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## Job Satisfaction and Burnout Levels of Early Childhood Teachers in the U.S. and Turkey\*

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### Abstract

The present comparative study has investigated whether the fact that EC teachers in the U.S. and Turkey do the same job in different conditions exerts a positive and/or negative influence on their state of job satisfaction and burnout. The study was structured within correlational survey methodology. Participants were EC teachers recruited from the province of Konya in Turkey and Buffalo in New York State. When looked at job satisfaction and burnout levels of the participants in the U.S. and Turkey, results point to a significant difference in the mental burnout and internal satisfaction sub-dimensions in favor of the participants in Turkey. When job satisfaction and burnout levels were examined according to the number of years of occupational seniority, emotional burnout score averages, total burnout scores and external satisfaction score averages of the participants in Turkey were found to be higher than the participants in the U.S.

**Key words:** Job satisfaction level, Burnout level, Early childhood teachers, Children

### Introduction

The concept of burnout first appeared in the literature in 1974 with an article written by Freudenberger. Freudenberger (1974) defined “burnout” as failure, wearing out, loss of energy and motivation or a type of exhaustion that results from the unsatisfiable needs on internal resources of an individual. Maslach & Jackson (1981) defined burnout as fatigue, physical exhaustion, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, a syndrome with negative attitudes toward life and people. According to the burnout model of Pines & Aranson, burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion by acute exposure to emotional situations. Burnouts are different in types which lead to different symptoms. While chronic tiredness and loss of energy are the symptoms of physical burnout; feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, being trapped, and disappointment are symptoms of emotional burnout. On the other hand, individual’s negative attitudes toward people and life may point to a mental burnout (Pines & Aranson, 1988). Research also underscores the importance of lack of social support from principal, colleagues, and family on teachers’ burnout status (Carlson and Thompson, 1995; Greenglass, Burke & Konarski, 1998; Greenglass, Burke & Fiksenbaum, 2001).

Teachers are expected to lead teaching/learning process and manage classroom while working to meet the needs of students, families and school officials without not necessarily having adequate support from principal and colleagues (Smylie, 1999). Consequences of burnout include neglecting work, increase in thoughts of quitting the job, decrease in quality of the work produced, attempting to extend the off-days through medical reports, breakdown in human relations at and outside work, miscommunication, detachment from partner and family

\* This study was presented as an oral presentation at Eurasian Educational Research Congress.

members, lack of job satisfaction, tendency to get sick without any cause, and increase in work accidents (Altay, 2007). The extent to which an individual enjoys life is closely related to her/his job satisfaction (Telman & Ünsal, 2004). Many definitions exist as to what job satisfaction actually refers to. The most common definition, broadly, is the employee’s satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their jobs (Akıncı, 2002). The occupation satisfaction is a work-oriented attitude that results from a mental evaluation of work-related elements (Alparslan, 2016). At the same time, dissatisfaction with job is related to voluntary quitting of the job, coming

late to work or not showing up, and behavioral problems related to work (Çarıkçı & Oksay, 2004). Relevant literature includes studies that have addressed job satisfaction and burnout together. Musal, Elçi & Ergin (1995) reported that job satisfaction is an important factor that affects burnout. Research has investigated how job satisfaction is influenced by not only personal demographics including age, sex and educational level, but also organizational and environmental factors such as the job content, wage, management policy and working conditions. When we look at the importance of occupation satisfaction for the individual, it is thought that the individual who is satisfied with the job will be happy and this happiness will have important positive results both for the employee and the business. The decrease in job satisfaction causes alienation of the person to his/her job. As a result, the employee is reluctant, inconvenient, stressful and irrelevant to his work (Altınok, 2018). The changing world order, globalization, industrialization and increase in production parallel with the consumption have led to the emergence of many small and big sectors, organizations and workplaces. In order to increase the efficiency of the work, many studies have been carried out about those who work in these areas. Teachers' occupation satisfaction is a part of these studies (Ari, 2015). That the teachers are in interaction with students all day with the endeavor to meet their learning needs causes stress and pressure on teachers. Such factors as inability to improve oneself in knowledge, skills and professional competence and the lack of satisfaction in job-related needs are likely to diminish teachers' motivation. Such negative conditions incrementally lead to job dissatisfaction and burnout (Akçamete et al., 2001).

Girgin (1995) emphasized that teachers with excessive burnout experienced a lower level of satisfaction with their jobs, work environment conditions were associated more with job satisfaction than burnout. The authors reported that teachers experienced dissatisfaction with their jobs and stress increased the level of burnout. Teaching is a profession that requires effort, tolerance, constant self-renewal of the job, as well as deep knowledge of the field and the profession. Therefore, teaching is among the groups of professions that are most susceptible to the risk of burnout (Girgin & Baysal, 2005). Factors such as crowded classes, low salaries, lack of opportunities for self-development and limited professional support with respect to educational problems, increase the likelihood for teachers to experience burnout (Akçamete et al., 2001). It is observed that the researches which examine the teachers' occupation satisfaction mostly involve primary and branch teachers. However, preschool education plays a preparatory role for the next education levels. The fact that pre-school education teachers are satisfied with their occupation is also very important for the group of students they serve. It is known that the interaction between pre-school teachers and students may affect the whole life of the child (Şahin & Dursun, 2009). The burnout of teachers leads to behavioral consequences such as a decrease in tolerance to in-class problems, the inability to prepare adequately for the lesson, low job performance, negative attitudes towards work, absenteeism, and willingness to quit. In relation to burnout, physical and mental health deteriorates and decreases the quality of life (Aydemir et al., 2015). Farber & Wechsler (1991) reported that all American teachers experienced burnout at any time in their profession at a rate of 5 to 20%. One-third of all teachers in the U.S. leave the profession by the end of their fifth year (Pedersen, 1998). The reasons that lay behind this phenomenon include lack of interest among students, lack of professional and emotional support from colleagues and principals, low salaries, lack of cooperation with children's parents, low social status, and uncertainty in classroom roles. In addition, such challenges are also reported as the high number of children in classes and of weekly lessons; the expectation of parents from teachers to educate and socialize their children without taking into consideration their potentials or without much interest in family involvement in early education; the need for teachers to spend additional time with children with special needs and the lack of adequate time to meet their needs. Furthermore, current challenges also include that teaching utilizes developmental learning plans arranged by others; shortcomings pertaining to implementation of innovative methods in the education system; unsuitable working conditions; the profession of early childhood education (ECE) being preferred by women to a higher extent and while only limited number of male colleagues exist; socially isolated working conditions with colleagues; and lack of pedagogical competence to meet differences among children in classrooms (language, cultural assets, race, etc.).

In conjunction with such challenges, Labaree (1994) specified that teacher training schools remained academically and pedagogically insufficient in delivering the necessary training. Kök et al., (2007) conducted a study on the problems experienced by preschool teachers in Turkey where almost all teachers expressed that the classrooms were not compatible with the what the Ministry of Education expects of preschool education or with children's needs; the physical equipment in classrooms was not adequate; tools and materials were outdated and insufficient; and their school had no or inadequate landscaping or playground for children to foster their play skills and physical development. Teachers also stated that they were faced with obstacles put forth by school administration in general planning at school or in-class activity planning; the curricula were not adequate; they did not feel knowledgeable or competent enough to prepare new teaching/learning activities; and no support person in their respective schools existed so as to provide guidance in such regards. The majority of teachers reported that they felt inadequate in skills related to guiding children's behavior, were not able to intervene effectively in behavioral challenges, had problems in efficient time management, and did not have the

professional skills to effectively respond to these matters. When preschool education system of Turkey and the U.S. are compared, notable differences are observed, which may lead to different levels of job satisfaction and burnout among teachers in respective countries. Demir & Arı (2013) examined the challenges encountered by teachers in their study and described the most important problems for teachers in Turkey as low income level, diminished job status in the society, and frequent legislation changes on education.

The Turkish education system has a centralized structure, and its central administration rests with the Ministry of National Education. All arrangements pertaining to the Turkish education system are prepared and implemented around the country by the Ministry. On the other hand, the American education system is mostly decentralized and subject to variations depending on local administrations. Every state has the right and responsibility to organize and operate its own education system in line with a certain guiding framework (Güçlü & Bayrakçı, 2004; Akgün & Şimşek, 2011). In the U.S., preschool education is generally delivered at kindergartens affiliated with public schools. Children at the ages of 4 and 5 are admitted to preschools and the education may continue up to 2 years (Demirel, 2000). While some institutions focus on “care” as part of “early childhood education and care” and others focus on “education”, certain schools offer a wide range of EC services by paying attention to both aspects (Kamerman & Gatenio-Gabel, 2007). In Turkey, there are kindergartens that deliver education to children between 37 and 66 months; nursery classes opened under formal and informal education institutions serving children between 48 and 66 months; and practical classes under vocational and technical education institutions that apply programs pertaining to preschool education in order to provide service to children between 37 and 66 months (MEB, 2012). According to the results of the study conducted by Başturan and Görgü (2020) it was found that the number of children in the classrooms of preschool teachers working in public schools is high, they do not have enough time to take a break during the day, the materials to be used in the classroom are insufficient, and the problems experienced with the parents of children are higher compared with the teachers working in private schools. Many reasons such as preschool teachers continue long-term education, children are in constant contact with their parents, teachers maintain an educational process to support all areas of development of children, and there are a high number of children in the classroom lead preschool teachers to work intensively (Deniz Kan, 2008). As a result of this situation, it is thought that pre-school teachers might experience burnout after a while.

While the number of school hours per week is strictly defined in the Turkish education system, it demonstrates state-specific variations in the U.S. preschool education system. ECE is not mandatory in Turkey or in the U.S.; however, the U.S. indicates a higher rate of EC schooling. Obvious from these facts across two counties, preschool teachers in Turkey and in the U.S. fulfill their duties in line with common objectives, yet under different conditions. In light of this body of information, the present study aims to comparatively examine job satisfaction and burnout levels among preschool teachers in the U.S. and Turkey.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

The study was conducted with preschool teachers working at the provincial center of Konya in Turkey and in Buffalo, New York. 69 teachers working in Turkey (68.3%) and 32 teachers working in the U.S. (31.7%) participated in the study. 41% of the teachers (40.6%) had 11-15 children in their classes (U.S./15-Turkey/26), whereas 60 teachers (59.4%) had 16-20 children in their classes (U.S./17-Turkey/43). 39 teachers (38.6%) had experience working as a preschool teacher for 1 year or less (U.S./2-Turkey/37), 62 (61.4%) had 2 to 5 years of experience (U.S./30-Turkey/32).

### **Instruments and Data Collection**

Teacher demographic forms that included information such as gender, age, years of employment, work experience and number of children taught in class, were collected at the beginning of the study across both countries. Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale (Weiss et al., 1967) was used to examine teachers' job satisfaction. Turkish adaptation of the scale was conducted by Baycan in 1985. Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale is a 5-point Likert scale scored at 1 to 5. The scale is scored 1 point for Not Satisfied; 2 points for Somewhat Satisfied; 3 points for I Don't Know; 4 points for Satisfied; and 5 points for Very Satisfied. The scale is composed of 20 items that aim to identify internal, external and general satisfaction level.

Maslach Burnout Inventory (Pines & Aronson, 1988) was used to examine burnout. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was undertaken by Çapri in 2006. Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as  $\alpha=0.93$ . Test-retest reliability coefficient was found to be 0.85. The burnout scale is a 7-point Likert scale of twenty-one items. The items on the scale are scored at 1 “never” to 7 “always”. With the highest

and lowest available scores being "7" and "1" respectively, the scale indicates a low level of burnout with a low score and a high level of burnout with a high score. The scale has three components with various individual items. Accordingly, seven items on the scale refer to (1) emotional burnout; seven items to (2) mental burnout; and seven items to (3) physical burnout. The scores obtained from the scale are also used to classify the participants into burnout groups. Those that scored 3 and lower are classified as group 1; 3-4 as group 2; 4-5 as group 3; and higher than 5 as group 4. Group 1 is interpreted to indicate that there is no burnout; group 2 that there is a distress signal for burnout; group 3 that the participant is in a burnout state; and group 4 that the participant is in a burnout state that requires support or intervention.

**Data Analysis**

Kolmogorov-Smirnov (k-s) test was used to establish whether the data were compatible with the normal distribution. It showed that the average job satisfaction and burnout scores of teachers working in the U.S. and Turkey did not demonstrate a normal distribution. Because the data did not indicate a normal distribution, job satisfaction and burnout levels of preschool teachers were analyzed with the Mann-Whitney U test for two unrelated samples from amongst non-parametric statistics, as in line with respective countries, the number of children in classes, weekly work hours and years of professional seniority. Thus, the dependent variables in the study were (1) job satisfaction and (2) burnout levels, while the independent variables were (1) number of children taught per class, (2) weekly work hours, (3) number of years of experience in the field; that is, professional seniority (Büyükoztürk, 2012).

**Results and Discussion**

Results of the analyses with regards to job satisfaction and burnout levels of the preschool teachers in the U.S. and Turkey are given below. The analyses first present job satisfaction and burnout levels on various domains of both constructs comparatively across both countries; then based on the number of children taught per class, weekly work hours, and the years of teaching experience in ECE field.

Table 1<sup>1</sup>: Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test on Job Satisfaction and Burnout Levels among Preschool Teachers in the U.S. and in Turkey

	Countries	n	$\bar{X}$	S	Line Average	Line Total	U	P
Emotional Burnout	Turkey	69	15.20	5.44	48.28	3331.50	916.50	.170
	U.S.	32	17.78	6.95	56.86	1819.50		
Mental Burnout	Turkey	69	24.68	3.20	56.49	3898.00	725.00	.005
	U.S.	32	23.09	3.55	39.16	1253.00		
Physical Burnout	Turkey	69	21.68	5.05	47.84	3205.50	927.50	.278
	U.S.	32	23.15	5.25	54.52	1744.50		
Burnout Total	Turkey	69	61.44	11.43	49.42	3311.00	1033.00	.770
	U.S.	32	64.03	13.87	51.22	1639.00		
Internal Satisfaction	Turkey	69	50.18	8.59	55.08	3800.50	822.50	.040
	U.S.	32	46.40	7.50	42.20	1350.50		
External Satisfaction	Turkey	69	27.75	5.08	51.41	3547.00	1076.00	.838
	U.S.	32	27.00	6.86	50.13	1604.00		
Job Satisfaction Total	Turkey	69	77.94	11.86	53.54	3694.50	928.50	.200
	U.S.	32	73.40	13.92	45.52	1456.50		

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the tables, N refers to sample size;  $\bar{X}$  refers to sample mean; S refers to standard deviation; U refers to Mann-Whitney U Test value; and P refers to p-value.

A review of the Mann-Whitney U Test results pertaining to job satisfaction and burnout levels among preschool teachers in the U.S. and in Turkey shows a significant difference (p<.05) in favor of teachers in Turkey in mental burnout and internal satisfaction sub-dimensions. The average of preschool teachers working in Turkey in mental burnout ( $\bar{X}$ =24.68) was higher than the average of preschool teachers working in the U.S. in mental burnout ( $\bar{X}$ =23.09). Furthermore, the internal satisfaction averages of teachers working in Turkey

( $\bar{X}$ =50.18) was found to be higher than the averages of teachers working in the U.S. ( $\bar{X}$ =46.40). The results of the analyses presented above need to be interpreted cautiously based on the contextual variables in ECE settings across both countries. State preschool classrooms in Turkey are more crowded and have lower ratio for the number of teachers per class than those in the U.S. (Göl-Güven, 2009). In addition, the number of children in preschool classrooms of Turkey is on the rise today in parallel with population increase, but the number of in-service teachers remains insufficient in the face of such increases (Işıklar, 2002). The insufficient number of schools in Turkey inadvertently results in crowded classes, which, in turn, leads to new issues regarding the quality of education provided to children in these classrooms (Öğülmüş & Özdemir, 1995). Kandır (1991) reported that the biggest challenge encountered by preschool teachers in Turkey at the stage of the preparation and implementation of developmental plans for children and teaching/learning activities was the excessively high number of children and the inadequacy of tools, equipment and in-service professional support to accommodate the needs of these children.

The challenges of teachers in Turkey are listed, in the following order of importance, as economic reasons, societal status, constant changes in curricula, increasing number of children per classroom and developmentally insensitive and unsupportive classroom environment, whereas the challenges in the U.S., in order of importance, are student-related problems and guiding challenging behaviors, low level of job satisfaction, working conditions, lack of respect for the profession and remuneration (Demir & Arı, 2013; Pedersen, 1998). Even though studies conducted in Turkey point out to economic reasons as the primary challenge for teachers, studies have also indicated no significant difference between economic status and job satisfaction of preschool teachers (Şahin & Dursun, 2009; Koruklu et al., 2013). In addition, teachers in the U.S. have been reported to experience serious challenges in terms of student-related problems, guiding challenging behaviors, which, in turn, results in dissatisfaction with the job. Relatively more heterogenous student population in the U.S. classrooms in terms of language, religion, race, and culture as well as struggles in social and personal lifestyles may be considered to have led to internal job dissatisfaction among preschool teachers. Based on the results, it is safe to state that the challenges expressed by the teachers in Turkey do not have a significantly negative effect on their levels of job satisfaction. Yet, they experience mental burnout due to such factors as constant changes in curricula, excessively high number of children per classroom, unsuitable physical conditions, and inadequate professional support.

Table 2: Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test on Job Satisfaction and Burnout Levels According to Number of Children Taught Per Classroom

Country	Sub-Dimensions	No of		n	$\bar{X}$	S	Line Average	Line Total	U	P
		Children	Per Class							
Turkey	Emotional Burnout	11-15	26	15.46	4.48	36.75	955.50	513.50	.572	
		16-20	43	15.04	5.99	33.94	1459.50			
	Mental Burnout	11-15	26	24.50	2.38	34.10	886.50	535.50	.769	
		16-20	43	24.79	3.62	35.55	1528.50			
	Physical Burnout	11-15	26	21.57	4.24	35.04	911.00	506.00	.728	
		16-20	43	21.75	5.56	33.34	1367.00			
	Burnout Total	11-15	26	61.53	9.32	35.56	924.50	492.50	.602	
		16-20	43	61.39	12.70	33.01	1353.50			
	Satisfaction	Internal	11-15	26	50.73	10.35	34.15	888.00	537.00	.785
			16-20	43	49.86	7.44	35.51	1527.00		
		External	11-15	26	26.92	4.82	31.81	827.00	476.00	.303

	Satisfaction	16-20	43	28.25	5.22	36.93	1588.00		
	Job Satisfaction	11-15	26	77.65	13.07	32.87	854.50		
	Total	16-20	43	78.11	11.23	36.29	1560.50	503.50	.491
U.S.	Emotional	11-15	15	14.20	3.60	11.93	179.00		
	Burnout	16-20	17	20.94	7.71	20.53	349.00	6.73	.009
	Mental	11-15	15	22.46	2.16	15.00	225.00		
	Burnout	16-20	17	23.64	4.42	17.82	303.00	.738	.411
	Physical	11-15	15	20.86	3.48	12.50	187.50		
	Burnout	16-20	17	25.17	5.80	20.03	340.50	5.17	.022
	Burnout Total	11-15	15	57.53	6.82	12.53	188.00		
		16-20	17	69.76	16.04	20.00	340.00	5.06	.024
	Internal	11-15	15	47.66	5.24	17.53	263.00		
	Satisfaction	16-20	17	45.29	9.06	15.59	265.00	.344	.576
	External	11-15	15	28.66	6.43	18.77	281.50		
	Satisfaction	16-20	17	25.52	7.08	14.50	246.50	1.65	.202
Job Satisfaction	11-15	15	76.33	11.56	18.10	271.50			
Total	16-20	17	70.82	15.60	15.08	256.50	.823	.370	

Table 2 indicates that no significant difference has been identified in job satisfaction and burnout levels among preschool teachers working in Turkey when reviewed by the number of children taught per class, whereas a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) has been observed among preschool teachers working in the U.S. in favor of those teaching an average of 16-20 students in their classes in terms of emotional burnout ( $\bar{X}=20.94$ ), physical burnout ( $\bar{X}=25.17$ ) and total burnout ( $\bar{X}=69.76$ ). According to Erdiller Yatmaz and Doğan (2019), burnout has an important place in the professional performances of preschool teachers and accordingly, in the situations of children. Maraşlı (2005) determined that teachers experienced weariness, insecurity, unhappiness and, in relation to such feelings, burnout due to the excessive number of children at schools in the face of low number of teachers. Other studies that point out to the negative effects of overcrowded classes include diminished level of professional motivation, added challenges to guiding children's challenging behaviors. Thus, inability to effectively address classroom management needs through effective guidance strategies due to crowd of classrooms led to serious problems with respect to social interaction and interpersonal communication in classrooms. Such factors have been shown to exert negative influence on teacher-children relations and establishing safe attachment, rendered teaching/learning activities dull and ineffective, caused a waste of time, reduced the level of active and dialogic participation among children, had a negative effect on children's academic attainment, and consequently led the teachers to feel stressed out (Alaçam et al., 2013; Çınar et al., 2004; Yaman, 2010). Although previous studies from Turkey identified negative results with respect to number of children in classrooms, the present study failed to establish a significant difference in this regard. This pattern might stem from the fact that teachers regard classes of 16-20 children the norm under current conditions in Turkey; that they implement large-group activities rather than individual or small-group activities with children; and that they do not experience a significant level of burnout as a result of the relatively more homogenous classrooms that exhibit lower level of diversity in the children/parent population. Howes et al., (1995) reported that lower teacher-child ratios in institutions led to lower levels of anxiety and aggressive behaviors when compared to higher ratios. The grounds for the exacerbation of burnout levels in direct proportion with the number of children in the U.S. might pertain to the fact that these teachers focus more on small-group and

individual activities, need more time and effort to attend to children's needs due to the high diversity in the child/parent population. Such contextual conditions may consequently lead to teacher burnout.

Table 3: Results of the Mann-Whitney U test on Job Satisfaction and Burnout Levels According to Weekly Work Hours

Country	Sub Dimensions	Weekly Hours of Work	n	$\bar{X}$	S	Line Average	Line Total	U	P
Turkey	Emotional Burnout	1-25 hours	13	14.57	5.50	32.37	1812.50	216.50	.023
		26-50 hours	56	17.92	4.34	46.35	602.50		
	Mental Burnout	1-25 hours	13	25.00	4.72	33.08	430.00	339.00	.699
		26-50 hours	56	24.60	2.78	35.45	1985.00		
	Physical Burnout	1-25 hours	13	21.09	5.10	31.41	1696.00	211.00	.026
		26-50 hours	56	24.15	4.20	44.77	582.00		
	Burnout Total	1-25 hours	13	60.07	11.08	31.66	1709.50	224.50	.045
		26-50 hours	56	67.09	11.19	43.73	568.50		
	Internal Satisfaction	1-25 hours	13	49.84	5.01	33.50	435.50	344.50	.764
		26-50 hours	56	50.26	9.26	35.35	1979.50		
	External Satisfaction	1-25 hours	13	26.69	4.83	30.12	391.50	300.50	.329
		26-50 hours	56	28.00	5.15	36.13	2023.50		
Job Satisfaction Total	1-25 hours	13	76.53	7.77	31.88	414.50	323.50	.534	
	26-50 hours	56	78.26	12.6	35.72	2000.50			
U.S.	Emotional Burnout	1-25 hours	9	15.77	3.92	15.06	135.50	90.50	.592
		26-50 hours	23	18.56	7.75	17.07	392.50		
	Mental Burnout	1-25 hours	9	22.44	2.78	14.11	127.00	82.00	.386
		26-50 hours	23	23.34	3.83	17.43	401.00		
	Physical Burnout	1-25 hours	9	21.33	2.44	14.61	131.50	86.50	.483
		26-50 hours	23	23.86	5.90	17.24	396.50		
	Burnout Total	1-25 hours	9	59.55	5.02	15.72	141.50	96.50	.773
		26-50 hours	23	65.78	15.82	16.80	386.50		
	Internal Satisfaction	1-25 hours	9	45.88	6.39	14.11	127.00	82.00	.386
		26-50 hours	23	46.60	8.02	17.43	401.00		
	External Satisfaction	1-25 hours	9	24.77	7.51	13.72	123.50	78.50	.301
		26-50 hours	23	27.86	6.55	17.59	404.50		
Job Satisfaction Total	1-25 hours	9	70.66	13.70	13.50	121.50	76.50	.263	
	26-50 hours	23	74.47	14.16	17.67	406.50			

A review of the job satisfaction and burnout levels among preschool teachers in the U.S. and in Turkey according to their weekly hours of work, preschool teachers who work between 26 and 50 hours per week in Turkey were observed to indicate significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) in terms of their average total scores in emotional ( $\bar{X}=17.92$ ) physical ( $\bar{X}=24.15$ ) and total burnout ( $\bar{X}=67.09$ ). On the other hand, no significant ( $p > .05$ ) difference was observed with regards to job satisfaction and burnout levels of preschool teachers working in the U.S. according to their weekly hours of work. Gökçebakan & Özer (1999) determined that the hours of work did not create an additional effect on the levels of burnout among teachers, while Tuğrul & Çelik (2002) identified an association between the weekly work hours of preschool teachers and their burnout levels in various corresponding domains. Pillay et al., (2005), on the other hand, specified that teachers working full time experience significantly higher levels of burnout when compared to teachers working part time. Preschool education curricula exhibit differences from those implemented at formal schooling levels in terms of teaching/learning processes, child and teacher characteristics and relations between the school and families (Başal, 2005). The results showing that the teachers in Turkey experience burnout in direct proportion with increases in the number of working hours may result from such grounds as the management of the class by a single teacher, lack or inadequacy of supportive personnel, long hours of work without any breaks, heavy workload and stress.

Table 4: Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test on Job Satisfaction and Burnout Levels According to Years of Teaching Experience

Country	Sub-Dimensions	Years of Teaching Experience	n	$\bar{X}$	S	Line Average	Line Total	U	P
Turkey	Emotional Burnout	1 year or less	40	13.24	5.42	27.84	807.50	372.50	.001
		2-5 years	29	16.62	5.05	40.19	1607.50		
	Mental Burnout	1 year or less	40	24.85	3.33	35.33	1413.00	567.00	.873
		2-5 years	29	24.44	3.05	34.55	1002.00		
	Physical Burnout	1 year or less	40	22.52	4.82	37.49	1424.50	418.50	.093
		2-5 years	29	20.58	5.22	29.43	853.50		
Burnout Total	1 year or less	40	58.27	11.79	27.91	809.50	374.50	.025	
	2-5 years	29	63.86	10.67	38.64	1468.50			
Internal Satisfaction	1 year or less	40	49.02	7.65	33.08	1323.00	503.00	.349	
	2-5 years	29	51.79	9.65	37.66	1092.00			
External Satisfaction	1 year or less	40	26.65	5.49	30.98	1239.00	419.00	.050	
	2-5 years	29	29.13	4.38	40.55	1176.00			
Job Satisfaction Total	1 year or less	40	75.77	11.13	31.68	1267.00	447.00	.105	
	2-5 years	29	80.93	12.38	39.59	1148.00			
U.S.	Emotional	1 year or less	15	19.60	8.07	18.13	272.00	103.00	.370

Burnout	2-5 years	17	16.17	5.53	15.06	256.00		
Mental	1 year or less	15	23.73	4.36	17.37	260.50	114.50	.628
Burnout	2-5 years	17	22.52	2.64	15.74	267.50		
Physical	1 year or less	15	23.60	6.27	16.30	244.50	124.50	.911
Burnout	2-5 years	17	22.76	4.32	16.68	283.50		
Burnout Total	1 year or less	15	66.93	17.50	17.33	260.00	115.00	.655
	2-5 years	17	61.47	9.48	15.76	268.00		
Internal	1 year or less	15	45.60	9.40	16.23	243.50	123.50	.882
Satisfaction	2-5 years	17	47.11	5.52	16.74	284.50		
External	1 year or less	15	26.66	7.44	16.13	242.00	122.00	.852
Satisfaction	2-5 years	17	27.29	6.52	16.82	286.00		
Job Satisfaction Total	1 year or less	15	72.26	16.41	16.20	243.00	123.00	.882
	2-5 years	17	74.41	11.73	16.76	285.00		

When job satisfaction and burnout levels of preschool teachers working in the U.S. and in Turkey are compared according to their years of teaching experience (i.e., professional seniority), preschool teachers in Turkey demonstrate higher burnout averages ( $\bar{X}=16.62$ ), burnout total scores ( $\bar{X}=63.86$ ) and external satisfaction averages ( $\bar{X}=29.13$ ) than those of preschool teachers working in the U.S. Studies carried out in the U.S. determined that half of the teachers who left the profession within their first seven years did so due to stress and burnout (Vaidero, 2002; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Studies from Turkey identified higher burnout levels among senior teachers (Cemaloğlu & Erdemoğlu Şahin, 2007; Çağlar, 2011), whereas others failed to establish a significant correlation between the number of years of teaching experience (i.e., professional seniority) and burnout levels of teachers (Kayabaşı, 2008; Başol & Altay, 2009; Yıldız & Akçay Uzum, 2018). Despite the studies that indicate a significant correlation between the professional seniority and job satisfaction of preschool teachers (e.g., Erdönmez-Bayrak, 2004; Altınkılıç, 2008; Tekerci, 2008), there are also studies that have shown no significant correlation (e.g., Öztürk & Deniz, 2008; Şahin & Dursun, 2009; Teltik, 2009). Interns/new teachers in their first year in the profession were observed not to experience burnout, whereas teachers in their first five years in the profession do experience burnout. This finding indicates that teachers experience burnout in response to the problems they encounter after spending a few years into their profession. However, the findings also show that such teachers also derive external satisfaction from the job they are undertaking. Öztürk & Özdemir (2003) expressed that job satisfaction levels were lower in the first years in the profession for young and inexperienced employees, but this level started to rise as the years went by. Accordingly, it can be considered that teachers formulate more realistic expectations/goals regarding their jobs and turn to be more successful at their jobs thanks to the experience accumulated in time in direct proportion with their years in the profession. Aktan Kerem & Cömert (2005) examined the challenges of preschool education in Turkey and identified the most important challenges for teachers to be the physical environment, self-realization and self-renewal, curricula, working with parents. The least important challenges were related to administrative issues, class management, and accountability issues for children's attainment for the goals established. Tezel-Şahin et al., (1997) emphasized that teachers could not find the time and possibility to keep abreast of new resources, and

did not have any facilities to explore their occupational self and update their relevant skills, as they could not take part in professional support opportunities such as conferences and seminars. Taken together, teachers seem to experience burnout due to the aforementioned challenges. As a result of the study conducted by Yıldırım (2016) it was found that the burnout levels of preschool teachers who do their jobs willingly are higher.

The long working hours of preschool teachers, the small age group of children in the classroom, the constant and intense communication process between the teacher, the parent and the management during the education process, supporting the development of children during the day and the energy spent to increase the interest of the children in the activities performed by the teachers, coupled with different factors, can have negative consequences.

## Conclusions

This study examined job satisfaction and burnout levels among preschool teachers in the U.S. and in Turkey. The results showed a significant difference in favor of teachers from Turkey in sub-dimensions pertaining to mental burnout and internal satisfaction. No significant difference was found in job satisfaction and burnout levels among teachers from Turkey when examined by the number of children per class. However, a significant difference was found among teachers from the U.S. in favor of those teaching 16-20 children on average in their classes in emotional burnout, physical burnout, and general total in burnout. When examined according to weekly work hours, significant differences were found in emotional, physical and general burnout levels for those teachers who worked between 26 to 50 hours per week in Turkey. Lastly, it was found that when job satisfaction and burnout was examined by their years of professional seniority, preschool teachers in Turkey were found to demonstrate higher burnout averages, burnout total scores, and external satisfaction than those teachers working in the U.S.

## Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, we suggest several implications. Teachers from Turkey seem to suffer from mental burnout more than those from the U.S. Given this finding, further research is needed that examines the factors negatively affecting mental burnout levels of teachers working in Turkey so that the necessary precautions are taken accordingly. Likewise, an in-depth investigation is needed on the factors and sources of problems that affect the burnout levels experienced by teachers working in Turkey who are in their first years of the profession. Further research should study other relevant variables at a larger scale such as teacher identity, relations with colleagues and administrators, issues related to curriculum, and working with families, all of which might have an effect on teachers' job satisfaction and burnout. Such studies have the potential to inform teacher educators, administrators and policy makers towards efforts to eradicate or minimize the risk factors that account for burnout and diminished job satisfaction among preschool teachers.

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