The relationship between pre-school teachers' perceptions of career barriers and their levels of burnout and alienation

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With the study reported on here, we aimed to determine the career barriers on organisational alienation and professional burnout levels of pre-school teachers and to reveal the relationship between their organisational alienation and burnout levels. A relational survey model was used in the study. The population of the study consisted of 896 pre-school teachers who worked in public and private schools in Mersin, Türkiye during the 2019–2020 academic year. The sample consisted of 309 pre-school teachers selected from the population using the convenience sampling method. The data were collected using the women's career barriers scale (İnandı, 2009a), Maslach burnout inventory (Ergin, 1992) and pre-school teachers professional alienation scale (Kıhrı, 2013). Correlation and regression analyses were performed on the data. As a result of the study, apart from social gender stereotypes and meaninglessness dimensions of alienation, positive and highly significant relationships were found between all sub-dimensions of career barriers and all sub-dimensions of alienation. Moreover, apart from social gender stereotypes and personal accomplishment sub-dimension of burnout, a positive and highly significant relationship between all sub-dimensions of career barriers and all sub-dimensions of burnout was found.

Keywords: alienation; burnout; career barriers; female teachers; pre-school teachers; teachers' perceptions; women's career barriers

Introduction

As seen worldwide, there is also an increase in the participation of women in the workforce in Türkiye (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2023). This increase is evident at the same level in almost every line of business including educational institutions. According to the data of the 2018–2019 education year for Türkiye, the number of female teachers is higher than that of male teachers (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Aile ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı Kadının Statüsü ve Sorunları Genel Müdürlüğü, 2019). According to this data, 94.4% of pre-school teachers, 64% of primary school teachers, 58.3% of secondary school teachers and 50.8% of high school teachers are female. However, the majority of the educational administrators are male.

There are 548,858 female (53.5%) and 479,027 (46.5%) male personnel working in the Ministry of National Education. The number of administrative women working in institutions affiliated with the Ministry is 16 department heads, one general director, two provincial national education directors, 13 provincial national education directors, 25 provincial national education directorate branch directors, 12 district national education directors, 132 district national education directorate branch directors, 2,904 educational institution administrators (managers), and 13,291 educational institution administrators (deputy principals) (T. C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı, 2020). From many studies conducted on the subject it became clear that the number of men has increased significantly in the higher levels of organisational hierarchy (Altinkurt & Yilmaz, 2012; İnandı, Özkan, Peker & Atik, 2009). Tan (1996) states that the majority of senior managers in general directorates of pre-school education and girls' technical education are male. The reason for this is that women seem to encounter various obstacles when it comes to higher positions. These obstacles include women's lack of self-confidence, difficulty in deciding between work and family, and their multiple roles of being mother, wife and career women (Durmuş, 2001; Gül & Oktay, 2009). The obstacles also include issues such as dual-career spouses, personal preferences and perceptions such as not possessing the requirements for promotion, not being career-oriented (Fels, 2004; Gül & Oktay, 2009), social gender stereotypes, glass ceiling barriers (Torun, 2023), family barriers, age, marital status, gender, and economic status (İnandı et al., 2009). These obstacles can negatively affect women in achieving their career goals.

Female teachers who experience career obstacles may experience negative emotions unless they are able to reach senior positions in their jobs. Some of these are alienation and burnout. According to Schwab, Jackson and Schuler (1986), unfulfilled expectations, high levels of role conflict, and a lack of freedom may cause burnout. If people experience alienation and burnout, they cannot be expected to manage themselves, contribute to the school, deal with students' problems or academic aspects, because it is difficult to expect positive behaviour from people who experience alienation and burnout. For this reason, we endeavoured to reveal whether teachers experienced burnout and alienation because they are unable to progress to the point they want to be. Female teachers experience alienation and burnout because they are hindered by the Ministry of National Education and the administrators in the education system in Türkiye. This has many negative repercussions for the school, the students, the parents and the teacher. It even reflects badly on the teacher in many ways, which results in women struggling to achieve educational and training goals. Therefore, if we reveal in two dimensions how women feel when they strive to be in these positions in the current structure but cannot, and if we know

how much it predicts this, it is thought that this study will contribute significantly towards developing solutions to increase their motivation and performance in later situations.

This study was conducted with the focus on developing possible solutions regarding the issue. In this way, we desired to identify and prevent any negative consequences from the very beginning.

According to Pines (1993), individuals have good motivation when starting a job and they set big goals when choosing a job. According to Friedman (2000) and Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998), individuals' expectations regarding their jobs and the failure to meet these expectations can create imbalance in the individual and ultimately lead to burnout. In addition, the perception is that people who cannot achieve their career goals may experience psychological stress, increased anxiety, hopelessness, burnout, alienation, low motivation, resignation, lack of job satisfaction, and decreased organisational commitment, all of which can, in turn, have negative effects on organisations. For all the reasons mentioned above, it was deemed necessary to conduct a study since it was found that only a few studies on this subject included pre-school teachers. We, therefore, decided to study pre-school teachers, since the majority are female teachers and the majority of those who could not reach their career goals are female. The aim with the study was to determine whether the situation in which female teachers experience obstacles in being promoted to senior positions leads to their alienation and burnout.

Career Barriers

The process of advancing in an organisational hierarchy is referred to as a career (İnandı & Tunç, 2012). In its most general sense, career is a series of positions in which employees earn more income, assume more responsibility, and gain prestige and power by advancing in a profession of their choice (Bakioğlu & İnandı, 2001; İnandı & Tunç, 2012; Şimşek, 1999). Today, many people face various career barriers preventing them from pursuing the career they desire. Career barriers are expressed as situations in and around the person that make career development difficult (Swanson & Woitke, 1997). İnandı (2009a) lists the factors that generally prevent women from pursuing a career as those arising from education, career barriers caused by school and environment, internal obstacles, gender stereotypes, glass ceiling situations, working hours, age, and economic reasons. Marital status and women's perspective on management also play a role.

These career problems can be said to affect them negatively and may cause women to experience feelings such as alienation and burnout. A teacher who feels alienated and experiences burnout cannot be expected to contribute to the development of children and assist in activities in pre-school education institutions. Alienation and burnout should, therefore, be explained at this point.

Alienation

Alienation can be defined as the separation of people from their environment, work or self, and a decline in their harmony with their environment, which gradually lead to loneliness and desperation (Şimşek, Çelik, Akgemci & Fettahlıoğlu, 2006). In other words, alienation can be expressed as the state of being the object of life rather than being the subject of it (Şimşek et al., 2006).

Some researchers divide alienation into sub-dimensions and in this study, Seeman's sub-dimensions of alienation are considered, namely, weakness, meaninglessness, isolation, normlessness, and self-alienation (Uğur & Erol, 2015). The first of these, weakness, refers to the inability to act on the conditions affecting the individual's life or to gain control over it. Meaninglessness entails that individuals do not understand their own actions, and cannot establish a connection between actions and general goals, and cannot decide what to believe. Isolation points to the situation that when the expectations are high, the rules lose their effect and individuals exhibit socially disapproving behaviour in order to achieve their goals. Normlessness refers to individuals' rejection of the goals of society and their isolation if the things that society values high do not have any value for them. Finally, self-alienation means the dependence of behaviour on external rewards, and involves that the individual's actions become a tool for the satisfaction of others rather than a source of self-satisfaction (Seeman, 1959).

Educational organisations are one of the areas most affected by alienation (Çağlar, 2012). Although teachers, who make up the majority of staff in educational organisations, are to a certain extent free while doing their job in their classroom, the environment created by excessive centralisation can alienate them in their organisations (Yılmaz & Sarpkaya, 2009). As a result of the alienation, teachers may experience a degree of burnout and it is, therefore, useful to focus on the concept of burnout.

Burnout

The most common definition of burnout used today was developed by Christina Maslach, who developed the Maslach burnout inventory (MBI), which is used in this study. Burnout is generally defined as negative attitudes towards work, life and other people that occur as a result of physical fatigue, long-term fatigue, and reflection of hopelessness and feelings of hopelessness (Maslach

& Jackson, 1981).

Maslach and Jackson (1986) express burnout in three dimensions as emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment. These dimensions generally refer to the changes in the lives of individuals who experience burnout. According to Maslach, the most important component of burnout is emotional exhaustion, which involves feelings of loss of confidence, fatigue and frustration (Gaines & Jermier, 1983). Depersonalisation, which is the second dimension of burnout, is expressed as employees who think that they cannot control their environment and work, who feel helpless when they encounter a negative event and start acting machinelike when dealing with this situation (Cordes, Dougherty & Blum, 1997). The third dimension of burnout is the personal accomplishment that can occur when people think that they are not appreciated (Ergin, 1992). Apart from these, exhaustion is seen as causing cynicism considered mentally with depersonalisation (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005).

Teachers who work in pre-school institutions and are prevented for various reasons, particularly experience emotional exhaustion when dealing with children. They become insensitive, and finally their personal success decreases, which will reflect negatively on students. This could even harm the healthy development of students of this age. The fact that the barriers that teachers in pre-school education institutions face and where female teachers are in the majority, have not been researched enough, points to the importance of this study. The feelings of the teacher who faces barriers, and how this affects students and the school are an important issue to be emphasised. This study was conducted with pre-school teachers in the Mersin province of Türkiye to investigate whether their inability to take on senior positions results in their alienation and burnout.

The main aim with this study was to determine what the relationship is between the career barriers that pre-school teachers face and their organisational alienation and professional burnout levels, and also to determine the predictability of career barriers on teachers' organisational alienation and professional burnout. Studies show that career barriers, burnout and alienation were individually found to have associations with demographic variables such as age ranges, marital status, number of children, type of institution, and the educational status of the teachers. However, this study is important because we examined the relationship between career barriers and alienation and burnout, and also the predictability of the influence of career barriers on teachers' organisational alienation and professional burnout. The answers to the following questions were sought in line with this main aim.

1) Is there a relationship between pre-school teachers' career barriers and organisational alienation levels?
2) Is there a relationship between pre-school teachers' career barriers and professional burnout levels?
3) To what extent do career barriers experienced by teachers influence their level of organisational alienation?
4) To what extent do career barriers experienced by teachers influence their level of professional burnout?

Limitation
This research was limited to pre-school teachers working in schools in the Mersin province in Türkiye in the 2019–2020 academic year. Therefore, teachers working in provinces other than Mersin were outside the scope of this research.

Method
Research Model
A relational survey model was used in this study, which aimed to reveal whether a significant relationship between career barriers faced by pre-school teachers and their organisational alienation and professional burnout levels existed, and also to determine whether teachers' career barriers had a significant predictive effect on organisational alienation and professional burnout. A relational survey is a non-experimental research study designed to explain whether a relationship exists between two or more variables and, if any, what kind of relationship it is, and to make predictions about the variables (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2010). The relational survey model is considered convenient for studies consisting of comparison and correlation questions (Gliner, Morgan & Leech, 2015). Therefore, it was employed in this study.

Population and Sample
The study population comprised a total of 896 pre-school teachers working in the central districts of Mersin province in the 2019–2020 academic year (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Bilişim Sistemleri [MEBBİS], 2019), therefore, the sample size that represents the population in the 95% confidence interval is 269. In the study, it was aimed to distribute a questionnaire to the entire population, but only 309 pre-school teachers could be surveyed because some teachers were unwilling to participate. The convenience sampling method was used to determine the sample group. Convenience sampling is the process of determining the sample by identifying the accessible people or situations in a research study (Miles & Huberman, 2016; Robson, 2015; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

Data Collection Tool
The data were collected by way of a personal information form and three different scales.

Personal information form
Questions about age ranges, marital status, number of children, type of institution, educational status of pre-school teachers were included in this form.

Women's Career Barriers Scale (WCBS)
The scale developed by İnandı (2009a) consists of 27 items and five sub-dimensions, including family barriers, school-environmental barriers, education, working hours, age, economic reasons and marital status barriers, social gender stereotypes and women's perspectives of career. Example items of the scale are as follows: Female teachers worry about neglecting motherhood and housework; the Turkish social structure regards career development as a male endeavour; female teachers do not have the self-confidence to develop their careers. The reliability of the scale was examined for all items and all dimensions, and Cronbach's alpha for the scale was found to be .92. As for the sub-dimensions, Cronbach's alpha was found to be .91 for family barriers, .87 for school-environment barriers, .82 for education, working hours, age, economic reasons and marital status barriers, .83 for social gender stereotypes and .81 for women's perspectives of career. As a result of the reliability analysis conducted in this study, Cronbach's alpha for the scale was found to be .79.

Pre-school Teachers Professional Alienation Scale (PTPAS)
The scale developed by Kıhrı (2013) consists of 68 items and five sub-dimensions, namely, meaninglessness, isolation, self-alienation, weakness and normlessness. Example items of the scale are: I feel mentally away from my job, I feel burnout spiritually when I arrive home back from work, I feel exhausted of what I am doing. The reliability of the scale was examined for all items and all dimensions, and Cronbach's alpha for the scale was found to be .96. As for the sub-dimensions, Cronbach's alpha was found to be .97 for meaningless, .96 for isolation, .91 for self-alienation, .91 for weakness and .82 for normlessness. As a result of the reliability analysis conducted in this study, Cronbach's alpha for the scale was found to be .95.

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)
The scale developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) was adapted by Ergin (1992) to suit the Turkish culture and to be used in studies on health care workers. It includes 22 items and three factors, namely, emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment. Statements on emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation sub-dimensions are negative while those about personal accomplishment are positive. Therefore, items in personal accomplishment were reverse-coded to ensure compatibility with other scales. Example items of the scale are: I feel useless and insignificant as a teacher, I feel unhappy at this school, I feel like I have lost the strength to deal with the problems at the school. For the reliability of MBI, being one of the most frequently used tools in research on burnout, Cronbach's alpha coefficients and standard deviations were respectively calculated as .90 and 3.8 in emotional exhaustion, .79 and 3.16 in depersonalisation, and .71 and 3.73 in personal accomplishment. The internal consistency coefficients were calculated as .83 for emotional exhaustion, .65 for depersonalisation and .72 for personal accomplishment. As a result of the reliability analysis conducted in this study, Cronbach's alpha for the scale was found to be .89.

Analysis of Data
SPSS version 25.0 was used to analyse the data from the scales. The data were first transferred to a computer environment, shaped and the necessary operations were carried out accordingly.

Univariate and multivariate normality tests were performed to determine whether the data were normal or not. In this context, z values and Mahalanobis distances were taken into account in determining the extreme values (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu & Büyüköztürk, 2018). To determine whether the entire distribution showed a normal distribution, univariate normality, item means, medians and mode values were compared, and as a result, multivariate normality was accepted. Later correlation analysis was performed to reveal whether pre-school teachers' career barriers are significantly linked to their alienation and burnout levels, and multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether teachers' career barriers predict their alienation and burnout levels. In the study, 0.05 and 0.01 were used as the significance level.

Findings
In this section, the findings about the relationship between the career barriers that pre-school teachers face and their organisational alienation and professional burnout level are presented. Following that, the predictability of career barriers on the organisational alienation and professional burnout of teachers is also given. Descriptive statistics for the study are shown in Table 1. The most striking elements here are 78.2% of the participants were single and 43.3% had two children.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics

		f	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Education level	Bachelor	278	90.6	90.6	90.6
	Master	26	8.5	8.5	99
	Doctoral (PhD)	3	1	1	100
	Total	307	100	100	
Marital status	Single	240	78.2	78.2	78.2
	Married	67	21.8	21.8	100
	Total	307	100	100	
Number of children	0	71	23.1	23.1	23.1
	1	78	25.4	25.4	48.5
	2	133	43.3	43.3	91.9
	3+	25	8.1	8.1	100
	Total	307	100	100	
Whether they want to be a senior manager in their business or not	Yes	102	33.2	33.2	33.2
	No	205	66.8	66.8	100
	Total	307	100	100	

Table 2 includes the results of the correlation analysis for the association of career barriers with alienation levels of female teachers working in pre-school institutions. Apart from social gender stereotypes and the meaninglessness dimension of alienation, a positive and highly significant relationship between all sub-dimensions of career barriers and all sub-dimensions of alienation was found.

Table 2 Correlation analysis results for the relationship between career barriers and alienation levels of female teachers working in pre-schools

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	$\overline{X}$	SD
1) Family	1										3.22	0.94
2) School environment	.287*	1									2.29	0.80
3) Education, working hours, age, economic reasons and marital status	.318	.556	1								3.03	0.73
4) Social gender stereotypes	.281*	.546*	.572*	1							3.18	0.94
5) Women's perspectives of career	.377*	.445*	.506*	.548*	1						3.05	0.93
6) Meaninglessness	.202*	.280*	.243*	.100	.175*	1					2.05	0.64
7) Isolation	.213*	.306*	.242*	.158*	.240*	.752*	1				2.17	0.60
8) Self-alienation	.237*	.303*	.257*	.240*	.237*	.506*	.540*	1			2.99	0.47
9) Weakness	.230*	.361*	.229*	.201*	.248*	.783*	.721*	.478*	1		2.06	0.70
10) Normlessness	.175*	.207*	.220*	.150*	.156*	.554*	.574*	.484*	.568*	1	2.94	0.69

Note. $*p < 0.05$.

The results of the correlation analysis for the association of career barriers with burnout levels of female teachers working in pre-school institutions are shown in Table 3. Apart from social gender stereotypes and personal accomplishment sub-dimension of burnout, a positive and highly significant relationship between all sub-dimensions of career barriers and all sub-dimensions of burnout was found.

Table 3 Correlation analysis results for the relationship between career barriers and burnout levels of female teachers working in pre-schools

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	$\overline{X}$	SD
1)	Family	1								3.22	0.94
2)	School environment	.287*	1							2.29	0.80
3)	Education, working hours, age, economic reasons and marital status	.318*	.556*	1						3.03	0.73
4)	Social gender stereotypes	.281*	.546*	.572*	1					3.18	0.94
5)	Women's perspectives of career	.377*	.445*	.506*	.548*	1				3.05	0.93
6)	Emotional exhaustion	.318*	.333*	.374*	.218*	.211*	1			2.01	0.70
7)	Depersonalisation	.222*	.305*	.376*	.195*	.183*	.664*	1		1.34	0.46
8)	Personal accomplishment	.239*	.149*	.215*	.083	.121*	.369*	.316*	1	2.19	0.63

Note. *$p < 0.05$.

Table 4 includes the multiple regression analysis results regarding the predictability of pre-school female teachers' career barriers on their alienation levels. Accordingly, it is seen that the sub-dimensions of career barriers are predictive of women's alienation levels ($p < .05$). All sub-dimensions of career barriers (family, school environment, education, working hours, age, economic reasons, marital status, gender stereotypes, women's perspectives on career) had a predictive power on all sub-dimensions of alienation (meaninglessness, isolation, self-alienation, weakness and normlessness).

Table 4 Multiple regression analysis results regarding the predictability of pre-school female teachers' career barriers on their alienation levels

Alienation	Meaninglessness				Isolation				Self-alienation				Weakness				Normlessness			
Variable	B	SE	β	t	B	SE	β	t	B	SE	β	t	B	SE	β	t	B	SE	β	t
Constant	1.245	.171		7.275	1.340	.161		8.347	2.262	.125		18.041	1.066	.183		5.818	2.123	.189		11.211
Family	.081	.040	.119	2.000	.069	.038	.107	1.818	.067	.030	.134	2.272	.089	.043	.119	2.058	.075	.045	.103	1.687
School environmental	.189	.055	.237	3.406	.182	.052	.242	3.491	.110	.041	.187	2.701	.275	.059	.316	4.635	.095	.061	.110	1.544
Education, working hours, age, economic reasons and marital status	.132	.064	.150	2.062	.067	.060	.080	1.113	.042	.047	.064	.889	.002	.068	.002	.024	.125	.071	.132	1.769
Social gender stereotypes	-.118	.050	-.172	-2.341	-.073	.047	-.112	-1.535	.018	.037	.035	.475	-.043	.054	-.057	-.795	-.016	.056	-.022	-.294
Women's perspectives of career	.030	.048	.043	.625	.073	.045	.113	1.626	.026	.035	.051	.744	.070	.051	.092	1.357	.010	.053	.014	.191

$R = .342$ A.$R^2 = .102$ $R = .354$ A.$R^2 = .111$ $R = .354$ A. $R^2 = .111$ $R = .392$ A. $R^2 = .139$ $R = .262$ A. $R^2 = .053$

$F_{(5\text{-}301)} = 8.03$ $F_{(5\text{-}301)} = 8.709$ $F_{(5\text{-}301)} = 8.709$ $F_{(5\text{-}301)} = 10.975$ $F_{(5\text{-}301)} = 4.473$

$p < .05$ $p < .05$ $p < .05$ $p < .05$ $p < .05$

Sub-dimensions of career barriers explain about 10% of the total variance in the meaningless sub-dimension. Sub-dimensions of career barriers explain about 11% of the total variance in the isolation sub-dimension. Sub-dimensions of career barriers explain about 11% of the total variance in the self-alienation sub-dimension. Sub-dimensions of career barriers explain about 14% of the total variance in the weakness sub-dimension. Career barriers predict weakness most among alienation sub-dimensions. Sub-dimensions of career barriers explain about 5% of the total variance in the normlessness sub-dimension.

Table 5 includes the multiple regression analysis results regarding the predictability of pre-school female teachers' career barriers on their burnout levels. Accordingly, it was found that the sub-dimensions of career barriers are predictive of women's burnout levels ($p < .05$). All sub-dimensions of career barriers (family, school environment, education, working hours, age, economic reasons, marital status, gender stereotypes, women's perspectives on career) have a predictive power on all sub-dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, personal accomplishment). Sub-dimensions of career barriers explain about 19% of the total variance in the emotional exhaustion sub-dimension. Career barriers predict emotional exhaustion most among burnout sub-dimensions. Sub-dimensions of career barriers explain about 16% of the total variance in the depersonalisation sub-dimension. Sub-dimensions of career barriers explain about 7% of the total variance in the personal accomplishment sub-dimension.

Table 5 Multiple regression analysis results regarding the predictability of pre-school female teachers' career barriers on their burnout levels

Burnout	Emotional exhaustion				Depersonalisation				Personal accomplishment			
Variable	B	*SE*	β	*t*	B	*SE*	β	*t*	B	*SE*	β	*t*
Constant	.631	.177		3.570	.526	.121		4.352	1.424	.172		8.298
Family	.162	.042	.219	3.889	.057	.028	.115	2.009	.133	.040	.199	3.299
School environment	.156	.057	.179	2.716	.093	.039	.160	2.366	.037	.056	.047	.666
Education, working hours, age, economic reasons and marital status	.258	.066	.269	3.906	.206	.045	.322	4.576	.165	.064	.190	2.575
Social gender stereotypes	-.050	.052	-.068	-.967	-.040	.036	-.081	-1.138	-.066	.051	-.097	-1.299
Women's perspectives of career	-.038	.050	-.050	-.764	-.025	.034	-.051	-.750	-.012	.048	-.018	-.258
	$R = .452$		$A.R^2 = .192$		$R = .413$		$A.R^2 = .157$		$R = .292$		$A.R^2 = .070$	
	$F_{(5-301)} = 15.592$				$F_{(5-301)} = 12.438$				$F_{(5-301)} = 5.64$			
	$p < .05$				$p < .05$				$p < .05$			

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim with this study was to determine the relationship between pre-school female teachers' career barriers and their alienation and burnout levels, and also to reveal the predictability of career barriers regarding their alienation and burnout. Findings from the study indicate that career barriers increase both feelings of alienation and burnout among teachers, which directly affect their job satisfaction and the quality of teaching. In particular, barriers such as family responsibilities, school environment constraints, and gender stereotypes negatively impact teachers' professional lives. These general findings, also considering the previous studies, are discussed in more detail below under the headings of alienation and burnout.

The Relationship between Pre-school Female Teachers' Career Barriers and Their Alienation

According to pre-school female teachers' views, a positive and significant relationship was found between all sub-dimensions of career barriers and all sub-dimensions of alienation (except for the relationship between gender stereotypes and meaninglessness). Also, career barriers were seen to considerably predict alienation in all its sub-dimensions. This result shows similarity with that by İnandı, Tunç and Kılavuz (2018).

The results of the study demonstrate no significant relationship between social gender stereotypes of career barriers, and the meaninglessness sub-dimension of alienation. Meaninglessness is generally taken as the individual's reluctance to act according to the goals and objectives of the organisation, due to the thought of conflict with their own beliefs, and thus, the individual's sense of not knowing which one to believe (Seeman, 1959). Keeping this in mind, the gender-based career barriers experienced by pre-school female teachers do not cause them to have any negative feelings about being unable to decide what to believe. In other words, they do not become alienated by feeling meaningless. Because meaninglessness is more related to one's own inner world while gender is an environmental, or rather, an external situation.

The relationship between pre-school teachers' career barriers and their alienation levels is also supported by the results of the regression analysis, showing that career barriers of female teachers predicted the weakness (13.9%), self-alienation (11.1%), isolation (11.1%), meaninglessness (10.2%) and normlessness (5%) sub-dimensions of alienation. Alienation of pre-school teachers may have various negative consequences, for example communication difficulties, loss of motivation, job dissatisfaction and like the tendency to quit job. That is, female teachers may feel powerless at first when they face a career barrier, then become alienated from themselves, and also feel isolated and experience a sense of meaninglessness. As Blauner (1964) states, such employees drift away from the objectives of the organisation and this results in the weakening of ties with the organisation. Breaking ties with the organisation can also decrease all efficiency in the organisation.

The Relationship between Pre-school Female Teachers' Career Barriers and Their Burnout

As career barriers of pre-school female teachers increase, so do their burnout levels. Burnout is particularly seen in employees of occupational groups that require intensive communication (Antoniou, Polychroni & Walters, 2000), one of which is pre-school teaching. According to the teachers' opinions, positive and significant relationships were found between female teachers' career barriers and burnout, except for the relationship gender stereotypes of career barriers and personal accomplishment of burnout. It was also revealed that career barriers predict burnout at almost all sub-dimensions.

According to the results of the regression analysis, career barriers predicted the emotional exhaustion (19.2%), depersonalisation (15.7%) and personal accomplishment (7%) sub-dimensions of burnout. As can be understood, women who have a career barrier can experience high levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation together with a decrease in their personal accomplishment, similar to what İnandi (2009b) found. In this study, parallel to the study of İnandi (2009b), it was also found that the burnout levels of female teachers increased as school and environmental career barriers arose.

In the study, a high level of positive correlation was also found between school environment career barriers and depersonalisation. In other words, pre-school female teachers who experience more career barriers, may gradually become more insensitive.

Women are seen to fully internalise the roles that society attributes to them. The burnout experienced by a female teacher can have negative consequences not only for herself, but also for her students, colleagues, parents, her own family, and finally the whole of society (Hock, 1988; Iwanicki, 1983). Especially, if the pre-school teacher experiences this situation, it is possible that it negatively impacts on her students that may affect most of their lives. For example, the decline in the quality of teaching, difficulties in student relations, tendency to leave the job, personal or health problems, decline in school culture and collaboration.

For these reasons, burnout in pre-school teachers can lead to serious consequences at both

an individual and institutional level, and it is important to prevent or manage this situation.

Pre-school teachers, like any other employee, have a desire to progress in their work and not remain where they started. However, this desire to progress may not be at the same level in all employees. Some set further goals and can make every effort to achieve these. When they reach the goals, they feel happy, but when they cannot reach them, they feel disappointed. This disappointment can cause their dismissal and even their burnout. Such a failure may not be as disappointing for people who set lower goals or who are less willing, but they may still experience unhappiness when they fail to reach their goal. The fact that female teachers who make up nearly 95% of pre-school education cannot achieve their career goals has led them to experience alienation and burnout. This rate is very important because it is quite difficult for an unhappy teacher who is alienated and experience burnout to be really interested in children, to contribute to their development, to improve their academic aspects, and to have the expected level of cooperation with parents and other staff. In short, as can be understood, it is very hard to achieve the overall goals of pre-school education.

For this reason, pre-school teachers, who are critically important in the education process, encounter gender-based discrimination, causing not only personal but also organisational problems which affects the whole education system. To rectify this, career processes of pre-school female teachers should be supported by the Ministry of National Education, flexible working hours should be implemented, and barriers to their progress should be removed. This is needed because these barriers reduce teachers' engagement in their jobs and lead to a disconnection from their profession. As alienation and burnout increase, teachers' responsiveness to students decreases, and they become less effective in educational processes. In the long term, this situation could lead to higher rates of teacher turnover and a decrease in trained professionals in the field of education. Additionally, experiencing burnout and alienation can have adverse effects on students. Students' academic achievements and their ability to adapt to school are largely influenced by the emotional and professional state of their teachers.

In conclusion, reducing the career barriers that pre-school teachers face will benefit both teachers and students. This will enhance teachers' professional satisfaction and overall educational quality, while also ensuring a sustainable future in the field of education.

Suggestions

In this study, the relationship between women's career obstacles and burnout and alienation was studied. Meta-analysis and meta-synthesis can be performed by bringing together studies on this subject. One can also look at the intermediary role. In-service training could be presented from time to time to eliminate women's career obstacles. In addition, policy and administrative support at the institutional level need to be strengthened to help female teachers tackle career barriers. This could mean creating policies that promote gender equality, increasing promotion opportunities for women, and providing support such as flexible working hours and family leave. It is also important that school administrators and other administrative staff support and encourage female teachers to reach their career goals. This type of institutional support can make it easier for female teachers to cope with career obstacles and will enable them to be more successful in their jobs.

Authors' Contributions

Both authors worked collaboratively.

Notes

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