Burn-Out Syndrome and Vocational Commitment: A Conceptual Study on Pre-School Teachers

Fatma (Kavşut) Arslantürk

Preschool Teacher, fatmakavsut@hotmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3028-5639>

ABSTRACT

In the present-day work environment, burn-out syndrome and vocational commitment are among the concepts that have begun to attract the attention of many scholars not only in the field of management but also in other fields such as education as well. The main reason for the very popularity of these two concepts can be put down to the work settings or environment requiring more and more human interaction. Especially, in the service sector, where human to human interaction is in its summit, the concepts of burn-out and vocational commitment gained more and more popularity. On the other hand, there is no doubt that pre-schooling occupies the most important phase of development in people's life. Ranging from the cognitive to motor skills, pre-schooling is for sure the indispensable part of an academic life of any given person. The labour and service intensive structure of pre-schooling period, especially from the perspective of teachers, brings the interaction to the fore and at this very point in order to sustain effectiveness and efficiency of the service-providers; that is, teachers, the two concept under consideration deserve a closer approach in terms of the relation of teaching. This in mind, the main objective of this study is to shed light on the concepts of burn-out and vocational commitment and then to examine the relation of the concepts with specific reference to pre-school teachers.

Keywords: Burn-out syndrome, vocational commitment, professional commitment, pre-school teachers

I. Introduction

In today's conditions, the school is obliged to perform certain tasks beyond the need for students to be informed. Children need to be able to turn all this into behaviors, as well as the knowledge and skills they get. These achievements are also among the main tasks of the school. Providing detailed information about raising children of parents, the school should be the place to apply first in creating proposals for solutions to all kinds of problems that may occur in the family (Oktay, 2002).

A teaching activity is an activity that involves intense stress. Daily interactions with students and colleagues, continuous teaching activity and a sense of responsibility cause internal pressures and stress (Akçamete, 2001). A number of physiological, psychological and behavioural problems caused by this stressful environment include the phenomenon of burnout. Burnout, which is a fairly bad experience for a person and causes bad situations throughout his or her life, is explained as a three-dimensional condition with sub-dimensions of emotional exhaustion, desensitization and low personal success. Emotional exhaustion refers to exhaustion of one's emotional resources and emotional overload. Desensitization is associated with numbness and stiffness. Low personal success means a person's feelings of competence and a decrease in success at work (Kapıkıran, 2003).

The above-mentioned concepts are among the ones that are usually associated with the employees offering service face-to-face and involving interaction with people to a large extent. This being the case,

the organization of the paper is as the following: this paper first of all reviews burnout syndrome and explains its relationship with specific reference to teaching. After that, the emphasis is shifted upon the concept of vocational commitment, which is also examined in an elaborative manner. Then, in the conclusion part the place of pre-schools and their nature is explained finally. The paper is a conceptual one, which is the main method employed throughout the rest of the paper.

2. Burn-Out Syndrome

Herbert Freudenberger made the first accepted and accepted definition of the concept of burnout in 1974 as "a state of exhaustion that occurs in an individual's internal resources as a result of failure, attrition, decreased energy and power, or unsatisfied desires" (Freudenberger, 1974:159).

According to Edelwich, burnout is an ever-increasing loss in idealism, energy and purpose, seen as a result of working conditions, in individuals working in professions that provide assistance to others (Edelwich, 1980).

Exhaustion is a condition caused by the accumulation of what situations that seem impossible to change draw on the human soul. It is an "Occupational Autism". This condition refers to the collapse of the human soul. It is a sneaky process. Creativity disappears, not for the better (Storlie, 1979).

Research shows that exhaustion is a phenomenon that lives on an individual level; it involves a negative emotional life and is based on a chronic, continuous emotion (Shirom 1989)

Vocational burn-out is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by environments that constantly consume individuals emotionally Physical exhaustion is characterized by decreased energy, chronic fatigue and weakness. Emotional exhaustion, the second dimension of burnout, includes feelings such as helplessness, despair, being trapped, deceit and disappointment. Mental exhaustion is a person's negative attitude towards other people and life (Pines ,1988)

Excessive stress and a person's failure to cope with this stress can affect people's commitment to the organization and work competence that they work and lead to burnout. Even if work-related stress can be considered a routine of working life, this can lead to burnout in an environment where the individual is not supported, the opportunity to show himself is taken away or not at all. Burnout is a condition that needs to be avoided, as it will have negative consequences for the organization and business (Çokluk, 2003)..

Maslach is the first to carry out important work on behalf of the concept of burnout. Maslach and his colleagues explained burnout as the fact that individuals who are constantly in contact with people are in a state of spiritual collapse, experiencing desensitization and incompetence due to their profession (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Burnout is defined as a decrease in inner strength in the mental, spiritual and individual's attitudes as a result of facing excessive spiritual demand. According to Storlie (1979), burnout occurs when an individual is aware of negative progressive situations and refuses to believe in this situation. The concept of burnout is challenged by the integration of what non-differentiation events form in one's self. According to Reynolds and Tabacchi (1993), burnout has been expressed as a mental problem that can be a bodily discomfort as a result of continuing tension in the professional field. There are many reasons that can reduce the pleasure that individuals receive from their lives and lead to burnout.

a. Factors Affecting Burnout

Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) state that the concept of exhaustion does not exist only in the professional field. Some of the sociodemographic factors can cause exhaustion. Individual qualities and general attitudes have an important place in experiencing decadence. No relationship between burnout and gender has been established. It has been emphasized that the absence of women in the position of manager will have an impact on this issue, when women are asked for jobs with equal characteristics with male employees, the gender factor will not be an important factor in burnout, the most important

factor of burnout is related to working conditions. It is known that women are more prone to exhaustion than men.

According to Tumkaya (1996), burnout is an integral part of stress and is a progressive process. The causes of burnout are associated with human expectations. It is a condition that usually develops as a result of unreal expectations and an excess of mismatch between reality and expectations. Exhaustion is a process that develops insidiously and slowly, while the mismatch between the needs of workers and their demands grows. The low performance of the individual negatively affects the rebellion and everyone who works in between, while the demands of the rebellion also shape the individual's experience.

In addition, the fact that ego participation is effective in these professions, that is, the individuals who are under its influence have a living and ego, which creates pressure on the service providers and also the negativity in the interaction causes individuals to wear out more. Because of these features, burnout is more intense in members of the profession who work face to face with people. (Özer,1998). 206541

b. Burnout in Teaching Profession

Burnout can be expressed most often in the teaching profession when benchmarking is performed in different areas of work. As a reason for this, the teaching profession is always a profession that requires dedication, being active in communication and tires a person emotionally. For these reasons, teaching is considered to be one of the professions where burnout is much more likely to occur. In fact, burnout is also known to be effective in increasing more than one very important problem in the teaching profession and even accelerating the process further. Frequent absenteeism, decreased commitment to the profession, illness, physical distress, inappropriate behavior, and decreased performance can be considered as negative events that occur in teaching. Albiol et al. (2010) found that there was a significant difference in teachers' job satisfaction levels, which may be high or low in burnout levels.

Statistical data show that an increasing number of teachers are leaving the profession day by day (Dworkin, 1987:7). According to Dworkin, teachers are three times more likely to quit than similarly trained professionals. The findings show that a large majority of teachers want early retirement, while others are turning to the private sector. Thousands of teachers are showing signs of burnout, adversely affected by funding constraints, limited personal control over teaching and a lack of social commitment. The rate of these symptoms is that 25% of all teachers experience burnout at different times (Dworkin, 1987:7).

All the burden of educational activities rests on teachers. Despite the rapidly rising number of students due to the growing population, the number of teachers who are insufficient places an extra burden on those who are present. In addition to this negative scenario, the role and expectations placed on teachers increase so that children can adapt to the developing world (Işıklar, 2002).

The classic Burnout model in teachers was introduced by Kyriacou and Suttcliffe in 1978. According to this model, stress is the result of a difference in teacher perceptions. In other words, teachers undergo burnout

- When they have a perception that the demands on them are excessive,
- * When they have difficulty meeting these demands,
- * When the mental and physical health is compromised by the impact of the failures experienced

Teacher burnout is a syndrome caused by long-term stress, defined by physical, emotional, and behavioral fatigue. In behavioral fatigue, teachers experience less passion and satisfaction for their work. If their work also requires more effort and time, the teacher becomes reluctant and may become indifferent to students' work. In emotional burnout, the teacher finds it very difficult to have a positive emotion on a work day. A heavy sense of abandonment predominates. The main emotion experienced is depression. In physical fatigue, the third element, the teacher often feels physically tired and exhausted at school (Kyriacou, 2000:3).

Burnout syndrome, is an education issue that affects not just teachers, but students and employers as well. The stress and burnout experienced by teachers have a significant impact on families, administrators, students and parents, that is, the entire society, and hence is reflected directly or indirectly in the entire society (Friedman and Farber, 1992:28-35).

It can be stated that the emergence and widespread of burnout in teachers is due to the educational philosophy and studies that can change in parallel with various social, economic and technological developments. Until 30-40 years ago, while educators were a dominant element in the decisions taken regarding education and training, they received support from the society, some differences have emerged, especially since the mid-seventies, and the effectiveness of educators has decreased (Gündüz, 2005:154).

3. Vocational Commitment

This notion is related to the concept of "career" according to Greenhaus (1971). According to Cohen (2007), this concept was first introduced as career commitment. Blau (1985) evaluates career commitment as individuals' attitude towards their profession. Colarelli and Bishop (1990) take this definition one step further, describing career commitment as "commitment, exhibited to develop career goals and achieve the goals" (p.159) as detailed.

When the literature on professional commitment is examined, it is seen that different concepts are used. These are the concepts of occupational commitment, professional commitment and career commitment. It is known that the concepts of occupation, professional and career are used and that there is a discussion on this subject (Kaya and Zerenler, 2014: 53). Aranya and Ferris (1984: 3) use the phrase professional commitment. Professional commitment, on the other hand, is defined in the form of a desire to associate with and participate in a particular profession, as well as to strive on behalf of the profession and maintain continuity for the profession. Blau (1985: 278) used career commitment and defined career commitment in the form of an individual's attitude to their profession or work. Meyer et al., (1993: 539) chose to use the concept of professional commitment instead of using career and professional commitment. According to them, all professional and non-professional individuals can experience professional commitment throughout their working life.

a. Dimensions of Vocational Commitment

In this study, Meyer et al., (1993) mentioned the three-dimensional dimension of professional commitment. These dimensions are emotional, normative, and continuum. These dimensions are mentioned in detail below.

Emotional Commitment

Emotional commitment is defined as an individual's attachment to their profession, participation in the profession, and emotional commitment to the profession. Emotional commitment is the most desirable dimension of commitment in professions and organizations. The reason for this is that the individual makes special efforts to stay in the profession because he is emotionally connected to his profession (Kaya and Zerenler, 2014: 69).

Emotional commitment is an attitudinal condition related to personality characteristics and occupational factors and is based on a voluntary basis shown in the way of achieving goals in the employee's profession (Mir et al., 2002: 190). Emotional attachment occurs as a result of an individual's attachment to their profession and the formation of an emotional connection between them and their profession (Kaya and Selcuk, 2007: 179). The development of emotional attachment begins with professional choices and changes based on experience. Individuals have low emotional commitment at the beginning of their career, but their emotional commitment increases as they achieve their career goals and adapt to their profession (Weng & McElroy, 2012: 257).

Attendance Commitment

Continuing commitment is defined as the fact that employees take into account the negativity that will come as a result of their departure from the organization and continue to work in their profession, feeling compelled (Zerenler and Öğütt, 2007: 582). Continuing commitment workers remain in their profession not for emotional or normative reasons, but for reasons of necessity. These imperatives are due to the costs and investments made in the profession as a result of changing the profession (Demirci, 2018: 15). In continuing commitment, the individual decides to stay in his / her profession by analyzing his / her departure from the profession (Sagsan and storm, 2015: 5).

Blau (2003: 471) suggested that continuation commitment consists of two separate dimensions. These two dimensions are the accumulated costs and the limitation of alternatives. Accumulated costs refer to the time spent owning the profession, the training received and the fees. The limitation of alternatives is expressed as the inability to perceive existing options to choose a new profession.

Normative Commitment

Normative commitment means an individual's obligation to remain in their profession (Blau, 2001). This obligation is not due to material resources, but due to external factors such as the working environment, colleagues (Ozer and Uyar, 2010). In normative devotion, the individual considers it a duty to pursue his or her profession. Employees with high normative commitment consider continuing their profession as a correct behavior (Arbak and Ozmen, 2009: 54). An individual with normative commitment feels an obligation to remain in his or her profession, as he or she feels pressure from the environment in his or her profession. Because the individual has earned his reputation in society through his profession, and in normative devotion, the profession is seen as a duty given by society for the individual (Yildirim, 2019).

Normative commitment can arise from an individual's culture or work ethics, in which case it can lead to an individual feeling obligated to stay in the organization. Normative commitment is separated from emotional commitment and continuing commitment, as it does not reflect the organization's goals and objectives, but very much related to the will of an individual to stay in an organization the individual to remain in the organization (Clugston, 2000).

4. Conclusion

In the broadest sense, the period that lasts from the birth of the child to the beginning of primary school is called preschool period, and all educational activities in this period are also called preschool education. The preschool period is the most intense and rapid period of brain development and the rate of establishing synaptic connections. Intellect development is important in order to boost the cognitive, language, motor, social and emotional development all together. For this reason, children grow up very quickly, especially in the first six years of life, called preschool, and become proficient in these areas of development at a surprising rate (Oktay, 2013).

Pre-school education institutions are institutions that aim to prepare children for life and inform parents about the importance of pre-school education and its place in children's life, in the most important period in the shaping phase of personality; healthy development of the child from a social, cognitive, emotional and physical point of view. Pre-school educational institutions that come after the family, where the child learns the first basic knowledge, skills and fluidity, are of great importance at the stage of preparing the child for social life. These institutions gain importance both directly on the child and with the guidance services they provide to the family (Kandir, 2001).

The teacher is the decision-maker and practitioner figure of this process. The ability of the teacher to perform the performance required by his role depends on his qualifications. A good teacher is someone who can manage this process well, teach well. In addition to technological developments, the modern world has changed and shown more at the point of acceptance of human relations and the existence of different ideas. This development has also led to a change in the system of traditional education (Yeşilyaprak, 2002). It is expected from educational institutions and teachers that when expressing

teaching services, children will educate individuals who can recognize and develop themselves without ignoring individual differences (Can, 2002).

Yeşilyaprak (2002) defines good teaching through self-knowledge and Orientation, Decision-making, critical thinking, educational research and practice. The competencies expected from the teacher are expressed as mastery of different teaching practices, ability to discuss topics, knowledge and problem solving strategies, all kinds of knowledge and communication skills related to students' learning (Yeşilyaprak, 2002).

Considering the facts that both burn-out and the sub-dimensions of the concept of vocational commitment equally hold an important place in the career paths of the teachers involved in pre-school education, in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning settings in any given school environment, factors related to the concepts within the consideration of this paper should be dealt with meticulous attention and care. Never forgetting the fact that pre-schooling is the period that is likely to affect of the not only the academic but also the social lives of the learners, share-holders should carry out a comprehensive study to determine the levels of burn-out and vocational commitment. Subsequently, decision-makers at the local and national level should perform every effort in order to decrease the levels of burn-out and low vocational commitment in an organized manner. It should be kept in mind that education is the very key point to the future development of a country and pre-schooling is in the first place in the educational process.

Resources

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