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The Role of Teacher Autonomy in Burnout Processes among Iranian and Turkish EFL Teachers

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Abstract

The study aimed at measuring the perceived burnout levels of Iranian (N= 230) and Turkish (N=156) EFL teachers, determining the teacher autonomy predictors of EE, DP and PA burnout processes, and exploring their cross-cultural roles. The MBI-ES was used to measure the perceived burnout levels of the participants, and a self-developed Teacher Autonomy Scale (11 items) based on the six-component teacher autonomy model of LaCoe (2008) was employed to measure the participants' autonomy perceptions in the areas of (1) pedagogy, (2) curriculum evaluation, (3) decision making and (4) problem solving. The internal consistency reliability of the 11-item scale was r=0.762. The results revealed that there was a slight significant difference between Iranian and Turkish groups only in EE processes, three dimensions of the teacher autonomy scale predicted the EE, DP and PA burnout processes, and its curriculum evaluation, problem solving and decision making dimensions played discriminatory role in EE, DP and PA processes across Iranian and Turkish teachers.

Keywords: Burnout, MBI-ES; teacher autonomy; pedagogy; curriculum evaluation; decision making; problem solving

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1.Introduction

Burnout concept was coined by Fredenberger (1974) to describe emotional depletion, motivational loss and commitment reduction experienced by human service workers after prolonged and extensive stress conditions (Soderfelt & Soderfelt, 1995). The concept was further popularized in social sciences in the writings of Maslach (1976) who defined burnout as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people-work' of some kind" (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 99). Based on the pioneering work of Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach (1976), Maslach and Jackson (1981) introduced the most widely accepted conceptualization of burnout and construed it as a psychological syndrome that has three dimensions: *emotional exhaustion* (EE) referring to feelings of being emotionally drained by intense contact with other people, *depersonalization* (DP) referring to negative attitudes or callous responses toward people, and *reduced personal accomplishment* (PA) referring to a decline in one's sense of competence and of successful achievement in working with people (Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001).

Burnout among teachers has been associated with many factors. One of them is teacher autonomy which has generally been defined as the degree to which a teacher has a desire to make curriculum decisions using his/her personal initiative and intellectual engagement. For the first time, Little (1995) defined the term as the "teachers' capacity to engage in self-directed teaching" (p. 176). After that, scholars defined teacher autonomy from different aspects. For instance, Aoki (2000) suggested that teacher autonomy involves "the capacity, freedom, and/or responsibility to make choices concerning one's own teaching" (p. 19). Smith (2000) also argued that teacher autonomy refers to "the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes for oneself as a teacher, in cooperation with others" (p. 89). Furthermore, Benson (2000) said that teacher autonomy can be seen as "a right to freedom from control and/or an ability to exercise this right" (p. 111).

Studies also revealed that teacher autonomy is crucial to educational effectiveness and empowers teachers within the system to adapt teaching to the changing needs of the students and the community. For instance, Pearson and Hall (1993) found that the degree of autonomy perceived by teachers was an indicator of job satisfaction and a positive reaction to teaching. Moreover, Ingersoll and Alsalam (1997) argued that increasing of teacher autonomy positively correlated with making better decisions about educational issues because top-down decision-making often failed when it lacked the support of

those who were responsible for the implementation of them. Finally, it has been found that perception of autonomy could positively affect factors such as tension, frustration, anxiety and job stress among teachers (Pearson & Hall, 1993; Natale, 1993; Davis & Wilson, 2000; Dinham & Scott, 2000; Webb, 2002; Pearson & Moomaw, 2006; Bustingorry, 2008).

While the potential role of teacher autonomy in language learning/teaching processes is enormous, it has been argued that Turkey has a centralized educational system (Öztürk, 2011; Uygun, 2008; Akşit, 2007). Yıldırım (2003) analysed the attitudes and practices of Turkish teachers with regard to their teaching programs and identified that teachers excessively rely on the curriculum and textbooks in their teaching activities because they are asked to meet fully the predetermined curriculum requirements, which means that they have little autonomy in determining the content of the teaching activities. He further added that centralized tendencies are vividly observed in many fields such as curriculum development, choice of instructional materials, teacher employment, in-service training programs, etc. Moreover, Vorkink (2006) claimed that "compared with Europe and most of the world, Turkey's public schools have the least autonomy over resources, staff deployment (at the school), textbook selection, allocation of instructional time, and selection of programs offered" (p. 17).

If the picture of Turkish educational system is really like this, there will be no much difference with Iran's one, where teachers have no flexibility to regulate the content of the programs in accordance with the student needs and classroom circumstances, where teachers' voices most of the time are not asked, where their educational and non-educational issues often remain unsolved, etc. Therefore, the general purpose of the study is to see whether there are similarities or differences between Iranian and Turkish EFL teachers' sense of autonomy in the areas of (1) choice of appropriate teaching methods, strategies and techniques, (2) evaluation of the established curriculum, (3) teacher involvement in decision making processes and (4) using personal initiative to solve work problems. It is perhaps worth mentioning that our teacher autonomy conceptualization here overlaps much with the 'agency' concept of Paris (1993) who characterized the relationship of teachers to curriculum by arguing that "teacher agency in curriculum matters involves initiating the creation or critique of curriculum, an awareness of alternatives to established curriculum practices, the autonomy to make informed choices, an investment of self, and on-going interaction with others" (P. 16). To highlight her concept, Paris (1993) contrasted it to commonly held conceptions of 'teachers as consumers of curriculum' and 'technical implementers of ideas and products of experts'. She further added that teachers who conceptualize

themselves as agents involve in curriculum *development*, *implementation* and *evaluation* activities.

The study, however, aims at measuring the perceived burnout levels of Turkish and Iranian EFL teachers, determining the role of nationality in Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and Personal Accomplishment (PA) burnout processes of Iranian and Turkish teachers, indicating the prediction index of the four teacher autonomy dimensions in EE, DP and PA burnout processes, and determining the cross-cultural role of the dimensions in EE, DP and PA burnout processes across Iranian and Turkish teachers. To this end, the following research questions were offered,

1. What is the perceived level of job burnout for Iranian and Turkish secondary EFL teachers in reference to the three-factor structure of the MBI-ES (i.e. EE, DP and PA subscales)?
2. Are there significant relationships between Iranian and Turkish EFL teachers' EE, DP and PA burnout levels while taking into their nationality?
3. Which dimensions of the teacher autonomy scale better predict the EE, DP and PA burnout subscales among both Iranian and Turkish teachers?
4. Which dimensions of the teacher autonomy scale play a cross-cultural role in EE, DP and PA burnout processes across Iranian and Turkish teachers?

2. Methodology

The participants were Iranian (N=230) and Turkish (N=156) teachers teaching English as a foreign language in state high schools during 2011-2012 academic year. The data for the study were collected from North West provinces of Iran (East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Ardebil, Zenjan, Qazvin and Tehran) and four city regions of Ankara (Mamak, Çankaya, Altındağ and Balgat) in Turkey. The Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES) was employed to measure self-perceived burnout levels of the participants through 22 items in three dimensions of EE, DP and PA. The internal reliability of these dimensions was checked in the study: EE (α= 0.882), DP (α= 0.722) and PA (α= 0.745). Additionally, a self-developed Teacher Autonomy Scale (11 items) based on the six-component teacher autonomy model of LaCoe (2008) was employed to measure the participants' autonomy perceptions in the four dimensions of (1) *pedagogy* (referring to teachers' perception of ability and freedom to choose appropriate teaching methods, strategies and content to meet student needs) = 2 items (e.g., "I am free to choose appropriate teaching methods and strategies to meet student needs"), (2) *curriculum evaluation* (referring to teachers' evaluation of the

established curriculum) = 2 items (e.g., "My performance at work is limited by the established curriculum"), (3) *decision making* (referring to a sense of being involved in decision making processes) = 4 items (e.g., "I feel I have no influence over instructional decisions made by my administration"), and (4) *problem solving* (referring to teachers' perception of freedom to use their personal initiative in solving work problems) = 3 items (e.g., "I feel I have control over how to solve my work problems"). The internal consistency reliability of the 11-item scale was $r = 0.762$ - indicating a very high reliability index for the measure. The collected data were entered into the SPSS version 17.0 for Windows for analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as per cent, mean, t-test, ANOVA and standard multiple regression were used for determining and explaining burnout levels of Iranian and Turkish Teachers.

3. Results

3.1. General Burnout Perceptions of Iranian and Turkish Teachers

Maslach, Jackson & Leiter (1996) suggested three score cut-off points for each burnout subscale, where high scores for EE and DP subscales along with low scores for PA subscale indicate greater feelings of burnout. See Table 3.1.

Table 3. 1

Score Categories of Burnout Subscales

Subscales	Range	Low	Moderate	High
Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	0-54	0 – 16	17 – 26	27 and over
Depersonalization (DP)	0-30	0 – 6	7 – 12	13 and over
Personal Accomplishment (PA)*	0-48	39 and over	32 – 38	0 - 31

*Indicating the positively-worded subscale

Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1996)

Based on this model, the results of descriptive statistics for burnout perceptions of Iranian teachers in the three subscales of EE, DP and PA were as: EE (Low=50.0 %, Moderate=21.3 %, and High= 28.7 %), DP (Low=56.5 %, Moderate= 22.2 %, and High= 21.3 %), and PA (Low= 29.1 %, Moderate=27.0 %, and High= 43.9 %), while for Turkish teachers they were as: EE (Low= 28.8 %, Moderate=32.7 %, and High= 38.5 %), DP (Low= 44.9 %, Moderate=34.0 %, and High= 21.2%), and PA (Low=27.6 %, Moderate=32.7 %, and High= 39.7 %). See Table 3.2.

Table 3. 2

Frequency and Percentage of Iranian and Turkish Teachers' Burnout Perceptions

Subscales	Observed Ranges		Low				Moderate				High			
	Ir.	Tr.	Ir.		Tr.		Ir.		Tr.		Ir.		Tr.	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
EE	0-48	2-53	115	50.0	45	28.8	49	21.3	51	32.7	66	28.7	60	38.5
DP	0-27	0-24	130	56.5	70	44.9	51	22.2	53	34.0	49	21.3	33	21.2
PA*	10-48	13-48	67	29.1	43	27.6	62	27.0	51	32.7	101	43.9	62	39.7
Overall Burnout**	1-99	7-104	88	38.3	37	23.7	138	60.0	116	74.4	4	1.7	3	1.9

(N Ir. =230, 100% & N Tr. =156, 100%)

*The scores of this subscale were reversed to calculate the summative score of burnout.
** The cut-off points belong to the researcher (Low= 0-32, Moderate= 33-87, High= 88-132).

The summative burnout scores of the participants were also computed here. Scores were considered 'high' if they were within the 25% of high scores of the total range (0-132), 'moderate' if they were within the 50% of middle scores of the total range, and 'low' if they were within the 25% of low scores of the total range. Based on this self-developed cut-off points, the results of Iranian teachers' overall burnout were as: (Low=38.3 %, Moderate=60.0 % and High= 1.7 %) and for Turkish teachers were as (Low=23.7 %, Moderate= 74.4 % and High= 1.9 %). See Table 3.2.

3.2. Nationality and Burnout Subscales

There was statistically a significant difference between Iranian (N = 230; 59.6 %) and Turkish (N = 156; 40.4 %) EFL teachers' perceptions on burnout only in the subscale of EE (t = -3.36; P = 0.001, P< 0.05). However, no significant difference was observed between the groups in the subscales of DP (t = -1.00; P = 0.316, P> 0.05) and PA (t = -.42; P = 0.674, P> 0.05). See Table 3.3.

Table 3. 3

Nationality and Teacher Burnout

Burnout Subscales	Group statistics				t-test			
	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Eta square
1. EE	Iranian	230	19.53	12.49197				
	Turkish	156	23.57	10.94505	-3.365	359.79	.001	0.0286
	Total	386						
2. DP	Iranian	230	7.42	6.30661				
	Turkish	156	8.02	5.31640	-1.004	366.25	.316	-
	Total	386						
3. PA	Iranian	230	32.76	8.57242				
	Turkish	156	33.10	7.46102	-.421	360.96	.674	-
	Total	386						

Moreover, the 'Effect Size' statistic based on the 'Eta Square' value (η^2) of Cohen (1988) indicated a slight significant difference for Iranian and Turkish groups in the EE subscale (η^2= 0.0286; η^2 < 0.059). Cohen's (1988) effect size indexes for the ratio of variance between the dependent and independent variables are as: small=0.01to 0.059, medium = 0.06 to 0.139 and large = 0.14 to 1. It is computed through the '$\eta^2= t^2/t^2 + (N_1-N_2-2)$' formula for t-tests. See Table 3.3.

3.3. Teacher Autonomy as a Predictor of Teacher Burnout

The results of multiple stepwise-method regression analyses for determining the role of the four dimensions of *Teacher Autonomy* in predicting the three burnout subscales among both Iranian and Turkish teachers revealed that EE had significant linear relationship with the *Teacher Autonomy* dimension of *Decision Making* (t = -3.396; P = 0.001, P< 0.05), DP with the dimensions of *Decision Making* (t = 2.204; P = 0.028, P< 0.05) and *Problem Solving* (t = -3.698; P = 0.000, P< 0.05), and PA with the dimensions of *Curriculum Evaluation* (t = -3.382; P = 0.001, P< 0.05), *Decision Making* (t = 2.758; P = 0.006, P< 0.05) and *Problem Solving* (t = 3.379; P = 0.001, P< 0.05). See Table 3.4.

Table 3. 4.

Coefficients of EE, DP and PA and Teacher Autonomy Predictors

Subscales	EE				DP				PA			
	Beta	t	Sig.	R^2	Beta	t	Sig.	R^2	Beta	t	Sig.	R^2
1. Pedagogy	.073	1.286	.199	-	.086	1.494	.136	-	.029	.515	.607	-
2. Curriculum evaluation	-.018	-.359	.720	-	.066	1.283	.200	-	-.167	-3.382	.001	.027
3. Decision making	-.171	-3.396	.001	.029	.133	2.204	.028	.012	.163	2.758	.006	.018
4. Problem solving	-.100	-1.663	.097	-	-.223	-3.698	.000	.035	.196	3.379	.001	.027

Furthermore, the results demonstrated that the strongest predictor of EE was *Decision Making* (t = -3.396, Beta = -.171), while the strongest predictor of DP and PA was *Problem Solving* (DP ► t = 2.204, Beta = 0.133; PA ► t = 3.379, Beta = 0.196). On contrary, the weakest predictor of EE and DP was *Curriculum Evaluation* (EE ► t = -.359, Beta = -.018; DP► t = 1.283, Beta = 0.066), and PA was *Pedagogy* (t = 0.029; Beta = 0.515). See Table 3.4.

3.4. Teacher Autonomy as a Predictor of Burnout across Iranian and Turkish Teachers

The results of multiple stepwise-method regression analyses for determining the role of the four dimensions of *Teacher Autonomy* in predicting EE burnout subscale across Iranian and Turkish teachers revealed that there was significant linear relationship between the EE subscale and *Teacher Autonomy* dimension of *Decision Making* (t = -2.178; P = .030, P< 0.05) in the case of Iranian participants and between the EE subscale and *Teacher Autonomy* dimensions of *Problem Solving* (t = -5.537; P = .000, P< 0.05) and *Curriculum Evaluation* (t = -2.427; P = .016, P< 0.05) in the case of Turkish participants. See Table 3.5.

Table 3. 5

Coefficients of EE Subscale and Teacher Autonomy across Ir. & Tr. Groups

Subscales	Ir.				Tr.			
	Beta	t	Sig.	R^2	Beta	t	Sig.	R^2
1. Pedagogy	.083	1.188	.236	-	-.097	-1.157	.249	-
2. Curriculum Evaluation	.093	1.394	.165	-	-.177	-2.427	.016	.030
3. Decision Making	-.143	-2.178	.030	.020	-.109	-1.176	.242	-
4. Problem Solving	.020	.267	.789	-	-.404	-5.537	.000	.155

The results also showed that *Decision Making* was the strongest predictor of EE subscale among Iranian teachers (t = -2.178, Beta = -.143), while the strongest predictor of EE among Turkish teachers was *Problem Solving* (t = -5.537, Beta = -.404). On the other hand, the weakest predictor of EE subscale among Iranian teachers was *Problem Solving* (t = .267, Beta = 0.20), while the weakest predictor of EE among Turkish teachers was *Pedagogy* (t = -1.157, Beta = -.097).See Table 3.5.

Moreover, the results of multiple stepwise-method regression analyses represented that there was significant linear relationship between the DP subscale and *Teacher Autonomy* dimensions of *Problem Solving* (t = -3.332; P = .001, P< 0.05), *Decision Making* (t = 2.959; P = .003, P< 0.05), and *Pedagogy* (t = 2.839; P = .005, P< 0.05) in the case of Iranian participants and between the DP subscale and *Teacher Autonomy* dimensions of *Pedagogy* (t = -2.756; P = 0.007, P< 0.05) and *Decision Making* (t = -2.088; P = 0.038, P< 0.05) in the case of Turkish participants. See Table 3.6.

Table 3. 6
Coefficients of DP Subscale and Teacher Autonomy across Ir. & Tr. Groups

Subscales	Ir.				Tr.			
	Beta	t	Sig.	R^2	Beta	t	Sig.	R^2
1. Pedagogy	.193	2.839	.005	.032	-.242	-2.756	.007	.043
2. Curriculum Evaluation	.111	1.730	.085	-	-.033	-.418	.677	-
3. Decision Making	.220	2.959	.003	.035	-.184	-2.088	.038	.025
4. Problem Solving	-.242	-3.332	.001	.044	-.096	-.951	.343	-

The results also demonstrated that *Problem Solving* was the strongest predictor of DP among Iranian teachers (t = -3.332, Beta = -.242), whereas the strongest predictor of DP among Turkish teachers was *Pedagogy* (t = -2.756, Beta = -.242). On the other hand, the weakest predictor of DP subscale among Iranian and Turkish teachers was *Curriculum Evaluation* (Iranian ▶t = 1.730, Beta = .111; Turkish ▶t = -.418, Beta = -.033). See Table 3.6.

Finally, the results of multiple stepwise-method regression analyses disclosed that there was significant linear relationship between the PA subscale and *Teacher Autonomy* dimensions of *Problem Solving* (t = -3.332; P = .001, P< 0.05), *Decision Making* (t = 2.959; P = .003, P< 0.05), and *Pedagogy* (t = 2.839; P = .005, P< 0.05) in the case of Iranian participants and between the PA subscale and *Teacher Autonomy* dimensions of *Pedagogy* (t = -2.756; P = 0.007, P< 0.05) and *Decision Making* (t = -2.088; P = 0.038, P< 0.05) in the

Table 7.
Coefficients of PA Subscale and Teacher Autonomy across Ir. & Tr. Groups

Subscales	Ir.				Tr.			
	Beta	t	Sig.	R^2	Beta	t	Sig.	R^2
1. Pedagogy	.022	.334	.739	-	.128	1.419	.158	-
2. Curriculum Evaluation	-.120	-1.873	.062	-	-.225	-2.963	.004	.055
3. Decision Making	.103	1.409	.160	-	.237	2.490	.014	.040
4. Problem Solving	.223	3.455	.001	.050	.242	2.560	.011	.041

case of Turkish participants. See Table 3.7 (Table 7).

The results also revealed that *Problem Solving* was the strongest predictor of PA subscale among both Iranian and Turkish teachers (Iranian ▶t = 3.455, Beta = .223; Turkish ▶ t = 2.560, Beta = .242), while the weakest predictor of PA subscale among them was *Pedagogy* (Iranian ▶t = .334, Beta = .022; Turkish ▶ t = 1.419, Beta = .128). See Table 3.7 (Table 7).

4. Discussion

The significant findings are discussed here to find answers to the four research questions which were the objectives of this study. The percentage scores of EE, DP and PA subscales revealed that Turkish teachers perceive more EE burnout than Iranian teachers (High Level ► Ir. = 28.7 %; High► Tr. = 38.5 %), Iranian teachers perceive more PA than Turkish teachers (High Level ►Ir. = 43.9 %; High ►Tr. = 39.7 %), and Iranian and Turkish teachers perceive DP burnout almost equally (High Level ►Ir. = 21.3 %; High Level ►Tr. = 21.2 %).This implies that Turkish teachers feel more drained from their job emotionally than Iranian teachers because of feeling emotional exhaustion, Iranian teachers sense more competence than Turkish teachers and also achieve more successful results from working with their students, but they feel cynical toward their students almost equally.

However, the results of t-test analyses for determining any significant difference between Iranian and Turkish teachers' burnout levels in reference to the three-factor structure of the MBI-ES revealed that there was statistically a slight significant difference between the groups only in the subscale of EE, but not in the subscales of DP and PA. The mean scores of Iranian (Mean= 20.45) and Turkish (Mean= 23.70) teachers showed that the Turkish teachers' scores were greater than that of Iranian ones. As with the percentage results, it implies that Turkish teachers feel emotionally drained from their job and are unable to give of themselves psychologically more than that of Iranian teachers. This may be attributed to the demanding EFL programs in Turkish context or Turkish teachers' lack of seriousness in taking responsibility for the work they do because Turkish teachers offer 15-hour obligatory teaching per week, while Iranian teachers offer 24-hour obligatory teaching per week with a low amount of salary than that of Turkish teachers.

With regard to which dimensions of *Teacher Autonomy* better predict the EE, DP, and PA burnout processes of both Iranian and Turkish teachers, the findings demonstrated that there was a significant relationship between the three dimensions of *Curriculum Evaluation*, *Decision Making* and *Problem Solving* and the EE, DP and PA subscales among both Iranian and Turkish EFL teachers, whereas no significant relationship was observed between the *Teacher Autonomy* dimension of *Pedagogy* and any burnout processes (See Table 3.4). This means that the three dimensions of *Teacher Autonomy* were valid in predicting EE, DP and PA burnout processes, while *Pedagogy* was neural to these processes.

Moreover, the results showed that *Decision Making* was the dominant dimension in predicting EE processes, meaning that Iranian and Turkish teach-

ers suffer mainly from emotional exhaustion as a result of not being involved in decision making processes. Lack of involvement in decision making processes also causes them to commit student depersonalization and affects their work performance. Furthermore, the results showed that *Problem Solving* was the dominant dimension in predicting DP and PA burnout processes. That is to say that Iranian and Turkish teachers commit student depersonalization mainly for not being able to solve their work problems, and for the same reason their work accomplishment can be affected negatively. Finally, their work accomplishment and performance are reduced when they feel the established curriculum restricts their teaching activities. Therefore, to deal with the burnout problems at *Teacher Autonomy* level among Iranian and Turkish EFL teachers, they should mainly be allowed to use their personal initiative or judgment in solving work problems. Moreover, they should be involved in decision making procedures to express their concerns, and a flexible curriculum should be offered so that they could choose appropriate teaching methods and strategies to meet student needs.

At last, the results of cross-cultural analyses revealed that EE subscale of burnout was better predicted by the *Decision Making* dimension (Beta= -.143) of *Teacher Autonomy* in the case of Iranian teachers, while by the *Problem Solving* (Beta = -.404) in the case of Turkish teachers. This means that Iranian teachers' sense of inability to participate in decision making processes mainly leads them to emotional exhaustion, whereas Turkish teachers are led to emotional exhaustion as a result of chiefly not being able to solve their work problems. Moreover, Turkish teachers' negative feeling towards the established curriculum also depletes them emotionally. Therefore, to deal with EE burnout among Iranian teachers, they should principally be involved in decision making procedures and are let to express their concerns, while Turkish teachers should mainly be allowed to use their personal initiative or judgment in solving their work problems, and a flexible curriculum should be offered so that they could choose appropriate teaching methods and strategies to meet student needs. The latter finding confirms the argument of a centralized educational system of Turkey (Öztürk, 2011; Uygun, 2008; Akşit, 2007; Yıldırım, 2003; Vorkink, 2006).

Furthermore, the cross-cultural results disclosed that DP subscale of burnout was better predicted by the *Problem Solving* dimension (Beta= -.242) of *Teacher Autonomy* in the case of Iranian teachers, whereas by the *Pedagogy* (Beta = -.242) in the case of Turkish teachers. That is to say that inability of Iranian teachers to use their personal initiative to solve the work problems primarily causes them to commit student depersonalization, while Turkish teachers are chiefly committed to student depersonalization as a result of not

being able to choose appropriate teaching methods, strategies and techniques in their teaching activities. Additionally, Iranian and Turkish teachers also depersonalize their students and do not care them adequately for not being able to participate in decision making processes. Further, lack of opportunity to choose appropriate teaching methods, strategies and techniques in teaching activities causes Iranian teachers to commit student depersonalization. To avoid or control DP burnout among Iranian teachers, they should mainly be permitted to use their personal initiative in solving their work problems, whereas Turkish teachers should be allowed to choose appropriate teaching methods, strategies and techniques. Moreover, Turkish teachers should also be participated in decision making processes, and Iranian teachers should not only be involved in decision making processes but also be allowed to select appropriate teaching methods, strategies and techniques to meet student needs.

Finally, the cross-cultural results released that PA subscale of burnout was better predicted by the *Problem Solving* dimension of *Teacher Autonomy* in the case of both Iranian and Turkish teachers (Ir. ►Beta= .223 and Tr. ►Beta = .242). This means that inability of Iranian and Turkish teachers to use their personal initiative in solving the work problems mainly affects their work accomplishment and performance. Further, Turkish teachers' work performance is affected as a result of not being involved in decision making processes and holding negative feelings towards the established curriculum. Therefore, to combat PA burnout among both Iranian and Turkish teachers, they should mainly be permitted to use their personal initiative and thought in solving the work problems. Turkish teachers should also be involved in decision making processes, and a more flexible curriculum should be offered so that their teaching activities could not be restricted much. In short, the results of cross-cultural analyses represented that *Curriculum Evaluation*, *Problem Solving* and *Problem Solving* dimensions had discriminatory role in EE processes, *Problem Solving* dimension in DP processes, and *Curriculum Evaluation* and *Decision Making* dimensions in PA processes across Iranian and Turkish teachers.

5. Conclusion and implications

The aim of this study was to measure the perceived EE, DP and PA burnout levels of Iranian and Turkish teachers and to explore which of these burnout processes is better predicted by a four-dimension teacher autonomy scale in the areas of (1) choice of appropriate teaching methods, strategies and techniques, (2) evaluation of the established curriculum, (3) teacher involvement in decision making processes, and (4) using personal initiative to

solve work problems both among and across Iranian and Turkish teachers. The results revealed that there was a slight difference between Iranian and Turkish teachers in the EE subscale. Moreover, the findings demonstrated that there was a significant relationship between the three dimensions of *Curriculum Evaluation*, *Decision Making* and *Problem Solving* and the EE, DP and PA subscales among both Iranian and Turkish EFL teachers, whereas no significant relationship was observed between the *Teacher Autonomy* dimension of *Pedagogy* and any burnout processes. Finally, the results represented that *Curriculum Evaluation*, *Problem Solving* and *Problem Solving* dimensions of the teacher autonomy scale played discriminatory role in EE, DP and PA processes of Iranian and Turkish teachers. However, these findings may especially be beneficial to policy makers and curriculum designers if they want to develop their curriculum and to let teachers adapt curriculum materials to their interests.

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