The Effect of Teacher Candidates on Burnout Levels During the Pandemic Process

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ABSTRACT

With the global pandemic, the education model has changed and education has moved to online environments around the world. It is the role of the teacher that does not change in this change in education. In this study, it is aimed to reveal the effect of future teacher candidates, who are students in the pandemic period, on the burnout levels. The research was carried out with the case study technique, which is one of the qualitative research methods. 32 teacher candidates participated in the research. Research data were collected through a semi-structured interview form and analyzed with content analysis technique. As a result of the research, it was concluded that the participants felt exhausted and tired due to the limitations experienced in the pandemic process, and this caused some difficulties in education. While prospective teachers had a positive view of the use of technology regarding the future of their profession, it was determined that the lack of practical courses in particular caused anxiety.

Keywords: Burnout, teacher candidates, pandemic, covid 19

1. INTRODUCTION

Looking at the history of humanity, it can be said that the teaching profession has a reputation in society. The most important factor in meeting the learning needs of individuals is the skills and behaviors of teachers. Teachers must be aware of the learning needs of a group of students so that they can influence the educational lives of individuals. In order to determine these needs and to create the necessary educational conditions for individuals, the person providing education and training must have the necessary resources. Teachers who receive the necessary special education are expected to know what, how, when and in what ways they teach, and to implement the necessary behavioral changes (Maslach & Leiter, 2017).

In order for a specialty to be a profession, people working in that field must have knowledge and skills specific to that field. In other words, a job that everyone can do cannot be called a profession. Everyone who is a teacher should be an expert in their field (Saloviita & Pakatinen, 2021). The skills and qualifications of the teaching profession, in general, the teacher should plan the learning process well, be creative, use the study time effectively, organize the classroom environment according to the needs of the students and monitor the development of the students. In order to do all this correctly, people in this profession need to specialize (Herman, Hickmon-Rosa, & Reinke, 2018).

There are very few studies on teacher burnout and on pre-service teachers who have not yet entered the profession. In this regard, studies have been carried out on teachers who have started their profession (Ören ve Türkoğlu, 2006). Burnout is not a situation that arises out of nowhere, it requires a process. Therefore, when the causes of "teacher burnout" are examined, if only the factors that emerge after starting the profession are considered, this will prevent the problem from being seen as a whole.

Determining and evaluating the burnout levels of pre-professional teacher candidates will be beneficial in finding early solutions to the problem. In the literature on the subject in our country, the burnout syndromes experienced by teachers after starting their profession have been examined in most of the scientific researches. Determining and comparing the burnout levels experienced by pre-service teachers before starting their profession and after becoming a teacher will facilitate taking effective measures against the problem (Çankaya et al., 2012).

With the coronavirus, schools have suddenly transformed from traditional learning environments to an online education model (Xu, 2017; Presley, 2021). In addition, the epidemic situation, online formats, new technological situation and difficulties in video conferencing sessions have made teachers' work difficult and therefore the feeling of work tension has increased. Teachers' skills are not sufficient to solve these problems, so they are increasingly dissatisfied with their jobs. Teachers who are exposed to stress for such a long time may be

affected by professional psychological symptoms. Over time, teachers are prone to insomnia, tension, irritability, fatigue, and other negative emotions that lead to varying degrees of burnout and job dissatisfaction. When teachers' burnout level is high, the effectiveness and order of teaching activities are affected (Lee, 2020; Moueleu et al., 2019). In the long term, situations that occur especially in pandemic conditions affect the ordinary vocational training processes. For this reason, it is important to reveal the burnout of teacher candidates, especially during the Covid-19 process. In this context, the burnout of teacher candidates during the Covid 19 process was examined in this study. In this context, answers to the following questions were sought in the study;

1. What are the effects of the pandemic on the personal life of teacher candidates?
2. What are the effects of the pandemic on the educational life of teacher candidates?
3. What are the situations in which teacher candidates feel exhausted and tired during the training they receive during the pandemic process?
4. What are the situations in which teacher candidates feel stressed during the pandemic process? How did this stress affect their education?
5. What are the situations in which teacher candidates feel inadequate during the pandemic process?
6. What are their views on the positive and negative effects of the current pandemic on their future professional lives?

1.1. Burnout

There are many definitions, explanations and approaches to the concept of burnout in the literature with the article of Freudenberger (1974) published in the journal "Journal of Social Issues" for the first time. According to Freudenberger's definition, burnout is a state of weariness, a sense of failure, and extreme exhaustion experienced as a result of too much demand from power and energy resources, as well as professional stress; It arises as a result of some wishes that cannot be met in the inner world of person (Madigan & Curran, 2020). Maslach and Jackson (1985) exhaustion, physical exhaustion, chronic fatigue, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness; They defined the development of a negative self-concept as a syndrome of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion, which includes a negative attitude towards work, life, and other people. Demirtaş and Güneş (2002) define burnout as "individually experienced physical fatigue, hopelessness, disappointment, weakness, negative self-concept development, developing a negative attitude towards work, colleagues, workplace and life as a result of work".

Ways of coping with job burnout are divided into personal and organizational methods (Çapulcuoglu & Gündüz, 2013); (a-) Personal methods: Recognizing fatigue, knowing needs/expectations, managing stress, recognizing job challenges, realistic job expectations, scheduling, changing jobs or taking breaks. (b-) Organizational methods: Choosing the right employee, empowering employees, managing conflicts, improving working conditions, performance evaluation-reward system, participation in internal decisions, supporting teamwork, providing career opportunities, organizational commitment, supporting senior managers, shortening working hours, socialization, planning activities, strengthening internal communication, fair promotion policy.

In the literature, burnout is seen in almost every occupational group that has a lot of contact with people because of their profession. Teaching is one of the professions where burnout can be experienced because it involves and interacts with more than one person such as student, family, school administrator. This situation triggers the conditions of the schools, the perspective of the representatives of this profession and the people outside them (Sarıçam & Sakız, 2014).

Students' motivation and problem behaviors also affect teacher burnout. Due to the nature of the profession, teachers have more than one communication area, but when these areas of communication are considered, it can be said that the student and his current situation are effective in experiencing this feeling (Jackson, Schwab ve Schuler, 1986). In addition to the fact that the teaching profession is one of the most stressful professions, it is also affected by the characteristics of the students with whom the teachers work (Çiftçi, 2015; Ishak et al., 2013).

Studies have shown that teachers who are constantly interested in people and in face-to-face contact with them are the closest occupational group to burnout (Barut & Kalkan, 2002). The feeling of burnout in teachers affects not only themself and their family, but also school, institution, students and parents. The professional burnout of teachers has a debilitating effect on many issues such as their personal health and the quality of the educational services they provide at school. While this causes deterioration in both the quality and quantity of the educational services that are tried to be given at school, it can sometimes negatively affect the mental health of the students (Antoniou et al., 2013).

1.2. Pandemic and Burnout

The causes of teacher burnout are often diverse. Students, school, economy, communication, role ambiguity, personal and extracurricular factors are among the causes of burnout in the literature (Sanchez-Pujalte et. al,, 2021). Although all these and other factors can exist in the lives of teachers under normal conditions, the Covid-

19 pandemic has been added to them. Under these conditions, the probability of teacher burnout increases even more.

In the researches, it is emphasized that the Covid-19 pandemic may be the cause of burnout (Şahin et al., 2020). Therefore, early recognition, prevention and coping methods of teacher burnout situations are of key importance during the pandemic period. Apart from these, there is uncertainty about the continuation of the process and uncertainty about what lies ahead. The role of teachers is important in implementing possible scenarios as positively as possible. It is believed that training strong teachers rather than tired teachers is more effective.

It can be assumed that the ongoing changes caused by the Covid-19 virus in the education system have increased the marginalization and exhaustion of the teacher organization (Alparslan et al., 2021). While distance education has been a popular learning experience for years, the global need to digitize education has never been greater. Therefore, it is possible for teachers to reconsider their roles and qualifications during the epidemic and to have a disagreement about being adequately equipped for this stage of education. An important issue for managers is to prevent negative emotional states such as alienation from the organization and exhaustion caused by this situation.

1.3. Burnout in Teacher Candidates

The burnout experienced by the senior students who are studying at the university before they step into their professional life will reach a more serious dimension with the problems and negative working conditions they will encounter in their professional lives in the future. It can be concluded that burnout can cause significant harm to the society as well as the individual, as the jobs and occupations of the individuals who make up the society contribute to the continuation of social life in a healthy way and to the development and progress of the society (Güdük et. al., 2005). Individuals who have completed their university education and have just started their profession can easily experience burnout due to the negative conditions they encounter. Similarly, pre-service teachers observe the working environment, working conditions, manager, teacher and student relations of their profession and try to adapt to this environment while doing their internship in practice schools in the last year of their university education. In this process, pre-service teachers may encounter much negativity before they actually start their profession. Therefore, they may alienate themselves from the working environment and the profession during their student years. The factors that cause burnout of teacher candidates can be listed as not being adopted as teachers in the schools where the practice is applied, constantly encountering negative criticism, not getting the necessary support and attention from the classroom teachers who attend the classes together, and feeling worthless in the eyes of teachers and students. In addition, how appropriate the teaching profession is to the personality of the individual can be counted among these factors. Not every individual has the skills and equipment to teach. Features such as a love for teaching and the ability to transfer knowledge to others will help the individual to cope with the difficulties associated with the teaching profession (Collie, 2012).

2. METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out using in-depth case study, which is one of the qualitative research methods. The case study is a type of qualitative research. It is a qualitative approach in which the researcher collects and describes in-depth information from various data sources (interviews, observations, audio-visual materials, reports and documents) about various limited real-life situations at a given time (Creswell, 2018).

The study group of the research consists of 32 teacher candidates who received pedagogical formation education in the 2020-2021 academic year in North Cyprus. In this study, a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher and approved by 2 field experts was used as a data collection tool. Research data were analyzed by content analysis method. The main purpose of content analysis is to reach concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data. Demographic characteristics of participants are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of teachers participating in the study

	n	%
Gender		
Female	14	44
Male	18	56
Age		
22-25	8	25
26-30	13	41
31-34	6	19
35 and above	5	15

Since the identity confidentiality of the participants is adhered to, the participants in the research report are referred to with codes such as P1, P2, P3 given within the research instead of their real names.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Effects of the Pandemic on Personal Life

"What were the effects of the pandemic on your personal life?" The answers given by the participants to the question are analyzed in Table 2.

Table 2. Participant views on the effects of the pandemic on personal life

Themes	Participant Views	
	n	%
inability to socialize	12	24
lack of communication	11	22
spending more time with family	6	12
future anxiety	5	10
social media usage has increased	4	8
working in a risky environment	3	6
business problems	3	6
inability to do hobbies	3	6
working from home	3	6
Total View	50	100

Participants for the effects of the pandemic on personal life, not socializing (n12), lack of communication (n11), spending more time with family (n6), future anxiety (n5), use of social media increased (n4), working in a risky environment (n3), work problems (n3), not being able to do hobbies (n3), working from home (n3). The answers given by the participants are as follows;

"The pandemic has given me the opportunity to work remotely and spend more time with my family. Although it definitely has effects due to the psychological restrictions, being able to run my business from home has caused me many positive results." P3

"The pandemic has negatively affected my life socially. Due to the risk of contamination, I can't go out as much as I used to and I can't do much social activities. In addition, due to the fact that more process-oriented, long-term and research-based assessment methods are used in the distance education system, I have to devote a large part of my time to my academic responsibilities, so I cannot spare much time for myself." P20

"In terms of social life, it affected me negatively during the time we stayed at home during the pandemic process. As someone who goes to the gym all the time, it made me weak physically. Before the pandemic, I was spending a lot of time outside with my friends. During the pandemic created by Covid-19, we only talked to my friends via computer and application environment, which limited my socialization." P31

3.2. Effects of the Pandemic on Educational Life

Participants were asked "What were the effects of the pandemic on your education life?" The answers given to the question are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Participant views on the effects of the pandemic on educational life

Themes	Participant Views	
	n	%
Opportunity to continue education	10	26
Ability to work and continue education	9	23
No practical lessons	5	13
lack of equal opportunities	5	13
lack of interest	5	13
not efficient	3	8
Educational opportunities limited	2	5
Total View	39	100

The opinions of the pre-service teachers participating in the research on the effects of the pandemic on educational life were gathered under 7 themes. Participants expressed 39 opinions on the effects of the pandemic on educational life. The opinions of the participants in line with the question asked are as follows;

"As a working individual, I can even say that it was good for me. It would be difficult to get off work and get to class. Since the classes were online during the pandemic, there was no need for this rush and I could easily attend my classes." P2

"The biggest contribution of the pandemic to my education life was that I joined the pedagogy formation department and gave me online education that I would not have had the opportunity to learn face-to-face." P24

"When I was studying a completely practical and applied department in terms of teaching, I had a great loss in experience. It took me 2 years to make up for this loss. The fact that it was not done in the internships that we had to do has affected me a lot in terms of experience." P32

3.3. Situations Feeling Exhausted and Tired in Education During the Pandemic Process

Table 4. Opinions of the participants about the situations that felt exhausted and tired in the education during the pandemic process

Themes	Participant Views	
	n	%
Constantly looking at the screen	11	27
Intensity of training	10	24
Limited communication	9	22
Lessons are boring	4	10
due to internet problem	4	10
didn't feel	3	7
Total View	41	100

"What are the situations in which you felt exhausted and tired during the training you received during the pandemic process?" Their answers to the question are as shown in Table 4. The answers given by the participants were grouped under six themes. These are constantly looking at the screen (n11), the intensity of the education (n10), the limited communication (n9), the boring lessons (n4), the internet problem (n4), I did not feel it (n3). The opinions of the participants are as follows;

"During the pandemic, I felt exhausted and tired when I had low motivation for my thesis, lessons or homework, especially during my education periods, when I felt stress and tension caused by my limited time, when I felt the loneliness of being away from my family and friends, when I felt the effects of a global problem." P10

"I can say that the lessons are not held in a classroom environment, when eye contact is not made with the teacher or the lesson energy cannot be taken well, it is more boring than the feeling of exhaustion and fatigue." P18

"When I think in terms of computer use, both listening to the lectures and doing homework and exams using the computer made me feel tired." P22

3.4. Stressful Situations During the Pandemic Process and Their Reflections on Education

"What are the situations in which you feel stressed during the pandemic process? How did this stress affect your education?" The question was asked and the answers given by the participants are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Participant views on stressful situations during the pandemic process

Themes	Participant Views	
	n	%
Fear of getting sick	23	55
Limitation of social life	11	26
Curfew	8	19
Total View	42	100

Most of the research participants (n23) stated that they were stressed because of the fear of getting sick. 11 of the participants stated that the restriction of social life, and 8 participants stated that the curfew caused stress.

In the continuation of the question, the participants were asked, "How did this stress affect your education?" question was posed. The themes that emerged regarding the answers of the participants are discussed in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Participant views on the effects of stress on education

Themes	Participant Views	
	n	%
There was no negative impact in terms of education	14	56
Lack of concentration and attention in lessons	7	28
Transition to online education	4	16
Total View	25	100

The pre-service teachers who participated in the research stated that the stress they experienced mostly did not affect their education life. The answers of the participants in this direction are as follows;

"During the pandemic period, positive cases from people I know around me or being in contact, and staying home in the first period made me feel stressed. When I could not manage this stress, I felt reluctant to attend classes." P8

*"During the pandemic, he has been in stressful situations due to extreme attention and sensitivity. This stress did not affect my education positively or negatively."*P17

*"Because I couldn't find a job and I didn't have a fixed income, I had to postpone my wedding and I couldn't settle in because I couldn't complete the furniture preparations for my house. On the other hand, I had to restrict my social life due to financial difficulties. It negatively affected my education life as I could not concentrate on my homework and exams."*P25

3.5. Situations Feeling Inadequate in the Pandemic
"What are the situations in which you feel inadequate during the pandemic process?" The answers given by the participants to the question are analyzed in Table 7.

Table 7. Participant views on situations felt inadequate during the pandemic process

Themes	Participant Views	
	n	%
didn't happen	7	22
insufficient knowledge in distance education	6	19
communication difficulty	5	16
Infrastructure challenges	5	16
Psychologically	4	12
material deficiencies	2	6
physically	2	6
Time management	1	3
Total View	32	100

Participant views on the situations felt inadequate during the pandemic process, there was no such situation (n5), lack of sufficient information in distance education (n5), communication difficulties (n4), infrastructure difficulties (n4), psychological (n3), financial inadequacies (n2) , physical aspects (n2), time management (n1). The answers given by the participants are as follows;

"Because we are doing distance education, I think that I am not fully beneficial to my students like all distance education teachers. For reasons beyond my control, I feel inadequate in this regard. In addition, I feel inadequate in terms of sports since I could not fully perform the sports activities I did in my social life during the pandemic." P9

"Situations where I felt inadequate during the pandemic process, and that my computer and internet were not fast enough made me feel inadequate. Of course, there are solutions to such problems, but the way of this solution is based on material, that is, money. There were times when I felt inadequate in this situation." P13

"There was no such thing." P20

3.6. Effects of the Pandemic on the Future Professional Life
To the research participants, "What do you think are the positive and negative effects of the current pandemic on your future professional life?" question was posed. The themes formed according to the opinions of the participants regarding their positive effects are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Participant views on the positive effects of the current pandemic on future professional life

Themes	Participant Views	
	n	%
Positive Views		
Technological knowledge increase	12	35
Using different education and training applications	8	24
Provided me the opportunity to develop myself	6	18
It saved time	4	12
Opportunity to re-access lectures	3	8
The value of the profession has increased	1	3
Total View	34	100

Participants for the positive effects of the current pandemic on their future professional life, increased technological knowledge (n8), using different education and training applications (n6), Provided an opportunity for self-development (n5), gained time (n2), opportunity to access the lessons again (n2), the value of the profession has increased (n1).
Table 9 shows the themes that emerged in line with the participants' views on the negative effects of the current pandemic on their future professional life.

Table 9. Participant views on the negative effects of the current pandemic on future professional life

Themes	Participant Views	
	n	%
Negative Views		
Insufficient practical training	8	29
technology addiction	5	19
Adaptation and discipline issues	4	15
Loss of meaning in lessons	3	11
Feeling inadequate and inexperienced	3	11
Extension of working hours	2	7
Continuing effects on business life	2	7
Total View	27	100

Participants' views on the negative effects of the current pandemic on their future professional life were gathered under seven themes. These are inadequacy of applied education (n8), technology addiction (n5), adaptation and discipline problems (n4), loss of meaning in lessons (n3), feeling inadequate and inexperienced (n3), prolonged working hours (n2), continuing effects on business life. (n2). The positive and negative opinions of the participants are as follows;
"Although being in the pandemic process is psychologically exhausting, it has developed me technologically in many ways and has taught me to use technology more efficiently in my future professional life. In addition, having survived the pandemic has reminded us how wonderful it is to go, that we have the chance to socialize with people, and the value of many things. If we look at the negative effects, if there was no pandemic in my undergraduate process, I would have had more chance to attend applied courses, more socialization, and these would have added positives in my professional life." P15
"The negative aspects of the pandemic are that it affects my current professional life negatively and this situation will continue for a long time. The positive effects are that I have received the necessary training for my future profession during the pandemic period." P23
"I learned to use the positive aspect of online systems/platforms in a different and effective way and improved myself. The negative side is that I may have difficulties in processes that require practice." P27

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDASTIONS

In this study, it was aimed to determine the burnout levels of future teachers in the pandemic period. Many studies in the literature have investigated the burnout levels of teachers and revealed its reflections on education. The aim of this research is to reveal the burnout levels of the candidates preparing for teaching during the Covid 19 epidemic, which is a global crisis, and to reveal how this will be reflected in their future professional lives.

First of all, the participants were asked about the effects of the pandemic on their personal lives. In addition to not being socialized and lack of communication, the participants expressed positive views such as spending more time with family and working from home, as well as negative effects such as anxiety about the future, increased use of social media, working in a risky environment, work problems and not being able to do hobbies. Regarding the effects of the pandemic on educational life, they expressed positive opinions such as that they had the opportunity to continue their education and that they could both work and continue their education. In addition, some of the participants expressed the views that applied courses are not held during the pandemic, there is no equal opportunities, the interest in the courses is reduced, online courses are not efficient and their education is limited.

It was determined that the participants felt exhausted and tired due to the constant watching of the screen, the intensity of the training, the limited communication, the boring lessons, and the internet problem during the training received during the pandemic process. Some of the participants stated that they did not feel exhausted and tired during this process. Brouwers and Tomic, (2000) emphasized in their research that people who face difficulties in their daily lives feel tired and exhausted when their problems cannot be solved. As a result of this feeling, individuals feel exhausted about their work (Örücü et al., 2022).

Regarding stressful situations during the pandemic process, the majority of the participants stated that they had a fear of getting sick. Curfew and limitation of social life are among the stressful situations. When asked about the effects of these stressful situations on education, some participants stated that they had no effect on education, while some participants stated that there was a lack of concentration and attention in the lessons, and that the transition to online education was a stressful process. In the researches, it is seen that the pandemic is the sole cause of burnout (Şahin et al., 2020). For this reason, in line with the findings obtained in the research, the stress experienced by teacher candidates due to the pandemic is also reflected in their education processes.

Participants stated that they felt inadequate in terms of lack of sufficient knowledge in distance education, difficulty in communication, infrastructure difficulties, psychological, financial inadequacies, physical and time management during the pandemic. Some of the participants stated that there was no situation in which they felt inadequate.

The positive and negative views of the participant teacher candidates regarding the effects of the burnout symptoms they experienced as students during the pandemic process on their future professional life were examined. The participants stated that the positive effects of the pandemic process on their future professional lives are increased technological knowledge, the use of different education and training applications, the opportunity for personal development, time saving and the increase in the value of the profession. The new normal has opened up many innovation opportunities in the context of teaching and for professional, instructional, technological and individual development (Sullivian et al., 2020). Teachers improve themselves by positively evaluating innovative applications that emerge during compulsory online learning (Fidan, 2021). The negative effects of the pandemic on their future professional lives were revealed as lack of applied education, technology addiction, adaptation and discipline problems, loss of meaning in lessons, feeling inadequate and inexperienced, prolonged working hours and the continuation of its effects on business life.

As a result, when the research data is examined, it is seen that the online education in the pandemic period offers many opportunities to teacher candidates, as well as the global crisis causes the future concerns of the participants. It was concluded that some participants felt inadequate for the profession, especially due to the inability to conduct practical courses, and problems such as internet, communication and concentration in online courses.

It is recommended to organize seminars and in-service trainings for early identification and prevention of burnout causes for teacher candidates. Thus, pre-service teachers can find the opportunity to eliminate the situations they feel inadequate.

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