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Techers' Emotional Intelligence and Burnout

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the predictive power of Turkish teachers' sub dimensions of emotional intelligence, gender, education, professional education, seniority, and age for sub dimensions of teacher burnout. Participants consisted of 536 teachers from Şanlıurfa, Turkey. Participant ages ranged from 20 to 51 years. Participants responded to the Turkish version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator Survey, and EQ-NED which was developed by Ergin, Işmen, and Özabacı (1999) to measure teachers' emotional intelligence. Stepwise regression analyses were conducted for each sub-dimension of teacher burnout. Results revealed that three sub dimensions of EQ (perception of own feelings POE, understanding others' feeling UOE, regulating emotions RE), teaching branches and years of experience explained 13.9% of the variance in emotional exhaustion. RE, UOE and POE explained 21.7% of the variance in depersonalization. Finally, RE, ages and teachers' branches explained 36.9% of the variance in personal accomplishment. Accordingly, implications and contributions are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching is an emotional and stressful profession (Kotaman, 2016a). It requires constant interactions with individuals such as parents, administrators, colleagues, students. Teachers need to be able to understand their own and others' feelings and they should be able to manage emotional situations (Kotaman, 2016b), such requirements increase teachers' emotional load and stress.

Teacher encounter with stressful events which trigger burnout such as misbehaviour of students, hostility of parents and administrators (Akbari & Roudi, 2020; Girgin, 2010, Huberman, 1993). Akbari and Roudi (2020) indicated that teachers idealistic, unrealistic expectations from themselves cause disappointment which in return increased teachers' burnout. All these cause emotional reaction in teachers that cause loss of motivation (Akbari, & Roudi, 2020). In another study conducted in Turkey with 564 teachers have been found teachers' emotions such as love negatively, sadness and fear positively related with teacher burnout (Atmaca, Rızaoğlu, Türkdoğan, & Yaylı, 2020). Therefore, we believe that level of teachers' emotional skills such as perceiving own feelings, understanding others' feelings and regulating emotional situations can be predictive factors for teacher burnout. Emotional load might trigger teacher burnout. Moreover, several studies revealed an association between emotional intelligence and teacher burnout (Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa-Kaja, Reyes, & Salovey, P. 2010; Chan, 2006; Ju, Lan, Li, Feng, & You, 2015; Merida-Lopez, & Extremera, 2017). Since burnout is an important issue for teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2017), and emotional exhaustion is the key component of burnout (Maslach 1993; Maslach & Jackson 1981), scholars claimed that association between emotional intelligence and burnout would contribute to decreasing teachers' burnout levels (Fiorili, Albanese, Gabola, & Pepe, 2017; Lee, 2019; Rumschlag, 2017). In order to achieve this, we need a detailed investigation of the teacher burnout with variables which may have an impact on it. Therefore, we have investigated the predictive capacity of both EI and its sub dimensions and demographic variables such as teachers' branches, length of professional education, teaching experience, age and gender on burnout on teacher burnout.

Teachers' demographic characteristics such as inexperience in teaching (Huberman, 1993; Fisher, 2011) and teacher branches (Huberman, 1993; Girgin, 2010) appeared as predictive factors for teacher burnout. Girgin (2010) reported that novice teachers experienced significantly higher burnout compared to teachers with 20 year and higher experience. For example, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) compared elementary, middle and high school teachers' dimensions of burnout. They found the indirect effects of teachers' gender and school level on their emotional exhaustion. Their findings revealed higher burnout levels for female teachers and lower grade teachers compared to male teachers and higher-grade teachers. Yorulmaz, and Altınkurt (2017) conducted an extensive meta-analysis where they have examined 118 articles, 169 master theses and 11 doctoral dissertations about teacher burnout which had been published between 2005-2015 in Turkey. They found that subject teachers experienced emotional exhaustion more than elementary (class) teachers had. On the other hand, class teachers experienced depersonalization and (reduced) personal accomplishment more than subject teachers. Their findings also revealed that teachers with a graduate degree had more emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment than the teachers with an undergraduate degree. Therefore, we wanted to examine predictive capacity of these variables on teachers' burnout.

While investigating the association between EI and teacher burnout, the current study also examined the impact of teachers' years of education, years of professional education, seniority, teaching branches and school level on teacher burnout in association with EI. Year of education is total amount of formal education that teacher receive in his/her life time. Years of professional education is the amount of formal education teacher receive about teaching profession such as two years vocational college, four years bachelor degree, master of education or master of science and doctoral. Thus, we aimed to provide a detailed picture on the factors which have an impact on teacher burnout

and how these factors affect different kinds of teachers. We believe that such a detailed examination will facilitate the intervention efforts which aim to increase teachers' EI to reduce teacher burnout. The findings of the current study would help to develop more suitable EI programmes for target groups by providing detailed information about the specific group.

We have recruited Maslach and Jackson's (1981) model to examine burnout. According to Maslach (1993) emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment are three components of burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1981) pointed to emotional exhaustion as the key factor in burnout and defined it as "feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work" (p. 101). They also described depersonalization as "an unfeeling and impersonal response towards recipients on one's care or service" (p. 101) and personal accomplishment as "feeling of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people "(p. 101). In this conceptualization, what is meant by personal accomplishment is the exhaustion of personal accomplishment due to burnout (Merida-Lopez & Extremera, 2017).

We have conceptualized emotional intelligence (EI) as teachers' perception about their ability to understand their own emotions, understand others' emotions and regulate emotions in their environments. This conceptualization mostly coincides with the EI conceptualization of Salovey and Mayer (1990). They have claimed that EI consists of perception of own emotions, understanding emotions and regulating emotions (Mayes, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004; Mayes, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000). The only difference is that we conceptualized regulating emotions in the environment rather than personal emotions. Regulating emotions in an environment is the ability to understand emotional interactions and provide appropriate responses. In the current study, we measure teachers' perceptions about their own emotions, capacity for understanding others' emotions and ability to regulate emotional situations. Thus, we examine the impact of each of these components on burnout dimensions.

TEACHERS, BURNOUT AND EI

Training teachers is a compelling process. In most countries, it requires at least a bachelor's degree. Therefore, losing teachers is an important problem which has consequences for society at large, and for schools, teachers, and students in particular. Since teacher burnout is the primary reason for teacher turnover (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan 2014; Leung, & Lee 2006), it contributes to teacher shortages which decrease the quality of education. Studies have also revealed the negative impact of teacher burnout on teachers' organisational commitment, work engagement, health (Hakanene, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Kahn, Schneider, Jenkins-Henkelman, & Moyle, 2006), wellbeing, general and mental health (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998; Tang, Au, Schwarzer, & Schmitz, 2001). Even if they do not quit teaching, because they are emotionally exhausted, burnout teachers do not want to work and they lose their motivation to teach (Egyed & Short, 2006). This creates a negative vicious cycle because burnout teachers are not motivated to teach most of the time and they cannot experience personal achievement which would motivate them to teach (Leung & Lee 2006). This negative cycle fosters student failure and burnout teachers set negative examples for students (Betoret, 2009; Egyed & Short, 2006).

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

All the above-mentioned studies revealed the importance of reducing teacher burnout. Therefore, scholars are investigating the factors which would achieve this. In many studies, emotional intelligence has emerged as an effective factor in reducing burnout (Brackett, et all., 2010; Chan, 2006; Ju, et all., 2015; Merida-Lopez, & Extremera, 2017). Fiorili, et. al. (2017) conducted a study with primary school teachers and they have found that teachers with low emotional regulation skills are emotionally more exhausted by their jobs, which triggers burnout. In another recent study, Lee (2019) has concluded that physical education teachers who can genuinely express their feelings experience less burnout compared to their colleagues who cannot express their feelings appropriately.

The studies revealed the importance of EI for preventing teacher burnout. Therefore, EI programmes which aim to increase teachers' emotional abilities such as understanding their and others' emotions and regulating them. To increase the effectiveness of these programmes, we must have detailed information about the factors which affect teacher burnout because teachers from different environments, branches and educational backgrounds might experience different emotions and emotional problems which would cause burnout.

Although teacher burnout is the primary reason for teacher turnover for many countries (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan 2014; Kabadayı, 2015; Leung, & Lee 2006), it would be more difficult for teachers in Turkey to quit their jobs compared to their colleagues from developed countries due to the conditions in Turkey. In Turkey, teacher candidates must receive a bachelor's degree from an educational faculty to become a teacher. The only criteria to study education at university is to pass a university entrance exam. In their extensive survey which they have conducted on 18,266 teacher candidates from 51 faculties of education, Aksu, Demir, Daloğlu, Yıldırım and Kiraz (2010) have found that %29 of teacher candidates had chosen teaching because their university entrance exam score was not good enough for a better department. They have also found that 25% of the prospective teachers reported teaching as an opportunity to find a job easily and 21% stated working conditions as the main reason to choose the teaching profession. Aksu et. al. stated that "job security, flexible hours and holidays as well as the possibility of engaging in secondary employment were other reasons given for choosing teaching as a future career (97)." In addition to these findings, 87% of the candidate teachers reported that they wanted to pursue their future career as a teacher (Aksu, et al., 2010). This may seem contradicting with the other findings of the study. However, it made sense, considering Turkey's somewhat unique conditions.

The unemployment rate for the population between 15 and 24 years of age is 22% in Turkey (http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=24630). High employment rate creates a strong drive for becoming a government officer, especially for the people coming from low-middle socio-economic backgrounds because government positions mean job security, financial stability and social benefits such as health insurance and retirement plan. This is also true for teaching. In Turkey, teacher candidates must outperform some of their colleagues in a central government officer entrance exam to be assigned as a state teacher. The gap between the number of positions provided by the government and the demand for those positions is getting larger. Therefore, becoming a state teacher is getting harder each year. Teacher candidates who could not become state teachers can work as contractual teachers in public or private schools. Contractual teachers' salary is around one third of state teachers' salary and most of the private schools do not pay as much as state. Private school teachers lack job security and several other benefits such as a retirement plan. Over years, several teacher candidates committed suicide just because they could not succeed in the central government officer entrance examination. The majority of the candidate teachers come from middle-lower SES families. One third of the fathers and about half of the mothers had no more than the 5-year primary education (Aksu et. al. 2010). Therefore, it can be said that becoming a teacher for most of the Turkish prospective teachers is a socially upward movement, which would provide higher income, social status, and more comfortable life conditions than their parents had.

All these facts revealed that a considerable number of prospective teachers are motivated for teaching professions by extrinsic motivational factors such as salary, job security, holidays, and social security. Several studies have revealed that teachers who are extrinsically motivated had higher burnout and turnover rate than their colleagues whose motivations for teaching are intrinsically determined (Butler & Shibaz, 2008; Kim & Cho, 2014; Malmberg, 2006; Roness, 2011). Therefore, we may expect a considerable percent of Turkish state teachers to leave the profession. However, this is not the case. The Minister of National Education, İsmet Yılmaz, declared that, in 2017, 207 of 850,690 state teachers quit their jobs (www.hurriyet.com.tr/bu-yil-207-ogretmen-istifa-etti-40580635). Again, we must consider Turkey's conditions in order to understand these facts, which appear contradicting

to each other. As it was mentioned above, it is hard to become a state teacher. Once you become a state teacher, you have job security for life. Quitting a job as a state teacher means losing income, which, in most cases, provides a teacher with higher economical standards than he/she was raised in. In addition, once teachers quit, they become a burden for their family until they can find a new job. On the other hand, with high unemployment rates and unstable middle east political environment, it is very difficult to find a new job or start a business. Under these conditions, it is very difficult for Turkish teachers to quit their jobs even though teaching dissatisfies them. Because of legal issues, it is impossible to fire a state teacher because of his/her inefficacy in teaching. Therefore, problems related to teachers such as burnout has to be solved in the system. That is why EI may play a critical role in preventing Turkish teachers' burnout. This would provide us with a different perspective on teacher burnout.

In summary, although they are burnout, Turkish teachers may not quit their jobs. Therefore, in Turkey, teacher burnout problem needs in-service solutions. Increasing teachers' EI skills within service trainings can be one way to support them. In order to develop programmes which would support teachers' EI skills, we need a detailed analysis of the association between burnout, EI and other factors which can have an impact on burnout such as teachers' level of education, professional education, branch and gender. The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of all these variables on teacher burnout and provide a fuller picture of the phenomenon. Accordingly, we aimed to answer following questions:

1. Do teachers' emotional intelligence effect teacher burnout?
2. Do early childhood, elementary and middle school teachers differ in teacher emotional intelligence and its' effect on teacher burnout?

METHOD

The study recruited survey model. Teachers provided self-reported responses for questionnaires.

PARTICIPANTS

From kindergarten to high school total of 23114 teachers work in Şanlıurfa (http://www.sanliurfa.gov.tr/sanliurfa-egitimde-yol-haritasini-belirledi). Of the 23114, originally, 624 questionnaires were returned to the investigators. However, among the 624 questionnaires, 88 had missing data. Therefore, they were discarded from the data set. Finally, the data set of the study consisted of 536 questionnaires. Table 1 presents the demographic variables. Of the 536 teachers, 331 were female (61.8%) and 205 were male (38.2%). The ages of the teachers ranged from 21 to 55, with a mean age of 30.67 (SD= 6.90). Participants' years of education, years of professional education and years of experience ranged from 10 to 22, 2 to 13, and 1 to 32, with mean years of 16.06 (SD = 1.23), 4.11 (SD = 1.07) and 6.55 (SD = 6.25), respectively. Of the 536 teachers, 158 (29.48%) were early childhood teachers, 65 (12.13%) were elementary school teachers and 313 (58.4%) were middle and high school teachers.

Table 1. *Demographic Comparison*

	Min	Max	Mean	Std.
Age	21	55	30.67	6.90
Years of Education	10	22	16.06	1.23
Years of Professional Education	2	13	4.11	1.07
Seniority	1	32	6.55	6.25

INSTRUMENTS

We made use of EQ-NED, which was developed by Ergin, Işmen, and Özabacı (1999) to measure teachers' emotional intelligence. The EQ-NED contains 108 items and three subscales. These are: (1)

perception of own emotions (POE), (2) understanding of others' emotions (UOE), and (3) regulating emotions (RE). It is a self-report scale. Each subscale consists of 36 items and is measured on a 4-point Likert scale. In another study, Kotaman (2016) has reported Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0.83, 0.77, 0.61, and 0.73 for total EI for each subscale, respectively. In the current study, Cronbach alpha coefficients for general EI, POE, UOE and RE were 0.91, 0.84, 0.74 and 0.80 respectively. These Cronbach's coefficients are considered to indicate moderate to sound reliability (Isaac and Michael 1995).

TEACHER BURNOUT

Teacher burnout was measured with the Turkish version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator Survey. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Girgin and Baysal (2005). The questionnaire includes 22 items divided into three subscales: emotional exhaustion (EE; nine items, e.g., "I feel emotionally drained from my work"), personal accomplishment (PA; eight items, e.g., "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job) and depersonalization (D; five items, e.g., I feel I treat some students as if they are impersonal objects"). Participants were asked to evaluate each item in terms of the frequency of their feelings, ranging from 0 (Never) to 4 (Always). High scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and low scores on personal accomplishment subscales are indicative of burnout. Participants could receive a minimum score of 0 and a maximum score of 88 on the total scale. The psychometric properties of the Turkish adaptation of the scale have been reported by Girgin and Baysal (2005), who indicated that the Turkish form was a valid and reliable scale. Kotaman (2016) made use of the scale for his study and reported the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of EE, PA and D as 0.93, 0.84, and 0.75, respectively. For the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients of EE, PA and D were 0.77, 0.85, and 0.75, respectively. These Cronbach's coefficients are considered indicative of sound reliability for education (Issac & Michael 1995).

DATA COLLECTION

We gathered data in the 2018-2019 academic year with voluntary participation of teachers working at state schools in Şanlıurfa. In Turkey, all teachers are registered to the Ministry of National Education (MONE). In every city, there is a directorate of MONE which has a database containing teachers' information. Prior to the administration of the questionnaires we obtained ethical permission from Şanlıurfa Directorate of National Education (MoNE) to apply the questionnaires. After we obtained ethical permission we requested from the MONE directorate of the city to disseminate an online version of the questionnaires to the teachers. Through their database, it is possible to send a questionnaire to every teacher working in the city. Thus, the questionnaires were disseminated to all the teachers in Şanlıurfa. Beside online application, the investigators also disseminated the questionnaires in central training sessions provided for teacher by MONE. In these trainings, we asked those teachers who had not responded to our questionnaires to participate in the study. Those who accepted to participate in the study responded to the questionnaire privately and handed to the investigators.

FINDINGS

Table 2 presented Skewness and Kurtosis analysis which tested the normality of the scales and their sub dimensions which we used to measure emotional intelligence and teacher burnout. The results revealed that two scales and all their sub dimensions presented a normal distribution. Therefore, we used parametric tests for our further analyses.

Table 2. *Skewness and Kurtosis Analysis of Normality*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
POE perception of own emotions	536	2,841	0,397	-0,406	-0,399
UOE understanding of others' emotions	536	2,824	0,326	-0,547	1,497
RE regulating emotions	536	2,883	0,372	-0,329	-0,144
TEI total emotional intelligence	536	2,850	0,323	-0,697	0,236
EE emotional exhaustion	536	1,864	1,068	1,035	4,971
D depersonalization	536	1,249	1,082	0,780	-0,156
PA personal accomplishment	536	2,298	1,116	0,457	-0,039

Four multiple regression analyses were conducted to predict general and three sub-dimensions of teacher burnout (EE, PA and D) based on teachers' gender, age, years of education, years of professional education, years of experience, branches and indicators of emotional intelligence (general, (1) perception of own emotions (POE), (2) understanding of others' emotions (UOE), and (3) regulating emotions (RE). Table 3 presents the first multiple regression conducted for emotional exhaustion (EE).

Table 3 *Stepwise Regression for Emotional Exhaustion (EE)*

	B	SE b	β	Adjusted R^2	R^2 Change	T	F
Constant	3.731	0.431				8.647	
UOE	-0.854	0.222	-0.261*	0.044	0.046	-3.850	
POE	0.727	0.150	0.270*	0.087	0.045	4.850	
Years of Exp.	0.027	0.007	0.160*	0.107	0.022	3.912	
Branches	0.235	0.065	0.196*	0.119	0.013	3.606	
RE	-0.776	0.216	-0.270*	0.139	0.021	-3.589	18.22

*p<0.001

A significant regression equation was found (F (5.530) = 18.22 p<0.000) with an adjusted R^2 0.139. The regression analysis revealed POE, UOE, RE, years of experience and branches as the significant predictors of EE. Other variables such as gender, years of education, years of professional education, age and general EQ were not among the significant predictors of EE. The beta values for UOE, POE, years of experience, branches and RE were -0.261, 0.270, 0.160, 0.196 and -0.270 respectively. These findings revealed that teachers' EE increased with teachers' POE and years of experience. The teachers who scored higher on POE had higher EE scores. EE has a negative relation with UOE and RE. Therefore, we can say that, as teachers' ability to understand others' emotions and regulating emotions increases, their emotional exhaustion decreases. The teachers' EE decreased 0.261 and 0.270 points for each unit of increase in UOE and RE, respectively. On the other hand, the teachers' EE increased 0.270, and 0.160 points for each unit of increase in POE and years of experience. These findings indicated that UOE, POE, years of experience, branches and RE explained 13.9% of the variance in EE. Unique contributions of each independent variable (UOE, POE, years of experience, branches and RE) for the prediction EE were 4.6%, 4,5%, 2.2%, 1.3% and 2.1%, respectively.

Table 4 *Stepwise Regression for Depersonalization (D)*

	B	SE b	β	Adjusted R^2	R^2 Change	T	F
Constant	5,075	0,378				13,413	
RE	-1,009	0,203	-0,347	0.179	0.181	-4,979	
UOE	-0,855	0,212	-0,257	0.198	0.020	-4,034	
POE	0,528	0,139	0,194	0.217	0.021	3,804	50.504

*p<0.001

A significant regression equation was found (F (3.532) = 50.504.22 p<0.000) with an adjusted R^2 0.217. The regression analysis revealed RE, UOE and POE as the significant predictors of D. Other

variables were not among the significant predictors of D. These findings revealed that the teachers' D decreased 0.347 and 0.257 points for each unit of increase in RE and UOE, respectively. Contrarily, the teachers' D increased 0.194 points for each unit of increase in POE. These findings indicated that RE, UOE and POE explained 21.7% of the variance in D. Unique contributions of each independent variable (RE, UOE and POE) for the prediction of D were 18.1%, 2.5%, and 2.1%, respectively.

Table 5. *Stepwise Regression for Personal Accomplishment (PA)*

	B	SE b	β	Adjusted R^2	R^2 Change	T	F
Constant	7,737	0,368				21,050	
RE	-1,292	0,131	-0,430	0.301	0.302	-9,856	
Age	-0,035	0,006	-0,220	0.341	0.042	-6,355	
Branches	-0,273	0,055	-0,218	0.369	0.029	-4,983	105.380

*p<0.001

A significant regression equation was found (F (3.532) = 105.380 p<0.000) with an adjusted R^2 0.369. The regression analysis revealed RE, age and branches as the significant predictors of PA. Other variables were not among the significant predictors of PA. These findings revealed that the teachers' PA decreased 1.292 and 0.035 points for each unit of increase in RE and their ages, respectively. These findings indicated that RE, age and branches explained 36.9% of the variance in PA. Unique contributions of each independent variable (RE, age and branches) for the prediction of PA were 30.2%, 4.2%, and 2.9%, respectively.

Since the regression analysis revealed branches as a predictive variable for EE and PA, we have conducted two one-way ANOVAs and post-hoc LSD analysis to find out the differences among branches in terms of these variables.

Table 7. *EE and PA Comparison by Teaching Levels*

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.	
Emotional Exhaustion	1-Early Childhood	158	1,759	0,818	5,026	0,007	2>1, 2>3
	2-Elementary	65	2,243	1,424			
	3-Middle School	313	1,838	1,080			
	Total	536	1,864	1,068			
Personal Accomplishment	1-Early Childhood	158	3,196	1,114	102,324	0,000	1>2, 1>3
	2-Elementary	65	1,694	1,112			2<1,2<3
	3-Middle School	313	1,969	0,816			
	Total	536	2,298	1,116			

For EE, one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference among groups [(F (2, 533) = 5.026 p = 0.007]. Post hoc LSD indicated that elementary teachers had significantly higher EE mean score (M = 2.243, SD = 1.424) than early childhood (M = 1.759, SD = 0.818) and branch teachers (M = 1.838, SD = 1.080). Elementary teachers were emotionally more exhausted than early childhood and middle school teachers. There was not a significant difference in terms of EE between early childhood and middle school teachers.

Similarly, one-way ANOVA indicated a significant difference among groups [(F (2, 533) = 102.324 p = 0.000001] for PA. Post hoc LSD showed that early childhood teachers had significantly higher PA mean score (M = 3.196, SD = 1.114) than elementary teachers (M = 1.694, SD = 1.112) and middle school teachers (M = 1.969, SD = 0.816). Middle school teachers' mean score for PA was significantly higher than elementary teachers' mean score of PA.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the predictive capacity of several variables such as three sub dimensions of emotional intelligence, teaching experience, teachers' years of education, teachers' years of professional education, teachers teaching levels and age on teachers' three dimensions of burnout (EE, PA and D). In some dimensions, our findings on teacher burnout were consistent with former studies and, in some, it was not. For example, Skaallvik and Skaalvik (2017) found higher burnout for female teachers. However, in our findings, gender didn't appear as a significant predictor neither for general burnout nor for three sub dimensions. Our study was consistent with other studies which did not find a connection between gender and burnout (Fiorili, et. al., 2017; Ju, Lan, Li, Feng, & You, 2015). The studies in which gender did not appear as a factor for teacher burnout targeted emotional intelligence. That may be the reason for the difference. Emotional abilities and emotional experiences may be shadowing gender as a factor for teacher burnout.

In our study, elementary teachers' emotional exhaustion was significantly higher and lack of personal accomplishment was significantly lower than their colleagues who taught in early childhood and higher grades. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) have found that teacher burnout increases as the grade level decreases. Yorulmaz and Altınkurt (2017)'s findings were more detailed. They found that branch teachers were emotionally more exhausted than elementary teachers and they experienced less personal accomplishment than elementary teachers. Their findings also revealed that elementary teachers experienced significantly higher levels of depersonalization compared to branch teachers. Our findings were not consistent with Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) and Yorulmaz and Altınkurt (2017). Neither of the studies included early childhood teachers. The conditions of the elementary teachers in Şanlıurfa may be the reason for this inconsistency. Şanlıurfa has the second highest illiteracy rate in Turkey and has the highest number of illiterate adults in Turkey (TÜİK, 2020). Also, Şanlıurfa has the highest fertility rate in Turkey in 2017 (TÜİK Haber Bülteni, 2018). These data mean that, in Şanlıurfa, teachers have to deal with illiterate parents and children coming from illiterate environments. In order to understand the condition of the elementary teachers, we must also consider that elementary education is mandatory. However, early childhood education is not, and students can complete middle school with open education. In Turkey, early childhood and elementary school curricula, atmospheres and teacher-student communication are very different. Kindergartens are less formal compared to elementary classes. Academics are not their priority. On the other hand, first grade lectures in elementary schools last 40 minutes. They must sit still in their chairs and their curriculum mostly emphasizes reading, writing and mathematics activities (Kotaman, 2014).

Parents' perception about elementary school and kindergarten are different, too. In kindergartens, parents emphasize social and behavioural development more than academic development (Seyfullahoğulları, 2012). Also, in Turkey, early childhood education is named as "before school education." Ertem and Gökalp (2020) found that parents with lower levels of education put higher emphasize on elementary education compared to parents with higher levels of education. In summary, there is more academic demand and expectations from elementary teachers than early childhood teachers. It is harder to teach children coming from poorly literate environments (Ellsworth & Ames, 1998) and Şanlıurfa has the second lowest literacy rate in Turkey. Therefore, elementary teachers would experience more difficulty in terms of meeting parents' expectations and improving children's academic skills compared to early childhood teachers. Therefore, they would live more conflicts with students and parents than their early childhood and middle school peers. Since, elementary teachers' workload is more than their peers and their conditions are harder, they may experience higher personal accomplishments because they could handle all these difficulties.

Our findings showed that as teachers' UOE and RE abilities increased, their emotional exhaustion decreased. This finding was consistent with several other studies (Chan, 2006; Karakuş, M. 2013; Merida-Lopez, & Extremera, 2017). For example, Karakuş (2013) has found a negative

association between emotional appraisal abilities and emotional exhaustion of teachers. In another study, Merida-Lopez, & Extremera, (2017) pointed out paying emotional attention to others' feelings and understanding feelings clearly (emotional clarity) as preventive factors against emotional exhaustion. Understanding others' emotions facilitates regulating one's own emotions because emotions usually occur in interaction with others. If teachers can understand the real intensions and feelings of people whom they interact with such as students, parents, administers and colleagues, they can regulate their own emotions accordingly and, thus, provide appropriate responses (Kotaman, 2016b). Since, administrative and parental demands (Kotaman, 2016a; Richards, Hemphill, & Templin, 2018; Vesely, Saklofske & Leschied, 2013) and disruptive student behaviours (Richards, Hemphill, & Templin, 2018; Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2017) are major stressors for teachers, if teachers could manage these relations skilfully, they would experience less emotional exhaustions (Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2017). Thus, these two skills would work against teacher burnout. It was somewhat surprising to see a negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and POE. However, when we look closer, POE aims to determine teachers' awareness of their own emotions. Therefore, it might be that teachers who had higher POE would indulge too much with their own feelings, which, in return, could prevent them from understanding others and regulating the emotional environment. Also, indulging in own feelings too much can cause social isolation which would trigger emotional exhaustion (Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2017).

The findings also revealed that emotional exhaustion increased with years of experience. This finding contradicts Rumschlag (2017) because he did not find a difference in the experience EE between novice and experienced teachers. Rumschlag (2017) conducted his study in the U.S.A. As we mentioned in the introduction, because of high unemployment rates and benefits of being government teacher in Turkey, even though teachers are emotionally exhausted, they usually do not quit their jobs. If one does an emotionally exhausting job, this exhaustion will pile up in years. Therefore, older teachers were probably significantly more exhausted than younger teachers in our sample.

Just like emotional exhaustion, depersonalization had a negative relationship with UOE and RE and a positive relationship with POE. Depersonalization is conceptualized as an apathy towards one's care or service (Maslach, 1981). UOE and RE required openness to others' feelings and building empathy. These contradict apathy. Therefore, we expected these findings. On the other hand, when a person indulges with his or her own feelings too much, there will be less time and energy to understand others' feelings and demands.

The regression analysis revealed that, as the teachers RE increased, their feeling of lack of personal accomplishment decreased. RE explained 30.2% of the variance for personal accomplishment. This finding was consistent with Brackett, et. al, (2010) in which they found that teachers' feeling of personal accomplishment increased if they thought that they could manage emotional situations. Brackett, et. al. (2010) recruited middle school teachers. Therefore, our finding extended the importance of RE for early childhood and elementary teachers, too. Teachers with high RE can probably manage stressful interactions skillfully without causing them to turn into greater conflicts. Thus, they would receive positive feedbacks with whom they interact (Brackett, et. al. 2010). This would contribute to the development of better relations between teachers and the people whom they interact with such as students, parents, administrators, and colleagues. Managing stressful interactions is a teacher qualification which would facilitate management; thus, teachers can deal with difficult students, which, in return, would provide them with a more effective teaching environment (Hoffman, Hutchinson, & Reiss, 2009). All these components would contribute to personal accomplishment.

Although several studies did not detect age as a significant predictor of teacher burnout (Fiorili et. al., 2017; Ju et. al., 2015), in our study, age appeared as a significant predictor of personal accomplishment. These studies were not conducted in Turkey with Turkish teachers. Karakuş (2013) conducted a study in Turkey with Turkish elementary school teachers and he found that, as teachers'

age increased, their burnout syndromes decreased. Our study extended this finding in two ways. First, beside elementary school teachers, our sample included early childhood and middle school teachers as well. Secondly, we provided a more detailed profile about age and teacher burnout by showing that age was a predictor of personal accomplishment. Klein (2017) has pointed out that, due to a decline in dopamine secretion, older people are affected from immediate emotional urges less than younger people. Therefore, older people can evaluate themselves more objectively than younger people because they can take into account the impact of different variables on the phenomenon. Older teachers may have evaluated their personal accomplishments better than younger teachers because they had a wider view on the outside variables which would have negative impacts on their personal accomplishments. Thus, older teachers may have blamed themselves less than their younger colleagues for their failures.

The study pointed out that elementary school teachers in Şanlıurfa experienced higher emotional exhaustion and lower lack of personal accomplishment feelings than their early childhood and middle school colleagues. We think that these findings emphasized the importance of conditions while dealing with teacher burnout because, to the authors' knowledge, such a difference had not appeared in former studies. In creating an emotional intelligence programme for elementary school teachers, the programme would be more effective if the components related to emotional exhaustion such as POE, UOE and RE were targeted. On the other hand, for early childhood teachers, targeting depersonalization would be more beneficial.

As a component of EQ, POE acted differently from UOE and RE. POE contributed to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. These findings have indicated that, although POE is an essential part of the EQ, it is not enough to understand own feelings for an EQ that would prevent or decrease teacher burnout. EQ programmes should work on how to establish connections among these three components and how to keep them in balance. Chan, (2006) has pointed that, without knowing how to manage emotions, understanding emotions will be useless. Therefore, creating programmes which support the development of teachers' emotional skills would contribute to lowering teacher burnout. Improving emotional skills can be a part of teacher education. Therefore, we can equip teacher candidates for future emotional difficulties (Karakuş, 2013).

The data stemmed from self-reports by volunteer participants. This was the main limitation of the study. It is possible that teachers who were not experiencing a great deal of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment would volunteer to respond to a such study.

In Turkey, most of the early childhood teachers are female. Therefore, the male and female division of the sample prevented us to reach a firm conclusion regarding gender and burnout. These were the main limitations of the study. The associational nature of the study prevented us from determining the direction of relationships. In the future, longitudinal studies in which investigators can track the evolution of teacher burnout and emotional intelligence would provide valuable insights on the issue. Teacher development from formal education through actual teaching experiences would provide valuable insights on the issue. We can create programmes to support the development of teachers' emotional intelligence in consideration of their special conditions and conduct experimental studies to see the impact of teachers' emotional intelligence on their students' academic outcomes and teacher performances. Thus, we can reach a fuller picture of the phenomenon.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

- Hüseyin Kotaman have made substantial contributions to conception, design, data collection, and writing. or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data
-Demirali Ergin have analyzed data. and The second author have been involved in drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content
-Fatih Karacabey gathered data.

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