

# Burnout of Early Childhood Education Teachers in Turkey

Türkiye'deki Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerin Tükenmişlik Düzeyleri

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The purpose of the study is to examine the burnout experienced by Turkish early childhood education teachers working in public preschools serving children from three to six years of age. **Material and Methods:** The participants of the study, 869 early childhood education teachers, were gathered through simple random sampling. The data for the study were gathered through Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) which was developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) and adapted into Turkish by Ergin (1992) was used for the study. Based on independent samples t-test and analysis of variance the burnout experienced by the teachers examined according to various personal and professional factors such as gender, marital status, monthly income, educational level, years of experience in occupation, and age group of children. **Results:** It was found that there were significant differences in burnout scores of the teacher depending on such factors as geographical region, gender, income, educational level etc. **Conclusion:** Findings suggest that teachers' burnout was related with such factors as geographical region, gender, monthly income, educational level and background, job position, current work experience and marital status of teachers.

**Key Words:** Burnout; Early childhood teachers; Teacher burnout; Early childhood education; Teacher development

## ÖZ

**Amaç:** Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'de devlet okullarında üç ila altı yaş arası çocuklarla çalışan okulöncesi öğretmenlerin yaşadıkları tükenmişlik düzeylerinin araştırılmasıdır. **Gereç ve Yöntem:** Çalışmaya basit örnekleme yöntemi ile seçilen 869 okulöncesi öğretmeni dahil edilmiştir. Çalışmanın verileri Maslach ve Jackson (1981) tarafından geliştirilen ve Ergin (1992) tarafından Türkçeye uyarlanan Maslach Tükenmişlik Ölçeği (MTÖ) ile toplanmıştır. Öğretmenlerin tükenmişlik düzeyleri ile cinsiyetleri, madeni durumları, görev yaptıkları bölge, çocuk gelişimi ve eğitimi bölümü mezunu olup olmamaları, eğitim düzeyleri, şu anki görevleri, aktif olarak çocuklarla çalışıp çalışmamaları gibi çeşitli kişisel ve mesleki faktör arasındaki ilişki bağımsız gruplar t-testi ve varyans analizi kullanılarak incelenmiştir. **Sonuçlar:** Öğretmenlerin tükenmişlik skorları arasında coğrafik bölge, cinsiyet, gelir düzeyi, eğitim seviyesi gibi faktörlere bağlı olarak anlamlı farklılık olduğu bulunmuştur. **Tartışma:** Sonuçlar öğretmenlerin tükenmişlik düzeyleri ile cinsiyetleri, madeni durumları, görev yaptıkları bölge, çocuk sahibi olup olmamaları, çocuk gelişimi ve eğitimi bölümü mezunu olup olmamaları, mesleki deneyimleri, eğitim düzeyleri, şu anki görevleri, çalıştıkları çocukların yaş grupları, aylık gelirleri ve engelli çocuklarla çalışma deneyimine sahip olup olmamaları gibi değişkenlerle arasında ilişki olduğunu göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Tükenmişlik; Okulöncesi öğretmenleri; Öğretmen tükenmişliği; Okulöncesi eğitimi; Öğretmen gelişimi

Teacher burnout has been studied extensively in research for almost four decades. However, examining teacher burnout experienced specifically by early childhood teachers remains to be a necessary need for the profession in general and for the teachers and children in particular. The present study aims to investigate the burnout phenomenon among Turkish early childhood teachers with special attention to the Turkish literature.

Burnout in research was first proposed by two independent and contemporary works, one by psychologist Herbert J. Freudenberg (1974), and the other by Maslach & Jackson (1981), widely known and cited researchers of burnout syndrome. Burnout in teaching, which was explored through descriptive and anecdotal reports has an old history dating back to late 1970s (Brissie, Hoover-Dempsey & Bassler, 1988), and laid the foundation for exploring individual and contextual variables behind it. Since then, burnout in teaching profession has been studied extensively in the occupational stress and burnout literature (McCormick & Barnett, 2011).

Teaching profession has been accepted as a highly stressful occupation (McCormick & Barnett, 2011; Cheng, Chan, Tang et al., 2009). Working conditions, work load, student demands and limited nature of resources that teacher have, brought teaching profession and teachers into the center of burnout literature and research. The relationship between teacher burnout and student outcomes has been a major drive behind burnout research in education (See for ex. Jennings, Greenberg, 2009; Van Horn, Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1999) as high rates of teacher burnout negatively influence student outcomes and impedes the quality of education (Hong, 2008). Likewise studies on burnout demonstrated that it is also a major threat for teachers' well-being, which decreases their job satisfaction (Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007) and increases teacher drop out in profession (Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt, 2012; Cheng et al., 2009).

Even though burnout was originally described as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism, which is commonly seen in "the individuals who do people-work of some kind", it is lately accepted as a syndrome that can occur in all occupations (Maslach, Leiter & Jackson, 2012). Manifestations of burnout are described as emotional exhaustion (not being able to give of oneself at a psychological level), development of a negative, cynical attitudes towards one's clients and thirdly a tendency to evaluate oneself negatively (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). As

research suggests (Brissie, Hoover-Dempsey & Bassler, 1988; Cano-Garcia, Padilla-Munoz & Carrasco-Ortiz, 2005; Vercambre et al. 2009; Kokkinos, 2007; Beltman, Mansfield, Price, 2011), the existence of individual and contextual variables as well as the interaction among them, contributes to the onset of burnout. Work-related and organizational characteristics, student behavior problems, need for professional recognition and prestige, teacher-student ratio, lack of resources, relationship with colleagues, high job demand, low reward, low skill discretion and social support (See for ex. Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt, 2012; Mojsa-Kaja, Golonka & Marek, 2015; Wang, Ramos, Hui, et al. 2014; Goddard, O'Brien & Goddard, 2006) have been among the contextual variables that can cause burnout. Similarly, age, gender, marital status and personality structure (see. McCormick & Barnett, 2011; Kokkinos, 2007), coping strategies (Ullrich, Lambert & McCarthy, 2012 ; ) and self-efficacy (Martin, Sass & Schmitt, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009) have been among the individual variables associated with teacher burnout.

Aside from the efforts to examine teacher burnout and the associating factors, recent research has begun to investigate the predictors of teacher burnout in order to design and implement effective interventions. Teachers' commitment (Day, Elliot & Kington, 2005), teachers' goals orientation and motivation (Retelsdorf, Butler, Streblov et al. 2010), teacher efficacy in student engagement (Martin, Sass, Schmitt, 2012), teachers' professional identity (Hong, 2010; Doğan & Erdiller-Yatmaz, 2018) are among the potential predictors of teachers' work performance, burnout and turnover.

Teacher burnout has been studied extensively in Turkey as well (ex. Tümkaya, 1996; Peker, 2002; Tuğrul & Çelik, 2003; Cemaloğlu & Erdemoğlu, 2007; Deniz Kan, 2008; Cerit, 2008; Öztürk & Deniz, 2008; Cenkseven-Önder, 2009; İnandı, 2009; Akın & Oğuz, 2010; Akman, Taşkın, Özden et al., 2010; Girgin, 2010; Koruklu, Feyzioğlu, Özenoğlu-Kiremit et al., 2012; Akbaba, 2014; Akın, Aydın, Erdoğan et al., 2014; Filiz, 2014; Doğan & Erdiller-Yatmaz, 2018; Sak, 2018). Individual and demographical variables that have been found to be in a relationship with burnout were age, gender, marital status, monthly income, educational level, total years of experience, years of experience in current school. Individual yet professional variables that were found to be related to burnout include willingness to become a teacher, appropriateness of career choice, ability to cope with stress, work satisfaction, satisfaction with students'

behaviors, workaholic tendencies, teacher identity and teacher stress. Finally, contextual variables affecting burnout include class size, type of school, emotional labor, servant leadership behaviors of administrators, working hours, in-service training hours, time spent for social activities, grade level of students, workload, prior expectations about school environment, interaction with administrators and colleagues, appreciation received from administrators and beliefs about curriculum.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### *Participants*

The participants of the study include 869 early childhood education teachers who work in public preschools in Turkey gathered through simple random sampling. Nearly 95% of the participants were working in state preschools and nearly 5% were working in private schools. Participants were from 7 regions of the Turkey with the following percentages: 14.7% from Mediterranean Region, 10.1% from Eastern Anatolia Region, 17.9% from Aegean Region, 7.9% from Southeastern Region, 16.6% from Central Anatolia Region, 14.1% from Black Sea Region, 18.7% from Marmara Region. 94.1% of the participants were female and 5.9% were male. Nearly 59% of the participants were married, 37% were single, and nearly 4% were divorced or widowed. Nearly 50% of the participants have a child. More than 60% of the participants have BSc or higher degree in the field of child development or early childhood education. 94% of the participants were actively working with children.

### *Instruments*

In order to examine the individual and contextual variables, which might have a relationship with burnout, a demographical information questionnaire was used. The questionnaire included questions about age, marital status, monthly income, educational level, educational background, years of experience, housing status, being a parent, region of residence, type of school and current position at work.

In order to explore the burnout phenomenon among early childhood teachers Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) which was developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) was used for the study. The MBI is 22-itemed, 7-point Likert-type scale and is the most frequently used instrument to assess burnout worldwide. The scale has three sub-scales: Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP)

and Personal Achievement (PA). It was adapted into Turkish by Ergin (1992).

### *Data collection*

The schools that participants work were chosen from the list of schools serving children from 3 to 6 years, obtained from the Ministry of National Education through random sampling. The participants were asked to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. For the ethical purposes and to protect the participants' confidentiality and anonymity, participants were given information about the study, informed that they are free to participate or not to participate the study, and were asked not to give any identifying information and to return their responses in the closed and sealed envelopes provided by the researchers.

### *Data Analysis*

Data for the study were analyzed using SPSS for Windows, version 16 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL). The descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages of categorical variables and the means and standard deviations of numeric variables were calculated. Numerical variables were investigated by independent sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). When the statistically significant difference was found in one-way ANOVA, pairwise comparisons were performed using post hoc Tukey HSD test.

## **RESULTS**

The purpose of the study was to explore the individual and contextual variables gathered through demographic information questionnaire that contribute to burnout of early childhood teachers in Turkey. The individual and contextual variables that were included in the questionnaire were gender, marital status, geographical location, being a parent, educational level and background, current position at work, actively working with children, age group of children, years of experience, work experience in integrated classrooms, monthly income and ownership of the residential house.

### *Burnout and gender*

T-Test was used to compare male and female participants for their scores from MBI subscales, and the results are given in Table 1. As given in Table 1, there are significant differences between means scores of male and female participants for EE subscale but no significant differences for DP and PA subscales.

**Table 1.** Comparison of male and female participants scores from MBI subscales

MBI Subscales	Sex	n	Mean	SD	Test statistics	P
EE	Female	797	1,92	0,68	-2,099	0,036*
	Male	50	2,31	0,75		
DP	Female	797	2,71	0,73	-.677	.499
	Male	50	2,89	0,72		
PA	Female	797	4,17	0,62	1.414	.158
	Male	50	4,03	0,49		

p<.05

#### *Burnout and marital status*

One-way ANOVA was applied to determine any significant differences among single, married and divorced or widow participants for their scores from MBI. Any significant differences found among these groups were tested by means of post hoc Tukey HSD test to determine any differences between two groups in triple groups. As given in Table 2, there are significant differences among single, married and

divorced or widow participants for their scores from EE and DP subscales but there is no significant differences for the PA subscale. For EE subscale, the mean scores of single teachers were significantly lower than the mean scores of married teachers. For DP subscale, the means scores of single teachers were significantly lower than the mean scores of married and divorced/widow teachers.

**Table 2.** Comparison of marital status of participants for their scores from MBI subscales

MBI Subscales	Marital Status	n	Mean	SD	Test statistics	p
EE	Married	493	2,05	0,72	17,883	0,000*
	Single	310	1,76	0,59		
	Divorced/Widow	29	1,85	0,65		
DP	Married	493	2,77	0,72	5,220	0,006*
	Single	310	2,61	0,73		
	Divorced/Widow	29	2,87	0,81		
PA	Married	493	4,18	0,61	0,175	0,839
	Single	310	4,15	0,6		
	Divorced / Widow	29	4,15	0,98		

P<.05

#### *Burnout and Geographical Regions*

One-way ANOVA was applied to determine any significant differences among participants according to geographical region for their scores from MBI subscales. Any significant differences found among these groups were tested by means of post hoc Tukey HSD test to determine any differences between two groups. As given in Table

3, for the scores from EE, DP and PA subscales, there were significant differences between the scores of teachers. For EE subscale, teachers from Southeastern Anatolia Region had significantly lower scores than the teachers from Marmara and Eastern Anatolia Regions, and teachers from Aegean Region had lower scores than teachers from Eastern Anatolia Region. For

DP subscale, teachers from Marmara Region had significantly higher scores than teachers from Aegean, Black Sea and Southeastern Regions. For PA subscale, teachers from Central Anatolia

and Eastern Anatolia Regions had lower scores than teachers from Aegean and Mediterranean Regions.

**Table 3.** Comparison of Geographical Regions of participants for their scores from MBI subscales

MBI Subscales	Region	n	Mean	SD	Test statistics	p
<b>EE</b>	Mediterranean	121	1,91	0,73	2,223	0,039*
	Eastern Anatolia	83	2,08	0,72		
	Aegean	147	1,85	0,68		
	Southeastern Anatolia	65	1,81	0,67		
	Central Anatolia	136	2,02	0,75		
	Black Sea	116	1,90	0,62		
	Marmara	151	2,04	0,63		
<b>DP</b>	Mediterranean	119	2,70	0,71	2,135	0,047*
	Eastern Anatolia	83	2,78	0,78		
	Aegean	147	2,62	0,80		
	Southeastern Anatolia	65	2,66	0,76		
	Central Anatolia	137	2,74	0,63		
	Black Sea	116	2,65	0,68		
	Marmara	151	2,88	0,72		
<b>PA</b>	Mediterranean	121	4,30	0,62	3,021	0,006*
	Eastern Anatolia	83	4,03	0,60		
	Aegean	147	4,28	0,50		
	Southeastern Anatolia	65	4,13	0,75		
	Central Anatolia	136	4,09	0,64		
	Black Sea	116	4,12	0,62		
	Marmara	152	4,12	0,64		

P<.05

#### *Burnout and Being a Parent*

t-Test was used to compare teachers with and without children for their scores from MBI subscales, and the results are given in Table 4. As given in Table

4, there were significant differences between mean scores of teacher with and without children for EE and DP subscales but no significant differences for PA subscales.

**Table 4.** Comparison of teacher with and without children for their scores from MBI subscales

<b>MBI Subscales</b>	<b>Having Children</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Test statistics</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>EE</b>	Yes	399	2,03	0,71	3,357	0,001*
	No	408	1,87	0,65		
<b>DP</b>	Yes	399	2,80	0,70	3,398	0,001*
	No	408	2,63	0,72		
<b>PA</b>	Yes	399	4,18	0,62	0,211	0,833
	No	408	4,17	0,58		

P&lt;.05

*Burnout and ECDE training*

t-Test was applied to determine whether there are any significant differences among participants according to the field from which teachers graduated for their scores from MBI subscales. As given in Table 5, teacher graduated from a child development

and education department had significantly lower scores for EE subscale than teachers not graduated from a child development and education department, and there were no significant differences between teachers graduated from different areas for DP and PA subscales.

**Table 5.** Comparison of teachers according to their graduation areas for their scores from MBI

<b>MBI Subscales</b>	<b>Graduated from an ECDE Department</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Test statistics</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>EE</b>	Yes	780	1,92	0,68	-2,480	0,013*
	No	64	2,15	0,71		
<b>DP</b>	Yes	780	2,71	0,73	-1,235	0,217
	No	64	2,82	0,77		
<b>PA</b>	Yes	780	4,17	0,63	1,301	0,194
	No	64	4,07	0,51		

P&lt;.05

*Burnout and Educational Level*

One-way ANOVA was applied to determine any significant differences among participants according to their educational levels for their scores from MBI and its subscales. Any significant differences found among these groups were tested by means of post hoc Tukey HSD test to determine any differences

between two groups. As given in Table 6, there are significant differences among teachers according to their educational levels only for scores of EE subscale. For scores from EE subscale, teachers with high school educational level had significantly lower scores than teachers with Associate and BSc/PhD degrees.

**Table 6.** Comparison of teachers according to their educational levels for their scores from MBI

MBI Subscales	Education	n	Mean	SD	Test statistics	p
<b>EE</b>	High School	148	1,68	0,59	13,330	0,000*
	Associate Degree	166	1,99	0,73		
	BSc/MSc-PhD Degree	539	2	0,68		
<b>DP</b>	High School	148	2,69	0,74	1,417	0,243
	Associate Degree	166	2,81	0,75		
	BSc/MSc-PhD Degree	539	2,7	0,71		
<b>PA</b>	High School	148	4,22	0,61	1,140	0,320
	Associate Degree	166	4,19	0,71		
	BSc/MSc-PhD Degree	539	4,14	0,59		

P<.05

#### *Burnout and Current Position at Work*

One-way ANOVA was applied to determine whether there are any significant differences among participants according to their position at work for their scores from MBI subscales. Any significant differences found among these groups were tested by means of post hoc Tukey HSD test to determine any differences between two groups. As given in

Table 7, there are significant differences among participants according to their positions for total scores from EE & DP subscales. For scores from EE and DP subscales, covenanted teachers had significantly lower scores than managers and teachers, and teachers had significantly lower scores than managers.

**Table 7.** Comparison of teachers according to their position for their scores from MBI

MBI Subscales	Position	n	Mean	SD	Test statistics	p
<b>EE</b>	Manager	53	2,26	0,72	44,351	0,000*
	Teacher	546	2,05	0,68		
	Covenanted Teacher	256	1,62	0,54		
<b>DP</b>	Manager	53	2,99	0,62	11,256	0,000*
	Teacher	546	2,76	0,7		
	Covenanted Teacher	256	2,56	0,76		
<b>PA</b>	Manager	53	4,17	0,50	0,601	0,548
	Teacher	546	4,16	0,59		
	Covenanted Teacher	256	4,21	0,67		

P<.05

#### *Burnout and Active Teaching Experience*

t-Test was applied to determine whether there are any significant differences among the participants who are actively working with children or not working with children for their scores from MBI subscales. As

given in Table 8, there was no differences between teachers actively working with children and teachers not actively working with children for scores from MBI subscales.

**Table 8.** Comparison of teachers actively working with children and teachers not actively working with children for their scores from MBI

MBI Subscales	Actively teaching	n	Mean	SD	Test statistics	p
EE	Yes	800	1,94	0,69	-1,072	0,284
	No	51	2,04	0,71		
DP	Yes	800	2,71	0,72	-1,738	0,083
	No	51	2,89	0,75		
PA	Yes	800	4,16	0,62	-1,196	0,232
	No	51	4,26	0,53		

P<.05

#### *Burnout and Age Group of Children*

One-way ANOVA applied to determine any significant differences among participants according to the age groups they worked with (mean age groups: under three years, three years, four years, five years, six years and mixed ages) for their scores from MBI subscales. Any significant differences found among these groups were tested by means of

post hoc Tukey HSD test to determine any differences between two groups. As given in Table 9, there were significant differences between teachers only for the scores from DP subscale. Teachers working with children under three years had significantly lower scores than the teachers working with children 4 and 5 years old.

**Table 9.** Comparison of teachers according to the children's age group worked with for their scores from MBI.

MBI Subscales	Age groups	n	Mean	SD	Test statistics	p
EE	Under 3 years	14	1,62	0,54	2,185	0,069
	4 years	33	2,19	0,71		
	5 years	60	1,98	0,72		
	6 years	561	1,91	0,67		
	Mixed ages	109	1,89	0,69		
DP	Under 3 years	14	2,37	0,76	3,821	0,004*
	4 years	33	2,97	0,89		
	5 years	60	2,95	0,58		
	6 years	561	2,68	0,71		
	Mixed ages	109	2,69	0,78		
PA	Under 3 years	14	4,34	0,45	1,785	0,130
	4 years	33	4,04	0,55		
	5 years	60	4,02	0,8		
	6 years	561	4,19	0,59		
	Mixed ages	109	4,18	0,63		

P<.05

#### *Teacher burnout and Monthly Income*

One-way ANOVA applied to determine any significant differences among participants according to their monthly income for their scores from MBI subscales. Any significant differences found among these groups were tested by means of post hoc Tukey HSD test to determine any differences

between two groups. As given in Table 10, there were significant differences among teachers according to their income level for their scores from EE and DP subscales. For the scores from EE subscale, there are significant differences between teachers with the lowest income level and the teachers with the other income levels. For the scores

from DP subscale, there are significant differences between the teachers with the lowest income level

and the teachers with the income level of YTL 2500-3999.

**Table 10.** Comparison of teachers according to their income levels for their scores from MBI.

MBI Subscales	Monthly Income (YTL)	n	Mean	SD	Test statistics	p
<b>EE</b>	0-1499	103	1,55	0,49	18,882	0,000*
	1500-2499	318	1,89	0,69		
	2500-3999	368	2,09	0,67		
	4000 and over	62	2,03	0,71		
<b>DP</b>	0-1499	103	2,55	0,74	4,213	0,006*
	1500-2499	318	2,68	0,76		
	2500-3999	368	2,81	0,71		
	4000 and over	62	2,71	0,66		
<b>PA</b>	0-1499	103	4,25	0,76	1,642	0,178
	1500-2499	318	4,16	0,61		
	2500-3999	368	4,13	0,6		
	4000 and over	62	4,27	0,43		

P<.05

#### *Burnout and Experience with Children with Special Needs*

t-Test was used to compare teachers with and without experiences with handicapped children for their scores from MBI subscales, and the results are

given in Table 11. As given in Table 11, there were significant differences between mean scores of teacher with and without children for DP and PA subscales but no significant differences for EE subscale.

**Table 11.** Comparison of teacher with and without experiences with handicapped children for their scores from MBI subscales.

MBI Subscales	Having Children	n	Mean	SD	Test statistics	p
<b>EE</b>	Yes	357	1,98	0,69	1,500	0,134
	No	472	1,91	0,68		
<b>DP</b>	Yes	357	2,78	0,72	1,959	0,050*
	No	472	2,68	0,72		
<b>PA</b>	Yes	357	4,25	0,54	3,153	0,002*
	No	472	4,12	0,64		

P<.05

#### **CONCLUSION**

It is a commonly acknowledged fact that teacher burnout is among the major factors that influence teachers' performance, health and well-being regardless of the country and the grade level. Due this significance it has been extensively studied in international and national research for decades. On the other hand, even though burnout is a common phenomenon that many teachers worldwide

experience along their professional life, it is also a unique experience as it has many influencing factors specific to country, grade level, and the educational system. The variations in individual and contextual characteristics keep the burnout phenomenon in the front line for research and continues to intrigue researchers. As a matter of fact, while some of the findings of the present study were in line with the burnout literature, some were contradicting with

many indeed.

Gender is one of the individual variables that has been considered in almost all of the studies examining burnout. The present study suggests that male early childhood teachers experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion compared to their female colleagues. Similarly, Sak (2018), in his study with early childhood education teachers found that male teachers display higher levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lower levels of personal achievement than their female colleagues. Though not in terms of emotional exhaustion, and not specifically with early childhood education teachers, McCormick & Barnett (2011) suggest that male teachers were more likely to report higher depersonalization and lower personal accomplishment than female teachers. There are also studies (İnandı, 2009; Akbaba, 2014; Peker, 2002; Koruklu, et al., 2012) conducted with Turkish elementary and secondary education teachers, which demonstrated that there is a statistically significant relationship between gender and teacher burnout. In contrast, another study conducted with early childhood education teachers in Turkey, found that the relationship between gender and burnout is statistically insignificant (Akman et.al, 2010). Yet this contradiction and inconsistency is what makes the burnout phenomenon worth further examination.

Similar to gender, marital status has been among the mostly investigated individual variables of burnout. The present study shows that single teachers experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion than married teachers, and lower levels of depersonalization than both married and widowed/divorced teachers. Likewise, Akman et al. (2010) suggest that single early childhood education teachers' personal achievement, a subscale of burnout, scores are higher than married teachers. Moreover, Girgin (2010) found that while married teachers have the highest levels of depersonalization, single teachers have the lowest depersonalization scores within the sample. On the other hand, Cemaloğlu & Erdemoğlu (2007) suggest that widowed/divorced teachers experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion compared to other groups. Prior studies (Kokkinos, 2007; Noor & Zainuddin, 2011) suggest that being married and female increases the likelihood for teachers to experience emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, as a result of the conflicting demands of work and family, not because of the marriage itself. In line with these findings, but with a slightly different perspective, İnandı (2009) suggests

that while home related barriers for female teachers' career advancement, such as motherhood and domestic cores, do not have an influence on teachers' depersonalization, school and environment based barriers, such as the existence of long working hours and necessity of working at home during the process of career advancement cause them to be exhausted and experience depersonalization. Usluer, 2000 (as cited in İnandı, 2009) justifies this as, while being a housewife and a spouse are regarded as the most important duties of women in Turkish society, the activities related to career advancement are regarded as men's work. Therefore, heightened work related demands for career advancement may more likely to cause married teachers to experience burnout. Regardless of the justifications behind this work-family conflict, research demonstrates that being married brings in additional strain to female teachers in terms of burnout and professional development. Congruently, as the present study suggests being a parent makes a significant difference in preschool teachers' burnout scores. Teachers, keeping in mind that the majority of the teachers in the sample are female, who have children experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

In terms of educational level, the present study demonstrates that teachers who are high school graduates experience lower emotional exhaustion than the teachers who are two-year university graduates, four-year university graduates or have a masters and Ph.D. degree. The study conducted by Öztürk & Deniz (2008) found consistent findings with the present study. Early childhood education teachers with a two-year university degree experience lower depersonalization compared to four-year university graduates and that of the teachers with master's degree. In other words, depersonalization scores of teachers increase as the educational level increases. In contrast, in their study Cemaloğlu & Erdemoğlu (2007) found that teachers with a BS degree have the lowest emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than the other groups. Filiz (2014) in her study on work satisfaction and burnout of teachers, states that there is a statistically significant difference between teachers with four year university graduates and teachers with masters and Ph.D degrees. In prior studies conducted with early childhood education teachers on teacher identity (Doğan & Erdiller-Yatmaz, 2018) and teacher stress (Erdiller & Doğan, 2015) it were found that teachers with higher educational level had higher levels of stress and

lower levels of teacher identity. Educational level and training of early childhood teachers have not been sufficiently explored for burnout. There is a great variety in early childhood centers' staff recruitment requirements in Turkey. While teachers with a high school degree can be recruited by private schools, four-year university degree is a requirement for public schools. On the other hand teachers without a university degree can still work in public schools as paid personnel. Therefore, further studies are needed in order to better explore burnout phenomenon of teachers.

The present study's findings demonstrate a similar pattern for early childhood teachers' burnout scores in terms of monthly income. It is found that teachers who have the lowest monthly income experience lower degrees of emotional exhaustion than teachers with higher levels of monthly income. Likewise, their experience of depersonalization (teachers with a monthly income of 0-1499 TL) is lower than teachers with the income level of YTL 2500-3999. In accordance with the discussion about educational level, the relationship between monthly income and teacher burnout has not been examined well enough in Turkish literature in order to understand and explain the burnout experience for early childhood education teachers. Monthly income and educational level are highly context specific, yet there is a strong need for studies exploring these variables. Prior studies (Doğan & ErdillerYatmaz, 2018; Erdiller & Doğan, 2015) conducted in Turkey on teacher burnout, teacher stress and teacher identity displayed similar results. It is found that the higher the income, the higher the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of Turkish early childhood teachers. It was also found that teachers with the lowest income, experience less personal and professional stress compared to teachers with higher income levels. Likewise, these teachers also experience less problems related to student behaviors and motivation as oppose to teachers with higher income (Erdiller & Doğan, 2015). In terms of teacher identity, Doğan & Erdiller-Yatmaz (2018) suggest that high school graduates (i.e. teachers with lowest level of education and most likely to have the lowest income) have the highest scores, followed by teachers with an associate degree and teachers with bachelor degree or graduate degrees (i.e. highest levels of education) respectively.

The present study was conducted with a sample gathered from seven geographical regions of Turkey and results demonstrate that for the scores of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization there

were significant differences among the geographical regions. Teachers from Southeastern Anatolia Region had significantly lower scores of emotional exhaustion than the teachers from Marmara and Eastern Anatolia Regions. Teachers from Aegean Region had lower exhaustion scores than teachers from Eastern Anatolia Region. In terms of depersonalization, teachers from Marmara Region had significantly higher scores than teachers from Aegean, Black Sea and Southeastern Regions. Finally, in terms of personal achievement teachers from Central Anatolia and Eastern Anatolia Regions had lower scores than teachers from Aegean and Mediterranean Regions. There isn't any research study to support or to explain these difference in Turkey, but these significant differences among the regions point out that there is a need for in-depth and qualitative analysis of the burnout phenomenon in Turkey.

The present study also suggests that teachers who graduated from a child development and education department experience lower emotional exhaustion than teachers who graduated from other departments. The sample size of teachers who do not have a children development and education background is small (64 out of 869 teachers), however, the difference is found to be statistically significant and requires additional examination.

The age group of children that teachers work with makes a difference for teachers' depersonalization scores. Teachers working with children under three years old experience lower depersonalization than the teachers working with children 4 and 5 years old. Again none of studies exploring early childhood education teachers' burnout had demonstrated a similar finding, however, Girgin (2010) and Cemaloğlu & Erdemoğlu (2007) found that grade level is a significant correlator of burnout for teachers. Cemaloğlu & Erdemoğlu (2007) suggest that teachers who are teaching at the elementary level experience higher level of depersonalization compared to secondary education teachers. Considering early childhood education context in Turkey, we can say that 4 & 5 year olds' class size is bigger than the other age groups and most of these classrooms are located in elementary schools. Class size is a significant variable to explain burnout. Cemaloğlu & Erdemoğlu (2007)'s study demonstrated that teachers who are working in classrooms with 41 students or more experience higher emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low personal achievement.

Current position at work creates a difference for

teachers' experiences of burnout. Findings suggest that covenanted teachers have significantly lower levels emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than managers and teachers, and teachers have significantly lower scores than managers. This finding is consistent with the findings of educational level and monthly income. Teachers who earn the lowest wage in public schools generally do not have permanent status and are paid personnel or covenanted teachers. Similarly, teachers who earn the lowest wage in private schools are generally high school graduates. Therefore, as teachers who earn the lowest wage and have the lowest level of education are the ones who are generally recruited as covenanted teachers, the burnout scores of these teachers are lower than tenured teachers and managers.

The present study did not find any significant difference regarding teachers' active teaching experience with children and their burnout level, however a prior study (Doğan & Erdiller-Yatmaz, 2018) conducted on teacher identity of early childhood education teachers found that teachers who are currently working with children had higher scores in valence and attractiveness and solidarity subscales, meaning that they find their profession more valuable and attractive and are more apt to share a common face with their colleagues. Therefore, in line with these findings, the burnout scores of the teachers were thought to differ according to this variable.

Finally, as research (ex. Talmor, Shunit & Feigin, 2005; Özdemir, 2006; Yavuz & Özgür, 2016) worldwide and in Turkey provides evidence, the present study demonstrates that teachers who are working with children with special needs experience higher levels of depersonalization and lower levels of personal achievement.

The purposes of the study were to explore the individual and contextual variables that have a relationship with burnout and to explain burnout phenomenon for early childhood education teachers in Turkey with respect to Turkish burnout literature. As national and international research studies demonstrate burnout is a universal phenomenon for almost all professions, but yet is also context-related and context-specific. Gender, marital status, being a parent, educational level, educational background, monthly income, geographical region, current position at work, age group of children and having children with special needs in the classroom were found to be the individual and contextual variables that are related with teacher burnout. While some of

these findings are consistent with studies conducted in Turkey, some are contradictory. Moreover, the review of literature for burnout studies revealed that almost all the studies exploring burnout follows a quantitative research methodology. Therefore, further investigation through different research designs is needed. Burnout is a vital determinant of teacher performance and student outcomes and is a major problem for the holistic educational system of a country. Educational system of a country is composed of teachers and managers as well as students and opportunities for teachers' professional development, administrative characteristics in a school setting, work and career demands, teachers' emotional and professional satisfaction, teachers' stress, teacher identity, interaction among school personnel, professional support and ways to maintain teacher resiliency must also be considered as urgent issues that needs special and continuous attention in Turkey. Burnout is one of few variables that have a close and direct relationship with all these phenomena and therefore sets a solid ground for improving educational system both for students and teachers.

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