# A STUDY OF THE FACTORS LEADING ENGLISH TEACHERS TO BURNOUT

# İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİ TÜKENMİŞLİĞE SÜRÜKLEYEN ETMENLER ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper reports a research study carried out on teacher burnout with a group of English instructors (N=44) in order to identify the major factor(s) leading instructors to burnout at various levels. A survey research model was first applied to find out the instructors (N=37) with a burnout problem and categorize them at different levels of teacher burnout. The next step of the research was an interview carried out with 12 instructors who were selected randomly from the four different levels of burnout. The results show that the instructors from the different levels unanimously believe that the major factor of their burnout is the administrative applications in their institution, which was coded as a micro variable. It was also revealed that the instructors with a high level of burnout displayed 'Alienation to professional identity' behavior.

**Key Words:** english instructors, burnout, management, alienation

**ÖZET:** Bu makale bir grup İngilizce okutmanlarını (N=44) farklı seviyelerde tükenmişliğe iten ana faktörleri belirlemek için öğretmen tükenmişliği üzerine gerçekleştirilen bir çalışmayı rapor etmektedir. Çeşitli seviyelerde tükenmişlik belirtisi gösteren okutmanları tespit etmek ve onları gruplandırabilmek için öncelikle bir tarama modeli uygulanmıştır. İkinci adım olarak bu tarama araştırması sonuçlarına göre belirlenen 4 farklı tükenmişlik seviyesindeki okutmanları temsil eden 12 kişi ile mülakat yapılmıştır. Bulgular farklı tükenmişlik seviyelerindeki tüm okutmanların hem fikir olarak tükenmişliğe iten ana faktörü araştırmada mikro değişken olarak belirtilen kurumlarındaki idari uygulamalar olarak göstermiştir. Aynı zamanda çok yüksek tükenmişlik belirtileri gösteren okutmanlarda 'Mesleki kişiliğe karşı yabancılaşma' tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** ingilizce öğretmenleri, tükenmişlik, yönetim, yabancılaşma

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of burnout is a relatively new field of inquiry in educational research. Many research studies specifically on 'Teacher Burnout' have shown that this issue merits attention in terms of research and applications in administrative and educational systems. There is no doubt that burnout is a devastating and hard experience for teachers. To give a clear portrait of the consequences of the issue, burnout and other stress related costs were estimated around $60 billion each year in the US (Wallis, 1983), and it can lead one to drug and alcohol abuse, and emotional and psychosomatic illnesses (Farber, 1991; Ray, 1991). As a profession realized in front of people, the consequences of burnout may be frustrating for both teachers and learners in the teaching and learning process. Due to these consequences, many teachers leave the profession within a short period of time (Archer, 1999; Boreen, Niday, & Johnson, 2003). The related literature also illustrates that there has been a significant increase in the number of teachers with a job-related anxiety in the last decades (Farber, 1984; Gregorian, 2001). Furthermore, it is commonly believed that the stressors leading teachers to burnout are seen only among primary and secondary teachers, which is indeed not the actual case. Even the university professors are reported to suffer from burnout (Hamann, Daugherty, & Sherbon, 1988; Hamilton, 2005; Jamal, 1999). Although burnout is increasingly observed in educational contexts, few studies have been conducted on the topic of teacher burnout.

While the term burnout was first used in the early1960s, it was introduced to the social sciences by psychologists Freudenberger (1974), who attempted to describe the nature and dynamics of the feeling of exhaustion commonly observed in human services workers. The term was defined as a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion that stemmed from job stress, attrition, and frustration (Maslach, 2003; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). This phenomenon generates itself in three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

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Emotional exhaustion is the result of certain feelings such as frustration, depression, and dissatisfaction. Depersonalization involves a dehumanized and impersonal view of others and treating them like objects or animals rather than people (Zhang & Sapp, 2007). Reduced personal accomplishment is characterized by a loss of self-efficacy on the job and the disposition of evaluating the self in a negative manner (Maslach, 2003).

When these three dimensions are taken as criteria to understand teacher burnout, the possible synthesis is that a teacher suffering from burnout is likely to display at least one of these behavior schemata. For instance, a teacher working forty hours a week may easily feel emotionally exhausted, which may lead to a decrease in job satisfaction. When there is little or no job satisfaction, it would be unwise to expect that the teacher can satisfy the feeling of personal satisfaction. As is seen, this chain of devastating behaviors may trigger each other and result in a burnout, which may end in even more devastating conclusions, like leaving the job. Therefore, the pursuit of the identification of the major factor(s) leading the teachers to burnout may give us some concrete ideas in terms of possible remedies for both teachers and institutions.

### 1.1. Teacher Burnout

The categorization of the research on teacher burnout may be done under themes such as the definition, causes and symptoms of teacher burnout, effects of burnout on the suffering teacher and the institution, and finally the strategies to be employed for coping with burnout (Dillon & Tanner, 1995). However, among these variables, the major factor or factors, if any, of the burnout has not been studied in detail. Of course, when it comes to analyzing human behavior, it is not that easy to reach simple conclusions with one research study alone, and even with some set of research studies in many cases. Nevertheless, as a universal problem, the causes and leading factors of burnout may be analyzed in terms of a specific culture, educational, administrative and governmental contexts to shed light on the issue. In this respect, the aim of this research study is to uncover the major factor(s) leading to teacher burnout in a specific context, which is the English preparatory school of a University in Turkey.

A considerable attention has been given to the notion of teacher burnout in the field of education since it was first discussed in the field of psychology. Many educational researchers have focused on the phenomenon at macro level such as governmental regulations, the financial state of the profession and the societal value given to the job. Others have scrutinized the issue at a more micro level such as institutional applications, influence of work hours or student pressure and so forth. However, all these studies are in accordance with the idea that the burnout problem is increasingly seen in contemporary educational systems, and that a remedy is urgently needed at both micro and macro levels to help teachers perform their best for the education of the societies. In a sense, those in the teaching profession are susceptible to burnout, because the profession is stressful in nature since there is always a mismatch between the course requirements and student expectations (Smylie, 1999). Teacher burnout is a function of societal, organizational, and individual factors, combined to produce a perception of inconsequentiality in teachers (Farber, 1991 as cited in Zhang & Sapp, 2007). At the societal level, the decline of public respect for and support of teachers may have triggered the increase in the number of teachers suffering from burnout. At the organizational level, teachers face increasing challenges from more diverse and needy student populations (Smylie, 1999). Burnout is likely to be triggered by overloaded work schedules and stress stemming from role conflict and ambiguity (Dillion & Tanner, 1995). The symptoms are anxiety, anger, frustration, depression, tension, powerlessness, hopelessness, failure, detachment, and feeling of inability (Pines, 1982). The symptoms put forward by Pines are some serious psychological disorders which will most likely follow the teacher to home and daily ongoing life. This may give us some idea about the fact that the devastating consequences of burnout should not be considered merely as a professional occurrence, but should be taken as a social problem to be coped with.

As a performance-based profession, teaching is characterized by a set of methodological phases and paces. In this sense, burnout is not an overnight situation, but a process influenced by some institutional, societal and governmental factors. In the pursuit of unraveling the major factors leading to burnout, we may need to recall Sarason's (1983) social-historical approach in which he examines the conditions that are conducive to burnout. He points out that burnout is triggered by features of the larger society rather than by individual or organizational factors. However, the research findings presented in the current study are quite the contrary to Sarason's claim.

### 1.2. Research Questions

The aim of this research study is to find out the major factor or factors leading English language teachers to burnout. The research questions followed in this study are:

1. Are there any specific stressors to be identified as the triggering factors for the burnout occurrence of teachers?
2. If there is/are, are these factors mainly:

      a.  macro level variables leading teachers to burnout?
      b.  micro level variables leading teachers to burnout?
      c.  based on a personal experience or situation?
      d.  known and accepted by those who suffer from them?

## 2. METHOD

This research study is designed integrating both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The quantitative phase of the research, a survey model, was designed so as to (1) find out whether teachers in this institution suffer from burnout; and (2) identify the teachers suffering from burnout at various intensities and levels. In this respect, the function of the quantitative phase was to prepare the necessary ground for the qualitative research and to contribute to its validity and reliability. In the qualitative research, the researcher conducted a set of interviews with the teachers to (1) decide on the factors to be taken as criteria; and (2) find out the major factor(s) leading these teachers to burnout.

### 2.1. Participants

Conducted at the English Preparatory School of a Turkish University, in 2008 and 2009 academic year, this research included 37 English Instructors, 6 of whom are males and the remainder of whom were females. After the quantitative data were gathered and analyzed, 12 of these 37 instructors were selected to participate in the interview sessions. The gender breakdown was 3 males and 9 females for the second data collection round. As for their educational background, 7 of the instructors were MA graduates and the rest held a BA in ELT or a related field such as English or American Literature. The years of service of the instructors varied from 3 to 22 years.

Apart from these participants analyzed for the major data of the study, 2 administrators and 5 senior instructors were selected for two different interview sessions contributing to the validity of the qualitative findings.

### 2.2. Instruments

The 'Teacher Burnout Scale' developed by McCroskey, Richmond, Wrench and Gorham (2001) was used to identify the teachers suffering from burnout. The researchers found a reliability of alpha .89 in the pilot study conducted in a similar setting to the actual research context. As for the qualitative data, three different interviews were carried out to form a factor list, to check its validity and finally to collect the necessary data. The first and second interviews, done respectively with experienced

instructors and administrators, were unstructured and mostly included open-ended questions. The third interview was a structured interview conducted with the instructors showing burnout behavior.

### 2.3. Data Collection

The first phase of the research was to apply the 'Teacher Burnout Scale' to the instructors of a Turkish University, English Preparatory School so as to see if there is a possible occurrence of burnout in the institution. The scale was given to 40 instructors randomly selected for the study. 37 of the scales were returned responded to completely. As the instrument is a scale yielding a score from the responses, 3 scales with some missing items were not included in the study. In the 'Teacher Burnout Scale', four degrees of burnout behavior were described for the interpretation of the scale. The degrees offered are:

1. 0-36 indicates few burnout feelings;
2. 36-55 indicates some strong feelings of burnout; but probably not a serious problem;
3. 56-70 indicates substantial burnout feelings, enough to recommend some help;
4. and 71-80 indicates the individual is experiencing severe burnout.

The scores obtained from the scales of 37 instructors were grouped under these four categorizations and presented in Table 1. The researcher coded the categories in the tables for a clear definition of the burnout degrees, as follows:

1. 0 -36: *Borderline*
2. 36-55: *Under Threat*
3. 56-70: *Affected*
4. 71-80: *Severely Affected*

We may also conclude that the possible distinction of displaying teacher burnout can be realized by taking *Borderline* and *Under Threat* groups as teachers with very little or no problem of teacher burnout. Accordingly the groups *Affected* and *Severely Affected* can be considered to be the group of potentially burnout teachers.

The second phase was carried out after the categorization of burnout degrees was completed. The first interview focused on a group of senior instructors who had been working in the institution for more than ten years. The theme of the interview was the possible factors leading the instructors to burnout. The second interview was carried out with administrators to check the validity of the factor list designed by referring to the literature and senior instructors (see Table 2). The third interview was conducted with the instructors who were found to display burnout at various degrees. In the selection of these instructors, the categorization of the 'Teacher Burnout Scale' was used. Three samples were chosen for each category, which resulted in the selection of 12 instructors suffering from burnout at different degrees.

### 3.   RESULTS

The results of this study will be discussed under two phases. The first phase is the discussion of the findings of the survey research, in which a sample group of English instructors was given a scale aiming at measuring their possible burnout degrees. The second phase is the discussion of the interviews with English instructors who were selected by means of the findings of the survey research.

The results of the 'Teacher Burnout Scale' have clearly shown that the instructors of the institution display teacher burnout at various degrees. Table 1 shows the distribution of the participants across the levels of burnout. It can be seen that the number of those not suffering from burnout was only 11, constituting 29.7 % of the sampling group; totally 19 instructors (51.3%) did not suffer from burnout, but showed some tendency; the remaining 18 instructors (48.6%) displayed a high degree of burnout.

**Table 1: Distribution of the Participants Based on the Teacher Burnout Scale.**

| Degrees of Burnout | 0-36 Borderline | 36-55 Under Threat | 56-70 Affected | 71-80 Severely Affected |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Frequency | **11** | **8** | **12** | **6** |
| Percentage | 29.7 | 21.6 | 32.4 | 16.2 |

The purpose of the empirical research was to find out instructors suffering from burnout, and since the research aim of the study was to identify the possible major factor(s) leading English instructors to burnout; the quantitative findings were analyzed and interpreted from this perspective. In order to identify the most suitable participants in terms of manifestation of teacher burnout, the findings given in Table 1 were used to select English instructors for the interview sessions which were designed to reveal why these teachers suffer from burnout and what may be the major factor triggering all other variables for teacher burnout. From each category illustrated in Table 1, three teachers were randomly selected to be interviewed.

There is a general accord with the idea that quantitative research studies often give us the 'What' of a phenomenon, as in this case, whether the instructors in this specific context suffer from teacher burnout or not. As for the stage in which 'why' burnout occurs in the institution involved in the current study is scrutinized, it is necessary to adopt a qualitative perspective.

In the context of the current study, the qualitative research design was based on the idea that the factors to be utilized as the grounds of the research should be data driven and allocated from the literature and as well as the administrators and the experienced senior instructors of the institution. The researcher found out that the statements made in the relevant literature and those made by administrators and senior instructors were surprisingly similar. This led the researcher to decide on the micro and macro variables influential in the burnout occurrence of the instructors. Table 2 presents the results of literature review and two cycles of interviews with the administrators and the senior instructors to decide on the factors to be included in the study.

The 'Academic' and 'Administrative' provisions of the institution were identified as the micro variables in that a great many of the regulations and applications in the institution were determined by the authority of the English preparatory school, specifically the director and some academic coordinators. In other words, apart from some very general enforcements of the constitution and regulations of the Council of Higher Education, the administrative staff is free to take decisions and put them into effect. Academic variables are related to the frequency and quality of in-service training, clinical supervision, existence and function of a mentor or a supervisor and number of courses and work load. Administrative variables are those which may be summarized as the tune, mood and the quality of the administrative body functioning in the institution.

The 'Governmental' and 'Personal' variables were selected as macro variables. Governmental variables included the salaries, the economic conditions of the English instructors, and their need for extra work. The macro level was assigned to the personal variables since all the previous defined factors surely have a very strong impact on both personal and professional identities, which led the researcher to decide on viewing the personal reflections of the instructors from a socio-psychological perspective. Personal variables involve depersonalization, emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 2003; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001: Zhang & Sapp, 2007). A detailed description of all factors is given in Table 2.

**Table 2: Factors Identified as Influential in Burnout**

| A. ACADEMIC (MICRO) | B. ADMINISTRATIVE (MICRO) |
|---|---|
| • **Lack of Clinical Supervision**<br>• **Little or no in-service training**<br>• **Number of courses given**<br>• **Overloaded work of the courses – evaluation and feedback of writing assignments, quizzes, material preparation**<br>• **A need for a mentor, a guide for both linguistic and methodological problems** | • **Rules and regulations without an explanation**<br>• **Communication styles of the administrators**<br>• **Supportiveness and guidance of administrators**<br>• **Little or no right of intervention in the development and improvement of the system**<br>• **Caring to personal needs and situations**<br>• **Feeling of being respected**<br>• **Unfair work distribution**<br>• **Feeling of cooperation and group work**<br>• **Competency and qualification of the administrators** |
| C. GOVERNMENTAL (MACRO) | D. PERSONAL (MACRO) |
| • **Wages and salaries**<br>• **Economic power – value of the salary**<br>• **Extra work – a burden or a chance?**<br>• **Universities contributions to social life – clubs, athletics, alumni communities etc.**<br>• **Social status of being an instructor**<br>• **Professional rights**<br>• **Civil Society Associations** | • **Feeling of belongingness to the profession**<br>• **Social prestige of being a language teacher**<br>• **Feeling of depersonalization**<br>• **Happy or sad to choose this career**<br>• **Feeling of improvement**<br>• **Feeling of success and achievement**<br>• **Feeling of alienation** |

The interviews with the 12 instructors showing teacher burnout at four different degrees have yielded quite interesting findings. The first one is that whatever the burnout level is, borderline or severely affected; all the instructors were in a consensus on the claim that the greatest stressor in their professional lives was the administrative applications in their institution. They unanimously claimed that the salaries may be supported with some extra work, the lack of in-service training may be compensated by the attendance to the large number of seminars and congresses held in their city, and career-originated personal breakdowns may be overcome. However, the negative effect of the administrators was the major source of burnout, which harms the professional identity and dedication to work.

The interview results were categorized under the same factors given above. After this coding procedure, the data were then grouped in relation with the burnout degrees of the instructors participated in the interview sessions. It was interesting to come across with the fact that no matter what the level of teacher burnout suffering was, all the instructors identified the same problems for this institutional disease.

As can be inferred from Table 3, the devastating effects of teacher burnout are seen in the instructors at an *affected* and *severely affected* degree. These instructors claimed to suffer from emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. Besides the factors put forward by Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2003), we have come across with one more consequence of the teacher burnout, specifically observed in the teachers with a higher degree. That is 'Alienation to professional identity,' which can be defined as the last phase of the teacher burnout in which teachers disconnect themselves from the profession, often resulting in leaving the job or trying to find a non-teaching position in the institution.

**Table 3: Distribution of the Interviews at Various Burnout Degrees**

| Categories | Academic | Administrative | Governmental | Personal |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Borderline | 1.Lack of In-service<br><br>2.Extra work burden | 1. Rudeness<br><br>2. Indifference to the problems<br>3. Rules without explanation | 1. Low salaries<br><br>2. Attention of the university | 1. Reduced personal accomplishment<br>2. Loneliness in professional development |
| Under Threat | 1.Lack of In-service<br><br>2.Extra work burden | 1. Rudeness<br><br>2. Indifference to the problems<br><br>3. Rules without explanation | 1. Low salaries<br><br>2. Attention of the university<br><br>3. Limited professional rights | 1. Reduced personal accomplishment<br><br>2. Doubtful about career choice |
| Affected | 1.Lack of In-service<br><br>2.Extra work burden<br><br>3. Need for a supervisor | 1. Rudeness<br><br>2. Indifference to the problems<br><br>3. Rules without explanation<br><br>4.Incompetency | 1. Low salaries<br><br>2. Attention of the university<br><br>3. No civil supporting association | 1. Reduced personal accomplishment<br><br>2. Depersonalization<br><br>3. Emotional exhaustion<br><br>4. Alienation to professional identity. |
| Severely Affected | 1.Lack of In-service<br><br>2.Extra work burden<br><br>3. Need for a supervisor | 1. Rudeness<br><br>2. Indifference to the problems<br><br>3. Rules without explanation<br><br>4.Incompetency<br><br>5. Detachment | 1. Low salaries<br><br>2. Attention of the university<br><br>3. No civil supporting association | 1. Reduced personal accomplishment<br><br>2. Depersonalization<br><br>3. Emotional exhaustion<br><br>4. Alienation to professional identity. |

The common factors identified by the instructors at all degrees of burnout are lack of in-service training, extra work they have to get involved in, the respect and communication problem with the administrative staff and low salaries. It can be concluded from the Table 3 that as the degree of teacher burnout rises, the source of stressors that were identified as factors of burnout vary. While the *Borderline* group did not mention 'Alienation to professional identity', the severely affected instructors' group unanimously talked about how they felt detached and isolated from the learning and teaching settings, and about how insecure they felt in such contexts in which they were repeatedly surrounded by the problems and stressors they had identified.

As for the major question of the study, it was concluded that the major source of teacher burnout in this institution was administrative variables. Not only did the instructors participating in the third round interviews literally and explicitly state this fact, but also the senior instructors and administrators, who have a great record of experience in this school, mentioned the same variable as the major source of teacher burnout.

The interpretation of this finding may be that there are many micro and macro variables affecting teachers negatively and leading them to burnout. Some studies have been carried out in many countries claiming that the macro variables are the key factors in leading teachers to teacher burnout (Sarason, 1983). However, what we have interpreted is that nothing can harm a teacher more than an exterior stressor which damages the professional identity of the teacher and results in alienation to professional identity. All of the English instructors we have interviewed repeatedly emphasize that they were willing to teach, whatever the economic conditions may be. However, a work condition in which they have no right to contribute to the development of the administrative system, improve the educational system they serve for, or get some professional support leads them to teacher burnout. On the other hand, apart from this detachment, their role in the administrative body is also a frustrating one.

## 4. CONCLUSION

This research set out to determine the major factor(s) leading English teachers to teacher burnout. In order to identify instructors having a burnout problem at various levels, a teacher burnout scale was administered. The results have shown that nearly half of the teachers displays teacher burnout. The following step was to gather qualitative data by some set of interviews with administrators, senior instructors and finally 12 instructors, 3 of who represent the 4 different degrees of burnout identified via the teacher burnout scale. The results have shown that all the instructors display burnout to some extent. However, instructors identified with a higher degree of burnout display all the symptoms of burnout presented by various researchers (Maslach, 2003; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001) namely depersonalization, emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment. Besides these three factors, it was found out that the instructors with a high level of teacher burnout display 'Alienation to professional identity', which can be considered the last phase of the teacher burnout which mostly results in leaving the job or abandoning their teaching position in the institution. As for the main question of the research study, it was found out that the major factor in teacher burnout was the administrative ones.

It is well known that education is not only a question of effective teaching or materials; it is also about designing a system which can work independently from the individuals and can be improved upon sustainably. A teacher cannot teach effectively unless s/he is supported both academically and administratively. For this reason, all the components of an educational system will surely aim at creating an effective atmosphere in which teachers can perform their best and a setting where learners can expand their horizons by investing in their skills and knowledge. As for the foreign language teaching context, the respect given to the performance of language teachers is invaluable in terms of the time and financial resources Turkey has been spending as a developing country. In this respect, teacher burnout is a great problem that should be observed and analyzed carefully in order to come up with effective remedies. However, as a first step, these remedies should not be just simple strategies offered to the teachers, they should be macro level regulations or even legislations which will protect the rights of the teachers by controlling, monitoring and evaluating language teaching institutions, private or governmental, and help the willing institutions in developing their administrative and academic systems.

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Günümüzde öğretmen tükenmişliği farklı eğitim ve öğretim ortamlarında önemli bir konu olarak ele alınmakta ve tartışılmaktadır. Eğitim kurumlarının değişik seviyelerinde farklı düzeylerde çalışan pek çok öğretmen "öğretmen tükenmişliği" konusunda sorun yaşamaktadır. Bu yaşanan sorunlar hem öğretmenleri hem de öğrencileri zaman zaman olumsuz etkilemekte ve içinden çıkılamayacak bir hale getirmektedir. "Tükenmişlik" ifadesi ilk olarak 1960 lı yılların başında kullanılmış olmasına karşın bu ifadenin sosyal bilimlere girişi 1974 yılında psikolog Freudenberger tarafından yazılan "Personel Tükenmişliği" (Staff Burnout) adlı makalenin yayınlanmasıyla olmuştur. Freudenberger (1974) bu çalışmasında tükenmişlik ifadesini hizmet sektöründe çalışanlarda yaygın olarak gözlemlenen aşırı yorgunluk duygusunun nedenlerini tanımlamak amacıyla kullanmıştır. Daha sonraları ise bu kavram iş ortamındaki stres, yıpranma ve düş kırıklığından kaynaklanan fiziksel, mental ve duygusal bitkinlik hali olarak da tanımlanmıştır (Maslach, 2003; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Tükenmişlik kendisini üç farklı boyutta göstermektedir; bunlar duygusal bitkinlik, mesleğe karşı yabancılaşma ve kişisel başarısızlıktır.

Bu araştırma üniversite düzeyinde çalışan İngilizce okutmanlarını (n=44) farklı seviyelerde tükenmişliğe iten ana faktörleri saptamak için gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmada hem nitel hem nicel araştırma tekniklerini kapsayan karma bir yöntem kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın ilk aşamasında çeşitli seviyelerde tükenmişlik belirtisi gösteren İngilizce okutmanlarını tespit etmek ve onları gruplandırmak için "Öğretmen Tükenmişlik Ölçeği" deneklere uygulanmıştır. Uygulanan ölçek McCroskey, Richmond, Wrench ve Gorham (2001) tarafından geliştirilmiştir ve beşli likert tipinde tasarlanan 20

adet maddeden oluşmaktadır. Bu ölçekten elde edilen bulgular 37 okutmanı dört farklı tükenmişlik düzeyinde gruplamak için kullanılmıştır. Bu ölçekten 0–36 arası puan alan okutmanlar Alt Sınır (Borderline) grubu olarak adlandırılırken, 36–55 arası puan alan okutmanlar Tehdit Hisseden ( Under Threat) grup, 56–70 arası puan alan okutmanlar Etkilenmiş (Affected) grup ve 71-80 arası puan alanlar ise Oldukça Etkilenmiş (Severely Affected) grup olarak adlandırılmıştır. İkinci adım olarak bu tarama sonuçlarına göre belirlenen dört farklı tükenmişlik seviyesindeki okutmanları temsilen 12 kişiyle mülakat yapılmıştır. Okutmanlara yapılan mülakat çalışmasını tamamlamadan önce yöneticiler ve kıdemli okutmanlarla belirlenen tükenmişlik faktörlerinin geçerliliğini kontrol etmek için iki adet mülakat daha gerçekleştirilmiştir.

“Öğretmen Tükenmişlik Ölçeği” kurumda çalışan okutmanların farklı seviyelerde tükenmişlik gösterdiklerini açık bir şekilde ortaya koymuştur. Örneklemin %29,7 sini oluşturan 11 okutman tükenmişlikle ilgili herhangi bir şikayette bulunmamışlardır. Ancak örneklemin % 21,6 sını oluşturan 8 okutman kendilerini tükenmişlik tehdidinde hissettiklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Toplam olarak örneklemin %51,3 ünü oluşturan 11+8=19 okutmanın tükenmişlikten şikayetçi olmamalarına karşın bu konuda tehdit hissettikleri gözlemlenmiştir. Öte yandan örneklemin % 32,4 ünü oluşturan 12 okutman ise tükenmişlik konusunda kendilerinin etkilenmiş olduğunu söylerken, örneklemin %16,2 sini oluşturan 6 okutman ise bu konuda oldukça etkilenmiş olduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Toplamda örneklemin % 48,6 lık kısmını oluşturan 12+6=18 okutmanın ise tükenmişliklerinin yüksek düzeyde olduğu saptanmıştır. Buna ilave olarak dört farklı düzeyde tükenmişlik gösteren 12 okutmanla yapılan mülakatlarda ise ilginç bulgulara ulaşılmıştır. Tükenmişlik düzeyleri ne olursa olsun tüm okutmanlar meslek yaşamlarındaki en önemli stres kaynağının kurumlarında uygulanan yönetsel süreçler olduğunda görüş birliğine varmışlardır. Ayrıca gelirlerine katkı sağlayacak ek çalışmalar yapılması, kendi şehirlerinde yapılan kongre ve seminerlere katılarak hizmet içi eğitim eksikliğinin giderilmesi ve kariyer gelişimlerine yönelik sorunların giderilmesi konusunda da tüm okutmanlar aynı görüşleri paylaşmaktadır. Ancak, görüşmelerde elde edilen bulgular neticesinde yöneticilerin negatif tutumları, mesleki kimliğe ve işe olan adanmışlığa zarar veren tükenmişliğin ana kaynağı olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu okutmanlar duygusal bitkinlik, mesleğe karşı yabancılaşma ve kişisel başarısızlıktan sıkıntı çektiklerini açıkça belirtmişlerdir. Maslach, Schaufeli ve Leiter (2003) tarafından ortaya konan etmenlerin yanı sıra özellikle öğretmenlerde yüksek düzeyde gözlemlenen öğretmen tükenmişliğinin bir başka sonucuyla karşılaşılmıştır. Bu da öğretmen tükenmişliğinin son aşaması olarak tanımlayabileceğimiz öğretmenlerin kendilerini meslekten soyutlama ve sıklıkla mesleği bırakma ya da kurumda eğitim dışı bir görev almayla sonuçlanan 'Mesleki kimliğe yabancılaşma' dır.

Çalışmanın ana problemine yanıt olarak, bu kurumdaki öğretmen tükenmişliğinin ana nedeninin yönetimsel değişkenler olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Yalnızca üçüncü tur görüşmelere katılan okutmanlar değil aynı zamanda bu kurumda uzun yıllardır çalışan deneyimli okutmanlar da aynı değişkenin öğretmen tükenmişliğinin ana nedeni olduğunu açıkça ifade etmişlerdir. Bu bulgu, öğretmenleri olumsuz yönde etkileyen ve tükenmişliğe götüren mikro ve makro birçok neden olduğu şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Birçok öğretmeni tükenmişliğe götüren ana etmenin makro değişkenler olduğunu iddia eden bazı çalışmalar yapılmıştır (Sarason, 1983). Ancak, bu çalışma sonucunda öğretmenlere hiçbir şeyin öğretmenin mesleki kimliğine zarar veren ve mesleki kimliğe yabancılaşmaya neden olan dışsal stres etkenleri kadar zarar veremeyeceği yorumu yapılabilir.

Bir öğretmen hem akademik hem de yönetimsel olarak desteklenmedikçe etkili bir şekilde öğretim yapamaz. Bu nedenle eğitim sisteminin tüm bileşenleri öğretmenlerin ellerinden gelenin en iyisini yapabilecekleri ve öğrencilerin yeteneklerini ve bilgilerini kullanarak ufuklarını geliştirebileceği etkili bir ortam oluşturmayı amaçlamalıdır. Yabancı dil öğretimi bağlamında da, dil öğretmenlerinin çabalarına verilen değer gelişmekte olan bir ülke olan Türkiye'nin harcadığı zaman ve ekonomik kaynaklar açısından çok değerlidir. Bu açıdan, öğretmen tükenmişliği, etkili çözümler geliştirilmesi için dikkatlice gözlemlenip incelenmesi gereken büyük bir sorun olarak görülmelidir.