

# Investigation of Burnout Levels of Turkish Physical Education and Sports Teachers in Terms of Various Variables

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## ABSTRACT

The present research aims at determination and evaluation of burnout levels of Physical Education and Sports Teachers who worked in Izmir Province, Turkiye in terms of some variables. Maslach Burnout Inventory developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) was used in order to explore burnout levels of Physical Education and Sports Teachers during the data collection phase. 100 volunteer Physical Education and Sports Teachers (46 female and 54 male) who worked at both state schools and private schools participated in the study. For the data analysis; percentages, arithmetic means, Mann-Whitney Test, Kruskal-Wallis and Pearson Correlation Test were used. As the result of the research, it was found out that female Physical Education and Sports Teachers had higher burnout levels compared to male Physical Education and Sports Teachers and those who worked at state schools experienced relatively higher levels of burnout levels compared to those who worked at private schools. And also, there was a significant correlation between professional rank and personal achievement subscale ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Keywords:** Physical education and sports teachers, Maslach Burnout Inventory

## INTRODUCTION

Technology that changes fast and the changes that take place in the social life affect human life in every aspect. Burnout syndrome that manifests itself as mental, emotional and physical fatigue emerged clearly especially for decades (22, 31).

Burnout is referred to as a reaction to a chronic stress in an interactive way between environment and personality traits (9, 36); as a stressful, heavy and longer working situations. Many authors have agreed that burnout is -at a personal level- an internal psychological experience that involves expectations, attitudes, motivations and emotions (15). Burnout, a negative experience that leads to negative conditions, is explained with three subscales (24). These are emotional exhaustion, desensitization and lack of personal accomplishment.

It is suggested that burnout levels of the individuals show personal differences in the face of similar stressful events depending on the individual's personal traits, his approach for stressful situations, his coping methods and recent working conditions. (35, 1). Burnout makes people feel hopeless, cornered and worn out. Therefore, it means a more negative situation than stress (23).

The reasons for burnout are associated with individual's expectations. It is generally a situation that occurs as the result of the inconsistency between unreal expectations and personal expectations (43). It is emphasized that burnout leads to such personality problems as fatigue, sleeplessness, alienation to work, quitting work, marriage problems (32). Burnout occurs more in a profession that requires more

interpersonal human relations like teachers, doctors and managers (34, 33).

Although it is known that teachers are more stressed than the general population and experience stress more than other professional groups (16), burnout that occurs as a natural result of the teaching profession and physiological and psychological problems that occur due to burnout weaken the quality of the teaching profession (42). The effects of these problems are felt negatively in the teaching settings, among the students, their families and the society because they cause stress, worry and exhaustion, low work performance, negative professional attitudes, absenteeism, wish to quit work and deterioration in psychological health (8).

According to the results of the studies obtained by the American Institute of Stress, it is concluded that teaching is one of the professions that have a possibility to shorten people's life span due to various reasons and to complicate people's effective coping with problems of daily living (4).

About the stress-causing factors, recent researches draw attention to the excessive number of the students in the classroom environment, growth retardation, excessive work load, role conflicts, poor communication with colleagues, poor work environment, insufficient salary, poor status, lack of time and lack of sources (21, 20, 14). Yet, some researches report that single teachers experience more exhaustion than married teachers, the elder people and children and those who are beginners and inexperienced in the profession undergo more burnout than those more experienced (2, 29).

Like other teachers, today, Physical Education Teachers may also undergo negative situations caused by exhaustion. Their exhaustion levels may be increasing generally due to unsuitable and negative conditions, economical insufficiencies and unmet expectations due to different reasons (45). The present research aims at evaluation of the professional burnout levels of the Physical Education Teachers in terms of different variables.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

100 volunteer Physical Education and Sports Teachers (46 female and 54 male) who were selected using random-sampling and worked at both state schools and private schools participated in the study. A questionnaire form was distributed to those who were willing to participate and there was no time-limit for filling in the forms. Official permissions from the Provincial (İzmir/Turkey) Directorate of National Education and school managements were obtained before the research.

### Data Collection

As the data collection tool, a questionnaire form used in survey method was used in order to generalize the population. Also, socio-demographic data collection form and Maslach Burnout Inventory [developed by Maslach and Jackson (25), Turkish validity and reliability tests performed by Ergin (11) and administered for teachers by Sucuoğlu and Kuloğlu for the first time (38) were used, too. For the data analysis; percentages, arithmetic means, Mann-Whitney Test, Kruskal-Wallis and Pearson Correlation Test were used.

### Data Analysis

The Mann-Whitney Test, Kruskal-Wallis and Pearson Correlation Test were used to evaluate the data. All data are presented in the form of mean  $\pm$  standard deviation (SD). All of the p values were compared at a 5% level of significance. The statistical analysis of the data was performed with the SPSS 15.0 software package for Windows.

### Socio-Demographic Data Collection Form

The form filled by the participants themselves contains questions about seven different variables [sex, marital status, age, working place (state school v.s. private school), professional rank, working time, sportive facilities of the school]. Some of the demographic variables were previously used in other researches conducted with other professional groups and teachers. We wanted to know the effect of these variables on physical education teachers. Other variables were determined as problematic issues and behaviors after the physical education teachers had mentioned them during the face to face interviews.

## Maslach Burnout Inventory

It was developed by Maslach and Jackson (25). It contains a total of 22 items and measures burnout under three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Desensitization (D) and Lack of Personal Accomplishment (LPA). The acronyms (MBI, EE, D, LPA) were used same as in the literature. There are 9 items in Emotional Exhaustion, 5 items in Desensitization and 8 items in Lack of Personal Accomplishment. Statements about Emotional Exhaustion and Desensitization are negative statements and statements about Lack of Personal Accomplishment are positive statements. Seven-point answer options were thought to be unsuitable and it became five-point answer option in the adaptation study. The evaluation of the subscales of the MBI is performed separately. In the five-point likert type scale; each item of the EE, D, LPA subscales is answered as “never” (0), “rarely” (1), “sometimes” (2), “frequently” (3) and “always” (4). However, higher scores that are obtained from LPA are considered as personal achievement since LPA subscale contains positive questions and there are no reversed items.

Validity and reliability tests of the scale designed for the teachers were first performed by Girgin (13) and Sucuoğlu and Kuloğlu (38). Test-retest method and internal consistency coefficient methods were used in the test performed by Girgin in order to determine reliability of the Inventory. Reliability coefficients obtained through test retest methods for EE, D and LPA were 0.86, 0.68 and 0.83; respectively. In the present research; the inventory was administered to the participants one by one and they were told that the inventory did not investigate burnout but measured professional attitudes thus we aimed to increase the reliability of the inventory. Cronbach Alpha Coefficients were found to be 0.82 for Emotional Exhaustion, 0.48 for Desensitization and 0.83 for Lack of Personal Achievement.

## RESULTS

Physical education teachers told that they had low income levels (5 %), medium income levels (91 %) and high income levels (2 %).

When analyzed in terms of subscales of the MBI; it was found out that there was not a significant difference ( $p>0.05$ ) between exhaustion scores and physical education teachers working at state schools had higher scores of Emotional Exhaustion, Desensitization and Personal Achievement compared to those working at private schools (table 1).

It was found out in the analysis made in terms of sex variable that female physical education teachers had higher scores from the subscales of the MBI compared to male physical education teachers. However, there was not any significant difference

between the groups ( $p > .05$ ; table 2).

It was found out in the analysis made in terms of marital status that married teachers were better in Personal Achievement subscale compared to single teachers. And also, scores of Emotional Exhaustion and Desensitization of the single teachers were higher. However, there was not any significant difference between the groups ( $p > .05$ ; table 3).

As seen in table 4, Emotional Exhaustion levels of the teachers who did not get on-job-training were higher whereas there was significant difference

between the teachers who got on-job-trainings and those who did not get on-job-trainings in terms of Personal Achievement ( $p < .05$ ).

It was noted that physical education teachers who did not follow professional publications had higher scores in Emotional Exhaustion and Desensitization. Teachers who followed professional publications had higher scores from Personal Achievement compared to others. However, there was not any significant difference between the groups ( $p > .05$ ).

**Table 1.** Mann-Whitney U Test For State-Private Schools – Burnout

Burnout Subscales		n	Mean $\pm$ Sd	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	P
Emotional Exhaustion	State	39	16.02 $\pm$ 5.87	52.70	2002.500	1056.500	-,739	.460
	Private	61	11.26 $\pm$ 2.54	48.32	2947.50			
Desensitization	State	39	11.97 $\pm$ 3.49	52.75	2004.50	1054.500	-,759	.448
	Private	61	11.26 $\pm$ 2.54	48.29	2945.50			
Personal Achievement	State	39	30.60 $\pm$ 4.72	49.75	1890.50	1149.500	-,069	.945
	Private	61	29.67 $\pm$ 6.60	50.16	3059.50			

**Table 2.** Mann-Whitney U Test for Sex- Burnout

Burnout Subscales		n	Mean $\pm$ Sd	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	P
Emotional Exhaustion.	Females	46	15.46 $\pm$ 5.23	51.23	2305.50	1159,500	-,495	.621
	Males	54	15.24 $\pm$ 5.63	48.97	2644.50			
Desensitization	Females	46	11.60 $\pm$ 3.17	50.11	2255.00	1210,000	-,035	.972
	Males	54	11.48 $\pm$ 2.76	49.91	2695.00			
Personal Achievement	Females	46	30.28 $\pm$ 5.14	51.14	2301.50	1163,500	-,363	.717
	Males	54	29.81 $\pm$ 6.58	49.05	2648.50			

**Table 3.** Mann-Whitney U Test for Marital Status- Burnout

Burnout Subscales		N	Mean $\pm$ Sd	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	P
Emotional Exhaustion	Married	70	15.18 $\pm$ 5.37	49.12	3389.00	974.000	-,466	.642
	Single	30	15.70 $\pm$ 5.64	52.03	1561.00			
Desensitization	Married	70	11.37 $\pm$ 2.90	48.78	3366.00	951.000	-,646	.519
	Single	30	11.90 $\pm$ 3.06	52.80	1584.00			
Personal Achievement	Married	70	30.18 $\pm$ 6.18	51.06	3523.00	962.000	-,557	.557
	Single	30	29.66 $\pm$ 5.44	47.57	1427.00			

**Table 4.** Mann-Whitney U Test for on-Job-Training – Burnout

Burnout Subscales		N	Mean $\pm$ Sd	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	P
Emotional Exhaustion	Yes	84	15.18 $\pm$ 5.22	49.51	4109.50	623,500	.386	.700
	No	16	16.18 $\pm$ 6.55	52.53	840.50			
Desensitization	Yes	84	11.61 $\pm$ 3.00	50.86	4221.00	593,000	.681	.496
	No	16	11.12 $\pm$ 2.65	45.56	729.00			
Personal Achievement	Yes	84	30.60 $\pm$ 5.74	53.29	4423.00	391,000	-2,602	.009*
	No	16	27.06 $\pm$ 6.29	32.94	527.00			

\* P < 0.05

**Table 5.** Mann-Whitney U Test for Following Professional Publications- Burnout

Burnout Subscales		N	Mean $\pm$ Sd	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	P
Emotional Exhaustion	Yes	49	14.37 $\pm$ 5.33	44.65	2143.00	967.000	-,804	.071
	No	51	16.25 $\pm$ 5.42	55.04	2807.00			
Desensitization	Yes	49	11.52 $\pm$ 2.98	50.68	2432.50	1191.500	-,230	.818
	No	51	11.54 $\pm$ 2.94	49.36	2517.50			
Personal Achievement	Yes	49	30.08 $\pm$ 5.70	49.80	2390.50	1214.500	-,067	.947
	No	51	29.98 $\pm$ 6.22	50.19	2559.50			

**Table 6.** Kruskal Wallis Test for Age Groups- Burnout

Burnout Subscales		N	Mean ±Sd	Mean Rank	X <sup>2</sup>	df	p
Emotional Exhaustion	<30Years	20	14.55±4.93	45.58	6.779	3	0.79
	31-40	46	14.58±5.30	45.62			
	41-50	21	17.71±5.50	63.79			
	>51	11	14.36±5.06	45.59			
Desensitization	<30Years	20	10.75±2.09	45.23	12.482	3	.006*
	31-40	46	11.26±2.78	47.61			
	41-50	21	13.28±3.16	66.64			
	>51	11	9.90±1.37	32.45			
Personal Achievement	<30Years	20	28.15±7.50	43.53	4.782	3	-.188
	31-40 Years	46	29.43±5.77	45.96			
	41-50	21	32.33±4.21	59.31			
	>51	11	31.72±5.51	56.45			

\* P &lt; 0.05

**Table 7.** Mann-Whitney U Test for Age Groups-Desensitization

Age Desensitization	Age	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	P
Desensitization	<30	20	15.80	316.00	106.000	-2,740	.0006*
	41-50	21	25.95	545.00	306.000	-2,410	.016*
	31-40	46	30.15	1387.00			
	41-50	21	42.43	891.00			
	41-50	21	20.26	425.50	36.500	-3,167	.002*
	>51	11	9.32	102.50			

\* P &lt; 0.05

**Table 8.** The Results of the Correlation between Burnout Levels of the Physical Education Teachers and Variables

Burnout – Variables	Emotional Exhaustion	Desensitization	Personal Achievement
Age	.183	.123	.231*
Professional Rank	.072	.228	.022
	.121	.085	.221*
Weekly Working Time	.238	.409	.029
	.008	.042	-.104
	.935	.684	.313

There was a significant difference between the age groups in the Desensitization subscale ( $p < 0.05$ ). The difference in terms of Desensitization was more evident in aged 41-50 years group (table 6).

There were significant differences between <30 and 41-50 age groups, 31-40 and 41-50 age groups and 41-50 and >51 age groups in terms of desensitization subscale ( $p < 0.05$ ; table 7).

Table 8 demonstrated that as age and professional rank –i.e. professional experience- increased so did personal achievement and thus there was a positive correlation between age and professional rank and Personal Achievement ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, there were no significant differences between burden of weekly working time and the subscales ( $p > 0.05$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The present research aims at evaluation of burnout levels of Physical Education and Sports Teachers in terms of some variables. When we analyzed the findings of the study, it was noted that Physical Education Teachers who worked at state schools had higher scores of Emotional Exhaustion, Desensitization and Personal Achievement subscales

compared to those who worked at private schools but there was not any significant difference in MBI ( $p > 0.05$ ). The similar results were obtained from the studies of Vurgun and et al., (45) and Fejgin and et al., (12). We may say that Physical Education Teachers who worked at state schools suffer from lack of physical equipment, lack of sportive equipment and lack of sportive facilities and thus get tired and worn out more and run out of their psychological sources. It may be suggested that private schools provide better courts, sportive equipments and its number of students is fewer than the state schools so these are effective upon the above-mentioned findings.

It was found out in our study –as in Şahin's study (40)- that female physical education teachers had higher scores from MBI in terms of sex variable compared to male physical education teachers. However, there was not any significant difference between the groups ( $p > 0.05$ ). The researches conducted in order to investigate sex variable do not provide consistent results (41). Some studies report that work load and burnout are experienced more by women whereas others did not find any difference among males and females (1, 29, 39, 37). As a result,

just as there are study-results that demonstrate that female physical education teachers experience more “emotional exhaustion” (7, 11,44); there are also study results that demonstrate that male physical education teachers experience more “emotional exhaustion”, too (43). Similar results are seen in the studies conducted with physical education teachers, too (6, 30). It may be suggested that female physical education teachers undergo more emotional exhaustion due to the fact that they experience different professional experiences, they come across different attitudes in student, parent and school management relations and they are emotionally more sensitive.

When analyzed marital status and exhaustion, it was found out that married teachers were better in Personal Achievement subscale compared to single teachers. And also, scores of Emotional Exhaustion and Desensitization of the single teachers were higher. However, there was not any significant difference between the groups ( $p>.05$ ). Literature reports similar results that exhaustion did not differ in terms of marital status variable (18, 40, 28). Although there was not significant difference between the scores obtained from MBI subscales in terms of marital status; it may be told that married teachers experience more exhaustion due to their heavier economic and familial responsibilities.

Emotional Exhaustion levels of the teachers who did not get on-job-training were higher and there was significant difference between the teachers who got on-job-trainings and those who did not get on-job-trainings in terms of Personal Achievement ( $p<.05$ ). However, there were no significant differences between burden of weekly working time and the subscales ( $p>.05$ ). Unlike our study, the study of Karademir and et. al. (19) pointed out that the correlation between daily working hours and exhaustion levels was found statistically to be significant. Physical education teachers are not charged only with teaching PE course but also organizing all of the sportive activities, discovering skillful students and guiding them and training teams and thus they are unable to save time for themselves; which in turn occurs as exhaustion (10).

In terms of age variable, there was a significant difference between the age groups in the Desensitization subscale ( $p<.05$ ). As age and professional rank increased so did lack of personal achievement and thus there was a positive correlation between age and professional rank and lack of personal achievement feeling ( $p<.05$ ). Age-advancement enhances knowledge and experience affects “personal achievement” positively while exhaustion caused by professional wearing out and heavy working conditions reduces life satisfaction. Results of many researches (17, 3, 5, 19) support ours.

Results of some foreign studies also support our results (22, 31). The fact that burnout reduces as age advances can be seen in the study of Maslach and Jackson (26, 27).

Physical Education Teachers may be regarded as lucky because they need to be active -despite their advanced age- due to their roles and their continuous involvement in non sportive activities and sportive activities. Reasons for the statistical difference among the age groups are that beginner teachers had higher burnout levels, had higher expectations, lacked professional experience, had more difficulties in coping with the problems compared to the experienced teachers. Experiences obtained on job provide both various solutions and practicability. Therefore, these results can be considered normal.

It was concluded in the present study which was conducted in order to determine levels of burnout of the physical education teachers in terms of some variables that physical education teachers who worked at private schools and voluntarily preferred the profession undergo less burnout; being beginner and younger in the profession and heavy working hours affected burnout levels negatively; female physical education teachers experienced higher burnout in sex variable; marital status and weekly working hours did not affect burnout levels in marital variable but those married were more capable of coping with their problems.

In light of these results; Candidate teachers should be trained about negative situations in the schools where they will work in the future and solutions should be proposed. A working setting where experienced teachers and beginner teachers collaborate should be set up and knowledge / information should be shared. Necessary sportive equipments and facilities should be provided so that physical education teachers can teach properly and effectively. Collaboration with universities should be initiated and on-job-trainings should be increased and professional upgrading should be performed.

We hope that the present research that aims at evaluation of burnout levels of Physical Education and Sports Teachers and the affecting variables will shed light on the problems that teachers are likely to face and will contribute to educational productivity.

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