

FACTORS AFFECTING TURKISH EFL TEACHERS' LEVEL OF BURNOUT: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY**Ali İlyâ**

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Abstract

Serious consequences of teachers' experienced burnout have repeatedly been reported. Thus, it is important to identify teachers' level of burnout and underlying factors. Accordingly, the current study aims to investigate the level of burnout English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in Türkiye may feel, and if four factors (age, gender, length of teaching experience, and type of school) predict their level of burnout. To that end, a quantitative orientation was adopted. Through convenience sampling 132 EFL teachers working in different regions of Türkiye voluntarily took part in the research. They were asked to fill out Maslach's Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, and to provide some demographic information. Three separate scores for each participant were obtained through three subscales in the 22-item Likert-type inventory; emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal achievement. Multiple regression analysis and a full-factorial ANOVA were conducted to reveal any possible effects of the four factors on the perceived burnout of the participants. The results revealed that majority of EFL teachers experience diminished personal accomplishment at a high level. Among the four variables, age was the most reliable precursor of burnout; however, the only statistically significant interaction was with depersonalization. The results suggest that EFL teachers need to see more concrete outcomes of their professional effort to improve their sense of personal accomplishment. In addition, as teachers get older, they may be engaged in activities that help them refresh their professional enthusiasm to prevent depersonalization.

Keywords

*Burnout,
Depersonalization,
Emotional Exhaustion,
Personal Achievement,
English Language Teachers.*

1. Introduction

It is an international proverbial comparison that has been made between a teacher and a candle; a simile used to illustrate the enormity of sacrifice teachers are eager to make to light the way to others. This renowned quote is quite suggestive regarding the heavy demands loaded over teachers, and beyond doubt, that is why teaching ranks among the five most stressful professions as revealed by the research carried out by Coombe (2008) and proved by another, in which around a quarter of teachers define teaching as a high-stress profession (Kyriacou, 2001). In United Kingdom, for instance, teaching was considered to be one of the most stressful among 26 professions (Johnson et al., 2005). Supreme sacrifice, stress, and other sources of emotional hardening pave the way for burnout in teachers. Dealing with students' misbehaviors (Chang & Davis, 2009), work-related pressures (Prasojo et al., 2020), and poor working conditions (Fore et al., 2002) are among the commonly encountered causes of burnout. When it is considered that teachers are the architects of the future, whose well-being has commonly been associated with the welfare of the whole nation, the importance of investigating the phenomenon of burnout gets crystalized and is better appreciated to deepen the understanding of the sources, possible effects, and interaction of burnout with other variables. Other than the internal effects of burnout on the working teachers, it has external effects as well. Teacher attrition, as an external effect, was previously reported as a leading result of teacher burnout (Chang, 2009). For instance, in the USA, almost 40% of teachers were reported to leave the profession in the first five years of their teaching career (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). Moreover, it was also revealed that teacher burnout was in relation to students' achievement (Herman et al., 2018).

Having been aware of the substantiality of scrutinizing the concept of burnout, researchers have inquired into the topic since 1980s, and a great number of studies approaching this issue from diverse perspectives have been released so far (e.g. Farber, 1991; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 1996;

Roohani & Dayeri, 2019; Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982). The previous studies addressed the causes and effects of burnout, relation of burnout to other concepts including teacher efficacy or teacher effectiveness, contextual precursors, resilience, and many other dimensions. In Türkiye, in the field of teacher education, burnout has frequently been studied too. While some research studies addressed the phenomenon in relation to personal characteristics (Yorulmaz & Altinkurt, 2018; Uğuz, 2016), others investigated it within the context of organizational factors (Kimsesiz, 2019). All such studies have enriched our understanding of burnout to better combat it and improve teachers' job satisfaction because it has been documented that if burnout is not prevented, it might result in chronic anxiety or physical afflictions (Schaufeli et al., 2017). As another attempt of contribution to the building block of teachers' burnout studies, the present research aims to investigate the perceived burnout level of English language teachers from Türkiye, and its relation to four variables, namely age, gender, school type (state or private institutions), and amount of teaching experience that have repeatedly been proved to be predictors of teachers' burnout. To accurately locate this study into the canon and to cultivate a wider appreciation, a concise review of the literature is deemed to be a requisite.

2. Literature Review

Burnout, as a concept of vigorous debate, has been defined by many scholars in various ways. Metaphorically, a prototypical definition of the term put forward by Freudenberger (1974) tells that it is a "symptom of emotional depletion and a loss of motivation and commitment." A later definition proposed by Maslach (1984), who was then identified as the leading name of the burnout literature, similarly views burnout as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people of work' of some kind". Both connote that burnout is an emotional state triggered by the interaction of work-related factors that may end up in psychological alienation to the occupation, annihilation of enthusiasm, felt inefficiency in accomplishing professional duties, and reaching at the end of rope. Although no consensus has been built, the multidimensional model constructed by Maslach and Jackson (1984) has been adopted on international basis. The model encompasses three components of burnout; emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment.

As the first dimension of burnout, emotional exhaustion is characterized by a feeling of being consumed and deenergized due to perceived overload of responsibilities one is held for. It may also be accompanied by frustration and tension that may lead one to rejection of further sacrifices and taking responsibilities to the recipients of service (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). In other words, it may result in "feeling drained and tired" (Lau et al., 2005). The second component, depersonalization, stands for dehumanization, in which recipients of service –students in teachers' case- begin to lose their animate qualities through service providers' lens, and to be perceived as mere objects. It may be echoed in the attitudes towards colleagues and/or the institution itself. Some concrete signs of depersonalization may include overuse of terminology, extended breaks, long conversations with co-workers, and "compartmentalization of professional lives" (Maslach & Pines, 1977). The last integral part, diminished personal accomplishment, manifests itself as perceived deterioration of occupational capabilities, fossilization, and the sense of no or very little progress in career. Such people tend to keep away from interactions with others and valuing the feelings of the students or colleagues with the disaster scenario that "the boat may sink" in their mind (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). High levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization with a lower level of personal accomplishment altogether constitute the burnout syndrome in the model (Maslach & Jackson, 1984). However, as argued by Hakanen et al. (2008), the results yielded by recent studies feature the first two components as the core of burnout.

The research studies delineating burnout disclose the factors that may play a role in the arousal of the syndrome. They could be capsulized as individual, interpersonal, social, organizational, and historical variables (Bibou-Nakou, 1999). Within a more concise framework, burnout can be studied at three levels; individual, organizational, and transactional (Chang, 2009; Durr et al., 2014). Among the individual factors that may predict the level of burnout; gender, age, and amount of teaching experience have frequently been counted (Anderson & Iwanicki, 1984; Demirel & Cephe, 2015; Fontana & Abouserie, 1993; Lau et al., 2005; Payne & Furnham, 1987). Anderson and Iwanicki (1984) support the effect of gender on the level of burnout one may feel in their study, which revealed that males got higher scores than females on all the three subscales of burnout. On the other hand, the study carried out by Fontana and Abouserie (1993) did not find any differences between genders, however it displayed that almost three quarters of the participants suffer from moderate level of burnout while one quarter experiences it at a high level. As a counter-result to the study by Anderson and Iwanicki (1984), Payne and Furnham's (1987) research yielded that female teachers felt higher level of stress than males. In addition, it was revealed that teachers with less amount of experience or with fewer qualifications were reported to be more stressed. Thus, their study signals an interactional effect of experience on burnout. Lau et al. (2005) also provide support for these findings. Their study showed that younger and less experienced teachers obtained a higher score on all the subscales of burnout. Age was marked as the best predictor of

emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. A relatively recent study conducted in the Turkish EFL context presented proof to the results of these studies with a report that younger and less experienced university instructors tended more to experience burnout in comparison with older and more experienced colleagues (Demirel & Cephe, 2015).

Organizational factors that may also predict teacher burnout entail the ones that are at the intersection of teachers and their institutions. Professional demands, financial concerns, institutional culture, class size, or teachers' involvement in decision making processes can be listed under the second group of predictors of burnout (Chang, 2009). The studies exploring the relation of burnout to organizational factors have demonstrated that time pressure (Hakanen et al., 2006), relationships with colleagues (Laung & Lee, 2006), forms of support available (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011), and nature and quality of social interactions in the workplace (Fernet et al., 2012) predict the level of burnout teachers suffer from. Besides such factors, type of the school teacher's work at was also found to be related to teacher burnout (Kimsesiz, 2019). It was revealed that EFL teachers working at primary schools reported a higher level of burnout in comparison to teachers working at middle and high schools (Kimsesiz, 2019). From another perspective, school type as state schools or private institutions may also play a role in the level of burnout teachers as it was previously yielded that working conditions have an impact on burnout (Demirel & Cephe, 2015), and it is evident that working conditions of state and private schools significantly differ in the Turkish context; however, studies investigating burnout from such a perspective are scarce.

Transactional factors, as the third group of variables, were also explored as a substantial part of burnout research. Such studies have tried to answer the question "who experiences higher levels of burnout in 'which' situations" (Chang, 2009). In other words, the research on transactional factors views burnout as a context-sensitive phenomenon, thus it explores the interaction between personal and organizational factors. Kahn et al. (2006), for example, revealed a negative correlation between the amount of social and emotional support offered and the level of teachers' burnout. It was noted that positive reinforcement, an optimistic and supportive work environment, and healthy communication foster teachers' wellbeing, and thus helped them cope with burnout. In another study, teachers' beliefs were proved to be the main predictors of their reactions to the work-related problems such as students' misbehaviors (Hoy et al., 2009). Thus, one may conclude that same or similar situations may lead to different degrees of stress and burnout depending on teachers' personal qualities, perceptions, and attributions. It provides another reason for exploring burnout within specific educational contexts.

Many research studies coming out so far notwithstanding, the burnout syndrome has frequently been reported by teachers as it was in the past (Gold, 1984; Kasalak & Dağyar, 2021). Moreover, the number of nationwide investigations of the phenomenon among English language teachers is still limited. When context-dependency, serious consequences of the syndrome, and a need for a clearer understanding are regarded; further research studies are required in Türkiye. In an attempt to respond to this need, the present research study seeks answers to the following research questions, answers to which may guide the authorities and people of interest in the way of better defining the case and identifying the solutions:

Do English language teachers in Türkiye feel burned out as revealed by their scores on the three subscales of MBI-Educators Inventory; emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment?

Are there any effects of gender, age, length of experience, and type of school (state or private institutions) on the perceived burnout of English language teachers in Türkiye?

3. Method Participants

From seven different regions of Türkiye, 132 English language teachers, 28 of whom were male while 104 were female, participated in the study on voluntary basis. They were from various regions of Türkiye and were working at different levels. The age of the participants ranged from 22 to 55 with the average of 30.29. The distribution of the participants among age groups was displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the participants among age groups

| Age Groups | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 20-25 | 30 | 22.7 | 22.7 | 22.7 |
| 26-30 | 51 | 38.6 | 38.6 | 61.4 |
| 31-35 | 30 | 22.7 | 22.7 | 84.1 |
| 36-40 | 12 | 9.1 | 9.1 | 93.2 |
| 40_Above | 9 | 6.8 | 6.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 132 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

109 of the participants were working at state schools while 23 of them were at private institutions. The

participants had from 1 to 33 years of experience. The distribution of the participants according to the length of teaching experience was presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of the participants according to the length of teaching experience

| Length of Experience | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1-3 Years | 50 | 37.9 | 37.9 | 37.9 |
| 4-7 Years | 42 | 31.8 | 31.8 | 69.7 |
| 8-10 Years | 17 | 12.9 | 12.9 | 82.6 |
| 11-15 Years | 13 | 9.8 | 9.8 | 92.4 |
| 16 Years and More | 10 | 7.6 | 7.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 132 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

117 people had a BA degree and 15 teachers were graduates of either an MA or a Ph.D. program. Convenience sampling as one of the non-probability sampling methods was used to select the participants. Creswell (2014) warns that, in this type of sampling, the people of the study may not accurately represent the population, and it is a drawback of the sampling method that causes the imbalance in the distribution of gender, age, school type, and length of experience.

Data Collection

Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators' Survey that was developed by Maslach and Jackson (1986) was used to collect the quantitative data. It was a seven-point, fully-anchored scale that was composed of 22 items distributed among three subscales, each of which measured the score for one component of burnout; emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The participants were requested to read each and every item and indicate the perceived frequency of the state described in the items from "Never" to "Always." The reliability coefficients for the subscales were reported by the developers as follows; .90 for Emotional Exhaustion, .79 for Depersonalization, and .71 for Personal Accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1997). The items were scored according to the scoring key provided in the Manual. Three separate scores were computed for each participant and the levels might possibly be labeled as low, moderate, and high by using the cut-off points.

In addition to the inventory, some demographic information was demanded from the participants. They indicated their age, gender, length of teaching experience, type of school, and degree they held. They were not asked to indicate their names to maintain confidentiality of the data, and they were all informed about the study without being synthesized to the concept of burnout as suggested in the MBI Manual (Maslach et al., 1997) and asked to grant written consent.

Data Analysis

Three separate scores, each of which represented one component of burnout in the multidimensional model of Maslach were calculated for each participant. According to the cut-off points in Maslach's Manual, each score was labeled as low, moderate, or high. The score for Personal Accomplishment was reversed since it was negatively correlated with the level of burnout. Number of items in each subscale in the Inventory and range of points are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Subscales in MBI-Educators' Survey

| Subscale | NI | Range |
|-------------------------|----|--------------------------------------|
| Emotional Exhaustion | 9 | 0-16/Low; 17-26/Moderate; =/+27/High |
| Depersonalization | 5 | 0-6/Low; 7-12/Moderate; =/+13/High |
| Personal Accomplishment | 8 | 0-31/High; 32-38/Moderate; =/+39/Low |

Note. NI: Number of items.

Frequencies were checked to display the number of participants who experienced the components of burnout at low, moderate, or high levels. To reveal any possible effects of the four factors -gender, age, length of experience, and type of school-, multiple regression analysis was conducted. Post-hoc tests following up the regression analysis more clearly specified the direction of interactional effects of the abovementioned factors on the three scores. A full-factorial ANOVA was run as well to show any possible interactional effects.

4. Results

EFL Teachers' Reported Burnout Levels

In order to answer the first research question, each participant's three scores obtained through the subscales in the MBI-Educators' Survey were categorized into low, moderate, and high levels of the perceived state of emotion, and frequencies were checked.

Table 4: Emotional exhaustion (EE) levels of the participants

| EE Level | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|

| | | | | |
|----------|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| Low | 72 | 54.5 | 54.5 | 54.5 |
| Moderate | 28 | 21.2 | 21.2 | 75.8 |
| High | 32 | 24.2 | 24.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 132 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 4 displays that 54.5% of the participants reported that they experience emotional exhaustion at a low level while 21.2% at moderate, and 24.2% at a high level. Likewise, 61.4% of the teachers did not perceive themselves depersonalized while only 14.4% of them suffered from depersonalization. On the other side, almost a quarter of the participants' level of depersonalization was at a moderate level as presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Depersonalization (DP) levels of the participants

| DP Level | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Low | 81 | 61.4 | 61.4 | 61.4 |
| Moderate | 32 | 24.2 | 24.2 | 85.6 |
| High | 19 | 14.4 | 14.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 132 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The scores on the third subscale of the MBI-Educators' Survey did not correspond with the results of the other two as 53% of the teachers seemed to experience a sense of diminished personal achievement, which signaled a high level of burnout. The remaining half is divided between moderate and low level of the sense of diminished personal accomplishment.

Table 6: Diminished personal accomplishment (PA) levels

| PA Level | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Low | 30 | 22.7 | 22.7 | 22.7 |
| Moderate | 32 | 24.2 | 24.2 | 47.0 |
| High | 70 | 53.0 | 53.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 132 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The Relation of Burnout Levels to the Four Variables

So as to reveal the predictive power of the four factors i.e. age, gender, length of experience, and type of school, a multiple regression analysis was run for each of the three scores on the subscales of MBI-Educators' Survey. An important prerequisite assumption of multiple regression analysis as a type of parametric tests, normal distribution of data, was violated.

Initially, the multiple regression test was administered for the score of Emotional Exhaustion. Table 7 clearly displays that none of the four factors significantly predicted the emotional exhaustion of the teachers. As can be seen in Table 8, the model could only predict 2.8% of the EE score. However, among the four factors, the best predictor seemed to be age with the $p = .104$, which was not sufficient in any way to rely on.

Table 7: Coefficients for emotional exhaustion scores

| Model | | UC | | SC | | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-------|-------------|--------|-------|-------|--|----------|----------|
| | | B | SE | Beta | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 24.030 | 5.175 | | | 4.643 | .000 |
| | Age | -.168 | .167 | -.088 | | -1.003 | .318 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 20.821 | 6.877 | | | 3.028 | .003 |
| | Age | -.169 | .168 | -.088 | | -1.005 | .317 |
| | Gender | 1.807 | 2.544 | .062 | | .710 | .479 |
| | (Constant) | 23.689 | 7.922 | | | 2.990 | .003 |
| | Age | -.179 | .169 | -.093 | | -1.060 | .291 |
| | Gender | 1.705 | 2.553 | .059 | | .668 | .505 |
| | School_Type | -2.024 | 2.760 | -.065 | | -.733 | .465 |
| | (Constant) | 29.880 | 9.309 | | | 3.210 | .002 |
| | Age | -.490 | .299 | -.256 | | -1.638 | .104 |
| | Gender | 1.393 | 2.559 | .048 | | .544 | .587 |
| | School_Type | -2.265 | 2.761 | -.072 | | -.820 | .414 |
| | Experience | 1.869 | 1.485 | .196 | | 1.259 | .210 |

Note. UC: Unstandardized coefficients; SC: Standardized coefficients; SE: Standard error.

Table 8: Model summary for emotional exhaustion scores

Change statistics

| Model | R | R ² | Adj. R ² | SE of the Estimate | R ² change | F change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F change |
|-------|-------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| 1 | .088a | .008 | .000 | 11.9272 | .008 | 1.005 | 1 | 130 | .318 |
| 2 | .107b | .012 | -.004 | 11.9500 | .004 | .504 | 1 | 129 | .479 |
| 3 | .125c | .016 | -.007 | 11.9715 | .004 | .538 | 1 | 128 | .465 |
| 4 | .167d | .028 | -.003 | 11.9442 | .012 | 1.584 | 1 | 127 | .210 |

Note. a. Predictors: (Constant), Age; b. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender; c. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender, School type; d. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender, School type, Experience; SE: Standard error

The same analysis was run for the second component of the burnout, which was Depersonalization. As was shown in Table 9, age was a significant predictor of the Depersonalization score with the $p = .047$. However, other three factors did not seem to have a significant effect on the DP scores of the participants. Considered with the previous model in which age ranked the first, though it was not statistically significant, age seemed to be the most reliable predictor of burnout.

Multiple regression analysis performed for the Personal Accomplishment score similarly pointed to age as the most influential factor with the $p = .18$, however its effect was not statistically significant though it is a better predictor of the Personal Accomplishment. Table 10 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis for the PA scores. In order to see any possible interactions between the four factors and/or their interactional effect on the three components of burnout, a full-factorial multivariate ANOVA was run, however the results revealed no significant interaction between the predictor factors or with the three components. Thus, the table of ANOVA is not presented here.

Table 9: Coefficients for depersonalization scores

| Model | | UC | | SC | | Correlations | | | |
|-------|-------------|--------|-------|-------|----------|--------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | B | SE | Beta | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | Zero-order | Partial | Part |
| 1 | (Constant) | 10.592 | 2.218 | | 4.775 | .000 | | | |
| | Age | -.144 | .072 | -.173 | -2.008 | .047 | -.173 | -.173 | -.173 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 12.893 | 2.847 | | 4.528 | .000 | | | |
| | Age | -.278 | .127 | -.335 | -2.198 | .030 | -.173 | -.190 | -.189 |
| | Experience | .809 | .630 | .196 | 1.284 | .201 | -.081 | .112 | .111 |
| 3 | (Constant) | 14.540 | 3.304 | | 4.400 | .000 | | | |
| | Age | -.291 | .127 | -.350 | -2.284 | .024 | -.173 | -.198 | -.197 |
| | Experience | .848 | .631 | .205 | 1.344 | .181 | -.081 | .118 | .116 |
| | School_Type | -1.157 | 1.177 | -.085 | -.983 | .327 | -.063 | -.087 | -.085 |
| 4 | (Constant) | 15.248 | 3.989 | | 3.822 | .000 | | | |
| | Age | -.294 | .128 | -.354 | -2.294 | .023 | -.173 | -.199 | -.198 |
| | Experience | .868 | .636 | .210 | 1.364 | .175 | -.081 | .120 | .118 |
| | School_Type | -1.180 | 1.183 | -.087 | -.997 | .321 | -.063 | -.088 | -.086 |
| | Gender | -.350 | 1.097 | -.028 | -.319 | .750 | -.013 | -.028 | -.028 |

Note. UC: Unstandardized coefficients; SC: Standardized coefficients; SE: Standard error.

Table 10: Coefficients for diminished personal accomplishment scores

| Model | | UC | | SC | | Correlations | | | |
|-------|-------------|--------|-------|-------|----------|--------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | B | SE | Beta | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | Zero-order | Partial | Part |
| 1 | (Constant) | 27.750 | 3.247 | | 8.546 | .000 | | | |
| | Age | .141 | .105 | .117 | 1.338 | .183 | .117 | .117 | .117 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 27.166 | 4.194 | | 6.478 | .000 | | | |
| | Age | .175 | .186 | .145 | .937 | .351 | .117 | .082 | .082 |
| | Experience | -.205 | .928 | -.034 | -.221 | .825 | .085 | -.019 | -.019 |
| 3 | (Constant) | 24.066 | 4.855 | | 4.957 | .000 | | | |
| | Age | .198 | .187 | .164 | 1.059 | .292 | .117 | .093 | .092 |
| | Experience | -.280 | .927 | -.047 | -.301 | .764 | .085 | -.027 | -.026 |
| | School_Type | 2.176 | 1.729 | .110 | 1.259 | .210 | .098 | .111 | .110 |
| 4 | (Constant) | 23.665 | 5.863 | | 4.036 | .000 | | | |
| | Age | .200 | .188 | .166 | 1.061 | .291 | .117 | .094 | .093 |
| | Experience | -.291 | .935 | -.048 | -.311 | .757 | .085 | -.028 | -.027 |
| | School_Type | 2.189 | 1.739 | .111 | 1.259 | .210 | .098 | .111 | .110 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Gender | .199 | 1.612 | .011 | .123 | .902 | .003 | .011 | .011 |
|--------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|

Note. UC: Unstandardized coefficients; SC: Standardized coefficients; SE: Standard error.

5. Discussion

The results in relation to the first research question revealed that only the diminished personal accomplishment seemed to be experienced at a high level by more than half of the participating Turkish EFL teachers. The other two components of burnout were not reported at a high level by the majority. As diminished personal accomplishment leads to fossilization or perception of little or no progress in career that is accompanied by pessimism (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993), it might be inferred that participating teachers lost their belief in their contributions to the field through the professional teaching service they provide. Hismanoğlu and Ersan (2016) similarly reported that Turkish EFL teachers experience diminished personal accomplishment at a high level while they did not seem to seriously suffer from emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. They altogether imply that teachers were in need of reinforcement, supportive manners by the authorities, participation in decision making processes, and witnessing more concrete signs of achievement resulted from their effort.

The interactional effect of four variables on the level of burnout -age, gender, length of teaching experience, and school type- was analysed as well to answer the second research question. Except for the statistically significant predictive power of age for the depersonalization score of the 132 participants, other three factors did not predict any of the components of the burnout. However, among the four variables, age was found to be the most reliable one. The predictive power of age was previously reported in many studies as well. For instance, Demirel and Cephe (2015) also reported an interaction between age and level of burnout. Anderson and Iwanicki (1984) and Özkara (2019) in a similar way supported the impact of age on perceived burnout level. The previous studies produced controversial results with regards to the impact of gender on teachers' reported burnout levels. While some studies (Fontana & Abouserie, 1993; Özkara, 2019) found no interaction between gender and level of burnout, some other studies pointed to the opposite (Anderson & Iwanicki, 1984; Payne & Furnham, 1987). In the present study, no interaction was observed between gender and level of teacher burnout. The results concerning the length of teaching experience, as another commonly explored variable within burnout research field, have not been consistent either. A group of research studies put forward a negative correlation between the length of teaching experience and diminished personal accomplishment, thus it implied that the more experienced teachers become, the more beneficial or successful they feel (Çağlar, 2011). On the other side, other studies demonstrated that older teachers feel more exhausted than their younger colleagues (Klusmann et al., 2008). However, in some other studies, opposite results were reported, and younger teachers expressed their felt exhaustion (Lau et al., 2005). In the current study, length of teaching experience was not found to be a predictive factor for any subscales of the burnout. As the last variable, school type was previously researched in limited number of studies; however, such studies explored the impact of different grade levels on the experienced burnout (Kimsesiz, 2019). This study approached the variable from another perspective, and analyzed the interactional effect of school type in terms of state and private schools on participants' level of burnout. It is evident that working conditions and job demands in state and private institutions may significantly differ, thus it was assumed that it might predict the level of burnout; however, the results revealed no impact of school type on participants' level of burnout.

6. Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations

The aim of the current study was twofold; analysing the burnout levels of Turkish EFL teachers and investigating the impact of four variables i.e. age, gender, length of teaching experience, and school type on any subscales of burnout. Although majority of the participating teachers did not seem to be burned out in terms of depersonalization and emotional exhaustion, it was revealed that most of the participating teachers suffered from diminished personal accomplishment. Age was found to be the most reliable predictive variable on all three dimensions of burnout; however, the only statistically significant interaction was with the dimension of depersonalization. Thus, one might infer that as teachers get old, they tend to feel more isolated to their profession, view students as objects, and perform the tasks more mechanically. As it was previously proved that positive work environment help teachers overcome burnout (Kahn et al., 2006), a more supportive environment can be created for teachers. Exciting implementations may be put into practice to trigger their enthusiasm and feel more engaged. In addition, as teachers reported a higher level of diminished personal achievement, some precautions that may bring the outcomes of their effort into focus may be taken.

The primary limitation of the study is lack of qualitative data to gain a deeper insight into the results obtained through quantitative analyses. To arrive at a broader understanding of the phenomenon, reasons for the perceived burnout and its possible effects on teachers' lives could be explored through interviews, diaries, or open-ended questions. Secondly, stratified sampling would have been more appropriate to collect representative data that was distributed among the sub-groups (age, length of teaching experience, school type, gender) in a balanced manner. A significant assumption of parametric tests, normal distribution of data, was violated in the

current study, thus using nonparametric tests might yield more reliable results. Lastly, the Inventory was administered only to a small size of the universe, that's why the results cannot possibly be generalized for all English language teachers in Türkiye.

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