

Teachers' Levels of Professional Commitment

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The aim of this study was to examine whether the levels of teachers' commitment to the profession differ according to various variables. The survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used in the research. The sample of the research consists of 608 teachers working in primary, middle, and high school schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in Yakutiye, Palandöken, and Aziziye districts of Erzurum province. As a data collection tool in the research; "The Personal Information Form" and "The Teachers' Professional Engagement Scale" were used. In the analysis of the data, descriptive analyses, Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H test were used. The teachers' level of commitment to the profession did not show a significant difference according to the variables of age, marital status, professional seniority, and graduated faculty, but showed a significant difference according to the variables of gender and teaching level. It has been obtained that teachers' levels of commitment to the profession is very high. It has been determined that female teachers have higher levels of commitment to their profession. It has been concluded that primary school teachers' levels of commitment to the profession is higher than that of high school teachers. There was no significant difference according to age, marital status, professional seniority, or graduated faculty.

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Keywords: Commitment to the teaching profession, professional commitment, teaching

INTRODUCTION

Education is globally recognised as the primary means of developing a skilled workforce. The quality of education is crucial in shaping individuals who will contribute positively to the future and society. Essentially, education should meet both individual and societal needs, fostering social development and well-being. By doing so, it can overcome obstacles to nurturing healthy generations and effectively advance its objectives.

Education prepares individuals with the knowledge and skills required to adapt to the changing economic, social, and cultural landscape of our society. Teachers play a pivotal role in achieving this goal (Dilaver, 1996). They are an essential part of education. Even if educational objectives are well defined and the curriculum is carefully designed, effective education can only be achieved when teachers possess the necessary skills and insights (Sünbül, 2001). Similarly, as Pascal (1993) points out, the quality of education is directly linked to the quality of teachers. Regardless of the resources available, without qualified teachers, achieving the desired educational outcomes is impossible. In essence, quality education hinges on the presence of quality teachers. Research on effective schools consistently shows that a teacher's professionalism is closely linked to the overall success of the school and its students (OECD, 1994). Thompson's study in 1993 revealed that students tend to align their behaviour with their teachers' personal values and attitudes. When teachers are deeply committed to their profession, serve as positive examples in the classroom, and have high expectations for their students, it leads to positive changes and development in student behaviour. To put it simply, the qualifications and dedication of teachers are crucial factors in fulfilling the goals of education (Başar, 2001).

Dedicated teachers are highly committed to their profession, their students, and their own learning. This commitment drives them to support their students in all subjects and invest maximum effort in their growth. Effective teachers empower students to grasp the world, master reading and writing, apply fundamental maths principles in real-life situations, nurture their intelligence and creativity, and build positive relationships with their peers (Dunne & Wragg, 1994).

Passion means "a strong inclination or desire for an activity that one enjoys and finds important and in which one invests time and energy". For teachers, developing a passion for teaching often stems from their ongoing commitment to students and learning. Passionate teachers are wholeheartedly dedicated to their work and serve as powerful sources of inspiration for their students (Mart, 2013). When teachers are passionately devoted to their profession, they have the confidence to effectively conduct the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching, which are essential components of their profession (Ada & Baysal, 2013).

Professional commitment is a crucial qualification that teachers should possess and is often considered the most important (Bozdaş, 2013). This commitment has a positive impact on teachers' performance, directly benefiting students' learning and success. In simple terms, when teachers are dedicated and committed to their profession, they teach more willingly, leading to greater progress in students' learning and achievements (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Moreover, professional commitment allows teachers to fulfil their roles in the classroom while adhering to their professional values, establishing effective communication with students,

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and guiding desired behavioural changes more effectively (Celep, 2000, p. 140). For these reasons, teachers hold a crucial place within the education system and are fundamental to its success. Committed teachers are essential for effective education and training (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

The professional commitment of teachers significantly influences the success of the education system (Beare, 2001). It is not a luxury or an optional trait; instead, it is the foundation for a high-quality education. In essence, professional commitment is the cornerstone of the teaching profession (Day, 2000). Therefore, it is essential for teachers, as educational leaders, to prioritise and uphold their commitment to the teaching profession (Engin, 2020).

A committed teacher is someone who remains determined and resilient by building strong emotional connexions with their school, students, and subject matter (Firestone & Pennell, 1993, p. 489). Such commitment enables teachers to establish effective teacher-student communication in alignment with professional values within the classroom. This, in turn, fosters student learning and encourages the desired student behaviours. Moreover, when the teaching profession's objectives and the school's goals and values clash, commitment to the profession becomes even more crucial. This is because one of the primary aims and values of the teaching profession is to instigate positive behavioural changes in students (Celep, 2000).

Teachers' commitment to their profession is strongly tied to their dedication and effort in their work (Turhan et al., 2012). When teachers have low commitment, they may view themselves as less valuable and approach their jobs without enthusiasm. They might also neglect self-improvement and innovation. Moderately committed teachers, feeling competent, may not actively seek change or innovation. Conversely, highly committed teachers willingly invest considerable effort and energy to enhance their professional skills and boost student success (Artun, 2008).

Any disruptions in teachers' professional lives have a direct impact on the outcomes, specifically students' success and the school's performance. Therefore, it is crucial to seriously address matters such as teacher training, appointments, income levels, and retirement and provide suitable conditions. Even when these conditions are at an adequate level, teachers adhering to professional principles and values and being more productive and efficient will further enhance their commitment levels. This, in turn, will have a positive impact on their dedication to teaching (Güner, 2006, p. 2).

In the literature, various studies have been conducted in Turkey on professional commitment (Altunay, 2017; Artun, 2008; Bozdaş, 2013; Celep, 1998; Dalay, 2007; Demirhan, 2010; Engin, 2020; Eroğlu, 2007; Güner, 2006; Kandemir, 2019; Karagöz, 2008; Kızıl, 2014; Kozikoğlu, 2016; Kozikoğlu & Özcanlı, 2020; Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018; Ozan & Bektaş, 2011; Örer, 2020; Pehlivan-Kapan, 2020; Schaufeli et al., 2006; Turhan et al., 2012; Üstüner, 2009; Yıldırım & Tösten, 2019; Zöğ, 2007). When these studies were examined, the concept of professional commitment was mostly expressed as organisational dedication. Turhan et al. (2012) determined that the factors affecting the professional commitment level of classroom teachers were "loving the profession", "devoting effort", "valuing", "social status", and "difficulty in the profession". Demirhan's (2010) research found that school administrators' management styles centred on people positively affected teachers' dedication and burnout levels. Bozdaş (2013) found that classroom and branch teachers' dedication to the professions and values education implementation were low. In Kandemir's (2019) research, it was observed that teachers who were dedicated to their profession used technology more. In the study conducted by Yıldırım (2019), it was determined that there was a direct proportion between teachers' positive psychological capital perception levels and their professional commitment levels. In other words, as teachers' psychological capital perceptions increase, their professional commitment also increases. Engin (2020) found that candidate teachers who received pedagogical formation training had higher scores in the sub-dimensions of commitment to the profession and self-sacrificing work than teacher candidates studying at the faculty of education. In his research, Kozikoğlu (2016) concluded that candidate teachers were highly committed to the teaching profession. In Pehlivan-Kapan's (2020) study to determine the level of dedication of classroom teachers to the profession, it was found that as teachers' dedication to students increases, their dedication to the profession also increases. Örer (2020) found that teachers are committed to the teaching profession and devoted to their profession. Because of the research conducted by Kozikoğlu and Özcanlı (2020), the 21st century. It has been determined that teachers with teaching skills are more devoted to their profession and their jobs.

In the existing research in Turkey, there has been a focus on issues related to teachers' commitment challenges and factors influencing their professional dedication. These studies have explored links with values education, motivation, confidence, emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and so on. However, there is a notable absence

of research examining teachers' commitment levels in relation to variables like age, teaching experience, and marital status. Addressing this gap in research can help identify both positive and negative factors influencing teachers' commitment levels, thereby contributing to their professional development. Furthermore, the outcomes of such research can aid in determining and enhancing the professional commitment of teachers, who play a pivotal role in shaping the future of education. This, in turn, can help mitigate professional commitment issues and support the realisation of the goals of Turkish National Education.

In this study, we aimed to investigate if there are significant differences in teachers' commitment to their profession based on various factors. The specific research questions include

1. What are the teachers' professional commitment levels?
2. Is there a significant difference between teachers' professional commitment levels according to variables of
 - a. gender,
 - b. age,
 - c. Marital status,
 - d. teaching level
 - e. Professional seniority and
 - f. graduated faculty

METHOD

Research Design

Since the aim of the study was to examine teachers' commitment to the profession according to various variables (gender, age, etc.), the general survey model, a quantitative research method, was used. General survey models are research in which a general opinion about the universe is reached by scanning a large population consisting of many elements, either the whole or a sample selected from the population (Karasar, 2002).

Population and Sample

The study population consists of 5015 teachers working in all primary, secondary, and high school schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in the central districts of Yakutiye, Palandöken, and Aziziye in the province of Erzurum in the 2020-2021 academic year. The total number of teachers in these schools was obtained from the data on the web pages of the District Directorates of National Education to which these schools are affiliated.

The sample of the study consists of 608 teachers working in schools determined by the cluster sampling method from the universe. Because the region and group where the research will be conducted are high in terms of volume and number, the use of cluster sampling method was preferred. The cluster sampling method is a method in which the application process is performed by dividing the universe into different groups in case the universe is large in terms of volume and spreads over a wide geographical area (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). While determining the sample size, the required sample size was calculated as 357 with a 95% confidence interval and a 5% sampling error margin (Büyüköztürk et al. , 2014). Due to the low rate of return to the questionnaires sent over the internet, 40 schools were randomly selected from the districts where the research would be conducted, and a school list was created. This list was submitted to the Erzurum Provincial Directorate of National Education with a petition, and the survey link was sent to the teachers in these schools by the relevant units of the Erzurum Provincial Directorate of National Education. The number of teachers who responded to the survey was 608. This number of returned questionnaires was also deemed sufficient to constitute the study sample. In addition, with the recalculations made for these 608 questionnaires, the sampling error margin was found to be 3.73% at the 95% confidence level (Büyüköztürk et al. , 2014). The demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variables (N = 608)	N	%	
Age	20-30	110	18.1
	31-40	271	44.6
	41-50	165	27.1
	51-60	57	9.4
	61 and above	5	0.8
Gender	Female	215	35.4
	Male	393	64.6
Branch	Justice	1	0.2
	German	4	0.7
	Arabic	6	1.0
	Physical education	32	5.3
	Information Technologies	14	2.3
	Biology	3	0.5
	Geography	10	1.6
	Child development and education	4	0.7
	Religious culture and moral knowledge	45	7.4
	Handicrafts	1	0.2
	Craft technology/Embroidery	1	0.2
	Philosophy	4	0.7
	Science	39	6.4
	Physics	5	0.8
	Visual arts	11	1.8
	Patient and older adults services	1	0.2
	Imam-Hatip High School vocational courses	12	2.0
	Elementary math	9	1.5
	English	34	5.6
	Chemistry	7	1.2
	maths	50	8.2
	Vocational courses	7	1.2
	Fashion design technology	1	0.2
	Music	11	1.8
	Preschool Education	14	2.3
	Special education	2	0.3
	Psychological counselling and guidance	24	3.9
	Classroom education	147	24.2
	Social studies	23	3.8
	History	10	1.6
	Technology and design	15	2.5
	Turkish and literature	19	3.1
	Turkish	39	6.4
Foreign language	1	0.2	
Food and beverage services	2	0.3	
Marital status	Married	94	15.5
	Single	514	84.5
Professional Seniority	0-10	227	37.3
	11-20	231	38.0
	21-30	136	22.4
	31-40	14	2.3
Faculty Type	Education	399	65.6
	Other	209	34.4
Teaching Level	Primary school	183	30.1
	Middle school	150	24.7
	High school	275	45.2

Data Collection Tool

Teachers' Professional Engagement Scale

To determine the level of teachers' commitment to the profession, the "The Teachers' Professional Engagement Scale" developed by Kozikoğlu and Senemoğlu (2018) was used. This scale is a measurement tool that provides a simple and economical evaluation of teachers' levels of commitment to the profession. The scale is a five-point Likert-type scale such as "1: Strongly Disagree", "2: Disagree", "3: Undecided", "4: Agree", "5: Strongly Agree", 20 items and three factors (the commitment to the profession, dedication to the students and devotion to the profession). In order to determine the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was 0.90; The reliability coefficients for the sub-dimensions were 0.92 for the "commitment to the profession" sub-dimension; It was calculated as 0.86 for the sub-dimension "dedication to the students" and 0.70 for the sub-dimension "devotion to the profession". The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of the measurements obtained from the Teachers' Professional Engagement Scale for this study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Sub-Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients
Commitment to the profession	0.94
Dedication to the students	0.87
Devotion to the profession	0.81
Overall scale	0.94

For the reliability coefficient to be acceptable, the required critical alpha value must be .70 and above (Cronbach, 1951). Accordingly, the measurements obtained from the scale in this study are reliable for both the overall scale and its subdimensions.

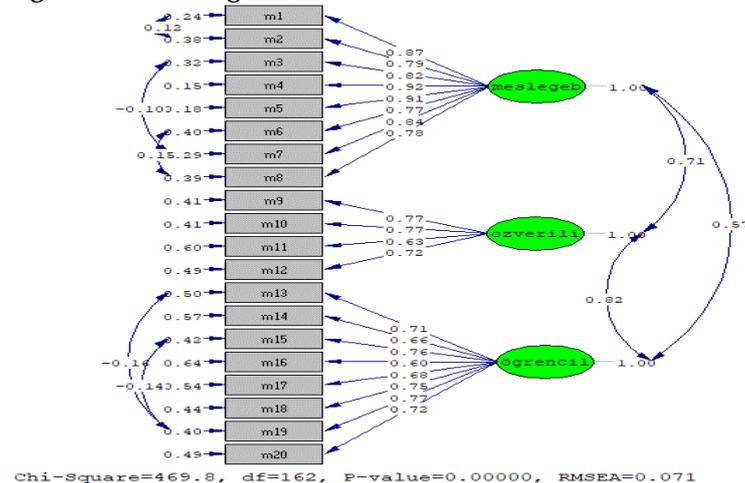
Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to determine whether the factor structure of the Teachers' Professional Engagement Scale was valid in the sample of this study. The values related to the fit indices of the model obtained in the CFA are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Values Regarding the Goodness of Fit Indices of the Scale

Chi-square	df	p	Chi-square/df	RMSEA	SRMR	NFI	NNFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
469.8	162	p<0.00	2.90	0.071	0.049	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.90	0.87

According to the DFA results, it was determined that the RMSEA value and chi-square/df value were not at the desired level in the first place. Therefore, the correlations between m1 and m2, m3 and m7, m6 and m8, m13 and m19, and m15 and m19 were released and modifications were made. After the modification, the chi-square value was significant, and the ratio of the chi-square value to the degrees of freedom was calculated between the acceptable range of 2 and 3. When the values of the other fit indices were examined, it was concluded that all of them were within acceptable limits (Byrne & Campbell, 1999; Hooper et al. .2008; Hu & Bentler, 1999). According to these results, model-data fit was achieved and the construct validity of the scale was confirmed. The path diagram of the confirmatory factor analysis is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Path Diagram



Data Collection and Analysis

To assess teachers' commitment to their profession, the "Teachers' Professional Engagement Scale" developed by Kozikoğlu and Senemoğlu (2018) was employed through phone interviews with the researchers, who granted permission.

The personal information form and the scale were administered to teachers in selected schools after obtaining legal permission from the Erzurum National Education Directorate. Because the COVID-19 epidemic prevented direct contact with the teachers, both the personal information form and the scale were digitised and made accessible via an online link. This link was then shared with teachers in 40 randomly chosen schools by the Erzurum National Education Directorate's relevant units, allowing teachers to participate voluntarily. Data required for the study were collected based on the teachers' responses. Following this data collection, the researcher transferred the obtained data to a computer and used it for all necessary processes.

The data analysis was conducted using the SPSS 23 software package. To determine the appropriate statistical tests for analysis, normality assumptions were assessed for each independent variable in relation to the total scale score. Skewness and kurtosis coefficients were calculated to cheque for normal distribution. Data within the range of 1 to +1 for these coefficients are considered normally distributed. However, all independent variables had skewness and kurtosis values outside this range, indicating that they did not meet the assumption of normal distribution.

To assess the significance of differences in teachers' commitment levels:

- The Mann–Whitney U test was applied for gender and marital status variables (consisting of two groups).
- The Kruskal-Wallis H test was used for variables like age, professional seniority, and teaching level (consisting of more than two groups).
- If the Kruskal-Wallis H test indicated a significant difference, the Mann–Whitney U test was conducted for each pair of groups to identify where the differences occurred.

The significance level for the data analysis was set at 0.05.

FINDINGS

The median and quartile deviation values of teachers' levels of professional commitment are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Median and Quarter Deviation Values of Teachers' Professional Commitment Levels

Sub-Dimensions	n	Median	QD
Commitment to the profession	608	4.88	.75
Dedication to the students	608	4.75	.63
Devotion to the profession	608	4.75	.75
Overall scale	608	4.70	.60

According to Table 4, the teachers' levels of professional commitment are very high for both the overall scale and its sub-dimensions ($m_{(\text{overall scale})} = 4.70$; ($Ort_{(\text{commitment to the profession})} = 4.88$; ($m_{(\text{dedication to the students})} = 4.75$; ($m_{(\text{Devotion to the profession})} = 4.75$).

The findings regarding the differentiation of teachers' levels of commitment to the teaching profession according to gender are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Findings Related to the Gender Variable

Sub-Dimensions	Group	n	Mean Rank	Sum of the Ranks	U	Z	p
Commitment to the profession	Male	215	265.83	57153	33933	-4.250	.000
	Female	393	325.66	127983			
Dedication to the students	Male	215	293.54	63111	39891	-1.163	.245
	Female	393	310.50	122025			
Devotion to the profession	Male	215	293.42	63085	39865.5	-1.193	.233
	Female	393	310.56	122050			
Overall scale	Male	215	277.61	59685.5	36465.5	-2.808	.005
	Female	393	319.21	125450.5			

A significant difference was found between the teachers' levels of commitment to the profession in the overall scale and in the sub-dimension of commitment to the profession ($Z_{(\text{overall scale})} = -2.808$, $p < 0.05$; $Z_{(\text{commitment to the profession})} = -4.250$, $p < 0.05$). According to the mean ranks of the scale, the average of female teachers ($m = 319,21$) is higher than the average of male teachers ($m = 277,61$). In the sub-dimension of commitment to the profession, the average of female teachers ($m = 325,66$) is higher than the average of male teachers ($m = 265,83$). It was determined that there was no statistically significant difference in the dimensions of dedication to the students and devotion to the profession, although the averages of female teachers were higher than those of male teachers ($Z_{(\text{dedication to the students})} = -1.163$, $p > 0.05$; $Z_{(\text{devotion to the profession})} = -1.193$, $p > 0.05$).

The findings regarding the differentiation of teachers' levels of commitment to the teaching profession according to age are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Findings Related to the Age Variable

Sub-Dimensions	Group	n	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square	p
Commitment to the profession	20-30 years old	110	314.80	3	1.632	.652
	31-40 years old	271	300.31			
	41-50 years old	165	297.65			
	51 and above	62	322.80			
Dedication to the students	20-30 years old	110	307.06	3	.487	.922
	31-40 years old	271	299.34			
	41-50 years old	165	308.17			
	51 and above	62	312.77			
Devotion to the profession	20-30 years old	110	296.41	3	.789	.852
	31-40 years old	271	303.58			
	41-50 years old	165	305.56			
	51 and above	62	320.06			
Overall scale	20-30 years old	110	313.90	3	1.768	.622
	31-40 years old	271	296.23			
	41-50 years old	165	304.17			
	51 and above	62	324.84			

There was no significant difference in the overall and sub-dimensions of the scale between teachers' levels of commitment to the teaching profession according to the age variable (Chi-square_(overall scale) = 1.768, $p > 0.05$; Chi-square_(commitment to the profession) = 1.632, $p > 0.05$; Chi-square_(dedication to the students) = .487, $p > 0.05$; Chi-square_(devotion to the profession) = .789, $p > 0.05$). Although it does not differ statistically significantly, in terms of dedication to the students and devotion to the profession, professional commitment increases as age increases; For the professional commitment sub-dimension and the overall scale, it can be said that professional commitment is higher between the ages of 20-30 and those old.

The findings regarding the differentiation of teachers' levels of commitment to the teaching profession according to marital status are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Findings Related to the Marital Status Variable

Sub-Dimensions	Group	n	Mean Rank	Sum of the Ranks	U	Z	p
Commitment to the profession	Single	94	285.71	26856.5	22391.5	-1.194	.232
	Married	514	307.94	158279.5			
Dedication to the students	Single	94	308.21	28971.5	23809.5	-.227	.820
	Married	514	303.82	156164.5			
Devotion to the profession	Single	94	295.49	27776.5	23311.5	-.560	.575
	Married	514	306.15	157359.5			
Overall scale	Single	94	293.36	293.36	23111	-.672	.501
	Married	514	306.54	306.54			

According to Table 7, there was no significant difference between the teachers' levels of commitment to the teaching profession in the overall and sub-dimensions of the scale ($Z_{(overall scale)} = -.672$, $p > 0.05$; $Z_{(commitment to the profession)} = -1.194$, $p > 0.05$; $Z_{(dedication to the students)} = -.227$, $p > 0.05$; $Z_{(devotion to the profession)} = -.560$, $p > 0.05$). Although there is no statistically significant result, the general scale, commitment to the profession, and devotion to the profession sub-dimensions of married teachers' professional commitment levels; In the sub-dimension of dedication to the students, it was determined that single teachers' professional commitment levels were higher.

The findings regarding the differentiation of teachers' levels of commitment to the teaching profession according to the teaching level variable are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Findings Related to the Teaching Level Variable

Sub-Dimensions	Group	n	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square	p	Difference
Commitment to the profession	Primary school (1)	183	314.54				
	Middle school (2)	275	307.13	2	2.326	.313	1-3
	High school (3)	150	287.43				
Dedication to the students	Primary school (1)	183	337.45				
	Middle school (2)	275	300.78	2	12.505	.002	
	High school (3)	150	271.12				
Devotion to the profession	Primary school (1)	183	324.50				
	Middle school (2)	275	299.93	2	4.090	.129	
	High school (3)	150	288.48				
Overall scale	Primary school (1)	183	331.98				
	Middle school (2)	275	304.12	2	9.834	.007	1-3
	High school (3)	150	271.67				

According to the variable of teaching level, a significant difference was found between the levels of teachers' commitment to the teaching profession in the overall scale and in the sub-dimension of dedication to the students (Chi-square_(overall scale) = 9.834, $p < 0.05$; Chi-square_(dedication to the students) = 12.505, $p < 0.05$). Pairwise comparisons were made using the Mann-Whitney U test to determine between which groups the difference was. Accordingly, a significant difference was found between primary school and high school teachers in favour of primary school teachers in the overall scale and the sub-dimension of dedication to the students. There was no significant difference in the sub-dimensions of commitment to the profession and devotion to the profession (Chi-square_(commitment to the profession) = 2.326, $p > 0.05$; Chi-square_(devotion to the profession) = 4.090, $p > 0.05$). Although it did not differ statistically significantly, it was determined that the professional commitment levels of primary school teachers were higher than those of middle and high school teachers in terms of dedication to the students and devotion to the profession.

The findings regarding the differentiation of teachers' levels of commitment to the teaching profession according to the professional seniority variable are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Findings Related to the Professional Seniority Variable

Sub-Dimensions	Group	n	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square	p
Commitment to the profession	0-10 years	227	312.43			
	11-20 years	231	301.27	2	.875	.646
	21 years and above	150	297.47			
Dedication to the students	0-10 years	227	298.41			
	11-20 years	231	308.46	2	.457	.796
	21 years and above	150	307.62			
Devotion to the profession	0-10 years	227	298.64			
	11-20 years	231	306.33	2	.490	.783
	21 years and above	150	310.56			
Overall scale	0-10 years	227	301.49			
	11-20 years	231	306.15	2	.108	.947
	21 years and above	150	306.51			

According to the variable of professional seniority, there was no significant difference between the teachers' levels of commitment to the teaching profession in the overall and sub-dimensions of the scale (Chi-square_(overall scale) = .108, $p > 0.05$; Chi-square_(commitment to the profession) = .875, $p > 0.05$; Chi-square_(dedication to the students) = .457, $p > 0.05$; Chi-square_(devotion to the profession) = .490, $p > 0.05$). Although it does not differ statistically significantly, as professional seniority increases in the overall scale and devotion to the profession dimension, professional

commitment also increases; In the sub-dimension of commitment to the profession, it was determined that as professional seniority increased, professional commitment decreased.

The findings regarding the differentiation of teachers' levels of commitment to the teaching profession according to the graduated faculty variable are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Findings Related to Graduate Faculty Variables

Sub-Dimensions	Group	n	Mean Rank	Sum of the Ranks	U	Z	p
Commitment to the profession	Education	453	306.05	138639.5	34406.5	-.393	.694
	Other	155	299.98	46496.5			
Dedication to the students	Education	453	310.52	140663.5	32382.5	-1.475	.140
	Other	155	286.92	44472.5			
Devotion to the profession	Education	453	306.61	138895	34151	-.525	.599
	Other	155	298.33	46241			
Overall scale	Education	453	308.33	139672	33374	-.924	.356
	Other	155	293.32	45464			

According to Table 10, there was no significant difference between the levels of teachers' commitment to the teaching profession in the graduated faculty variable in the overall and sub-dimensions of the scale ($Z_{(overall\ scale)} = -.393, p > 0.05$; $Z_{(commitment\ to\ the\ profession)} = -.393, p > 0.05$; $Z_{(dedication\ to\ the\ students)} = -1.475, p > 0.05$; $Z_{(devotion\ to\ the\ profession)} = -.525, p > 0.05$). Although there is no statistically significant difference, the overall score of the scale, in all sub-dimensions, is that of the professional commitment levels of teachers who graduated from the faculty of education; It has been determined that teachers who graduated from other faculties have higher levels of professional commitment.

RESULT and DISCUSSION

The study findings indicate that teachers were highly dedicated to their profession, which is consistent with previous studies (Karagöz, 2008; Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018; Pehlivan Kapan, 2020; Zöğ, 2007). Other studies by Altunay (2017), Artun (2008), Kandemir (2019), Kzl (2014), Kozikoğlu and Özcanlı (2020), Turhan et al. (2012), and Yldrm (2019) also confirm that teachers have a high level of commitment to their profession. Babaoğlu and Ertürk (2013) found that teachers' commitment to their school and workgroup is high, indicating a strong commitment to teaching and the profession. However, there are some studies that report different findings. Bozdaş (2013) found that classroom and subject teachers had a lower level of commitment to the teaching profession. Kozikoğlu (2016) discovered that novice teachers generally feel sufficiently devoted to the profession, while Engin (2020) found that novice teachers with pedagogical training had higher commitment scores than prospective teachers in education faculties. These varying results suggest that teachers' dedication levels can differ. Some teachers highly value and are dedicated to their profession, while others may not feel the same way and may even be dissatisfied with their jobs or lack commitment.

The study identified a significant difference in teachers' dedication to the profession based on gender. On average, female teachers showed higher dedication scores than male teachers in both the overall scale and its sub-dimensions. This finding is consistent with several studies in the literature (Kızıl, 2014; Kozikoğlu & Özcanlı, 2020; Pehlivan-Kapan, 2020; Turhan et al., 2012; Zöğ, 2007). However, there are also studies that do not align with this result and show a preference for male teachers (Altunay, 2017; Artun, 2008; Eroğlu, 2007; Güner, 2006; Kandemir, 2019; Karagöz, 2008). Additionally, some studies found no gender-based difference (Örer, 2020). In a study by Engin (2020) on the commitment levels of prospective teachers, it was found that the results were similar for both male and female candidates, regardless of whether they received pedagogical training or studied at the education faculty. In both cases, the average dedication scores of female teachers were higher than those of male teachers. These results suggest that the dedication levels of female and male teachers are similar. One possible explanation for the higher average dedication of female teachers might be attributed to inherent maternal characteristics, as women tend to connect more easily with the teaching profession and exhibit greater self-sacrifice and commitment due to their natural inclinations.

Furthermore, the study indicated no significant difference in the levels of teachers' commitment to the teaching profession based on age, both in the overall scale and its sub-dimensions. However, in the dimension related to dedication to students and devotion to the profession, it was observed that professional commitment tends to increase with age. Specifically, there is higher professional commitment among teachers aged 20-30 and

those over 50. This finding agrees with similar studies in the literature. For instance, Turhan et al. (2012) found that primary school teachers aged 51 and above tend to love their profession more and put in more effort. Karagöz (2008) reported that teachers aged 51 and older had higher normative and emotional commitment compared to teachers in other age groups. Other studies by Artun (2008), Eroğlu (2007), Güner (2006), and Zöğ (2007) also discovered that as teachers' age increases, their commitment levels tend to rise. Kızıl (2014) noted that teachers aged 51 and above had the highest commitment levels, whereas those in the 20-30 age group had the lowest organisational commitment levels. In a study by Örer (2020), it was found that teachers aged 46 and above had higher scores in the devotion to the profession sub-dimension compared with those aged 25 and under. The explanation for these findings could be related to the fact that teachers in the 20-30 age group are often single or newlyweds, with fewer family responsibilities, and similarly, teachers over 50 may experience a decrease in family obligations. As a result, teachers in these age groups may have more time, energy, and interest to dedicate to their profession, contributing to higher levels of commitment.

Conversely, the study found no significant difference in the levels of commitment to the teaching profession based on the marital status of the teachers. However, when examining specific dimensions, it was noticed that married teachers had higher commitment levels in the overall scale, professional commitment, and devotion to the profession. However, single teachers had higher commitment levels in the dimension of dedication to students. These findings are consistent with those of similar studies. Artun (2008) and Karagöz (2008) also did not find a significant difference in commitment levels based on marital status. However, Eroğlu (2007) found that single teachers had a higher level of dedication to the profession than married teachers. One possible explanation for the higher commitment levels of married teachers might be that they have more family responsibilities, leaving them with less time and attention to devote to students. In contrast, single teachers may have fewer family obligations, leading them to spend more time with students and show greater interest in their students as a way to fill the gap in their daily lives.

Additionally, the study revealed a significant difference between primary school and high school teachers, with primary school teachers scoring higher on the overall scale and the dimension related to dedication to students. However, there was no significant difference in the dimensions of commitment and devotion to the profession. Although not statistically significant, it was noted that the professional dedication levels of primary school teachers were higher than those of secondary and high school teachers, particularly in terms of dedication to students and devotion to the profession. This finding is consistent with previous research. Kızıl (2014) and Zöğ (2007) also found that primary school teachers had the highest levels of organisational commitment, while middle school teachers had the lowest. Örer (2020) reported that primary school teachers scored higher than high school teachers in the commitment to the profession dimension. Similarly, Kandemir (2019) and Kozikoğlu and Özcanlı (2020) found no significant difference in teachers' commitment levels across different school levels. The reason for this difference may be that primary school teachers have more prolonged interactions with their students, allowing them to better understand their students' interests and needs and to prepare teaching plans accordingly. In contrast, middle and high school teachers have fewer opportunities to observe and understand their students in the same way, which may make it more challenging for them to align their teaching plans with student interests and needs. Consequently, primary school teachers may exhibit higher levels of commitment to the profession because of their greater success in this regard.

The study further indicated that as teachers' years of professional experience increased, their overall professional commitment and devotion to the profession also increased. However, in the dimension of commitment to the profession, it was observed that as professional seniority increased, professional commitment decreased. Similar results were found in studies by Altunay (2017), Artun (2008), Güner (2006), Karagöz (2008), Kızıl (2014), and Zöğ (2007). Kandemir (2019) reached the opposite finding in his study. Kozikoğlu and Özcanlı (2020) found that teachers with 1-5 years of experience and those with 16 years or more of experience had higher levels of commitment to the profession. In Pehlivan-Kapan's (2020) study, classroom teachers with 11-15 years of experience had higher perceptions of professional commitment, dedication to students, and selfless work compared with those with 0-5 years of experience and those with 16 years or more of experience. In Örer's (2020) research, teachers with 6-10 years of experience had lower scores in the devotion to the profession dimension compared with those with 21-25 years and 26 years of experience. Bozdaş (2013) found that there was a significant difference in the professional commitment levels of classroom teachers based on years of service, but no significant difference among branch teachers. On the basis of these findings, it can be concluded that as teachers accumulate experience and become more proficient in their profession, they are

less likely to switch to other careers or fields of work. This maturity in the teaching profession appears to be associated with an increase in their commitment and dedication to the profession over time.

Lastly, it was found that teachers who graduated from faculties other than education had higher levels of professional commitment than those who graduated from education faculties. This result contradicts the findings of Altunay (2017), who found the opposite result. Artun (2008) did not find any significant difference in commitment scores among teachers from various educational backgrounds, including education faculties, while Örer (2020) found no differentiation in commitment based on the faculty of graduation. The data from this study suggest that teachers from education faculties are trained in line with the requirements of the teaching profession. They acquire essential teaching skills through both initial teacher training and ongoing professional development activities. As they apply these skills in their teaching roles, they achieve the desired level of effectiveness in the profession. On the other hand, teachers who graduated from faculties outside of education may not receive adequate training in teaching-specific qualifications, which could affect their productivity in the profession. As a result, teachers from education faculties may exhibit higher levels of commitment than those from other faculties.

On the basis of the research findings, here are some suggestions for both practitioners and researchers:

1. To enhance male teachers' commitment to the profession, consider organising collaborative activities involving both male and female teachers and creating shared workspaces.
2. Boost the commitment of middle and high school teachers by having them observe the work of primary school teachers in action and encouraging them to undertake similar projects.
3. Explore ways to increase the commitment of teachers who graduated from faculties other than education, such as promoting collaboration with educators and offering professional development opportunities.
4. Organise seminars and in-service training sessions that highlight the appealing aspects of the teaching profession to inspire newly minted teachers.

In addition, consider the following research avenues:

1. Conduct qualitative research alongside quantitative methods to delve deeper into the subject.
2. Investigate how teachers' commitment levels correlate with student and school success.
3. Examine the impact of parent and student expectations on teachers' professional commitments.
4. Explore how teachers' commitment contributes to social change.
5. Analyse whether teachers' commitment levels vary based on the type of school (public or private).

Declarations

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflicts of interest were disclosed by the author(s) with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Ethics Approval

The formal ethics approval was granted by the Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Atatürk University. We conducted the study in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration in 1975.

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Research and Publication Ethics Statement

The study was approved by the research team's university ethics committee of the Atatürk University (Approval Number/ID: 01/10/2020/12-5. Hereby, we as the authors consciously assure that for the manuscript the following is fulfilled:

- This material is the authors' own original work, which has not been previously published elsewhere.
- The paper reflects the authors' own research and analysis in a truthful and complete manner.
- The results are appropriately placed in the context of prior and existing research.
- All sources used are properly disclosed.

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