

Chapter 7

The Effect of COVID–19 on Professional Accountants: The Evidence of Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19 has affected the business methods and procedures of almost all professions as well as the economies of the countries. Many professions in Turkey have felt the adverse effects of the pandemic. One of these professions is Certified Public Accountant (CPA). The pandemic has significantly affected accounting practices and the roles of professionals. Therefore, the need to learn in detail from the experts has emerged. So, this study aimed to investigate the effect of the pandemic on the professional activities of CPAs. In this direction, using the interview technique, eight questions were asked to eight professionals, mainly problems, expectations, income status, workload, and work stress. The results of the research revealed that the members of the profession had problems with both government institutions and taxpayers. As a result of the research, the CPAs stated that they had difficulty finding an interlocutor during the pandemic and had severe communication problems. Emphasizing their income has decreased significantly, the CPAs also said that their workload has increased.

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INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic, which emerged as a health crisis in Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019, greatly affected the economic and social life in the later process (Topcu & Demirkol, 2021). Covid-19 has started to affect all countries negatively in a short time. As a result of this rapid spread, a series of measures have been taken in countries. Restrictions have begun to be implemented in many areas, from health to economy, education to social life. The Covid-19 epidemic, which emerged as a significant threat, has limited the life activities of individuals and has become a global problem (Güngör Karyağdı, 2021). The measures taken by the states caused a decrease in production and commercial activities, a decrease in the income of individuals, and an increase in unemployment rates. These developments have led to the deterioration of supply chains, the consumption of various products, and decreased demand for some services. Therefore, the balance of supply and demand has deteriorated significantly (Papadopoulou & Papadopoulou, 2020). Covid-19 has been a process in which the normals of life are affected, the known solutions lose their validity, and the importance of psychological immunity is realized. The ways of doing business of the future, whose scenarios have been discussed so far, had to be implemented as new normals with this sudden change. This change process has led to an increased understanding of individuals, questioning their talents and supporting their weak points (Beder, 2021). One of the biggest problems experienced in this process has been the problems encountered in the economic field. At this point, accounting professionals, who ensure healthy communication between businesses and the state, which has great importance in the economy, emerge again. Professional accountants contribute to the beneficial execution of economic activities by providing consultancy to the enterprises in the struggle given in the economic sense and by providing communication between the state and the taxpayer (Güngör Karyağdı, 2021). In such a situation, it becomes challenging to carry out professional activities, especially in occupational groups with intense human relations. The accounting profession is also stressful, where physical and emotional collapse is low and tiring. Dissatisfaction is high due to the heavy workload, constant communication with people and the necessity of completing work at certain times (Buyruk Akbaba & Bulut, 2021).

Our social habits, which we had to change due to the Covid-19 epidemic, have affected business life closely (Tuğay & Dokur, 2020). Many organizations have changed their work environments and have had to offer their employees the opportunity to work remotely. A survey conducted in 2020 reveals that remote workers account for 51 to 75% of the total workforce in firms (Lin & Hwang, 2021). The accounting profession has also significantly affected this change in working habits (Tuğay & Dokur, 2020). Professionals who provide the link between the taxpayer and the

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