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The Examination of the Burnout Levels of Psychological Counselors According to Perceptions of School Environment

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the burnout levels of psychological counselors are examined according to perceptions of school environment and according to the variables such as cooperation with the school administrators, the quality of the school, the school grade and the place where the counselors work, the level of being appreciated by their superiors. The study was conducted on 213 the psychological counselors eliminated with random sampling method who work in Erzurum province and its countries in 2011-2012 school years. The data of the study was gathered by Maslach Burnout Inventory developed by Maslach. The data related to the variables of the psychological counselors was gathered through "Personal Information Form" prepared by the researcher. One-way MANOVA for multi-variables and Bonferroni LSD test technique, one of the multi-comparison tests (Post Hoc) were used in the statistical analysis of the data. In the result of the study, it is observed that the burnout levels of psychological counselors difference significantly according to variables such as being appreciated by their superiors, the quality of the school where counselors work and cooperation with the administrators, but the burnout levels do not difference significantly according to the type of the school and the place. The results were discussed and the necessary suggestions were made according to the related litterateur.

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Keywords:
Psychological counselor, burnout, burnout inventory, school environment

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Introduction

Burnout is a term which attracted attention after 1970s and first defined by Freudenberger (1974) as "to start to be exhausted because of the excessive desires on power, energy or personal resources". Pines and Eliot (1983) defined burnout as a disease consist of symptoms such as physical exhaustion, desperation and feeling of despair, emotional exhaustion, negative self-perception, having negative attitudes towards work, life and other people. Cherniss (1988) defined burnout as the individual's withdraw himself as a reaction to the excessive stress or dissatisfaction. Maslach (1981) stated that the individual experienced the feeling of exhaustion and fatigue, psychological exhaustion causing the individual to be alienated from the work and the individuals who are served, moral exhaustion consisting of doubting himself in the process of burnout. Potter (1980) emphasized that burnout is a syndrome that the individuals do not do the things they are interested in, they can manage and do and it is a general loss of interest and desire; Gold (1991) stated that the symptoms of burnout are similar to those of depression and the symptoms such as the feeling of hopelessness, feeling empty and sadness are the most common symptoms both in depression and burnout. Milburn (1981) stated that the most important reason of the counselors having burnout is that the counselors' having plenty of clients and interviewing with them for hours and days causes the counselors to have mostly personal and emotional problems.

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Personal or organizational reasons play an important role in the emergence of burnout syndrome. Personal reasons can be listed such as individual's job which s/he has wanted to choose or not, the desire to do everything perfect, not being responsive to the events, the problems the individual may have in his/her private life, the perception of adequacy, etc. Organizational reasons can be listed such as strict rules, role ambiguity, role conflict, heavy workload, excessive expectation regarding the work, economic status, problem solving and communication skills, organizational atmosphere, occupational seniority, the settlement where the individual works, being appreciated or not, etc. (Cankara, 2008).

It can be observed that people who have burnout syndrome can have one or more of the problems such as physiologic problems (chronic headaches, exhaustion, digestive system problems, weight loss, insomnia, fatigue, loss of energy, chronic cold), behavioral problems (making mistakes, postponing some things or negligence, being late to work, not coming work without permission or because of diseases, tendency to quit work, spoilage of the service, corruption in the relations in and out of the office, increase in the accidents and injuries, being sarcastic towards to the colleagues and people who are served, spending time on other things rather than work, loss of interest in the institution) emotional problems (sudden anger outburst, constant anger, feeling of loneliness and hopelessness, desperation, feeling hindered, impatience, decrease in the self-respect, unworthiness, excessive sensitivity to criticism, disability to decide, etc.) (Izgar, 2008).

Ross, Altmaier and Russell (1989) detected that social support and workplace stress have a significant effect on the burnout level of the psychological counselors and counselors who have the support of their colleagues and directors experience less burnout syndrome and workplace stress. According to the results of the study in which the relationship between the organizational stress sources and burnout level of the school counselors were examined, carried on by Mills and Huebner (1998), it was observed that the relationship between the emotional burnout and depersonalization of the school counselors were stronger than the points of the low-self-success feeling. Özer (1998) stated that psychological counselors experience burnout syndrome mostly under the sub-dimension of low self-success sense. Seğmenli (2001) stated that burnout syndrome can be seen in psychological counselors who are between the ages of 23-30 and who have a 1-5 year experience at work; and they experience burnout syndrome mostly under the sub-dimension of low self-success sense. Çoban and Hamamcı (2008) indicated that coping with stress in group counseling program affects psychological counselors' burnout level significantly in the sub-dimension of low self-success sense. Karçkay (2008) stated that there is not a difference between graduating from counseling department and graduating from out of the counseling department in terms of job satisfaction; but he determined that variables such as school type, education level, etc. are significantly predictors on the adequacy of the profession. İkiz (2010) determined that there is not differentiation in burnout levels of psychological counselor according to age and gender, but there is differentiation according to the type of the institution where the counselors work, professional seniority and self-adequacy perception. Özabacı, İşmen, and Armağan (2004) determined that the burnout scale of psychological counselors who are outgoing, at peace with himself and can communicate with others shows a completely adverse relation with its all dimensions. Çoban and Demir (2004) determined in their study that there is a statistically significant relationship between the psychological counselors' burnout levels and perception of their salaries and satisfaction of the job they do; and they also stated that psychological counselors experience mostly emotional burnout. Seçer (2011) determined that there is a significant relationship between psychological counselors' burnout levels and age, profession seniority and satisfaction of workplace. Bulut (2007) determined according to his study, in which he searched the relationship between the psychological counselors' life satisfaction, strategies to cope with stress and negative automatic thoughts, that there is a significant difference in seeking social support sub-scale according to age. It is determined that "problem solving" and "life satisfaction" levels of the psychological counselors who perceive themselves adequate enough with the knowledge and the skills they have gained in the institution they graduated compared to those who do not are in high levels. It is found that there is a significant relation in a negative way between "life satisfaction" and "negative and "avoidance" automatic thoughts"; yet, there is a relation in a positive way between "avoidance" and negative automatic thoughts". Hamamcı and İnanç (2005) determined a significantly relationship between the psychological counselors' professional developments and professional satisfactions. Professional development activities such as attending conference and symposium, debating topics concerning the profession with colleagues, reading related publications and gender were found to be the important predictors of professional satisfaction. It is thought that the results of the study, aimed to

determine burnout levels of the psychological counselors who are the implementers of the guidance and psychological counseling in the schools, which has an important function in the modern educational approach and Turkish National Education system, will provide important information for psychological counselors, academicians, researchers and other concerned with this subject.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to search the burnout levels of the psychological counselors in terms of school environment variables such as being appreciated, workplace, school grade, quality of the school and cooperating with the administrators. For this purpose, the following questions were answered.

1. Do burnout levels of psychological counselors differ significantly according to being appreciated by their seniors?
2. Do the burnout levels of psychological counselors differ significantly according to the workplace?
3. Do the burnout levels of psychological counselors differ significantly according to education level?
4. Do the burnout levels of psychological counselors differ significantly according to the quality of the school?
5. Do the burnout levels of psychological counselors differ significantly according to the level of cooperation with their administrators?

Method

The research is a descriptive study designed with relational descriptive survey.

Population and Sample

The sample of the study is formed of 430 psychological counselors working in Erzurum city center and districts in 2011-2012 school years. Data about the sample is obtained from Erzurum Counseling and Research Center. Study group is comprised of 213 counselors, 115 male and 98 female, which were selected from the sample of the study mentioned according to random sampling method.

Data Collection Tool

Maslach Burnout Inventory. Maslach burnout inventory was developed by Maslach (1981) who is acknowledged as authority in burnout subject. This inventory took place in litterateur as "Maslach Burnout Inventory". The inventory was adapted to Turkish by Ergin (1992). The scale is formed of 22 items and 3 sub-dimensions which are burnout, depersonalization and low-self-success sense. Emotional burnout sub-dimension is formed of 9 items, depersonalization sub-dimension is formed of 8 items and low-self-success sense sub-dimension is formed of 5 items.

The scale's structure validity is dealt by examining the structure of factor. The factor analysis done for that purpose, it was observed that at first it verified 5 natural factors but later these were amassed on the 3 factors. These factors are; 1- Emotional Burnout, 2- Depersonalization, 3- Low-self-success Sense, sub-dimensions. These three factors explain the 49 % of the total variance. The factor loads change between .35 and .61 in emotional burnout sub-dimension, between .33 and .57 in depersonalization sub-dimension and between .37 and .55 in low-personal success sub-dimension.

Maslach Burnout Inventory's reliability was confirmed by internal consistency. It was found that reliability factor is .90 for emotional burnout, .79 for depersonalization and .71 for self-failure. Measurement standard deviation is 3.80 for emotional burnout, 3.16 for depersonalization, and 3.73 for self-failure. It is accepted that points 28 and over in emotional burnout sub-scale are "*high levels of burnout"*, points 15 and over in depersonalization sub-scale are *"high levels of burnout"*; but, burnout is accepted lower as the points increase and higher as the points decrease apart from other sub-dimensions in the low-self-success sub-scale. Accordingly, points between 0-26 are accepted as *"high levels of burnout"* (Çam, 1992).

Collecting and Analyzing the Data

The data was gathered from the counselors directly. During the research process, one-way MANOVA test which insures to analyze the relationship and the effect of one or more independent variables on more than one dependent variable was used in the analysis of data obtained. MANOVA provides to present which factor is more important through evaluating more than one dependent variable. MANOVA, as called multivariable variance analysis, can be summarized as constituting a new dependent variable with the best linear combinations of the dependent variables of the study and comparing to the variant analysis of the groups for this new dependent variable (Alpar, 2003). MANOVA should be preferred because when ANOVA is performed one by one, the possibility of Type I Error may increase as more than one dependent variable is in question. Stevens (1996) stated that MANOVA should be preferred because the variables are simultaneously dealt in case of comparing groups to dependent variables which are in the same structure by means and showing similar correlations. Besides, Benferroni LSD test, one of the multi-comparing tests, was used to determine the source of the difference in the analysis in which significantly differentiation is determined. In the study, the significance level has been accepted as .05.

Findings

The results and the comments related to these results, which were gathered such variables as psychological counselors' cooperation levels with the administrators, Nature of the school, workplace and school type and levels of being appreciated by their superiors, are given below.

Table 1. The average and standard deviation values of psychological counselors' burnout levels according to the variable of being appreciated by their superiors

	Emotional burnout			Depersonalization			Low-personal success		
	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd
Never	66	26.87	7.63	66	12.00	3.98	66	24.15	7.50
Sometimes	72	23.36	7.52	72	11.55	4.16	72	27.86	5.58
Often	84	24.66	7.45	84	13.00	3.73	84	25.73	8.00
Always	72	22.361	7.72	72	11.97	3.77	72	27.88	5.72

Table 2. The One-Way MANOVA results of psychological counselors' burnout levels according to the variable of being appreciated by their superiors

	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Significant Differences	λ	η2
Be Appreciated	Emotional Burnout	784,21	3	261,40	4,551	,004	A*-B**, A-D****	.898	.045
	Depersonalization	148,00	3	49,33	3,225	,023			.032
	Low-Personal Success.	683,55	3	227,85	4,884	,003	A*-B**, A*-D****		.048

* The new significant level according to Bonferroni Test p< .017 *A: Never **Sometimes ***C: Often ****D: Always

Wilks Lambda (λ)=.898, F(9, 701)= 3,537, p< .017. On analyzing the Table 1 and 2, it is seen that psychological counselors' burnout levels difference significantly according to being appreciated by their superiors in emotional burnout and self-success sub-dimensions. This finding shows that psychological counselors' burnout levels difference significantly according to being appreciated by their superiors. According to results of Bonferroni LSD test, which is one of the multi-comparing tests, applied to determine the source of this difference; it was found that the never-cooperative group difference significantly from the sometimes-cooperative group and always-cooperative group in the emotional burnout sub-dimensions. It

was also determined that the never-cooperative group difference significantly from sometimes-cooperative and always-cooperative groups in the self-success sub-dimension.

Table 3. The average and standard deviation values of psychological counselors' burnout levels according to the variable of working place

	Emotional burnout			Depersonalization			Low-personal success		
	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd
City Center	36	23.83	1.288	36	11.16	0.654	36	25.72	1.157
District	198	24.13	0.549	198	11.80	0.279	198	26.95	0.493
Village or Town	60	25.03	0.998	60	12.99	0.507	60	25.09	0.896

Table 4. The One-Way MANOVA results of psychological counselors' burnout levels according to the variable of working place

	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	p	λ	η2
Work Place	Emotional Burnout	45,61	2	22,80	,381	,683	.969	.003
	Depersonalization	92,07	2	46,03	2,983	,052		.020
	Low-Personal Success.	179,70	2	89,85	1,863	,157		.013

* The new significant level according to Bonferroni Test p< .017

Wilks Lambda (λ)=.969, F(6, 578)= 1,51, p> .017. On analyzing the Table 3 and 4, it is seen that psychological counselors' burnout levels do not difference significantly according to the residential area in which they work. According to this finding, psychological counselors' burnout levels do not difference significantly according to workplace.

Table 5. The average and standard deviation values of psychological counselors' burnout levels according to the variable of school type

	Emotional burnout			Depersonalization			Low-personal success		
	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd
Primary school	50	24.17	0.494	50	12.07	0.25	50	26.52	0.44
Secondary school	50	24.80	1.092	50	11.48	0.55	50	25.96	0.98

Table 6. The One-Way MANOVA results of psychological counselors' burnout levels according to the variable of school type

	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	p	λ	η2
Type of School	Emotional Burnout	16,35	1	16,35	,274	,601	.994	.001
	Depersonalization	14,63	1	14,63	,935	,334		.003
	Low-Personal Success.	13,22	1	13,22	,272	,602		.001

* The new significant level according to Bonferroni Test p< .017

Wilks Lambda (λ)=.994, F(3, 290)= .590, p> .017. On analyzing the Table 5 and 6, it is seen that psychological counselors' burnout levels do not difference significantly according to type of the school in which they work. According to this finding, psychological counselors' burnout levels do not difference significantly according to the school type.

Wilks Lambda (λ)=.944, F(6, 578)= 2,812, p< .017. On analyzing the Table 7 and 8, it is seen that psychological counselors' burnout levels difference significant according to nature of school in the emotional burnout sub-dimension whereas psychological counselors' burnout levels do not difference significant according to school quality in the depersonalization and low-self-success sense sub-dimensions. This finding shows that psychological counselors' emotional burnout levels difference significantly according to the

nature of school. According to the LSD test results, one of the multi-comparing tests (Bonferroni), which was applied to find out the source of this difference; it was determined that burnout levels of psychological counselors who work in *Boarding Schools* difference significant from those who work in *Normal-Extern Schools* in the emotional burnout sub-dimension. According to this finding, emotional burnout levels of psychological counselors who work in boarding schools difference significant from the emotional burnout levels of those who work in normal-extern schools.

Table 7. The average and standard deviation values of psychological counselors' burnout levels according to the variable of quality of the school

	Emotional burnout			Depersonalization			Low-personal success		
	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd
1	144	25.43	0.63	144	11.87	0.33	144	26.80	0.58
2	102	22.23	0.75	102	12.17	0.39	102	25.68	0.68
3	48	25.16	1.09	48	11.83	0.57	48	26.87	1.00

Tablo 8. The One-Way MANOVA results of psychological counselors' burnout levels according to the variable of quality of the school

	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Significant Differences	λ	η2
Nature of school	Emotional Burnout	654,80	2	327,40	5,675	,004	A*- B**	.944	.038
	Depersonalization	6,54	2	3,27	,208	,812			.001
	Low-Personal Success.	86,23	2	43,11	,888	,412			.006

* The new significant level according to Bonferroni Test p< .017 *A: Boarding School **B: Normal (extern) ***C: Anatolian-Science High School

Table 9. The Average and standard deviation values of psychological counselors' burnout levels according to the variable of cooperation with school managers

	Emotional burnout			Depersonalization			Low-personal success		
	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd	n	$\overline{X}$	Sd
Never	a	24.75	7.83	132	12.09	4.01	132	26.07	6.26
Sometimes	72	23.08	7.76	72	11.91	3.67	72	26.77	7.18
Often	60	26.59	6.80	60	11.83	4.06	60	26.50	7.71
Always	30	20.39	7.12	30	11.86	4.28	30	27.00	8.00

Tablo 10. The One-Way MANOVA results of psychological counselors' burnout levels according to the variable of cooperation with school managers

	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Significant Differences	λ	η2
Cooperation	Emotional Burnout	907,78	3	302,59	5,307	,001	A*- D**** B**-C***, C-D	.943	.052
	Depersonalization	3,57	3	1,19	,075	,973			.001
	Low-Personal Success.	35,31	3	11,77	,241	,868			.002

* The new significant level according to Bonferroni Test p< .017 *A: Never **B: Sometimes ***C: Often ****D: Always

Wilks Lambda (λ)=.943, F(9, 701)= 1,88, p< .01. On analyzing the Table 10, it is obtained that psychological counselors' burnout levels difference significant according to cooperation with school administrators in emotional burnout sub-dimension, but it does not difference according to variable "cooperation with school administrators" in depersonalization and self-success sense sub-dimensions. This finding shows that psychological counselors' emotional burnout levels difference according to variable

"cooperation with school administrators". Bonferroni LSD test, one of the multi-comparing tests, was conducted to determine the source of this difference.

According to Bonferroni LSD test results, it was determined that psychological counselors who think they *always* cooperate with school administrators have lower emotional burnout levels compared to those who think they *never*, *sometimes* and *often* cooperate. According to this result, it was determined that emotional burnout levels increase as psychological counselors' cooperation with school administrators decrease.

Discussion

According to findings obtained from the study, there is a significantly relationship between psychological counselors' being appreciated by their superiors, emotional burnout levels and low-self-success sense, and this difference increases as the appreciation level decreases, and also it can be said that this difference is an effective factor that affects the emotional burnout and depersonalization of the psychological counselors who are not appreciated by their superiors. In the related litterateur, Ross, Altmaier and Russell (1989) and Kovach (2002), Uslu (1999), Seçer (2011b), Özabacı, İşmen and Yıldız (2004) determined that there is a significantly relationship between school counselors' burnout levels and appreciation from the administrators. Schwab and Jackson (1986), Mazur and Lynch (1989), Altıntaş (1997), Otacıoğlu (2008), Dolunay (2002), Girgin (1995), Örmen (1993), Weisberg and Sagie (1999), Sucuoğlu and Kuloğlu (1996) determined this relationship for school teachers as well. As a result, we can say that appreciation from superiors is a factor that affects psychological counselors' burnout levels in each three sub-dimensions.

It is seen that there is not a significant difference between the workplace and burnout levels of psychological counselors. Psychological counselors' burnout levels difference significant according to workplace such as city center, district or village. In the related litterateur, there is not any research finding about the workplace of psychological counselors. However, in the research carried on teachers by Dilsiz (2006), it was determined that teachers working in villages have more emotional burnout and teachers working in city centers become more depersonalized and experience more low-self-success sense. In accordance with the data obtained from the study, it can be said that working in city centers, districts or villages is not a factor that affects and difference the psychological counselors' burnout levels.

It wasn't determined that there is a significant difference between the school type (primary, high school) and burnout levels. The data of related litterateur shows that there is evidence that both supports and does not support the finding of the study. Seğmenli (2001), Başören (2005) and Tümkaya (2005) determined that psychological counselors' and Dilsiz (2006) determined that teachers' burnout levels do not difference significantly according to school and institution type. Karçkay (2008) and İkiz (2010) determined that psychological counselors' burnout levels and Otacıoğlu (2008), Gmelch and Gates (1998) determined that teachers' burnout levels do not difference according to school and institution type.

It was determined that there is a significant difference between the quality of the school (boarding, extern, Anatolian-Science) and psychological counselors' burnout levels in emotional burnout sub-dimension but there is not in depersonalization and low-self-success sense sub-dimensions. In emotional burnout sub-dimensions, it is seen that psychological counselors working in boarding schools have the maximal burnout levels, psychological counselors working in extern schools follow them and the minimal burnout levels are experienced by psychological counselors working in Anatolian-Science schools, respectively. In the related litterateur, the researchers could not find any studies examining the quality of the school and the psychological counselors' burnout levels.

However, if we look through the studies conducted on teachers and administrators, we can see that Özkaya (2006) determined that teachers who work in primary and secondary boarding school experience maximal emotional burnout and depersonalization, and the minimal burnout is experienced by teachers working in common high schools. It is thought that the natural high work stress of working in boarding schools and high expectations of psychological counselors are the factors affecting emotional burnout.

It is seen that there is significant difference cooperation with school administrators and burnout in emotional burnout sub-dimension, but there is not significantly difference in other sub-dimensions. In the related litterateur, there is evidence supporting the research findings. Ross, Altmaier and Russell (1989) Kovach (2002) determined in school counselors, and Schwab and Jacson (1986) Bettoret and Domenech (2006) determined in school teachers that cooperation with school administrators is factor affecting the burnout. As a result, it can be said that being unable to cooperate with administrators pushes psychological counselors to experience emotional burnout.

Suggestions

According to these findings, it can be suggested as below about the psychological counselors' burnout.

The burnout, which could be experienced by psychological counselors whose job requires face to face communication with people, can cause personal and interpersonal problems, economic damages with the decrease in the work effect and decrease of the quality of the service. It is really necessary particularly for the scientists to make the burnout fact known and be argumentative in the society and especially by educator directors to solve this problem which has important dimensions with not only personal but also institutive, social and health policy. The school managers should be provided to take measures and be informed about the burnout and about the attitudes causing burnout in this direction. Besides, effective studies are needed to determine the ways especially for prevention and coping skills about this matter.

To solve this problem related to not only personal but also institutional, social and health policies, this phenomenon should be recognized and debated. Studies determining effective methods to, especially, prevent and overcome the burnout are needed to obtain enough data about this subject.

The institutions, organizations (M.E.B., C.R.C.) and especially school administrators should take precautions to prevent negative situations that causes burnout and problems that psychological counselors encounter while doing their jobs and negative situations arising from administrative factors by considering working in boarding school leads to experience burnout emotionally more.

School administrators should treat psychological counselor as with the responsibility of a leader, encourage them and stimulate their job motivations and the message of appreciation and support of what's been done should be given. School administrators should be in active cooperation with psychological counselors in carrying out the counseling activities as they are with other teachers.

They should be provided to know occupational burnout and gain effective coping skills with it through the collaboration of universities, Ministry of National Education and counseling and research centers. Besides, Psychological counselors who are determined to have burnout syndrome should be encouraged to get help and therapy they need.

Similar studies can be analyzed upon wider sample groups and in terms of much more different variables.

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