Burnout in prospective elementary school teachers: Is it related to reasons for choosing the elementary school teaching major, beliefs about the teaching career and satisfaction with the choice?

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The present study was carried out to examine the relationships between elementary school teacher candidates' motivations for choosing the teaching profession, beliefs about the teaching profession, satisfaction with the choice, and burnout. The study was carried out with 171 senior elementary school teacher candidates at one public university in Turkey. Results showed student burnout was significantly and negatively correlated with ability, intrinsic career value, social utility value, and prior teaching and learning experiences as motivations to enter the teaching profession. It was also found that student burnout negatively and significantly related with task return and satisfaction with the choice of career. Moreover, there was found to be a significant and positive relationship between burnout and fallback career as motivating factor, which reveals that students who chose teaching profession as a last resort profession experienced a greater level of burnout. Regression analysis revealed that ability-related motivations to entering into teaching contributed negatively to student burnout, whereas fallback career and personal utility value motivations contributed positively to student burnout. Regarding beliefs about the teaching profession and satisfaction with the choice, it was found that task return and satisfaction with the choice were negative contributors to student burnout.

Key words: Elementary teacher education, student burnout, reasons for choosing teaching as a career, beliefs about the teaching profession, satisfaction with the choice

INTRODUCTION

Burnout is a psychological syndrome that was conceptualized by Maslach and Jackson (1981) as involving three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Initially studied in the context of human service employees, burnout has been expanded to students since they also have
workloads, assignments with deadlines, and other responsibilities that cause them to develop burnout syndromes (Erturgut and Soysal, 2010; Law, 2010; Lee et al., 2010; Mostert et al., 2007; Parker and Salmela-Aro, 2011). “Burnout among students refers to feeling exhausted because of study demands, having a cynical and detached attitude toward one’s study, and feeling incompetent as a student” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 465). Due to its adverse influences on human service employees and students, burnout has been the subject of many studies attempting to shed light on conditions arousing burnout (Bresó et al., 2011; Kao, 2009; Yang, 2004). The adverse effects of burnout that occur during college years manifest in both pre-service and in service years. For example, studies with students revealed that burnout has a significant negative impact on academic performance (Balkis et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Yang, 2004) and commitment (Jia et al., 2009), and that there is a negative correlation between burnout and engagement (Alarcon et al., 2011; Kutsal and Bilge, 2012; Mostert et al., 2007; Salanova et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Uludağ and Yarat, 2010; Zhang et al., 2007), between burnout and self-esteem (Lee et al., 2010), between burnout and life satisfaction (Chang et al., 2011; Capri et al., 2012), and between burnout and student departure (Kelly et al., 2012). Burnout may result dissatisfaction from school, low commitment, skipping classes, intention to leave college, and low academic performance (Law, 2007; Maslach and Leiter, 2008). Furthermore, the impact of burnout can expand to after graduation years so that burnout experienced during college education years can predict the burnout level after graduation; in some cases, burnout during college can predict an even greater rate of burnout post-college (Yang and Farn, 2005).

Burnout among college students and associated factors

The studies on school burnout show that it is a multi-source syndrome that is associated with personal characteristics of individuals, e.g. gender, age, self-efficacy, personality traits, socio-economic status, relationships with others etc., and school related factors, e.g. academic workload, exams, adjustment to school environment, career concerns, etc. (Mehdinezhad, 2011; Morgan and De Bruin, 2010). Studies have revealed that self-efficacy (Fives et al., 2007; Yang, 2004; Yang and Farn, 2005) and social support (Gündüz et al., 2012; Yang, 2004; Yang and Farn, 2005) are significant variables that predict less burnout among students, indicating the more social support they receive and the more they feel self-efficacious the less burnout they have. Particular demographic characteristics of students were also related to school burnout (Morgan and De Bruin, 2010). For instance, years of study and age (Balkis et al., 2011; Bekir et al., 2012; Bernhard, 2010; Gündüz et al., 2012; Ören and Türkoğlu, 2006) financial status or perceived socio-economic status (Bekir et al., 2012; Cushman and West, 2006; Salmela-Aro et al., 2011; Tümkaya and Çavuşoğlu, 2010) were found to be significant predictors of student burnout, suggesting that upper classes and/or elders, and students having financial difficulties are more likely to experience burnout. One of the other mostly studied demographic variables seems to be gender. Findings related to gender and burnout association are not consistent. For example, Yang (2004) and Balkis et al., (2011) found that male students felt more burnout as compared to females; Erturgut and Soysal (2010) and Ören and Türkoğlu (2006) found that females have more emotional exhaustion than males; however, in other dimensions such as self-efficacy and cynicism, males felt more burnout compared to females. As for academic factors, research by Baş (2011) showed that standardized exams carried out nationwide were a significant predictor of burnout. Other academic factors such as student workload that is assignments, the overabundance of homework and exams, and coursework involvement were also found to be significant predictors of burnout, indicating that the more students have to do the more burnout they experience (Bernhard, 2010; Cushman and West, 2006; Gündüz et al., 2012; Kao, 2009; Law, 2007; Yang, 2004). These are typical activities that result from the status of being a student; however, they can cause burnout (Salanova et al., 2010). Teacher-related factors such as “teacher apathy”, “teacher ego”, and “teacher boredom with the subject matter”, instructors’ unclen-erness, unavailability, arrogance, “instructor’s indifference”, “lack of a caring attitude”, and “perceived egotism” were also mentioned as reasons for burnout by students in a study by Cushman and West (2006, pp. 26-28). There is a dearth of studies examining relationships between students’ career choice motivations, their beliefs about teaching, and satisfaction with their choice and student burnout. However, there is ample empirical research examining the impact of career choice reasons and/or beliefs about the profession for individuals. For example, Demirtaş et al. (2011) found a positive relationship between teaching commitment and teaching self-efficacy, suggesting prospective teachers who held more positive attitudes toward the teaching profession felt more self-efficacious. Moreover, studies showed that academic performance of preservice teachers is related to their intrinsic reasons for becoming teachers (König and Rothland, 2012) and positive attitudes towards the teaching profession (Özder et al., 2010). These studies corroborate the negative effect of an unwilling choice of career or negative perceptions of teaching on academic outcome (Topkaya and Uztopsun, 2012). Several studies found that future teachers who preferred the teaching profession for more intrinsic reasons, as opposed to
teaching as a fallback career, held more positive attitudes toward teaching than those who chose teaching as a fallback career or for extrinsic reasons (Akpinar et al., 2006; Bozdoğan et al., 2007; Özder et al., 2010). Others found that intrinsically motivated prospective teachers had greater occupational respect than extrinsically motivated prospective teachers (Ünal and Şimşek, 2008); intrinsically motivated prospective teachers planned to exert more effort in the profession (Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus, 2012a; Watt and Richardson, 2007); and intrinsically and altruistically motivated teacher candidates were motivated to learn more and had a lower level of anxiety related to learning (Aktürk, 2012). Likewise, Rots et al. (2010) found that future teachers who had greater commitment to teaching had more intention to become a teacher after graduation. Moreover, studies found positive correlations between satisfaction with the choice and professional engagement and career development aspirations (Eren, 2012; Eren and Tezel, 2010; Watt and Richardson, 2007) and satisfaction with the choice and affective professional commitment to the teaching profession (Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus, 2012b), and negative correlations between fallback career choice, negative beliefs about teaching and planned effort, intention to remain in the profession, and commitment (Eren and Tezel, 2010; Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus, 2012a; Watt and Richardson, 2007).

Based on the studies, one can infer that student teachers’ reasons for choosing teaching and beliefs about the teaching profession not only affect their achievement during teacher education, their attitudes towards the teaching profession and their desire to leave or remain in the profession (Sinclair, 2008; Chan, 2006) but also their feeling of burnout, e.g. lack of energy to study, desire to leave the school, and feeling incompetent (Alarcon et al., 2011; Salanova et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Yang, 2004). Watt et al. (2012) argue that teacher candidates “who find themselves in settings which do not allow them to realise their motivations are likely to feel less efficacious, less satisfied with their career choice, and to experience burnout or leave the profession” (pp. 800-801). If individuals choose a career in which there is incompatibility between the job and themselves, it is more likely that they will experience more burnout or leave the profession (Natan and Becker, 2010; Maslach et al., 2001).

A study by Pisarik (2009) found that “individuals who experienced greater levels of intrinsic motivation to attend college (e.g., those who are motivated by the satisfaction and pleasure derived from academic tasks) were more likely to experience lower levels of exhaustion and cynicism”. In the same vein, in other studies (Bekir et al., 2012; Cushman and West, 2006; Erturgut and Soysękerci, 2010) satisfaction with the major or disinterest in the chosen major was found to be a significant predictor of the burnout, suggesting that students who are not satisfied with their major are more vulnerable to burnout.

### METHODOLOGY

This study used correlational design (Creswell, 2008) and sought answers the following research questions: (1) what are the relationships between elementary school teacher candidates’ motivations that is reasons for choosing the teaching profession, beliefs about the teaching profession, satisfaction with the choice, and burnout; and (2) do elementary school teacher candidates’ motivations for choosing the teaching profession, beliefs about the teaching profession, and satisfaction with the choice predict their burnout.

#### Participants

In the present study, the participants were 171 senior elementary school teacher candidates at one public university in Turkey. One hundred twenty three (71.9%) of the participants were female, and 48 (28.1%) were male. The average of the age of the participants was 21.2 years (SD=1.84). In terms of maternal educational attainment level, most of the participants’ mothers had completed elementary school as the highest level of education attained (61.4%), which was followed by high school (17.0%), no formal schooling (9.4%), higher education (7.6%), and middle school (4.7%). In terms of the highest level of educational attainment for fathers, almost half of the participants reported elementary education (41.5%), which was followed by high school (28.1%), middle school (14.0%), higher education (14.0%), and no formal schooling (2.3%).

#### Instruments

In the study, Turkish versions of the factors influencing teaching choice scale (FIT-Choice scale) and Maslach Burnout Inventory – Student Survey (MBI-SS) were utilized to collect the data.

#### FIT-choice scale

This scale was developed by Richardson and Watt (2006) and Watt and Richardson (2007) and consists of 12 factors (ability, intrinsic career value, fallback career, job security, time for family, job transferability, shape future of children/adolescents, enhance social equity, make social contribution, work with children/adolescents, prior teaching and learning experiences, and social influences) measuring motivations for choosing the teaching profession (38 items), 5 factors (expertise, difficulty, social status, salary, and social dissuasion) measuring beliefs/perceptions about teaching (17 items), and 1 factor measuring satisfaction with career choice (3 items) constructs (Eren and Tezel, 2010; Richardson and Watt, 2006; Watt and Richardson, 2007, 2008). Out of motivations for choosing the teaching profession factors, job security, time for family, and job transferability comprise higher-order personal utility value; shape future of children/adolescents, enhance social equity, make social contribution, and work with children/adolescents comprise higher-order social utility value; of beliefs/perceptions about teaching factors, expertise and difficulty comprise higher-order task demand construct; and social status and salary comprise higher-order task return construct (Richardson and Watt, 2006; Watt and Richardson, 2007). The present study used the Turkish translation of the FIT-Choice scale, which was translated by Eren and Tezel (2010). As reported by Eren and Tezel (2010), Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients of the scale’s Turkish version yielded good results as ranging between .77-.95 for motivation factors, .79-.88 for beliefs about teaching factors, and .87 for career choice satisfaction factor. Participants rated their agreement with the items on a 7-point Likert scale (7 = extremely important, 1 = not at all important for motivation items; and7=extremely, 1 = not at all for beliefs about teaching and satisfaction with choice items) (Eren and Tezel,
MBI-SS

This scale was modified from the Maslach Burnout Inventory—General Survey (MBI-GS) by Schaufeli et al. (2002) to measure burnout among students on three dimensions as being Exhaustion (5 items), Cynicism (5 items), and Efficacy (6 items) (Schaufeli et al., 2002). In the present study, the Turkish version of MBI-SS, which was adapted by Çapri et al. (2011), was utilized to measure student burnout. The Turkish MBI-SS consists of three subscales as with the original MBI-SS; however, during reliability analysis of the Turkish version, 1 item from Cynicism and 2 items from Efficacy subscales were removed from original MBI-SS; as a result Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients of the MBI-SS’s Turkish version were reported as ranging between 61-.82, suggesting that Turkish version of the scale is a reliable measure (Çapri et al., 2011). In the Turkish MBI-SS, students indicate their burnout level on a 5-point frequency scale (1= never, 5= always); high scores on exhaustion and cynicism and low scores on efficacy subscales indicate high level of burnout (Çapri et al., 2011). To measure the burnout level of students in the present study, only exhaustion and cynicism subscales were used, as previous studies (Bresó et al., 2011; Galán et al., 2011; Mostert et al., 2007; Salanova et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010) have suggested these two dimensions are core elements of burnout.

RESULTS

Research question 1

First research question was what are the relationships between elementary school teacher candidates’ motivations that is reasons for choosing the teaching profession, beliefs about the teaching profession, satisfaction with the choice, and burnout? To determine the relationships between elementary school teacher candidates’ motivations for choosing the teaching profession, beliefs about the teaching profession, satisfaction with the choice, and burnout, the Pearson product moment correlation analysis was conducted. The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations were presented in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, there were found to be significant relationships between burnout and elementary school teacher candidates’ several motivations for choosing the teaching profession. Namely, student burnout negatively and significantly correlated with ability (r= -.31, p<.01), intrinsic career value (r= -.23, p<.01), social utility value (r= -.15, p< .05), and prior teaching and learning experiences (r= -.19, p< .05). In contrast, student burnout positively and significantly correlated with fallback career (r= .26, p<.01). However, no significant correlations were found between student burnout and personal utility value (r= .08, p>.05) or social influences (r= -.01, p>.05). As for relationships between burnout and beliefs about the teaching profession and satisfaction with choice, it was found that there was a negative and significant relationship between burnout and task return (r= -.28, p<.01) and satisfaction with choice (r= -.37, p<.01). There were no significant relationships between burnout and task demand (r= .04, p>.05) or social dissuasion (r= .12, p>.05).

Research question 2

The second research question was do elementary school teacher candidates’ motivations for choosing the teaching profession, beliefs about the teaching profession, and satisfaction with the choice predict their burnout? To test whether elementary school teacher candidates’ reasons for choosing the teaching profession and beliefs about the teaching profession predict their burnout, multiple regression analyses were performed on the data. To determine whether satisfaction with the choice predicts their burnout, simple linear regression analyses was used. Table 2 shows multiple regression analysis for motivations for teaching variables predicting student burnout.

As seen in Table 2, the results of multiple regression indicated that the motivations of elementary school teacher candidates for choosing the teaching profession, when combined, explained 17% of the variance in burnout, R² = .17. F(7, 163)=4.81, p<.001. It was found that ability (β = -.33, p< .01), fallback career (β = .18, p<.05), and personal utility value (β=.17,p<.05) were significant predictors. However, intrinsic career value (β=.09, p>.05), social utility value (β=.01, p<.05), prior teaching and learning experiences (β=.15, p>.05), and social influences (β=.07, p> .05) were not significant predictors.

These results revealed that a high level of ability-related motivations to become an elementary school teacher were associated with lower levels of burnout; on the other hand, high levels of fallback career and personal utility value motivations were associated with higher level of burnout. Table 3 displays the results from multiple regression analysis for beliefs about the teaching profession variables predicting student burnout.

As seen in Table 3, social dissuasion, task demand, and task return together accounted for 9% of the variance in student burnout, R² = .09, F(3, 167)= 5.62, p<.001. However, the only significant predictor of student burnout was task return (β = -.28, p<.001), indicating that a higher level of task return was associated with lower level of burnout. Table 4 indicates the results from regression analysis for satisfaction with the choice variable predicting student burnout.

As seen in Table 4, satisfaction with the choice accounted for 14% of the variance in student burnout, R² = .14, F(1, 169) = 27.21, p<.001. Standardized beta coefficient reveals that high level of satisfaction with the choice was associated with lower levels of burnout (β = -.37, p< .001).

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

The present study was carried out to examine the relationships between elementary school teacher candidates’
motivations for choosing the teaching profession, beliefs about the teaching profession, satisfaction with the choice, and burnout. Results showed student burnout was significantly and negatively correlated with ability, intrinsic career value, social utility value, prior teaching and learning experiences as motivations to enter the teaching profession, suggesting that students who identify with these motivations and rate them higher as inspirations to choose teaching are less likely to experience burnout. It was also found that student burnout negatively and significantly related with task return and satisfaction with the choice. There was found to be a significant and positive relationship between fallback career and burnout, which reveals that students who chose teaching profession as a last resort profession reported a higher level of burnout. Further analysis revealed that ability reasons to enter into teaching contributed negatively to student burnout, whereas fallback career and personal utility value motivations (e.g. job security, time for family, job transferability) were positive contributors to student

| Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Burnout and Motivations for Teaching, Beliefs about the Teaching Profession, and Satisfaction with the Choice Predictor Variables. |
| Variable | M  | SD  | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  |
| Burnout  | 2.75 | .80  | -.31**| -.23**| .26**| .08  | -.15*| -.19*| -.01 | .04  | -.28**| .12  | -.37** |

**Predictor Variable Motivations for Teaching**

1. Ability 5.54 1.05 — .74** -.31** .29** .59** .35** .24** .25** .33** -.05 .58**
2. Intrinsic career value 5.48 1.22 — -.50** .33** .65** .36** .21** .23** .27** -.11 .65**
3. Fallback career 3.19 1.72 — .04 — .31** -.15 -.06 -.07 -.16* .17* -.55**
4. Personal Utility Value 4.92 .94 — .45** .30** .22** .16* .23** .00 .18*
5. Social Utility Value 5.77 .91 — .36** .23** .42** .24** .02 .53**
6. Prior teaching and learning experiences 5.29 1.46 — .29** .24** .19* .01 .33**
7. Social influences 4.62 1.69 — .11 .17* .14 .14

**Beliefs about the Teaching Profession**

8. Task Demand 6.00 .83 — .07 .15* .21**
9. Task Return 3.79 1.03 — -.07 .35**
10. Social dissuasion 3.43 1.48 — -.07
11. Satisfaction with the Choice 4.88 1.46 —

*p<.05. **p<.01.

| Table 2. Multiple Regression Analysis for Motivations for Teaching Variables Predicting Student Burnout. |
| Variable | B  | SE B | β  | t  | p   |
| (Constant) | 3.12 | .47  | 6.63 | .000 |
| Ability | -.25 | .08  | -.33 | -3.01 | .003 |
| Intrinsic career value | .06 | .08  | .09 | .68 | .495 |
| Fallback career | .08 | .04  | .18 | 2.09 | .038 |
| Personal Utility Value | .14 | .07  | .17 | 2.01 | .046 |
| Social Utility Value | .01 | .09  | .01 | .07 | .947 |
| Prior teaching and learning experiences | -.08 | .04  | -.15 | -1.92 | .057 |
| Social influences | .03 | .04  | .07 | .90 | .371 |

Note. R² = .17, F(7, 163)=4.81, p=.000.
burnout, suggesting that students who were extrinsically motivated and who chose teaching as a last resort career are more susceptible to burnout. In contrast, students who chose teaching career because they consider teaching to be suitable to their abilities are less likely to experience burnout. Regarding beliefs about the teaching profession and satisfaction with the choice, it was found that task return and satisfaction with the choice were negative contributors to student burnout. Students who believe teaching is high in social status and salary are less likely to experience burnout; additionally, if they are satisfied with their choice to become an elementary school teacher, they are less likely to experience burnout. These findings—which are favorable for those choosing the teaching profession for ability reasons and who express satisfaction with their choice, and which are not favorable for those who are motivated by personal utility values and considered teaching a last resort profession— are not surprising. Previous research has shown that intrinsically motivated teacher candidates were motivated to learn more and had a lower level of anxiety related to learning (Akbınar, 2012). On the other hand, those who chose the teaching profession as a fallback career were uncertain to remain in the profession (Eren and Tezel, 2010; Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus, 2012a; Watt and Richardson, 2007), had low academic performance (König and Rothland, 2012; Özder et al., 2010), and held more negative attitudes towards teaching (Akbınar et al., 2006; Bozdoğan et al., 2007; Özder et al., 2010). Moreover, other studies also found relationships between burnout and disliking the career chosen (Akanseş et al., 2012) and being uncertain about choosing the right career (Cephe, 2010).

Students in their fourth years in elementary school teacher education programs have a greater work load compared to previous years at schools of education. In addition to their regular classes, they have a student-teaching course, which is a five-credit course for two semesters, in the last year. Students spend one school day a week at an elementary school and carry out their responsibilities for this course under the guidance of two mentors: one from the elementary school they visit and one from the university. Moreover, following their graduation, students need to take the Personnel Selection Examination for Public Organizations (KPSS), which requires intensive preparation to be recruited as an elementary school teacher at public schools. Responsibilities necessitated by student teaching and KPSS preparation increase student workload, which can result in burnout (Tümkaya and Çavoşoğlu, 2010). Studies showed that student burnout is related to workload (Bernhard, 2010; Cushman and West, 2006; Gündüz et al., 2012; Kao, 2009; Law, 2007; Yang, 2004) and standardized exams (Baş, 2011).

According to the findings of the present study, we can conclude that students who choose teaching profession due to their ability and express satisfaction at their choice can successfully handle stressors such as homework, exams, and responsibilities of student teaching that can cause burnout; these students can easily adapt to teaching practices and, as a result, meet the requirements of student teaching. As asserted by Tümkaya and Çavoşoğlu (2010), teaching is a job that entails ability, and those who choose any profession that does not suit their abilities and interests are more likely to experience negative emotions that can result in burnout. As such, students choosing the teaching profession primarily for personal utility values or extrinsic factors were found to be more susceptible to burnout. These students were motivated by extrinsic factors such as job security, time for family, and job transferability. This result supports the findings of Pisarik (2009), whose research showed that students who attended college for extrinsic reasons experienced more burnout. We can argue that as long as

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis for Beliefs about the Teaching Profession Variables Predicting Student Burnout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social dissuasion</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Demand</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Return</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-3.77</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = .09, F(3, 167) = 5.62, p = .001$.

Table 4. Regression Analysis for Satisfaction with the Choice Variable Predicting Student Burnout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>18.78</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with the Choice</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.37</td>
<td>-5.22</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = .14, F(1, 169) = 27.21, p = .000$. 
these extrinsic motivations for becoming an elementary school teacher exist during pre-service years, it is possible that these students may concentrate on their study in a similar manner as shown by those students motivated by ability reasons. However, a problem can emerge when these external factors disappear. In the absence of the external factors that attracted students to teaching profession, such students would lose their purpose, which can make them susceptible to burnout. For example, on 10 September 2012, the last teacher recruitment cycle before the data collection, the total number of the elementary school teacher candidates who applied for employment at public schools was 4378; however, the total number of the elementary school teachers who were recruited at public schools was 324 (MEB, n.d.), which means only 7.4% of applicants were given the opportunity to work as an elementary school teacher at public schools. It can be asserted that this low recruitment of elementary school teachers may have contributed to future elementary school teachers’ burnout, since student teachers motivated by external reasons for becoming a teacher may have more concern for the future because of low recruitment (Tümkaya and Çavuşoğlu, 2010). Future elementary school teacher candidates would be aware from the last recruitment cycle that most of the applicants will not succeed in attaining a secure job, reliable income, lengthy holidays, short working days, and other factors that motivated them to choose teaching profession, all due to recruitment policies.

To conclude, findings in this study have shown that guiding individuals as they make their career choice is of great importance; students should be helped to choose a profession that best suits their abilities, so that they can avoid or successfully handle stressors that will inevitably arise during pre-service years. As a limitation, this study was carried out with prospective elementary school teachers. Therefore, to better understand the relationship between student burnout and reasons for choosing the teaching profession, the following are advisable: (1) similar studies conducted with different teacher education programs, and (2) longitudinal and qualitative studies.

Conflict of Interests

The author have not declared any conflict of interests.

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