BURNOUT SYNDROME LEVELS OF TEACHERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN TURKEY

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The purpose of this study is to determine whether burnout levels of special education teachers working with hearing, orthopedic and mentally impaired students in Bursa, Turkey differ according to some independent variables such as gender, family status, years of teaching experience, educational background and school type. A descriptive approach incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods was adopted in the present study to collect data. To analyse the quantitative data, t-tests and Mann Whitney- U test and descriptive analysis were used. A total of 67 teachers were selected from the seven special education schools in Bursa, Turkey. Each subject was given both the Maslach Burnout Inventory and Personal Information Form. Fourteen of the voluntarily participant teachers were interviewed. The results of the study revealed the fact that teachers working in special education schools had been experiencing burnout at very high levels. When burnout levels were investigated with respect to the type of the schools where the teachers work, significant differences were found in all subscales. To overcome burnout syndrome, it is necessary to train qualified teachers not only psychologically but also physiologically. For this reason, teachers both during pre-service and in-service education periods should take some courses, which will help them avoid burnout.

Introduction

Owing to factors as changing social roles, disagreement between individuals in their relationships, competition and bureaucratic working environments, the quest of individuals to prove themselves and having high expectations at work place negatively influence the health of employees and cause stress in their professional lives. When the stress of professional life adds up to difficulties and problems in the private lives of individuals, all these cause burn out which leads to serious problems both at individual and organizational levels. Burnout is a work related syndrome that individuals experience negative psychological reactions. As burnout results from all kinds of problems that an individual may experience in his/her working environment, plays a big role in causing burnout in the individual. Maslach and Jackson (1981) describe the experience of burnout in the people involved in *assisting professions* which require a close contact between the worker and the people receiving the service. Burnout is defined as a combination of feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a sense of lack of personal accomplishment (Hastings *et al.*, 2004). The use of the term *emotional exhaustion* entails the basic assumption that the burnout syndrome is mainly exhibited in the workers whose jobs demand high levels of interpersonal involvement. Apparently, it is particularly those who start their work with high involvement, interest and care, might eventually exhibit the same sense of mental exhaustion, typical of routine, and boring jobs (Jackson *et al.*, 1986). The feeling of depersonalization is regarded as a reaction to stress that is expressed in a range of reactions from little or no involvement in clients' problems up to treating themes as *objects* rather than human beings (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981). The sense of personal accomplishment is the lack of real achievement feeling at work in spite of the efforts by the worker. It is expressed in symptoms of stress and depression and a sense of despair—*Why should I try, in any case, nothing I do has any worthwhile results?* (Abramson *et al.*, 1978; Miller & Norman, 1979).

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the burnout levels of the special education teachers working with hearing, orthopedic and mentally impaired students in Bursa, Turkey. The present study tried to find out emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment subscales differ

according to such variables as gender, family status, teaching experience, educational background and school type.

Teaching is generally regarded as a highly pressured demanding profession in which burnout is common (Blandford, 2000; Evers et al., 2004; Sari, 2004; Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2005; Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2005; Isıkhan, 2004). Sari (2000) reported that low pay, poor training, crowded classrooms, discipline problems, lack of resources, lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of a well designed program, the mess of bureaucracy, bureaucratic society's criticisms, social and political oppression on educational organizations, insufficiency of rewarding and lack of participation in decision making are some of the reasons for teacher burnout. Teacher burnout, which is a phenomenon, has been found to affect the quality of educational services since over a period of time and influence a teacher's behavior in the classroom and the teaching profession. Stökli (1999) investigating the conditions of burnout impacting on the quality of the teacher-student relationship among 200 primary school teachers demonstrated that the teachers scoring high in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) also showed increased negative reactions to the pupils.

Another significant factor regarding burnout is the influence of the students who receive service in such environments. This factor is one of the characteristics, which has been studied extensively (Byrne, 1998; Eichinger, 2000; Evans, 2001; Hughes, 2001; Girgin & Baysal, 2005). It is reported that student characteristics in schools can seriously influence the extent of teacher exhaustion. Exhaustion of teachers leads to reduce teaching quality, and as a result of that, the academic performance of students is affected as well (Blandford, 2000). Among teachers, in comparison to general educators, special educators have been found to have higher burnout rates (Eichinger, 2000; Evers et al., 2004; Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2005). Working with students with special needs weakens the teacher's professional development and quality of educational and related services for the students. To work with these students in need can cause both physical and mental illnesses. According to the relevant literature on this topic, teachers working with the impaired are less creative and more impatient with their students, as they are depressed and lack of enthusiasm for their work (Weiskopf, 1980; Crane & Iwanicki, 1986; Croasmun et al., 1997). Since special needs children require more care and training as well as patience and sacrifice in comparison to their healthy peers, it is very stressful to work with students with special education needs. Special education teachers are often overburdened with multiple and sometimes competing responsibilities. This situation makes them experience less occupational satisfaction and more burnout. As the density of physical interaction is too high among special education students, working as a special education teacher is very exhausting.

The need for qualified staff in special education has reached crisis proportions in Turkey. With the increased need to educate students with disabilities on the rise and the supply of special education teachers on the decline, the shortage of special education teachers is a serious concern. Severe teacher shortages in special education have resulted in the hiring of many teachers who do not have adequate training on working with special needs students either in their undergraduate or in-service education programs. In Turkey, there are 253 at pre-school and elementary school levels (4-14 ages). Five hundred and forty-one children with special education needs, but unfortunately only 32.027 of them (13%) have a chance for special education in Turkey (MEB, 2007). The most fundamental reason for this is the insufficient number of schools for the impaired. Moreover, the fact that the institutions training teachers for the special education schools are insufficient in number, and for this reason, teachers with no knowledge of field are given the opportunity to work in these schools is considered to be among the reasons why the impaired can not get a sufficient and qualified education.

Like most teachers in Turkey, teachers in special education, due to economical reasons, do not have an opportunity to start a new career. They become exhausted because of many challenges they face everyday and experience occupational burnout. Burn out in teachers may be accompanied by reduced quality of teaching and may also impair pupils` performance since the possibility of successful progress highly depends on the teachers` accomplishment. Academic preparation and training of these teachers is costly, time-consuming, and difficult to replace. Much attention has been focused on the need to improve the quality of teaching in the special education schools. There is a need for studies on special education teachers' burnout in Turkey and studies on this topic are expected to fill this gap to improve the quality of special education teachers.

Method

Participants

A total of 67 teachers were selected from the seven special education schools in Bursa, Turkey. Each subject was given the questionnaire by the researcher directly with a set of specific instructions describing the study. Twenty-five percent of the group was composed of males and 75% of females; 91% married and 9% single. The number of years of teaching varied considerably. On average, participants had taught from 5-13 years. Fifty-nine percent of the teachers have an undergraduate degree in special education whereas 41% do not have a degree. This means these teachers do not have any education within the field of special education during their undergraduate studies. That is to say, they are the teachers of other fields. However, since there is a shortage of teachers in special education, they are appointed to these schools. Moreover, they have not had any in-service training in special education yet. Of the teachers, 48% work with the hearing impaired, 33% with the mentally retarded and 19% with the orthopedic impaired students in special education schools. All of the 67 teachers were administered the MBI. And the interview including a qualitative analysis was held with 14 teachers. Fourteen of the interviewed teachers were female whereas five were male. Only two of these teachers were single. While six of these teachers had a BA degree in Special Education, eight of them received only regular teacher education (B.Ed degree). Six teachers had been working with hearing impaired (HI), four with orthopedic impaired (OI), and four with mentally retarded (MR) students.

Measures

A descriptive approach was used in the present study in which the data were collected with both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data were collected through *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (MBI), *Personal Information Form* and interviews. The MBI was translated into Turkish by Ergin (1992) and applied to a sample group of 235 which consisted of doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers, and police officers. The analysis of the findings from this group resulted in some modifications on the MBI made by Ergin. Since the Turkish language does not respond to seven-point degree scale, the original instrument was modified to a 5 -point Likert-Type scale from never to everyday (Ergin, 1992). The MBI was administered individually to each participant to measure his or her level of burnout. MBI includes 22 questions divided into three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. Each subscale contains a series of particular characteristics: the Emotional Exhaustion (EE) contains nine items that describe feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work; the Depersonalization (D) subscale describes an unfeeling and impersonal response towards recipients of one's care or service; the eight items in the Personal Accomplishment (PA) subscale describe feelings of incompetence in the work settings. Scores from the Maslach Burnout Inventory are considered high if they are in the upper thirds of the normative distribution (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). For the subscales of EE and DP, high mean scores correspond to higher degrees of experienced burnout. In contrast to these subscales, lower mean scores within PA correspond to a higher degree of burnout. In this study, several statistical tests were used to examine the reliability of the inventory. First Cronbach Alpha values were calculated. The values for EE-emotional exhaustion (0.82), for DP-depersonalization (0.60), and for PA-personal accomplishment (0.73) were observed to be consistent with the results reported by Maslach and Jackson (1986).

Data Collection

Teachers and school administrators were contacted through site visits to each school and provided with a permission letter from the National Ministry of Education for the research and a letter explaining the study. It was explained to teachers that their participation in the study was completely voluntarily. Once verbal consent was received from the principals, arrangements were made with teachers to give detailed information about the study and the MBI. The teachers returned the MBI in one week to the researcher.

The qualitative data were collected through a researcher-designed semi-structured interview and the sample was asked about occupational burnout and the influence of it. Fourteen voluntarily participant teachers were interviewed in depth, on an individual basis lasting approximately one hour for each. The original interview schedule was first pilot-tested with three teachers working in a different special education school. After each interview, interviewee's comments were elicited, followed by a number of fundamental modifications in the schedule. During the interviews conducted by the researcher, the synonyms of burnout in Turkish were listed, and then the burnout syndrome was explained in detail. The following questions were asked: *Can you tell me about how you feel with occupational burnout while you have been teaching at this school?; What are the reasons for burnout?* ; *What do you think should have been done to overcome burnout?* ; *What helps the most, the least and why?* ; *Are you better*

equipped to deal with burnout? ; *Do your school administrators and the physical environment have a part in your burnout syndrome?*

Analysis of data

The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to find out whether the data show normal dispersion or not. For the data showing normal dispersion, t-test and one-way analysis of variance were applied. For the variables that were found significant, Turkey HSD test was used to make comparisons across groups. For the data that did not disperse normally, Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests were used. The relationships among the variables were investigated using with the co-efficient of Spearman correlation. The significant level was found to be α=0.05. For the statistical analysis of the quantitative data, SPSS 13.0 was used.

Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the interviews. Descriptive analysis involves identifying coherent and important themes and patterns in the data. Thus the complexity of the data was organized into categories. The categories were the feelings of the teachers related to occupational burnout, the reasons of burnout, and the ways of overcoming burnout. The researcher took notes during the interviews by using the word processor program; the responses of the participants were cut and pasted under each category. Then thematic similarities and differences were identified under each category.

Results

In the first part, the quantitative analysis of the data is presented. The quantitative findings of this research will be presented in five main parts as burnout levels of teachers according to gender, family status, education, years of teaching experience and school type.

Table 1

Burnout and Gender, Family Status, Educational Background

Subscale	Gender	N	Mean Rank	SR	U	P
Emotional	Male	17	43.09	732.5	270.50	.026*
Exhaustion	Female	50	30.91	1545.5		
Depersonalization	Male	17	45.41	772.0	231.00	.005**
	Female	50	30.12	1506.0		
Personal	Male	17	33.30	483.5	330.500	.172
Accomplishment	Female	50	22.81	1794.5		
	Family Status					
Emotional	Married	61	34.43	2100.0	157.000	.584
Exhaustion	Single	6	29.67	178.0		
Depersonalization	Married	61	35.47	2163.5	93.50	.048*
	Single	6	19.08	114.5		
Personal	Married	61	33.25	2028.5	137.50	.326
Accomplishment	Single	6	41.58	249.5		
	Educational Background					
Emotional	S E	39	37.41	1459.0	413.00	.090
Exhaustion	R E	28	29.25	819.0		
Depersonalization	S E	39	38.10	1486.0	386.00	.041*
	R E	28	28.29	792.0		
Personal	S E	39	29.36	1145.0	365.000	.021*
Accomplishment	R E	28	40.46	1133.0		

There were significant differences according to gender variable in relation to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The results indicated that the male teachers had significantly more emotional exhaustion (U=270.5, p< .05) and higher DP (U=231.0, p< .01) than their female counterparts. In PA, although no significant differences were found according to gender variable, the female teachers had significantly less personal accomplishment than their male counterparts. There were not any significant differences according to family status variable in relation to EE and PA. On both subscales, married teachers had higher burnout levels (see Table 1). On DP subscale, married teachers were found to be significantly more depersonalized than the single teachers (U=93.5, p< .05). Although it was not statistically significant, the EE levels of teachers who graduated from special education departments were found to be higher according to the type of graduated school variable. However, in the sub-scales of DP and PA statistically significant differences were found regarding the variable B.A. type. Both in DP (U=386.0, p< .05) and in PA subscales (U=365.0, p< .05), it was observed that the teachers

graduating from special education departments felt more exhausted compared to the teachers graduating from other departments.

Table 2
Burnout and Number of Years of Teaching Experience

Subscale	#Years teaching experience	N	Mean Rank	Sd	X2	P
Emotional Exhaustion	1-10	29	36.36	3	3.581	.310
	11-15	25	31.90			
	16-20	12	35.38			
	>21	1	1.50			
Depersonalization	1-10	29	34.90	3	2.019	.568
	11-15	25	34.30			
	16-20	12	33.46			
	>21	1	7.00			
Personal Accomplishment	1-10	29	31.19	3	2.531	.470
	11-15	25	38.84			
	16-20	12	30.58			
	>21	1	35.50			

Special education teachers' years of teaching experience had no significant effect on their level of burnout in any of the subscales. This was not an expected result because recent surveys have revealed that those whose teaching experience period is shorter had more burnout (Shreeve et al., 1986; Singer, 1993; George et al., 1995; Evans, 1997; Kilgore & Griffin, 1998). Those having one to ten years of teaching experience had the highest score, while those having 11-15 years of experience had the lowest mean score on emotional exhaustion. Although the differences were not significant on depersonalization subscale, teachers with 16-20 years of experience had the lowest burnout score. On personal accomplishment subscale, both the techers with teaching experience of 16-20 years and those working for one to ten years had more burnout. As there was only one teacher who had been working more than 21 years, his mean rank of burnout was not taken into consideration.

Table 3
Burnout and School Type

Subscale	School Type	n	Mean Rank	Df	X2	P	Significant Difference
Emotional Exhaustion	HI	32	26.50	2	11.90	.003**	HI-MR, HI-OI, MR-OI
	MR	22	36.66				
	OI	13	47,96				
Depersonalization	HI	32	24.17	2	22.397	.000***	HI-MR, HI-OI, MR-OI
	MR	22	36.50				
	OI	13	53.96				
Personal Accomplishment	HI	32	48.95	2	39.813	.000***	HI-MR, HI-OI, MR-OI
	MR	22	25.11				
	OI	13	12.23				

When burnout levels were investigated regarding the type of schools where teachers work, significant differences were found in all subscales. On emotional exhaustion, teachers working with the mentally retarded were more exhausted than those working with the hearing impaired; however, the teachers working with the orthopedic impaired were the most exhausted. On DP and PA scales, a statistically significant difference was found among the teachers, working with orthopedic and hearing-impaired students than those working with mentally retarded students. Additionally, it was observed that the teachers, working with mentally retarded individuals experience more exhaustion levels when compared to those working with hearing impaired individuals. Finally, when the differences between the scores of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment within the group were compared for each school type, the scores on each subscale were determined to be high and statistically significant.

Discussion

Burnout and Gender:

The findings of the present research were in accordance with the studies investigating gender differences in burnout syndrome that men to score significantly higher on emotional exhaustion and

depersonalization (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Byrne, 1998; Sari, 2004; Huges, 2001; Girgin & Baysal 2005; Timms et.al., 2006 and Bilge, 2006). On the personal accomplishment subscale, since any significant gender difference in relation to the personal accomplishment subscale was not found, the results of the present study also match up with the results of Kokkinos, (2006); Sari, (2004) and Evans, (2001). Female teachers typically take the major share of the responsibility for well being of the traditional home, to have time at home with their families and still enjoy the fulfillment of a professional career. This can be due to the fact that more female teachers work in schools; they share a lot in the teachers' room, tell each other about their problems and relax. Thus, they presumably feel much less professional exhaustion in comparison to male teachers. During the interview, this was expressed with the following words of a female teacher:

> *Thanks God! We have breaks and this teachers' room. We talk to each other here and give vent to our anger and helplessness. We share a lot not only about the problems we face in school, but also other matters of daily life, home, and our families. Seeing that I am not the only one who faces with the problems in school makes me feel relieved*.

A male teacher who is working with the hearing impaired said:

> *This is an impossible job to do. You are exhausted all day, but you are neither paid well nor are your efforts appreciated well enough. Whether you like or not, you are labelled as a teacher of students with special aid. We are not treated respectfully by anybody. I wouldn't recommend this profession to anyone. Who else would feel more burnout*?

These feelings expressed by the teacher lead to, as Hughes (2001:291) too pointed out, *less idealism, reduced work goals, and emotional detachment* among teachers working with the impaired.

Burnout and Family Status:

The family status variable of the study was exploratory in nature because previous relevant studies had been inconclusive as to whether family status has any role in the development of burnout (De Heus &Diekstra, 1999; Dorman, 2003; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). A married female teacher working with orthopedic impaired students stated that being married is a disadvantage regarding the emotional exhaustion dimension by saying:

> *I am worn out so much and put so much energy to work that when I go home I have no energy left to lift up even a finger*.

On the other hand, Gamsjäger and Buschmann (1999) demonstrated that married teachers were less vulnerable to burnout than divorced ones. A female teacher working with mentally retarded students stated that being married is an advantage:

> W*hen I go home, I speak to my husband, and sometimes I speak too much to compensate for lack of not being able to speak to anyone and explain myself properly to someone at school.*

A female married teacher working with hearing impaired said:

> *There are so many things I have to do, and I have so many responsibilities at home, believe me I have already forgotten the things I experience in school when I go home. I may not be very successful at the things I do in my class, but the things I do at home with my husband and kids satisfy me.*

All these words can be taken as an example that in the sense of personal accomplishment, married teachers were less exhausted compared to single teachers.

A married teacher working with the mentally impaired described herself as:

> *At times I feel worn out and tired at school. Sometimes I also feel that I flog a dead horse but I forget these in order not to distress my folk at home. In fact, I have got two lives; in school I am exhausted or at home I am all alive*.

What married teachers say are in accordance with the research findings of Greenglass, Fiksenbaum and Burke (2001) stating that being married provides a kind of social support in itself.

Burnout and Teaching Experience:

When the literature of burnout is reviewed, different results on the relationship between burnout and years of teaching experience are found. George et al. (1995) and Bilge (2006) found that special education teachers who having less teaching experience have more burnout. George et al. (1995) also stated that more than 36 % of the teachers reported that they planned to leave the field within one year. While Kokkinos (2006) found no significant difference between the burnout levels of special education teachers working for less and more than ten years, Timms et al. (2006) reached the conclusion that special education teachers who working for 15-19 years suffered the highest burnout. In the present study, although no statistically significant difference was found regarding years of teaching experience both on emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment subscales, it was determined that the

teachers who worked working for one to ten years and for 16 to 20 years experience more burnout than the others. In terms of depersonalization, those working for 1 to 15 year(s) have the highest burnout level. This does not appear to support the findings of Tye and O'Brien (2006) that as length of service prolong, the positive attitude of teachers towards learners' increases, and exhaustion levels decreases. On the other hand, they match up with the findings of Shreeve et al. (1986) who have reporting that it is the younger, less experienced special education teachers that have revealed higher levels of burnout. It is assumed that this is either due to the experience that teachers gain over the years that enable them to cope with the problems or they somehow learn to remain indifferent to the problems as a result of a kind of learned helplessness. The issues, which were raised by four of the participant teachers, whose length of service changed between three-eight years, are also supported by what the other teachers said in the interview.

> *There are so many things in our lives which can potentially cause exhaustion that it would be wrong to think otherwise. If I had the chance to change my job for another job, I would do it, but unfortunately I don't have such a chance. Teaching profession is already so abrasive, but working with students with special aid is the hardest. I feel more downtrodden each year. They used to say that as time advances exhaustion leaves its place to resignation, but that doesn't happen. I feel more and more exhausted, tired, and bad each day. The difference between the ambition of my first years in teaching and now is so big that I even don't remember the first days.*

In an interview study of beginning special educators, Kilgore and Griffin (1998) found that novice special educators reported different problems from their beginning colleagues. They often described themselves as insufficiently prepared, frustrated, and exhausted. This situation can be explained by the factors that teachers who have done their job for a long time lose their professional enthusiasm, they experience performance deterioration, feel tired of dealing with the same problems all the time, and the accumulation of physical and emotional exhaustion increases their desire to retire. Higher burnout in both sexes in the mid career cohort of 15-19 years experience, and indicates a corresponding fall in morale in the same mid career cohort of male teachers.

Burnout and Pre service Education:

The distinctive factor associated with dissatisfaction for teachers of students graduating from special education departments is that of frustration. Weiskopf (1980) also observed that special education teachers commonly perceived a lack of success. The findings of this study match up with the findings of Dursun (2000) concluding that the levels of experienced teacher exhaustion are higher as these teachers' professional knowledge and quality in relation to the field increase. Evans (1997) suggested that educators of students with special needs might begin their careers with high expectations that they will be able to overcome the unique challenges faced by their students. It is thought that the risk of exhaustion formation is potentially higher as a consequence of experiencing higher levels of disappointment in those who have chosen the profession willingly. This study shows that there is a significant relation between the exhaustion level of teachers and the field they are trained. Those who were educated in the special education are found to feel more exhausted since they appear to become more aware of and more knowledgeable about the issues related to the field during their B.Ed., which could lead them to have higher professional expectations. Also, as Scott et al. (2001) and Sutton and Wheatley (2003) reported student performance, student misbehavior, parental expectation, lack of resources, increasing workload and poor quality teaching make teachers experience more burnout. Because of these factors, when they start practicing the profession, they seem to experience exhaustion to a great extent in comparison to the other teachers with a general B.Ed. degree. Three teachers who have education in the field of hearing impaired and mentally retarded stated similar opinions with Timms et al. (2006) in this matter as follows:

> *The things I learned when I was at school and real life are completely different. The things we were taught at school were ideals. However, the reality is very bitter.*

> *Students have no responsibility or accountability, and it appears that many parents are the same - rather than help and support teachers, they beg or complain. Most of the parents are really uncooperative but they are dissatisfied with the lack of progress made by students. The ignorance of families about students with special aid, insensitivity of the society towards their needs, the lack of or sometimes the absence of materials necessary for education we are deprived of anything that you can think of. Under these conditions I could not help but feel burnout. If you know how a job should really be done, all these will continuously disturb you. I wish I became an ordinary classroom teacher, too. Sometimes ignorance about certain things*

can be a blessing. It makes you feel stronger and more enthusiastic. Have you examined the curriculum sent by the Ministry of National Education? It is so hard to practice it that I cannot explain. Realizing these objectives with these students in this school under such depravity is just a dream.

What a teacher, who hasn't taken any pre-service or in-service training about special education and works with the mentally retarded, has said is very striking. This might be an indicator of why the ones who have not received training on special education feel less burnout.

The system has already been set and will go on like this. What we can do with these children is limited, and once you accept this you worn yourself out less. The heart matter is accepting this. Even our colleagues who work with normal students are faced with lots of problems. So what we experience is just normal, not surprising. We already do our best. With these ingredients, this kind of cake can be baked. The only problem is to accept.

Burnout and School Type:

All teachers' levels of burnout have been found to be quite high regardless the type of school and handicap. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Sucuoğlu and Kuloğlu (1996) who have stated that not being able to have professional satisfaction from their teaching performance as a consequence of unequipped teaching conditions pose as a risk for special education teachers. It is known that the longer the times spent on working with teacher dependent students, the more desensitization teachers develop. Beck and Gargiulo (1983) reported that teachers of students with mental retardation have a great sense of personal accomplishment. The findings obtained by the researchers coincide with those from the present study.

A teacher working with the mentally retarded expressed the followings:

The love I had for my work is gone, I never used to feel this way, but now it's hard to drag myself to school each day. I had no idea that I'd be told what to teach.

'Maslach et al. (2001) observed that lack of efficacy correlated with lack of resources. It can be concluded that the teachers finding themselves insufficient and more stressful experience more burnout. Teachers working with orthopedic impaired individuals experience a very intense physical contact. Additionally, it is thought that working with the orthopedic students who cannot always meet their self-care needs (depending on the impairment type) can be one of the factors causing high level of exhaustion. Since there is a serious lack of equipment needed, the teacher's job becomes even harder. Four of the teachers working with orthopedic impaired individuals expressed their burnout as follows:

I can't stand children touching me all the time. This annoys me so much that I want to hit them.

Our compound is not spacious and not well equipped. The number of supportive staff is very little and those we have are qualified to their job, and as if these were not enough, the unlimited wishes of parents drive me crazy. I don't want to see students with special aid around me anymore. I sometimes cry without any reason or get furious, but when I consciously think of that, I know that it is all because of the school and my students

Teachers working with mentally retarded individuals said the following:

Many days I don't even feel I am really teaching. I feel like an animal trainer rather than a teacher. The only thing I do is subdue violent students who have discipline problems. And, this tires me out so much that my will of teaching fades away. I sometimes yell at students but they even don't understand why; nonetheless, it relaxes me.

Teachers working with hearing impaired said the following:

We are maybe the luckiest teachers of impaired because we can teach something academic to the students by somehow establishing a contact them with the help of the sign language, or by lip reading or some hearing equipment and most importantly we do harvest we saw.

A teacher working with mentally retarded stated the reasons of exhaustion as follows:

I have no idea about how I overcome this, what you call burnout. I take antidepressant pills, but sometimes even they are ineffective. I sometimes vent my anger on my students and I hit them. I know that this is so wrong, but what else can I do? I feel there is no way to express the thing I feel; sometimes I feel sorry for my students and try to do more than what I can do, but sometimes I feel so furious because they make me feel like this that I want to smash them up. And, unfortunately, neither majority of the parents nor the school managers assist us in this matter. Parents are too very naturally very exhausted and desperate since they have to live with these children for the rest of their lives. Managers, on the other hand, avoid their responsibilities by ignoring teachers' problems. I sometimes think that managers' only responsibility is to find

financial support for the school, and they never bother themselves with matters such as the conditions of teachers, and what can be done for them"

The expressions of the teacher above are very close to the findings of Blase and Blase (2003) and Fink (2003) saying that when school administrations are not supportive, or are abusive, individual teachers' capacities to resilience are overloaded and the consequence is burnout. The principals of the schools as educational leaders are supposed to assist the teachers in any subject. At first, the principals should be acknowledged about burnout syndrome in order to figure out the teachers facing burnout. By this way they can be helpful and supportive towards teachers.

As a fact being a teacher is very much open to burnout. And when it comes to special education the burnout is far more than normal education. The results of this study revealed that all the special education teachers are facing burnout. The development of the children who need special education is very slow and difficult. Due to this special education teachers feel themselves less successful and experience little personal accomplishment. In order to avoid new areas (such as different social activities, cooperation with non governmental organizations etc) for them should be prepared to make them feel more successful. According to findings obtained from this study, teachers' who work in special education schools should be selected and trained more carefully. To overcome burnout syndrome, it is necessary to train qualified teachers not only psychologically but also physiologically. For this reason, teachers both during pre-service and in-service education periods should take some courses, which will help them avoid burnout. Stress management, self-help and professional development workshops are recommended for teachers to manage burnout especially at the beginning of their professional careers. Also extra benefits or *worn-out indemnities* should be given to special education teachers. Mentor programs for new special education teachers are recommended to assist with reducing stress. To make teachers more equipped with the techniques to deal with burnout, the Ministry of Education can provide an individualized support for the novice teachers in special education. Additionally, candidate teachers should be told about possible difficulties they will face during their career and a relevant course including real life exposure should be given before they begin their career. It can also be suggested that novice and experienced teachers should be assigned to schools with different demands varying in degree. Lastly, future teachers should be taught different problem solution techniques so that they will be able to make their job easier.

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