ATU PRESS

ISSUES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING (ILT)
VOL. 9, NO. 1, 93-116, June 2020
https://doi.org/10.22054/ilt.2019.44381.405

An Investigation into Iranian EAP Teachers' Burnout and its Variations in Relation to Their Demographic and Organizational Characteristics

Ogholgol Nazari
Ph.D. Candidate of TEFL, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Tehran, Iran

Mahmood Reza Atai*
Professor of Applied Linguistics, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

Parviz Birjandi
Professor of Applied Linguistics, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Tehran, Iran

Received: January 15, 2018; **Accepted:** April 16, 2018

Abstract

Teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is highly demanding for EAP teachers as they are faced with diverse pedagogical and administrative challenges in such courses. This study addressed the level of burnout among EAP teachers and variations in relation to their demographic and organizational characteristics. To this aim, a demographic questionnaire along with the Persian version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was administered to 276 EAP teachers from state universities in Iran. The results revealed that a considerable number of EAP teachers reported mid-levels of personal accomplishment. Moreover, variations in degree of burnout were found among EAP teachers in relation to marital status, age, years of experience in teaching EAP and content/general English courses, educational background, and the field and number of EAP courses taught. Also, EAP teachers with different demographic and organizational characteristics who were more susceptible to burnout were identified. Finally, implications for enhancing the working conditions of EAP teachers are presented.

***Keywords*:** Burnout, Depersonalization (DP), Emotional exhaustion (EE), EAP, Personal accomplishment (PA)

***Corresponding author's emails:** mahmood.atai@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Striving to achieve context specific goals (Basturkmen, 2010), English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses assume different roles for teachers (Robinson, 1991) and, thus, ESP teachers are faced with different challenges in such courses (Basturkmen, 2010; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Put simply, "being an ESP teacher is not an easy job" (Robinson, 1991, p. 96). This is while the needs of ESP/EAP practitioners are less considered by the ESP community (Ding & Campion, 2016).

Burnout is considered as a prevailing phenomenon in occupational settings in the modern age (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Education, in general, and teaching, in particular, is considered an emotionally challenging occupation (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout is defined as "a state of exhaustion in which one is cynical about the value of one's occupation and doubtful of one's capacity to perform" (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996, p. 20).

Although devastating effects of burnout on EFL teachers at different institutes and schools have been considered (e.g. Akbari & Tavassoli, 2011; Eghtesadi, 2011), burnout of EAP teachers has remained untouched. This is while organizational factors are cited in the current literature as significant variables in burnout (Byrne, 1999; Maslach et al., 2001). Moreover, teaching EAP courses is different from, and more demanding than, teaching General English (GE) courses (Robinson, 1991). Besides, inadequate attention to EAP teachers' needs and training for dealing with such demands may affect EAP teachers' occupational well-being. In what follows, we present a sketchy account of literature on the challenges EAP teachers typically face and the factors affecting burnout. This study basically explores the status of burnout among EAP teachers. Also, we probed EAP teachers' burnout in relation to demographic and organizational characteristics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Demands of ESP Courses

In the late 1960s, advancements in technology, linguistics, and psychology, together with rapid changes in the sociopolitical status of the English language resulted in the emergence of a new branch of English Language Teaching (ELT), called ESP (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Taking a wide-angled approach, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 19) define ESP as "an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning". There are different types of ESP courses, EAP (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), a branch of ESP, is concerned with English for studying/researching academic disciplines (Robinson, 1991). ESP courses, striving for achieving context specific goals, assume, among other features, some different roles for teachers. Consequently, ESP teachers are exposed to unique demands of teaching language in such context-specific courses (Basturkmen, 2010; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) and, therefore, they are supposed to manage diverse pedagogical and administrative challenges. "As EAP is still considered a branch of ESP" (Ding & Campion, 2016, p. 549) and considering the "impoverished base of literature and research" (p. 547) on EAP teacher education, challenges of teachers in the field of ESP, a superordinate term for EAP, is considered in this part.

Anthony (2011) attributes most of the challenges ESP teachers face to the narrow-angled product-oriented approach to ESP. One of the greatest challenges in transitioning to ESP is developing content knowledge (Anthony, 2011; Basturkmen, 2010; Campion, as cited in Ding & Campion, 2016; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Comprehending ESP subject matter may seem difficult to ESP teachers due to the separation of the education of Humanities and Sciences, one-way accommodation by ESP teachers in conforming to the requirements of the target situation, and ESP teachers' preference to work in the safe realm of ELT and their reluctance to join ESP (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

There is also no ESP orthodoxy to offer ready-made guides for ESP teachers (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Moreover, lacking adequate training for ESP teachers to resolve their efficacy doubts in the new field aggregates the situation (Basturkmen, 2010; Ding & Campion, 2016; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Although scanty literature suggests that development can be achieved through preservice training (Ding & Campion, 2016), there is the predominant experience bias (Campion, as cited in Ding & Campion, 2016; Elsted, as cited in Ding & Campion, 2016) suggesting the "deficiency model of novice EAP teachers" (Ding & Campion, 2016, p. 555), the ill-preparedness of EAP teachers, and the need for long term experience for the expertise to develop.

Another challenge is the change in the established status of ELT (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Robinson, 1991) as EAP "is seen as subservient to the more prestigious theoretical disciplines rather than developing its own independent subject knowledge and skills" (Hyland & Shaw, 2016, p.4). In this regard, Early (as cited in Robinson, 1991) declares "the ESP teacher typically leads an uneasy existence housed in a curriculum unit which exists on the margin of the world. It is not a situation which is conducive to a strong sense of professional identity" (p. 44). It is also stated that ESP is considered as a "service industry for other specialisms" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 164) and, thus, ESP teachers are marginalized and depersonalized (Hall, 2013; Robinson, 1991). Similarly, Johns (as cited in Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) reports ESP teachers' complaints from low priority in timetabling, lower status than subject teachers, inadequate personal and professional relationship with subject teachers, lack of respect from students, and separation from other English teachers.

Accountability to the time and money of the learners and investors also places additional burdens on ESP teachers (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Besides cooperating with and receiving help from content specialists as colleagues (Anthony, 2011; Basturkmen, 2010; Robinson, 1991), they have to negotiate with learners who bring certain expectations regarding the

nature, content, and achievements of ESP courses (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Further, the beliefs regarding the inadequacy of language teachers in teaching subject specific knowledge (Howe, as cited in Anthony, 2011) indicate that content and language teachers teaching ESP courses do not enjoy the same level of social support and collegiality from the students (Johns, as cited in Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) and organizations (Anthony, 2011).

EAP teachers are also faced with some other challenges including low General English proficiency (GEP) of students (Atai & Nazari, 2011), limited time, inadequate materials (Anthony, 2011; Atai & Nazari, 2011), demotivated students, heterogeneous GEP level of students, overcrowded classes (Atai & Nazari, 2011; Ding & Campion, 2016; Robinson, 1991), inappropriate appreciation for the value of ESP courses on the part of learners (Robinson, 1991) and organizations (Anthony, 2011), limited special knowledge as compared to that of learners (Howe, as cited in Anthony, 2011), high teaching loads, limited support, resources, and opportunities for development (Ding & Campion, 2016), inadequate pay (Robinson, 1991; Anthony, 2011), and utopian unsystematic course design (Atai & Nazari, 2011). Above all, ESP teachers are considered ‘‘reluctant dwellers in a strange and uncharted land” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 158).

Factors Affecting Burnout

Different scholars classify the factors affecting burnout differently (e.g., Byrne, 1999; Maslach et al., 2001). In the present study, we followed Maslach et al.’s (2001) classification and considered some demographic (including gender, age, marital status, years of experience in teaching EAP and content/general English courses, and educational background) and organizational (including field of the EAP courses taught, employment status, and number of EAP classes) factors.

Contradictory results have been reported on the relationship between

gender and burnout; however, there is unanimity among researchers that, due to gender job-stereotyping and cultural sex roles, males and females suffer from DP and EE, respectively (Maslach et al., 2001). Similarly, many studies reported that male teachers experienced greater levels of DP (Eghtesadi, 2011; Byrne, 1999; Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, & Vanroelen, 2014; Van Horn, Schaufeli, & Enzmann, 1999). While Eghtesadi (2011) attributed higher EE to male teachers, some studies found that female teachers appeared to be more emotionally exhausted than their male counterparts (Akbari & Tavassoli, 2011; Steinhardt, Jaggars, Faulk, & Gloria, 2011) possibly due to better job conditions available for males and greater responsibilities of females (Akbari & Tavassoli, 2011). As for PA, females experienced less reduced PA than male teachers (Eghtesadi, 2011; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2014). Contrary to such studies, Bracket, Palomera, Mojsa-Kaja, Reyes, and Salovey (2010) found no relationships between burnout and gender.

Age is one of the demographic variables that have most consistently been related to burnout as older individuals, possibly due to their higher status positions, greater resources, or survival bias, experience less burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). However, Grayson and Alvarez (2008) declared the inconsistency of the relationship between age and burnout among different communities and cultures. In the same vein, some studies claimed that burnout did not vary across different age groups (Bracket et al., 2010). As for the subscales of burnout, older teachers were reported to experience less EE (Eghtesadi, 2011; Klusmann, Kunter, Trautwein, Lüdtke, & Baumert, 2008; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2014). However, Byrne (1999) argued that it is true only for university professors. Byrne (1999) also found no differences in the DP of different age groups. Regarding PA, some studies reported a negative relationship between reduced PA and age (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2014); however, some argued for a positive relationship between these two variables (e.g., Byrne, 1999; Van Horn et al., 1999).

Inconsistent results have been reported regarding the relationship

between marital status and burnout. Some studies reported the higher propensity of burnout in single people because of the inadequacy of social support for such individuals at home (Maslach et al., 2001). However, some studies (e.g., Byrne, 1999; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008) reported no differences in the levels of burnout between single and married individuals.

To Byrne (1999), the role of experience in burnout is less supported empirically. While some studies (e.g., Eghtesadi, 2011; Bracket et al., 2010; Van Horn et al., 1999) found no relationships between burnout and experience, some reported high burnout levels for beginning teachers (Goddard, O'Brien, & Goddard, 2006). Regarding the subscales of burnout, it is reported that EE is increased with years of experience (Akbari & Tavassoli, 2011; Goddard et al., 2006; Kokkinos, 2007); however, Eghtesadi (2011) did not find any differences in the EE of teachers with different years of experience. While Goddard et al. (2006) postulated an increase in DP with years of experience, Eghtesadi (2011) found that DP is not related to experience. Reduced PA is also increased significantly with the number of years of experience in the profession (Goddard et al., 2006; Kokkins, 2007).

As for the educational level of the students, differences have been reported in the burnout of primary and secondary school teachers (Van Horn et al., 1999) and high school, elementary and middle school teachers (Steinhardt et al., 2011). Among student characteristics, Van Horn et al. (1999) reported that low outcomes from students were associated with high burnout, particularly low PA and high DP. Although part- and full- time teachers did not differ in term of EE and DP, full time teachers experienced less reduced PA (Van Horn et al., 1999). However, Anderson and Iwanicki (as cited in Van Horn et al., 1999) reported higher EE levels for full-time teachers.

In the study by Klusmann et al. (2008), the number of classes was positively related to EE, while the number of teaching (working) hours was not related to it. However, Van Droogenbroeck et al. (2014) acknowledged non-teaching-related and mainly teaching-related workloads are positively

related to EE. Byrne (1999) also reported the relationship between workload and EE. Likewise, according to Kokkinos (2007), work overload affected teachers' PA.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Deleterious effects of burnout on teachers' occupational well-being are widely echoed in the literature. However, despite the plethora of studies conducted on burnout among EFL teachers in schools and institutes, the literature is still scanty or nonexistent regarding burnout among EAP teachers. This is while diverse pedagogical and administrative challenges in EAP courses render teaching EAP courses more demanding than teaching general English courses. Further, given the effects of organizational factors on burnout (Byrne, 1999; Maslach et al., 2001), it seems necessary to probe EAP teachers' burnout. Thus, this study attempted to address the following research questions:

1. What is the level of burnout among EAP teachers?
2. Are there any variations in the burnout of EAP teachers with different demographic and organizational characteristics?

METHOD

Participants

Participant of the study were 276 EAP teachers (including both content and language teachers) who were selected through cluster sampling from the state universities located in the centers of provinces in Iran. It is worth mentioning that the total number of the collected questionnaires was 300; however, 24 of them were not considered in data analysis because of missing responses. We considered the participants' burnout in relation to their demographic (gender, marital status, age, years of experience in teaching content/general English courses, years of experience in teaching EAP courses, and educational background) and organizational (field of

EAP course taught, employment status, and the number of EAP courses taught) characteristics. The participants were grouped regarding their ages and years of experience according to Byrne's classification (1999); however, teachers' minimum age was considered 24 (the minimum age required for completing graduate studies). Table 1 represents the demographics of the participants.

Table 1: A profile of the participants

Variable		N	%	Missing	Total
Gender	Male	188	68.1	0	276
	Female	88	31.9		
Marital status	Single	53	19.2	0	276
	Married	223	80.7		
Age	25-35	74	26.8	0	276
	36-45	99	35.9		
	46-54	71	25.7		
	≥55	32	11.6		
Years of experience in Teaching content/general English courses	1-4	22	8.0	0	276
	5-12	121	43.8		
	13-20	68	24.6		
	≥20	65	23.6		
Years of Experience in Teaching EAP courses	1-4	99	35.9	0	276
	5-12	111	40.2		
	13-20	42	15.2		
	≥20	24	8.7		
Educational background	Medical sciences	58	21.0	0	276
	Engineering	37	13.4		
	Sciences	38	13.8		
	Humanities	54	19.6		
	TEFL	89	32.2		
Field of EAP course taught	Medical sciences	106	38.4	2	274
	Engineering	57	20.7		
	Sciences	39	14.1		
	Humanities	72	26.1		
Employment status	Faculty member	251	90.9	0	276
	Invited lecturer	25	9.1		
Number of EAP courses taught	1-3	148	53.6	2	274
	4-6	71	25.4		
	6-9	18	6.5		
	≥9	37	13.4		

Instrumentation

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), developed by Maslach et al. (1996) in English, is based on Maslach's multidimensional definition of burnout. It is a 7-point Likert scale instrument in which respondents report the frequency of their experiencing each of the 22 items from 0 (never) to 6 (every day). The MBI has three subscales: EE has 9 items (e.g. I feel emotionally drained from my work.); DP includes 5 items (e.g. I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.); and PA involves 8 items (e.g. I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.).

The factorial validity of the MBI was confirmed (Byrne, 1999) and the reliability of its subscales have also been assured (0.71-0.90) by Maslach et al. (1996). In Iran, the MBI was translated by Eghtesadi (2011) and its factorial validity and reliability have been assured in a study on Iranian school language teachers. Specifically, they attested the three underlying factors of the scale and reported reliability coefficients of 0.84, 0.75, and 0.74 for subscales of EE, DP, and PA, respectively. In the present study, the Persian version of the MBI was used to study the EAP teachers' burnout. Therefore, the questionnaire was piloted among 50 EAP teachers and the reliability of the questionnaire was assured as reliability indices of EE, DP, and PA were 0.60, 0.79, and 0.80, respectively. As for the main study, the results of Cronbach's Alpha tests for EE, DP, and PA were 0.82, 0.73, and 0.76, respectively which assured the reliability of the MBI. We also ran Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) test through LISREL (8.53) software and assured three dimensions of the MBI (GFI=0.81; AGFI=0.77; X2/df= 3.36; CFI=0.87). It is worth mentioning that Maximum Likelihood method (ML) was chosen in running CFA.

Data Collection Procedure

To identify the EAP teachers as representative samples of the target

population, the first researcher attended or contacted different departments and talked to heads of departments or education offices. Also, university websites and home pages of teachers were used to identify EAP teachers. The questionnaires were either handed in as hard copies or delivered electronically via email to the participants. It deserves mentioning that data collection stared in the second semester of the educational year 2015-2016 and ended in the first semester of the educational year 2016-2017.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). As the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests proved non-normality of the data (the observed levels of significances were (0.00) for all three subscales of the MBI), non-parametric tests of Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis were run in analyzing the data. Confirmatory factor analysis of the MBI questionnaire was also run through the LISREL software (8.53).

RESULTS

Patterns of Burnout among EAP Teachers

To determine the level of burnout of the participants, the instructions offered by the developers of the MBI, i.e., Maslach et al. (1996), were followed. The scores on EE, DP, and PA could range from 0-54, 0-30, and 0-48, respectively. Those scoring high in EE and DP and low in PA were considered as burnout cases. Upper third of the normative distribution were considered as high burnout cases. Middle and lower third of the distribution also indicated mid and low burnout cases. As represented in Table 2, the participants mostly had low EE (83.7%) and DP (96.4%) and high PA (77.9%). However, some of the participants suffered from mid-levels of EE (15.6%), DP (3.6%), and PA (21.4%). Very few (0.7%) had high EE and low PA.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for patterns of burnout among EAP teacher

	EE		DP		PA	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Low	231	83.7	266	96.4	2	0.7
Mid	43	15.6	10	3.6	59	21.4
High	2	0.7	0	0	215	77.9
Total	276	100	276	100	276	100

Variations in Burnout Patterns of EAP Teachers with Different Demographic Characteristics

In order to explore the gender-based differences in different facets of burnout, Mann Whitney U tests were used (Table 3). The results respectively indicated that the differences between EE, DP, and PA of male and female EAP teachers are not significant ($p = 0.53$; $p = 0.20$; and $p = 0.78$ respectively). It can thus be concluded that burnout does not differ between male and female EAP teachers.

Table 3: Mann-Whitney U tests for differences in the facets of burnout between male and female EAP

Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Std deviation**	**Mean Rank**	**Mann Whitney U**	**Z**	**Asymp. Sig.(2tailed)**
Male	188	10.71	8.42	136.45	7887.00	-0.62	0.53
Female	88	10.88	7.57	142.88			
Male	188	2.60	3.18	142.60	7501.00	-1.27	0.20
Female	88	2.29	3.15	129.74			
Male	188	37.78	7.52	139.42	8099.50	-0.27	0.78
Female	88	37.44	7.94	136.54			

The differences in the facets of burnout between single and married EAP teachers were also probed through Mann Whitney U tests (Table 4) and it was found that single and married teachers have different levels of EE ($p = 0.00$). Specifically, single EAP teachers have higher means in EE than married EAP teachers. This is while the differences in the DP ($p = 0.55$) and PA ($p = 0.12$) of single and married EAP teachers does not differ

significantly.

Table 4: Mann-Whitney U tests for differences in the facets of burnout between single and married EAP teachers

	Marital status	N	Mean	Std deviation	Mean rank	Mann Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
EE	Single	53	14.45	9.54	170.65	4205.50	-3.26	0.00
	Married	223	9.89	7.45	130.86			
DP	Single	53	2.50	2.87	144.25	5605.00	-0.59	0.55
	Married	223	2.50	3.24	137.13			
PA	Single	53	36.49	7.39	123.53	5116.00	-1.52	0.12
	Married	223	37.95	7.70	142.06			

The results of Kruskal Wallis Tests (Table 5) revealed there are statistically significant differences in the EE ($p = 0.00$) and DP ($p = 0.04$) of EAP teachers of different age groups. However, there are not statistically significant differences in the PA of EAP teachers of different age groups ($p = 0.11$). However, scrutinizing the means of PA reveals that the third age group has the highest PA. They also have the lowest mean in DP. While the oldest group has the lowest mean in EE, the youngest teachers have the highest means in EE and DP and lowest PA.

Table 5: Kruskal Wallis Tests for differences in the burnout facets of EAP teachers of different age groups

	Age	N	Mean	Std deviation	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
EE	25-35	74	12.77	7.58	162.18	19.68	3	0.00
	36-45	99	11.07	7.38	145.13			
	46-55	71	12.21	7.60	105.10			
	≥55	32	10.76	11.88	137.34			
DP	25-35	74	3.08	3.62	153.57	7.91	3	0.04
	36-45	99	2.49	2.98	144.41			
	46-55	71	1.85	2.33	122.41			
	≥55	32	2.65	4.04	121.08			
PA	25-35	74	36.05	8.66	124.71	5.88	3	0.11
	36-45	99	37.38	7.41	134.25			
	46-55	71	39.60	5.98	154.97			
	≥55	32	38.06	8.50	146.98			

Burnout among EAP teachers with different years of experience in teaching content/general English courses was probed through Kruskal Wallis Tests (Table 6) the results of which indicated EE (p = 0.00), DP (p = 0.03), and PA (p = 0.00) of EAP teachers with different teaching experiences are significantly different. The lowest means in EE and DP belong to teachers with over 20 and 13-20 years of experience, respectively and PA is enhanced with experience. The least experienced group has the highest mean in EE and the lowest mean in PA.

Table 6: Kruskal Wallis Tests for differences in the burnout facets of EAP teachers with different years of experience in teaching content/general English courses

	Experience in teaching content /general English courses	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Devia -tion**	**Mean Rank**	**Chi-Square**	**df**	**Asymp. Sig.**
EE	1-4	22	12.86	7.88	162.68	16.37	3	0.00
	5-12	121	12.16	7.49	155.31			
	13-20	68	9.25	7.27	126.58			
	≥20	65	9.04	9.67	111.50			
DP	1-4	22	3.00	4.20	143.64	8.96	3	0.03
	5-12	121	2.83	3.12	152.98			
	13-20	67	1.91	2.84	120.09			
	≥20	63	2.35	3.17	129.06			
PA	1-4	22	34.95	8.78	113.86	13.69	3	0.00
	5-12	121	36.38	7.42	123.00			
	13-20	67	39.11	7.41	154.46			
	≥20	63	39.49	7.35	168.99			

The results of Kruskal Wallis tests indicated that there are statistically significant differences in the EE (p = 0.00) and PA (p = 0.02) of EAP teachers with different years of experience in teaching EAP courses (Table 7) while their DP does not differ meaningfully (p = 0.14). Considering the means of different groups reveals that EE is reduced with experience. It can also be claimed that PA is enhanced with an increase in years of experience in teaching EAP courses. The lowest DP also belongs to EAP teachers with 13-20 years of experience in teaching EAP courses.

Table 7: Kruskal Wallis Tests for differences in the burnout facets of EAP teachers with different years of experience in teaching EAP courses

	Experience in teaching EAP courses	Mean	Std Deviation	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
EE	1-4	11.97	7.15	99	156.15	14.06	3	0.00
	5-12	10.73	7.68	111	139.90			
	13-20	9.14	9.08	42	115.12			
	≥20	8.75	8.75	24	100.13			
DP	1-4	2.54	3.04	99	142.28	5.45	3	0.14
	5-12	2.72	3.31	111	146.54			
	13-20	2.04	2.97	42	121.21			
	≥20	2.16	3.45	24	115.96			
PA	1-4	37.07	7.45	99	131.27	9.19	3	0.02
	5-12	37.33	7.92	111	135.14			
	13-20	37.45	8.03	42	137.82			
	≥20	42.00	5.05	24	185.04			

Kruskal Wallis tests also revealed that EE of EAP teachers with different educational backgrounds are statistically different ($p = 0.04$) (Table 8). However, the differences in their DP ($p = 0.15$) and PA ($p = 0.56$) are not statistically significant. Considering the means of EAP teachers with different educational backgrounds reveals that EAP teachers who have majored in TEFL have the highest mean in EE.

Table 8: Kruskal Wallis Tests for differences in the burnout facets of EAP teachers with different educational backgrounds

	Educational background	Mean	Std deviation	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
EE	Medical sciences	8.55	6.68	57	117.70	9.68	4	0.04
	Engineering	11.35	8.42	37	145.89			
	Sciences	8.86	7.45	38	118.6			
	Humanities	11.98	8.74	53	151.11			
	TEFL	12.04	8.53	88	149.72			
DP	Medical sciences	2.29	2.68	57	138.18	6.73	4	0.15
	Engineering	2.45	3.94	37	123.57			
	Sciences	1.63	2.05	38	116.45			
	Humanities	2.85	3.05	53	150.87			
	TEFL	2.83	3.53	88	146.83			
PA	Medical sciences	39.10	6.58	57	151.84	2.97	4	0.56
	Engineering	36.54	8.92	37	130.16			
	Sciences	38.78	6.11	38	145.59			
	Humanities	37.37	7.67	53	135.25			
	TEFL	36.93	8.24	88	132.21			

Variations in Burnout Patterns of EAP Teachers with Different Organizational Characteristics

According to the results of Kruskal Wallis Tests (Table 9), EAP teachers teaching different EAP courses for students of Medical studies, Engineering, Sciences, Humanities do not differ in their EE ($p = 0.08$) and DP ($p = 0.08$). However, the differences in their PA are statistically significant ($p = 0.01$). The lowest means in PA belongs to EAP teachers offering EAP courses for the students of Engineering and Humanities.

It deserves mentioning that there are no differences in the facets of burnout of faculty members and invited lecturers. However, there are differences in the DP of EAP teachers teaching different numbers of EAP courses ($p = 0.02$) as the means of EAP teachers' DP, decreasing with the increase of the number of EAP courses (2.63 - 2.18), increases highly (3.24) in the group with the highest number of EAP courses.

Table 9: Kruskal Wallis Tests for differences in the burnout facets of EAP teachers teaching different EAP courses

	Field of EAP courses	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
EE	Medical studies	106	10.06	7.98	129.83	6.59	3	0.08
	Engineering	57	11.66	8.24	147.28			
	Sciences	39	8.84	8.84	117.83			
	Humanities	72	12.27	12.27	151.71			
DP	Medical studies	106	2.33	2.84	136.35	6.63	3	0.08
	Engineering	57	2.80	4.03	136.90			
	Sciences	39	1.58	2.04	113.24			
	Humanities	72	3.06	3.32	152.81			
PA	Medical studies	106	39.05	7.22	152.02	10.96	3	0.01
	Engineering	57	35.35	8.90	116.82			
	Sciences	39	39.48	6.13	152.85			
	Humanities	72	36.56	7.46	124.17			

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to explore burnout among EAP teachers and variations in relation to their demographic and organizational characteristics. The findings of this research confirmed that 21.4% of the participants had mid-level of PA. Also, there were differences in the facets of burnout among the participants when all their demographic characteristics, other than gender, were considered. Likewise, as for the organizational characteristics, burnout facets of EAP teachers with different organizational characteristics including the field and number of EAP courses taught, except for employment status, were different.

The results of the study revealed low burnout among most of the EAP teachers as they had low EE and DP and high PA. The participants' low burnout could be interpreted as either the effectiveness of their coping strategies in meeting the challenges of their profession or the effect of their "social desirability bias" (Dornyie, p. 54) in filling out the questionnaires.

Our findings also indicated reduced PA among EAP teachers. EAP teachers' reduced PA can be due to the low GEP level of EAP students (Atai & Nazari, 2011). This finding can be considered in line with Van Horn et al. (1999) who reported the association between low outcomes from students and burnout. The current study also lends support to the higher EE of single EAP teachers and this can be due to the inadequacy of social support for such individuals at home (Maslach et al., 2001). This finding contradicts the results of Byrne (1999) and Grayson and Alvarez (2008) arguing for lacking any differences in the burnout of single and married teachers.

According to the results of the study, there were no gender-based differences in the burnout facets of the participants. This is in line with Bracket et al.'s (2010) findings; however, it is inconsistent with most of the studies attributing greater EE to either female teachers (Akbari & Tavassoli, 2011; Maslach et al., 2001; Steinhardt et al., 2011) or male teachers (Eghtesadi, 2011). Similarly, as no differences were found in the DP of

male and female EAP teachers, this study contradicts the literature in attributing greater DP to males (Byrne, 1999; Eghtesadi, 2011; Maslach et al., 2001; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2014; Van Horn et al., 1999). Also regarding the lack of differences in the PA of male and female teachers, this study nullifies the findings of Van Droogenbroeck et al. (2014) and Eghtesadi (2011). Our findings i.e., lack of gender-based differences of burnout facets might be justifiable as individual (e.g., level of education) and social statuses of the participants of the present study might have affected their family life and life style, especially as compared to EFL school (Eghtesadi, 2011) and institute teachers' (Akbari & Tavassoli, 2011) life style.

The findings of the study are not consistent with the studies reporting lack of differences in the burnout facets among teachers of different age groups (Bracket et al., 2010). However, our findings attest the less vulnerability of older people (46-55 years old) to burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). To Maslach et al. (2001), it can be interpreted by survival bias as highly burnt-out individuals might have left the organization. This can also be due to their higher status positions and greater resources (Maslach et al., 2001). In the case of EAP teachers, it can mostly be attributed to the resources or expertise gained through many years of experience.

Our results are somewhat in line with the studies claiming the decrease of EE by age (Eghtesadi, 2011; Klusmann et al., 2008; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2014). In the present study, while the oldest and the youngest age groups had the lowest and highest levels of EE, respectively, the mean of the second group ranked the second lowest one. Our study also contradicts Byrne's (1999) findings regarding the lack of differences in the DP of different age groups. Moreover, despite the lack of significant differences in the PA of different age groups, considering the means of different groups reveals older groups had the highest PA. Thus it can be argued that the current study parallels Van Droogenbroeck et al.'s finding (2014) in defining older teachers as more competent teachers.

The results of the tests examining the differences in EE and PA among

EAP teachers were the same when their years of experience in teaching EAP and content/general English courses were considered. However, in considering the participants' years of experience in teaching EAP courses, differences between the DP of different groups were not significant. Thus, the current study is not in agreement with the literature (e.g., Bracket et al., 2010; Eghtesadi, 2011; Van Horn et al., 1999) in reporting differences in the EE and PA of teachers with different years of experience in teaching EAP and content/general English courses. Moreover, unlike these studies, we found significant differences in the DP of teachers with different years of experience in teaching content/general English courses. However, in line with Goddard et al. (2006), less experienced teachers were more burnout-prone than experienced ones.

Findings of the current study, reporting the decrease of EE with an increase in years of experience, oppose the studies relating less EE to novice teachers (e.g., Akbari & Tavassoli, 2011; Goddard et al., 2006; Kokkinos, 2007). As for DP, unlike Eghtesadi (2011) and Goddard et al. (2006), we found that those with 13-20 years of experience in the profession had the lowest mean in DP; however, it increased in the highly experienced group. Unlike Goddard et al. (2006) and Kokkins (2007) who attributed greater PA to beginning teachers, we also found PA is increased with years of experience in the profession.

There are variations in the burnout of EAP teachers in our study and TEFL teachers (as reported by Eghtesadi, (2011)) in considering their ages and experiences. The susceptibility of less experienced EAP teachers to burnout can be justified considering the various pedagogical and administrative challenges in EAP. It attests that "being an ESP teacher is not an easy job" (Robinson, 1991, p. 96) and that adjusting to all of these challenges takes time. This also supports the experience bias (Campion, as cited in Ding & Campion, 2016; Elsted, as cited in Ding & Campion, 2016) and underscores the "deficiency model" (Ding & Campion, 2016, p. 555) and ill-preparedness of EAP teachers. It should be noted that lack of teacher training courses in dealing with these challenges (Basturkmen, 2010; Ding

& Campion, 2016; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) might have deteriorated the situation.

EAP teachers having majored in TEFL had the highest mean in EE. This can be justifiable as language teachers are faced with more demands and problems than content teachers. In this regard, reference can be made to their marginalization (Hall, 2013; Robinson, 1991), difficulty in working with subject specialists (Basturkmen, 2010), need to cope with the new realms of knowledge (Basturkmen, 2010; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), efficacy doubts (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), lack of acceptance for them from the organizations (Anthony, 2011), feelings of lower status, and lacking senses of professional identity (Early, as cited in Robinson, 1991). However, considering all such challenges, one may doubt considering language teachers' reluctance to teach ESP courses and preference to teach GEP or ELT courses (Anthony, 2011; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) as a cause, rather than the effect, of the situation. Has it not been for such problems, language teachers might not have been reluctant to join EAP.

Unlike Van Horn et al. (1999), no differences were found in the facets of burnout of faculty members and invited lecturers. This might have been caused by the fact that EAP courses in Iran are taught by guest faculty members who were invited to teach such courses. Furthermore, it might be interpreted in terms of the interaction of other demographic and organizational characteristics (e.g., self-efficacy, interest, and the status of the universities) and their "social desirability bias" (Dornyie, p. 54) in filling out the questionnaires. Besides, unlike previous studies (Klusmann et al., 2008; Kokkinos, 2007; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2014), teachers with different numbers of classes differed only in DP as DP decreased with an increase in the number of EAP courses. Variations in burnout facets of EAP teachers with differences in age, years of experience in teaching EAP and content/general English courses, and the number of EAP courses taught may underscore the difficulty of gaining expertise in EAP courses.

Teachers of EAP courses for Sciences and Medical sciences had the highest means in PA. This can be justifiable with the greater status of

language departments in medical schools as data collection revealed that EAP courses in most of the Iranian Medical schools are offered by established language centers. In line with Van Horn et al. (1999) who reported the association of high burnout with low outcomes from students, it can also be due to differences in the level of GEP of EAP students and higher GEP of students in EAP courses for Sciences and Medical sciences. Such a difference in the GEP level of the students and the status of EAP in different departments may also justify the highest mean rank of EAP teachers offering EAP courses in colleges for Humanities.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study investigated burnout facets among EAP teachers with different demographic and organizational characteristics. The findings indicated that not all EAP teachers reported their achieving high-level of PA. PA was specifically low among EAP teachers offering EAP courses for students of Engineering and Humanities. Further, expertise in teaching EAP courses is gained through extensive experience. This is also reflected by the decrease of some burnout facets of EAP teachers considering their ages and the number of EAP courses taught. Moreover, EAP teachers having majored in TEFL were more emotionally exhausted than others. The findings attest the demanding nature of teaching EAP courses, especially for language teachers.

The findings of this study, thus, call for a greater concern for EAP teachers. It is required that their needs be analyzed by the EAP community (Ding & Campion, 2016). Further, the necessity of the quite extensive experience for EAP practitioners to gain expertise in handling their job requirements suggests education and development of EAP teachers require a greater concern. Effective pre-service or in-service training programs and workshops for beginning teachers would familiarize them with different coping strategies and obviate the need for such long time for gaining expertise in teaching EAP courses. This study also calls for the attention of

education administrators to identify and obviate factors jeopardizing language teachers' occupational well-being so as to create supportive workplace conditions for them.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

ORCID

Ogholgol Nazari http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2148-1179
Mahmood Reza Atai http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0656-212X
Parviz Birjandi http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7591-630X

References

Akbari, R., & Tavassoli, K. (2011). Teacher efficacy, burnout, teaching style, and emotional intelligence: Possible relationships and differences. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics (IJAL), 14*(2), 31–61.

Anthony, L. (2011). Products, processes and practitioners: A critical look at the importance of specificity in ESP. *Taiwan International ESP Journal*, *3*(2), 1–18.

Atai, M. R., & Nazari, O. (2011). Exploring reading comprehension needs of Iranian EAP students of health information management (HIM): A triangulated approach. *System*, *39*(1), 30–43.

Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing courses in English for specific purposes.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bracket, M. A. Palomera, R., Mojsa-Kaja, J., Reyes, M. R., & Salovey, P. (2010). Emotion-regulation ability, burnout, and job satisfaction among British secondary-school teachers. *Psychology in the Schools*, *47*(4), 406–417.

Byrne, B. M. (1999). The nomological network of teacher burnout: A literature review and empirically validated model. In R. Vandenberg, & A. Huberman

(Eds.), *Understanding and preventing teacher burnout* (pp. 15–37). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ding, A., & Campion, G. (2016). EAP teacher development. In K. Hyland, & P. Shaw (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of English for academic purposes* (pp. 547–559). New York, NY: Routledge.

Dornyie, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eghtesadi, A. R. (2011). *Burnout among Iranian EFL teachers: Underlying reasons, influential factors, and effective coping strategies.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), Tarbiat Modarres University, Tehran, Iran.

Goddard, R., O'Brien, P., & Goddard, M. (2006). Work environment predictors of beginning teacher burnout. *British Educational Research Journal, 32*(6), 857–874.

Grayson, J. L., & Alvarez, H. K. (2008). School climate factors relating to teacher burnout: A mediator model. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24,* 1349–1363.

Hall, D. R. (2013). Teacher education for languages for specific purposes. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 5537–5542). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Hutchinson, S. & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning centered approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hyland, K., & Shaw, P. (2016). Introduction. In K. Hyland, & P. Shaw (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of English for academic purposes* (pp. 1-15). New York, NY: Routledge.

Klusmann, U., Kunter, M., Trautwein, U., Lüdtke, O., & Baumert, J., (2008). Engagement and emotional exhaustion in teachers: Does the school context make a difference? *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 57*(1), 127–151.

Kokkinos, C. M., (2007). Job stressors, personality and burnout in primary school teachers. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 77*(1), 229–243.

Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E., & Leiter, M. P. (1996). *Maslach burnout inventory manual* (3rd ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*(1), 397–422.

Robinson, P. C. (1991). *ESP today: A practitioner's guide.* London: Prentice

Hall.

Steinhardt, M. A., Jaggars, S. E. S., Faulk, K. E., & Gloria, C. T. (2011). Chronic work stress and depressive symptoms: Assessing the mediating role of teacher burnout. *Stress and Health, 27*(5), 420–429.

Van Droogenbroeck, F., Spruyt, B., & Vanroelen, C. (2014). Burnout among senior teachers: Investigating the role of workload and interpersonal relationships at work. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 43*, 99–109.

Van Horn, J. E., Schaufeli, W. B., & Enzmann, D. (1999). Teacher burnout and lack of reciprocity. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 29*(1), 91–108.