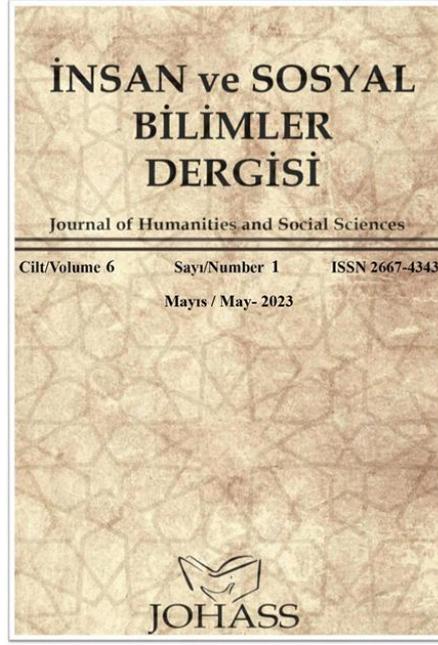


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**The Effects of The Body Instrumentalization on Academics' Level of Burnout, Psychological Well-Being and Perceived Social Support During The Covid-19 Pandemic\***

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# **The Effects of The Body Instrumentalization on Academics' Level of Burnout, Psychological Well-Being And Perceived Social Support During The Covid-19 Pandemic**

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## **Abstract**

Burnout is a syndrome that results from prolonged job-related stress and may be expressed as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment which may negatively effect the academic life. (Ömer, 2008). Individuals with positive psychological characteristics are more likely to cope with demanding job-related tasks and adapt to these demands easily than individuals with negative psychological characteristics (McNeill, Cheyne, 2008). In terms of an individual's characteristics, we could mention psychological well being. On the other hand, there are external sources that may contribute to lower levels of burnout such as social support. Social support is understood as the individual resources that help in coping with demanding situations and can be acquired by means of interpersonal interactions (McNeill, Cheyne, 2008). In this study, it was tried to decrease the burnout levels of academicians through art therapy and breathing exercises. Academicians from various provinces of Turkey who participated voluntarily were assigned to the art group they preferred, and these studies, which were carried out with a total of 6 academicians, 3 people in each group, lasted for 1 month. The burnout, psychological well-being and perceived social support levels of the participants were measured with the pre-test and post-test methods through scales. In order to better evaluate the results of the 1-month studies conducted with the participants, in-depth interviews were conducted with semi-structured questions. As a result, there was a decrease in the burnout levels of the participants, and an increase in the levels of psychological well-being and perceived social support.

**Keywords:** Burnout syndrome, psychological well-being, perceived social support, breathing exercises, art therapy.

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## **Introduction**

### **Burnout**

It is common to experience burnout, which has a detrimental effect on one's social and personal resources. Burnout sufferers are often metaphorically compared to a burned out circuit or a dead battery. The syndrome of burnout, which can manifest as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a decline in personal achievement, is brought on by prolonged work stress (Mer, 2008). Personal and social resources could therefore have a big influence on burnout levels. It should be noted, though, that some personal traits and social support systems may make burnout more likely than others. Clinical psychiatrist Herbert Freudenberger first identified the burnout syndrome, which has a negative impact on work life, in 1974. Freudenberger (1974) defined burnout as the feeling of exhaustion that people experience in response to unmet demands. According to Freudenberger and Richelson (1981; cited by Başerer & Başerer, 2019), burnout is a natural by-product of contemporary social life and the outcome of people's efforts to find meaning in their lives. Burnout sufferers can be represented metaphorically by a burned-out circuit or a dead battery. People with burnout syndrome are said to eventually run out of energy and their circuits become inoperable without overloading, just like a battery does when it reaches its maximum capacity (Maslach, 1982; cited by Başerer and Başerer, 2019).

Burnout, which is common among academics, should not be dismissed as a simple feeling. Because academic fatigue has a detrimental impact not only on academics but also on the education processes of future workers (Tümekaya, 2000). As a result, it is critical to comprehend the notion of burnout and take appropriate action by determining how it relates to personal, social, and educational domains.

Examining academic studies reveals that many of them attempt to identify the variables that will influence burnout. These studies have looked at burnout generally and variables like academic standing and year of study. It has been found that there is more burnout in the early phases of the career path when the studies on burnout and academic titles are compared. According to research assistants, burnout is more prevalent (Ardinç & Polatc, 2008). On top of that, research has shown that there is no connection between academic rank and burnout (Avuş, Gök, & Kurtay, 2007). According to studies, burnout is more prevalent in the first five years of employment in relation to the working year. According to studies on the subject, the first five years of a person's academic career are when burnout is most likely to occur (Ardinç & Polatc, 2008). From these, it is clear that research on burnout focuses mostly on how gender, title, and working year relate to burnout in academic terms. Each of these factors significantly affects burnout. However, it still falls short in terms of preventing academic burnout.

Burnout is being recognized as a significant source of workplace stress that has been linked to employees' poor physical and mental health as well as poorer levels of job performance. Burnout is a psychological condition that results from ongoing pressures at work (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Burnout was identified by Maslach and Jackson (1981, 1996) as a syndrome characterized by emotional tiredness, a pessimistic outlook on work, and a lack of personal accomplishment. Burnout is linked to worse health outcomes for people and poorer organizational performance (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli, Maslach & Marek, 1993). On the other hand, teachers who work with high dedication, responsibility, orientation towards the innovation process are more susceptible to emotional burnout (Ibragimovich, 2023).

When we examine from the standpoint of psychological well-being, we can talk about an inverse link between these two ideas because burnout has a negative nature.

### **Psychological Well-Being**

The idea of psychological well-being, according to Ümmet and Yalın (2020), "emphasizes that the human being is a whole as a multidimensional structure, and that he/she has the obligation to protect, maintain, and enhance his/her well-being" (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 2008). Positive psychological traits increase a person's capacity to manage and adapt to difficult work-related activities (McNeill & Cheyne, 2008). When analyzing this circumstance in terms of a person's traits, psychological well-being can be brought up. It is feasible to think of psychological well-being as an internal resource that safeguards the person, and it is also possible to think of social support as an external resource when discussing a concept that helps people experience less burnout.

Because people react to their work environment differently when they are burnt out depending on significant aspects including age, marital status, gender, and personality features, it is vital to consider personality traits (Maslach et al., 2001). This is in line with health psychology research, which contends that a person's personality qualities are directly tied to their psychological and physical health (Vollrath, 2006). Because personality affects how we experience stress, it has the potential to "morph" into stressful situations, such as the perception of danger and the ensuing emotional and physical reactions (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). People may view various features of a scenario as more or less stressful and respond to situations in different ways depending on their personality traits (Watson et al., 1999; Vollrath 2001; Suls & Martin 2005). Suitable interventions is necessary to improve teachers' (Agyapong et al., 2023) stress-coping ability, reduce the likelihood of burnout and improve general well-being.

### **Perceived Social Support**

Social support is characterized as a person's personal tools for navigating challenging circumstances, which can be obtained through interpersonal relationships (McNeill & Cheyne, 2008). Having social support is one of the most important aspects of working in the current world. The term "social support" describes the feeling of being cherished, fostered, and respected by those who are closest to the person. These people may include family, peers, friends, teachers, communities, or a social group to which the person belongs. Stress is a predictor of social support, according to studies. For instance, it was discovered that people with more social support were in better psychological shape than people with less social support under stressful conditions (Rehman et al., 2020).

### **Art Therapy**

When used as an expressive language, art offers a non-threatening method of communication that people can control and that capitalizes on their own creativity. Making art as part of art therapy allows the patient to actively participate in their own treatment. This strategy can be used to reduce people's fear of pain and exposure to art, making it appealing to those who are not yet familiar with it. It is said that art supplies are more complex than they first appear to be (Riley, 2001).

Thoughts might be challenging to put into words, but art encourages people to express themselves in other ways. Clients can become conscious of their emotions and let go of negative ones with the use of art therapy. Additionally, art therapy helps clients communicate more effectively and manage their emotions. Clients can resolve emotional conflicts, enhance coping strategies, increase self-esteem, lessen anxiety, and build creative thinking and problem-solving abilities by employing art supplies and the creative process (Malchiodi, 2007). It is feasible to evaluate art therapy within the context of psychodynamic, humanistic, learning and development, family therapy, and other psychological approaches when psychological approaches are considered (Vick, 2003). Every art therapist is aware that learning can occur both during the creation of a piece of art and when viewing it after it has

been completed. Instead of being a dated artifact shown in a museum, tapestry as art therapy is a dynamic work in progress (Vick, 2003).

### **Breathing Exercises**

The literature also refers to breathing exercises, a body and mind discipline, as breathing therapy or breathing treatment. People now train in breathing methods to treat illnesses and lessen some of their symptoms. Despite the fact that there is not much scientific study of women's health, it has grown over the past ten years (Yalçın and Özbaşaran, 2021).

The sole activity that keeps us alive and is there with us at all times is breathing (Acar, 2016). According to WHO (World Health Organization), it involves engaging the diaphragm muscle and breathing in all of the oxygen-rich air we take in. One of the simplest and most efficient strategies to apply for quality aging is breathing, which consists of two steps: inhalation and exhalation (Şinik, 2019). Breathing that needs to be controlled is behavioral in practice, whereas breathing that comes naturally is reflex (Novotny, et al., 2013; Peter, 2016).

When all of these are taken into consideration, treatment can support the person's internal and external protective resources. In this regard, the goal of this study is to use art therapy and breathing techniques to reduce academicians' levels of burnout.

### **Research Purpose and Problem**

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of a breath and art program on academicians' levels of burnout, psychological well-being, and perceived social support. By emphasizing the individual's own internal processes, body instrumentalization activities seek to improve psychological wellbeing and social support levels. Thus, it aims to lessen the degree of burnout that people suffer.

The problem statement of the research is, "Is it possible to reduce the burnout levels of academicians, to increase the levels of psychological well-being and perceived social support through studies on the instrumentation of the body?" was created as the sub-problems are "Do breathing studies have an effect on reducing the burnout levels of academicians, psychological well-being and perceived social support levels?", "Do Art Therapy studies have an effect on reducing the burnout levels of academicians, psychological well-being and perceived social support levels?" sorted as.

## **Method**

### **Process**

After the approval of Yıldız Technical University ethics committee, this experimental study, which includes pre-test, post-test and in-depth interview technique, was carried out online via Zoom with academics from various provinces of Turkey for a period of four weeks (30 January 2022- 20 February 2022). This study consists of three different therapy groups. The academicians were first given a questionnaire to determine their level of burnout.

### **Sample and Population**

Six academicians with severe burnout levels were invited to join the therapy groups. They were assigned to the intervention group that the academics had specified on their personal information form. There are three people per group. In this study, an art- and breath-based intervention approach was applied differently to each group. Four sessions of the intervention program, each lasting 40 minutes, were held. According to the intervention program they had been a part of at the end, gift baskets were given to the participants. In this study, the psychological well-being of academics was evaluated through in-depth interviews. Interviews with focus groups look at the interpersonal communication that develops within a set group (Krueger, 1994).

**Materials**

The Maslach Burnout Scale, Psychological Well-Being Scale, and Multidimensional Perceived Social Support Scale were twice given to academicians as a pre-test and post-test in the context of this study. To better understand the outcomes of the intervention, semi-structured interview questions were used before an in-depth interview 1 month after the study's conclusion.

**Demographic Information Form**

The participants shown the sociodemographic information form that the researchers had developed. The Sociodemographic Information Form's objective is to gather more specific information about the research participants. In addition, sociodemographic information is used to examine the connection between job satisfaction and perceived social support. The form's questions were designed to compile the data collected from the scales and complete the needed information. In this context, participants were asked for details including gender, age, marital status, number of dependents professional seniority, title, status, academic promotion waiting time, academicians number in the family, weekly class hour load, number of thesis executed, administrative duty, and residence status.

*Table 1. Demographic Informations*

	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5	Subject 6
<b>Intervention Group</b>	Art	Art	Art	Breath	Breath	Breath
<b>Gender</b>	Woman	Woman	Woman	Woman	Woman	Man
<b>Age</b>	44	37	32	49	42	41-50
<b>Marital Status</b>	Widowed or Divorced	Married	Single	Married	Married	Married
<b>Number of Dependents</b>	1	2	-	2	3	3
<b>Professional Seniority</b>	16-20 years	11-15 years	5 years or less	21 years or more	16-20 years	11-15 years
<b>Title</b>	Associate professor	Research Assistant	Doctor Lecturer	Professor	Assistant Professor	Research Assistant
<b>Status</b>	Full time	Full time	Full time	Full time	Full time	Full time
<b>Academic Promotion Waiting Time (years)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	8
<b>Academician Presence in the Family</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Weekly class hour load</b>	20	0	16	4	16	2
<b>Number of thesis executed</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-

<b>Administrative Duty</b>	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-
<b>Residence status</b>	My own and my family	Rental	Rental	My own and my family	Lodging	Lodging

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### **Maslach Burnout Inventory**

Maslach et al. (1986) was adapted into Turkish by Ergin (1992) to measure the burnout levels of individuals, and its validity and reliability study was conducted. Consisting of 22 items, Maslach Burnout Scale measures perceived burnout level with 3 sub-dimensions. The "Emotional Exhaustion" sub-dimension, which consists of 9 statements (1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16 and 20) measures the fatigue and emotional exhaustion levels of the participants. The 'Depersonalization' sub-dimension, which consists of 5 statements (items 5, 10, 11, 15 and 22), measures the insensitive behaviors of the participants towards the other individuals they serve. The 'Personal Achievement' sub-dimension, which consists of 8 statements (items 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19 and 21), measures the participants' sense of competence. When the evaluations of burnout levels according to the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions of the scale are examined, Emotional Burnout; Low burnout between 0-16 points, medium between 17-26 points and high burnout of 27 points and above; desensitization; Low burnout between 0-6 points, moderate between 7-12 points and high burnout of 13 points and above; personal success; When 39 points and above are evaluated as low, 32-38 points as medium and 0-31 points as high burnout, it is seen that it is categorized as follows (Maslach et al., 1986; Ergin, 1992).

### **Psychological Well-Being Scale**

To measure psychological well-being, the "Psychological Well-Being Scale" developed by Diener et al. (2010) and methods adapted into Turkish by Telef (2013) will be used. The scale consists of 8 items and there is no reverse item. Scale questions have a 5-point Likert type and one-dimensional structure. The Cronbach's Alpha value calculated for the scale was determined as 0.86. The confirmatory factor analysis results of the scale were determined as [CMIN/DF= 2.62, GFI=0.94, RMSEA=0.96, CFI=0.95, AGFI=0.87, NFI=0.92]. According to these findings, it can be said that the 8-item unidimensional structure of the scale is reliable and valid.

### **Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support**

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), Zimet et al. It consists of 12 items and includes 7-point Likert-type answers. A high score from the scale indicates high perceived social support. "The proposed sub-scale structure; It includes perceived support from family, friends, and a special person". The scale was translated into Turkish by Eker, Arkar, and Yaldız (2001) and it was found to be generally satisfactory in terms of factor structure, reliability and construct validity, and use in our country.

### **Semi-structured Interview Questions**

The interviews are characterized by their open-ended nature, the presence of unstructured questions, and their length, which allows for in-depth discussion of the subject. The average interview lasts between 30 and 60 minutes, however some studies can last for many hours (Valle and Halling, 1989). In the interview form, nine open-ended questions were basically created, and some sub-questions were added to the interview questions over time based on the pilot studies. The interviews were conducted face-to-face at an agreeable and quiet location after the pertinent ethical guidelines were reviewed and the participants' consent was obtained. Participants who volunteered to participate but were unable to attend the interview in person also had telephone interviews conducted.

Interview questions about burnout, perceived social support and psychological well-being were prepared by researchers by reviewing the relevant literature and examining questions from studies on related topics. The 9 open-ended basic questions prepared are given below:

1. Has there been a change in your perspective towards work after you participated in the study? If so, explain these changes.
2. After the study you participated in, did you develop empathy for the feelings of others? If so, explain these changes.
3. Do you see yourself as successful in the work you do after the work you participated in? Has there been any change in the success level of your routine work? If so, explain these changes.
4. After the study you participated in, do you find the activities you do in your daily life (walking, hobby, trip, etc.) enough for yourself? If so, explain these changes.
5. What kind of change do you see when you imagine yourself after the study you participated in? Have you experienced any relevant changes? If you have, describe these changes.
6. Did your thoughts about the future change after the study you participated in? Please explain if it did.
7. Did you experience any changes in your attitude towards your family after you participated in the study? If you have, describe these changes.
8. Did you experience any changes in your relationships with your friends after you participated in the study? If you have, describe these changes.
9. Have you experienced any changes in your relationship with your dating/lover/fiancé/verbal/spouse after you participated in the study? If you have, describe these changes.

## **Intervention Program**

**Table 2.** *Art Therapy and Breathing Exercises Weekly Modules*

	<b>Art Therapy</b>	<b>Breathing Exercises</b>
Week 1	h.1.1. Warming h.1.2. Emotion Transfer h.1.3. Self Perception Picture h.1.4. Sharing	h1.1. Breath Awareness h1.2. Upper Body Relaxation 1 h1.3. Upper Body Relaxation 2 h1.4. Gradual Full Breath/Abs-Chest-Shoulder h1.5. Breathing Pattern Change Exercise h1.6. Alternate Nose Breath h1.7. Honeybee Breath h.1.8. 4-7-8 Breath h.1.9. Resonance Study with Letters A-U-M
Week 2	h.2.1. Emotion Transfer h.2.2. Warm Up with Tiki-Taka Sounds h.2.3. Musical Autobiography h.2.4. Sharing	h.2.1. Breath Awareness h.2.2. Upper Body Relaxation h.2.3. Shoulder-Neck Relief h.2.4. Regional Breathing/Upper Thoracic-Middle Thoracic-Abdominal h.2.5. Vocal Diaphragm Exercises h.2.6. 4-7-8 Breath h.2.7. Working with Letters A-U-M Resonance Study
Week 3	h.3.1. Noticing the Room with the Five Senses h.3.2. GIM h.3.4. Transferring Images in the Mind to the Picture	h.3.1. Breath Awareness h.3.2. Upper Body Relaxation h.3.3. Gradual Full Breath/ Abdominal- Chest-Shoulder h.3.4. Breathing Pattern Change Exercise h.3.5. Hyperventilation Correction Exercise

	h.3.4. Sharing	h.3.6. Honeybee Breath h.3.7. Alternate Nose Breath h.3.8. Working with A-U-M Letters
Week 4	h.4.1. Creating a Metaphor of Being a Tree in the Mind h.4.2. Transferring the Tree Created in the Mind to the Picture h.4.3. Sharing	h.4.1. Breath Awareness h.4.2. Upper Body Relaxation 1 h.4.3. Upper Body Relaxation 2 h.4.4. Gradual Full Breath/Abs-Chest-Shoulder h.4.5. Breathing Pattern Change Exercise h.4.6. Alternate Nose Breath h.4.7. Honey Break Breath h.4.8. 4-7-8 Breath h.4.9. Resonance Study with Letters A-U-M

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### **Data Analysis**

In this study, the scales were collected using quantitative research methods, while the interview questions were collected using qualitative methods. As a result, a mixed model was used to create the study. Due to the small number of subjects, pre- and posttest studies could not be statistically evaluated and were instead calculated as points. It was discovered that there was a difference between the participants' pretest and posttest results. These variations improve psychological health and social perception; it was found that the burnout score dropped.

### **Findings**

Six academicians from various parts of Turkey who agreed to participate in the research participated in the study. To each academic, Maslach et al. The Maslach Burnout Scale developed by Ergin (1986) and adapted to Turkish by Diener et al. (2010) and adapted to Turkish by Telef (2013) and Zimet et al. (1988) and translated into Turkish by Eker, Arkar, and Yıldız (2001), the Multidimensional Perceived Social Support scale was applied as a pre-test and post-test.

Among the academicians, 3 participants participated in art therapy and 3 participants in breathing exercises groups. The work of the groups continued online for 4 weeks. Each study was administered for 45-60 minutes.

According to the data obtained from the study;

1. Burnout scores of each participant in the art therapy group decreased.
2. The Psychological Well-Being scores of each participant in the art therapy group increased.
3. Perceived Social support scores of each participant in the art therapy group increased.
4. Burnout scores of each participant in the breathing exercises group decreased.
5. Perceived Social support scores of each participant in the breathing exercises group increased.
6. Perceived Social support scores of each participant in the breathing exercises group increased.
7. In the answers given to the interview questions;

- After this study, academics in both groups experienced an increase in empathy and awareness about burnout in both groups.

- When the academics in both groups were evaluated in terms of psychological well-being, there were changes in staying in the moment, taking risks, getting out of the comfort zone and realizing the potential, although this study did not make a big difference.

- Academicians developed more supportive attitudes towards family and friends when examined in terms of perceived social support.

### **Quantitative Findings**

**Table 3. Quantitative Findings**

	Burnout First Test Total	Psychological Well-Being First Test Total	Perceived Social Support Initial Test Total	Burnout Posttest Total	Psychological Well-Being Post-Test Total	Perceived Social Support Posttest Total
Subject 1	68	39	68	56	53	78
Subject 2	63	40	64	51	54	68
Subject 3	61	39	65	51	51	76
Subject 4	77	34	73	70	48	78
Subject 5	65	32	70	60	43	78
Subject 6	68	37	53	63	48	61

### **Qualitative Findings**

After the art therapy and breathing exercises, an interview was conducted with open-ended questions in order to evaluate the change in burnout, psychological well-being and perceived social support levels of the participants’ are questioned with related questions. Below, the answers of the participants in which they emphasized these topics are categorized and gathered together.

#### **Findings Related to the Burnout Levels of the Participants Awareness**

The questions asked within the framework of this subject were “Has there been a change in your perspective towards the job after you participated in the study? If so, please describe these changes.”, “After the study you participated in, did you develop empathy for the feelings of others? If it happened, tell me.”, “After the work you participated in, do you see yourself as successful in the work you do? Has there been any change in the success level of your routine work? If so, explain these changes.” is in the form. As a result of the interviews, it was seen that there were changes in the burnout levels of the subjects. These changes can be evaluated within the framework of “awareness”.

*Subject 1: “After the study, I started to think about how I could benefit from the techniques taught in my work life. We repeated the warm-up exercises with my students. Lessons became more enjoyable. I realized that it is important to use exercises that help us express ourselves in business life.”*

*Subject 1: “As I said, when I repeated the work with the students, I developed empathy for the results.”*

*Subject 2: “I’ve noticed more clearly that we humans neglect ourselves a little while grappling with routine work. In the flow of life, we are actually looking for a partner.”*

*Subject 3: "I usually try to empathize in everyday life. But emotionally, I wouldn't. I started paying attention to him."*

*Subject 3: "I see it as successful. For example, I started to take part in the management of my co-workers' discourses (to which I fit in, saying that they have known for a long time, etc.)."*

*Subject 4: It made me approach things more calmly.*

*Subject 6: I started to work more concentrated and more systematically.*

*Subject 6: I was already an empathic person, but after the study, I started to detect the moments when people were nervous more easily.*

*Subject 6: Yes, I see. I was able to finish the detailed work I needed to complete. I've seen the payoff from that too. I started to pay more attention to my health outside of work. Some of my chronic problems are less disturbing thanks to this attention.*

A decrease was observed in the total burnout scores of the participants in the art and breathing exercises groups (Table 3). In line with this, in the interview with the participants, it can be thought that the burnout scores of the participants decreased with the increase in their awareness of themselves and their environment. It is thought that the fatigue and emotional exhaustion dimensions of burnout may have been improved with the study.

### **Findings Related to Psychological Well-Being Levels**

After the art therapy and breathing exercises, an interview was conducted with open-ended questions in order to evaluate the change in the psychological well-being of the subjects. The questions asked within the framework of this interview were "After the study you participated in, do you find the activities you do in your daily life (walking, hobby, excursion, etc.) sufficient for yourself? If you find it, explain these changes.", "What kind of ... (participant's name) do you see when you imagine yourself after the study you participated in? Have you experienced changes? Tell us about these changes if you have experienced them.", "Did your thoughts about the future change after the study you participated in? Tell me if it happened." is in the form. As a result of the interviews, it was seen that there were changes in the burnout levels of the subjects. These changes can be evaluated within the framework of "awareness and seeking new experiences".

*Subject 1: Yes. I try to perceive what effect the music I listen to, especially while walking with my dog, creates on me at what time.*

*Subject 1: My dreams for the future still continue.*

*Subject 2: I hope their numbers increase (activity counts).*

*Subject 2: I don't think I've had a big change. I may have started to look more objectively at some of the issues that I may be criticizing.*

*Subject 3: I see enough. For example, I am taking a walk, I started a new course.*

*Subject 3: More calm, tolerant.*

*Subject 3: The idea of living more memories occurred.*

*Subject 4: I do more regular activities, I do not procrastinate.*

*Subject 4: I am on my way to being an individual living in the moment, it is easier to take risks and get out of my comfort zone.*

*Subject 6: I am in a more positive mood. For the continuity of this, I would like to see myself as having reached a routine of spending quality time.*

*Subject 6: It helped me to re-remember my potential and take action.*

There was an increase in the psychological well-being scores of the participants participating in the art and breathing exercises groups (see Table 3). In line with this, in the interview with the participants, it can be thought that there was an increase in the psychological well-being scores with the increase in the awareness and seeking new experiences of the participants.

### **Findings Regarding the Perceived Social Support Levels of the Participants**

After the art therapy and breathing exercises, an interview was conducted with open-ended questions in order to evaluate the change in the perceived social support levels of the subjects. The questions asked within the framework of this interview were “Have you experienced any changes in your attitude towards your family after the study you participated in? If you have, tell about these changes.”, “Did you develop empathy for the feelings of others after the study you participated in?”, “Have you experienced changes in your relationships with your friends after the study you participated in? If you have, please describe these changes.”, “Have you experienced any changes in your relationships with your spouse after you participated in the study? If you have experienced it, describe these changes.” is in the form. As a result of the interviews, it was seen that there were changes in the burnout levels of the subjects. These changes can be evaluated within the framework of “support for family and friends”.

*Subject 4: I am careful to prioritize my family.*

*Subject 4: I am more determined to take time for myself.*

*Subject 6: I approach them more understanding, less critically.*

*Subject 6: I am generally supportive of friends, but I started making an effort to talk to them more.*

*Subject 6: I tried to give him some suggestions with what I learned after the study. I advised him to do the exercises. I can say that I am more moderate.*

The perceived social support scores of the participants participating in the art and breathing exercises groups increased in their total scores (Table 3). In line with this, in the interview with the participants, it can be thought that the perceived social support scores increased with the increase in the support behaviors of the participants to family and friends.

### **Discussion and Result**

As a result of this study, it has been seen that burnout is an important concept for academicians and it is possible to reduce burnout levels with art and breathing exercises method. In a similar study conducted by Cataldo and Russo (2008) in the oncology unit where burnout syndrome is seen quite frequently, art therapy was used and it was suggested that it could be effectively treated with art therapy. In this study, which included 65 doctors and nurses, it was concluded that burnout syndrome among oncology unit personnel could be effectively treated with art therapies.

According to another study by Vennet's (2002), an eight-week art therapy group for mental health professionals is effective in reducing secondary trauma and burnout, according to interviews with staff and patients. The aim of the study is to explore the case of an eight-week art therapy session on how to reduce secondary trauma among mental health professionals. In-depth interviews support that the art therapy module is effective in reducing secondary trauma and burnout for this population.

In another study similar to the results we obtained, teachers who participated in school-based counseling groups who used music therapy techniques together with cognitive behavioral interventions reported lower levels of burnout symptoms than teachers who only used cognitive behavioral interventions (Cheek et al., 2003).

Örün (2019) revealed that 15 young female volunteer participants, who applied a natural and connected breathing exercise for 45 minutes with a breathing coach, showed a difference in reducing stress factors before and after the exercises, so that breathing exercises could be applied as a relaxation technique. Saliva and cortisol levels were determined in 40 randomized controlled participants who performed 20 sessions of controlled diaphragmatic breathing exercise for 8 weeks. The pre-test and post-tests applied to these subjects were on

attention and focus. As a result, it was stated that participants who did breathing exercises had a positive effect on cortisol levels and attention/focus (Xiao et al., 2017).

The findings show that social support plays an important role in the link between burnout and subjective well-being. Indeed, the chain mediation model of social support and learning motivation significantly demonstrated the link between burnout and psychological well-being. These findings show that increasing social support in an educational institution reduces the effects of burnout and increases psychological well-being (Rehman, Bhuttah, & You, 2020).

As can be understood from the above-related studies, some quantitative studies have been conducted on burnout syndrome and psychological well-being. Although these studies were not carried out with the academics who are the subject group of this article, it was understood that art therapy and breathing exercises had a positive effect due to the research. No other study was found where art therapy and breathing exercises were conducted face-to-face or online. It has been determined that art therapy and breathing exercises with subject groups in different fields lasted eight weeks. Although the applications of this study with the experimental groups lasted for four weeks, a decrease in burnout levels and an increase in psychological well-being were observed. We could not find any study measuring social perception. For this reason, art therapy and breathing exercises, which increase the social perception of the subjects, are beneficial.

As a result of these studies, it can be thought that art therapy and breathing exercises can be effective in reducing burnout levels and increasing psychological well-being and perceived social support levels. In the light of this information, it can be thought that the fact that academics and other professional groups experiencing burnout are interested in these art-based therapy methods, which can progress interactively, may contribute to drawing a road map to prevent burnout syndrome. In addition to emphasizing the importance of individual efforts and increasing awareness of individuals towards themselves and their environment in the phenomenon of burnout, it is necessary to consider the fact that this awareness also affects perceived social support levels.

### **Recommendations**

Quantitative data can be produced by repeating this study. Sub-branches of art like ceramics, photography, dance movement, marbling, music-rhythm, and collage can be added to art therapy and breathing exercises. For upcoming studies, experimental and control groups made up of adults from various professions can be formed. Studies may be applied in person. The working period is not constrained to four weeks; it is possible to plan for a longer time frame.

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