

The Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Anxiety Levels of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) Teachers

Melih Burak ÖZDEMİR¹

Article History:

Received 02.12.2024

Accepted 19.01.2026

Available online 19.01.2026

This study aimed to examine the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the anxiety levels of teachers in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). By focusing on teachers as a professional group, this research sought to evaluate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic from a unique perspective. In the 2019-2020 academic year, 101 (Female = 69, 68.3%; Male = 32, 31.7%) primary school teachers working in public schools affiliated to the TRNC Ministry of National Education participated in the study. Beck Anxiety scale developed by Beck et al. (1988) was used in the study. The anxiety levels of the participants were divided into two groups as normal -mild anxiety (0-15) and moderate-severe anxiety (16-63) according to their responses to the scale. A high score on the scale indicates a high level of anxiety. In the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics were used to describe continuous variables and chi-square was used to examine the relationships between categorical variables. Although not statistically significant ($p>0.05$), the anxiety levels of the participants ($n=83$, 82.2%) were found to be in the normal -mild range. In terms of variables; female ($X=46$), single ($X=59$), classroom teacher ($X=46$), bachelor's degree graduate ($X=51$) and 0-5 years of service ($X=67$) had higher anxiety levels. The fact that the anxiety levels of the participants in the Covid-19 process were in the normal to mild range can be considered as a positive situation in terms of psychological public health.

Keywords: Anxiety, COVID-19, pandemic, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, primary school teacher

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus outbreak, which was first identified in Wuhan, China, on December 31, 2019, and quickly spread from person to person, was classified as a 'Pandemic' by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2020 and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Turkey announced the first case in Turkey (CNN Türk, n.d.; World Health Organisation 2020). Historically, pandemics have detrimentally impacted the health of individuals, threatening both their physical and mental well-being (Wenham et al. 2020; Wilder Smith et al. 2020). Research has indicated that pandemics lead to an increase in health issues among individuals, including 'depression, stress, anxiety, burnout, and fatigue' (Serafini et al., 2020; Waterman et al., 2018).

Education was suspended in primary and secondary schools and universities in Turkey on March 12, 2020, and as of March 17, 2020, many countries and institutions transitioned to remote working (Euronews, n.d.). Once this process began, swift decisions had to be made regarding schools. With the onset of the pandemic, educational institutions were generally the first to close. As of March 10, 2020, one in five students worldwide had been forced to stay away from school due to the coronavirus, and one in four people had suspended their education in higher education institutions (UNESCO, n.d.). In the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, traditional education has been suspended since March 11, 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and schools have been temporarily closed on the island, as in many countries around the world, in order to prevent the spread of the virus.

In terms of the Covid-19 virus's impact on individuals, it is primarily associated with two types of health problems: biological and psychological. The biological effects pertain to the virus's direct physical impact on individuals, whereas the psychological effects relate to the fear and anxiety generated by the epidemic (Aşkın et al. 2019). The pandemic is believed to potentially trigger new mental health issues and exacerbate pre-existing psychological conditions (Kardeş, 2020). Various factors, including exposure to funeral procedures through media, hoarding of food supplies, misinformation about the pandemic, circulating voice recordings and images, increased hospital occupancy rates, and public debates, have significantly contributed to the rise in anxiety levels among individuals during this period (Aşkın et al., 2019).

Psychology and psychiatry have incorporated anxiety as a subject of study since the 1890s (Kozacoğlu, 1984). In the early stages of psychoanalysis, anxiety was conceptualized as a biological condition. However, this perception shifted when Freud shifted the emphasis from the topographic personality theory to the structural personality theory and identified anxiety as an ego function (Gectan, 1995).

Anxiety is an emotion similar to fear that every individual experiences from time to time (Geçtan, 1995) and is defined as curiosity, anxiety, a feeling similar to fear, or a state of unexplained uneasiness as if bad news will come (Öztürk & Uluşahin, 2015) or a state of uneasiness and uneasiness experienced by the individual, despite the absence of concrete danger (Şahin, 2019).

¹Dr., T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, mlhbrk52@hotmail.com, <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7016-0745>

While the available evidence is currently insufficient, there is speculation that Covid-19 may be associated with mental and neurological symptoms like depression, anxiety, delirium, and sleep difficulties (Baltacı & Coşar, 2020). When we review the studies in the literature; Şahin & Nur Aydın (2022) a rise in dread of Covid-19 was associated with heightened levels of depression, anxiety and hopelessness. Yakar and Gülbahar (2023) in their study with 43 nurses and 42 doctors (48 healthcare workers actively working in the COVID-19 pandemic department), found that 37.6% of healthcare workers had depression, 31.7% had anxiety, and 42.3% had poor sleep quality. While no statistically significant difference was found between anxiety and depression levels between the two groups, sleep quality was found to be higher in those working in the COVID-19 pandemic department than in the other group. Trumello et al.'s (2020) study of 627 Italian healthcare workers indicated that the need for psychological support was twice as high in workers during the Covid-19 pandemic compared to the other group. Kök Eren (2021)'s study examined the rates of sleep problems after the COVID-19 pandemic began. Anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the world's poor sleep limit. In their study, Demiryürek et al. (2022) concluded that depression and anxiety levels were higher in young people and women among COVID-19 patients. Cansel (2022) study with infected patients during the Covid-19 period, she concluded that the most common psychiatric diagnoses were delirium and sleep disorders, followed by adjustment disorder, anxiety and depression, respectively.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the Covid-19 pandemic triggered and even exacerbated anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders. Considering that the Baltacı and Coşar (2020) study was conducted early in the Covid-19 pandemic, it can be said that these disorders increased as the Covid-19 pandemic began to have effects on humans.

Purpose and Importance of the Research

It's quite natural for us as a society to experience anxiety, panic, and fear due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, but it's impossible to exclude children from these negative experiences. Children and adolescents are likely to experience stress or exhibit anxiety reactions in the face of life events like the pandemic. It's also natural that children, in particular, may struggle to understand concepts like pandemics and viruses due to their cognitive developmental levels and limited medical knowledge. In this new order, which harbors considerable uncertainty, education is undoubtedly one of the sectors most affected by this process.

The scope of this study includes the extent to which teachers' daily and educational lives have become challenging due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the impact the pandemic has had on their educational lives, and the concerns they are experiencing. The study also examines how teachers, who are also facing social isolation due to the pandemic, have experienced impacts on their daily and educational lives. In professions likely to experience high levels of stress, such as teaching, the pandemic may have the potential to trigger or exacerbate negative emotions, which is one reason the study was conducted.

In this study, the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic process on the anxiety levels of primary school teachers working in public schools affiliated to the TRNC Ministry of National Education was tried to be addressed in terms of some variables. In the literature in Turkey and the world, there are studies that reveal how teachers are affected by the Covid-19 process (Allen et al., 2020; Çiftçi & Demir 2020, Urcos et al., 2020, Roman 2020, Wakui et al., 2021, Santamaria et al., 2021) are available in many studies. Agyapong et al. (2022) in their study, an increase in stress was observed after the epidemic (from 2020 to 2022).

However, no study was found in the TRNC literature that addressed the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic process on teachers' anxiety levels. The studies conducted are mostly studies on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on healthcare professionals. With this study conducted with teachers as a professional group, it is aimed to look at the subject from a different perspective and contribute to the field. It is thought that studies on the social and psychological effects of pandemic periods such as Covid-19 on mental health may shed light on the pandemics that may occur in the following periods and may guide the solution of psychological problems that may arise. In the light of this information, an answer is sought to the following question:

- According to the variables considered (age, marital status, department, professional seniority, and educational status), did the level of anxiety vary?

METHOD

The study is a survey model from quantitative research methods.

Sample

The sample of this cross-sectional study consisted of 101 (female=69, 68.3%; male=32, 31.7%) primary school teachers working in public schools affiliated to the TRNC Ministry of National Education during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the 2019-2020 academic year, the number of primary school teachers in public schools affiliated to the TRNC Ministry of National Education is (female=800, male=436, total 1236). Due to the pandemic conditions, participation in the study was limited to 101 primary school teachers, as the data were collected via Google form and on a voluntary basis. The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Characteristics of the participants*

	N	%
Gender		
Female	69	%68.3
Male	32	%31.7
Marital		%75.2
Married	76	%24.8
Single	25	
Branch		
Classroom teacher	56	%55.4
Branch teacher	45	%44.6
Educational background		
Degree	68	%67.3
Master degree/Doctorate	33	%32.7
Years of service		
0-5 years	9	%8.9
6-10 years	18	%17.8
11-15 years	20	%19.7
16-20 years	16	%15.8
21 years and above	38	%37.6

When Table 1 is analysed; 68.3% (n=69) of the participants are female, 31.7% (n=32) are male; 75.2% (n=76) are married, 24.8% (n=25) are single; 55.4% (n=56) are classroom teachers, 44.6% (n=45) are branch teachers; 67.3% (n=68) bachelor's degree graduates, 32.7% (n=33) master's degree graduates; 8.9% (n=9) had 0-5 years of service, 17.8% (n=18) 6-10 years, 19.7% (n=20) 11-15 years, 15.8% (n=16) 16-20 years, and 37.6% (n=38) 21 years or more.

Data Collection Tool

Personal information form developed by the researcher and Beck Anxiety Scale were used as data collection tools in the study. Beck Anxiety Scale is a self-assessment scale consisting of 21 items developed by Beck et al. (1988) to determine the frequency of anxiety symptoms experienced by the individual. The validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Ulusoy et al. (1998) in Turkey. Ulusoy (1993) found Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale as .93 and test-retest reliability coefficient as .57. In this study, Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .92. Cronbach alpha value ($0,40 < \alpha$ is unreliable, $0,41 < \alpha < 0,60$ is moderately reliable, $0,61 < \alpha < 0,80$ is reliable and $0,81 < \alpha$ is very reliable) (Tomruk, 2014). The Cronbach Alpha value of the study can be interpreted as very reliable.

The scale is a 4-point Likert-type scale evaluated between (0=none and 3=severe). The score range of the scale is 0-63. (0-7 points) is minimal anxiety, (8-15 points) is mild anxiety, (16-25 points) is moderate anxiety and (26-63 points) is severe anxiety (Ulusoy et al., 1998).

Permission to use the scale was received from Nesrin Hisli Şahin via e-mail.

Procedure and Data Analysis

As a result of the permission obtained from the TRNC Ministry of National Education (permission dated 15 September 2020 and numbered İÖD.0.00-006-20/E.4272), data collection started in the 6th month of the pandemic and data collection was completed within 1 month. The data were delivered to primary school teachers throughout the TRNC via Google form and the data were collected from there. In the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics were used to define continuous variables and Chi-Square was used to examine the relationship between categorical variables. The data obtained in the study were analysed using SPSS 24 package programme. In the study, the anxiety levels of the participants were divided into two groups as 'normal-mild anxiety (0-15) and moderate-severe anxiety (16-63) according to their answers to the scale. A high score obtained from the scale indicates a high level of anxiety (Ulusoy et al., 1998).

Limitations of the Study

The study's sample being confined to individuals with access to technology and the internet represents a significant limitation. Data collection was conducted via a Google Form, and while utilizing online methods facilitates access to a broader sample, it also raises concerns regarding the accuracy of the information gathered. The inclusion of only primary school teachers working in public schools further narrows the scope of the study, making it challenging to extend the findings to all teachers in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Another limitation is the focus on individuals with higher education levels, excluding a potentially diverse range of educational backgrounds. Additionally, the study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to observe changes over time or determine causality. This highlights the need for longitudinal studies in the TRNC to comprehensively understand the impact of variables such as the pandemic on teachers' mental health and well-being over extended periods.

Ethical Permissions of the Research

The data was obtained with the permission received from the TRNC Ministry of Education (permission dated 15 September 2020, numbered İÖD.0.00-006-20/E.4272).

In this study, research ethics principles were observed and the necessary ethics committee permissions were obtained. Within the scope of ethics committee permission; The document dated 09.06.2023 and numbered 2023/11 was received from İğdır University Ethics Commission.

FINDINGS

Table 2. Frequency, Beck Anxiety score means, standard deviation, t test and Anova significance results in terms of variables

	N	X±SS	F\ t	p
Gender				
Female	69 (%68.3)	,46±,42	t=,750	,415
Male	32 (%31.7)	,39±,46		
Marital				
Married	76 (75.2)	,39±,37	t=-2,093	,24
Single	25 (24.8)	,59±,55		
Branch				
Classroom teacher	56 (%55.4)	,46±,45	t=,696	,29
Branch teacher	45 (%44.6)	,40±,41		
Educational Background				
Degree	68 (%67.3)	,50±,46	t=2,15	,057
Master degree/Doctorate	33 (%32.7)	,31±,33		
Years of service				
0-5 yaers	9 (%8.9)	,67±,36		
6-10 years	18 (%17.8)	,40±,52		
11-15 years	20 (%19.8)	,31±,32	F= 1,133	,346
16-20 years	16 (%15.8)	,48±,40		
21 years and above	38 (%37.6)	,45±,46		

When we look at the findings, the mean anxiety scores of 'gender, marital status, branch, education level and length of service' variables do not show a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$). However, it is seen that the mean anxiety scores are higher in women ($\bar{X}=,46$), men ($\bar{X}=,39$); unmarried teachers ($\bar{X}=,59$) than married teachers ($\bar{X}=,39$); classroom teachers ($\bar{X}=,46$) branch teachers ($\bar{X}=,40$); bachelor's degree graduates ($\bar{X}=,51$) than master's degree graduates ($\bar{X}=,31$) and 0-5 years of service ($\bar{X}=,67$) than other service periods.

Table 3. Chi-Square Results of Beck Anxiety Scale According to Participants' Gender, Marital Status, Branch, Educational Background and Years of Service Variables

BECK ANXIETY SCALE			
Normal-Mild	Moderate to Severe		<i>p</i>
	Anxiety		Anxiety
	(0-15 points)		(16-63 points)
Gender			
Female	57 (%68.7)	12 (%66.7)	
Male	26 (%32.3)	6 (%33.3)	,536
Total	83 (%82.2)	18 (%17.8)	
Marital			
Married	65 (%78.3)	11 (%61.1)	
Single	18 (%21.7)	7 (%38.9)	,111
Total	83 (%82.2)	18 (%17.8)	
Branch			
Classroom teacher	44 (%53)	12 (%66.7)	
Branch teacher	39 (%47)	6 (%33.3)	,214
Total	83 (%82.2)	18 (%17.8)	
Educational background			
Degree	53 (%63.9)	15 (%83.3)	
Master degree	30 (%36.1)	3 (%16.7)	0,90
Total	83 (%82.2)	18 (%17.8)	
Years of service			
0-5 yeras	5 (%6)	4 (%22.2)	
6-10 years	14 (%16.9)	4 (%22.2)	
11-15 years	18 (%21.7)	2 (%11.1)	,199
16-20 years	13 (%15.7)	3 (%16.7)	
21 years and above	33 (%39.8)	5 (%27.8)	
Total	83 (%82.2)	18(%17.8)	

The chi-square analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences ($p > .05$) in the data. When examining the variables of gender, marital status, branch, education level, and years of service, it was found that the anxiety levels of the participants were predominantly Normal-Mild (82.2%) and to a lesser extent Moderate-Severe (17.8%).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Despite the absence of statistically significant differences when examining study contributions, the Beck Anxiety Scale indicated that anxiety levels were predominantly in the normal-mild range across all variables ($n=83$, 82.2%). These findings are consistent with existing literature and are supported by studies by Yılmaz et al. (2020) and Buldum et al. (2023), which identified low levels of anxiety in their research. Our study aligns with these observations. The presence of normal-mild anxiety symptoms may be associated with protective measures implemented during the pandemic, such as vaccination efforts, especially during the periods when these studies were conducted. Given that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is an island nation, its geographical isolation from the mainland may influence its experience during pandemics. This isolation could have led to a reduced concern about survival risk compared to mainland populations, contributing to the lower anxiety levels observed.

There are also research results in the literature that do not support our study. (Erdoğan et al., 2020, Didin et al., 2022; Katra 2021, Karaslan et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2020) have reached situations where they show signs of moderate knowledge in the current period.

In the study, it was revealed that women's divorce rates were higher than men's ($\chi=46$). It is possible to maintain our study finding in the literature. (Leung et al., 2005, Ertan 2008, Akan et al., 2010, Çirakoğlu 2011, Arslan et al., 2016, Erdoğan et al., 2020, Stachteas & Stachteas 2020, Gürocak 2020, Yılmaz et al., 2020, Saruhan 2021, Turan et al., Akkaynak 2021, Söylemez 2022, Süren & Öztürk 2022, Didin et al., 2022, Özdemir Uysal 2022, Şahin & Nur Aydın 2022) according to the gender variable, people are in a higher situation than men.

Carli (2020) and Erdoğan et al. (2020) found that women experienced more mental health issues than men during the pandemic, suggesting that women are more affected by social crises and stressful events, as supported by Kendler et al., (2001). The pandemic blurred the lines between private and public spaces for working women, combining the challenges of remote work, childcare, and household responsibilities. Women faced the dual pressure of professional duties and traditional roles as mothers and wives, heightening their concern for the health and well-being of themselves and their families. The increased burdens of motherhood and partnership, exacerbated by remote education for children and home-based work for spouses, may have led women to perceive the pandemic as more challenging. This heightened risk perception among women could explain why their anxiety levels were higher compared to men. This difference might be interpreted as either women's greater vulnerability to psychological stress or a reflection of their disadvantaged status in the social hierarchy. However, contrasting findings exist, such as those by Balkhy et al. (2010), who reported higher anxiety levels among men than women during the H1N1 outbreak in Saudi Arabia, indicating variability in anxiety responses across different contexts and populations.

The analysis indicated that single individuals exhibited a higher average anxiety level ($\chi=59$) compared to their married counterparts. This discrepancy may be attributed to the stabilizing influence of marital life, where the sense of responsibility, regularity, and spousal support inherent in marriage could potentially mitigate anxiety. Consequently, family life emerges as a beneficial factor in reducing anxiety among married individuals. Literature, including studies by Yılmaz et al. (2020) and Lee (2020), supports these observations, highlighting that single individuals tend to have higher anxiety levels, possibly due to the lack of emotional support. The quality of the marital relationship also plays a crucial role in this context. In the Turkish Cypriot culture, which highly values marriage and family ties, these institutions likely provide significant support during challenging times like a pandemic. However, there are studies presenting contrasting findings. Research conducted by Ahmad et al. (2020), Saruhan (2021), Turan & Akkaynak (2021), and Karaslan et al. (2022) discovered that married individuals experienced higher anxiety levels than singles during the pandemic. These findings diverge from our research results, suggesting variability in how marital status influences anxiety across different contexts and populations.

While the literature contains studies on the impacts of Covid-19 on teachers, none specifically focus on comparing classroom teachers to branch teachers. In our study, classroom teachers exhibited a slightly higher anxiety average ($\bar{X}=46$) compared to branch teachers ($\bar{X}=40$). Several factors might contribute to this difference. Classroom teachers, responsible for overseeing the entire class and conducting more lessons than branch teachers, likely faced greater challenges with distance education. The low student engagement in

online courses, difficulties in monitoring homework completion, and challenges in accessing necessary materials could have exacerbated these challenges. The inability to interact with students directly, coupled with the pandemic's overall difficulties, may have led to increased anxiety levels among classroom teachers compared to their branch counterparts.

Egeli & Özdemir (2019) acknowledge that the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the existence of alternative educational methods, such as distance learning, due to challenges like accessing technology-based learning resources, delays in the academic calendar, and disruptions in teacher training. These issues underscore the unique challenges faced by classroom teachers during the pandemic, contributing to their heightened anxiety levels.

In our research, individuals with a bachelor's degree exhibited a higher anxiety average ($x=.50$) compared to those with a master's degree. This finding aligns with some studies in the literature, such as the one by Süren & Öztürk (2022), which found that the anxiety levels of individuals with lower educational attainment, like primary school graduates, were higher than those of other educational groups. While a significant portion of research, including works by Gündüz (2009), Kleinknecht et al. (2014) and Hakeberg (1999), suggests no notable correlation between education level and anxiety, other studies, like those by Gürol & Binici (2017) and Sezer et al. (2012), indicate that educational attainment does influence anxiety levels. These contrasting findings might suggest that higher education could enhance psychological resilience, offering individuals better coping mechanisms and resources to manage stress and anxiety. This discrepancy in research highlights the complex nature of the relationship between education level and anxiety, suggesting that while education may not directly correlate with lower anxiety levels universally, it may contribute to factors that mitigate anxiety for some individuals.

In our research, individuals with a service period of 21 years or more exhibited a higher anxiety average ($x = .45$) compared to those with shorter service periods. This observation is supported by literature, as demonstrated by Karaslan et al. (2022), who found that individuals with over 10 years of professional service experienced moderate to severe anxiety levels at a rate of 36.9%. Interestingly, their study also noted that healthcare professionals with less than a year of service did not report moderate to severe anxiety levels. Similarly, Saruhan (2021) observed that anxiety levels tended to increase with professional experience, aligning with our findings. However, contrasting evidence exists, such as the study by Demireli (2020), which suggested that Covid-19 related anxiety decreases with professional experience. This discrepancy highlights the nuanced relationship between professional experience and anxiety levels, indicating that while some studies find a positive correlation between length of service and anxiety, others suggest that increased experience may contribute to reduced anxiety levels. These differences could be attributed to various factors, including the nature of the job, individual coping mechanisms, and the specific challenges encountered in different stages of a professional career.

While the pandemic's requirement for individuals to stay at home and work remotely presented challenges, engaging in special activities at home emerged as a significant means of safeguarding mental health during such uncertain times. The ability to adapt to home confinement without difficulty allowed some individuals to navigate the pandemic with relatively less psychological impact. The economic stability of Turkish Cypriots, coupled with a preference for living in detached houses, provided additional space and freedom, potentially contributing to lower levels of anxiety. This setup, reflecting the Cypriot intervention and quality of life, might explain the prevalence of normal-mild anxiety disorders in the region.

The happiness and resilience of Turkish Cypriots, attributed to their satisfaction with living in a limited geography and finding joy and purpose in life, further illustrate their mental health resilience. The strong family ties prevalent among Turkish Cypriots also play a crucial role in their well-being, offering emotional support and a sense of security.

Moreover, the geographical isolation of the island and its distance from the mainland contributed to lower case and death rates in the TRNC during the pandemic. This isolation, along with the cultural emphasis on family connections and emotional support, are key factors in maintaining the high morale and mental health of the Turkish Cypriot population.

Despite the participants' anxiety levels being categorized as normal-mild in our study, variations were observed in anxiety averages across different variables including 'marital status, gender, educational status, length of service, and whether they were classroom or branch teachers', indicating that each variable was impacted differently by the pandemic. This suggests that implementing social support programs aimed at anxiety could play a significant role in enhancing individuals' problem-solving capabilities and psychological resilience.

Encouraging teachers to engage in physical activities during lockdowns or similar periods of closure could be beneficial for their health. Such activities not only have the potential to improve teachers' mental and physical well-being but also to positively affect their overall quality of life. Research, such as that conducted by Katra (2021), supports the notion that an increase in teachers' anxiety levels may be associated with heightened symptoms like increased sensitivity to eating or changes in hunger. This further underscores the importance of holistic approaches to health and well-being, including the promotion of physical activity as a means to manage stress and anxiety during challenging times.

Given the adverse psychological, emotional, social, and economic consequences associated with the Covid-19 epidemic, it is imperative to emphasize the significance of effectively communicating preventive and protective measures in a manner that is accessible to all sectors of society. One may therefore argue that the utilization of psychological support software is crucial for professional groups and individuals of all ages. It is imperative to take into account the social and psychological aspects of the incident in addition to its medical implications. In their study, Egeli & Ozdemir (2019) emphasized that the establishment of scientific committees just in the domain of health is inadequate for this purpose; education boards are also required. By assembling interdisciplinary boards comprised of scholars and authorities from many fields, boards may effectively address challenges across all aspects of society, thereby facilitating the recovery process with minimal negative impact.

This study highlights the variations in anxiety levels among participants, with a general trend towards normal-mild anxiety despite differences across variables such as marital status, gender, educational status, length of service, and the distinction between classroom and branch teachers. These variations suggest that the pandemic affected each group differently, underscoring the potential benefits of social support programs and physical activities in enhancing psychological resilience and overall well-being. While the literature provides mixed findings on the relationship between these variables and anxiety, the consistency with studies identifying lower anxiety in certain demographics suggests that factors like marital support, educational attainment, and professional experience play significant roles in psychological health. The study also notes the unique position of Turkish Cypriots, whose geographical isolation and strong family ties may have contributed to lower anxiety levels during the pandemic. However, the research faces limitations such as its cross-sectional design and focus on individuals with internet access, indicating a need for more inclusive, longitudinal studies. The findings support the implementation of comprehensive support systems and highlight the importance of considering a wide range of factors, including cultural and societal norms, in addressing mental health during crises.

The pandemic has demonstrated to countries and governments on a global scale the following: It has highlighted the necessity of open and distance education to ensure the uninterrupted continuation of education. It has highlighted the importance of further investment in this area, demonstrating the importance of alternative learning approaches such as open and distance education, replacing traditional face-to-face approaches. It has also demonstrated the importance of these systems for countries. It is crucial that these alternative education practices not only support formal education during normal life processes, but also offer significant advantages during times of pandemics, wars, disasters, forced migration, and economic crises, and that policymakers consider them.

Mapping the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teachers and developing support plans for teachers, in collaboration with relevant authorities in each country, is crucial for public policy implementation. In this regard, it's clear that there's a need for studies that address the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teachers' mental health.

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 data was obtained with the permission received from the TRNC Ministry of Education (permission dated 15 September 2020, numbered İÖD.0.00-006-20/E.4272).

In this study, research ethics principles were observed and the necessary ethics committee permissions were obtained. Within the scope of ethics committee permission; The document dated 09.06.2023 and numbered 2023/11 was received from Iğdır University Ethics Commission. We conducted the study in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration in 1975.

Funding

No specific grant was given to this research by funding organizations in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

In this study, research ethics principles were observed and the necessary ethics committee permissions were obtained. Within the scope of ethics committee permission; The document dated 09.06.2023 and numbered 2023/11 was received from Iğdır University Ethics Commission. 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.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

The research is a single-author study.

REFERENCES

- Agyapong B., Obuobi-Donkor G., Burbach L., & Wei, Y. (2022). Stress, burnout, anxiety and depression among teachers: A scoping review. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, *19*, 10706. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191710706>.
- Ahmad, A., Rahman, I., & Agarwal, M. (2020). Factors influencing mental health during Covid19 outbreak: an exploratory survey among indian population. *MedRxiv*. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.05.03.20081380>.
- Akan, H., Gürol, I., Özdatlı, S., Yılmaz, G., Vitrinel, A., & Hayran, O. (2010). Knowledge and attitudes of university students toward pandemic influenza: A cross-sectional study from Turkey. *BMC Public Health*, *10*, 413-420.
- Allen, R., Jerrim, J., & Sims, S. (2020). How did the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic affect teacher wellbeing? *CEPEO Working Paper*, *20*(15).
- Arslan, H., Mergen, H., Erdoğan, B., & Ayyıldız, Ü. (2016). Assessment of depression, anxiety and self-esteem scores of the students of the faculty of education regarding with different variables. *Medical Sciences*, *11*(1), 1-13.
- Aşkın, R., Bozkurt, Y., & Zeybek, Z. (2019). COVID-19 pandemic: Psychological effects and therapeutic interventions. *Istanbul Commerce University Social Sciences Journal*, (COVID-19 Social Sciences Special Issue), *37*, 304-318.
- Balkhy, H. H., Abolfotouh, M. A., Al-Hathloul, R. H., & Al-Jumah, M. A. (2010). Awareness, attitudes, and practices related to the swine influenza pandemic among the Saudi public. *BMC Infectious Diseases*, *10*(42).
- Baltacı, N. N., & Coşar, B. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic and soul-body relationship. In B. Coşar (Ed.), *Psychiatry and COVID-19* (pp. 1-6). Türkiye Clinics.
- Beck, A. T., Epstein, N., Brown, G., & Stair, G. A. (1988). An inventory for measuring clinical anxiety: Psychometric properties. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *56*(6), 893-897.

- Buldum, A., Aksu, A., Değirmenci, F., & Vefikuluçay Yılmaz, D. (2023). The relationship between women's anxiety and fatigue, affecting factors of anxiety and fatigue during the Covid-19 pandemic. *YÖBU Faculty of Health Sciences Journal*, 4(3), 284-295.
- Cansel, N. (2022). Acute period psychiatric effects of COVID- 19 in hospitalized patients: A Retrospective investigation. *Journal of Inonu University Health Services Vocational School*, 10(1), 372-383. <https://doi.org/10.33715/inonusaglik.1022907>
- Carli, L. L. (2020). Women, gender equality and Covid-19. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 35(7/8), 647-655.
- CNN Türk (t.y.). Dünyayı kasıp kavurdu... Koronavirüs salgınının 100 günü. Access address: <https://www.cnnturk.com/>
- Çırakoğlu, O. C. (2011). The investigation of Swine influenza (H1N1) pandemic related perceptions in terms of anxiety and avoidance variables. *Turkish Journal of Psychology*, 26(67), 65-69.
- Çifçi, F., & Demir, A. (2020). The effect of home-based exercise on anxiety and mental well-being levels of teachers and pre-service teachers in Covid-19 pandemic. *African Educational Research Journal*, 8(2), 20-28.
- Demireli, S., & Durmaz, H. (2021). Investigation of anxiety, obsession and related variables in nurses due to the coronavirus outbreak. In *International Congress on Reflections of the Pandemic on Mental Health and Psychosocial Care* (pp. 313–314). Erzurum, Turkey, 24–25 June.
- Didin, M., Yavuz, B., & Gezgin, Yazıcı, H. (2022). Effect of Covid-19 on students' stress, anxiety, depression and fear levels: Systematic review. *Current Approaches in Psychiatry*, 14(1), 38-45.
- Egeli, S., & Özdemir, M. B. (2020). An overview of the reflections coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic process on the TRNC education system. *Education And Society In The 21st Century*, 9, 779-804.
- Erdogdu, Y., Koçoğlu, F., & Sevim, C. (2020). An investigation of the psychosocial and demographic determinants of anxiety and hopelessness during COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 23(1), 24-37.
- Ertan, T. (2008). Epidemiology of psychiatric disorders. *Istanbul University Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine Continuing Medical Education Events*, 62, 25-30.
- EURONEWS (t.y.). İlk 100 günde yaşananalar. Access address: <https://tr.euronews.com/>
- Geçtan, E. (1995). *Psychoanalysis and after*. Remzi Publisher.
- Gündüz, S. (2009). *Comorbidity of other anxiety disorders in patients with dental phobia*. [Psychiatry specialization thesis, Mental Health and Neurological Diseases Training and Research Hospital].
- Gürocak, A. A. (2020). *An investigation of anxiety levels and psychological resilience of adults in terms of schema characteristics in Turkey during the Covid-19 outbreak*. [Master Thesis, Üsküdar University].
- Gürol, A., & Binici, Y. (2017). Determination of anxiety levels of the mothers whose children will undergo day care surgery and the effective factors. *Izmir Dr. Behçet Uz Children's Hospital Journal*, 7(1), 29-38.
- Hakeberg, M., Berggren, U., & Carlsson, S. G. (1992). Prevalence of dental anxiety in an adult population in a major urban area in Sweden. *Community Dent Oral Epidemiol*, 20, 97-101.
- Karaaslan, H., Tezcan, Keleş, G., & Deveci, A. (2022). The anxiety level of healthcare teams going to code blue in the Covid-19 pandemic period. *Turkish Journal of Resuscitation*, 1(2), 87-104.
- Kardeş, V. Ç. (2020). Mental and behavioral evaluation of during and after the pandemic. *Turkish Journal of Diabetes and Obesity*, 4(2), 160–169.
- Katra, H. (2021). *Covid-19 fear among teacher: Correlation with physical activity and effect mental health and eating behaviors (Çanakkale province example)*. [Doctoral thesis, Uludağ University].
- Kendler, K. S., Thornton, L. M., & Prescott, C. A. (2001). Gender differences in the rates of exposure to stressful life events and sensitivity to their depressogenic effects. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 158(4), 587-593.
- Kleinknecht, R. A., Thorndike, R. M., McGlynn F. D., & Harkavy, J. (1984). Factor analysis of the dental fear survey with cross-validation. *J Am Dent Assoc*, 108(1), 59-61.
- Kozacıoğlu, G. (1982). *The relationship between family attitudes and the anxiety level of children* [Doctoral thesis, Istanbul University].
- Kök Eren, H. (2021). Anxiety levels and sleep quality of individuals during the COVID-19 outbreak. *Journal of Turkish Sleep Medicine*, 3, 235-242.

- Lee, S. A. (2020). Coronavirus anxiety scale: A brief mental health screener for Covid-19 related anxiety. *Death Studies*, 1-9.
- Leung, G. M., Ho, L. M., Chan, S. K., Ho, S. Y., Bacon-Shone, J., Choy, R. Y., Hedley, A. J., Lam, T. H., & Fielding, R. (2005). Longitudinal assessment of community psychobehavioral responses during and after the 2003 outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome in Hong Kong. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 40, 1713–1720.
- Roman, T. (2020). Supporting the mental health of preservice teachers in COVID-19 through traumainformed educational practices and adaptive formative assessment tools. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 28(2), 473–481.
- Özdemir, Uysal, Ş. (2022). *Examination of the relation of the teacher's Covid anxiety, job satisfaction and burnout levels in pandemic process* [Master Thesis, Hitit University].
- Öztürk, M., & Uluşahin, A. (2015). *Mental Health and Disorders*. Nobel.
- Santamaria, M. D., Mondragon, N. I., Santxo, N. B., & Ozamiz-Etxebarria, N. (2021) Teacher stress, anxiety and depression at the beginning of the academic year during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Global Mental Health*, 8(14), 1-8.
- Saruhan, E. (2021). *Examination of the burnout and anxiety levels os primary scholl teachers workin in Mardin Kızıltepe during the Covid-19 pandemic process* [Master Thesis, Near East University].
- Serafini G, Parmigiani B, Amerio A ve ark. (2020) The psychological impact of Covid-19 on the mental health in the general population. *An International Journal of Medicine*, 113(8), 531–537. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qjmed /hcaa201>.
- Sezer, U., Üstün, K., Şenyurt, S. Z., Çiftçi, M. E., & Erciyas, K (2012). The evaluation of anxiety in periodontal patients. *Cumhuriyet Dent J*, 15(4), 297-306.
- Stachteas P., & Stachteas, C. (2020) The psychological impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on secondary school teachers. *Psichiatriki*, 31(4), 293-301.
- Söylemez, F. (2022). Coronavirus anxiety level in among individuals aged 18 and over living in central Bitlis province. *Sakarya Medical Journal*, 12(1), 146-151.
- Süren, Y., & Öztürk, Z. (2022). Examination of depression anxiety and stress levels of Covid-19 patients. *Eurasian Journal of Researches in Social and Economics*, 9(2), 347-360.
- Şahin, M. (2019). Fear, anxiety and anxiety disorder. *Eurasian Journal of Social and Economic Research*, 6(10), 117-135.
- Şahin, M., & Nur-Aydın, M. (2022). An investigation of the relationship between fear of Covid-19 and levels of depression, anxiety, and hopelessness. *Current Perspectives in Social Sciences*, 26(4), 381-390.
- Tomruk, Z. (2014). *Sources of stress, relationship of behaviors during stress and handling it for academicians-The case of Near East University* [Master Thesis, Gazi University].
- Trumello, C., Bramanti, S. M., Ballarotto, G., Candelori, C., Cerniglia, L., Cimino, S., Crudele, M., Lombardi, L., Pignataro, S., Viceconti, M. L., & Babore, A. (2020). Psychological adjustment of healthcare workers in Italy during the COVID-19 pandemic: Differences in stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, secondary trauma, and compassion satisfaction between frontline and non-frontline professionals. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(22), 8358.
- Turan, H., & Akkaynak, M. (2021). The effect of health anxiety on burnout in teachers working with children with special needs in the Covid-19 pandemic. *Academic Journal of History and Idea*, 8(2), 577-588.
- Ulusoy, M. (1993). *Beck anxiety inventory: Validity and reliability study* [Unpublished specialist thesis, Bakırköy Psychiatric and Neurological Diseases Hospital].
- Ulusoy, M., Erkmen, H., & Şahin, N. (1998). Turkish version of the Beck Anxiety Inventory: Psychometric properties. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 12, 163–172.
- UNESCO. (t.y.). Within one in five learners kept out of school, UNESCO mobilizes education ministers to face the COVID-19 crisis. [https:// en.unesco.org/news/](https://en.unesco.org/news/)
- Urcos W. H., Urcos, C. N., Ruaales, E. A., & Urcos, J. F. (2020). Stress, anguish, anxiety and resilience of university teachers in the face of Covid-19. *Utopia y Praxis Latinoamericana*, 25(7), 453-463.
- Yakar, H. İ., & Gülbahar, B. N. (2023). Evaluation of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on health care professionals in terms of anxiety, depression and sleep quality. *Gaziosmanpaşa University Faculty of Medicine Journal*, 15(1), 45-53.

- Yılmaz, Z., İstemihan, F., Arayıcı, S., Yılmaz, S., & Güloğlu, B. (2020). The investigation of anxiety and hopelessness among individuals throughout Covid-19 outbreak. *Crisis Journal*, 28(3), 135-150.
- Zeybekoğlu, Akbaş, Ö., & Dursun, C. (2020). Mother interpolating public space into private space during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. *Eurasian Journal of Researches in Social and Economics*, 7(5), 78-94.
- Wakui, N., Abe, S., Shirozu, S., Yamamoto, Y., Yamamura, M., Abe, Y., Murata, S., Ozawa, M., Igarashi, T., Yanagiya, T., Machida, Y., & Kikuchi, M. (2021). Causes of anxiety among teachers giving face-to-face lessons after the reopening of schools during the Covid-19 pandemic: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, 21(1050), 1-10.
- Wang, Y., Di, Y., Ye, J., & Wei, W. (2020). Study on the public psychological states and its related factors during the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in some regions of China. *Psychol Health Med*, 30, 1-10.
- Waterman, S., Hunter, E. C. M., Cole, C. L., Evans, L. J., Greenberg, N., Rubin, G. J., & Beck, A. (2018). Training peers to treat Ebola centre workers with anxiety and depression in Sierra Leone. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 64(2), 156-165.
- Wenham, C., Smith, J., & Morgan, R. (2020). Covid-19: The gendered impacts of the outbreak. *Lancet*, 395, 846-848.
- Wilder, Smith, A., Chiew, C. J., & Lee, V. J. (2020). Can we contain the Covid-19 outbreak with the same measures as for SARS? *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, 20, 102-107.
- World Health Organization. (2020). *Responding to community spread of COVID-19: Interim guidance*. Retrieved August 15, 2021, from <https://www.who.int/docs/defaultsource/coronaviruse/2020>