



Psycho-Educational Effect of Motivational Interviewing on School Burnout

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Abstract

School burnout is an important problem which should be understood in terms of the consequences it causes in the school environment. During school burnout cases, undesirable behaviors may be exhibited. For this reason, it is very important to understand school burnout to recognize and to intervene before causing negative results. The aim of this study is to reduce students' school burnout using the motivational interviewing approach. In this study, a psycho-education program which based on the basic principles of motivational interviewing was developed and applied to middle school 6th and 7th grade students. This study is an experimental study with pretest posttest follow-up test. According to the results of the post-test conducted after psycho-education applications, it was seen that this program decreased significantly students' school burnout levels. In the follow-up test conducted later, it was observed that the decrease in the levels of school burnout showed stability. Based on these results, it can be said that motivational interviewing based psycho-education al interventions will be beneficial for students experiencing school burnout.

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INTRODUCTION

The problems in schools have multifaceted effects. Negative attitudes towards school, which turn into undesired behavior, not only affect those who develop these attitudes, but also school's educational climate (Fish, Finn & Finn, 2011). The point to note here is that the existence of individuals who develop undesired behaviors will ultimately influence the lives of all school stakeholders. This situation tells us that the problems experienced in schools should not be ignored and these problems should be accepted as the common problems of the society in which the students are. In this respect, efforts to reduce the problematic behaviors will directly contribute to the other individuals in the school environment. Reducing problematic behaviors should be considered important because they are related to academic achievement and behavioral commitment (Parker, Nelson & Burns, 2010).

Many situations are cited as the causes of problematic behaviors in schools. Drugs and substance abuse (Ondigo, Birech & Gakuru, 2019), student alienation (Mau, 1989), bullying (Salmon, James & Smith, 1998), school violence (Henry, 2000) are some of them. School burnout is one of these negative situations mentioned in the relevant literature (Gabola et al. 2021). It is understood that school burnout should not be ignored when its results are taken into consideration.

Among the symptoms of burnout, a decrease in physical and emotional energy, as well as a feeling of decreased personal achievement is described (Çam & Öğülmüş, 2019). In various studies, different reasons are mentioned as the causes of school burnout. Some of these reasons are, selection exams (Yedigöz Sönmez & Çapri, 2013), homework (Özdemir, 2015), indifference and incompetence (Aypay & Eryılmaz, 2011), peer bullying and cyber victimization (Uzun & Karataş, 2019), family expectations and economic situation (Acar & Çakır, 2015) and so on. These are just some of the causes of school burnout. On the other hand, situations such as self-regulation, teacher-student relationship, peer relations and the involvement of families in educational processes stand out as factors that reduce burnout (Özhan & Yüksel, 2021). When considered in the context of cause and effect, it is understood that school burnout is an important situation. For this reason, this study is expected to contribute significantly to school guidance services. In this study, the reasons, symptoms and negative conditions of school burnout were discussed and a psycho-education program was prepared to reduce the level of school burnout.

SCHOOL BURNOUT

It is the common determination of teachers' that some of the students are reluctant to learn. Situations such as lack of confidence and anxiety from high performance expectations (Liu & Littlewood, 1997), teachers, parents and curriculum (Aziz, Quraishi & Shahid Kazi, 2018), lack of social support (Engin, Özen & Bayoğlu, 2009) are among the reasons for this reluctance. However, most teachers have difficulty in identifying the causes and basic sources of this reluctance. When they attempt to do so, they argue that the student does not do enough for most of the time and that the parents do not help their children enough (Viau, 2015). This point of view makes the matter seem simple but in fact, this reluctance is a very important problem. Besides, it can be caused by many different reasons.

School burnout can also be shown among these negative reasons (Pala, 2012). However before addressing school burnout, it is useful to look at professional burnout. Burnout is defined as individuals' emotional distancing from their work and feeling themselves exhausted, cynic and inefficient (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Individuals in this situation feel tired, are indifferent to others at workplace and see themselves inadequate for their work (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Recently, besides the occupational groups, the burnout of the students has started to be studied. Burnout, seen as a problem created by the works, is also considered as a valid situation for students (Bilge, Tuzgöl Dost & Çetin, 2014). Although the students are not workers, the essence of their activities can be evaluated as work. They attend classes and do homework to pass an exam or to

get a degree (Bask & Salmela-Aro, 2013). From these perspectives, it can be said that the work of the students is a kind of profession.

Just as in the workplace, burnout in the school environment has negative consequences. Burnout among students means fatigue caused by the demands of the study, not belonging to his studies and feeling himself insufficient as a student (Schaufeli, Martinez, Pinto, Salanova & Bakker, 2002). Among the problems caused by school burnout, a decrease in school engagement (Özdemir, 2015) academic procrastination (Balkıs, 2013) lack of academic motivation (Seçer, 2015) depressive symptoms (Salmela-Aro, Savolainen & Holopainen, 2009) can be shown. In their study, similar to these studies, Fiorilli, De Stasio, Di Chiacchio, Pepe and Samela-Aro (2017) stated that students with school burnout experience problems such as low academic achievement, low motivation to fulfill their school responsibilities, and passivity in learning tasks. Based on the findings of these studies, it may be stated that burnout in the school environment has significant effects on students' school life. Being able to identify these students in the classroom will prevent the above-mentioned overlook and underestimation.

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Miller and Rollnick (2013) defined motivational interviewing as a guiding method that increases intrinsic motivation to change by searching and analyzing ambivalence. Motivational Interviewing is a client-centered approach that encourages people to make their own changes to their own lives. Motivational interviewing is seen as a way for individuals to recognize their current or potential problems and take action on them. This method is considered an effective method, especially for people who are reluctant or ambivalent about change (Rubak, Sandbaek, Lauritzen & Cristensen, 2005). The point to be emphasized in motivational interviewing is ambivalence. Ambivalence is the coexistence of opposite situations in individuals, and often lies between change and not change (Hall, Gibbie & Lubman, 2012). Motivational interviewing allows individuals to make a change talk in their own words in this ambivalence situation. Motivational interviewing also supports individuals in their self-efficacy.

There are a number of principles on which the motivational interview practice is based on while the clients are accompanied by change. These principles guide both the counselor and the client. The following are the four basic principles that show great relevance to the nature of the motivational interview.

Express empathy. A client-oriented and empathic counseling is a key principle and a defined characteristic of motivational interviewing. This kind of empathic communication is used throughout the process from the very beginning of the motivational interview process (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). This technique, which includes reflective comments that indicate what the client is saying, indicates that the consultant listens to the client and tries to look at it from his point of view (Droppa & Lee, 2014). The use of this skill helps the client enter positive tendencies in order to plan a change. In addition, empathy helps to establish a safe space where the client can easily move between feelings and thoughts (Stoltz & Young, 2012).

Develop discrepancy. The second main principle of the motivational interview is to create a contradiction between the client's purpose and values related to the future and the present behavior. When a behavior is perceived as conflicting with a person's important goals (such as one's health, success, family's happiness or positive self-image), change is more likely to occur (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

Roll with resistance. Resistance occurs when the counselor advocates change and the client presents evidence against it. Such debates are time consuming to achieve the goal. Not only does the ambivalent annihilate the possibility of convincing the person, but he also forces the person to go in the opposite direction, causing a direct defense argument (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

Support self-efficacy. An individual's positive belief about change is an important element of motivation. The client himself is responsible for all of the changes in the process of change and the consequences of these choices. The counselor's belief that the client can make the change is reflected in the attitude of the client during the change process. Encouraging their positive beliefs in the direction of change leads to positive behavioral changes.

In the relevant literature, it is mentioned how motivational interviewing can help theoretically and practically in the face of many negative situations (bullying, at-risk students, dropout) encountered in schools (Rollnick, Kaplan & Rutschman, 2016). In addition, the findings of the researches that motivational interviewing affects academic behaviors (Terry, Smith, Strait & McQuillin, 2013) also provided the idea that this technique can prevent burnout, which is an undesirable thing in school environments.

In this study, the effect of a psycho-education program that prepared according to the motivational interviewing basic principles, on the school burnout levels of secondary school students was investigated. For this purpose, the following hypothesis has been created:

School burnout of students participating in the motivational interview psycho-education program will show a significant decrease compared to students who do not.

METHOD

This study was carried out to examine the effect of a psycho-education program prepared in accordance with the principles of motivational interviewing on the school burnout levels of 6th and 7th grade primary school students. Accordingly, an experimental design with pre-test, post-test, follow-up test and control group was used. This method is the research in which the cause-effect relationships between the variables are investigated and the changes are observed by keeping the variables under control (Cemaloğlu, 2012). Experimental studies are quantitative approaches designed to explore the effects of assumed causes. In this approach, changes are deliberately made to see how one thing will affect another (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2015).

In this study, 2 x 3 factorial design was used. In this model, there are two groups created by random assignment. One of these groups is the experiment; the other is used as the control group. In both groups, pre-experimental and post-experimental measurements are made under equal conditions (Karasar, 2016).

STUDY GROUP

This study was conducted in a secondary school in Van, Turkey in 2016-2017 academic year. The study group of the study consisted of the students selected from the 6th and 7th grades in secondary school. The students participating in the research are between 12-14 years old. Pre-test was administered to all of the students in the 6th and 7th grades of the school. When the literature on the establishment of psycho-education groups for children and adolescents is reviewed, it is recommended that the age range and grade level should not be more than two for the same groups (Brown, 2018). Similarly, 5th grade students were not included in the study because they were younger and it was thought that they would have difficulty in participating in the group process. 8th grade students were not included in the study as they were preparing for the entrance exam to high schools and did not have time. For this reason, 6th and 7th grades, which are thought to have close characteristics, were included in the research groups. Totally 198 students from 6th and 7th grades participated in the pre-test application. The pre-test scores of these students from SBI are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. *The Pre-Test Scores of These Students from SBI.*

	<i>n</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	\bar{X}	<i>Sd</i>
<i>SBI Total</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>9,00</i>	<i>45,00</i>	<i>17,823</i>	<i>7,280</i>

DATA COLLECTION

The School Burnout Inventory (SBI) was developed by Salmela-Aro, Kiuru, Leskinen and Nurmi (2009) in order to measure school burnout levels of students aged 10-18 years. The scale is 5-likert type. The items are scored as the participant makes the most appropriate choice in the range of "I totally don't agree" and "I totally agree". The Turkish adaptation study of the inventory was performed by Seçer, Halmatov, Veyis and Ateş (2013). The original form of the inventory consists of 9 items and three sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions are exhaustion at school, cynicism toward the meaning of school and sense of inadequacy at school. After confirmatory factor analysis for Turkish form, similar to the original form three sub-dimensions were tested. As a result of the reliability analysis of the scale, the internal consistency parameter has been found to be $\alpha=.75$, and the reliability of test-retest as $\alpha=.80$ (Seçer et al., 2013).

PROCESS

This study is an experimental study consisting of three tests (pre-test, post-test and follow-up test). In accordance with the purpose of the study, the researcher created an eight-session psycho-education program. The aforementioned basic skills of motivational interviewing were used in each session of the psycho-education program. In the first session, the meeting took place and the group rules were established by joint decisions. In the last session, the psycho-education program was evaluated. The Session Evaluation Form was used to evaluate the psycho-education program.

The content of the psycho-education program applied in this study was prepared in line with the basic principles of motivational interviewing. After the session content and activities were prepared by the researcher, they were presented to the opinions and suggestions of a field expert. Some arrangements were made in line with the opinions of the field experts. Then, it was submitted to the provincial directorate of national education in order to evaluate the content and appropriateness of the program and to obtain the necessary application permissions. After obtaining the necessary permissions, the principal and school counselor at the implementation school were interviewed and information was given about the program content.

The inventory form to be used in the study was applied to 198 students attending 6th and 7th grade students. Then the results of the pre-test application were analyzed and the students were assigned to the experimental and control groups. After the students in the experimental and control groups were determined, a permit document was requested from the parents of the students to participate in the application. At the end of the psycho-education process, post-test was applied to the students in the experimental and control groups. This application was made to the experimental group students attending the sessions and to the control group students attending the meeting where the post-test application was held. Finally, two months after the post-test application, the students in the experimental group, and control group (participating in the post-test) were followed-up. The last test results were analyzed together with the pre-test post-test results and their findings were presented in the study.

PSYCHO-EDUCATION PROGRAM

Psycho-education programs aim to eliminate or minimize the problems by raising awareness of individuals about the potential they have in order to eliminate the problems they encounter (Srivastava & Pandey, 2017). Psycho-education al groups are inherently educational and prioritize skills training (Brown, 2018). It is thought that studying subjects such as social skill development, working skills, sexual issues, emotional issues and stress management in psycho-education groups may be effective (Bore, Hendricks & Womack, 2013).

Motivational interviewing aims to help students not only for their academic success but also to cope with different problem situations they may encounter in school (Rollnick, Kaplan & Rutsman, 2016). The psycho-education program prepared for this study focused on the issue of school burnout,

which may be one of the different situations. The preparation of this program, which aims to help school burnout with the principles of motivational interviewing, started by reviewing the related literature. This psycho-education program consists of 8 sessions. Although each session varies according to its content and activities, it takes an average of 70 minutes. It is stated that this period will be appropriate if active participation of the group is achieved (Brown, 2018). Content of a sample session:

Topic: Gives information about the topic of a session. For example, if the session is about feeling weak, the topic might be "weakness".

Objectives: It is the part where the purpose of the session is known. For example, noticing situations in which he/she feels "weak" at school.

Aim: It is the place where the situations that are expected to be gained at the end of the session such as skill, knowledge, awareness are expressed. For example, He/she will notice situations in which he/she feels weak at school.

Awareness raising: At this stage, it is expected that the students are aware of the topic of the session.

Expressing empathy: This stage represents one of the basic principles of motivational interviewing. Students are given the message that they are listened to and understood by giving empathic reflections.

Develop discrepancy: The next step in motivational interviewing is developing discrepancy. At this stage of the program, students are expected to notice the contradictions between their current situation and the situations they want, imagine and expect.

Rolling with resistance: This is the third step in motivational interviewing. An individual who gains awareness about change may not be able to accept this change easily. The resistance to change that will arise in this case is not seen as a problem in motivational interviewing. Resistance to change can arise for different reasons. The thing to do is to understand the resistance and make the student be aware of the resistance.

Support self-efficacy: The student himself is responsible for all of the changes. Supporting student's self-efficacy will bring out positive results in the change process.

Ending the session: The group leader thanks the members for participating in the session and the session is ended with good wishes.

In each step of the session, the basic skills used in motivational interviewing were used. Open questions, affirmations, reflections and summarizing are the basic skills used in motivational interviewing and were used in sessions of this psycho-education program. The most important issue to be considered in practice is that the group leader should provide the time that the participants can attend the activities.

RESULTS

According to the results of the t-test conducted to test whether the pre-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups obtained from the SBI were equal before the experimental procedure, the difference between the mean scores of the experimental groups in both groups was not significant [$t(32) = -1,233$ $p > .05$].

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation Values of the Groups for Scores of all Three Tests of the SBI.

Groups	Pre-Test			Post-Test			Follow-up		
	n	\bar{X}	Sd	n	\bar{X}	Sd	n	\bar{X}	Sd
Experimental	17	24,235	4,76353	16	17,9375	6,85535	16	12,1250	2,777
Control	17	26,9412	7,69310	12	31,5000	10,1935	12	25,2500	9,733

When the table is examined, it is seen that the mean score of the experimental group participants in the pre-psycho-education program was 24,235, while the average score of the same test was \bar{x} =17,9375 after psycho-education. The mean pre-test score of the control group was \bar{x} =26,9142 and this was \bar{x} =31,500 for the post-test. Accordingly, it can be said that there was a decrease in the school burnout levels of the experimental group participants after the applied psycho-education program and the increase in the burnout levels of the control group participants who did not receive education.

It is seen that the experimental and control groups are different from the ones taken from the SBI. The results of ANOVA for the repeated measures applied to determine the significance of the differences between the mean scores of the scores of the groups were given in Table 3.

Table 3. ANOVA Results for SBI all Three Tests Scores.

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between groups	43542,29	27			
Groups (Experiment/Control)	1875,62	1	1875,62	21,603	.000
Error	2257,368	26	86,822		
Within groups	3107,621	56			
Time	777,145	2	388,572	11,631	.000
Group*Time	593,24	2	296,62	8,879	.000
Error	1737,236	52	33,408		
Total	43542,29	27			

p <.05

According to the results of Table 3, it was observed that the group effect was significant (F (1-26) = 21,603; p <.05) in the mean of the school burnout all three tests' scores of the participants in the experimental and control groups. According to this, it can be said that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the scores obtained from the SBI without discriminating between the pre-test, post-test and follow-up test results of the experimental and control groups.

The difference between the averages of the scores of all three tests was statistically significant (F (2-52) = 11,631; p <.05). It can be said that school burnout levels change as a result of the experimental process when group discrimination is not performed. However, when the effect of group*measurement is considered, it is understood that the result obtained is meaningful (F (2-27) = 8,879; p <.05). According to this finding, there is a change in the scores of the experimental and control group participants from the tests.

Bilateral comparisons were made with Bonferroni method in order to learn the source of significant differences in measurement*group interaction in school burnout measurements. The paired comparison results of the experimental and control groups are presented in Table 4.

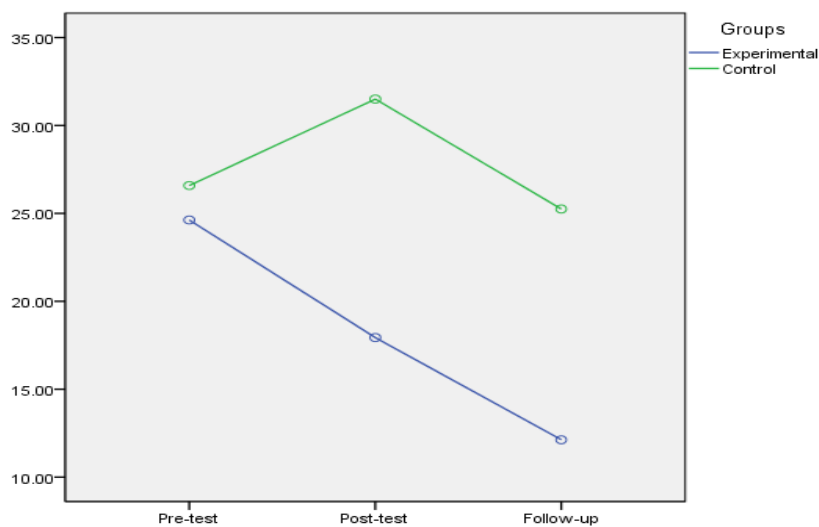
Table 4. Post-hoc Table of the Tests' Scores of the Experiment and Control Groups From the SBI.

		Experimental			Control		
		Pre-test	Post-test	Follow-up	Pre-test	Post-test	Follow-up
Experiment	Pre-test	–	6,688*	12,500*	1,958		
	Post-test		–	5,812*		13,562*	
	Follow-up			–			13,125*
Control	Pre-test				–	4,917	1,333
	Post-test					–	6,250*
	Follow-up						–

*p <.05

As seen from the results in the table, there was a significant difference (6,688; p <.05) between the pre-test and post-test scores of the participants in the experimental group participating in the psycho-education program. There was also a significant difference between the pre-test scores and the follow-up test scores of the experimental group participants (12,500; p <.05). This significance was found between the post-test scores of the experimental group participants and the follow-up test scores (5,812; p <.05). When the table was examined, there was no significant difference between the tests applied to the control group except the post-test and the follow-up test. The graph of changes due to groups and measurements in the study process is presented in Figure 1.

Figure1. Graph of Change due to Groups and Measurements in School Burnout Scores



As seen in Figure 1, there was a steady decline in school burnout scores among the experimental group participants. In addition, the scores of the control group participants showed an increase from the pre-test to the post-test and then decreased in the follow-up test.

The aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of a psycho-education al program prepared according to motivational interviewing basic principles on the school burnout levels of middle school students. For this, the researchers carried out an application consisting of 8 sessions. When the school burnout scores obtained from the experimental and control groups at the beginning and at the end of the application are analyzed, it is seen that the burnout scores of the participants of the experimental group differ significantly from the scores of the control group. Based on the analysis findings, it can be said that motivational interviewing has an effect on reducing the school burnout of

middle school students. However, no study investigating the relationship between motivational interviewing and school burnout was found in the literature review. It is seen that the studies conducted are generally associated with the results of school burnout.

According to the results of the study, it was observed that the psycho-education program implemented in this study decreased school burnout. When the researches are reviewed, it is seen that academic achievement is related to school burnout and increasing academic success decreases burnout. It would not be wrong to say that the decrease in burnout in this study increased academic achievement. Similarly, Reich, Sharp, and Berman (2015) concluded that motivational interviewing intervention influenced students' studies outside the school and increased the success of their examinations. Based on this result, it can be said that motivational interviewing based intervention decreases school burnout and thus increases academic achievement.

In the literature, it is stated that there is a significant relationship between school burnout and self-efficacy (Charkhabi, Abarghuei & Hayati, 2013). In this respect, it can be said that reducing school burnout will increase self-efficacy. In this study, using motivational interview principles, it can be concluded that self-efficacy increases as a result of the decrease of school burnout. Channon et al. (2013) pointed out that the peer support program they prepared in accordance with the motivational interview principles contributed to the development of positive school beliefs and the students' experience as a supporting environment. Considering the fact that the learner feels lonely in the school environment, one of the most important factors in the alienation of the school can be said that the applied psycho-education program reduces the alienation status of the school by giving students the awareness of peer support among their own resources. In their study, Cryer and Atkinson (2014) concluded that the motivation of motivational interviewing led to an increase in the motivation of learning even for young children and a significant decrease in classroom behavior. This result is consistent with the conclusion that motivational-based psycho-education reduces the impact of school alienation.

According to the results of the research, it was seen that the education program applied in this study reduced school burnout. Safaeinaeini et al. (2020) stated in their study that, similar to the results of this study, motivational interviewing helps to reduce academic burnout. Based on these and similar indirect studies, it can be said that interventions to school burnout can affect positive student behavior. Considering the significant effect of the psycho-education program applied in this study in reducing school burnout, it can be said that motivational interviewing is an effective method in intervening in adverse situations in schools.

RECOMMENDATION

In present study, it was aimed to reduce the school burnout levels of secondary school students by using the principles of motivational interviewing. For this purpose, a psycho-education program was developed and applied in eight sessions. It can be seen from the research findings that the motivational interviewing-based psycho-education program is effective in reducing the school burnout of students in the specified age group. Based on these findings, it is recommended to conduct motivational interviewing practices at different educational levels. Similarly, it is thought that motivational interviewing practices will be useful in solving different problems (academic alienation, violence, bullying etc.) that can be seen in schools.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

- The first author has made substantial contributions to the conception and design, data collection, and data analysis
- The second author has made substantial contributions to the conception and design as well as the analysis and interpretation of the data

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