Investigating The Link Between Turkish Science Teachers’ Burnout And Their Motivation To Leave Teaching

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Contribution

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Burnout is defined as being exposed to long time occupational stress (Jennett, Harris, & Mesibov, 2003). It is generally observed on human service workers. Since schools are social systems in the service of students’ learning, teachers are one of the target groups that experience burnout syndrome (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Maslach and Jackson (1981) describe burnout with three dimensions which are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. In teacher burnout, emotional exhaustion involves having low levels of energy in work and feeling of constant tiredness (Schwarzer, Schimtz, & Tang, 2000). Depersonalization refers to teacher’s negative attitudes and feelings about their students or colleagues. The third one, reduced personal accomplishment concerns teachers own assessments about themselves no longer valuing their profession as a meaningful and important job (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). According to Peeters and Rutte (2005), burnout shows itself at the end of a series of complications. Firstly, experiencing severe stress causes one to have a reduced psychological mood. In the second stage, tension and nervousness follow physiological problems as headache, sleeping and remembering problems. In the third and last step the victim demonstrates a number of behavior change and attitude problems.

Recent research on teacher burnout revealed that the three components of burnout predict psychological health and certain teacher characteristics such as motivation and attitude towards teaching profession. Moreover, research in different cultures yield parallel results. For example Hakanen, Bakker, and Schaufeli, (2006) reported that emotional exhaustion and
depersonalization correlated negatively with work ability and self-rated psychological health of Finnish teachers. Leung and Lee (2006) found that emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout predicted teachers’ intentions to quit teaching and their job satisfaction in Hong-Kong. Recently, in Turkey, Yerdelen, Sungur, and Klassen (2015) found that there was a positive relationship between job satisfaction and personal accomplishment.

Motivation to leave the teaching profession refers to the negative side of teachers’ job satisfaction. As the definition states, job satisfaction is positive or negative feelings about one’s job. Thus, motivation to leave the teaching profession deals with teachers’ negative feelings and dissatisfaction about teaching profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). As teacher attrition and inclination to leave the teaching profession are serious problems for education systems, possible predictors are worthy of investigation. Accordingly, based on the theoretical explanations and empirical studies, the purpose of this study is to reveal the relationship between the components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishments) and motivation to leave the teaching profession. This study concentrates on a special group of teachers, namely science teachers, with an ultimate aim of adding important insights to understanding Turkey’s science teaching labor force and improving it. To this purpose, the research question guiding the current study is as follows:

• What is the relationship between the components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment) and motivation to leave the teaching profession for Turkish science teachers’?

Method

The sample of this study consists of 135 Turkish science teachers residing in Ankara, the capital city of Turkey. Two measures are used to collect the data. The first one is Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981). It includes 22 items in three dimensions. The second one is Motivation to Leave the Teaching Profession scale developed by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011). It includes three items. Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was adapted to Turkish by Ergin (1992). Motivation to leave the teaching profession scale was adapted to Turkish by the researchers. As part of data analysis, a path model will be generated to uncover the relationships between teacher burnout dimensions and motivation to leave the teaching profession. The fit of the data to the specified path model will be analyzed by using Lisrel 8.80 statistical package program. Simple descriptive statistics such as means and standards deviations will also be analyzed by SPSS 21 statistical program.

Expected Outcomes

It is expected that the results of the study will comply with the mainstream results of the previous studies. Since both burnout and motivation to leave the teaching profession has a negative character, a positive relationship is expected in total burnout score and motivation to leave the teaching profession score of the science teachers. For the predictive power of burnout components, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions are expected the correlate stronger with motivation to leave the teaching profession than reduced personal accomplishments dimension of teacher burnout. The results of the currents study may be useful for the Turkish Ministry of National Education in terms of dealing with teachers’ expectations from their profession at times when they felt themselves psychologically devastated. Moreover, since the concentration of this study is on science teachers, it points out to a special group of educators who have a special role in the recent investments regarding Turkey’s effort to establish a sound development movement in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education.

References


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