

EFL University Instructors' Employment Status and Their Perception of Professional Commitment

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Abstract

Instructors play an important role in educating the future members of society through their work in universities and quality education cannot be achieved without the supreme efforts of dedicated and committed university teachers. Hence, there is a call for more research concerning the notion of teacher commitment, its dimensions and the factors that influence it. The current study first aimed to set priority among the dimensions of EFL instructors' professional commitment through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling and then investigate the effect of EFL instructors' employment status as full time or part time on their professional commitment through two-tailed *t*-test. A previously validated EFL Teachers' Professional Commitment Questionnaire was employed to collect data from 420 EFL male and female university instructors. The results exhibited a significant difference between these two variables in total. One of the important implications of this research is that EFL instructors inspire to evaluate their commitment regarding the priority of dimensions and their underlying components meticulously to find out what they should work on more to improve students' achievements in the EFL learning context of Iran.

Keywords: Commitment to profession, Commitment to students, Commitment to university, EFL university instructors, PLS-SEM, Teachers' professional commitment

1. Introduction

Teacher commitment is a crucial phenomenon to understand due to its intimate connection with concepts such as the quality of teaching, teacher adaptability, teacher attendance, teacher burn out, teacher retention, efficiency and productivity in schools, organizational “health” of the school, and student attitudes and learning outcomes (Klein, Molloy, & Cooper, 2009 ; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Accordingly, teacher commitment has been deemed as an initial element in the success and future of education. Following the same pattern of thoughts, Nwosu (2012) beautifully asserted that teachers with a high level of commitment work more diligently, demonstrate stronger affiliation to their school, and display more desire to carry out the goals of teaching than teachers with low levels of commitment. Consequently, it is of value to precisely define the notion of teacher commitment, its dimensions, and the factors that influence the level of teachers’ commitment in schools and universities.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

There exist a number of concerns that stand up for why research on teachers’ commitment needs to be carried out in the EFL academic context of Iran. First, commitment has received a great deal of attention in business and organizational studies, compared to the relatively little research that has addressed commitment among teachers (Somech & Bogler, 2002). However, to consider teacher commitment merely in terms of organizational commitment would be to ignore the uniqueness and complexities of a number of working relationships that are integral to the act of teaching itself.

Another noticeable reason for conducting the present study lies in the fact that plenty of research (Arjunan & Balamurugan, 2013; Crosswell, 2006) has already been conducted on professional commitment but there is inconsistency in defining and determining its dimensions. Subsequently, the factors, dimensions, and components influencing the level of commitment of teachers in schools and in the wider education systems must necessarily be the focus of an important research leading to the introduction of reform and change within classrooms, schools, institutions, learning centers, and national systems of education (Crosswell, 2006).

The next reason is that a teacher commitment as a multidimensional construct may have different forms, such as commitment to the school, commitment to student,

commitment to the profession, and commitment to society, etc. However, it is worth drawing distinctions among the dimensions and treating them as separate entities because teachers' views, values, behaviors, and performance in class may vary, depending on the kind of commitment involved.

Another significant reason which supports the needs for the current study to be conducted in that the level and the degree of commitment among EFL university instructors are considered to be different for various reasons. Seemingly, as Cooper (2009) asserted, the commitment of teachers is influenced by several factors such as job satisfaction, teachers' employment status, educational certificate, gender, teaching experience, etc. However, there exist few studies which explored the relationship between teachers' professional commitment and these variables. Therefore, the current study investigated the effect of EFL teachers' employment status as full time or part time on their professional commitment.

1.2. Research Questions

Given the significance of EFL teachers' professional commitment, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the priorities among the dimensions of teachers' professional commitment?
2. Does EFL university instructors' employment status have any effect on their professional commitment?

1.3 Research Hypothesis

Iranian EFL university teachers' employment status (e.g. full time and part time) has a significant effect on their professional commitment.

2. Literature Review

There exist various definitions of commitment provided by theorists and researchers based on how commitment itself is conceptualized. Commitment has received a great deal of attention in business and organizational studies, compared to the relatively little research that has addressed commitment among teachers. The notion of commitment has been widely used in organizational research to analyze both individual and organizational

behavior from the late 1950s. Organizational commitment is defined as “a psychological state that (a) characterizes the employee’s relationship with the organization, and (b) has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization” (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). This popular definition is an attempt to create a consensus between different research traditions and definitions in the literature on organizational commitment. The two most commonly-used assessment tools in organizational behavior research are Mowday, Steers, and Porter’s (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), and Allen and Myers’ (1990) three Component Organizational Commitment Scale. According to Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), OCQ has three characteristics : (1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, (2) willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization and 3) a strong desire to remain a member. Later on, Allen and Meyer (1990) developed the concept by providing a three-dimensional model of organizational commitment. In fact, they attempted to provide a comprehensive model from three perspectives; Affective, normative, and continuous. They argued that although the various conceptualizations of organizational commitment have emerged, in fact, each of them has common three subjects: "affective attachment", "obligation" and "perceived costs" that introduced by "affective commitment", "normative commitment" and "continuance commitment". These dimensions describe the different ways of organizational commitment development and the implications for employees’ behavior. According to Meyer and Allen’s Model (1991), an organizational commitment was characterized into three dimensions namely: affective, continuance, and normative.

Affective Commitment referred to " the positive feelings of identification with organization, attachment to and involvement in the work organization", Continuance Commitment identified by "the extent to which employees feel committed to their organization by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving" and Normative Commitment stood for "the employee’s feelings of obligation to remain with the organization" (p.67).

A great number of educational researchers, such as Eisinga, Teelken, and Doorewaard (2010), Joiner and Bakalis (2006), and Choi and Tang (2007) conducted research based on the assumption that teacher commitment was equivalent to organization commitment along with its three dimensions. Eisinga et al. (2010) examined the effect of some factors on organizational commitment of the faculty members in six European

universities from Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, UK, Finland, and Sweden. They considered the faculty at the organizational level. Winter and Sarros (2002) investigated the effect of the environmental factors on the organizational commitment of the faculty members at Australian Universities. Soltani and Hajikarimi (2016) proposed a conceptual cross-level model of organizational commitment for faculty members and the staff of nonprofit universities in Tehran. Remarkably, most of the existing research on organizational commitment of the faculty members used the standard questionnaires of Allen and Meyer (1990). Furthermore, many researchers such as Aghaei and Savari (2014), Naghipour, Galavandi, Alizadeh, and Ebrahim (2017) employed a standard questionnaire of Allen and Meyer (1990) to investigate teacher commitment in the educational context of Iran. All the above researches and many others exhibited the widespread applications of Allen and Meyer's (1990) model both for organizational commitment and teacher commitment's studies in the world.

Although it is a multidimensional construct that can be viewed from several perspectives and various dimensions apart from the only definition provided by Allen and Meyer (1990), there exist very few studies in Iran and other countries considering different dimensions of teacher commitment. Regarding the significance of EFL teacher commitment in education, an increasing number of researchers put their efforts into defining the constructs of teacher commitment and recognizing its various dimensions and components (e.g. Huang, Lee, Zhang & Wang, 2016). The recently an explanation of teacher commitment is provided by Arjunan and Balamurugan, (2013):

Professional commitment is a passion for the work involved in teaching or a specific aspect of teaching. It is an investment of time outside of contact hours with students as a responsibility to impart knowledge, attitudes, values, and beliefs and takes responsibility for passing on a core set of skills, understandings, and values. Professional commitment is the willingness to engage with the school and the school community. It is a belief that teachers have a professional responsibility that reaches out beyond the four walls of the classroom and perhaps even extends beyond the boundary of the school. (p.45)

Drawing on the previous studies on teacher commitment, some of the dimensions and components were nearly common among all. In a study by Srinivasan and Ambedkar (2014), the dimensions of commitment were categorized into commitment to the

profession, commitment to the learner, commitment to attain excellence, commitment to the society, and commitment to human values. Similarly, Huang et al. (2016) classified teacher commitment into three dimensions and their scale was validated through CFA. The results confirmed two dimensions of teacher commitment to school and teacher commitment to students while indicating an insignificant coefficient and value for the third dimension of commitment to the teaching profession. In another study, Thien, Razak, and Ramayah (2014) validated an integrative teacher commitment scale in Penang, Malaysia using EFA and CFA. The findings supported the connection of teacher commitment with students, teaching, school, and profession. It is worth mentioning that the four dimensions of commitment to student, teaching, to school, and to the profession were somehow common in this researches. Additionally, Ganjali, Ashraf, and Motallebzade (2019) in their study on developing and validating EFL instructors' professional commitment questionnaire through PLS-SEM identified the dimensions and components of instructors' professional commitment in a mixed-method; two qualitative and one quantitative phase. One of their theoretical frameworks for selecting the most prominent dimensions and components of teachers' professional commitment was the research carried out by Razak, Darmawan, and Keeves (2009) which elected four types of teacher commitment, not necessarily reflected the types of commitment found in business organizations or other professions. These types of commitments of teachers were 'teacher commitment to the school, teacher commitment to the student, teacher commitment to teaching work, and teacher commitment to the profession. Since some of these relations seemed to overlap, the researchers put these connections under three major dimensions as "students", "university", "profession" and "society". As the findings in their research indicated, three dimensions of commitment to the university, commitment to students, and commitment to the profession along with ten components were identified. Commitment to students encompassed three components namely: social needs, academic needs, and personal needs. Commitment to profession included four components as identity, attitude, colleagues, and professional development. It should be noted that since teacher commitment is a multidimensional concept, the researchers employed Meyer and Allen's organizational commitment model as one of the dimensions namely Commitment to University in their model. Accordingly, this dimension contained its three components as affective, normative and continuous. The aforementioned dimensions applied in this study are explained in the following.

—Commitment to School: As discussed earlier, Meyer and Allen's Organizational Commitment Model (1991) has been incorporated into Teachers' Professional Commitment Model (Ganjali et al., 2019) in the current study and therefore employed as one of the dimensions namely Commitment to University. Accordingly, the researchers put forward the definition of Lawrence and Deepa (2012) to elaborate on Commitment to School. They applied Meyer and Allen's (1991) prior research to define three dimensions of commitment that they labeled affective, normative and continuance. Affective Commitment is defined as the teacher's positive emotional attachment to the school for the learning of the students. A teacher who is affectively committed strongly identifies with the goals of the school and desires to remain as a member of schools. This teacher commits to the school because he/she wants to. Normative Commitment is the teacher's perceived obligation to remain in school. The individual commits to and remains with an organization because of feelings of obligation. The employee stays with the organization because he/she "ought to." Continuance Commitment is described as a teacher's commitment to the school because he/she perceives high costs of losing the job, including economic costs (such as pension accruals) and social costs (friendship ties with co-workers) that would be incurred. 'The employee remains a member of the organization because he/she "has to' (p.62).

—Commitment to Students: This dimension rests outside the discussed organizational dimensions as it concentrates on the unique relationship between a teacher and their students. Rosenholtz (1989) states that teachers who are committed to their students positively engage with their students, work harder to make the classroom activities more meaningful, and introduce new ways of learning. As such, Teacher Commitment to Students is conceptualized as teachers' involvement or responsibility in student learning. According to Razak et al. (2009), Commitment to Students motivates the teachers to deal with students undergoing personal crises, or to be more sensitive and aware of the students' development and their achievement. Similarly, the findings of some research revealed that committed teachers establish good rapport with students and offer remedial assistance to weak students (Nabukenya, 2005; Mart, 2013).

—Commitment to Profession: Huang et al. (2016) defined teacher commitment to the profession as the psychological link between the teachers and their teaching, that is, an affective attachment to the profession or occupation associated with personal identification

and satisfaction as a teacher. Commitment could also be viewed as loyalty to teaching as a profession that included at its heart values, norms, or roles entailed in teaching (Tyree, 1996, p. 296), or teachers' willingness to be engaged in teaching work (Thien et al., 2014). In another view, Aghaei and Savari (2014) identified professional commitment as a sense of identity and attachment to a particular profession. They emphasized the willingness and interest in a career as a professional commitment. Similarly, Park (as cited in Razak et al., 2009) defined teacher commitment to teaching as the extent to which teachers were satisfied with their job and likely identified themselves as teachers (p. 463). Moreover, teacher commitment to the profession is important because it enables an individual to develop the needed skills and relationships to have a successful career regardless of the organization within which he or she is employed (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990). As such, Teacher Commitment to Profession is conceptualized (Razak, et al., 2009) as the strength of teacher motivation and involvement to work and to improve professional skills, knowledge, and teaching abilities.

2.1. Theoretical Background

From among little available relevant frameworks applicable to the academic contexts, the proposed model by Allen and Meyer (1990) seemed the wisest to be the foundation of the current research. The reason this framework was picked out bases on the fact that Meyer and Allen's three-component model of organizational commitment has become the dominant model for the study of workplace commitment with respect to its widespread usage throughout the world as well as incorporating the various concepts of commitment into three components namely affective, continuous, and normative. Another reason lies in the fact that this recently model was more standardized and congruent to the aim of the current study than other organizational commitment models. Additionally, opting for this model goes to the lack of research on teacher commitment and its insufficient theoretical frameworks.

The adopted definition for the dimension of Commitment to University corresponds with the definitions by Meyer and Allen (1991, p 67) mentioned above. Additionally, Meyer and Allen's Organizational Commitment Model has its roots in exchange theory, investment theory, attitudinal, and behavioral theories.

According to the exchange theory or "side-bet" theory (Becker, 1960), an individual is considered to have made a side bet when his or her "decision with regard to some particular line of the action has consequences for other interests or activities not necessarily related to it" (p. 35). Becker (1960) described commitment, in general, as a disposition to engage in "consistent lines of activity" (p. 33) as a result of the accumulation of "side bets" that would be lost if the activity were discontinued. The consistent line of activity refers to maintaining membership (i.e., employment) in the organization. Accordingly, individuals are committed to the organization, here university, as far as they hold their positions, regardless of the stressful conditions they experience. However, they would leave the organization in favor of alternative benefits.

The investment theory centers on the time element; the longer a person has been with an organization, the more that person wants to stay (Salancik, 1977). According to Sheldon (1971), investments refer to participation in an organization to the extent that possible participation in another organization is decreased.

Mowday et al. (1982) offered the following descriptions for attitudinal and behavioral theories based on the definition provided by Meyer and Allen (1997):

“Attitudinal commitment focuses on the process by which people come to think about their relationship with the organization. In many ways, it can be thought of as a mindset in which individuals consider the extent to which their own values and goals are congruent with those of the organization. People could be attached to the organizations, unions or jobs, as attitudinal commitment”. Behavioral commitment, on the other hand, relates to the process by which ‘individuals become locked into a certain organization and how they deal with this problem (p.26)’ or to some course of action, like remaining a member, goals or policies (p.9).

There existed a low number of theories dealing with and advocating teacher commitment; among them, are Identity theories, self-efficacy theory, Structural Identity Theory, etc. Identities are the shared social meanings that persons attribute to themselves in a role. Burke and Reitzes (1981) noted three distinctive features of identities. First, identities are social products that are formed, maintained, and confirmed through the processes of 1) naming or locating the self in social categories (Foote, 1951; Stryker, 1977); 2) interacting with others in terms of these categories (McCall & Simmons, 1966; Stone, 1962); and, 3) engaging in self-presentation and negotiation and confirming the

meanings and behavioral implications of the social categories (Goffman, 1959; Weinstein, 1969). The theory of identity is related to teacher commitment as Elliott & Crosswell (2002) considered teacher commitment as part of their professional identity. They stated that identity defines teachers and their work and consequently they gain satisfaction and a lot of enjoyment from this.

To put it in a nutshell, Bandura's (1992) theory of self-efficacy was relevant to this study due to the main assumption that people's beliefs in their efficacy have varied effects on behavior such as commitment.

According to Structural Identity Theory (Burke & Reitzes, 1981, p.239), commitment has been conceptualized as one way in which the self is linked with social structure through the infusion of the social structure, roles, and behavior. Commitment has been represented as the link between an individual and consistent lines of activity (Becker, 1960), an individual and organizations (Kanter, 1974), and an individual and a stable set of self-meanings (Burke & Reitzes, 1981).

To sum it up, the aforementioned three dimensions were picked out for Teachers' Professional Commitment Model in this study and later on, corresponding components along with relevant items for each of the components were elicited out of the available literature.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Design

To determine and identify the dimensions and components of teachers' professional commitment and then to prioritize the dimensions, exploratory design was employed. First, the researchers collected the qualitative data, analyzed it, and then used the information to develop a follow-up quantitative phase of data collection. The quantitative strand thus was built on the qualitative one (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Furthermore, to investigate the effect of the teachers' employment status on their professional commitment, Ex-post-factorial design opted. This design refers to studies that investigate the possible cause and effect relationships by observing an existing condition; that is, studying the independent variables in retrospect for their possible relation to, or effect on the dependent variables.

3.2. Participants

The participants included 420 EFL university instructors. The instructors held M. A or Ph.D. degree in English and some of them were Ph.D. candidates. The majority of the respondents were aged 30 to 50 with average teaching experience of 10 to 25 and worked full time or part time. The instructors were teaching English at Azad Universities, State Universities, Non-Profit Universities, Payam-e-Noor Universities in seven provinces of Iran including Tehran, Esfahan, Kerman, Razavi Khorasan, South Khorasan, North Khorasan, and East Azerbaijan. The total number of full time and part time instructors in the universities of these provinces was estimated at 4500. Hence, utilizing a 95% confidence level column in Krejcie and Morgansample size table (1970) and 5.0% margin of error, the probable number of instructors is estimated as 351. Since the respondents were located in the various universities and provinces, the researchers distributed 480 questionnaires among the instructors from which 420 responded back. Due to the scope of research which was university and to increase the generalizability of the outcomes, the questionnaire was sent in Google doc format so as all the participants could answer from everywhere in the country. A demographic analysis of the participants is displayed in Table 1.

Table1.

Demographic Background of the Participants

	Category	Frequency
Gender	Male	153
	Female	267
Educational Status	M.A	92
	PhD	208
	PhD Student	120
Universities	Azad Universities, State Universities	270
	Non-Profit Universities, and Payam-e-Noor	150
Employment status	Full time	193
	Part time	227

3.3. Instrument

3.3.1. Questionnaire on EFL Teachers' Professional Commitment (QTPC)

The QTPC questionnaire was a validated and reliable researcher- made a questionnaire designed by Ganjali et al. (2019). Designing this instrument embraced three

phases; two qualitative and one quantitative one. The validation of the questionnaire consisted of expert validation and construct validation.

In the first phase, through a thorough review of the available literature as well as a semi-structured interview with ten EFL instructors, the core dimensions, components, and items were opted. The participants were required to respond to the questions about the notion of teacher commitment and its dimensions and components. Having analyzed and categorized the responses, the researchers asked three experts (supervisor and advisors) to check out the results to establish content validity in this phase. They were demanded to review the results related to dimensions, components, and items and give the comments on the notions, the relevance of each component to its dimension as well as items to the components, the wording of the statements, or any other critical point and the required modifications were employed accordingly. It should be noted that the questionnaire for two dimensions of Commitment to Students and Commitment to Profession was designed after reviewing the literature and interviewing the experts but the questionnaire for Commitment to University has already been designed by Mayer and Allen (1997) namely Organizational Commitment Questionnaire and used by many researchers in the world. Therefore, data collection was done only for two dimensions of Commitment to Students and Commitment to the Profession in qualitative phases. Once the three experts reached a consensus on the dimensions, components, and items, three dimensions each with three

corresponding components and a totally of 70 items were designed.

Since the first step of the qualitative phase was accomplished, the researchers designed the early draft of the structured questionnaire containing 70 items with 3 scales including “keep it, remove it or modify it”. To check out the content validity of the questionnaire through the expert validation, the inventory was handed into 25 experts to mark each item based on the idea they had about the item. They were also required to put forward their suggestions in case of adding any dimensions, components, and items. Having collected the responses and to be confident in selecting the most significant and appropriate content, content validity ratio (CVR) was computed. After items have been identified and determined for inclusion in the final form, the content validity index in item level and scale-level was calculated. According to CVR computed for 48 items concerning the two dimensions of Commitment to Students and Commitment to Profession, ten items

with CVR lower than 0.37 were removed out of questionnaire, and 8 items with a CVI between 0.70 and 0.79 were modified. Additionally, based on experts' recommendations, one component namely 'colleagues' was added to the dimension of Commitment to Profession. This process resulted in the second draft of the Professional Commitment questionnaire including 62 items on a five-point Likert scale including strongly disagree, disagree, neither disagree nor agree, agree, and strongly agree.

Consequently, in the third phase, the questionnaire was administered to 70 EFL university instructors to probe the validity and reliability of the instrument through quantitative analysis. The validity and the reliability of the researcher made questionnaire were established through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). To check out the reliability, Factor loadings, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability were employed. Convergent validity and validity were the two means for measuring the validity of the questionnaire. The results of all the adopted data analysis procedures proved the reliability of the questionnaire (an index of above 8.5 for all the three dimensions and their nine corresponding components and items) and through the validation process, eight of the items were removed from the scale and the questionnaire ended up in 54 items on a **five-point** Likert scale (Ganjali et al., 2019).

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection started on February 15, 2017, and completed on October 20, 2018. The questionnaire was distributed among 420 EFL instructors to establish the priorities among the variables and also to probe the relationship between Iranian EFL university instructors' employment status and their professional commitment. Those who were not in the availability of the researchers received the questionnaire in Google doc format so as all the participants could complete it from everywhere in the country.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

PLS-SEM was run to prioritize the three dimensions and components. To investigate the effect of Iranian EFL university instructors' employment status, e.g. full time and part time, on their professional commitment, two Tailed **t-test** was employed.

4. Results

As it was earlier explained, through two qualitative and one quantitative phase (Ganjali et.al, 2019), three dimensions namely Commitment to Students, Commitment to Profession, and Commitment to University along with ten corresponding components were identified. To deal with the first research question which centered on prioritizing the three dimensions of instructors' Professional commitment, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was opted for data analysis and the validation of the structural model was achieved through Partial Least Squares structural equation modeling (PLSSEM 2.0). While other SEM tools exist, the choice to use PLS was driven by several factors. The researchers employed PLS software mostly because of being efficient with small size and it could be of use where theory is still less developed. or proposed (exploratory researches). The results are depicted in Table 2.

Table2.

Prioritization among Dimension

Dimensions of the model	<i>T</i> -Value	Standard Coefficient	Priority
Commitment to Students	47.541	0.877	1
Commitment to Profession	48.444	0.852	2
Commitment to University	9.099	0.679	3

Table 2 indicates the *t*-value and Standard Coefficient for the three dimensions. When the size of the resulting empirical *t*-value is above, 1.96, we can assume that the path coefficient is significantly different from zero at a significance level of 5 %. According to the findings, there were significant relationships among the dimensions since the *t*-value was higher than 1.96 and all the relationships were confirmed one hundred percent. Hence, the fitness of the structural model was verified. Having confirmed the significance of relationships among all variables, the Standard Coefficient for each variable was calculated which indicated the effectiveness of the variable. Among the three dimensions, the dimension of Commitment to Students had the highest linear regression effect with the

Standard Coefficient of 0.877 and took priority over the other dimensions, then Commitment to Profession (Standard Coefficient of 0.852) ranked second among the three dimensions and finally Commitment to University (Standard Coefficient of 0.679) located in the last position.

The second question centered on investigating the effect of Iranian EFL university instructors' employment status, e.g. full time and part time, on their professional commitment. Two-tailed t-tests were employed and the outcomes are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3 represents full-time and part-time employment of 420 EFL instructors in different universities. 193 (45.95) instructors worked full-time in university and 227 (54.05 %) did part-time work.

Table3.
T-test for Instructors' Employment Status

Variable	Working Status at Work Place	Descriptive Statistics			t-test value	d.f	P-value
		N	Mean	Std.			
Teachers' Professional Commitment	Full Time	194	4.08	0.39	6.613	420	.000
	Part Time	226	3.78	0.36			
Commitment to Students	Full Time	194	4.29	0.41	3.686	420	.000
	Part Time	226	4.11	0.42			
Commitment to Profession	Full Time	194	4.22	0.49	119	420	.264
	Part Time	226	4.16	0.41			
Commitment to University	Full Time	194	3.74	0.58	9.091	420	.000
	Part Time	226	3.13	0.54			

As Table 3 exhibits, *p*-value regarding full time and part time employment in two dimensions of Commitment to Students and Commitment to University revealed a level of significance of 0.00 which was smaller than .05; therefore, the relationship between instructors' employment and their professional commitment was a statistically significant one, in other words, the findings proved the effect of instructors' employment status on their professional commitment and indicated difference between full time and part time employment with respect to their professional commitment. On the other hand, the *p*-value for the dimension of Commitment to Profession was more than the significant level of 0.05 which confirmed no significant relationship between instructors' employment and their Commitment to the Profession. Hence, it could be inferred that the full-time English instructors possessed more commitment than part-time English instructors when it came to only two dimensions of Commitment to Students and Commitment to University.

5. Discussion

Reflecting on the research findings, it seems fundamental to consider professional commitment in the EFL context in universities which are deemed as the dominant place of preparing students as social beings with various skills needed for the society.

Drawing on the outcomes, it can be inferred that EFL teachers demonstrate commitment to students more than to profession and to university for they feel a devotion to educating, and therefore their first priority as a teacher is to their students' needs such as academic needs, personal needs, and social needs (Ganjali et al., 2019). A number of researchers (e.g. Mutchler, 2005) identified commitment to students as a base from which the notion of commitment could be described. Mutchler (2005) asserted that factors that influence teachers' professional commitment center on their culturally and ideologically – based dedication to making a difference for students and on their willingness to devote personal time and energy outside their classrooms to take action on that commitment. As Mart (2013) stated, “the degree of loyalty of committed teachers toward their profession is one of their distinguished characters. Teachers who are engaged in their profession and commitment to students and their learning play a crucial role in the development of students” (page, 36). On the other hand, low levels of commitment to students might affect student achievement, less sympathy toward students, and lower tolerance for frustration in the classroom (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Louis, 1998).

Commitment to Profession, the second priority, included four components including Professional Development, Identity, and Attitude, and Colleagues (Ganjali et al., 2019). According to the findings, it can be claimed that committed teachers devote their time to continue education and never stop learning new strategies to teach their students. They are committed to challenging themselves and take every opportunity to continue learning, all for the success of their students. Similarly, Gamoran (2003) has declared that teachers' professional commitment can be enhanced through professional development chances. Furthermore, to accentuate Identity as the second component of Commitment to Profession, those who get to know and accept themselves as teachers do their best to demonstrate commitment to their profession, which gives them the identity of the teacher. Besides, commitment to Colleagues, the third component, reflected Commitment to the Profession in some ways. For instance, veteran instructors speak from experienced to novice teachers to widen their knowledge, expertise, and even their commitment to the profession. Finally, regarding Attitude as one of the other components affecting Commitment to Profession and given self-efficacy as a driving force, it can be understood that teachers' self-efficacy leads to teacher commitment, otherwise the teachers are unable to overcome the obstacles such as external pressures coming from outside, school or society, due to lack of self-confidence in their capability and competency.

Given the research findings in the quantitative phase, commitment to university was located as the least important dimension among the other dimensions, which may reflect some reasons such as neglecting the role of social values in education or being dissatisfaction with the university they work for. For instance, in the qualitative phase, when the instructors were asked about commitment to university and society, the majority of them neglected and belittled the role of university and society in professional commitment and also took the social needs of students as the last priority. These findings were the converse of the results obtained from a study by Habibi, Vazifehdust, and Jafari (2016) which identified the social factors as the first priority from the instructors' point of view. Seemingly, university authorities should identify the ways and means through which teachers could be provided with facilitating work environment which will influence their work and also commitment towards teaching.

The second research question goes to the relationship between EFL Teachers' Professional Commitment and their employment status. The full-time English instructors

possessed more commitment than their part-time counterparts when it came to only two dimensions of Commitment to Students and Commitment to University and it proved no difference between full time and part-time employment in the dimension of Commitment to Profession which reflects some reasons. The first one could be a sense of belonging and attachment to university which brings loyalty toward the workplace and act as emotional factors leading to more commitment to students and profession as indicated in studies by Meyer and Allen (1991) and Park (2005). The next probable reason goes to job security which assures teachers of their future work and let them exploit their potential to associate their goals with those of the university, go beyond the bounds of expected contact hours and devote extra time to school activities, and finally work harder to improve students' achievement. Similarly, some researches, such as Jandaghi, Mokhles & Bahrami (2011), highlighted the relationship between job security and commitment. The third reason might relate to the social identity of teachers (Bandura, 1992) which is shaped and adapted by their workplace or university where they pass the time teaching and educating the students. Thus, it is not surprising the full-time teachers who are identified by their university commit and devote more time to student learning than part-time teachers who may leave their workplace for different reasons. Another reason could be the obligation and regulations of the university which makes the full-time teachers more committed. The other probable reason could be the recruitment process employed for the full time and part-time teachers; that is, the full-time teachers should pass an arduous exams, interviews, etc. to check out their general and professional qualifications to be employed as a faculty member while it is much easier for the part-time instructors. As a result, full-time EFL teachers are deemed to possess more incentive and expertise to show commitment toward students, university, and profession. However, further research is needed to investigate the factors leading to dissatisfaction in the workplace and lack of commitment to teaching.

Moreover, the findings indicated that there existed no difference between full time and part-time employment when it comes to the dimension of Commitment **to the** Profession. It can be understood that commitment to profession is of great value for both groups regardless of where and for whom they are teaching. For instance, dedicated teachers struggle to be up to date with the latest educational methods and are committed to challenging themselves when an opportunity comes up to continue learning, all for the accomplishment of their students.

6. Conclusion

By way of conclusion, the research results support EFL Teachers' Professional Commitment as a multidimensional construct with its three underlying dimensions: (a) Commitment to Students, (b) Commitment to University, and (c) Commitment to Profession. Having set priorities among the dimensions, Commitment to Students, Commitment to Profession and Commitment to University took the first to last importance respectively in accordance with the findings in the qualitative phase. The proposed conceptualization of EFL Teachers' Professional Commitment incorporates the new knowledge in Teacher Commitment literature based on the present empirical findings. Although the research dealt with the characterization and prioritization of Teacher Commitment dimensions with respect to EFL instructors' perspectives, this might include different set of categories when interviewing with other groups, such as principals, students, and parents from the schooling community or teachers in lower levels of education at other educational contexts including language schools. Additionally, it would be beneficial to investigate whether university instructors of different fields hold similar or different perceptions of teachers' professional commitment compared to EFL university instructors.

The findings also revealed the relationship between EFL Teachers' Professional Commitment and their employment status in total. The full-time English instructors demonstrated more commitment than the part-time instructors to students and to university and it proved no difference between full time and part-time employment in commitment to the profession. Worth mentioning, the relationship between EFL teachers' professional commitment and some variables such as age, gender, etc. is deemed to help gain more knowledge about teacher commitment.

The results of this study can also provide pedagogical implications for awareness-raising of EFL teachers in understanding their level of commitment toward students, profession, and university. The next implication goes to awareness-raising of university administrators about the notion of commitment and the importance and priority of each dimension and component to compare the level of all EFL university instructors' commitment with each other. Regarding the difference between full time and part time, EFL instructors' commitment in the current study, policymakers and university authorities are first required to take steps to know about professional commitment and then deploy the

teacher commitment scale at the outset of recruitment processes to employ responsible and committed teachers.

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Appendix

Model of Standard coefficient in the structural model

