



Examination of professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers during Covid-19 pandemic period

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Abstract

In this research, it is aimed to examine the professional commitment of primary and secondary school teachers. Descriptive survey model was used in this research. The sample of the study consisted of 341 teachers working in primary and secondary schools in the center and villages of a province and district in the Southeast region in the fall term of 2020-2021. In collecting data for this study, “Scale of Commitment to Teaching Profession” and “Personal Information Form” were used. In analyzing data of this study; Mann Whitney U test, Kruskal Wallis H test and descriptive statistics were used. In accordance with the findings obtained from the research; during the Covid-19 pandemic process, it has been concluded that professional commitment of primary and secondary school teachers was high; professional commitment levels differ significantly according to gender and educational status and there is no significant difference according to the school level, professional seniority, age and marital status.

Keywords: Primary school; secondary school; teacher; professional commitment; Covid-19.

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1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected society in many ways in the last year, has also negatively affected the education process. The epidemic has been effective in all areas of life, not just education (Marshall, Shannon, & Love, 2020). In order to prevent the spread of the epidemic, the formal education process has to be interrupted. This necessitated the transition to online learning process instead of face-to-face education at all educational levels (McQuirter, 2020). Such processes and extraordinary situation that were occurred; have brought about a transformation in the responsibilities of teachers, as

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in all components of education. In order to carry out the learning and teaching process effectively, it is important that teachers are disposed to learn about the profession as well as the competence of using information and communication technologies-based tools, which are used effectively in the distance education process by teachers.

In addition to being a stressful profession in nature (Easterly & Myers, 2018), teaching in general, the conditions under which the profession is practiced can have many consequences for teachers. In this context, in a study carried out by Bozkuş (2018), it was concluded that approximately half of the teachers participating in the study experienced burnout. The burnout experienced by teachers in the school environment is considered as a serious problem (Shen et al., 2015). It can be said that the limitations experienced in the context of time in the teaching profession, the excessive workload and the responsibilities that arise out of the curriculum, is a reason for stress, but also affect the quality of the education given by teachers and the motivation of students. (Wolgast & Fischer, 2017). In addition, there are many factors affecting the quality of the learning-teaching process and the success of teachers. Commitment of teachers to the profession is one of these factors (Kozikoğlu & Özcanlı, 2020).

Professional commitment is defined as a sense of professional commitment among individuals within the professional group. The mentioned commitment consists of two basic components: the pride in doing the teaching profession and strong desire for professional development (Shukla, 2014). Other than that, Razak, Darmawan and Keeves (2009); emphasized four different types of teacher commitment: the teacher's commitment to the school, to the student, to teaching work and to the profession. In the same study, as a result of the rapid changes arisen out of the use of technology, a new need emerged in the context of commitment to a certain knowledge, attitude and skill of teachers who deal with this subject, so a fifth and a new type of commitment was also emphasized under the name of teacher's commitment to knowledge, attitude and skills. As Sawchuk (2009) also stated, teachers are not only those who reveal the facts in the context of knowledge, but also those who play a facilitating role in activities with students in employing 21st century skills.

Considering the commitment of the teacher to the school; Mowday, Porter and Steers (1979) defined the commitment to the school as the acceptance and belief in the goals and values of the school within the context of the concept of organizational commitment, the effort to fulfill the said goals and values, and their will to maintain their commitment to the school. Thus; one of the important outputs in educational institutions is attitude. Since teachers should be efficient at the point of making students volunteer for attitude change, the existence of conditions that motivate teachers in the process of performing this task is also important (Celep, 2000). Motivation is defined as an inner process that enables an individual to achieve the goal (Iliya & Ifeoma, 2015). In this respect, it is known that the working motivation of teachers is a factor that affects organizational

commitment (Tentama & Pranungsari, 2016). Therefore, it should not be overlooked that motivating conditions that affect teachers' commitment to school should be created, since teachers' commitment to school may be important in the emergence of important results or terminal behaviors for the learner.

Another type of commitment is the commitment of the teacher to the student. Kushman (1992) conceptualized this kind of commitment by emphasizing that it consists of three different components. These are the effectiveness of the teacher, the expectation that the students can learn, and the effort and prioritization of the students with low levels for the realization of their learning. The first two of these reflect the idea that all students can learn, and the third involves the effort of the teacher to achieve learning. As a matter of fact, it is known that teachers' performance in the learning and teaching process has an important effect on students' learning process (Delima, 2015). Louis (1998) also emphasized that such commitment is important in the context of protecting students at risk. He also stated that students who experience problems individually can motivate teachers to overcome these problems. Starting from this point of view; it can be said that the commitment of the teacher to the student has an important role not only in solving the problems that arise in terms of student but also in the success of students in the learning and teaching process.

Teacher's commitment to teaching work is another type of commitment. Lodahl and Kejner (1965) defined this commitment to the profession or job as the degree to which an individual becomes psychologically identified with his job. In this context, Tyree (1996) conceptualized this commitment in the context of the teacher who is associating his own goals with the goals of the school as teacher's identification with the school; participation as a desire for teachers to devote more time to school activities outside of compulsory working hours and lastly as loyalty that could be identified as the teacher's willingness to stay in the school and commitment to the school. It could be said that; as it is mentioned herein; teacher's allocating the time to school activities even if it is not compulsory or supporting those activities could be an important indicator in terms of professional commitment. Supporting this, Butucha (2013) stated that teachers who commit themselves to their profession, spend more time with their students, are more willing to cooperate with parents and carry out the process in a more beneficial way.

In conclusion, one of the types of commitment that is required to be discussed is the teacher's commitment to the profession or career. Colarelli and Bishop (1990) explained that career commitment is a concept related to the practical concerns of individuals or organizations, and in this context, the level of career commitment is an insistence on achieving goals despite the obstacles they meet. It was emphasized by Blau (1985) that the concept of commitment to career is an individual's attitude towards his profession. Hall (1971) defined the same concept as the strength of the motivation of a person regarding a preferred career role. In this context, it could be said that the conceptual

framework drawn regarding a teacher's commitment to the profession or his career is generally composed of the individual's insistence, attitude and motivation in the process.

It could be said that these types of commitment, which are considered in terms of teacher commitment, have an important role in the experience of a better professional process for the teacher in general, a more efficient learning and teaching process for the learner and the occurrence of terminal behaviors as a result. Within this context, it is a known fact that students have an important role in the progress of a country and that students are trained by teachers. Therefore, the role of teachers has a great role in the development and further progress of a country (Singh & Kumar, 2015).

The role of teachers on the development of a country in general and on the development of an individual in particular is a well-known fact. It could be said that the reality in question is more distinguished by the society in some periods or in some extraordinary situations. For instance, today, we have been faced with an epidemic that has affected the whole world. The epidemic, which is named as Covid-19, brought along the necessity of having new responsibilities and competencies for teachers who should also have many responsibilities and competencies. Schools, which were closed to face-to-face education with the epidemic, forced individuals to find alternative ways in terms of the sustainability of the learning and teaching process. In other words, the Covid-19 epidemic has prompted teachers to find alternative solutions to support students' learning regardless of where they live or what tools they have access to (Correia, 2020). As a result, teachers have chosen to benefit from online learning environments in order to continue the learning and teaching process. This naturally increased the diversity in the responsibilities and competencies that the teacher should have.

In this context, in the shade of the negative effects of the epidemic process, professional competencies of teachers in both the quality and healthy execution of the learning and teaching process, as well as the level of professional commitment, including attitude, desire, motivation, belief and effort in terms of the above-mentioned definitions, are also important. It is known that teachers with high levels of professional commitment continue to teach more than teachers with low levels of professional commitment (Ni, 2017).

In brief, the Covid-19 epidemic has brought great challenges for education systems, as in all aspects of life (Daniel, 2020). In this process; teachers, like other professional groups or every member of the society, faced with great difficulties. It could be said that teachers' feelings and thoughts about their profession are very important in terms of the sustainability of an effective and efficient education in a process during which face-to-face education has disappeared and the learning and teaching process is carried out online. This has strengthened the necessity of this study in terms of determining the professional commitment levels of teachers in the Covid-19 process. In this context, it is thought that the professional commitment level of teachers working in primary and

secondary schools, which are important educational levels for the total development of the learner, is an important issue that needs to be researched.

Although there are such studies examining and researching the professional commitment of primary and secondary school teachers (Bozdaş, 2013; Meriç & Erdem, 2020; Turhan, Demirli, & Nazik, 2012) in the body of literature, the lack of a study discussing the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers in our country during the Covid-19 process has made this research necessary. With this research, it was aimed to examine and explore the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers in the Covid-19 process.

Within the context of the aforementioned purpose; answers for the following questions were sought:

1. What are the professional commitment scores of primary and secondary school teachers?
2. Do the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to the school level they work?
3. Do the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly by gender?
4. Do the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to their professional seniority?
5. Do the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly by age?
6. Do the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to their educational status?
7. Do the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to marital status?

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

In this study, descriptive survey model was used in order to determine the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers during the Covid-19 process. Survey model is defined as a non-experimental research method that is carried out by using questionnaires or interview protocols (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2015). In other words, it is a research model that aims to identify a past or present situation as it is (Karasar, 2019). In survey researches; it is aimed to collect data to determine certain characteristics of a group (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2016). In this study, the opinions of teachers on the subject were

taken in order to determine the professional commitment levels of the teachers by using the “Scale of Commitment to Teaching Profession” and “Personal Information Form”.

2.2. Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of 2875 teachers working in primary and secondary schools in the center and villages of a province and district in the Southeast region during the fall term of 2020-2021. On the other hand, the sample of the study consisted of 341 teachers chosen by using simple random sampling method. Considering the representation level of the population of the sample, it could be said that the number of samples included in the study is sufficient to represent the population at a 95% confidence interval and .05 margin of error according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Personal information regarding the teachers included in the study is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Personal information regarding the teachers included in the study

Variables	Category	N	%
Gender	Female	180	52,8
	Male	161	47,2
School level	Primary	148	43,4
	Secondary	193	56,6
Year of Professional Seniority	4 and less	163	47,8
	Between 5-8	111	32,6
	9 and more	67	19,6
Age	30 and younger	186	54,5
	30-35	106	31,1
	35 and older	49	14,4
Educational Background	Bachelor's Degree	317	93,0
	Master's Degree	24	7,0
Marital Status	Married	136	39,9
	Single	205	60,1

As shown in Table 1, 180 (52.8%) of the teachers participating in the study were women and 161 (47.2%) were men. In addition, 148 of the teachers (43.4%) are working in primary school and 193 (56.6%) are working in secondary school. 163 of the teachers (47.8%) have 4 or less years of seniority in their profession, 111 (32.6%) have 5-8 and 67

of them (19.6%) have 9 years or more. In addition, considering the age variable, 186 (54.5%) of the teachers are under 30, 106 (31.1%) are between 30-35 and 49 (14.4%) of them are 35 and older. When examined in terms of educational background; 317 (93.0%) of teachers have bachelor's degree education, while 24 (7%) of them have master's degree. Finally, in terms of marital status, 136 (39.9%) of the teachers are married and 205 (60.1%) are single.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

In this research; “Scale of Commitment to Teaching Profession” and "Personal Information Form" were used as data collection tools. The Scale of Commitment to Teaching Profession was developed by Kozikoğlu and Senemoğlu (2018) and was designed in a five-point Likert type scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The scale consists of 20 items and three factors such as commitment to profession, commitment to students, and selfless/devoted work. In the study, while evaluating the score averages of the scale; those below the midpoint of 3.00 were interpreted as low, and those above 3.00 as high. In this current study, the Cronbach Alpha value, which is the inner consistency coefficient, was calculated for the reliability of the scale. The closer the Cronbach Alpha value is to 1.00, the higher the inner consistency of the items in the scale (George & Mallery, 2016). As a result of the calculations obtained, the Cronbach Alpha value was found at a good level of 91.6 (DeVellis, 2003; Kline, 2000). In addition, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to check whether the data set verified the factor structure of the scale or not. CFA values were found allowable values as $\chi^2/df=2.737$, CFI=.91, GFI=.87, AGFI=.84, SRMR=0,5 (Büyüköztürk, Akgün, Özkahveci, & Demirel, 2004).

2.4. Collection of Data

The data were collected in the fall semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. Since schools are closed during the Covid-19 epidemic process, the learning and teaching process is carried out online. For this reason, the data required for the research were collected online. The online form was delivered to teachers working at primary and secondary school levels through the provincial directorate of national education and the required data were collected in this way.

2.5. Analysis of Data

In order to decide which tests to be used in the analysis of the data obtained within the scope of the research, the normality of the data set was examined first, both as in total and in sub-dimensions. Since Kolmogorov-Smirnov values were found to be insignificant ($p<.05$) and since there were deviations from a straight line in the Q-Q graphics, it was

decided that the data were not normally distributed (Pallant, 2016). Since it was determined that the data were not distributed normally, the analysis of the data of the study was continued with nonparametric tests. In this respect, when two groups were compared, Mann Whitney U tests were used and when more than two groups were compared, Kruskal Wallis H tests were used. When a significant difference was found in the Kruskal Wallis H test, the groups between which the significant difference existed were determined with the help of non-parametric multiple comparison tests. In the study, descriptive statistics were also used and utilized to calculate the professional commitment scores of primary and secondary school teachers. All analyzes of the research were made by using statistical package programs of IBM SPSS and AMOS.

3. Findings

In this chapter of the study, the findings related to the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers in the Covid-19 process within the scope of the research are presented in the context of various variables.

Findings Obtained Regarding the First Sub-Problem

Within the scope of this research, the findings obtained from the analyzes that were carried out to determine the professional commitment scores of primary and secondary school teachers in the Covid-19 process are submitted in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Information Regarding Professional Commitment Scores of Teachers

Dimension	N	\bar{X}	S.d.
General	341	4,3364	,41982
Commitment to Profession	341	4,3193	,58127
Selfless Working	341	4,2551	,46670
Commitment to Student	341	4,3941	,42714

When Table 2 is analyzed, it is seen that general professional commitment scores (\bar{x} =4.3364), professional commitment sub-dimension scores (\bar{x} =4.3193), selfless working sub-dimension scores (\bar{x} =4.2551) and commitment to student sub-dimension scores (\bar{x} =4.3941) of primary and secondary school teachers were found to be at a high level.

Findings Obtained Regarding the Second Sub-Problem

The findings obtained regarding the results of the Mann Whitney U test carried out to determine whether the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to the school level they work in or not are submitted in Table 3.

Table 3. Results Obtained from Mann Whitney U Test Regarding Professional Commitment Levels of Teachers According to the School Level They Work

Dimension	School Level	N	Mean Rank	Rank Sum	U	p
General	Secondary School	193	167,94	32412,00	13691,00	,511
	Primary School	148	174,99	25899,00		
Commitment to Profession	Secondary School	193	166,16	32068,00	13347,00	,297
	Primary School	148	177,32	26243,00		
Selfless Working	Secondary School	193	172,76	33342,50	33342,50	,701
	Primary School	148	168,71	24968,50		
Commitment to Students	Secondary School	193	171,39	33077,50	14207,50	,934
	Primary School	148	170,50	25233,50		

According to Table 3, it has been concluded that the professional commitment of primary and secondary school teachers does not differ significantly according to the school level they work ($U=13691,00$, $p>.05$). In the sub-dimensions, there was no significant difference according to the level of the school (Commitment to Profession: ($U=13347,00$, $p>.05$); Selfless Working: ($U=33342,50$, $p>.05$); Commitment to Students: ($U=14207,50$, $p>.05$).

Findings Obtained Regarding the Third Sub-Problem

The findings obtained regarding the results of the Mann Whitney U test carried out to determine whether the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to gender or not are submitted in Table 4.

Table 4. Results Obtained from Mann Whitney U Test Regarding Professional Commitment Levels of Teachers as per Gender

Dimension	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Rank Sum	U	p
General	Female	180	183,08	32954,50	12315,50	,016
	Male	161	157,49	25356,50		
Commitment to Profession	Female	180	185,95	33470,50	11799,50	,003
	Male	161	154,29	24840,50		
Selfless Working	Female	180	173,30	31194,50	14075,50	,641
	Male	161	168,43	27116,50		
Commitment to Students	Female	180	180,13	32423,00	12847,00	,068
	Male	161	160,80	25888,00		

When Table 4 is analyzed, it is concluded that the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to gender

($U=12315.50$, $p<.05$). However, professional commitment of female teachers mean rank was found to be significantly higher than that of male teachers. In terms of sub-dimensions, it was seen that there was only a significant difference according to gender in the sub-dimension of professional commitment ($U=11799,50$, $p<.05$). It was concluded that the mean rank of female teachers for professional commitment was significantly higher than that of male teachers.

Findings Obtained Regarding the Fourth Sub-Problem

The findings obtained regarding the results of the Kruskal Wallis H test carried out to determine whether the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to their professional seniority year or not are submitted in Table 5.

Table 5. Results Obtained from Kruskal Wallis H Test Regarding Professional Commitment Levels of Teachers as per Their Professional Seniority Years

Dimension	Year of Professional Seniority		N	Mean Rank	sd	χ^2	p	Difference
	Professional Seniority	N						
General	4 and less	163	158,79					
	Between 5-8	111	178,45	2	5,235	,073	-	
	9 and more	67	188,34					
Commitment to Profession	4 and less	163	160,07					
	Between 5-8	111	177,11	2	4,350	,114	-	
	9 and more	67	187,46					
Selfless Working	4 and less	163	155,63					1-2
	Between 5-8	111	183,50	2	8,005	,018	1-3	
	9 and more	67	187,70					
Commitment to Students	4 and less	163	164,68					
	Between 5-8	111	172,50	2	1,873	,392	-	
	9 and more	67	183,89					

According to the data given in Table 5, it was observed that the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers did not differ significantly according to their professional seniority years [$\chi^2(sd=2, n=341)=5.235$, $p>.05$]. When the sub-dimensions are analyzed, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers in the sub-dimension of

selfless working according to their professional seniority [$\chi^2(\text{sd}=2, n=341)=8,005, p<.05$]. Teachers with 5-8 and 9 or more years of professional seniority had a significantly higher average of selfless working than teachers with 4 or less professional seniority years.

Findings Obtained Regarding the Fourth Sub-Problem

The findings obtained regarding the results of the Kruskal Wallis H test carried to determine whether the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to age or not are submitted in Table 6.

Table 6. Results Obtained from Kruskal Wallis H Test Regarding Professional Commitment Levels of Teachers as per Age

Dimension	Age	N	Mean Rank	sd	χ^2	p	Difference
General	Younger than 30	186	164,45				
	30-35	106	175,77	2	2,144	,342	-
	Older than 35	49	185,53				
Commitment to Profession	Younger than 30	186	167,31				
	30-35	106	170,16	2	1,552	,460	-
	Older than 35	49	186,84				
Selfless Working	Younger than 30	186	158,45				
	30-35	106	187,27	2	6,977	,031	1-2
	Older than 35	49	183,46				
Commitment to Students	Younger than 30	186	165,63				
	30-35	106	176,65	2	1,258	,533	-
	Older than 35	49	179,17				

When Table 6 is analyzed; it is concluded that the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers do not differ significantly according to their ages [$\chi^2(\text{sd}=2, n=341)=2,144, p>.05$]. When the sub-dimensions are analyzed, it was seen that the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to age in the sub-dimension of selfless working [$\chi^2(\text{sd}=2, n=341)=6,977, p<.05$]. Accordingly, it has been observed that the mean rank regarding the selfless working of teachers between the ages of 30 and 35 is significantly higher than the mean rank regarding selfless working of teachers under 30 years of age.

Findings Obtained Regarding the Sixth Sub-Problem

The findings obtained regarding the results of the Mann Whitney U test carried out to determine whether the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to their education level or not are submitted in Table 7.

Table 7. Results Obtained from Mann Whitney U Test Regarding the Professional Commitment Levels of Teachers as per Educational Background

Dimension	Educational Background	N	Mean Rank	Rank Sum	U	p
General	Bachelor's Degree	317	167,28	53029,00	2626,00	,011
	Master's Degree	24	220,08	5282,00		
Commitment to Profession	Bachelor's Degree	317	168,44	53396,50	2993,50	,080
	Master's Degree	24	204,77	4914,50		
Selfless Working	Bachelor's Degree	317	168,56	53432,00	3029,00	,089
	Master's Degree	24	203,29	4879,00		
Commitment to Students	Bachelor's Degree	317	167,62	53136,00	2733,00	,020
	Master's Degree	24	215,63	5175,00		

According to the findings in Table 7, it was seen that the professional commitment of primary and secondary school teachers differed significantly according to their educational background ($U=2626,00$, $p<.05$). The mean rank regarding the professional commitment of teachers with Master's Degree was found to be significantly higher than that of teachers with Bachelor's Degree. When the sub-dimensions are analyzed; it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the sub-dimension of commitment to students according to their education background ($U=2733,00$, $p<.05$). It was observed that the mean rank regarding commitment to students of teachers with educational background of Master's Degree was significantly higher than that of teachers with educational background of Bachelor's Degree.

Findings Obtained Regarding the Seventh Sub-Problem

The findings obtained regarding the results of the Mann Whitney U test carried out to determine whether the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to their marital status or not are submitted in Table 8.

Table 8. Results Obtained from Mann Whitney U Test Regarding Professional Commitment Levels of Teachers as Per Their Marital Status

Dimension	Marital Status	N	Mean Rank	Rank Sum	U	p
General	Married	136	173,50	23596,00	13600,00	,702
	Single	205	169,34	34715,00		
Commitment to Profession	Married	136	180,01	24481,50	12714,50	,167
	Single	205	165,02	33829,50		
Selfless Working	Married	136	170,50	23188,00	13872,00	,938
	Single	205	171,33	35123,00		
Commitment to Students	Married	136	168,91	22971,50	13655,50	,747
	Single	205	172,39	35339,50		

When Table 7 was analyzed; it was seen that the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers did not differ significantly according to marital status ($U=13600,00$, $p>.05$). When the sub-dimensions are analyzed, there is no significant difference found in the professional commitment levels of teachers according to marital status [Commitment to Profession: ($U=12714.50$, $p>.05$), Selfless Working: ($U=13872.00$, $p>.05$), Commitment to Students: ($U=13655.50$, $p>.05$)].

4. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, in which it is aimed to examine the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers during the Covid-19 process, firstly, the level of professional commitment scores of teachers was examined. General professional commitment scores of primary and secondary school teachers' were found to be high. It was concluded that the scores of commitment to the profession, selfless working and commitment to students were also at high levels in the sub-dimensions. When the literature is reviewed, it has been observed that the level of professional commitment of classroom teachers (Meriç & Erdem, 2020; Turhan, Demirli, & Nazik, 2012) and branch teachers (Meriç & Erdem, 2020) is high in other studies on this subject. Therefore, as in the studies carried out before the Covid-19 epidemic; the professional commitment of teachers was found to be high in this study that is carried out on the epidemic process. As it is expected, it could be said that this is an expected result for teachers working at primary and secondary school levels, which have an important role in the universal development of the individual. When evaluated in terms of the results obtained, there was no change in the level of professional commitment of the teachers working in the

aforementioned education levels, despite the negativities brought by the epidemic process.

Another variable discussed in the research is the school level. It has been determined that professional commitment of teachers does not differ significantly according to the school level at which they work. Likewise, no significant difference was observed in sub-dimensions. In the research carried out by Meriç and Erdem (2020), it was found that the professional commitment of primary and secondary school teachers and sub-dimensions do not differ significantly in line with the results of this study. Therefore, no significant difference was found between the sub-dimensions of professional commitment of primary and secondary school teachers such as commitment to profession, selfless working and commitment to students. However, when comparing the mean ranks; it is attracted the attention that the professional commitment levels of primary school teachers are higher than the branch teachers even if it is not significant. This may be a result of both the developmental characteristics of primary school students and the longer duration of primary school teachers working in the same class. In addition, primary schools are known to be an environment where teachers have to take on multiple roles to meet the diverse needs of students, as well as encouraging a quality learning process (Cruickshank, Pedersen, Cooley, & Hill, 2019). This means that teachers who work at the primary school level are expected to show responsibility, dedication and effort in different ways. Therefore, it is a possible result that the professional commitment of primary school teachers is higher than those teachers who are working higher educational levels.

In the scope of this research, professional commitment levels were also reviewed according to the gender variable. In accordance with the findings, it was determined that the professional commitment of primary and secondary school teachers differed significantly according to gender. However, it was determined that there is only a significant difference by gender in the dimension of professional commitment as in sub-dimensions. The mean ranks of sub-dimensions as professional commitment and commitment to profession of female teachers were found to be significantly higher than that of male teachers. In the study carried out by Park (2005), it was concluded that the commitment levels of women were higher than men. On the other hand, in the study carried out by Bozdaş (2013), it was found that the professional commitment levels of classroom teachers and branch teachers did not differ significantly according to gender. This has shown that in the body of literature; an absolute decision could not be made on the commitment level of teachers as per gender in the context of their commitment to the profession.

Another result obtained from the research findings is that the professional commitment of primary and secondary school teachers does not differ significantly in terms of years of professional seniority. It was determined that there is no significant difference between the professional commitment of primary and secondary school

teachers. When the sub-dimensions are analyzed; it was determined that the mean rank regarding selfless working of teachers with professional seniority years of 5-8 and 9 and longer is significantly higher than teachers with professional seniority years of 4 and less. This showed that teachers with more years of professional seniority have higher levels of professional commitment. As in all professions, the first year in the teaching profession is a period in which difficulties are experienced in terms of adaptation (Korkmaz, Saban, & Akbaşlı, 2004). Those who successfully complete their education of teaching and start the teaching profession may encounter various difficulties in their early days (Veenman, 1984). In addition, as there were many difficulties with the negativities brought about by the Covid-19 epidemic, selfless working of teachers may have been affected by this situation. Accordingly, it could be said that teachers with more years of professional seniority could cope up with this situation in stronger manner. In the study carried out by Meriç and Erdem (2020), it was determined that the professional commitment of teachers with less professional experience is high and these results are not overlapping with the results of this research. This showed that the population in which the study was carried out, the time period and the emerging conditions may have been effective in the occurrence of different results.

Moreover; it was determined that there is no significant difference between the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers as per the age. When the sub-dimensions are analyzed, it was seen that the mean rank regarding selfless working of teachers between the ages of 30 and 35 was significantly higher than the mean rank regarding selfless working of teachers who are younger than 30 years of age. In other words, it has been concluded that older teachers have higher levels of professional commitment than younger teachers. When the body of literature was reviewed in the context of this variable, it was concluded in the study carried out by Garipağaoğlu (2013) that commitment level of teachers did not differ significantly according to age. On the other hand, Hanlon (1983) stated that older teachers have higher levels of professional commitment than younger teachers. However, Bozdaş (2013) concluded in his study that, the level of professional commitment decreases as the age of branch teachers increases, in contrary to this research. Therefore, it has been observed that there are different results in terms of studies carried out on this subject in different years. In terms of this study, although it was concluded that there was no difference in the context of the age variable in general terms, the higher main rank of the older teachers in the sub-dimension of selfless working and the professional seniority and experience of teachers depending on the age during the epidemic process may have been effective in the occurrence of this result.

Another finding of the study is that the professional commitment of primary and secondary school teachers differ significantly according to their educational background. It has been concluded that the mean rank of professional commitment of teachers with Master's Degree education is significantly higher than that of teachers with Bachelor's

Degree education. When the sub-dimensions are reviewed; it was found that the mean rank regarding commitment to students of the teachers with Master's Degree education level was significantly higher than that of the teachers with Bachelor's Degree education. As a matter of fact, Master's Degree education is a process that requires more effort and endeavor by the individual to uplift himself to a better professional level. In this context, the occurrence of such a result is an expected result. Joffres and Haughey (2001) also emphasized that when teachers cannot continue their professional education and development, their professional self-efficacy decreases and this could cause decreasing in their professional commitment level.

Finally, in this research; the professional commitment levels of the teachers were examined as per their marital status. It was found that the professional commitment levels of primary and secondary school teachers according to marital status did not differ significantly. Accordingly, no significant difference was found between the professional commitment of married and single teachers. The same result has been reached when considered in terms of sub-dimensions. Nevertheless, when the mean ranks are compared, the main rank regarding general professional commitment of married teachers is found higher than those who are single and the main ranks regarding the sub-dimensions of selfless working and commitment to students of single teachers are found higher than married teachers. Based on this, it can be thought that the responsibilities of married teachers within the family affect professional commitment. Since single teachers have less family commitments and responsibilities than married teachers, they can allocate more time to work related to their profession, which may have been effective in higher levels of sub-dimensions such as selfless working and commitment to students. When the body of literature was reviewed, it was concluded in the research carried out by Meriç and Erdem (2020) that professional commitment levels were significantly higher in favor of single teachers. On the other hand, in the study carried out by Gerald (2011), it was concluded that professional commitment did not differ according to marital status.

In conclusion, in this research, which examined and analyzed the professional commitment of primary and secondary school teachers during the period of Covid-19 epidemic, it was found that the professional commitment of teachers was generally at a high level; it has been concluded that female teachers have higher professional commitment levels than male teachers and the professional level of teachers with Master's Degree education is significantly higher than of professional commitment level of teachers with Bachelor's degree education. During the Covid-19 pandemic, it can be said that teachers have had significant difficulties in adapting to online teaching and maintaining low-level communication with students and supporting both learning and development of students (König, Jäger-Biela, & Glutsch, 2020). When the results obtained in this context were assessed; it was seen that professional commitment levels of teachers were at a good level despite all the negativities experienced in an extraordinary process such as an epidemic. This research can be supportive and guiding

in terms of teacher-oriented decisions, that teachers' feelings and thoughts during the Covid-19 epidemic process, as well as regarding the high levels of professional commitment in the context of their professional desire, passion and motivation.

Following recommendations could be made based upon this research:

- Studies could be carried out regarding the relationship between the individual characteristics of teachers as well as their professional commitment levels, learner characteristics and success, attitudes of the school administration, working environment and conditions, parental attitudes and professional commitment level.
- Activities that could ensure the continuity of the professional commitment of primary and secondary school teachers and that could support them may be carried out by The Ministry of National Education.
- The professional commitment levels of teachers working at different educational levels can be reviewed.
- In-dept researches could be carried out by using qualitative research techniques such as interviews on professional commitment levels of teachers in the Covid-19 process, etc.
- Researches in which the professional commitment levels of teachers during and after the Covid-19 process are compared could be carried out.

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