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# EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS' WILLINGNESS TO TEACH, TEACHING EFFICACY AND TEACHER BURNOUT

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***Abstract:*** *The purpose of the study was to examine the predictive power of Turkish early childhood teachers' teaching efficacy levels, willingness to teach, gender, education, professional experience, and years of professional education, for teacher burnout. Participants were 219 early childhood teachers from Turkey. Ages ranged from 20 to 51 years. Of the 219 participants, 188 were female and 31 were male. Participants responded to the Turkish version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator Survey, the Turkish version of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale, and scoring of an item, "I am teaching willingly", on a 5-point scale. Stepwise regression analyses were conducted for each sub-dimension of teacher burnout. Results revealed that willingness to teach, student engagement, and years of professional education explained 40% of the variance in emotional exhaustion. Student engagement alone explained 25% of the variance in personal accomplishment. Finally, willingness to teach and general teaching efficacy appeared to be significant predictors for depersonalization sub dimension of teacher burnout. Accordingly, implications and contributions are discussed.*

*Key Words: teacher burnout; willingness to teach; teaching efficacy; profes-*

*sional education, early childhood*.

## Introduction

Teaching is a stressful profession (Borg, & Riding, 1991; Brudnik, 2009). Therefore, burnout is an important issue for teachers (Huberman, 1989). Maslach (1993) defined burnout as "A psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity" (pp. 20, 21). Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment are three components of burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1981) pointed to emotional exhaustion as the key factor in burnout and defined it as "feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work" (p. 101). They also described depersonalization as "an unfeeling and impersonal response towards recipients on one's care or service" (p. 101) and personal accomplishment as "feeling of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people "(p. 101). Maslach and Jackson's (1981) scale have been widely recruited in the burnout literature. In this study we used this conceptualization for burnout.

Over the last two decades many studies have been conducted on teacher burnout. These studies have revealed that teacher burnout has consequences for society at large, schools, teachers, and students. Teacher burnout is the primary reason for teacher turnover (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan 2014; Leung, & Lee 2006). Therefore, it contributes to teacher shortages. Teacher shortages affect society at large by preventing quality education. Teachers are one of the basic components of education. The impact of teacher quality (characteristics) on children's development has been very well documented (Ca-

bell et al., 2011; Cote et al., 2013). Therefore, issues such as burnout are important problems because they prevent teachers from teaching. Burned-out teachers exhibit less organizational commitment and work engagement and have higher rates of absenteeism (Hakanene, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Kahn, Schneider, Jenkins-Henkelman, & Moyle, 2006). Studies have revealed that teachers' burnout is positively associated with ill health (Hakanene, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006) and negatively associated with teachers' wellbeing, general and mental health (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998; Milfont, Denny, Ameratung, Robinson, & Merry, 2008; Tang, Au, Schwarzer, & Schmitz, 2001). When we consider the fact that teachers' positive emotional state and professional dedication improve their students' motivation (Bakker, 2005), it is not surprising to see a negative impact of teacher burnout on teacher effectiveness and students' development (Betoret, 2009; Fernet, Guay, Senecal, & Austin, 2012; Hong, 2012). Burned-out teachers are so overwhelmed by their own problems, they cannot find enough energy to deal with students' educational and personal problems (Egyed & Short, 2006). Because they are emotionally exhausted they do not want to work and cannot experience the personal accomplishments that motivate them (Egyed & Short, 2006). This creates a negative vicious cycle that fosters teacher turnover (Leung & Lee 2006) and student failure (Betoret, 2009; Egyed & Short, 2006). Burned-out teachers may set negative examples for students.

All of the above-mentioned studies revealed the importance of reducing teacher burnout. Therefore, scholars are investigating factors that would do so. In many studies teacher efficacy has emerged as an effective factor in reducing burnout (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan 2014; Betoret, 2009; Brown, 2012; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Chan, 2007;

Egyed & Short, 2006; Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2002; Hong, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Teachers Teaching Efficacy and Burnout

According to Bandura (1997), teachers' teaching efficacy is a specific case of self-efficacy. Bandura (1986, p. 391) defined self-efficacy as "People's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance." Self-efficacy is a personal belief about the capacity to accomplish a certain task. Self-efficacy beliefs work as an initiator of a behavior (Bandura, 1989), increase persistence and motivation (Bouffard-Bouchard, 1990; Multon, Brown & Lent, 1991) and mediate the effects of other self-beliefs (Pajares & Miller, 1994; Teti & Gelfand, 1991). Accordingly, teaching efficacy is a specific case of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) defined teacher self-efficacy as "…individual teachers' belief in their own ability to plan, organize, and carry out activities that are required to attain given educational goals" (p. 1059). Efficacy for instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement are three dimensions of teacher self-efficacy beliefs (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Hoy, 1998). In this study, teaching efficacy was conceptualized as teachers' beliefs about their capabilities for using instructional strategies, managing classrooms effectively, and establishing student engagement.

Studies have shown that teaching efficacy beliefs are associated with students' academic achievement (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy 2000; Muijs & Reynold, 2002; Shidler, 2009), teaching effectiveness (Gencer & Cakiroglu, 2007; Shachar & Shmuelevitz, 1997), readiness to adopt innovative educational practices (Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic,

2002), professional commitment (Hong, 2012; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007), job satisfaction, experiencing less stress during teaching (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Hoy, 1998), and teacher burnout (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014; Betoret, 2009; Brown, 2012; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Chan, 2007; Egyed & Short, 2006; Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2002; Hong, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010; Kabadayı, 2015). In an extensive review of studies on teacher burnout and self-efficacy, Brown (2012) found negative associations between self-efficacy and burnout in teachers. In a similar study, Aloe, Amo and Shanahan (2014) conducted a multivariate meta-analysis to examine teachers' classroom management self-efficacy and burnout. They have found moderate associations between teachers' classroom management self-efficacy and three components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment). They suggested self-efficacy as a protective factor against burnout. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) examined associations between teaching efficacy and burnout with 2,249 elementary and middle school teachers. They found negative relationships among teaching efficacy, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization. Brouwers and Tomic (2000) revealed that teachers' classroom management self-efficacy has longitudinal effects on the depersonalization dimension of burnout and synchronous effects on the personal accomplishment dimension. These studies explicitly displayed the association between teacher self-efficacy and burnout.

As burnout level increases, teachers' sense of personal accomplishment decreases—they lose interest in their profession and faith in what they are doing and their capacity to contribute to children's development (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014; Betoret, 2009; Brown, 2012; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Chan, 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010). Concurrently, teaching becomes a meaningless job without objectives (Skaalvik

& Skaalvik, 2010). This process reinforces emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Brouwers & Tomic, 2002). Teachers with high and low teaching efficacy differ in terms of coping with stress, which is the most important factor in emotional exhaustion (Maslac, & Jackson, 1981). Chwalisz, Altmaier, and Russell (1992) showed that teachers with higher teaching efficacy recruited problem-focused coping efforts against stressful events whereas teachers with lower teaching efficacy used emotion-focused coping efforts. Teachers with higher teaching efficacy sustained a realistic approach to educational problems and did not blame themselves because they were aware that they were not the reason for the problem. On the other hand, teachers with low teaching efficacy tend to blame themselves. They experience excessive stress which increases teacher burnout (Hong, 2012; Leung & Lee, 2006; Schaufeli & Taris, 2005). Therefore, teachers' teaching efficacy beliefs act to protect them against emotional exhaustion, loss of professional interests, and lack of satisfaction (Chan, 2007).

Willingness to Teach

In their self-determination theory, Deci and Ryna (2000, 2008) claimed that people work better and pursue longer when they are intrinsically motivated rather than externally forced to do something. Several studies have revealed that under these circumstances, people perform better, sustain their efforts longer, and enjoy general well-being (Lepper, Corpus, & Iyengar, 2005; Lepper, Henderlong, & Gingras, 1999). Several scholars have suggested that teachers who were intrinsically motivated to teach tended to perform better, experience more professional satisfaction and stay longer in the profession than their colleagues whose reasons for teaching are externally determined (Butler & Shibaz, 2008; Kim & Cho, 2014; Malmberg, 2006; Roness, 2011).

Marusic (2014) conducted a study with 119 secondary school teachers and found that teachers' intrinsic motivation for choosing to be teacher and performing in that profession predicted the effectiveness of their professional behaviors. Therefore, it is reasonable to question the relationship between early childhood teachers' intrinsic motivation to teach and their burnout. However, Roness (2011) asserted that the definition of intrinsic motivation overlaps with other concepts such as altruism. Deci (1972) defined intrinsic motivation as that occasion in which "one is said to be intrinsically motivated to perform an activity when he receives no apparent rewards except the activity itself" (105). Therefore, this study targeted the willingness component of intrinsic motivation. Early childhood teachers' willingness to teach was tested as an indicator of their burnout level. To the author's knowledge no studies have investigated this relationship. Examination of teachers' willingness to teach can extend our understanding of the impact of early childhood teachers' intrinsic motivation to teach. More attention on this component of teacher intrinsic motivation is needed.

## Turkey's Conditions and Burnout

In Turkey teacher candidates should receive bachelor degree from an educational faculty in order to become a teacher. Only criteria to study education in university is to pass university entrance exam. Aksu, Demir, Daloğlu, Yıldırım and Kiraz (2010) conducted an extensive survey with 18,266 prospective teachers from 51 faculties of education. Their findings showed that 29% of the prospective teachers reported that they had chosen teaching because their university entrance exam score were not good enough for a better department. They have also found that 25% of the prospected teachers reported opportunity to find a job easily as a reason and 21% stated working condi-

tions as main reason to choose teaching profession. Aksu et. al. indicated that "job security, flexible hours and holidays as well as the possibility of engaging in secondary employment were other reasons given for choosing teaching as a future career (97)." In Turkey most of the teachers hired by Ministry of National Education and they are state officers. Therefore, state teachers have a great legal protection in comparison to those employed by private schools (Aksu, et. al., 2010). Although significant amount of prospective teachers reported reasons out of education majority of them (87%) pointed that they want to pursue their future career as a teacher (Aksu, et. al., 2010). This may be because of Turkey's somewhat unique conditions.

After university teacher candidates has to outperform some of their colleagues in central government officer entrance exam in order to assign as a state teacher. Turkey has a young population therefore every year the gap between state jobs and positions provided by government and request for those position getting larger. Every year becoming state teacher getting harder. Teacher candidates that could not become state teacher can work as contractual teacher in public or private schools. Contractual teachers' salary is around one third of state teachers and most of the private schools do not pay as much as state. As it was mentioned above they lack job security and several other benefits such as retirement plan. Over years several teacher candidates had committed suicides just because they could not succeed in central government officer entrance examination. These facts can seem contradictable with finding of Aksu et. al. (2010) in which 25% of the prospective teacher reported opportunity to find a job easily as their reason to choose teaching profession. However, when we consider Turkey's conditions and prospective teachers' socio-economic background picture make sense. According to Turkish Statistical Institution (which is a formal institution that declare statistical

facts about Turkey), unemployment rate for population 15-24 years of age is 22% (http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=24630). It is a very high unemployment rate. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider 25% which stated they chose teaching because of opportunity to find job easily as a relative evaluation. In order to understand this data we should also consider prospective teachers' socio-economic background. Aksu et. al. (2010) have reported that majority of the prospective teachers were coming from middle-lower SES families. One third of the fathers and about half of the mothers had no more than 5-year primary education. Therefore, it can be said that becoming teacher for most of the Turkish prospective teachers is a socially upward movement which would provide higher income, social status and more comfortable life conditions than their parents had.

All these facts revealed that considerable amount of prospective teachers motivated for teaching profession for external motivational factors such as salary, job security, holidays, social security, social status rather than internal motivational factors such as cultivating new generations with better standards, creating nation's future, contributing development of humanity. As it was mentioned above that teachers who were intrinsically motivated had lower turnover rate than their colleagues whose reasons for teaching are externally determined (Butler & Shibaz, 2008; Kim & Cho, 2014; Malmberg, 2006; Roness, 2011). Therefore, we may expect considerable percent of Turkish state teachers to leave the profession. However, this was not the case. Minister of National Education İsmet Yılmaz declared that in 2017, 207 of 850,690 state teachers quit their jobs (www.hurriyet.com.tr/bu-yil-207-ogretmen-istifa-etti-40580635). Again we have to consider Turkey's conditions in order to understand these facts which appear contradicting to each other. As it was mentioned above it is hard to become a state

teacher and once you become a state teacher you have a job security for life. Quitting job as state teacher means losing income which in most case provides the teacher higher economical standards than he/she was raised. Also once teachers quit they become a burden for their family until they can find a new job. On the other hand with high un-employment rates and unstable middle-east political environment it is very difficult to find a new job or start a business. Under these conditions it is very difficult for Turkish teachers to quit their jobs even though teaching dissatisfy them.

There are a lot of extrinsic conditions compel Turkish prospective teachers to choose teaching as profession and Turkish state teachers to stay in teaching. The study would extend our understanding about teacher burnout, self-efficacy and willing to teach under conditions which minimize teachers' choices for different careers. Because of legal issues it is impossible to fire a state teacher because of his/her inefficacy in teaching. Therefore, problems related to teachers such as burn out has to be solve in the system. In order to achieve this first of all we have to figure out factors that have impact on teacher burn out. Thus, we can establish policies and programs to remedy the prob-lem.

## Importance and Purpose of the Study

The above-mentioned studies revealed the negative impacts of teacher burnout and positive impact of teacher self-efficacy on teacher burnout. Therefore, many studies have been conducted on teacher burnout and self-efficacy (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014; Betoret, 2009; Brown, 2012; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Chan, 2007; Egyed & Short, 2006; Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2002; Hong, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010). Guglielmi and Tatrow (1998) pointed out that teachers are not a homogenous

group—professional demands differ according to teaching level. However, none of these studies focused on early childhood teachers. Several studies have been conducted in Turkey on teacher burnout in early childhood educators (Akman, Taşkın, Özden, & Çörtü, 2010; Tuğrul & Çelik 2002) but these did not examine the relationship between early childhood teachers' self-efficacy, willingness to teach, and teacher burnout. Therefore, an examination of this relationship among Turkish early childhood educators would offer important insights. On the other as it was mentioned above it is very hard for state teachers to quit their jobs even though the teaching dissatisfy them. Thus, the study would also provide perspective about impact of these extrinsic conditions on teachers' burnout and intrinsic motivation. The purpose of the study was to examine the predictive power of Turkish early childhood teachers' teaching efficacy levels, willingness to teach, gender, education, professional experience, and years of professional education on teacher burnout.

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

This study's population included early childhood education teachers from two different cities (Şanlıurfa and İstanbul) in Turkey. Istanbul is the largest and most cosmopolitan city in Turkey with 14 million habitants. People from all Turkish cities migrate to İstanbul, making it a microcosm of Turkey. Assembling a sample from İstanbul increased the generalizability of findings. The investigator contacted teacher unions in İstanbul and asked them to disseminate surveys to their members. In Şanlıurfa, the investigator visited randomly selected kindergartens and preschools (a total of 12) and asked teachers to participate in the study. Those who volunteered completed surveys on

their own time and then either sent them to the investigator via email or the investigator personally visited the schools to collect the surveys.

Two hundred nineteen (219) early childhood teachers participated in the study. Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 51, with a mean age of 28.1 years (SD = 5.28). Of the 219 participants, 188 (85.8%) were female and 31 (14.2%) were male. Participants' years of education, years of professional education and years of experience ranged from 11 to 22, 2 to 9, and 1 to 32, with mean years of 15.7 (SD = 1.2), 4.31 (SD = 1.17) and 5.99 (SD = 5.02), respectively.

## Materials

### Teacher Burnout

Teacher burnout was measured with the Turkish version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator Survey. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Girgin and Baysal (2005). The questionnaire includes 22 items divided into three subscales: emotional exhaustion (EE; nine items, e.g., "I feel emotionally drained from my work"), personal accomplishment (PA; eight items, e.g., "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job) and depersonalization (D; five items, e.g., I feel I treat some students as if they are impersonal objects"). Participants were asked to evaluate each item in terms of the frequency of their feelings, ranging from 0 (Never) to 4 (Always). High scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and low scores on personal accomplishment subscales are indicative of burnout. Participants could receive a minimum score of 0 and a maximum score of 88 on the total scale. The psychometric properties of the Turkish adaptation of the scale have been reported by Girgin and Baysal (2005), who

indicated that the Turkish form was a valid and reliable scale. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of EE, PA and D for this study were 0.93, 0.84, and 0.75, respectively. These Cronbach's coefficients are considered indicative of sound reliability for education (Issac & Michael 1995).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teachers' teaching self-efficacy was measured using the Turkish version of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) from Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (1998). The scale was adapted by Çapa, Çakırooğlu and Sarıkaya (2005). The questionnaire includes 24 items divided into three subscales: efficacy for instructional strategies (IS; eight items, e.g., "How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?"), student engagement (SE; eight items, e.g., "How much can you do to get through the most difficult students?") and classroom management (CM; eight items, e.g., "How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?"). Participants were asked to respond to each item in terms of their level of belief in being able to achieve each item. Responses ranged from 1 (Nothing) to 9 (A great deal). High scores on every subscale indicated higher levels of teaching efficacy. Participants could receive a minimum score of 8 and a maximum score of 72 on each subscale. The psychometric properties of the Turkish adaptation were reported by Çapa, Çakıroğlu and Sarıkaya (2005), who indicated strong validity and reliability scores. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of IS, SE, CM and the general teacher efficacy (GTE) for this study were 0.89, 0.91, 0.89, and 0.96, respectively. These Cronbach's coefficients are considered indicative of sound reliability for education (Issac & Michael 1995). Teachers' willingness to teach was measured through their responses to following statement "I am teaching will-

ingly." They scored the statement between 1-5 points. One indicated least willingness and 5 indicated highest willingness.

## Results

Stepwise multiple regression was calculated to predict three sub-dimensions of teacher burnout (EE, PA and D) based on teachers' gender, age, years of education, years of professional education, years of experience, willingness to teach, and four indicators of teaching efficacy (general, IS, SE and CM). For EE, regression analyses revealed willingness to teach, SE, and teachers' years of professional education as significant predictors. A significant regression equation was found ($F(3.215) = 50.43$ $p<0.000$ with an adjusted $R^2$ 0.405. Participants predicted EE to be equal to 34.027 -4.154 (willingness to teach) -1.644 (SE) + 0.997 (year of professional education), where willingness to teach was coded from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), SE was measured from 1 (lowest) to 9 (highest) and year of professional education was measured by years, respectively. Teachers' EE decreased 4.154 and 1.644 points for each unit of increase in willingness to teach and SE, respectively. EE increased with years of professional education. Willingness to teach, SE and teachers' years of professional education were significant predictors of teachers' EE. These findings indicated that willingness to teach, SE, and years of professional education explained 40% of the variance in EE. Unique contributions of each independent variable (willingness, SE, and years of professional education) for predicting EE were 35%, 3,5% and 2%, respectively.

For PA, regression analyses revealed only SE to be a significant predictor. A significant regression equation was found ($F(1.217) = 36.36$ $p<0.000$ with an adjusted $R^2$ 0.245. Participants predicted D to be equal to 8.81 +2.224 (SE). Teachers' PA in-

creased 2.224 points for each unit of increase in SE. SE appeared to be a significant predictor of PA. SE explained 25% of the variance in PA.

For D, regression analyses revealed willingness to teach and GTE to be significant predictors. A significant regression equation was found (F (2.216) = 62.76 p<0.000 with an adjusted $R^2$ 0.221. Participants predicted PA to be equal to 10.57 -1.04 willingness and -0.6 (GTE). Increased willingness to teach and GTE predicted decreases in D. Teachers' D decreased 1.04 and 0.6 points for each unit of increase in willingness to teach and GTE, respectively. SE appeared to be a significant predictor of D. These findings showed that willingness to teach and GTE explained 22% of the variance in D. Unique contributions of each independent variable (willingness and GTE) for predicting D were 21% and 3.9%, respectively.

## Discussion

This study investigated the predictive capacity of several variables such as teaching experience, years of education, years of professional education, willingness to teach and teaching efficacy dimensions IS, SE, CM and GTE on early childhood teachers' burnout dimensions (EE, PA and D). Although several studies have emphasized gender (Esmeray & Erçen, 2007; Sağır, 2015; Seferoğlu, Yıldız, Yücel, 2014; Timms, Graham, & Caltabiano, 2006) and teaching experience (Garcia-Ros, Fuentes, & Fernandez, 2015) as predictors of teacher burnout, in this study these factors did not significantly contribute to teacher burnout. Egyed and Short (2006) conducted a study with elementary school teachers and did not find a difference in burnout among teachers with different education levels. They reported that this finding was unexpected. This study's finding about teachers' years of education and burnout was consistent with those of Egyed and

Short (2006). Although on the correlational matrix it appeared that some of these factors were significantly correlated with some sub-dimensions of teacher burnout, in the step-wise regression analysis they did not show up as a significant predictor. Therefore, it is reasonable to assert that other factors included in the regression analysis were more predictive than these factors in determining teacher burnout.

Teaching is an emotional job due to the necessary interactions with a wide range of individuals that include parents and students. Teachers' positive emotional state improves their students' motivation levels (Bakker, 2005). Since children's emotive knowledge expands during the early years of their lives (Bee, 1999) and teachers are models for children and set an example with regard to emotive competencies (Denham, Bassett, & Zinsser, 2012; Garner, 2010; Heller et al., 2012), preventing emotional exhaustion is especially important for early childhood teachers. This is especially true for Turkish early childhood state teachers because as it was mentioned in literature review for Turkish teachers it is very difficult to quit teaching profession due to country's conditions and teachers' socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore, we have to find ways to prevent teachers from emotional exhaustion because they will probably not quit even if they are emotionally exhausted. Rentzou (2012) found that early childhood teachers' emotional exhaustion reduces both the educator's and the child's performance while also having a negative impact on children's physical and emotional well-being. In addition to a negative effect on children's development, among the three burnout components Leung and Lee (2006) showed that emotional exhaustion is a predictive factor for teachers' intention to leave the profession. Several scholars have suggested that teacher self-efficacy is a preventative factor against emotional exhaustion (Brouwers & Tomic, 2002; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010). These studies measured teacher efficacy gen-

erally or did not look at sub-dimensions such as student engagement, classroom management and instructional strategies, which were the subject of this study. Therefore, this study's findings serve to expand and add new factors to consider while working on teachers' burnout problems. Findings showed that willingness to teach, SE and years of professional education explained 40% of the variance in EE. Willingness to teach appeared to be the strongest predictor and was negatively associated with teacher EE. This finding was expected—simply put, people who do not like to do what they are doing are not willing to do it. This finding also is consistent with findings from studies on intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryna, 2000; 2008; Lepper, Corpus, & Iyengar, 2005; Malmberg, 2006; Marusic, 2014). These offer a closer look at the concept of intrinsic teaching motivation by presenting willingness to teach as a significant predictor of early childhood teachers' EE.

Findings also indicated that teachers' EE increased with their years of professional education. This finding contradicted findings from several studies (Egyed & Short 2006; Seferoğlu, Yıldız & Yücel, 2014). In a study with elementary and middle school teachers, Seferoğlu et al. (2014) found that teachers with two-year degrees had significantly higher levels of EE compared with their colleagues with bachelor's, master's, or Ph.D. degrees. However, in their sample only four teachers had two-year degrees. In another study, Tuğrul and Çelik (2002), this time conducted with early childhood teachers, the researchers reported that early childhood teachers' education level was a predictor of their EE; however, they did not mention the direction of the relationship. There may be several explanations for this finding. Teachers with more professional education might hold higher professional expectations for themselves than their colleagues with less professional education. In a similar study conducted by Sağır

(2015) with elementary and middle school teachers, he found that teachers with master's degrees experienced greater depersonalization and lower feelings of personal accomplishment than teachers with bachelor degrees. Negative associations between years of professional education and teachers' EE may also emanate from types of teachers' professional education. In Turkey there are two routes to becoming an early childhood teacher: graduate from a four-year educational facility or go to a vocational high school and then pursue a two-year degree at a technical school. Teachers who come from vocational schools are experienced teachers because since 2004, these teachers are required to have a bachelor's degree. Teachers from vocational schools have a practical education and teachers from a university receive a mainly theoretical education. Therefore, teachers who come from vocational schools may have greater mastery experience than their colleagues who graduate from a university.

Several studies have suggested that general teacher self-efficacy is a protective factor against teacher EE (Aloe, Amo & Shanahan, 2014; Chan, 2007; Garcia-Ros, Fuentes, & Fernandez, 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). This study's findings elaborated further, extending these findings for early childhood teachers. SE was pointed to as the most important sub-dimension of teaching efficacy in predicting early childhood teachers' burnout. A stepwise regression showed that SE was the second largest predictor of EE and sole predictor of PA. SE alone explained 25% of the variance in PA. This may be considered a new finding because former studies on teacher burnout usually emphasized general teacher efficacy and classroom management sub-dimensions (Betoret, 2009; Brown, 2012; Brouwers & Tomic 2000; Hong, 2012). For example, in their longitudinal study with secondary school teachers Brouwers and Tomic (2000) found that teachers' perceived self-efficacy in classroom management had a longitudinal effect

on the depersonalization dimension of burnout and a synchronous effect on the personal accomplishment dimension. In their meta-analysis Aloe, Amo and Shanahan (2014) reported a negative association between classroom management self-efficacy and teachers' feelings of emotional exhaustion. As mentioned earlier, none of these studies targeted early childhood education teachers. There are differences between early childhood education and higher levels of education (starting from elementary education) in terms of educational content, general atmosphere, and nature of teacher-child relationships. In general, early childhood is less "formal" and focuses more on education than on instruction compared to higher education. Most of the time early childhood teachers are the first teachers encountered by children (students). Therefore, early childhood teachers may embrace student engagement as their first priority, compared to classroom management and instructional strategies. Concurrently, SE deficiency may trigger EE and feelings of efficacy in SE may promote PA. Evers, Tomic, and Brouwers (2004) reported a negative association between PA and EE among high school teachers, which supports this inference. SE could be mediator factor between early childhood teachers' EE and PA—future studies should focus on this issue.

Teaching requires constant interaction with students; among those engaged in early childhood teaching, it is more so. If teachers cease interaction and communication with their students, they simply cannot teach. Therefore, depersonalization prevents teachers from teaching. Several studies have pointed to the relationship between EE and D (Betroret, 2009; Evers, Tomic, & Brouwers, 2004; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). For example, Betroret (2009) noted the impact of emotional exhaustion on depersonalization. In another study Evers, Tomic, and Brouwers (2004) indicated that reported perceptions of disruptive classroom behavior were significantly related to teachers' emo-

tional exhaustion and depersonalization, but not to their personal accomplishments. This study's findings pointed in a similar direction. Findings revealed that, as for EE, willingness to teach was also a primary predictor of D. When willingness to teach increased, D decreased. Teachers who are not willing to teach probably will not want to pursue personal interactions, which are required in their profession. Therefore, D may be a defense mechanism for early childhood teachers who are unwilling to teach. Findings also indicated that GTE is a second predictor of D. This finding is consistent with the literature (see, e.g., Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Brudnik, 2009; Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2002). This study's findings revealed that when GTE increased, D tended to decrease. Each sub-dimension of teacher self-efficacy contains items that emphasize human interactions—the combined effects of these items may be the reason for this result.

In summary, two main factors—willingness to teach and SE—stand out as predictors of early childhood teachers' burnout. As mentioned earlier, SE is an educational rather than an instructional concept. It is comprised of issues such as fostering creativity, teaching to value learning, and motivating children. Early childhood teachers and in-service education can focus more on these issues in order to equip teachers with better instruments that enable them to perform better on SE. Justice and Espinoza (2012) asserted that early-career teachers who know how to deal with problems encountered in the classroom reduce their level of burnout and increase their performance.

Roness (2011) revealed the stability in the motivation to engage in teaching. Therefore, willingness to teach may be considered a necessary element in the teacher candidates' selection process. This process would enable the selection of better teacher

candidates. For example, in Turkey, a person who passes the university's tests, which evaluate subject knowledge in several domains (e.g., mathematics, science, and Turkish), they can enter a university school of education. After graduation, they may be officially licensed to teach. Throughout this process, no systematic attempt to evaluate willingness to teach existed. Evaluation of willingness to teach would continue throughout teachers' professional lives. When decreased willingness to teach was detected, vocational, social, and psychological support would be provided to the teachers. In consideration to low turnover rate of Turkish state teachers it would be beneficial for teachers and for students to provide in service support to teachers.

## Limitations and Future Studies

The data stemmed from self-reports from volunteer participants. These were the main limitations of the study. It may be that teachers who were more willing to teach, had more beliefs in teaching efficacy and experienced less burnout would volunteer to respond to a study on teacher development. The associational nature of the study prevented us from determining the direction of relationships. For example, willingness to teach appeared to be a strong predictor of EE and PA; however, the relationship also could be the reverse. Future studies could focus on willingness to teach and involve longitudinal studies that would follow teacher development from education through actual teaching experiences—this information would provide valuable insights on the issue. In the future, the impact of willingness to teach on several dimensions of teaching such as teaching performance, teaching self-efficacy and burnout and later impact on willingness to teach could be the subjects of more detailed investigations.

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