

A Bibliometric Analysis of Graduate Theses on Professional Commitment in Türkiye¹

Türkiye’de mesleki bağlılık üzerine yazılmış lisansüstü tezlerin bibliyometrik analiz tekniğiyle incelenmesi

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze graduate theses written on professional commitment in Türkiye between 2010 and 2024 using a bibliometric method. A total of 49 theses, 36 at the master's level and 13 at the doctoral level, accessed from the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) National Thesis Center database were examined. The theses were analyzed based on criteria such as year of publication, type of thesis, advisor's academic rank, university and department distribution, and research method. The findings indicate that the majority of the theses were completed at the master's level and employed quantitative research methods, and that the number of theses related to professional commitment began to increase after 2019. The results further reveal that most of the graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye were conducted within the field of educational sciences and that the sample groups predominantly consisted of teachers.

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye’de 2010-2024 yılları arasında mesleki bağlılık konusunda yazılmış lisansüstü tezleri bibliyometrik yöntemle analiz etmektir. Çalışmada, Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YÖK) Ulusal Tez Merkezi veri tabanından ulaşılan yüksek lisans düzeyinde 36 ve doktora düzeyinde 13 olmak üzere toplam 49 tez incelenmiştir. Tezler yayın yılı, tez türü, danışman unvanı, üniversite ve anabilim dalı dağılımı ve araştırma yöntemi gibi ölçütlere göre analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular konuyla ilgili tezlerin çoğunlukla yüksek lisans düzeyinde ve nicel yöntemle hazırlandığını ve 2019 yılından itibaren artış göstermeye başladığını ortaya koymaktadır. Araştırma sonuçları ayrıca, Türkiye’de mesleki bağlılık üzerine tamamlanan lisansüstü tezlerin büyük çoğunluğunun eğitim bilimleri anabilim dalında hazırlandığını ve örneklem grubunun çoğunlukla öğretmenlerden oluştuğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

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Keywords: Professional commitment, bibliometric analysis, graduate theses.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mesleki bağlılık, bibliyometrik analiz, lisansüstü tezler.

JEL codes: I23, J24, M12

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Bu çalışma, 2010–2024 yılları arasında Türkiye’de mesleki bağlılık üzerine yazılmış lisansüstü tezleri bibliyometrik analiz yöntemi ile incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada, Türkiye’de Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YÖK) Ulusal Tez Merkezi veri tabanından erişilen toplam 49 tez (36 yüksek lisans, 13 doktora) değerlendirilmiş ve tezler yayın yılı, tez türü, danışmanın akademik unvanı, üniversite ve bölüm dağılımı, araştırma yöntemi ve örneklem özellikleri gibi kriterlere göre analiz edilmiştir.

Araştırma, mesleki bağlılığın bireysel ve örgütsel düzeydeki önemine dikkat çekmektedir. Bireyler açısından mesleki bağlılık, iş tatmini ve yaşam doyumunu artırmakta, mesleki performansı yükseltmekte ve profesyonel kimliğin oluşmasına katkı sağlamaktadır. Örgütsel açıdan ise mesleki bağlılık, çalışan bağlılığını ve performansını artırmakta, işten ayrılma niyetini azaltmaktadır. Alanyazında mesleki bağlılık, yaş, kıdem, cinsiyet, eğitim düzeyi, iş tatmini, tükenmişlik ve yaratıcılık gibi değişkenlerle ilişkilendirilerek ele alınmıştır.

Araştırmada veriler bibliyometrik analiz tekniğiyle çözümlenmiştir. Bu yöntem, literatürdeki belgelerin niceliksel özelliklerini ölçmeye ve belli olayların frekanslarını hesaplayarak dağılımını incelemeye olanak sağlamaktadır. Araştırma kapsamında incelenen lisansüstü tezler; yıllara göre dağılım, danışman akademik unvanı, tez düzeyi (yüksek lisans-doktora), araştırma yöntemi, örneklem grubu ve büyüklüğü, anahtar kelime kullanımı, üniversite ve anabilim dalı dağılımı ile mesleki bağlılıkla ilişkilendirilen değişkenler açısından analiz edilmiştir. Veriler Microsoft Excel ve SPSS yazılımları kullanılarak betimsel istatistiklerle değerlendirilmiştir.

Bulgular, Türkiye’de mesleki bağlılıkla ilgili lisansüstü tezlerin çoğunlukla yüksek lisans düzeyinde yazıldığını ve bu tezlerde genellikle nicel araştırma yöntemlerinin kullanıldığını göstermektedir. Araştırma sonucunda, Türkiye’de 2019 yılından itibaren mesleki bağlılık konusuna olan akademik ilginin arttığı görülmüştür. Mesleki bağlılık üzerine çalışılan lisansüstü tezlerin ağırlıklı olarak eğitim bilimleri alanında yürütüldüğü ve örneklem gruplarının çoğunlukla öğretmenlerden oluştuğu belirlenmiştir. Görece az sayıda olmakla birlikte işletme, sağlık, turizm, çalışma ve endüstri ilişkileri ile kamu yönetimi gibi farklı disiplinlerde de mesleki bağlılık üzerine çalışmaların yürütüldüğü tespit edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, mesleki bağlılıkla en çok ilişkilendirilen değişkenlerin “örgütsel bağlılık”, “iş tatmini”, “tükenmişlik”, “işten ayrılma niyeti” ve “duygusal emek” olduğu saptanmıştır. Mesleki bağlılıkla ilgili olarak Türkiye’deki lisansüstü tezlerin sayısı açısından İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim Üniversitesi ile Çukurova Üniversitesi’nin öne çıktığı belirlenmiştir.

Araştırma, Türkiye’de mesleki bağlılık üzerine yürütülen lisansüstü tezlerin genel yapısını ortaya koymakta ve gelecekte yapılacak araştırmalar için yol gösterici nitelik taşımaktadır. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgulardan hareketle, konuyla ilgili olarak farklı sektörlerde yapılacak görgül (ampirik) çalışmaların literatüre katkı sağlayabileceği düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, sonraki araştırmalarda nitel ve karma yöntemlerin kullanımının konunun daha kapsamlı incelenmesine olanak tanıyabileceği ve mevcut literatürde mesleki bağlılıkla birlikte çalışılan klasik değişkenlerin dışında, konunun çağdaş yönetim yaklaşımlarıyla da ilişkilendirilerek ele alınmasının faydalı olabileceği değerlendirilmektedir. Bununla birlikte,

mesleki bağlılıkla ilgili olarak doktora düzeyinde yürütülecek çalışmaların sayısının artırılmasının, alana kuramsal ve ampirik açıdan derinlik kazandırabileceği beklenmektedir.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of profession is generally associated with an individual's identity and is regarded as a phenomenon that enables one to gain social prestige (Sun Ceylan, 2019:11). Professional commitment, on the other hand, concerns an individual's recognition of the value of their profession in their life as a result of the skills and expertise they possess. In other words, it refers to the extent to which individuals perceive the importance and centrality of their profession in their lives based on their efforts to acquire skills and expertise in a particular field (Aydın, 2010:16).

The growing importance of information and technology today has led to a shift toward specialization in the workplace. This development has resulted in an increase in the number of experts and professionals in specific fields and, consequently, a significant emphasis on professionalism (Singh & Gupta, 2015:1195). Changing conditions within organizations have led individuals to realize that spending their entire careers in a single organization is no longer realistic. Therefore, professional commitment has gained importance, as employees need to demonstrate commitment to their profession in order to take advantage of opportunities in other organizations (Haider et al., 2020:22 adapted from Cohen, 2007).

Professional commitment influences individuals' life satisfaction. As commitment to the profession increases, individuals' levels of life satisfaction also increase (Sun Ceylan, 2019:12). Individuals with a high level of professional commitment develop positive feelings toward their profession, strive to be successful in their professional roles, and do not consider leaving their profession. Moreover, individuals with high professional commitment also exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Yiğit & Yazarkan, 2014:78). Possessing a high level of professional commitment enables the fulfillment of personal goals and the development of a clearer professional identity (Freund et al., 2013:870). For an employee with high professional commitment, work is considered an integral part of life (Vaitzman Ben-David & Berkovich, 2021:285). Such employees strongly embrace their professional objectives and possess a strong desire to maintain continuity in their careers (Singh & Gupta, 2015:1195; Rogosic & Perica, 2023:481). Accordingly, professional commitment is suggested to be one of the most significant factors influencing job performance. The behavioral components of individuals with high professional commitment can be listed as attention to customers, loyalty to the organization, professional autonomy, and adherence to professional standards and ethics (Vaitzman Ben-David & Berkovich, 2021:285). At the organizational level, strong professional commitment enhances both job satisfaction and work performance (Uçar et al., 2020:42). Furthermore, the rewarding of employees' professional behaviors by organizations strengthens both organizational and professional commitment (Güder, 2021:34). Employees who are committed to their profession are reported to be more resilient to workplace challenges and exhibit lower intentions to leave their jobs (Çelik & Yıldız, 2018:48).

The aim of this study is to provide an overall view of graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye through a bibliometric analysis, contribute to the existing literature

on the topic, and offer a new perspective to the field. In this context, the research seeks to answer the following questions:

- How are the theses distributed by year?
- How are the theses distributed according to advisors' academic ranks?
- How are the theses distributed by level (master's/doctoral)?
- How are the theses distributed according to research methods?
- How are the theses distributed according to sample groups?
- How are the theses distributed based on sample sizes?
- How are the theses distributed according to keyword usage?
- How are the theses distributed across universities?
- How are the theses distributed by academic departments?
- With which variables (topics) is professional commitment examined in the theses?

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of professional commitment emerged in the 1980s. Prior to this period, studies addressing the notion of commitment generally focused on organizational commitment (Haider et al., 2020:22). Unlike organizational commitment, professional commitment begins during an individual's professional education and, under appropriate conditions, increases throughout their professional life (Ünal, 2015:47). While organizational commitment pertains to the organization, professional commitment concerns characteristics related to the individual employee. In other words, an individual may be committed to their profession but may not feel committed to an organization that does not provide personal satisfaction (Firat, 2015:8).

Professional commitment can be defined as an individual's psychological attachment to their profession and identification with it (Singh & Gupta, 2015:1195; Rogosic & Perica, 2023:482). In other words, professional commitment refers to the alignment between an individual's personal beliefs and their professional goals (Jia, 2021:381).

In the literature, professional commitment has been examined in relation to various variables. In international studies, professional commitment is often investigated in connection with age, gender, education level, job satisfaction, burnout and intention to remain in the profession. For example, Wang et al. (2012) found that age and job position are positively associated with professional commitment, while in the study conducted by Blau and Lunz (1998), no significant difference was observed between male and female employees in terms of professional commitment. However, men were found to have a slightly higher intention to leave the profession compared to women. Colarelli and Bishop (1990) noted that a higher level of education is positively related to occupational commitment. Studies also emphasize the significant effect of job satisfaction on professional commitment. For instance, Lee et al. (2000) found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and professional commitment. Moreover, Raiziene and Endriulaitiene (2007) highlighted a relationship between professional commitment and burnout, noting that employees with high professional commitment tend to have lower levels of burnout.

In the national literature, professional commitment has generally been examined in relation to variables similar to those studied internationally. Aslan (2008) found a positive relationship between professional commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. Günlük (2010), in his research on accountants and trainee accountants in Türkiye, reported positive associations between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. Çiftçiöğlü (2011) found significant negative relationships between occupational commitment and occupational turnover intention. Findings of this study also showed that professional commitment has statistically significant and negative association with emotional exhaustion. A study conducted by Çiçekli Ayyıldız (2022) on tourist guides revealed that job satisfaction positively affects professional commitment. These findings suggest that the concept of professional commitment is associated with similar variables across different cultures and produces important outcomes in the local context as well.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to examine graduate theses focusing on professional commitment in Türkiye using a descriptive bibliometric analysis technique, thereby providing guidance for future researchers. Bibliometric analysis is an approach used to measure the characteristics of documents and the processes associated with them. Bibliometrics is an effective method used to analyze research trends within a specific field (Aslançı, 2022:4). The bibliometric analysis literature includes various analytical approaches such as citation analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, co-word analysis, and co-authorship analysis (Donthu et al., 2021:288). However, the present study does not include such analyses, rather, the examination is limited to presenting descriptive characteristics of the theses, such as year, topic, method, sample, and similar attributes.

No studies were found in the relevant literature that conducted a bibliometric analysis of graduate theses on professional commitment. Based on this, the sample of the research was composed of graduate theses on professional commitment written at universities in Türkiye between 2010 and 2024. As a result of the review, a total of 49 graduate theses (36 master's and 13 doctoral) related to the topic were identified in the National Thesis Center database of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) in Türkiye. Therefore, the research data set consists of these 49 graduate theses.

In the data collection process, open-access theses were preferred. In this context, the data were collected in March 2025 from the National Thesis Center database of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) using the keywords “mesleki bağlılık” and “professional commitment/occupational commitment”.

Microsoft Excel, SPSS software, and the WordArt application were used for data analysis. For the analysis, the theses were first categorized according to various criteria, and descriptive analyses were conducted. The obtained data were evaluated using frequencies and percentages.

The theses were analyzed according to the following variables:

1. Distribution by year
2. Distribution by advisors' academic ranks

3. Distribution by thesis level (master's/doctoral)
4. Distribution by research method
5. Distribution by sample group
6. Distribution by sample size
7. Distribution by keyword usage
8. Distribution by universities
9. Distribution by academic departments
10. Distribution according to the variables (topics) examined alongside professional commitment

The obtained findings were presented and interpreted through tables and figures, and attempts were made to provide recommendations for future research on professional commitment.

3. FINDINGS

First, the distribution of graduate theses on professional commitment by year was examined (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of Graduate Theses on Professional Commitment by Year

Year	Frequency	Percentage %
2010	1	2,0
2012	1	2,0
2013	1	2,0
2014	2	4,1
2015	2	4,1
2016	3	6,1
2017	3	6,1
2018	3	6,1
2019	6	12,2
2020	6	12,2
2021	6	12,2
2022	6	12,2
2023	3	6,1
2024	6	12,2
Total	49	100,0

As shown in Table 1, the number of graduate theses focusing on professional commitment in Türkiye between 2010 and 2018 is relatively low. During this period, a total of 16 graduate theses addressing professional commitment in Türkiye were identified. In contrast, a significant increase is observed in the number of theses on professional commitment written between 2019 and 2024 in Türkiye. Graduate theses on professional commitment during this

period accounted for 68% of all graduate theses written on this topic in Türkiye. This increase may reflect the growing recognition of professional commitment as an increasingly important phenomenon in work environments shaped by rapidly changing structural and technological conditions.

In the next stage, the distribution of faculty advisors' academic ranks for graduate theses on professional commitment was examined (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of Academic Ranks of Faculty Advisors for Graduate Theses on Professional Commitment

Advisor Rank	Frequency	Percentage %
Associate Professor	14	28,6
Assistant Professor	14	28,6
Professor	18	36,7
Assistant Lecturer	3	6,1
Total	49	100,0

Table 2 presents the distribution of graduate theses on professional commitment according to the academic ranks of their advisors. Among the 49 theses examined, the group with the highest number of advisors consists of professors, accounting for 36.7% (18 theses). This is followed by associate professors and assistant professors, each representing 28.6% (14 theses). The findings presented in Table 2 reveal that graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye have been supervised by faculty members holding different academic titles. Based on these findings, it can be inferred that faculty members with various academic ranks at universities tend to supervise graduate students on the topic of professional commitment.

In the next stage, the distribution of graduate theses on professional commitment by degree level was examined (Table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of Theses on Professional Commitment by Graduate Degree Level

Thesis Level	Frequency	Percentage %
Doctoral	13	26,5
Master's	36	73,5
Total	49	100,0

As shown in Table 3, approximately three-quarters (73.5%) of the theses on professional commitment in Türkiye were prepared at the master's level. The proportion of theses prepared at the doctoral level is 26.5%. The findings in Table 3 indicate that in-depth research on professional commitment conducted at the doctoral level in Türkiye remains limited in number.

In the next stage, the research methods preferred in graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye were examined (Table 4).

Table 4: Research Methods Used in Graduate Theses on Professional Commitment

Research Method	Frequency	Percentage %
Survey	48	98,0
Interview	1	2,0
Total	49	100,0

As shown in Table 4, it was determined that in almost all (98%) of the graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye, quantitative research methods were employed, and the data were collected using the survey technique. The findings in Table 4 suggest that qualitative research approaches have not been sufficiently adopted in graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye. Therefore, it is believed that the use of qualitative or mixed research methods in future graduate theses on professional commitment could enrich the field.

In the next stage, the sample groups selected in graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye were examined (Table 5).

Table 5: Distribution of Graduate Theses on Professional Commitment by Sample Group

Sample Group	Frequency	Percentage %
Lawyers	1	2,0
Bank Employees	1	2,0
Ceramic Workshop Employees	1	2,0
Midwives and Nurses	1	2,0
Security Guards	1	2,0
Aviation Employees	1	2,0
Nurses	5	10,2
Employees in Construction, Textile, Tourism- Transportation, Education, Logistics, and Other Sectors	1	2,0
Public Internal Auditors	1	2,0
Civil Servants	1	2,0
School Administrators	1	2,0
Opticians and Eyewear Specialists	1	2,0
Hotel Employees	1	2,0
Students	1	2,0
Teachers	21	42,9
Pilots	2	4,1
Psychological Counselors	1	2,0
Health Personnel	1	2,0
Independent Pharmacists	1	2,0

Social Security Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors	1	2,0
Tour Guides	4	8,2
Total	49	100,0

As shown in Table 5, teachers were the most frequently selected sample group (42.9%) in graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye, followed by nurses (10.2%) and tour guides (8.2%). Based on these findings, it appears that teachers' perceptions of professional commitment are considered significant by academics or educational scientists in Türkiye. Considering that professional commitment is an important phenomenon in all areas of work life, it is believed that conducting new graduate theses on professional commitment among employees in various sectors in Türkiye could contribute valuable insights to the literature.

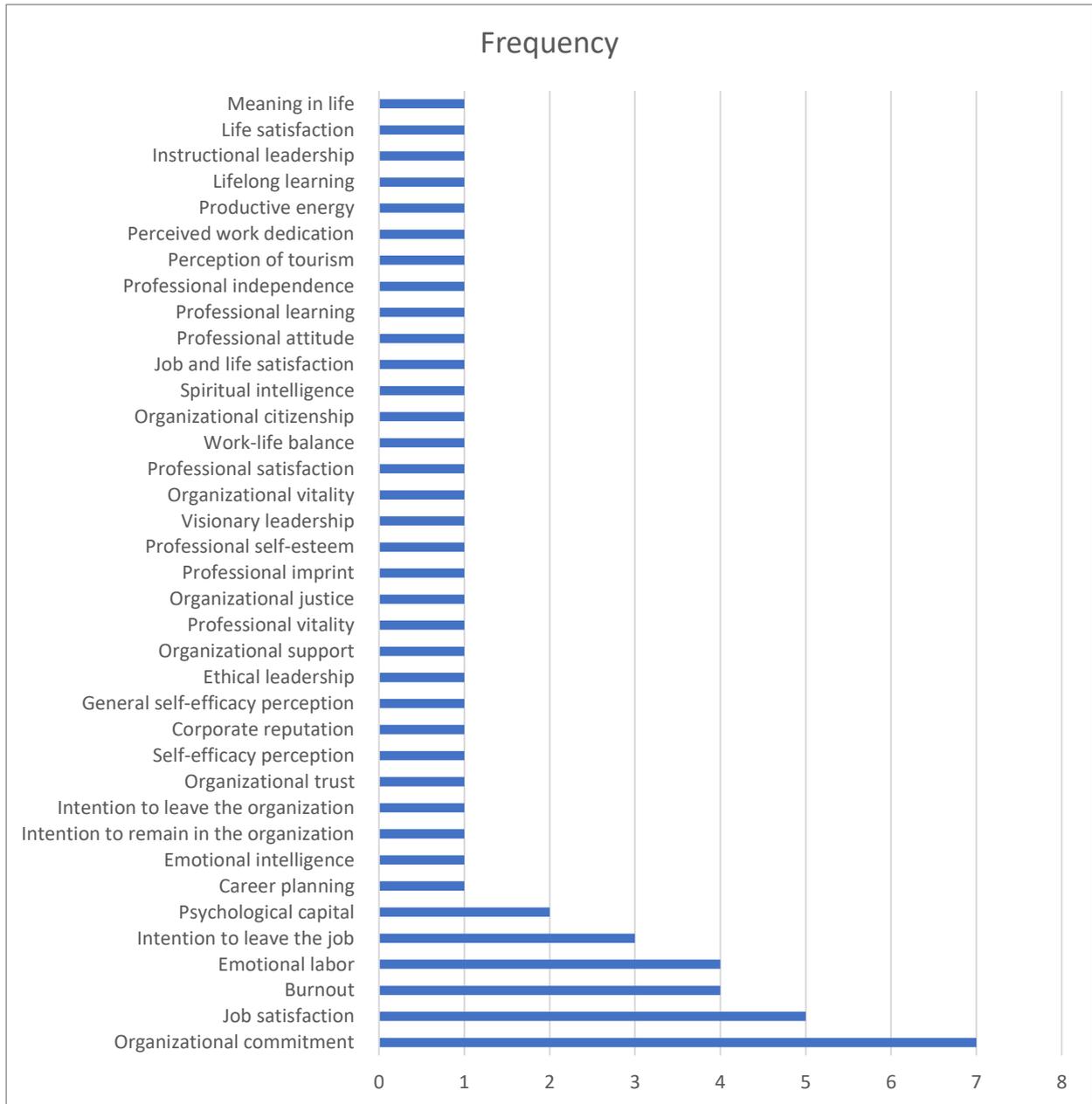
When examining the sample sizes used in these graduate theses on professional commitment, the findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Distribution of Theses on Professional Commitment by Sample Size

Sample Size	Frequency	Percentage %
1-100	3	6,1
101-300	16	32,7
301-500	19	38,8
501+	11	22,4
Total	49	100,0

As shown in Table 6, the sample sizes of graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye vary considerably. The majority of the theses have sample sizes ranging from 101 to 500 participants. The smallest sample consists of 18 participants, while the largest reaches 1068 participants. This distribution indicates that some studies on the topic in Türkiye have been conducted with either very small or very large sample groups. Limitations in the sample group may be due to studies focusing on specific cases or difficulties in accessing participants in certain professions.

In the next stage, the variables examined alongside professional commitment in graduate theses written in Türkiye were analyzed. A pareto chart illustrating these variables is presented in Graphic 1.



Graphic 1: Other Variables Associated with Professional Commitment

Graphic 1 presents the other variables associated with professional commitment in graduate theses conducted in Türkiye. As shown in Graphic 1, professional commitment has most frequently been examined in relation to organizational commitment, with seven graduate theses addressing this association ($f = 7$). Other variables most commonly linked to professional commitment in these theses include job satisfaction ($f = 5$), burnout ($f = 4$), emotional labor ($f = 4$), and turnover intention ($f = 3$).

In the next stage, the distribution of graduate theses on the topic written in Türkiye by universities was examined (Table 7).

Table 7: Distribution of Graduate Theses on Professional Commitment in Türkiye by Universities

University	Frequency	Percentage %
Adnan Menderes University	2	4,1
Afyon Kocatepe University	2	4,1
Akdeniz University	1	2,0
Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University	1	2,0
Ankara University	1	2,0
Beykent University	1	2,0
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University	1	2,0
Çukurova University	3	6,1
Dicle University	1	2,0
Dokuz Eylül University	1	2,0
Erciyes University	1	2,0
Eskişehir Anadolu University	1	2,0
Fatih Sultan Mehmet Foundation University	1	2,0
Gaziantep University	1	2,0
Haliç University	1	2,0
İstanbul Arel University	2	4,1
İstanbul Gedik University	1	2,0
İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim University	7	14,3
İstanbul University	1	2,0
İstinye University	1	2,0
Kastamonu University	1	2,0
Kocaeli University	1	2,0
Koç University	1	2,0
Kütahya Dumlupınar University	1	2,0
Marmara University	1	2,0
Mersin University	1	2,0
Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University	1	2,0
Munzur University	1	2,0
Ondokuz Mayıs University	2	4,1
Pamukkale University	1	2,0
Selçuk University	2	4,1

Siirt University	1	2,0
Süleyman Demirel University	2	4,1
Turkish Aeronautical Association University	1	2,0
Yıldız Technical University and Aydın University	1	2,0
Total	49	100,0

As seen in Table 7, the examined graduate theses were conducted under 36 different universities. The highest number of graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye was produced at İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim University (14.3%). This was followed by Çukurova University (6.1%), Afyon Kocatepe University (4.1%), İstanbul Arel University (4.1%), Ondokuz Mayıs University (4.1%), Selçuk University (4.1%), and Süleyman Demirel University (4.1%). Based on the findings in Table 7, it can be understood that graduate theses on professional commitment are also conducted at institutes of foundation universities in Türkiye, in addition to state universities. Notably, 17 out of the 49 theses on this topic were prepared within foundation universities.

Finally, the distribution of graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye by academic departments was examined (Table 8).

Table 8: Distribution of Graduate Theses on Professional Commitment in Türkiye by Academic Departments

Academic Department	Frequency	Percentage %
Labor Economics and Industrial Relations	1	2,0
Education	23	46,9
Business Administration	9	18,4
Public Administration	1	2,0
Health	8	16,3
Tourism	7	14,3
Total	49	100,0

As shown in Table 8, approximately half (46.9%) of the graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye were written within the Department of Educational Sciences. Indeed, as noted in previous sections, a significant portion of the sample groups in these theses consists of teachers. This suggests that teachers have been identified as a focal group in graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye. Following the Department of Educational Sciences, the theses were most frequently conducted in the Departments of Business Administration (18.4%), Health (16.3%), and Tourism (14.3%). In addition, one thesis each was identified in the Departments of Labor Economics and Industrial Relations, and Public Administration.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the rapid development of knowledge and technology, the tendency toward specialization in workplaces has increased. This situation has made professionalism one of the

most important phenomena across nearly all sectors today. Within this framework, professional commitment is no longer limited to individual satisfaction or job performance but has become a concept directly related to organizational structures and changing working conditions (Singh & Gupta, 2015:1195). In other words, in today's work environment, it is increasingly difficult for individuals to pursue their careers within a single institution, which further emphasizes the importance of professional commitment (Haider et al., 2020:22).

This study aimed to reveal the general structure of graduate theses focusing on professional commitment in Türkiye and to provide a guiding framework for future research on the topic. Within this scope, 49 theses published between 2010 and 2024 in the YÖK National Thesis Center database were analyzed using the bibliometric method. The theses were categorized for analysis, and evaluations were made based on the findings obtained from the data.

The prominent findings of the research indicate that academic interest in the concept of professional commitment has increased over the years. It was observed that the number of graduate theses on professional commitment published between 2010 and 2015 was 7, whereas the number of graduate theses between 2016 and 2024 increased sixfold, reaching 42. Based on this, it can be inferred that researchers' tendency to address the topic of professional commitment at the graduate thesis level has gradually intensified over the past decade. Such a finding is also consistent with theoretical perspectives that argue professional commitment is a relatively new and increasingly expanding area of research, which has generated a movement toward specialization in work life (Singh & Gupta, 2015:1195). Considering the increase in the number of graduate theses conducted on professional commitment in Türkiye, it can be inferred that the topic has gained greater academic significance in the country in recent years.

According to the Higher Education Council's National Thesis Center database, graduate theses on the topic of professional commitment published between 2010 and 2024 were prepared at a total of 36 different universities. This finding demonstrates that professional commitment is regarded as a phenomenon worthy of study in graduate education institutes across numerous universities located in different regions of Türkiye.

The findings of the present study revealed that the vast majority of graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye were conducted at the master's level. Although it was determined that thesis advisors were predominantly academics with the title of professor, it was also observed that faculty members with various academic titles in universities across Türkiye show interest in the topic of professional commitment and tend to supervise graduate theses in this area.

Nearly in all graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye have adopted quantitative research approaches. Only a single graduate thesis in Türkiye has addressed the topic of professional commitment using a qualitative approach. Therefore, it can be concluded that the number of graduate theses employing qualitative or mixed-methods research on professional commitment in Türkiye is considerably insufficient.

Graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye have been prepared within 6 different academic disciplines. In half of these theses, teachers were selected as the sample group. Consistent with this finding, it was observed that nearly half of the theses were conducted

within the departments of educational sciences. Additionally, graduate theses on this topic were also found in the fields of business administration, health, tourism, labor and industrial relations, and public administration. These findings indicate that the vast majority of graduate theses on professional commitment in Türkiye are conducted within social science institutes. It is particularly evident that academics working in the field of educational sciences in Türkiye show greater interest in this topic. Nevertheless, it is recognized that professional commitment is an important issue across nearly all areas of working life. Therefore, it is believed that theses conducted on professional commitment among employees in different sectors in Türkiye could provide the literature with diverse perspectives.

The variables most frequently associated with professional commitment in graduate theses in Türkiye were identified as “organizational commitment”, “job satisfaction”, “burnout”, “intention to leave the job” and “emotional labor”. The theoretical basis for associating these variables with professional commitment can be explained as follows:

Organizational commitment refers to individuals’ attachment to the organizations in which they work. Professional commitment, on the other hand, pertains to individuals’ dedication to their professions. According to Meyer and Allen’s (1991) three-component model of commitment, employees can exhibit their commitment to their organizations in different forms, such as “affective commitment,” “continuance commitment,” and “normative commitment.” A high level of affective commitment can be associated with higher professional commitment. Research indicates that employees’ professional commitment is significantly related to organizational commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990:183; Cihangiroğlu et al., 2015; Çaylıkoca, 2017). On the other hand, job satisfaction refers to the individuals’ contentment with the work they do (Sempane et al., 2002:23). It has been stated that individuals with high professional commitment also tend to have higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Yiğit & Yazarkan, 2014:78). Burnout is defined as a state of mental and physical exhaustion caused by one’s professional life (Köktürk & Bağcı, 2023:4 adapted from Freudenberger, 1974). Burnout is considered a significant issue that threatens work life both for individuals and organizations (Arı & Bal, 2008:131). There are studies in the literature that indicate a negative relationship between burnout and professional commitment (Çiftçioğlu, 2011; Yetgin, 2017; Chang et al., 2017). Another concept related to professional commitment is turnover intention, which refers to employees’ tendencies to leave their jobs. It is stated that employees who demonstrate commitment to their profession may exhibit behaviors such as enduring the challenges posed by their profession, overlooking problems arising from the work environment, and restraining their desires to quit their jobs (Çelik & Yıldız, 2018:48). Finally, emotional labor is defined in its simplest form as the display of emotions expected by the organization (Duman, 2017:32 adapted from Robbins, 2005:114). Studies in the literature suggest a positive relationship between emotional labor and professional commitment (Giderler et al., 2016; Yıldırım & Eroğlu, 2021).

In summary, examining the relationships between professional commitment and variables such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, burnout, turnover intention, and emotional labor contributes to understanding how individuals’ commitment to their professions is shaped by the dynamics within the organizational context.

The findings of this study are expected to provide new perspectives for future research on professional commitment. In this context, the following recommendations are offered to researchers interested in the topic:

- Professional commitment is closely related to all areas of the business world. Therefore, empirical studies conducted in different sectors on professional commitment can make significant contributions to the literature.
- Future research on professional commitment could benefit from greater use of qualitative and mixed method approaches, which would allow the topic to be explored from diverse methodological perspectives and offer new insights to the literature.
- The existing literature has predominantly focused on classical variables such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and burnout. In this regard, examining professional commitment in relation to contemporary management approaches could provide the literature with new perspectives.
- Increasing the number of doctoral level studies on professional commitment can add both theoretical and empirical depth to the field.

Disclosure Statements

Researchers' Contribution Rate Statement

The authors declare that they have contributed equally to this article.

Researchers' Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no potential conflict of interest in this study.

Ethical Statement of Researchers

The authors declare that all stages of this study were conducted in accordance with research and publication ethics, and that ethical principles and scientific citation standards were fully observed.

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