



The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on school administrators' psychology family life and work life (İznik sample)*

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Abstract

This study investigated the opinions of school administrators working in primary (elementary) and secondary (high school) schools in İznik district, Bursa province, on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic process on their psychology, family life and work life. Twenty-one school administrators, six female and fifteen male, participated in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants using a 10-question interview form developed by the researcher. Data from the interviews were analysed using MaxQda qualitative analysis software. The interview transcripts of the participating administrators were analysed and coded, and the effects experienced by the school administrators in psychological, family and work life during the pandemic process were divided into codes. The issue that school administrators were most affected by the pandemic is related to psychological and emotional health. Administrators who had difficulty coping with the idea of uncertainty preferred to spend more time with family members to cope. Contrary to expectations, the Covid 19 pandemic did not reduce the workload of school administrators; on the contrary, it added the responsibility of managing distance learning to their previous tasks.

Keywords: Covid-19, psychological impact, work and family life, school administrator, pandemic

Introduction

There have been many epidemics throughout human history. As a result of these epidemics, which make people question their relationship with the world, the current situation has changed and humanity has moved to another dimension (Gelir, 2020). COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 11 March 2020, when the first case was detected in Turkey (Ministry of Health URL). Following the pandemic declaration, governments began to implement a range of measures on behalf of their countries. These measures included behaviours and bans that had not been used before. With the onset of the epidemic, people's lives began to change, first in China and then almost everywhere else in the world. All social activities were cancelled, schools were closed, many workplaces were closed, and billions of people who should have heeded the call to "stay home" began to stay home. Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has been declared as a global health disruption, and at the same time affecting the global economy (İsa & Razak, 2021), social life and education systems. The social effects of these rapidly implemented measures began to manifest themselves over time (Afacan & Avcı, 2020).

At the beginning of the pandemic, people spent more time at home, but as the pandemic increased its impact, restrictions increased and people spent more time at home. This situation led to a change in daily habits (Arıkan & Aytekin, 2022). Many institutions suspended their activities, and the government called on people to stay at home. Kelli & Ginsberg (2023) claim that Covid 19 effected all school systems, students, teachers and school principal in the USA and it changed lots of habits and created some problems. Due to these problems in Turkey, it has been difficult to continue educational activities. Although teachers are the ones who carry out educational activities in this process, school administrators are the ones who manage this crisis process, plan the continuation of activities without interruption and try to ensure the continuity of education. As they struggled to manage the education system and minimise the damage, school administrators also had to deal with the social and psychological effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. As they struggle with these effects, it is believed that their quality of life will change negatively and they will need psychological support. For this reason, it was necessary to investigate how the family and work life of school administrators, who are among the most important actors in the education system, were affected during the Covid-19 process.

1.1. School administration

The most important element of education is the school. The reason for this is that the main production activities are carried out in the school. The task of other educational systems and organisations outside the school is to guide and support the purpose of the school (Aytaç, 2002). School administration, as a subfield of educational administration, can find a field of action within the boundaries set by the public administration, which is valid throughout the country. In a centralised public administration system, schools are required to implement the policies determined by the highest administrative bodies in the field of education, which are called ministries or secretariats depending on the public administration system of the country in which they are located (Aslanargun, 2011). In centralised public administration structures, issues such as determining the criteria for appointing administrators, appointing teachers, preparing curricula and textbooks are determined by the relevant ministry, and provincial organisations and schools are in a position to implement these policies. In realising the implementing role of schools, school principals are the most important person in creating a perfect school. Principals are the organisers, the motivators, the leaders, the visionaries, the architects of success and the first responsible for failure. Principals are expected to be able to deal with crises in the organisation, to prevent and manage possible conflicts, to have a high vision, to motivate staff, to make valid and reliable decisions on issues within their area of initiative and to have the ability to solve problems (Çelikten, 2001). The effective and efficient management of education and training processes depends on school administrators adopting the principle of lifelong learning, closely following scientific developments and reflecting the theories and models developed by educational authorities (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). It is possible for educational administrators to keep up with the rapid changes in education by fulfilling these expected roles (Çelik, 1997).

1.2. Roles and responsibilities of school administrators

It is the task of school administrators to ensure that the school lives up to its objectives by making the most effective use of all the human and material resources available in the school. In fulfilling these duties, school administrators cannot always act as they wish; they are not completely free in this respect. Schools, as educational institutions affiliated to the Ministry of National Education, must comply with the established legal structure and functioning. The management approach of the school is shaped by the influence of many variables such as the attitudes of administrators, teachers, school staff, parents and students, the ecosystem in which the school is located and the characteristics of the physical environment. The integration of the school with its ecosystem is an indicator of an effective and efficient management approach and a prerequisite for a democratic attitude. School administrators should have the necessary competences to solve problems of different dimensions coming from different sources in a democratic way, taking into account the characteristics of the school, and to ensure that the school progresses in line with its goals (Dönmez, 2001)

1.3. Covid-19 pandemic

An pandemic of pneumonia of unknown origin occurred in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and spread rapidly across the country in about a month. The virus causing this disease was identified as a new type of coronavirus and was initially named 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). However, on 11 February 2020, WHO designated this epidemic disease as a novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) (Sağdıç, Kayacan, Dertli, & Arıcı, 2020). When the pandemic process of Covid-19 was examined, it was considered to be a regional disease in China, the country where the disease was first seen, and was considered to be an 'epidemic'. In the future, however, it has begun to affect the health of societies on a global scale by crossing the borders of the Asian continent (Bağ & Sade, 2020).

The Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, which has spread to almost every country in the world, has been deadly, especially for the elderly and people with chronic illnesses. The delay in taking the necessary measures after the pandemic allowed the virus to spread rapidly. In just a few months, more than a hundred thousand people have died. Preventive measures focus on social isolation and hygiene (Dikmen, Kına, Özkan, & İlhan, 2020).

Turkey has taken its place among the countries most affected by this crisis. As of December 2019, the pandemic has been on the agenda of the whole world as of 11 March 2020, with the first case seen on 11 March 2020, the epidemic process has started in Turkey and some measures such as hygiene have started to be taken. After the first case, measures and social policies started to be implemented. These measures have affected all areas of social life (Arikan & Aytekin, 2022). Isolation, which is used to prevent transmission, has been the most

important way to minimise the relationship of individuals with the social environment. In addition to being an important way to control the spread of the disease, the practice of quarantine deprived individuals of the mutual interaction that social life provides. As a result, people whose freedom was restricted and who were isolated under quarantine were exposed to many psychological effects, especially stress and panic (Ho, Che, Ho, 2020).

1.4. Psychological impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

While epidemics and disasters pose a threat to health and life, they also affect people psychologically. In particular, uncertainty and existing risks increase anxiety and panic and create a climate of fear at the individual, social and universal levels (Yıldırım, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis situation of such magnitude that it will cause such negative emotions. Although the physical health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic attracted more attention and were talked about in the early days of the pandemic, the mental health effects began to be seen over time. In fact, while the Covid-19 pandemic caused physical health problems, it also caused health problems such as depression, anxiety and worry that developed as a result of the pandemic. This shows that the Covid-19 pandemic is not only a medical health crisis, but also a crisis of psychological resilience. It has deeply affected the psychological health and well-being of all infected and uninfected people during the pandemic. Even when the pandemic ends, the psychological impact of this situation will continue for a long time (Zeybek, Bozkurt, & Aşkın, 2020).

1.5. Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on family relationships

The family has many functions, mainly biological, social and psychological. These functions provide benefits such as socialisation, recreation, entertainment, ensuring psychological stability and generational continuity (Canatan & Yıldırım, 2011). Social trauma affecting the family affects family relationships and roles, as well as the characteristics of family members. Individuals may face various psychological problems due to family relationships and roles that have changed due to the epidemic process. It can be said that the sense of guilt about the risk of contracting or transmitting the disease, the prolonged compulsory quarantine process, stigmatisation and the family and social effects of quarantine increase the level of anxiety in individuals. It is thought that this process of uncertainty and many unknowns will lead to communication problems, behavioural problems and outbursts of anger in the family and social environment. Acute stress symptoms are observed during quarantine and curfews (Koçak & Harmancı, 2020). In the event of a death in this process, families could not experience mourning processes, could not receive social support and could not fully perform their religious rituals due to the epidemic rules. Under these conditions, mental health problems such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and self-destruction can occur in family members who are unable to experience the mourning process in a timely manner. Explaining all these extraordinary and undesirable situations to children in the family and addressing their concerns increased the psychological burden on parents (Jörg et al., 2020)

1.6. Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on business life

People spend a large part of their lives working. Working life occupies an important place in the lives of individuals (Martel & Dupuis, 2006, p. 333). With the pandemic process, there have been changes in working styles and the remote working system has been used, usually from home. It can be said that employees have many different opinions about this change. Individuals with introverted personality traits and socially isolated individuals may perceive the remote working system as normal. However, for extroverted individuals who like to be social, this situation is not acceptable and can cause problems. For people who are interested in technology and tend to use technological tools, this situation does not pose a problem (Deloitte, 2020).

In addition to major changes in individuals' personal lives, the stringent measures introduced at the start of the pandemic have inevitably led to changes in their working lives and working styles. Individuals who try to achieve a balance in their work life before the pandemic find it more difficult to achieve this balance during the pandemic. In pandemic situations, individuals' levels of anxiety, stress and fear increase and the situation is perceived as a threat, which has a significant impact on their work-life balance and motivation. (Yılmaz & Sağlam, 2021).

1.7. Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Turkish education system

As in the rest of the world, Turkey tried to take measures to minimise the impact of the pandemic on the educational process. Videos with course content prepared with EBA and TRT channels were delivered to students who had to continue their education remotely. In order to minimise the impact of this process on teachers, students and parents as stakeholders in education, changes were made to legislation regarding psychosocial support studies, compensatory education and evaluation of student performance (Gençoğlu & Çiftçi, 2020).

The first measure taken in Turkey to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic was to suspend education in primary and secondary education institutions as of 16 March 2020, by bringing forward the mid-term holidays previously scheduled in the educational calendar. Following the announcement that the first case was detected in Turkey on 11 March 2020, it was announced that education in all institutions affiliated to the Ministry of National Education would be suspended for one week until 23 March 2020, and after this break, distance education would be started in these institutions through television channels and electronic education network. It was added that an announcement regarding the situation of teachers will be made at a later date. These statements are similar to the measures taken by UNESCO in relation to education policy. As a requirement of a social state, the needs of the times and society are given priority in determining education policy. The MoNE has also revised its education policy in this direction, moving towards distance learning (Eren, 2020).

The problem statement of this study was defined as "The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic process on the family and work life of school administrators".

Based on the aim of the study, the following research questions were sought to be answered:

- What are the psychological impact of the Covid-19 pandemic process on school administrators?
- What are the eimpact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the family lives of school administrators?
- What is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic process on the professional lives of school administrators?

2. Method

2.1. Research model

This study was conducted with qualitative research method and phenomenological design was adopted. By using qualitative research method, it is aimed to address the problem in a multidimensional way with a holistic perspective in its own environment. According to Sandelowski (2004), qualitative research method includes strategies and attitudes towards understanding how individuals make sense of, experience, interpret the social world and how they follow the processes of producing knowledge and how they produce products. In this respect, qualitative studies allow obtaining detailed and rich information about the subject under investigation. How the Covid-19 process affects the family and professional lives of school administrators was examined in detail.

Workgroup

The study group consists of 21 school administrators working in İznik district of Bursa province in the 2020-2021 academic year. Researchers conducting phenomenological research generally prefer purposive sampling method because they need items that have experienced a particular phenomenon (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this study, the purposive sampling method was preferred. The study group of the research consisted of 21 administrators, 6 female and 15 male, working as administrators in schools in Iznik district of Bursa province in the 2021-2022 academic year. In selecting the administrators for the study group, factors such as age, gender, education level, service level, work experience and work experience in the institution where they work as administrators were taken into consideration. Demographic information on the school administrators who participated in the study is presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants

<i>Kod</i>	<i>Professional Experience Duration</i>	<i>Education Institution</i>	<i>Education Status</i>	<i>Type of Organisation</i>
K1	17 years	High School	Master's Degree	Public School

K2	16 years	Preschool	Bachelor's Degree	Private School
K3	11 years	Secondary school	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
K4	18 years	Primary School	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
K5	10 years	High School	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
K6	15 years	Primary School	Master's Degree	Public School
E1	17 years	High School	Bachelor's Degree	Private School
E2	11 years	Secondary school	Master's Degree	Public School
E3	32 years	Primary School	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
E4	16 years	Primary School	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
E5	36 years	Primary School	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
E6	15 years yıl	Secondary school	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
E7	27 years	Primary School	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
E8	22 years	Primary School	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
E9	13 years	Secondary school	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
E10	20 years	Secondary school	Master's Degree	Public School
E11	10 years	Secondary school	Master's Degree	Public School
E12	15 years	Primary School	Master's Degree	Public School
E13	37 years	Primary School	Associate Degree	Public School
E14	15 years	Primary School	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
E15	23 years	High School	Bachelor's Degree	Public School

According to Table 1, six of the participating school administrators are female and 15 are male. When looking at the length of professional experience, the administrator with the least seniority has been working in the educational service for 10 years, while the administrator with the most experience has been working in educational institutions for 37 years. One of the administrators has worked in pre-school education institutions, 9 in primary schools, 6 in secondary schools, one in primary schools and four in secondary schools. While the administrator with the highest seniority has an associate degree, 14 of them have a bachelor's degree and 6 of them have a master's degree.

2.2. Data collection

In this study, which examined the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic process on school administrators in various dimensions, a semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool. Semi-structured interviews are not as rigid as fully structured interviews, but they are far from the flexibility of unstructured interviews (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Prior to administration to participants, a pilot administration was carried out to two school administrators from the sample. As a result of this administration, necessary adjustments were made to the research questions. The researcher used the flexibility of the semi-structured interview form to modify questions and ask additional questions as necessary. In the study, due to the pandemic conditions of covid-19, some interviews were conducted face-to-face and some interviews were conducted online using programmes such as Zoom, MS Teams and recorded with the permission of the participants. The study was voluntary for the participants. Interviews lasted 30-35 minutes on average.

In the study, the interview questions addressed to the participating school administrators in the context of the research questions formed by the four different expert opinions are as follows :

- How did the Covid-19 process affect you psychologically?
- What worried you the most during this process?
- How has the Covid-19 process affected your family relationships? Do you think your relationship with your spouse has changed? Explain.
- Can you explain how it has affected your relationships with your children?
- How has Covid-19 affected your responsibilities at school and your relationships with school staff? Explain.

- Can you talk about the process of establishing online communication with teachers and the impact of this process on the principal-teacher relationship, using examples from your own experience?
- How and in what way have your relationships with colleagues been affected?

The audio recordings of the interviews with the participating school administrators were first converted into written texts, shared with the participants and confirmed. The collected data were then analysed and transcribed electronically using MaxQda (2022). The transcripts of the interviews were reviewed by another expert and checked for consistency. No abbreviations or corrections were made to the interview transcripts, except for spelling errors, and the interview transcripts were recorded electronically.

2.3. Analysing the data

Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants who agreed to participate in the study, using an interview form developed by the researcher for this study, which included probing questions to obtain in-depth information on the subject of the study. The interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants. The interviews used to collect data for the study were conducted on a voluntary basis, the data were transferred to the computer environment after the data were reported, and the 'credibility' of the research was ensured by obtaining the consent of each participant again. To ensure transferability, participants were informed about the research process before each online interview.

Data analysis in qualitative research means variety, creativity and flexibility. All qualitative research is different. Data analysis in every research requires several new analyses. If we look at it, there are two basic models of analysis, descriptive and content (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this study, the data obtained through the interview technique were analysed using descriptive and content analysis methods.

In the analysis of the data obtained in the research, the interview transcripts were grouped by keeping the amount of digitisation to a minimum, the written texts were first coded by working on the written texts, and the codes were grouped under themes determined according to their similar characteristics. The themes were also presented in relation to the categories created on the basis of the participants' views. The themes of the study are as follows: Impact on family life, Impact on work life.

3. Findings

In this study, a qualitative research process in which interview data were processed was conducted. The findings obtained by analysing the verbal data were associated with the two themes of the study and interpreted with tables, graphs and examples of statements taken directly from the interview transcripts. The findings are presented under two sub-headings: Findings on psychological impact (3.1,) Findings on the impact on family life (3.2) and Findings on the impact on work life (3.3).

In the interviews, the responses to the questions posed to school administrators working in schools at different levels were analysed and it was found that they clustered around two themes that were considered compatible with the theoretical framework prepared during the study. The first theme relates to the family and includes two sub-themes: Impact on relationships with spouses and Impact on relationships with children. The second theme is about working life and includes three sub-themes: Impact on school responsibilities, Impact on relationships with teachers and other administrators, Impact on relationships.

3.1. Findings on psychological impact

Research question: What are the psychological impact of the Covid-19 pandemic process on school administrators?

- How has the Covid-19 process affected you psychologically? Have you observed any emotional changes in yourself? Explain.
- What worried you the most during the Covid-19 process?

The first question of the study aims to examine the views of the school administrators participating in the study on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on their psychology. In order to find an answer to this question, the seventh and eighth questions of the interview form were put to the school administrators. The administrators' opinions on this subject were analysed under the theme of psychological effects. The codes created by analysing the interview transcripts of the school administrators on psychological effects are shown in Figure 1.

Findings from the analysis of the participants' interview transcripts on the theme of Psychological Impact The fact that the participants expressed opinions on the effects they felt most personally (38) shows how much they were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The fact that the participating school principals feel anxious and somewhat obsessed, in addition to the fear of death, suggests that they are under the influence of being constantly bombarded with negative news about the Covid-19 outbreak in social media, periodic and non-periodic audiovisual media organisations. In addition, the fact that the pandemic process seems to never end and creates a feeling of uncertainty among managers can also be linked to the negative news of this period. On the other hand, the fact that countries, societies and individuals today do not have sufficient experience with Covid-19 may also play a role in this process.

Figure 1 was created on the basis of the findings obtained by examining the interview transcripts of the participating school administrators with regard to psychological impact.

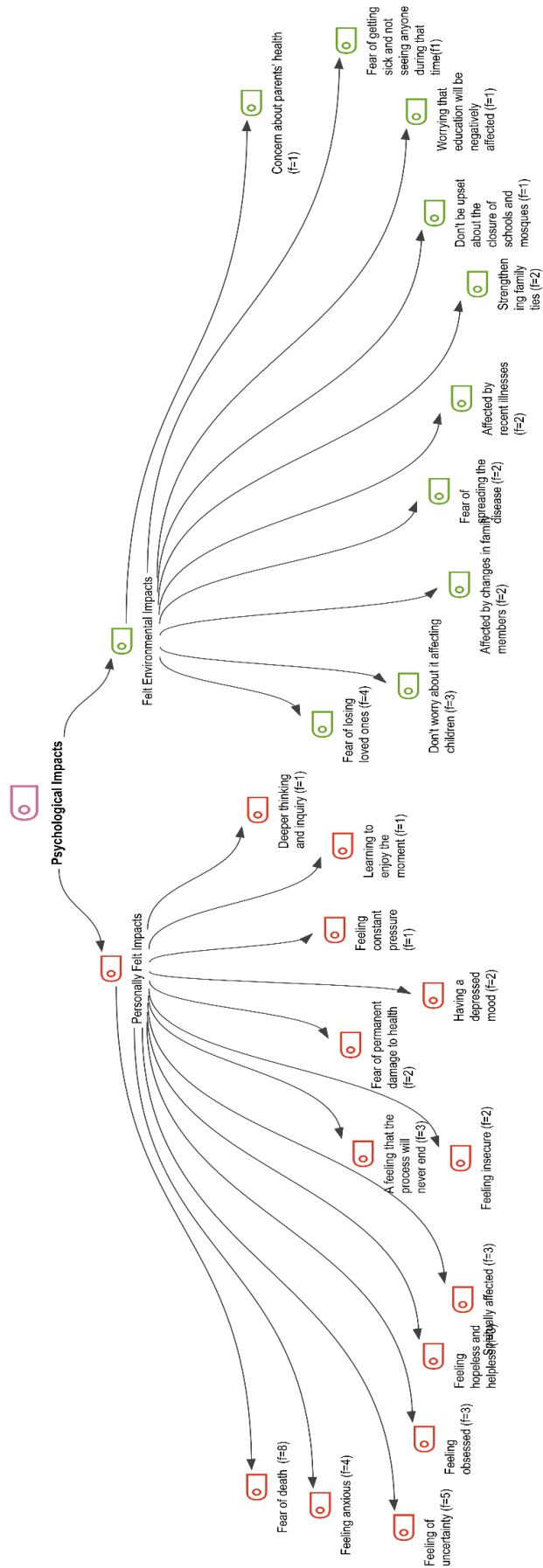


Figure 1: Psychological Impact Codes

3.1.1 Findings on personally felt impacts

By analysing the interview transcripts of the participant school administrators about the impact felt personally, the codes of fear of death, feeling uncertainty, feeling anxious, feeling obsessed, feeling hopelessness and helplessness, being affected psychologically, feeling that the process will never end, feeling insecure, fearing permanent damage to health, feeling constant pressure, having a depressed mood, learning to enjoy the moment, and deeper thinking and questioning were developed.

The manager coded P1 (17 years, High School, Master's Degree, Public), who stated that the Covid-19 pandemic made him very anxious and obsessive, explained the reasons for this as follows: *"I was psychologically extremely affected during the initial outbreak process. Although I restricted my social life, I had a process in which I felt very tense, anxious and even obsessive at my workplace because I had to work. I even cut my hair myself. Even though I got over this process, I am still not the old me. I am uneasy and anxious"*, while the manager coded E14 (Primary School, Undergraduate, Public) stated that he had a depressive mood due to covid: *"The first few months were not a problem, it even felt like a holiday, but in the following months, being away from my friends and not being in crowded environments created a depressive mood."*

The administrator coded E4 (16 years, Primary School, Bachelor's Degree, Public) emphasised concerns about family members as one of the psychological effects of the pandemic: *"Strengthening family ties and learning to enjoy the moment. Covid-19, for example, I was a little ambitious in my own way, everyone had their own goals, such as let me buy this, do this, and get that. It reminded us that it is also important to enjoy the moment of life. It strengthened my relationship with my family. Because we spent more time together at home"*. Similarly, the manager coded P3 (11 years, Secondary School, Bachelor's Degree, Public) stated that they were anxious due to the danger of Covid-19 infecting their children: *"As someone who has gone through this process, I realised that I am very sensitive. Especially since we carry the risk of infecting children, I felt uneasy at the slightest thing."*

Another emotional intensity that stands out in this issue is the fear of losing their relatives. The following is an example of the statement taken directly from the interview transcript of the administrator coded E8 (22 years, Primary School, Bachelor's Degree, Public) *"We were really affected when there was a curfew in the first periods. Also, we were caught in Covid-19 as a family in that process. Each of us was in a separate room. This affected me a lot. The children are all in different rooms. Going to the kitchen at different times affected us a lot. There was fear of losing relatives. Our mother-in-law also lost her life because of this."*

3.1.2 Findings related to felt environmental impacts

By analysing the interview transcripts of the participant school administrators about the effects felt about the environment, the codes *fear of losing loved ones*, *don't worry about it affecting children*, *fear of spreading the disease*, *strengthening family ties*, *affected by changes in family members*, *affected by recent illnesses*, *worrying that education will be negatively affected*, *don't be upset about the closure of schools and mosques*, *fear of getting sick and not seeing anyone during that time*, *concern about parents' health* were developed.

It can be said that the pandemic process undoubtedly worried almost every individual, big and small. In this regard, the administrator coded K1 (17 years, High School, Master's Degree, Public) stated that he had the feeling of losing his wife and children, *"The fear that my wife and child would get sick and I would lose them was what worried me the most"*, and the administrator coded E15 (23 years, High School, Bachelor's Degree, Public) stated that he was afraid that covid-19 would leave permanent damage to health: *"Having a disease that can cause permanent damage to ourselves and our loved ones."*

Participant managers felt the pressure of the pandemic on themselves so intensely that they almost felt that the process would never end. The manager coded E4 (16 years, Primary School, Bachelor's Degree, Public) said the following on the subject: *"Fear of transmitting the disease. The risk of transmission worried me a lot. I waited to see when this situation would end. It seemed as if it would never end. I was most afraid that my children would be infected with this disease, that it would pass through me"*.

Supporting her colleague, the administrator coded E1 (17 years, High School, Undergraduate, Private) stated that the anxiety she experienced became intense with the feeling of uncertainty as follows "*Uncertainty... What was going to happen? Would there be vaccines, medicines, how would we get over if we got sick? Would we lose our loved ones?*".

Unlike other participants, the administrator coded E11 (10 years, Secondary School, Master's Degree, Public) stated that he was worried that the education process would be negatively affected: "*The attendance of the students, the teaching techniques of the teachers, the internet infrastructure in Iznik district made me very uneasy in terms of negatively affecting the education process*".

3.2. Findings on the impact on family life

Research Question: What are the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the family lives of school administrators?

- How has the Covid-19 process affected your family relationships? Do you think your relationship with your spouse has changed? Explain.
- Can you explain how it has affected your relationships with your children?

The two questions of the study aim to examine the opinions of the school administrators who participated in the study regarding the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected Turkey and the whole world since 2020, on their family life. In order to find an answer to this question, the ninth and tenth questions of the interview form were asked to the school administrators. The administrators' opinions on this topic were analysed under the theme of family life. The codes created by analysing the interview transcripts of school administrators on family life are shown in Figure 1:

Analysing the results in Figure 1, the interview transcripts on the topic of effects on family life show that participants expressed a similar number of opinions about effects on relationships with spouses (21) and effects on relationships with children (20).

School administrators believe that the HIV pandemic has had a strong impact not only on individual and social life, but also on relationships between family members. On the other hand, school administrators stated that they spent more time with their spouses because of the pandemic and that their lives had changed more positively than other effects, suggesting that the pandemic had a positive impact on family life. Similarly, administrators expressed that they were happy to spend more time with their children. Although participants reported that family life was generally positively affected by the pandemic, it was observed that they reported the restriction of physical contact as much as possible due to health conditions as a negative effect.

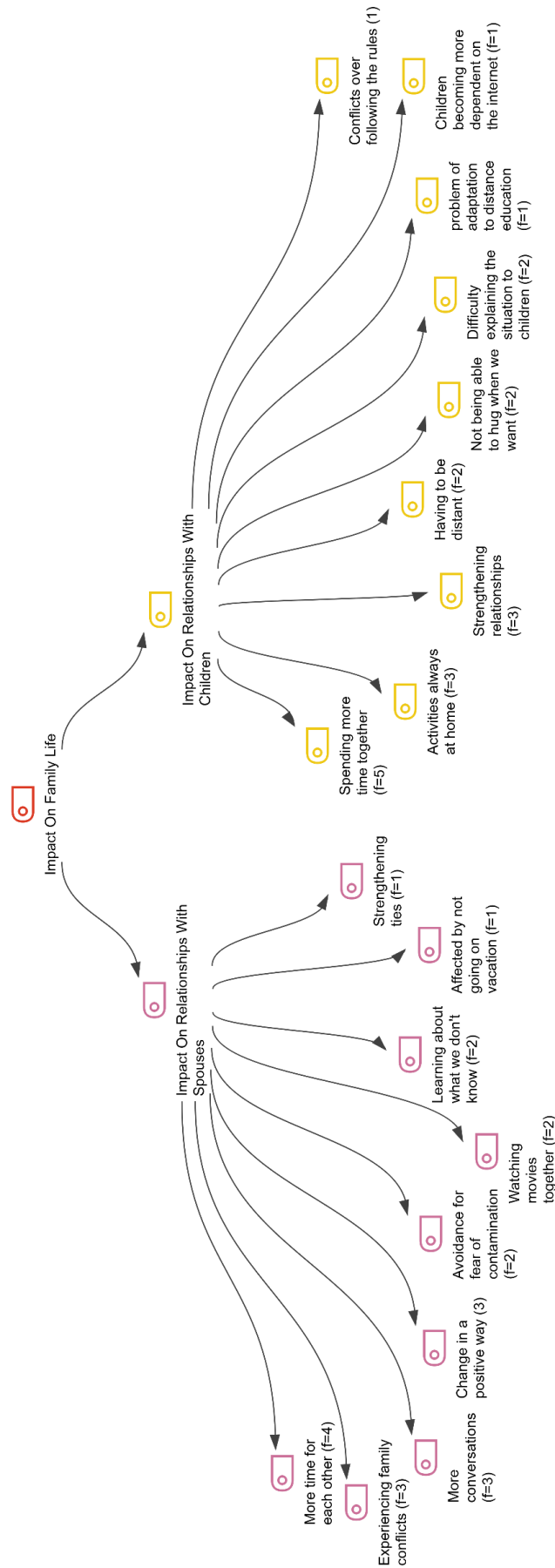


Figure 1. Codes on family life

3.2.1. Impact on relationships with spouses

By examining the interview transcripts of the participant school administrators about the impact of coronavirus on their relationships with their spouses, the codes of *spending more time for each other, experiencing family conflicts, changing in a positive way, more conversations, avoidance for fear of contamination, watching movies together, learning about what we don't know, strengthening ties and affected by not going vacation* were developed.

It can be said that one of the most important outcomes of family togetherness is to do activities with the spouse and to act around a common goal. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, it can be said that school administrators spent more time with their spouses than before the pandemic, and the number and quality of the activities they did together differed. There were cases where the pandemic positively affected the relationship between spouses. For example, the administrator coded E5 (36 years, Primary School, Undergraduate, Public) stated that they spent more time with their spouses: "*This situation was positive for my relationship with my spouse. We spent more time together, we spent more time with each other, so it was good.*".

Similarly, the administrator coded P2 (16 years, pre-school, bachelor's degree, private) stated that she and her husband had positive interactions as a result of the pandemic and that they spent more time together: "*In this process we spent more time together, we became more connected, our bonds were strengthened. It was positive for us.*"

When the opinions of the participants were examined, it was found that the pandemic had some negative effects, such as not being able to go on holiday together, as well as positive effects. On this issue, the administrator coded E10 (20 years old, Secondary School, Master's Degree, Public) expressed his opinion as follows "*... as we cannot use our holidays for other activities, it is a reflection of the same home environment, the same work environment and the negative situations experienced for about three years*".

The manager coded E8 (22 years old, primary school, bachelor's degree, public sector) gave the example of spouses moving away from each other in a negative way among the situations caused by the pandemic: "*We always sat in different corners in the home environment. We moved away a bit, we became more cautious, we became more controlled. Especially in the first periods, when it came from the street, taking off your clothes, spraying disinfectant everywhere, when it came from the market, it affected us too*".

3.2.1 Impact on relationships with children

By analysing the interview transcripts of the participant school administrators about the effect of coronavirus on their relationships with their children, the codes of *spending more time together, activities always at home, strengthening relationships, having to be distant, not being able to hug when we want, difficulty explaining the situation to children, problem of adaptation to distance education, children becoming more dependent on the internet, conflicts over in following the rules* were developed.

It can be said that the pandemic had both positive and negative effects on school administrators' interaction with their children. Among the positive effects, the strengthening of the relationship between school administrators and their children can be ranked first. The statement of the administrator coded E3 (32 years old, primary school, undergraduate, public) on this subject is as follows: "*We had the chance to spend a long time together, we talked about what we did not find time to talk about, we renewed our memories, we talked about the future, we had the chance to transmit our oral culture from the past to our children. Our exchanges increased and our bonds strengthened*".

It can be said that the effects of Covid 19 on children are mostly negative according to school administrators. Some of the participants stated that their children had difficulties in adapting to distance learning, some of them stated that their children were addicted to the Internet. The educator coded K2 stated that he had observed problems of adaptation to distance learning in his children: "*A life without school was comfortable for them, but the process of online education was very difficult, inefficient and boring. Apart from that, we had very productive and enjoyable moments together*", while the administrator coded E9 (13 years, secondary school, bachelor's degree, public) stated that he suffered from children becoming addicted to the Internet: "*The child has become more dependent on the internet. Overweight has occurred. Home games and films have increased.*"

The administrator coded E1 (17 years old, High School, Undergraduate, Private), who stated that he found it difficult to explain the situation to the children, expressed his opinion as follows "*Spending more time together. It was very good for me in terms of time allocation. But it was difficult to explain this pandemic and its effects to the children. The hardest thing was to explain that they cannot go out on the streets. In fact, I think we will be able to see how it affects them after many years*", while the administrator coded E7 (27 years old, primary school, undergraduate, public) stated that he had observed conflicts in his children about following the rules due to the pandemic: "*They came together with groups of friends from time to time. We were very concerned about this situation. After their activities, we felt uncomfortable when we had to be together. When it came to personal hygiene, we made sure they were left alone with some suggestions and obligations. This caused some problems and arguments between us from time to time. Therefore, in this process, some fractures, damages and problems in our relationships with our children arose*".

Some participants stated that they had to be distant from their children because of their health conditions. An example is the opinion of the administrator coded E13 (37 years old, primary school, associate degree, public): "*My children, of course, took care to behave a little more carefully because they were worried about us. We had a more distant relationship*".

3.3. Findings on the effects on work life

Research question: What is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic process on the professional lives of school administrators?

- How has Covid-19 affected your responsibilities at school and your relationships with school staff?
Explain
- Can you talk about the process of setting up online communication with teachers and the impact of this process on the principal-teacher relationship, using examples from your own experience?
- How and in what way have your relationships with colleagues been affected?

The second question of the study is to examine the opinions of the school administrators participating in the study regarding the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on their professional lives. In order to find an answer to this question, the school administrators were asked the fourth, fifth and sixth questions in the interview form. The administrators' opinions on this subject were analysed under the theme of work life. The codes created by analysing the school administrators' interview transcripts on work life are shown in Figure 2:

When analysing the results in Figure 2, it can be seen that the participants mostly expressed their opinions on the responsibilities at school (32). The interview transcripts were analysed under the theme of the impact on the participants' work life. It was observed that school administrators thought that although the Covid pandemic did not change their administrative duties, it did affect them as much as possible in terms of improving health conditions, ensuring the general hygiene of the school, motivating teachers, students and other staff in line with the objectives of the educational institution. According to the participating administrators, although there was a situation of being away from school from time to time due to the epidemic, the school's efforts to continue its activities in line with the general objectives of national education in the online environment by transforming them into distance education did not make any difference to their sense of duty.

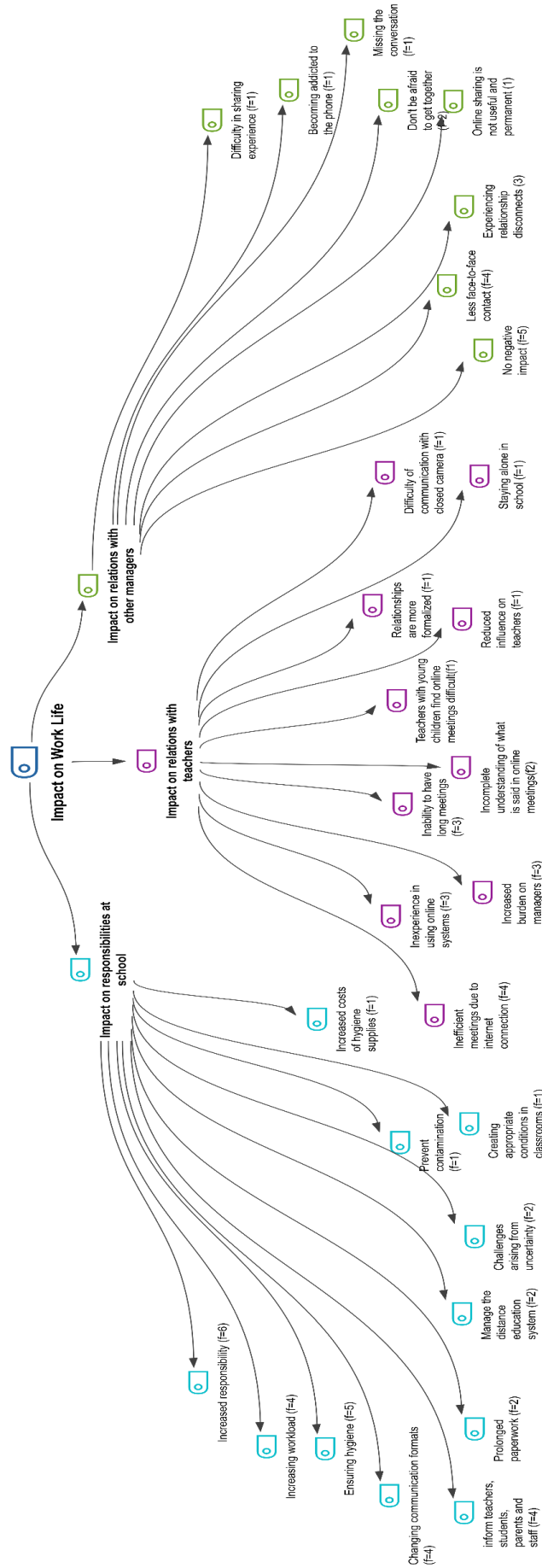


Figure 2. Codes on work life

3.3.1. Impact on responsibilities at school

By analysing the interview transcripts of the participant school administrators about the impact of coronavirus on responsibilities at school, codes were developed for increased responsibility, *increased workload, ensuring hygiene, increased responsibility, informing teachers, students, parents and staff, changing communication formats, prolonged paperwork, manage the distance education system, challenges arising from uncertainty, prevent contamination, creating appropriate conditions in classrooms, increasingcosys of hygiene material* .

School administrators stated that they had a heavy workload in terms of in-school and out-of-school activities related to administrative tasks, with or without the pandemic, and that the workload did not decrease because of the pandemic, and even increased because of the coordination of online courses. In this context, the administrator coded E15 (23 years, High School, Undergraduate, Public) said: *"Crowded and face-to-face meetings have been replaced by remote online meetings. This situation has had a negative impact on the quality and duration of communication"*, while the administrator coded E14 (Primary School, Undergraduate, Public) complained that paperwork took longer due to the pandemic: *"Difficulty in solving problems that can easily be solved face to face. Since we switched to remote and rotational working, official paperwork has become more difficult. With teachers and other staff away from the school, we had difficulty even getting official documents signed. Notebooks could not be filled in regularly, especially during the first phase of the pandemic. We struggled to solve problems that we could easily solve in a face-to-face meeting."*

The administrator coded E8 (22 years old, Primary School, Bachelor's Degree, Public), who explained that they try to create suitable conditions for online teaching in school classrooms, said: *"It increased our responsibilities, that is, our responsibilities such that we had to closely monitor the health of our students, parents or staff. We tried to create suitable conditions, we tried to create an educational environment, classrooms"*, while the administrator coded K1 (17 years, High School, Master's Degree, Public) complained about the increase in responsibilities due to the pandemic: *"Increased responsibilities. Increased workload. Increased hygiene costs. We have different responsibilities in terms of school health. The cost of cleaning and hygiene materials has increased. On the other hand, apart from the actual process, Covid-19 also brought a lot of burden in terms of following up documents and procedures. Daily e-school and Mebbis Hes code scans, positive/contact notifications to students/staff, providing a Hes code reception/request service to parents/visitors, updating cleaning charts kept outside the routine, increased workload due to staff in quarantine, coordinating empty classes, etc.The workload and responsibility also increased. We have shared tasks with the school staff regarding the management of the Covid process."*

The administrator coded P6 (15 years, Primary, Master's Degree, Public), who stated that there was uncertainty due to Covid which led to some difficulties, in other words there were difficulties due to uncertainties in the process, said: *"When Covid-19 started, the closure of schools and the uncertainties afterwards caused us great difficulties. Then they tried distance learning. It was quite difficult in this process. We had a lot of difficulties because the system was still new. We tried to assign courses until midnight"*.

The administrator coded E4 (16 years, Primary School, Undergraduate, Public) complained about having to follow up on students and teachers related to the disease: *"In the school's responsibilities, we put more emphasis on hygiene issues. We warned a lot about distance, hygiene, cleaning the toilets and not allowing children to be together. After a while, the constant checking of the children began to cause discomfort both for the children and for us. In other words, don't quarantine a child with the slightest fever, don't send them home. This had a negative impact not only on the children but also on us. Because the suspicion of covid-19 was not confirmed by 100 per cent of the tests."*

3.3.2 Impact on relations with teachers

By analysing the interview transcripts of the participating school administrators about the impact of the coronavirus on administrators relationships with teachers, codes were developed *for inefficient meetings due to Internet connection, inexperience in using online systems, increased burden on managers, inability to have long meetings, incomplete understanding of what is said in online meetings, teachers with young children find online meetings difficult, reduced influence on teachers, relationships are more formalized, staying alone in school, difficulty of communication whit closed camera*.

The Covid-19 pandemic led to unpredictable results. Administrators who resorted to online meetings because they were unable to hold face-to-face meetings suffered from a lack of understanding of teachers' needs and an inability to keep them properly informed.

For example, the manager coded P5 (10 years, High School, Bachelor's Degree, Public) emphasised that what was intended to be said in online meetings could not be fully understood, as follows: *"In online communication, from time to time I realised that the message intended to be said in the meetings was not properly understood in the studies carried out in the following process. I could not be sure if some friends were really there at that time because the cameras were turned off and there was no interaction during the meeting. In normal face-to-face meetings, we were able to cover the topics we cover in 3-4 hours in a maximum of 1 hour when we zoomed in"*.

The administrator coded E14 (Primary, Undergraduate, Public) also described the inability to hold long meetings as a negative: *"Difficult for teachers with young children. The fact that the applications we used in the Teachers' Council meetings with my teachers did not allow more than 1 hour did not allow us to discuss all the issues. As my teachers usually have young children, the children were involved in the meeting from time to time."*

School administrators who had problems adapting to the online system because they were in other professional fields expressed that they had some inexperience in using the system. In this regard, the administrator coded P6 (15 years, Primary, Master's Degree, Public) expressed the inexperience in using the online system as follows: *"Communicating with teachers online was difficult for us at first. Especially in the process of making online meetings, there were beginners. There were some people who could not connect to the meeting and had difficulty turning on the camera sound"*.

The administrator coded E5 (36 years old, primary school, bachelor's degree, public), who criticised the inefficiency of the meetings due to the internet connection, summarised his opinion as follows: *"We had problems communicating online. There were interruptions in the internet connection. Inadequate communication led to a lack of coordination"*.

The administrator coded E2 (11 years, Secondary School, Master's Degree, Public) approached the issue from a different perspective, giving the example of the increase in the workload of principals and the decrease in their influence on teachers: *"In this process, I think that while the workload of school principals has increased, their influence on teachers has decreased even more. The extension of distance learning has opened the door to administrative separation and laxity. I have observed that the control mechanism over teachers and the educational process has been disrupted"*. The administrator coded E3 (32 years, primary school, bachelor's degree, public) also supported his colleague and complained that relations had become more formal: *"There was a more formalised communication environment"*.

3.3.3. Impact on relationships with other managers

By analysing the interview transcripts of the participating school administrators about the impact of the coronavirus on their relationships with other administrators, the following codes were developed: *no negative impact, less face-to-face contact, experiencing relationship disconnections, online sharing is not useful and permanent, don't be afraid to get together, becoming addicted to the telephone, difficulty in sharing experiences, missing the conversation*.

It was observed that the pandemic affected school administrators in a multidimensional way. Because of the risk of contamination, administrators were reluctant to meet with staff in their own schools or with administrators in other schools. This situation led to school administrators who had intensive meetings becoming bored with the process.

The administrator coded P4 (18 years, Primary, Undergraduate, Public) who complained about this situation mentioned that there was a disconnect between administrators: *"Unfortunately, we did not have the opportunity to meet with our colleagues. Of course, since there were no meetings, there were rifts"*, P5 (10 years old, High School, Bachelor's Degree, Public) explained that they were afraid to get together because of the fear of

secrecy: *"We were afraid of each other. When we came together, we tried to communicate by wearing a double layered mask"*.

The administrator coded P6 (15 years, primary school, master's degree, public), who suffered from the inability to share experiences among administrators, said *"In this process we have not had the opportunity to meet face to face with our colleagues and exchange information. It has become difficult to share experiences"* and summarised the problem..

In addition to these, the administrator coded E4 (16 years old, Primary School, Undergraduate, Public), who stated that the pandemic strengthened the unity among administrators, expressed his opinion as follows: *"Well, we, that is, with our teachers, both our students and our parents, everyone tried to find a solution, this strengthened our unity. I can say that it strengthened our team spirit, that is to say, we tried to give comfort to our friends. They tried to be self-sacrificing in different issues"*.

The administrator coded E7 (27 years old, primary school, bachelor's degree, public) also expressed that he missed the colleagues he had been away from: *"Of course, the theatre, cinema, museum, sports, social and other activities that we used to do together with our teachers have always been postponed. That is why this process has made us feel a longing to develop better relationships, even though the distance in our relationships is insipid"*.

4. Discussion

This study investigated the opinions of school administrators working in primary and secondary schools in İznik district, Bursa province, on the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic process on them.

Twenty-one school administrators, six female and fifteen male, participated in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants using a 10-question interview form developed by the researcher. Data from the interviews were analysed using MaxQda qualitative analysis software. The interview transcripts of the participating administrators were analysed, codes were created and the opinions of the school administrators on the impact of the pandemic process were clustered under two themes and their sub-themes.

The findings were discussed under the headings of impact on family life and impact on work life.

4.1. Discussion of Psychological Impact

When analysing the transcripts of the participants' interviews on the topic of psychological effects, the fact that the majority of the participants (38) expressed opinions on the effects they felt personally shows how much they have been affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. The fact that the participating school principals feel anxious and somewhat obsessed, in addition to the fear of death, suggests that they are under the influence of being constantly bombarded with negative news about the Covid-19 outbreak in social media, periodic and non-periodic audiovisual media organisations. In addition, the fact that the pandemic process seems to never end and creates a feeling of uncertainty among managers can also be linked to the negative news of this period. On the other hand, the fact that countries, societies and individuals today do not have sufficient experience with Covid-19 may also play a role.

The pandemic primarily caused health problems. However, many socio-psychological effects have been observed in the process of combating the epidemic and in the following period. It can be said that the epidemic process undoubtedly worries almost every individual, big or small. The participating managers felt the pressure of the pandemic on themselves so intensely that they almost felt that the process would never end. Singh and Singh (2020) stated in their study that the drastic reduction in deep and meaningful relationships during the Covid-19 period affects people physically and mentally, increasing stress and anxiety, loneliness, fearful impulses, depression, panic states, mental disorders and many other issues that affect individual lives and social life as a whole.

Some administrators stated that the anxiety they experienced was intensified by the feeling of insecurity, while others feared that the educational process of their children would be negatively affected. In difficult living

conditions, it is common for individuals to experience unhappiness, anxiety, anger, fear, excitement, rage and many other negative emotions (Kandemir & Atak, 2020). The fear of losing their relatives and the fear of infecting their relatives were effective in increasing the anxiety experienced.

4.2. Discussion on family life

School administrators believe that the COVID pandemic has had a strong impact not only on individual and social life, but also on relationships between family members. On the other hand, principals stated that they spent more time with their spouses because of the pandemic and that their lives had changed more positively than other effects, suggesting that the pandemic had a positive impact on family life. Similarly, managers said they were happy to spend more time with their children. Although participants reported that family life was generally positively affected by the pandemic, it was observed that they reported the restriction of physical contact as much as possible due to health conditions as a negative effect.

The problems that increased most in the family during the pandemic period were discussions about domestic responsibilities, criticism of each other by family members, arguments and fights in the family, and discussions about the household economy. There was an increase in verbal arguments in particular. In addition, there was a decrease in some of the domestic problems compared to the pre-pandemic period, and there was an increase in spending more time together, doing activities together, and communicating within the family (Barış & Taylan, 2020). It can be said that one of the most important outcomes of family togetherness is doing activities with the spouse and acting towards a common goal. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, it can be said that school administrators spent less time with their spouses than before the pandemic, and the number and quality of activities they did together differed.

During the pandemic period, it was found that family members spent more time with their children and themselves and tried not to transfer their fears to their children (Özyürek & Çetinkaya, 2021). There were cases where the pandemic had a positive effect on the relationship between spouses. It was observed that some managers stated that they spent more time with their spouses, while others stated that they had positive interactions with their spouses due to the pandemic and that they spent more time together.

Looking at the opinions of the participants, the pandemic had some negative effects, such as not being able to go on holiday together, as well as positive effects. Some administrators mentioned estrangement of spouses as an example of a negative effect of the pandemic.

It can be said that the pandemic has both positive and negative effects on school administrators' interaction with their children. Among the positive effects, the first is the strengthening of the relationship between school administrators and their children. Some participants stated that their children had difficulty adapting to distance learning and some of them stated that their children were addicted to the internet.

While one administrator stated that he observed problems of adaptation to distance learning in his children, another administrator stated that he suffered from children becoming addicted to the Internet. In addition to the administrators who stated that they had difficulties explaining the situation to their children, there were also those who stated that they had observed conflicts in their children about following the rules due to the pandemic. Some participants also said that they had to keep their children at a distance because of their health.

4.3. Discussion on work life

School administrators stated that they have a heavy workload of administrative tasks related to both in-school and out-of-school activities, with or without the pandemic, and that the workload has not decreased because of the pandemic, but has increased because of the coordination of online courses. While some of the administrators who participated in the study complained that paperwork had increased because of the pandemic, some of them complained that they were trying to create the right conditions for online teaching in school classrooms, while others complained that their responsibilities had increased because of the pandemic.

Some administrators stated that there was uncertainty due to COVID, which led to some difficulties, in other words, there were difficulties due to uncertainties in the process, while others complained that they had to follow up students and teachers related to the disease.

In order to achieve the desired success in distance learning and education management, issues such as technological infrastructure, skilled technical and administrative staff are important. As this is a technology-dependent situation, system-related disruptions can affect all parties (Özyürek, Begde, Yavuz, & Özkan, 2020). The Covid 19 pandemic had unpredictable results. Administrators, who resorted to online meetings due to the inability to hold face-to-face meetings, suffered from not being able to fully understand teachers' needs and inform them properly. School administrators who had problems adapting to the online system, as in other professional fields, expressed that they had some inexperience in using the system. In the study conducted by Akyavuz and Çakın (2020) on school administrators, it was found that school administrators experienced various problems in the education system during the COVID 19 process and that these problems were lack of communication, technical inadequacy, lack of information, lack of interest of teachers in the subject and inadequacy of the plans made. In this study, school administrators reported that they had the most problems with communication.

It was observed that the pandemic affected school administrators in a multidimensional way. Because of the risk of contamination, administrators were afraid to meet either with staff in their own schools or with administrators in other schools. This situation led to the boredom of the school administrators who had intensive meetings. Some participants who complained about this situation mentioned that there was a disconnect between administrators, while others were afraid to meet because of the fear of the epidemic.

5. Suggestions

Based on the findings, recommendations for further research and policy makers have been developed.

Suggestion for Decision Makers

- It is recommended that students and teachers should be supported in terms of technological equipment in order to access online courses efficiently.
- In order to facilitate the adaptation of school administrators to distance learning, they can be offered courses on pedagogical strategies.
- In-service training courses can be organised to support school administrators psychologically and emotionally.

Suggestions for further research

- The impact of school administrators' technological competencies on the management process in the Covid-19 pandemic experienced on a global scale.
- Factors affecting the performance of school administrators under pandemic conditions can be explored by including family members in the research.

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