Work-Family Conflict During Working from Home Due to Pandemic: A Qualitative Research on Female Teachers*

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to investigate the work-family conflict experienced by female teachers working from home due to Covid-19. The case study was used in the study. The study group of the research consists of teachers who are married and have children, working from home due to the pandemic process, working in Istanbul. 17 female teachers who met the criteria of teaching by distance education, being married and having children constituted the study group of the study. A semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers was used to collect the data. Thematic analysis technique was used in analyzing the data. According to the findings, the work-family conflict experienced by female teachers working from home during the pandemic process was grouped under three themes: time-based, strain-based and behavior-based conflict. Most of the female teachers working from home stated that they could not get administrative support during the distance education process. On the other hand, it was found that female teachers were emotionally tired during the process of working from home, their job satisfaction decreased, they were stressed, they had low motivation, and they had balancing concerns between home and work

Keywords: COVID-19, female teachers, working from home, work-family conflict

1. Introduction

COVID-19 outbreak that originated from Wuhan province of China in December 2019 has rapidly spread to other countries, with Turkey having the first reported case on 11th March 2020. Following this initial case, schools and other educational institutions have

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been temporarily closed by the authorities on 25th March 2020, in an effort to control the outbreak. Subsequently, educational activities have been maintained via television or other web-based technologies. While home-based work was a matter of preference prior to that period, thanks to technological advances, it has become a necessity due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and teachers had to adopt distance education due to interruption of face to face education. During this process, National Information Network (EBA) has been utilized by the Turkish Ministry of Health, while private schools have been continuing their educational activities via other programs depending on their preferences.

Although distance education offers certain advantages in terms of its ability to create an educational environment independent of time and space, it is also associated with a number of problems such as reduced social interaction between students, increased parent burden for child care, lack of access to regular food for children and adolescents residing in disadvantaged geographical areas as well as issues associated with the differences between students in their ability to access to technological resources (Chang & Satako, 2020). In addition to such impacts on students, teachers may also potentially experience difficulties associated with the radical change in their working style. According to Rubin et al. (2020) problems of distance working among teachers include the inability to have face-to-face interaction with colleagues, absence of previous experience on working at home, reduced social contact, issues with work/life balance, inability to focus on work, ergonomic issues at home, and inadequacy or lack of technological equipment required for the task. Such adverse effects may be intensified due to lack of planning or motivation, work-related unexpected requirements, and absence of similar experiences. In particular, the work-life balance emphasized by Rubin et al. (2020) may represent a significant problem in the context of the social gender role of women, with consequent work-family and family-work conflicts.

Arguably, work and family represent the two most important components of life, and individuals have different roles in work and family. Since the family structure, in which only males used to work and females had the responsibility of growing children, is changing, individuals' responsibilities have also gone through alterations (Kahraman & Çelik, 2018; Palmer et al., 2012). As a result of these changes, roles assumed by individuals at workplace and home may be subject to conflicts (Dockery & Bawa, 2020; Fırat & Cula, 2016; Mustafayeva & Bayraktaroğlu, 2014; Palmer et al., 2012; Özdevecioğlu & Çakmak-Doruk, 2009; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Sometimes, the role assumed in the work is an obstacle for the role in family, and sometimes the opposite scenario is true (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Such situations are viewed in the context of "work-family conflict".

Work-family conflicts define conflicting situations that occur when family and work roles should be simultaneously assumed (Özdevecioğlu & Çakmak-Doruk, 2009), and

they occur when work related responsibilities have a negative impact on the family life. This may be related with reduced work compensation as well as causing an hindrance for the fulfillment of family responsibilities. If family responsibilities have an impact on the work life, this results in family-work conflicts, potentially leading to reduced satisfaction from marriage, and the tension and stress experienced within the family may create an obstacle for work related responsibility. Both types of conflicts have adverse effects on family and work life (Cinamon & Rich, 2005; Netemeyer-Boles & McMurrian, 1996). Presence of conflicts or disharmony between family and work increases the risk of physical and mental health problems (Kinnunen et al., 2006) together with an increased risk of burnout syndrome (Cinamon et al., 2007).

A number of variables may have an impact on family-work or work-family conflict. Working hours, workload, marital status, and number of children may lead to an imbalanced participation between family and work roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). For instance, number of children is correlated with the time requirements and tension within families, while work experience is negatively correlated with work-family conflict. While commitment to family bonds and number of children affect the family-work conflict, the commitment to work, salary, and work experience have an impact on work-family impact. As a result of all these variables, the life-satisfaction of the individual may be afected (Beutell & Witting-Berman, 1999). Other determinants such as personal characteristics, traits, stress factors, spouse support, and work-family or family-work conflict also influence the work satisfaction and personal health indices (Burke & Greenglass, 1999). Unfortunately, the negative effects of family-work conflict is increasingly becoming more prevalent, reaching a point where the entire life of the individuals are affected (Mustafayeva & Bayraktaroğlu, 2014). Individuals with an unhappy family life fail to achieve adequate work concentration with consequent reduction in general success. This in turn negatively affects the family life (Aras & Karakiraz, 2013).

Three types of work-family conflict have been described by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), namely the time based conflict, strain based conflict, and behavior based conflict. In time based conflicts, the individual is unable to spare adequate time for his/her roles, in which individual cannot properly balance the time distribution between different roles. The time based conflicts occur when the requirements of the one role area are discordant with the other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Work-related factors such as irregular working hours, excessive working, and overtime work may reduce the time that should be spent with the family (Aras & Karakiraz, 2013). In particular, excessive work requirements may hamper fulfilling family responsibilities (Netemeyer et al., 1996). For instance, instead of a weekend activity, individual may be required to complete an urgent report. Alternatively, the individual may fail to complete a similar report, if a child experiences health problems (Özdevecioğlu & Çakmak-Doruk, 2009).

The strain based conflicts result from fatigue, tension, and nervousness caused by work related factors, in which the role assumed in workplace hinders family responsibilities (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Also, intensive participation in a certain role may be associated with stress. Long and inflexible working hours, excessive requirement for work related travels, and overwork may indirectly lead to conflicts (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The behavior based conflicts occurs when one behavioral pattern required for a specific role is incompatible with the behavioral pattern required for another role. For example, while other family members may expect warmness and closeness from the individual, he/she may fail to exhibit behaviors that fulfill such expectations (Palmer et al., 2012; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Again, similar examples include a father serving in the military who imposes military discipline in the family, or a mother working as a school teacher who treats her children as her students.

In general, the work-family conflict models take a number of factors into consideration, including the precursors of the conflict and its bidirectional nature as well as its consequences. Again, life role values should be incorporated into such models. Life role values pertain to what the individual believes to be important to, central to, or a priority in his or her life. For example, a single working mother spends time with her children, but may have to spend more time in workplace to be able to spend more time with her children, again resulting in conflict (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000).

Female and male teachers may be differentially affected by the work-family conflicts. Teachership as a profession is more frequently preferred by females (TMOE, 2019). On the other hand, as compared with their male counterparts, female teachers take significantly more responsibility with respect to home labor and childcare. Several studies have reported that female employees assume more responsibilities in family life, resulting in a higher occurrence of work-family conflict (Sittar et al., 2020; Özkul & Cömert, 2019; Ballıca, 2010; Küçükusta, 2007; Lockwood, 2003; Cinamon & Rich, 2002). Particularly female teachers who are also mothers may experience more pronounced work-family conflict due to stress and uncertainty related to their responsibilities (Claesson & Brice, 1989). Conversely, some authors have proposed that gender is either not associated or associated only with little effects on work-family conflict (Özalper, 2016; Byron, 2005; Frone, 1992). In the recent pandemics, however, certain differences may be noted. Particularly, women with children who have to work from home may experience difficulties in establishing a good balance between work and life (Del Boca et al., 2020). When one considers the fact that at least one of the parents have to stay at home to take care of children due to closure of schools and kindergartens, the significant workload on women cannot be ignored (Queisser et al. 2020). Herein, societal gender roles play a role, which may be used to account for the work-family conflict experienced by women.

Societal gender is a concept related to the tasks and responsibilities imposed on women by the society as well as to the perceptions and expectations from women. In the Turkish society, the traditional attitudes toward female workforce remain largely in place, with the primary role imposed on women being a "spouse and mother", not only by the society, but also by women (Minibaş, 1998; Terzioğlu, 1988). Based on the findings of the TUIK Family Structure Survey (2016), most of the house work is carried out by women. Again, according to TUIK Use of Time Survey, males spend around 53 minutes for house work and family care, only 9 minutes of this being dedicated to childcare. In contrast, the total amount of time spent by women for the same tasks is 4 hours and 34 minutes. This is similar to most other countries, and the pandemic is associated with increased workload of working women due to increased housework (Del Boca et al., 2020; Sevilla & Smith, 2020). The current study focused on female teachers, based on the assumption that married female teachers with children may be more likely to experience work-family conflict.

Work-family conflict experienced by teachers should never be overlooked, particularly when one considers the facts that societal advances occur mainly through education and that the main element of education is represented by teachers. Furthermore, since the input and output of schools consist of humans, it is very likely that work-family conflict of teachers may also affect their students. Although our literature search revealed many studies examining the work-family conflict among teachers (Özkul & Cömert, 2019; Kahraman & Çelik, 2018; Pu et al., 2017; Fırat & Cula, 2016; Richter et al., 2015; Yılmaz & Altınkurt, 2015; Mustafayeva & Bayraktaroğlu, 2014; Aras & Karakiraz, 2013; Palmer et al., 2012; Cinamon et al., 2007; Cinamon & Rich, 2005), we did not come across with any research particularly focusing on female teachers, rendering this study first of its kind that may provide potential contributions to the scientific advances in education management. Although COVID-19 pandemics originally emerged as a public health problem, it is also associated with obvious economic, social, and psychological repercussions. An accurate description of difficulties experienced by female teachers during this period may provide guidance on strategies aiming at improving the working conditions.

Teachers hold a distinctive position in terms of work-family conflict. They should pursue continuing professional education and be continuous learners. Teaching as a profession with has impacts both in and out of the classroom. Such factors may lead to an imbalance between family and work life among teachers. Based on the results of a previous study by Yilmaz & Altinkurt (2015), work-family conflicts are generally more intense among teachers as compared to family-work conflicts. Since this may be exaggerated during the pandemic necessitating distance education, we decided to examine the work-family conflict among female teachers working from work in more depth. Therefore, answers to the following questions have been asked:

1. What are the problems experienced by teachers in relation to work-family conflict?

2. What are the problems experienced by teachers in relation to family-work conflict?

3. What are teachers' opinions, regarding the support they get from their supervisors during distance education?

4. What are their views on distance education?

2. Method

2.1. Study Design

This was a qualitative case study, which explores and identifies integral and meaningful characteristics of real life events using in-depth examination of data (Creswell, 2015). In case studies, an in-depth understanding of an event is essential. Accordingly, the work-family conflict experienced by female teachers during distance education represents the case to be understood thoroughly.

2.2. Study Group

The study population consisted of married female teachers with children residing in Istanbul and working from home due to the pandemics. Teachers were selected using the criterion sampling technique, which is among purposive sampling techniques. Criterion sampling assists in obtaining comprehensive and detailed data from a relatively small sample size (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2015). Inclusion criteria for the study were teaching from distance, being married, and having children. These criteria were chosen due to the fact that females have a higher burden of home responsibilities due to societal gender roles as well as due to their suitability to collect in-depth data regarding work-family conflict experiences. When recruiting eligible teachers, case sampling was used as a rapid and practical method in pandemic conditions where teachers had to work from home.

The study population consisted of 17 female teachers. The following table provides information on teachers and related codes.

Table 1. Teachers' information and codes

Code	Age	Branch	No. of children	Weekly No. of Lessons	Professional seniority	Time spent for home labor	Type of institution
K1	38	Primary School	2	8	15	8	Private
K2	41	Physics	2	10	18	6	Private
K3	25	English	1	12	2	5	Private
K4	36	Social Sciences	2	5	13	5	State
K5	38	Primary School	2	5	12	6	State

K6	31	Primary School	2	3	10	11	State
K7	27	Chemistry	2	4	5	12	Private
K8	40	Biology	1	3	19	4	State
K9	26	Turkish Language and Literature	1	6	1	5	State
K10	34	Science	2	3	10	7	State
K11	24	Turkish	1	11	2	4	Private
K12	39	Math	2	6	15	10	Private
K13	40	Primary School	2	4	17	10	State
K14	35	Turkish Language and Literature	1	15	13	5	Private
K15	33	English	2	12	10	7	Private
K16	47	Math	2	18	24	3	Private
K17	29	Social Sciences	1	6	4	10	Private

2.3. *Data Collection*

A semi-structured questionnaire developed by the investigators was utilized to collect data. Opinion was obtained from two academicians and one teacher during the development phase of the questionnaire, and the pilot study of the questionnaire was carried out with the inclusion of two teachers. The questionnaire included 7 items collecting data on personal information, 1 item for workload at home, 2 items for problems experienced at work and family relationships after the start of distance education, 2 items regarding the support from school management, and 1 item for opinions on working from home, summing up to a total of 13 items.

Although initially data collection with video talks was planned, telephone calls were utilized due to a number of reasons such as time restrictions or being unavailable for video talks. Six of the participants allowed recording of the telephone interview, while 11 did not. Data from this latter group of interviews were directly entered into the interview forms. In order to minimize the risk of data loss, the interviews were recorded by both the investigator collecting the data as well as by an assistant. The shortest interview lasted for 19 minutes, while the longest lasted for 32 minutes.

2.4. *Analysis of the Data*

Data analysis was based on thematic analysis. The responses obtained from participants were sorted out into words and sentences, and these analytic units were named and coded. Then these codes were interweaved and associated with each other in order to form the themes. The resultant themes and codes were tabulated with frequency of the codes, to improve data clarity.

3. Results

Table 2. Home responsibilities

| Theme	Code	f
Home Related Tasks	Cleaning	17
	Cooking	15
	Washing clothes and ironing	10
	Washing the dishes	6
	Shopping	2
Children Related Tasks	Childcare	10
	Playing with and taking care of children	8
	Help with children's homework and lessons	6

As shown in Table 2, the tasks have been categorized into two main domains, namely the home related tasks and children related tasks. Among the former group of tasks, the highest number of codes were expressed for cleaning and food preparation, followed by washing clothes, ironing, washing dishes, and shopping. With regard to children related tasks, childcare was expressed by 10 participants, while playing with and taking care of children were expressed by 8, and helping children with homework and lessons were expressed by 6 participants.

Table 3. Work-family conflicts

Domain	Subdomain	f
	Spending inadequate time with the spouse	10
Time-Based Conflicts	Spending inadequate time with children	10
	Neglecting childcare	4
	Loss of shift perception	2
	Dispute within family	5
Strain-Based Conflicts	Tension	4
	Stress	3
	Feeling of guilt	3
	Feeling low	2
	Depreciation of distance education	6

Behavior Based Conflicts	Being treated as a housewife	3

A Table 3 presents the views of participants on work-family conflict. This table categorizes the work-family conflict in three domains: time-, strain-, and behavior-based conflicts. While spending inadequate time with the spouse and children were expressed most frequently within this domain, neglecting childcare and loss of the "shift-work" feeling were also reported. Dispute within the family, tension, stress, feelings of guilt, and low mood comprised the strain-related expressions. Lastly, the expressions of behavior-based conflicts included depreciation of distance education and being treated like a housewife.

Based on these findings, the work-family conflicts experienced by female teachers were modelled as follows:
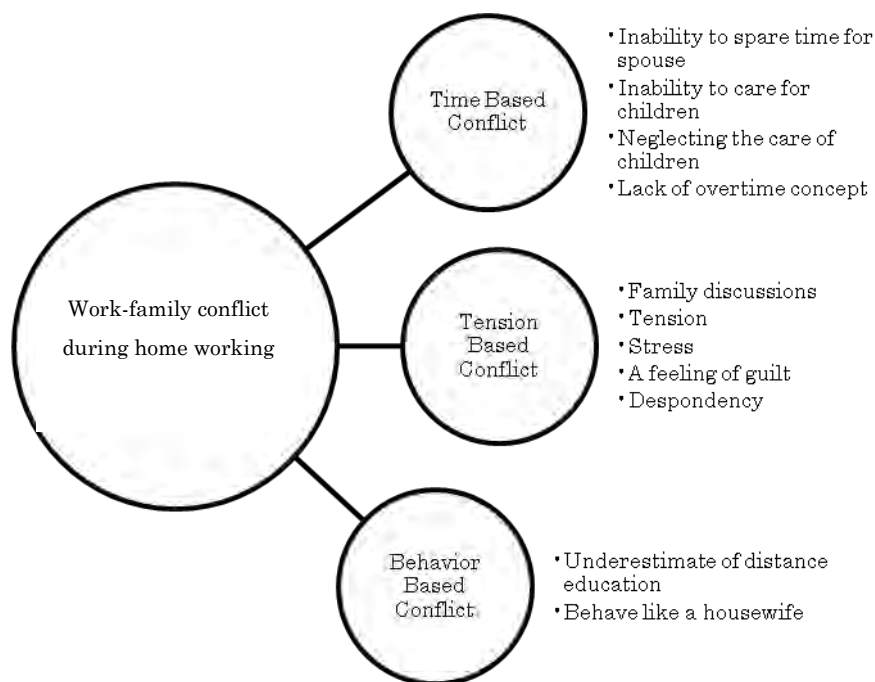
Some of the views expressed by the participants regarding the work-family conflict are presented below:

"My children would have to watch television during that time window. But, they are unable to take good care of themselves, since they are very small. My distance education starts at a time when I am supposed to serve them a breakfast. If I leave them alone, they have injuries, sometimes a bleed in the nose, sometimes in the lips. I spend extra time to prepare for lessons, again letting them spend time alone. Problems, problems, problems." (K6)

"I can only take care of my child physically, not being able to play or spend enough time with him. This gives me a guilty conscience. Apart from that, I cannot fulfill all responsibilities regarding the house related tasks." (K17).

"I have difficulties in spending enough time with my spouse and children. Since my spouse is also working, he is unable to support me. I have a 11-month old daughter, whom I feel I cannot take adequate care. I mostly place her on her walker, and she spends time alone. I feel very sad, because I am unable to take adequate care of her at a time when she needs this most." (K14).

"Before distance education started, I could take care of my child and do all types of house work when I was at home. Now, I am both at home and working, with expectations from my school, spouse, and children. The distance education requires a lot of time, plus I have to check homework, prepare for lessons, and respond to students' and parents' questions. I cannot spend enough time with my spouse and children, leading to high levels of stress, for them as well as for me. I experience feelings of guilt and irritability." (K15).
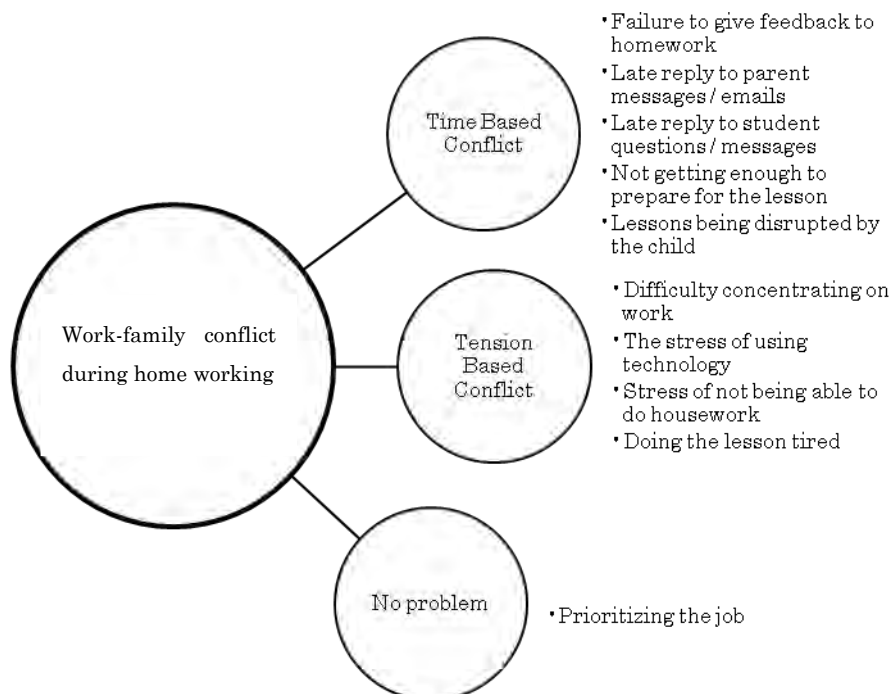
Table 4. Family-work conflicts

Domain	Subdomain	f
Time based conflicts	Setbacks in giving feedback to student homework	5
	Delayed responses to parent messages/e-posts	5
	Delayed responses to students' questions/messages	3
	Inadequate preparation for lessons	3
	Interruption of the lessons by my children	2
Strain based conflicts	Difficulty in focusing on work	3
	Stress associated with the use of technology	2
	Stress due to failure to complete housework	2
	Being tired during the lesson	2
Lack of problems	Prioritizing the work	3
	Spouse assistance	2

Table 4 summarizes the family-work conflicts using the domains of time-based conflicts, strain-based conflicts, as well as the absence of problems, as reported by some participants. The subdomains of the time-based conflicts consisted of setbacks in giving feedback to homework, delayed responses to parent messages/e-mails, delayed responses to students' questions/messages, inadequate preparation for lessons, and interruption of the lesson by the children. The strain-based domains included difficulties in focusing on work, stress associated with the use of technology, stress due to failure to complete

housework, and feeling tired during the lessons. Participants with no family-work conflict reported that prioritizing their tasks allowed them to cope up with the problems.

Based on these findings, the family-work conflict experienced by these teachers was modelled as follows:

Some of the views expressed by the participants regarding the family-work conflict are presented below:

"I have to finish the housework, but I also have lessons. It is not just those from EBA. I also have homework to give feedback, I have to respond to messages from parents. Also, students ask a lot of questions. I feel as if the telephone and the PC are stuck to my hand." (K11).

"I arrange my day according to the needs of my job, because we continue to be paid for what we do. Because of this, I have problems mainly with my family, leading to stress, and low mood." (K13).

"I had great trouble in establishing a balance between work and home in the initial days. I could not arrange the sleep and play time as well as the homework of my children, not to mention cook and housework. When my children were awake or had free time, they were a sort of obstacle to my lessons. While I was teaching, I also had to take care of them, which was a major distraction. Usually there is a delay in checking and providing feedback for my students' homework, and I try to do this after everyone sleeps. A quite exhausting time for me." (K15).

"I am grateful to my partner. I have no problems, since he helps with housework." *(K18).*

Table 5. Manager support during distance learning

Domain	Subdomain	F
Manager Support Present	Acknowledging success	2
	Motivation	2
Manager Support Absent	Lack of communication	6
	Continuous pressure regarding EBA	5

Table 5 shows the view of participant teachers on manager support. As can be seen from the table, majority of the participants expressed absence of manager support. Those reporting support from their managers described this in the form of acknowledgment of success and positive motivation. Those reporting absence of manager support described lack of communication and presence of continuous pressure regarding EBA.

Some of the views expressed by teachers regarding manager support can be found below:

"Our principal tries to support us in everything. He expresses his appreciation orally for our effort." (K1)

"Although we have been sent e-mails regarding what we should be doing during this period, we have received no support." (K15)

"We only get technical support for distance education, nothing else." (K16).

Table 6. Views on working from home

Domain	Subdomain	F
Impact on Students	Little benefit for students	6
	Close communication with students is lacking	5
	Student participation very low	5
Emotional Impact	Exhausting	6
	Lack of satisfaction from work	5
	Stressful	4
	Low motivation	4
	Concerns of balancing home and work tasks	2

Compelling Effects	Difficulties associated with being female	4
	Technological shortcomings	2
	No private time	2

As seen in Table 6, the views on working from home were categorized under 3 domains. The "impact on students" domain included subdomains such as little benefit for students, lack of close communication with students, and low participation by students. In "emotional impact" domain, exhaustion and lack of work satisfaction were most frequently expressed, followed by low level of motivation, and concerns regarding the balance between work and home requirements. Difficulties associated with being female, technological shortcomings and lack of adequate private time comprised the compelling effects domain.

Based on these findings, the views of participant teachers on working from home were modelled as follows:
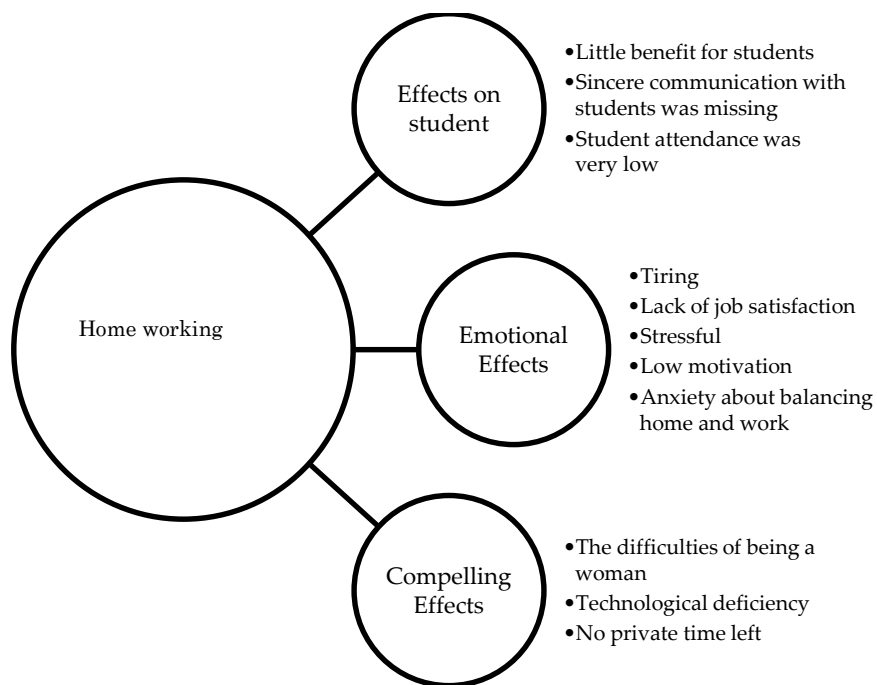
Some views expressed by participant teachers regarding working from home are as follows:

"Exhausting, unpleasant. I believe that this profession (teaching) is directly related with human contact. It appears to me that feelings and thoughts cannot be adequately conveyed via online platforms. Also, student attendance is low. Of course, it is much more easier to

communicate with students who have good motivation. However, since the number of students is low, we may assume that this is a difficult time period." (K8).

"Distance education is a challenging way for education. We have to rely on online documents submitted by our students. Moreover, with respect to high school students, most parents cannot catch up with the content of the education. This, I believe, causes a decline in the success, and only a small minority of the students may adhere to scheduled lessons. Questions that would normally require only a short fraction of time under normal conditions now require a lot more time. Also, the energy flow between us and students is much higher in face to face communication, representing another factor for reduced attendance rates during online education. Altogether, these may negatively impact the motivation of teachers." (K7).

"Home duties, childcare, and school related tasks need to be carried out all at once. Sometimes I feel that I cannot even breath. Tidy up this, tidy up that". (K12).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This pandemic has been associated with multi-faceted impacts on many countries, including economic, sociologic, psychologic, and professional effects. The current study aimed to perform an in-depth assessment of work-family conflict experienced by female teachers working from home due to COVID-19 outbreak. Accordingly, an evaluation of house responsibilities assumed by female teachers showed that house and children related tasks are on the forefront of the task list for most participants. The most time and energy consuming house duties included cleaning and food preparation, followed by washing clothes and ironing, and shopping. Similar findings have been reported in a number of previous studies, in the sense that traditional roles imposed on women require execution of several housework tasks by women, including cleaning, cooking, ironing, and dishwashing (Ergöl, Koç, Eroğlu & Taşkın, 2012; Dikmen & Maden, 2012; Akın-Acuner, 2009; Güner, 2008; Arpacı, 2004; Özkanlı & Korkmaz, 2000). This was described using the phrase "invisible labor" by some authors (Dikmen & Maden, 2012) to define labor intermingled with life without shift hours, and our findings in a group of female teachers corroborate such previous research. Also, these factors were considered as an "career obstacle for female teachers" under the heading of "familial reasons", as suggested by some studies (Gündüz, 2010). On the other hand, research by Wong and Nguyen (2020), and Del Boca et al. (2020) concluded that the workload of the female employees was intensified during the COVID-19 outbreak. In studies from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Austria, the increase in the workload of women that had been observed in times of war or natural disaster was found to re-emerge during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the same vein of research, it has been underscored that this increased demand on women with respect to housework may continue to escalate until the termination of the

pandemic. In studies by Demir-Öztürk et al. (2020), it was found that females assumed more responsibility regarding routine housework and childcare during the pandemic.

Children responsibilities assumed by female teachers during the pandemic were found to conglomerate around childcare, taking care of older children, and assistance with children's homework. Studies from the UK (Sevilla & Smith, 2020), Spain (Farre et al., 2020) and Italy (Boca et al., 2020) also suggest that women working from home have more responsibility regarding childcare during the period of working from home.

Work-family conflict experienced by female teachers working from home during the pandemic was categorized under 3 domains, i.e. time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based conflicts. The body of literature that support our findings in terms of strain-based conflict point out to a positive relationship between perceived stress and work-family conflict. (Ergün & Yüksel, 2019; Fırat, 2018; Erdilek & Karabay, 2015; Tekingündüz et al., 2015; Palmer et al., 2012; Yılmaz & Şahin, 2008; Efeoğlu & Özgen, 2007; Claesson & Brice, 1989).Studies examining the pandemic period showed that parents experience cumulative stress due to COVID-19 (Brown et al., 2020) and another study from China reported high levels of anxiety among teachers, with female teachers having even higher anxiety levels (Li et al., 2020). Similarly, in the current study female teachers reported a number of different stressors, including quarrels within the family, tension, guilt, and low mood, which could lead to a strain-based work-family conflict.

Previous quantitative research on sample populations consisting of teachers suggested low or moderate levels of work-family conflicts. However, work-family conflict was generally more intense as compared to family-work conflict (Türker & Çelik, 2019; Kahraman & Çelik, 2018; Yılmaz & Altınkurt, 2015). Furthermore, more frequent occurrence of work-family conflict was reported for female teachers as compared to their male counterparts (Özkul & Cömert, 2019; Özünlü, 2012; Keleş-Ay, 2010).As stated in an update issued by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), males and females are affected differently by the pandemics. Work-family conflicts were already more common among female teachers prior to the pandemic, hence, the likelihood of aggravation in such conflicts among this population cannot be ignored.

Expressed views of the participants regarding family-work conflict showed that although a small fraction of female teachers reported no problems, most had time- and strain-based conflicts. It is important to note that female teachers who did not report problems were those who also received assistance from their partners in terms of housework. This apparently solidified societal gender roles are closely related with where women position themselves and their partners. Accordingly, women consider housework as a part of their core tasks, and housework carried out by the partner is perceived as a supportive act.

Of the views on family-work conflict, the most frequent responses for time-based conflicts consisted of "setbacks in providing feedback to homework" and "delay in

responding parent messages/e-mails", while the most frequent responses for strain-based conflicts consisted of difficulties related with "focusing on work", "using technology", and "finishing housework".

Notably, only few of the participants reported adequate manager support during the process of distance education. Those who responded positively regarding manager support expressed motivation and acknowledgement of success. Previous studies showed moderate or high levels of manager support among teachers (Sarıkaya & Keskinkılıç-Kara, 2019; Ertük et al., 2016; Özdemir, 2010). However, majority of the teachers in the current study reported no manager support, communication problems, and pressure in terms of EBA use (Education Informatics Network). Although the perceived manager support is generally important for teachers in many aspects, it appears to be even more so during the pandemic. Similarly, an Indonesian study during the pandemic indicated the need for adequate manager support among teachers (Rasmitaldi et al., 2020).

Reduced motivation for distance education was also reported in female teachers working from home during the pandemic. Again, in another study from Indonesia teachers working from home were found to have lower levels of education during this period (Purwanto et al., 2020). Furthermore, the study subjects pointed out to a lack of close communication with students and reduced efficiency of the educational activities as well as to technological shortcomings. Similarly, previous literature published before the pandemic on problems associated with distance education has identified difficulties in teacher-student communication and technological drawbacks (Bilgiç & Tüzün, 2015; Kırık, 2014; Engin, 2013; Bilgiç et al., 2011; Tuncer & Taşpınar, 2008). Again, research on distance education during the pandemic has reported similar issues (Rasmitaldi et al., 2020). Major determinants of the success of online education were the pedagogic as well as technological competence of the teachers (Bilgiç et al., 2011).

4.1. Recommendations

It appears from all these findings that teachers require information and support for the educational and training activities during the pandemics. UNESCO has recommended a similar support for teachers (2020b) for coping up with COVID-19 pandemic, considering the critical roles played by teachers, since teachers have been reported to be exposed to pressure regarding the use of certain distance education methods and tools, despite their frontline position in ensuring the continuity of education. Such strains may trigger further work-family conflicts for teachers, and school managers may provide further support for teachers, for example by the use of collaborative platforms such as live video calls.

UNESCO (2020a) also recommended several platforms and resources to facilitate the educational activities during the outbreak for parents, teachers, school managers, and students, and to provide psycho-social support. In this regard, digital learning platforms

may be established and training on informatics technology may be provided for teachers. Such technical support for teachers may offer certain advantages such as enriching the educational content and reducing family-work conflict.

Teachers' well-being should be a priority for educational institutions. Identifying the needs of teachers, provision of support and motivation, building trust, and giving hope for the future will certainly provide positive contributions. In addition to economic and societal impacts, this long-lasting pandemic is also associated with psychological effects, and platforms for providing psychological support to teachers are required. In this regard, more widespread availability of family counseling may be of significant help.

The difference between men and women in term of societal gender roles is associated with a cultural hierarchy in favor of men that is reproduced and maintained in all aspects of life. Adoption of a more egalitarian approach by the new generations would provide the most effective drive for a change in societal gender roles. Thus, societal gender equality should be incorporated into the current curriculums.

This study specifically looked at work-family conflict among female teachers. Future studies may focus on the spouses rather than a single gender, allowing an evaluation of family-work conflict experienced by the family. Also, the study sample may include managers, academicians, and other professionals and different methodologies may be utilized.

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