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Sağlık Çalışanlarının Kişilik Özelliklerinin Onların Örgütsel Destek Ve Örgütsel Güven Algıları 387-406 Üzerindeki Etkisi

Tekin SANCAR ve Fuat YALMAN



REMOTE WORKING AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The COVID-19 outbreak started a new era as it changed the balance between work and family by necessitating remote working. However, only a few studies have investigated work-family conflict during the pandemic. Hence, the primary aim of this study is to examine work arrangement and work-family conflict relationship. It is also expected that gender will have a moderating role that affects work-family conflict in different ways depending on work arrangements. The second purpose of the study is to explore the aspects that facilitate working from home.

Method: The sample consisted of 245 employees working in finance and information sectors in Turkey. Data was collected by using questionnaires.

Findings: Results indicated that office workers had higher work-to-family conflict than remote workers and hybrid workers. No significant difference was found on family-to-work conflict regarding the work arrangement, and gender did not act as a moderator. Regarding the second purpose of the study, the aspects that facilitate working from home were classified into three categories. In the content analysis, the most repeated codes were related to working conditions, followed by physical and psycho-social needs.

Results: This research is one of the first investigations in Turkey to explore the relationship between work arrangement and work-family conflict during the COVID-19 outbreak providing important results regarding the remote working arrangements adopted by many organizations worldwide.

Keywords: Remote working, Hybrid working, Work-family conflict, Work-life balance.

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COVID-19 SALGININDA UZAKTAN ÇALIŞMA VE İŞ-AİLE ÇATIŞMASI

ÖΖ

Amaç: COVID-19 salgını, uzaktan çalışmayı gerekli kılarak, iş ve aile arasındaki dengeyi değiştirdiği için yeni bir dönem başlatmıştır. Bununla birlikte, pandemi sırasında iş-aile çatışmasını araştıran oldukça az çalışma bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle bu çalışmanın temel amacı, çalışma biçimi ve iş-aile çatışması ilişkisini incelemektir. Ayrıca, çalışma biçimine bağlı olarak cinsiyetin iş-aile çatışmasını farklı şekillerde etkileyen bir düzenleyici rolünün olacağı beklenmektedir. Çalışmanın ikinci amacı, evden çalışmayı kolaylaştıran unsurları incelemektir.

Yöntem: Araştırmanın örneklemi Türkiye'de finans ve bilişim sektörlerinde çalışan 245 kişiden oluşmaktadır. Veriler anket yöntemi kullanılarak toplanmıştır.

Bulgular: Araştırma sonuçları; ofis çalışanlarının, uzaktan çalışanlar ve hibrit çalışanlara göre daha şiddetli iş-aile çatışması yaşadığını göstermiştir. Çalışma biçimine bağlı olarak aile-iş çatışmasında anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmamıştır ve cinsiyetin düzenleyici bir rolünün olmadığı görülmüştür. Araştırmanın ikinci amacı ile ilgili olarak, evden çalışmayı kolaylaştıran unsurlar üç temel kategoride sınıflandırılmıştır. Yapılan içerik analizinde en çok tekrarlanan kodlar çalışma koşullarıyla ilgili olmuştur, çalışma koşullarını fiziksel ihtiyaçlar ve psiko-sosyal ihtiyaçlar takip etmiştir.

Sonuç: Bu araştırma, COVID-19 salgını sırasında çalışma biçimi ve iş-aile çatışması arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen Türkiye'deki ilk çalışmalardan biridir ve dünya çapında birçok kuruluş tarafından benimsenen uzaktan çalışma biçimlerine ilişkin önemli sonuçlar sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uzaktan çalışma, Hibrit çalışma, İş-Aile çatışması, İş-Yaşam dengesi.

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 outbreak has brought significant changes in almost all areas of life. A new era has begun with the "new normal". National lockdowns caused remote working to become a popular work arrangement in many countries (Bhumika, 2020). The number of remote workers has dramatically increased during this period (Ipsen et al., 2021). Either full-time or part-time, temporary or permanent, enforced by the government or not, remote working practices have been adopted by companies in order to prevent the spread of the disease. However, the outbreak showed that many jobs could be successfully done from home. Accordingly, many major companies, such as Twitter, Microsoft, and Dropbox, announced that they would continue with remote work even after the pandemic (Hadden et al., 2020).



As a result, the radical upsurge of remote working has unearthed the work-family conflict topic since the boundaries between the work and family domains became blurred during this period (Sener & Abunasser, 2020). The employee's work and home spheres were no longer separate, distinct blocks (Khwela-Mdluli & Beharry-Ramraj, 2020). The role conflict was severe since the employee could not travel to work which provided the opportunity to "switch roles". On the other hand, while remote working before the pandemic was an active choice of employees; the COVID-19 outbreak offered no choice and forced employees to work from home, which prevented the individual from the positive feelings such as autonomy or gratitude (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020). Further, the pandemic also caused changes in the family dynamics as the other household members had to work or get an education remotely. These unprecedented situations, such as sharing the same place 24/7 with family members, changed the balance between work and family (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020). Therefore, we propose that remote working will make an increase on employees' workfamily conflict.

Not surprisingly, there are few published studies about the impact of remote working during the COVID-19 outbreak. Additionally, most of the research is qualitative studies as it was a work arrangement used by a small number of employees before the COVID-19 outbreak and is a newly adopted model afterwards (Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir, 2020; Karaca & Esen, 2019; Kıcır, 2015; Tuna & Türkmendağ, 2020). To our knowledge, this is one of the first studies in Turkey that aimed to examine the remote working and workfamily conflict relationship during the COVID-19 outbreak.

On the other hand, gender is identified as a significant factor that would moderate the relationship between remote-office working and workfamily interference (Delina & Raya, 2016). The COVID-19 outbreak blurred the boundaries and this permeability made it harder for women to juggle with their work life and family life when they work remotely (Khwela-Mdluli & Beharry-Ramraj, 2020). Consequently, in a country with a large gender gap like Turkey, we expect that gender will act as a moderator, and work-family conflict differences between remote workers and office workers will be higher for women.

In addition, companies adopting different work arrangements should pay attention to their employees' perceptions of remote working. Organizations have responsibilities to consider employee needs and expectations since employee motivation, well-being, and the quality of work life are significant factors for organizational effectiveness and productivity.



Remote Working
and Work-FamilyThus, this study aims to identify the employee expectations about remote
working.Conflict During
the Covid-19
OutbreakII. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND2.1. Remote Working

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With the development of information and communication technologies, the obligation to physically work in the workplace has diminished, and remote working has gained importance (Sullivan, 2003). Remote working (RW) refers to a work arrangement in which either part or all of the work is carried out outside of the workplace, usually at home. Other terms include teleworking, telecommuting, working from home, mobile work, home office, and home working (Bellmann & Hübler, 2020). Felstead and Henseke (2017) states that public opinion about remote working is a "win-win situation" wherein both the employee and the employer benefits. Accordingly, companies have been encouraging remote working because of its advantages such as reducing labor costs, saving time and resources, and thus increasing profitability and productivity (Bellman & Hübler, 2020; Molino et al., 2020). Remote workers, who work outside of the office, perceive this work arrangement as a means of spending more time with the family and getting away from the stress that emerges on the way to work, and thus; remote working is considered as a flexibility for the employee (Johnson et al., 2001). Besides, as Demirbilek (2007) clarifies, working from home creates employment opportunities for disabled employees. Additionally, although the percentage of people working from home has gradually increased over the years, it did not rapidly spread until the COVID-19 outbreak (Serinikli, 2021). After the Coronavirus disease started to spread all over the world, many organizations had to switch to remote working and adopt this new working model (International Labour Organization, 2020).

Recent research investigated the outcomes of remote working for both employees and organizations. It was reported that remote working was linked to job related well-being, productivity, efficiency, and work-life balance (Allen et al., 2015; Karaca & Esen, 2019; Palumbo, 2020). However, several studies identified that remote working has negative outcomes for performance such as reducing team collaboration, creativity, employee interactions, and knowledge sharing, and increasing isolation, stress, role ambiguity, and work overload (Allen et al., 2015; Stich, 2020; Tuna & Türkmendağ, 2020). In a comprehensive analysis of market data, it is indicated that working from home is positively related with job satisfaction, well-being, and organizational commitment but it is also related with higher work intensification and higher inability to switch off (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

Studies also examined how employee well-being is influenced by remote working. While some research suggests that it leads to stress and role conflict since the boundaries become blurred when working from home; other studies indicate that it decreases role stress, work exhaustion, and improves work-life balance (Moore, 2006; Allen et al., 2015).

2.2. Work-Family Conflict

OBS

The drastic upsurge in the percentage of employees who worked remotely during the outbreak brought the work-family conflict topic to light again (Şener & Abunasser, 2020). Work–family conflict is defined by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible" (p. 77).

The theoretical background of the work-family conflict is based on several theories. Role theory refers to acting out socially defined roles (e.g., employee, husband, father, son) which includes the duties, expectations, responsibilities, norms, and behaviors that an individual has to fulfill (Barnett, 2014; Marks, 1977). On the other hand, the scarcity perspective argues that individuals have a limited number of psychological and physiological resources. Hobfoll's (1989) theory of conservation of resources (COR) proposes that "individuals strive to obtain, retain, protect and foster those things that they value" (p. 341). Drawing upon these theories, it can be said that the individual's resources such as time or energy may be depleted by the requirements, duties, and demands of one role which would necessitate his or her other roles to be fulfilled by insufficient resources which would lead to inter-role conflict (i.e. work-family conflict) (Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001; Marks, 1977).

In accordance with the definition, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) have identified three forms of work-family conflict: time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based. Time-based conflict happens when the time spent in one domain makes it difficult to devote time in the other domain. Strain-based conflict occurs when the strain experienced in one role affects the performance of the individual in the other role. Lastly, behavior-based conflict appears when the certain behaviors of one role make it difficult to meet the behavioral expectations of the other role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Michel et al., 2011). Besides these three forms, it is identified as bidirectional: "work-to-family conflict (WFC)" and "family-to-work conflict (FWC)" (Gutek et al., 1991). The three forms and two directions of work-



Remote Working and Work-Family Conflict During the Covid-19 Outbreak 320 family conflict constitute the six dimensions of the concept (Carlson et al., 2000).

The predictors of work-family conflict can be sorted into three categories: family-related variables, work-related variables, and individual or demographic variables (Michel et al., 2011). Work-related variables include job involvement, flexibility, supervisor support, job demands, job authority and pressure, coworker support, and so on. Family-related variables include family support, marital status and satisfaction, number of children, household income, and spouse work status. Occupation, gender, age, personality characteristics, and coping styles are among the individual or demographic variables (Allen et al., 2012; Nohe et al., 2015; Schieman & Young, 2011).

2.3. The Relationship Between Remote Working and Work-Family Conflict

It has been suggested that remote working can have both positive and negative outcomes (Sullivan & Lewis, 2006). It increases work hours, role ambiguity, and work stress; and employees may feel detached and isolated because of insufficient support, social interaction, and leadership (Mitchell, 2017; Sullivan & Lewis, 2001). Besides, it leads to role conflict since the person uses the physical place of home for work, shares it with his/her family, and no longer has commuting time to "switch roles" while traveling to work (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). The high permeability of work and home domains leads to changes in all these dynamics (Van der Lippe & Lippényi, 2020). In short, it makes the boundaries blurry which in turn exacerbates the conflict between work and family domains. However, it has been noted that it may increase the employee's control of time, control over the scheduling of their days, autonomy, efficiency, and productivity and may facilitate the management of family and work demands; hence, it may improve work-life balance (Anderson et al., 2015; Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Sullivan & Lewis, 2001).

Previous research that examined the relationship between remote working and work-family conflict has shown mixed results. A large number of studies suggested that remote work lowered work-family conflict and facilitated work-life balance (Ammons & Markham, 2004; Golden, 2006; Perrons, 2003). Gajendran and Harrison (2007), in their meta-analysis of 46 studies, reported that remote working increases autonomy and lowers the work-family conflict among employees. Furthermore, the researchers indicated that remote working did not harm co-worker relationships, but also it was positively related with employee-supervisor relationship quality



(Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Conversely, a few researchers argued that working from home may increase work-family conflict (Lapierre & Allen, 2006; Palumbo, 2020). Altogether, these contradictory findings may be due to other potential factors that can explain these relationships.

On the other hand, the coronavirus pandemic forced companies to adopt remote working. In addition to this "enforced remote working" situation, the other household members, such as spouses or children, had to work or get an education remotely as well. However, there is very little research in the literature about the remote working and work-life conflict relationship during the COVID-19 outbreak. Tuna and Türkmendağ (2020), in their qualitative study, investigated the factors that negatively affected employees such as increased workload, increased housework, work ambiguity, problems with childcare, problems with communication, and so on.

In summary, the pandemic did not only change the working model of employees, but it also changed the balance regarding work and family. Thus, we propose that remote working may increase employees' workfamily conflict. Moreover, previous studies have demonstrated that workrelated factors explain work-to-family conflict and family-related factors explain family-to-work conflict more strongly (Allen et al., 2012; Carlson et al., 2000). As remote working brings work and family responsibilities to the same place, it may affect both work and family domains. Therefore, we expect that the work arrangement will make a difference for both the workto-family conflict and the family-to-work conflict scores of workers.

H1: There is a difference in work-to-family conflict scores of employees depending on their work arrangement in which remote workers experience higher work-to-family conflict than hybrid workers and office workers.

H2: There is a difference in family-to-work conflict scores of employees depending on their work arrangement in which remote workers experience higher family-to-work conflict than hybrid workers and office workers.

2.4. Gender as a Moderator

Gender differences have been an important variable in work-family interface literature (Eby et al., 2005; Delina & Raya, 2016). Women were shown to have more conflict than men in terms of the three forms (time, behavior, strain) of family-to-work conflict and strain-based work-to-family conflict (Carlson et al., 2000). This finding is expected since both genders may prioritize work and family domains differently. Consistent with the gender role theory, previous research has shown that social expectations are



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The boundaries between the work and family domains became blurred during the COVID-19 outbreak which made it harder for women to juggle with their work life and family life when they work from home (Khwela-Mdluli & Beharry-Ramraj, 2020). Bhumika (2020) reported that gender moderated "personal life interference in work and emotional exhaustion relationship" in which women experienced more emotional exhaustion during the working from home period (p.712). Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir (2020) investigated the gender differences in work-life balance during the pandemic in Iceland. The findings suggested that an extraordinary situation, like the COVID-19 pandemic, reveals and strengthens the gender norms and expectations for mothers, even in a country like Iceland which has been ranked the topmost of the Gender Gap Index.

Turkey is one of the countries that have a large gender gap and ranked 133rd among 156 countries according to the Gender Gap Index (The World Economic Forum, 2021). Correspondingly, Ararat and her colleagues (2021) published a report about working life and domestic violence during the pandemic period in Turkey. They reported that the percentage of time devoted to housework is higher for women. Moreover, while the majority of men (65%) stated that the time they devoted to housework increased slightly, half of the women indicated that they did much more housework compared to the pre-pandemic period (Ararat et al., 2021). Thus, we expect that gender will act as a moderator and the difference between remote workers and office workers will be higher for women in terms of work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict.

H3: The difference between the remote workers', hybrid workers', and office workers' work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict scores is higher for women.



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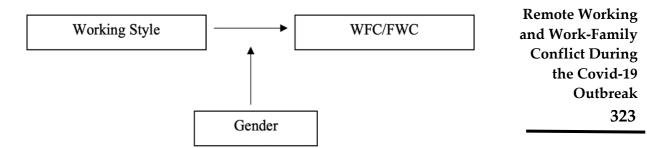


Figure 1: Research Model

The second purpose of the study is to investigate the aspects that would facilitate remote working from the perspective of employees. It can be argued that the COVID-19 outbreak did not only force employees to remote work but also laid a burden on the companies. Companies that have been encouraging working from home should take cognizance of their employees' perceptions and needs. Accordingly, this study aims to unearth the employee expectations from organizations about remote working.

III. METHOD

3.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 245 participants (105 female, 140 male) who are currently working in finance and IT industries in Turkey. These sectors were chosen because they were appropriate for comparison of the work arrangement since there were employees working from home, working from the office, or working partly from home and partly from the office. The mean age was 34.33 years (SD = 7.5). In addition, 16% of the participants were office workers, 43% of the participants were remote workers, and 41% of the participants were hybrid workers during the COVID-19 period. Participants, because of the research subject, were required to live with at least one of their family members in order to participate in the study. Accordingly, 69% of the participants were married and living with their spouses and/or children and 31% of the participants' demographic information is shown in Table I.

| Variable | Category | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Gender | Female | 105 | 43 |
| | Male | 140 | 57 |
| Education | Secondary Education | 2 | 1 |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 160 | 65 |
| | Master's Degree | 78 | 32 |
| | Doctoral Degree | 5 | 2 |



Table 1. Continued Remote Working Percentage and Work-Family Variable Category Frequency (N) (%) **Conflict During** 2.825 - 5.000 TL 16 7 5.001-10.000 TL 89 36 the Covid-19 Income 81 33 10.001- 15.000 TL Outbreak 15.000 TL + 59 24 324 Finance 155 63 Industry Information 90 37 Married 168 69 Marital Status Single 77 31 Yes 129 53 Parenthood No 116 47 Office workers 4016 Work Arrangement 105 Remote workers 43

Hybrid workers

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3.2. Measures

During Pandemic

The survey consisted of three parts: demographic information, workfamily conflict scale, and open-ended question. Demographic Information: Demographic questions involved the participants' gender, age, education, marital status, parenthood, family income, occupation, and sector. Besides these questions, the work arrangement of the participants was measured categorically. Participants marked their work arrangement during the COVID-19 period, from three choices: working from the office (office workers), working from home (remote workers), and working partly from the office and partly from home (hybrid workers).

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Work-family Conflict Scale: Work-to-family conflict and family-towork conflict were measured by using Carlson and his colleagues' (2000) work-family conflict scale (WFCS). The scale was adapted to Turkish society by Erdoğan (2009).

The 18-item scale measures three dimensions (time-based, strainbased, and behavior-based) of both the work-to-family conflict and familyto-work conflict. A sample item for work-to-family conflict was "My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like" and a sample item for family-to-work conflict was "Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with family matters at work". Several items in the scale have been revised for this study in a way that can be answered by both remote workers and office workers. The revised phrases were as follows: "when I get home from work" was replaced by "when I finish my work" and "at work" was replaced by "while I work". Participants responded using a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha values for both scales were found to be above .70



(work-to-family conflict: .92, family-to-work conflict: .90). The open-ended question was "What suggestions would you make for your organization to facilitate working from home?"

3.3. Procedure

The study was approved by the Social Sciences Ethical Committee of Marmara University (Date: 05/16/2021, Approval Decision Number: 55). Convenience sampling was used in the study. Data was collected by using online surveys between May and July 2021. Informed consent forms described the purpose of the study and the anonymity, at the beginning of the surveys. Participation was voluntarily and emphasized in the informed consent forms. Statistical analyses were conducted by using SPSS 17.

IV. FINDINGS

4.1. Hypothesis Testing

A one-way ANOVA was carried out to explore the differences in participants' work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict scores depending on their work arrangement (Table II). There was a statistically significant difference in participants' work-to-family conflict scores for the work arrangement: F (2, 242) = 6.788, p < .001. The highest work-to-family conflict score was found among office workers. Post hoc comparisons of work arrangement using the Tukey HSD test showed that office workers had higher work-to-family conflict than remote workers (M_{dif} = .81, p < .001) and also than hybrid workers (M_{dif} = .65, p < .01). According to these findings, H1 was rejected as it stated that "remote workers will experience more work-family conflict than hybrid workers and office workers".

On the other hand, no significant difference was found on family-towork conflict depending on the work arrangements of the participants *F* (2, 242) = .805, p > .05). Therefore, H2 was not supported.

| | Groups | N | M | SD | F | р |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----|------|------|-------|-----|
| | Office workers | 40 | 4.06 | 1.30 | | |
| Work-to-Family Conflict | Remote workers | 105 | 3.25 | 1.19 | 6.788 | .00 |
| | Hybrid workers | 100 | 3.41 | 1.13 | | |
| | Office workers | 40 | 2.85 | .93 | | |
| Family-to-Work Conflict | Remote workers | 105 | 2.65 | 1.01 | .805 | .45 |
| | Hybrid workers | 100 | 2.79 | 1.04 | | |

Table 2. ANOVA Results for Work Arrangement



Remote Working and Work-Family Conflict During the Covid-19 Outbreak 326 In addition, a two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the moderating role of gender on work arrangement and work-family conflict relationship (Table III). A moderator refers to an interaction effect where the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable differs in the existence of that moderating variable (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Also, it has been clarified that moderation, which can be shown by interaction effects, can be examined by using factorial Analysis of Variance (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Since work arrangement significantly differed in participants' work-to-family conflict scores, this direction was tested only.

According to the findings, the interaction effect between work arrangement and gender was not statistically significant F(2, 239) = .99, p > .05). Although the impact of gender and work arrangement reached statistical significance separately, no significant interaction effect was found. Hence, H3 was not supported.

| Source | df | MS | F | р | Effect Size |
|--|-----|---------|---------|-----|-------------|
| Intercept | 1 | 2449.72 | 1886.53 | .00 | .89 |
| Work Arrangement | 2 | 10.52 | 8.10 | .00 | .06 |
| Gender | 1 | 23.87 | 18.38 | .00 | .07 |
| Work Arrangement x Gender | 2 | 1.28 | .99 | .37 | .01 |
| Total | 245 | | | | |
| Note . MS = Mean squares, effect size = partial η 2. | | | | | |

Table 3. ANOVA Results for Work Arrangement and Gender on Workto-Family Conflict

4.2. Additional Analyses

A number of statistical analyses are carried out with demographic variables. Independent-samples t-tests were performed to compare the scores for males and females in terms of work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict (Table IV). There was a significant difference in females and males work-to-family conflict scores; females had a higher work-to-family conflict (M_{dif} = .65, p < .001). However, there was no significant difference of family-to-work conflict scores between the two genders (M_{dif} = .19, p > .05).

Furthermore, there was no difference in terms of marital status, education, income, and parenthood in the work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict scores of the participants.



Table 4. T-test for Gender **Remote Working** Gender Ν М SD t df р and Work-Family **Conflict During** Male 140 3.17 1.20 Work-to-Family Conflict 4.27 243 .00 the Covid-19 Female 105 3.82 1.14 Outbreak Male 1402.66 0.99 327 Family-to-Work Conflict 1.50 243 .14 Female 105 2.85 1.03

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4.3. Open-ended Question

Among 245 participants, 151 participants answered the open-ended question (What suggestions would you make for your organization to facilitate working from home?). The responses were analyzed by using content analysis. In the content analysis, the content of the participants' responses is systematically analyzed (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Initially, the codes are determined according to the frequently emphasized and repeated phrases in the responses. Then, the codes that are related to each other are classified into categories. Three main categories of the analysis were: work conditions, physical needs, and psycho-social needs. The list of the codes and categories can be seen in Table V.

Table 5. Codes and Categories of the Open-ended Question

| | Tuble 5. Coues and Euregones of the open | enaca Question |
|----|--|---------------------|
| | Code | Category |
| 1 | Compliance with the working time | Work conditions |
| 2 | Removal of the restrictions about the place of residence | Work conditions |
| 3 | No-meeting day, off-day | Work conditions |
| 4 | Revision of task sharing, new performance measurements | Work conditions |
| 5 | Hybrid working, flexible working models | Work conditions |
| 6 | Internet and technological support | Physical needs |
| 7 | Equipment support | Physical needs |
| 8 | Financial support for expenses | Physical needs |
| 9 | Social events | Psycho-social needs |
| 10 | Improving motivation | Psycho-social needs |
| 11 | Employee recognition | Psycho-social needs |

The work conditions category included the most repeated suggestions such as to comply with the working time, to remove the restrictions about the place of residence of the employee, to schedule a nomeeting day, to revise work related practices such as task sharing, and performance measurements, and lastly to adapt flexible working models. One of the participants emphasized the importance of new performance appraisal methods when working from home:

"If we want remote working to be effective, work overload should be balanced and companies should pay attention to performance

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Another participant explained why it is not convenient to restrict the residence of the employee while remote working:

"Organizations usually set unpractical rules for their employees when it comes to remote working, such as the obligation to work from the city where the organization is located. In my opinion, as long as the employee completes his/her job effectively, the residence requirement should be ignored and the employees should be able to work from wherever they want."

Physical needs category is composed of Internet and technological infrastructure, equipment such as desks, chairs, computers, and financial support for expenses. One of the participants stated the necessity of the physical needs in the following way:

"An employee support package should be provided for each employee for the convenience of remote working and to create a positive working environment. Employees should not have problems with internet or phone utilities which are essential for working from home."

Additionally, many employees expressed their expectations about psycho-social needs such as to socialize, to increase motivation, and to improve employee recognition. As one participant clarified, all of these factors are very essential for employee well-being:

"People feel lonely when working from home. Online events can be organized to motivate employees. Even if you are working from home, the synergy of the team should be maintained by social events and motivationenhancing activities."

Moreover, one participant highlighted the need to be supported about work-life balance:

"We need guidance in separating our work-home lives and assistance in maintaining work-life balance. Similarly, we need stress-reducing or motivation-enhancing activities organized for remote workers."

V. CONCLUSION

In many countries, remote working has become a popular work arrangement during the COVID-19 outbreak (Bhumika, 2020). Furthermore, a lot of companies have stated that they will embrace working from home from now on including Microsoft, Dropbox, and Twitter (Hadden et al., 2020). Moreover, the "new normal" brought significant changes regarding



family dynamics such as that other family members had to work or get an education from home as well. Accordingly, it can be said that the pandemic and the permeability of the boundaries changed the balance between work and family (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020). Hence, the primary aim of this study was to identify the relationship between work arrangement and work-family conflict and the moderating role of gender in a country with a large gender gap - Turkey.

Firstly, a statistically significant difference was found in participants' work-to-family conflict scores for the work arrangements. But it was surprising that employees working from the office had higher work-to-family conflict than remote working employees and hybrid working employees. This was contrary to our expectations since we expected that the remote working group to have higher work-to-family conflict. However, these results are in line with earlier studies in the literature indicating that online working increases autonomy, control of time, control over the day scheduling, efficiency, and productivity and hence, may facilitate the management of family and work demands (Anderson et al., 2015; Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Sullivan & Lewis, 2001). Accordingly, "enforced remote working situation" did not make the boundaries blurry as we expected. In fact, the remote work arrangement did not exacerbate the conflict between work and family domains but caused remote workers to have lower work-to-family conflict than hybrid and office workers.

Secondly, no significant difference was found in family-to-work conflict scores of employees depending on their work arrangements. Although previous research has shown mixed results about work-life conflict we proposed that remote workers would experience higher familyto-work conflict than hybrid workers and office workers. The unanticipated results might be related to the study sample that remote working facilitated the work-life balance of the employees in finance and information sectors. These industries are known to have high work-related stress. Therefore, it is possible that employees took advantage of remote working such as increased autonomy and flexibility, and thus; they tolerated the negative effects such as work overload, work ambiguity, and so on.

Thirdly, we expected that the work-family conflict difference between remote workers and office workers would be higher for women in a country in which women are expected to primarily focus on domestic duties (Ararat et al., 2021). But the findings showed that the gender did not act as a moderator as we predicted. Although, there was a significant difference in females' and males' work-to-family conflict scores; no significant difference was found in the effect of work arrangement on work-



Remote Working and Work-Family Conflict During the Covid-19 Outbreak 330 to-family conflict scores for males and females. In other words, female workers' work-to-family conflict scores were not significantly different from their male colleagues depending on work arrangement. This finding could be attributed to the study sample as well since the study only included employees from finance and IT sectors. It could be argued that female employees, in these sectors, may carry out the responsibilities required by their work and family roles like their male co-workers that the difference between the remote workers', hybrid workers', and office workers' work-tofamily conflict scores were not higher for women. On the other hand, to develop a full picture, we need to understand other dynamics and buffering factors that caused no difference between the two genders, and further investigations are needed since women and men may prioritize work and family domains differently in other sectors.

Furthermore, it was found that the mean score of work-to-family conflict was higher than that of family-to-work conflict. This can be a remarkable finding for organizations to consider the costs of remote working for the employee. Taken together, remote working is a newly adopted model and its consequences are largely unknown. As seen in the literature, there are conflicting findings regarding the relationship between remote working and work-family conflict. The results of the present study are consistent with previous studies that reported that remote working would lower workfamily conflict (Ammons & Markham, 2004; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

On the other hand, the findings of the open-ended question made original and useful contributions by allowing participants to express their opinions. The responses were classified into three categories: work conditions, physical needs, and psycho-social needs. The most repeated suggestions were from the category of work conditions. Participants expected their organization to comply with the working time, remove the restrictions about the place of residence of the employee, to make a nomeeting day, to revise work related practices such as task sharing and performance measurements, and lastly to adopt flexible working models. These findings show that remote working has brought significant changes to employees' work- life balance. This is why the most mentioned suggestions are about work conditions. As cited in the introduction part, the boundaries became blurred when working from home (Sener & Abunasser, 2020). Thus, employees may want their organization to respect their boundaries such as complying with working hours. In addition, it is clear that pre-existing practices no longer measure up with remote working. Accordingly, there is a need to adapt new practices such as new performance measurements and flexible working models. Also, employees' request for a no-meeting day and right to work from a place other than their residence is understandable considering that the new working model restricts the employees in many ways.

Concerning physical needs, employees need Internet and technological infrastructure support, equipment support, and financial support for their expenses. It is known that working from home has several advantages for organizations such as reducing labor costs, saving time and resources (Bellman & Hübler, 2020). But these advantages may turn into disadvantages for the employee. As seen from the suggestions, employees have a perception that remote working has increased employees' expenses. Consequently, regardless of whether it decreases expenses and saves resources for the organizations, organizations should compensate employees' expenses which arise as a result of remote working.

Lastly, employees emphasized their expectations of psycho-social needs such as social events, improving motivation, and employee recognition. All of these expectations are plausible since it is reported in previous studies that remote working has negative outcomes such as reducing employee interactions, increasing isolation, stress, and diminishing team collaboration (Allen et al., 2015; Tuna & Türkmendağ, 2020). In brief, when we examine these suggestions, we see that the COVID-19 outbreak not only forced employees to remote work but also laid a burden on organizations. Companies that have been encouraging remote working should pay attention to all these expectations and take necessary steps to provide a convenient work environment since employee motivation is what leads to productivity. Otherwise, it will not be a surprise that changing work arrangements can bring many problems.

In summary, this study provides encouraging results in terms of remote working, as adopted by many organizations worldwide. These findings might draw the attention of employers to implement remote working or hybrid work arrangements in a post-pandemic world. It is likely that remote working will remain as an important issue for a long time and further studies are needed to explore the implications of remote working in the future.

5.1. Limitations

One of the limitations of the study was the convenience sampling method. Although it is a timesaving method; randomized samples would produce more generalizable results (Schutt, 2018). Furthermore, the sample consisted of remote workers, office workers, and hybrid workers; but the office workers composed only 16% of the sample. This was another



Remote Working and Work-Family Conflict During the Covid-19 Outbreak 332 limitation of the study. Moreover, our study was limited since it examined only two sectors: finance and information. Future researchers should replicate the study with employees from different sectors and industries. Remote working might not be suitable for every sector, but flexible working models are adopted by many organizations. Therefore, flexible working models should be studied in future investigations. Although this study makes important contributions; there are still unanswered questions about the consequences of remote working. Additionally, there are very few studies about the relationship between remote working and work-life conflict in the literature. Hence, more research is needed to explore the contextual variables of remote working as well.

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