

## Virus in the Office: Effects of Transition to Work from Home System Due to Covid-19 Pandemic on Employees Work-Life Conflict and a Qualitative Research on Resolutions

Nazlı YÜCEOL\*, Ceylan Merve BİNİCİ\*\*

### Abstract

The Covid-19 Pandemic makes working-from-home mandatory creates some difficulties for employees. This study was prepared to investigate the possible effects of changeover to the working-from-home system due to the Pandemic on employees' work-life conflicts and to offer solutions. The research was carried out at an international independent research company's head office which involved full-time office workers. With the structured interview, 10 people who have different life structures about home life, the number of people staying at home and their roles at home were interviewed. By examining the interview transcripts, 4 common themes were found as the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the effects of working-from-home, the work-life conflict, and the effects of the pandemic process. It has been observed that the working-from-home system creates work-life conflict and the different home life structure affects the situation. Individual and managerial strategies are necessary for the resolution of work-life conflicts.

**Keywords:** Flexible Working, Work from Home, Work Life Conflict, Covid-19 Pandemic, Covid-19

**Jel Codes:** D23

**Ofise Virüs Girdi: Covid-19 Pandemisi Nedeniyle Evden Çalışma Sistemine Geçilmesinin Çalışanların İş-Yaşam Çatışması Yaşamasına Etkileri ve Çözüm Önerileri Üzerine Bir Nitel Araştırma**

### Öz

Covid-19 pandemisi, evden çalışma sistemini zorunlu kılarken bu durum çalışanlar için bazı zorluklar yaratmaktadır. Bu çalışma, pandemi nedeniyle evden çalışma sistemine geçişin çalışanların iş-yaşam çatışmalarına olası etkilerini araştırmak ve



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\* Corresponding Author, Lecturer, Istanbul Gelisim University, Vocational School of Health Services, Medical Documentation and Secretarial, Istanbul, Türkiye. E-mail: [nyuceol@gelisim.edu.tr](mailto:nyuceol@gelisim.edu.tr)

**ORCID** <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8416-5707>

\*\* PhD Student, Yıldız Technical University, Business Administration, Istanbul, Türkiye.

E-mail: [ceylan.binici@gmail.com](mailto:ceylan.binici@gmail.com) **ORCID** <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7672-5185>

çözümler sunmak amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Araştırma, tam zamanlı ofis çalışanlarının yer aldığı uluslararası bağımsız bir araştırma şirketinin merkezinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yapılandırılmış görüşme ile farklı yaşam yapılarına sahip 10 kişi ile evde kalan kişi sayısı ve katılımcıların evdeki rollerinin farklılığı dikkate alınarak görüşülmüştür. Görüşme transkriptleri incelendiğinde, Covid-19 pandemisinin iş ve ev yaşamına etkileri, evden çalışma sisteminin etkileri, iş-yaşam çatışması ve pandemi sürecinin duygusal ve psikolojik etkileri olarak 4 ortak tema bulunmuştur. Evden çalışma sisteminin iş-yaşam çatışması yarattığı ve farklı ev yaşamı yapısının durumu etkilediği görülmüştür. İş hayatı çatışmalarının çözümü için bireysel ve yönetsel stratejiler gereklidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Esnek Çalışma, Evden Çalışma, İş-yaşam Çatışması, Covid-19 Pandemisi, Covid-19

**Jel Kodu:** D23

## 1. Introduction

The traditional working system, whose start and end time is set, is based on a fixed time and place, has undergone changes from the past to the present. Unlike this traditional working system, alternatives were needed to cope with the realities of modern life such as contribution to the family budget, single-parent home owners, building and transportation costs, participation of disabled people in working life and higher living costs (Kelly, 1988). Home-working have been studied in the literature for a long time, based on the fact that they may cause work-life conflict. Boswell and Olson (2007) suggested that, the family and friends expect more access and communication during working hours, which causes interruptions and distractions for work (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007). Park and Jex (2011) argued that it increases the state of being in constant connection for work, this situation continues after work and thus blurring the boundary between different living spaces of the person (Park & Jex, 2011). With the blurring of the boundaries between work and family roles, people try to reconcile the demands between them, which is one of the organizational challenges faced by employees (Zoonen, Sivunen, & Rice, 2020).

There have been epidemics affecting large masses in the past centuries. Today, the Covid-19 Pandemic negatively affects business, social life and economy. Turkey has decided to switch to social isolation measures started to be implemented and made many businesses to shut down the system and work from home with regulations to reduce the speed of propagation of the epidemic in March. Deloitte's April 2020 report in 17 different provinces across Turkey from the 334 that responded to the survey participants are located. One of the questions is "Have You Switched to Home Working?" Almost half of the respondents stated that all their employees now work from home and the rate of those who continue to work in the company / field is below 10%. The rate of partial transition is 43.2% (Deloitte, April 2020). This situation raises the need to investigate the functioning of the home-working system and the positive/negative factors that affect this process. From a micro perspective, the transition to a home-working system will affect the work-life balance of employees, and from a macro perspective, it will affect businesses, sectors, markets and government regulations. The study, which defines the relationship / effect of work-life conflict and working from home in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, aims to contribute to the ideas and results that expand and enrich the existing literature. First a review of descriptive and theoretical issues related to work-life conflict and working from home is presented. After defining the concepts, it has benefited

from the studies on these two subjects in the literature. Addressing this issue is extremely important due to the fact that the home-working system is one of the working systems that will be used more frequently in the future and its possible effects on the work-life conflict of employees. For this analysis, the structured interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods, was used, the findings were evaluated and suggestions were made for future studies.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Work-Life Conflict**

Employees' work-life balance is ensured by the balanced and harmonious functioning of the roles assumed at work, private and family life. The fact that the individual has more than one role towards job, marriage and children and the inability to balance these roles causes conflicts to occur. Work-life conflict can be defined as "incompatible demands in some aspects of role demands in work, private and family life" (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). The role undertaken in working, private and family life alone does not cause conflict, but incompatible demands that arise when the responsibilities and obligations undertaken as a requirement of the roles are synchronous with each other may cause conflict (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). In the studies conducted since the beginning of the 1990s, the causes of the conflict as well as the direction of the relationship (two-way) that triggered the conflict have been discussed (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). Accordingly, it is possible that the role of the individual in relation with job prevents them from fulfilling family and private life obligations, as well as preventing the private life and family from fulfilling their work-related duties (Voydanoff, 2005). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) divided the work-life conflict into three groups (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985):

- **Time:** Time pressures on one role make it impossible to realize the expectations of the other role. While the demands of one role are met, time-dependent conflict can also occur when there is a mental preoccupation with another role.
- **Tension:** The negative psychological consequences caused by the role in business, private or family life prevent the other role from being fulfilled in a healthy way. Situations such as pressures, tensions, disappointments, sadness, anxiety, irritability, insensitivity and intolerance experienced by the person due to his role can negatively affect the performance for the other role.
- **Behavior:** The employee cannot adapt to behaviors related to other roles of roles in business, private or family life.

The factors that disrupt the work-life balance of individuals and prepare the ground for the emergence of conflicts are quite diverse. Long and irregular working hours, autonomy status, the size and structure of the organization, low wages, and negative attitude of the senior management, business relations, and employee performance are seen as job-related factors (Madsen, 2003). Various personal and family factors such as demographic characteristics, high number of children and younger age, working of both spouses, not supporting each other, taking care and responsibilities of children by one of the spouses, time pressure and lack of energy has been seen to cause family life conflict (Lo, 2003). Situations such as stress, tension, anxiety and fatigue that the person experiences due to these factors make it difficult for them to fulfill the requirements of other roles and invite conflicts (Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980). Conflicts cause a feeling of deterioration in work-life balance and an overall decrease in life satisfaction compared to previous years (Zuzanek, 2004).

While all these factors create the possibility of a work-life conflict, the introduction of an unexpected factor such as the Covid-19 Pandemic further strengthens this possibility. In such situations where conflict is inevitable, some duties and responsibilities fall on the managers as well as the employees in order to manage the conflict (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Accordingly, executive support significantly reduces work-life conflict (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002). If a manager provides support to employees, employees can more easily balance their work and family roles (Burke & Greenglass, 1999). According to a study conducted by Airtasker, home workers work an average of 1.4 days more per month than office workers, which corresponds to 16.8 days a year. It is estimated that these numbers have increased during the epidemic. The support provided by the managers can prevent work-life conflicts to be experienced (Öztürkler, 2020). Controlling working hours, planning and managing the process during the pandemic process will be possible with the support and sensitivity of the manager.

## **2.2. Work from Home**

Work from home can be expressed as remote work is that developments in information and communication technologies make employees less dependent on their workplaces. These developments help employees to run their business outside of the workplace, for example at home or any other place they have access to (Näswall, Hellgren, & Sverke, 2008). Tremblay (2003) emphasized it as an attractive non-standard way of working because it reduces time spent on the road, in traffic, so employers can go home early (Tremblay, 2003). In terms of its effects on businesses, industries and markets, it is stated that work from home is an arrangement that can increase the profitability of the organization (Major, Verive, & Joice, 2008). In addition, Martinez et al. (2007), in his research with 156 Spanish companies, concluded that work from home has a positive effect on financial performance and strategic flexibility. (Martínez-Sánchez, Pérez-Pérez & Vela-Jiménez, 2007).

It is a good method for flexible use of time and making time for family and private life (Sullivan & Lewis, 2001). Many employees work with the help of computers & communication tools without going to the workplace and find it advantageous to continue there in a place away from the workplace. However, it has some disadvantages. The blurring of the boundaries between work and life creates an imbalance between roles and paves the way for work-life conflict. In addition, home workers stay away from the social environment and opportunities offered by the work environment because they do not go to work. This situation may lead to loneliness of home workers and weakening of their social skills. Some regulations can also be made against the employee in terms of wages, social benefits and social security when work from home (Näswall, Hellgren, & Sverke, 2008).

In the studies conducted to date, it has been considered as a working model that employees generally consider and prefer not as a necessity but as an option. However, in this study, unlike the literature, the pandemic has made it compulsory for many sectors to work from home. In addition, the transition from home to work system brought along a process that many businesses were caught unprepared for. Businesses that did not have an existing infrastructure to use this system, did not have the necessary equipment, did not provide training to their employees about it, faced great difficulties. This situation has the potential to cause differences in the experiences, attitudes and behaviors of the employees by affecting the dynamics in the habitual work-life order and to create work-life conflict.

### 3. Methodology

Qualitative research method was used in the study. Considering the qualitative research cycle (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003), the research problem was first determined. The difficulties that employees who switched to work from home system due to the pandemic may experience while adapting to this process have been identified. After examining the possibility of these difficulties triggering conflicts in their business and social lives (private and family life), it was decided to make suggestions to employees and managers to prevent conflicts. Later, a literature study was conducted in order to establish the theoretical framework, the basic theories related to the subject discussed were examined and the relationship between them was specified. After the definition of the relationship between theories, research questions were formed. This research aims to address the following questions:

- 1) What kind of changes have occurred in the lives of employees these days when we switched to work from home due to the Covid-19 Pandemic?
- 2) What are the effects of family structure on work from home and work-life conflict?
- 3) What kind of measures do employees take to prevent existing or potential work-life conflicts?
- 4) What kind of duties and responsibilities fall on managers in order to prevent existing or probable work-life conflicts?

In the selection of the sample, office workers, who are defined as white-collar employees, were selected within the scope of the research problem and the possibilities. Office workers working in a firm that has offices in Istanbul, Barcelona, Dubai, Jeddah, Doha, Kuwait, Amman and Cape Town and provides research and consultancy services in more than 60 countries participated in the study with the non-probabilistic sampling method. Participants was selected from full-time office workers of the head office of the research company (Turkey). Detailed information about the company and participants can be found in the tables below. Pseudonyms were given to the participants to ensure confidentiality.

<b>Information about the company</b>	The company has offices in Turkey, Spain, UAE, and South Africa and carries out studies on consumer products, health, agriculture with more than 60 countries. It has a total of 21 full-time office employees, 8 managers for national projects, 5 managers for international projects, 2 specialists for IT, 2 workers for project support activities, 2 specialists for call center and 2 workers for administrative affairs.
<b>Working principle of the company</b>	Researchers examining the behavior and satisfaction of individuals working in this sector or benefiting from the services offered by the sector are carried out by remote communication methods such as phone calls and video calls. Since consumer purchasing behavior research includes activities such as package and packaging research and product, fragrance and taste testing, it requires employees and participants to be together in a laboratory environment.

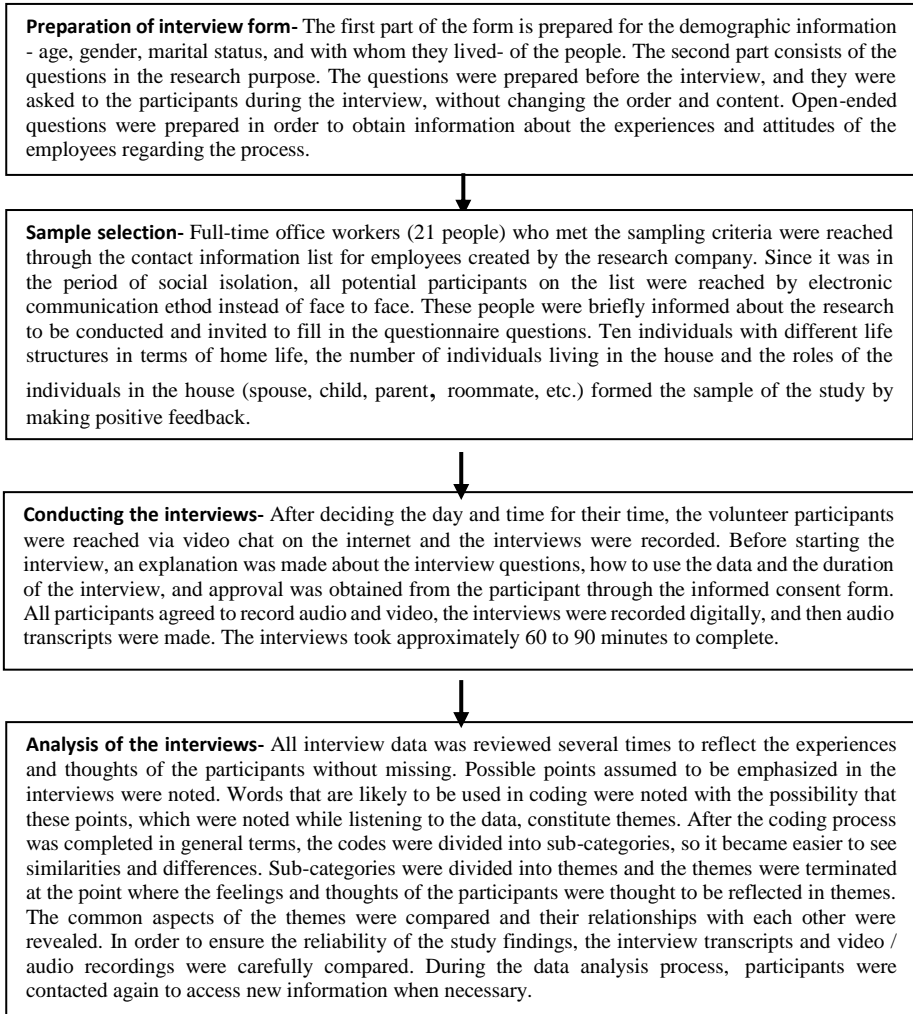
**Table 1:** Information about the Company

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Age / Gender</b>	<b>Marial Status</b>	<b>Household</b>	<b>Working Time</b>	<b>Work Position</b>
<b>K1</b>	28-F	Single	Homemate	3 Years	Project manager (National)
<b>K2</b>	32-F	Single	Parents	2 Years	Project Manager (National)
<b>K3</b>	33-F	Single	Alone	12 Years	Project Manager (National)
<b>K4</b>	36-M	Married	Wife	5 Years	IT
<b>K5</b>	22-M	Single	Parents & Sister	3 Years	IT
<b>K6</b>	27-F	Single	Parents & Brother	3 Years	Project Manager (International)
<b>K7</b>	40-M	Single	Parents	5 Years	Project Team Leader
<b>K8</b>	26-F	Single	Parents & Brother's family	7 Years	Call Center Specialist
<b>K9</b>	25-F	Married	Spouse	1 Years	Administrative Staff
<b>K10</b>	54-F	Single	2 Children	8 Years	Administrative Staff

**Table 2:** Demographic Data of Participants

During the data collection phase, a pre-prepared interview form was used in accordance with the structured interview method. The structured interview technique is that all participants are asked the same questions, in the same order and in the same way (Quinn, 1990). In the interview form, the participants were asked 4 research questions and demographic encounters in accordance with the purpose of the research and their opinions were taken. During the interview, all the participants were asked the same questions in the same order. During the interview, the predetermined questions were not exceeded.

Content analysis method was used in data analysis. Since the pandemic process made the face-to-face meeting risky, the interviews were conducted via the internet in the form of a virtual meeting. With the permission of the participants, audio and video recording was taken during the interview. The audio and video recordings obtained were coded by listening to them a few times. Open coding was used to determine what kind of themes were present in the research then subcoding of each theme was made. Main themes and sub-themes are shown in table 3. The research stages are presented in detail in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** The Stages of the Analysis

#### **4. Findings**

There are 4 common themes obtained as a result of examining the interview transcripts: Covid-19 Pandemic, work from home and work-life conflict, and the effects of the process on participants in all aspects. After the determination of these main themes, sub-themes of each main theme were created. By explaining the sub-themes each theme has in itself, it is tried to express how these themes are interconnected. It is possible to see themes and sub-themes in the table below:

MAIN THEMES	SUB-THEMES
COVID-19 PANDEMIC	The Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Home Life The Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Working Life
WORK FROM HOME	Advantages of Work From Home Disadvantages of Work From Home The Effect of Work From Home on Attitudes and Behaviors
WORK-LIFE CONFLICT	Situations That Create Work-Life Conflict Efforts to Prevent Work-Life Conflict (Employees and Executive Perspective)
THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIA	Psychological Effects Emotional Effects

**Table 3:** Main Themes and Sub-Themes Obtained as a Result of Interviews with Participants

*The effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic on home life:* The duties and responsibilities of the majority of the participants have increased during this period. Spending the day at home increases the amount of housework to be done.

K1: The things I have to do at home such as washing, washing, and kitchen shopping have increased because we started to spend the whole day at home.

K2: I had certain responsibilities before the pandemic, but tasks such as cooking and cleaning increased with the pandemic. For example, I was not a regular cook, but now I have to eat at least 2 meals a day. A helper was coming to clean the house, but now he can not come, so I do the cleaning. In other words, with the pandemic, in the process of work from home, all housework is entirely my responsibility".

*The effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the work life:* The activities carried out on the phone and computer in the office were continued from home without any interruption. This situation is related to moving laptops and desktop computers used in the office to the house, having internet connection in the houses and continuing the calls made from office phones with mobile phones.

K9: There has been no change in my duties and responsibilities. I kept looking at the phones in the same way as I redirected the office phone to my mobile number. Thanks to the system installed on my computer, I was able to make my invoices and follow up income and expenses and I continued to work without any changes.

K10 stated that she made phone calls at home in order to support the project work as the administrative work in the office ended during this process and stated that her work had changed. During the pandemic process, consumer purchasing behavior research conducted by the company was suspended, as it required employees and participants to be together in a laboratory environment. Similarly, field work was suspended because it required the parties to come face to face. This situation caused a decrease in the workload of some employees.

K3, on the other hand, stated that face-to-face work decreased, but other projects increased, with the statement that "field projects stopped, internet and telephone studies were emphasized" and stated that their intensity decreased relatively. Working in the field of information technologies, K4 stated that he is interested in server maintenance and control, removing technical problems, security and continuity of information flow from home as well as in the office, but in addition to all these, he emphasizes remote access services.

Working as an international project manager, K6 stated that, unlike the other participants, the effects of the pandemic experienced vary by country. Participants observed slowdown and disruptions due to the pandemic in the projects implemented in Turkey. They said "the impact of the customer to the pandemic in the country and it's hard



to explain that this is why projects proceed slowly, during this period we spend extra effort to customer satisfaction. Deloitte's April 2020 report supports the above data. Considering the answers given to the question "Did you have any work from home approach for pre-pandemic term?", it is seen that 75.8% no, 24.2% yes answer. (Deloitte, April 2020).

*Advantages and disadvantages of work from home:* While evaluating the advantages, the most emphasis was placed on saving time spent on commuting. Living in a metropolitan city causes a serious traffic problem and it is an advantage to use the time spent on the road for work that can be done during the day thanks to work from home (Rubin, Nikolaeva, Nello-Deakin, & te Brömmelstroet, 2020). K3 said that he could devote more time to sports. K5 stated that he started to be interested in his hobbies and could help his brother with his homework. Considering the different advantages of work from home, K4 stated that work from home enables healthy eating, K10 focuses on tasks that have been waiting to be done at home for a long time, and K9 stated that the risk of getting illness is reduced thanks to the work from home system.

The disadvantages of work from home are more weighted than advantages. It was emphasized that social life is affected the most. K4 stated that being at home all the time causes boredom. K5 also stated that the inability to go out and socialize bothers him. K7, K9 and K10 also emphasized that work from home is a disadvantage, as the work environment provides the opportunity to socialize and allow people to move away from home, enter new environments and interact with different people. In addition to the interruption of social life, K1 stated that moving away from the office environment made communication with colleagues difficult and this situation interrupts the process of making and implementing decisions.

K2: The comfort of working in home environment always disrupts concentration.

K3: Routine work discipline was lost, I'm deprived of the concept of overtime, I could not plan my work during the day, and that not being able to communicate face-to-face with both customers and colleagues caused focusing problems.

K8: I have the most difficulty in video call meetings, it is difficult to keep silence. I use headphones, but still the mobility in the room can distract me" and stated that work from home is a disadvantage for her due to a noisy and crowded environment.

*The Effect of Work from Home on Attitudes and Behaviors:* Minimization of physical connection with the outside world due to social isolation caused changes in the behavior of both the participants and the people with whom they shared the home environment. Waking up early and exhibit new behaviors in the form of planning the day, reading a book, doing sports or turning to different hobbies have positive psychological and physical consequences. The people with whom the home environment was shared developed attitudes and behaviors in a way to adapt to the home working system of the participants. In case the behaviors of the parties were compatible with each other, the work from home system operated without any problems, otherwise it was inevitable to experience work-life conflict. Compatibility can be explained by showing the necessary respect and importance to the business life maintained in the home layout. The attentive behaviors of the participants not to get distracted during working hours, to provide a quiet working environment and not to give opportunity to the interrupters can be given as examples. If the working environment is quiet and separate from other individuals, there is not much problem with the participants working at home. However, if the working environment is included in the home life itself, the behavior of the parties is important. K1 lives with her roommate and both individuals switched to work from home due to the pandemic. This situation, under the influence of empathy, enabled them to pay a high level of attention to each other's work from home processes. A great majority of the participants living with family members stated that they responded with positive

attitudes and behaviors as well as displaying positive attitudes and behaviors. Individuals at home avoided household chores that would cause noise or distraction during the participant's working hours.

*Work-life conflict:* Effective management of the time allocated for home roles and the time allocated for work has gained importance. K1 and K2 stated that they had problems in using their time effectively and efficiently in their answers that they stated that the work done at home increased.

K8: My mother is old, my sister and her baby are also at risk. Therefore, I take this responsibility in cases where it is necessary to go out. It is difficult to carry out both home work, office work and outside work together.

K9: I have to prepare meals three times a day, but now it is difficult to allocate time for work and extra housework".

If the conflict is caused by tension, the negative psychological consequences caused by the role in business, private or family life prevent the other role from being fulfilled in a healthy way.

K8: Having a little baby at home means housework never ends. At this point, when I am constantly asked to take care of something, I state if I need to focus on my work at that time, but this situation can upset my mother and sister

K10: My children may think that I am always ready to do housework because I am always at home.

If the conflict is behaviorally oriented, the employee's behaviors related to roles in work, private or family life cannot be compatible with the behaviors he / she does in other life spheres. The participants rarely experience conflicts arising from their inability to manage and confuse their own roles.

K6: I have a mother who thinks that I only sit in the corner of my computer and do not do housework and on the other hand I have customers that I am dealing with. Being able to manage both my role of helping my mother at home and my executive role that manages her project well and satisfies her customers at the same time makes things a bit difficult, of course.

In addition to the causes of work-life conflict mentioned above, other individuals living at home exhibit negative attitudes and behaviors towards participants when they work from home, making conflict inevitable. K6 stated that unlike other participants, she does not have a working environment of her own. Situations such as having a loud television in the working environment or visiting guests affect her negatively. The participant exemplified the conflict she experienced by saying "Sometimes there can be discussion even because of the sound of the television".

*Efforts to Prevent Work-Life Conflict:* The common measure for most of them is to determine the working environment in the home as a quiet place away from other individuals.

K1: I set up the same as my office table in my room and I avoid activities related to my work in common areas, so I respect the common use area and do not engage in my work in shared spaces with my housemate.

K5: I run my work in my room in order to prevent the tension I experiences with family members from turning into conflict, and I spend time in my room to avoid conflict and listens to music to calm down.

K8: Having a little baby at home means that housework never ends. At this point, when I am constantly asked to deal with something, if I need to focus on my work at that time, I state it and want understanding.

K9: During my work hours I think of myself as if I was at work and put aside home-related work so I don't have any conflicts. I fulfill my home-related responsibilities after my working hours, and I spare time for myself and my wife".

K10: I want my children to respect me by reminding them that I am obliged to work during working hours. This situation prevents conflicts. If I had very young children, they might not have understood this situation".

Participants also commented on how managers can take measures to prevent work-life conflict.

K1: It would be beneficial for managers to communicate with employees at regular intervals and to make them feel interested in them. It would be comforting to show value and the fact that video talks are not only for sharing information about the work done, but also the status of employees and family members.

K2: I think it is beneficial for managers to be more understanding and to think like "employees rather than employers. The health crisis and its effects are a process full of uncertainty and difficulties for both employers and workers. In this case, everyone is equal, everyone is locked up at home and waiting without knowing what will happen tomorrow. While uncertainty causes enough stress and tension, it is important for managers to adopt positive and supportive attitudes.

K10: Managers should be aware that we may have difficulties in running the business at home because they also have similar problems at home, so it shouldn't be too hard to empathize.

K4: Although we are asked to be always ready to wait as if we are working at a desk in the office, we may stand up from the computer for reasons such as preparing food at home, meeting personal needs, or we may not be able to answer the calls at the moment, this situation should not be perceived as not working while at home.

K9: Sending a job request suddenly at late hours of the day or at the weekend may disturb the employees and disrupt the order at home.

K10: When I meet with my close friends, they complain that since they have been work from home, more work has been given and the job is requested day and night without noticing. Since we are going through a difficult process and we have a fear of losing our job, we may be afraid to reflect on the difficulties we face in case of giving more than normal work or asking for work at uncommon times. I see that my friends complain about this situation, but they cannot reflect this to their managers. I do not have such a problem at the moment, but I missed my old work environment.

*Psychological and emotional effects:* Fear of getting sick or infecting their relatives, problems caused by decreased socialization opportunities, difficulty in adapting, motivation and concentration are seen as factors that directly affect the participants.

K7: Because of the advancing age of my parents that makes them a member of the primary risk group that the pandemic could affect, this process caused us to feel anxious.

K1: When I switched to the home-working system due to the pandemic, I felt like I was not doing business at first and was uncomfortable with this situation.

K6: Unfortunately, because I cannot reflect this to the customers, the situation is reflected in my family. I get nervous during working hours.

K5: Being alone, not being able to communicate with loved ones and not being able to socialize, as well as spending the quarantine process by closing home with the family is good at first, but after a while negatively affects relationships."

K8: I have to work harder than before. When I am cornered, family members try to understand and do things themselves, but this situation makes me feel inadequate and mentally tired sometimes. It makes me feel unhappy not to catch up with every job and distribute my responsibilities to others.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The Covid-19 Pandemic has emerged unexpectedly, causing a change in the routine of life. Everything that is considered normal in both home and business life has been replaced by uncertainty and unusual innovations. It is one of the measures developed until the pandemic process ends to make the work from home system mandatory in order to adapt to the isolation measures in business life. On the other hand, there are predictions that work from home will continue to be used after the pandemic process ends. As the pandemic process affects many sectors, unemployment is increasing day by day. It is thought that the transition from home to work system will have an effect on reducing unemployment. According to the study of Bick et al. (2020) with 5000 adults in the USA, work from home will significantly affect employment and labor demand after the virus outbreak (Bick, Blandin, & Mertens, 2020). From this point of view, the importance of the studies about work from home is once again seen. Likewise, Dingel and Neiman (2020) emphasized that work from home will be used more after the end of the pandemic process, so the research to be done is extremely important (Dingel & Neiman, 2020).

According to the results of the research, the effect of the role held in the home and other household members is observed in work-life conflicts caused by the forced transition of the participants to the work from home system due to the pandemic. The responsibilities of being a parent and spouse could not be observed in detail because the participants were mostly single and childless. While no significant difference was found in the context of gender and age in the study. This difference emerged depending on the roles in the family. The participants who continue their working life in the home environment do not reflect their stress and worries about their work life on their home life, and otherwise develop successful solutions to prevent them from doing their jobs properly. They also do not have difficulty in establishing work-life balance and they can develop solutions when they encounter work-life conflicts. While the majority of the participants did not have children, it was easier for them to maintain their working order in the home environment, while the supportive attitudes of the individuals with whom they shared home life helped to share responsibilities. The participant, who had a young child at home, made more effort to reduce work-life conflict.

Examples such as self-discipline, planning, effective time management can be given to individual solutions that participants can develop in order to prevent work-life conflict. People need to identify their priorities for their jobs and lives, and learn to cope with the stress of difficulties in meeting expectations. The process of adapting to a new work environment will also affect the emotional state and work motivation of the employee. Employees will need to be more motivated to adapt to this new work environment. This can increase perceptions of human-environment harmony and even help actively build or change the environment to adapt to them (Zhang, Chen, Schlegel, & Chen, 2019). Since individual effort is not sufficient to prevent work-life conflict, it is also important to demand supportive behaviors from individuals with whom home life is shared. When focusing on managerial strategies to prevent work-life conflict, focusing on the problems of the participants in teamwork is a primary need. The perception of not being able to control and effectively manage the new working style on work-life conflict may disrupt the long-term mental health and psychological well-being of employees (Wynn & Rao, 2020). At this point, training employees on flexible working can be considered as a method. With the training to be given to employees about work from home, problems in this area can be prevented. In order to eliminate the doubts employees feel about flexibility and to change their perceptions, it is necessary to update the work structure in accordance with the practice of work from home, with the company's own

organizational structure and culture. The fact that projects require teamwork and decisions need to be made quickly with a consensus brings communication problems with it. The realization of teamwork in a virtual environment creates problems arising from time and space differences. In the study, in addition to some competencies that the participants acquired for teamwork in the pre-pandemic working order, they have clearly defined work processes and distinct role sharing, allowing teamwork to be continued in a virtual environment. They have IT skills that will enable them to continue their work in the home-working system without interruption and the technological infrastructure that will enable remote communication also support team work. The adaptation problem experienced by the participants, who stated that they had problems in teamwork despite all these conditions, was not related to the team members but to the unusual conditions caused by the pandemic.

It is necessary to make some suggestions for employees and managers in order to prevent possible work-life conflict that may arise with the home working system. Clarifying the working hours and to inform the employees clearly on this issue. In the study of Smith et al. (2020) on this subject, employees may continue to exhibit work-related behaviors while continuing to work outside the workplace, but it is necessary to clarify the planned working hours and availability outside these hours (Smith, Kim, & Carter, 2020). One of the most important problems faced by employees in this process is the perception that they are always ready to work. Considering that the concept of overtime has disappeared due to being at home and that they can work at any time of the day may pave the way for employees to experience work-life conflict. Clarifying the working hours and planning the person's non-work life accordingly will be effective in preventing work-life conflict. It is also important empathizing with the employees in order to increase the motivation of the employees and to establish regular and healthy communication outside of work. It should not be forgotten that employees fear being unemployed in this process. Referring to Turkey in April, data from the next pandemic level has increased to 13.4% in June, according to data at the level of unemployment is 12.8% (TURKSTAT, 2020). The support of the manager is also important in reducing the stress experienced by the employees and increasing the motivation. Adopting a solution-oriented approach, providing active feedback in every positive or negative situation, evaluating the performance of the employees, evaluating the suggestions of the employees and using up-to-date technological opportunities, ensuring that the employees are trained in this sense, determining their working hours clearly and not waiting for work outside of working hours should be among the priorities of managers.

The study has some limitations, only full-time office workers working in the head office of the research company were interviewed, and two people with less than 6 months working in the company were not included in the sample. The reason why employees from other countries are not included in the analysis is that these branches operate with home-based working systems in the pre-pandemic period. Temporary employees assigned on a project basis are excluded from the sample because they do not meet the criteria of full-time employees, and employees who manage field studies do not work in the office environment. The study focuses on a single sector so it is not possible to generalize the findings obtained to other sectors that switch to the home working system due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Undoubtedly, the possible effects will also differ between sectors. Obtained findings are limited to the expressions of the participants, since different data collection techniques were not used or observations were not made about the work, private and family lives of the participants.

Proposals for future studies include surveys and interviews with employees of the research company's branches in other countries. In this way, the responses of employees employed through the home-based working system in different cities can be

comparatively evaluated in terms of organizational culture, employee differences, and legal regulation differences. In addition, the workloads and business structures of other businesses can be examined from different angles. The research can be carried out in different sectors and to cover different occupational groups. Finally, apart from the interview technique used in the research, the use of different qualitative and quantitative research designs can be considered among the suggestions for future research.

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## Summary

*Türkiye, Mart ayından itibaren uygulanmaya başlanan sosyal izolasyon önlemleri ile Covid-19 Pandemisinin yayılmasını önlemeye çalışırken birçok işletme evden çalışma sistemine geçmiştir. Literatürde uzun zamandır çalışma konusu olarak dikkat çeken evden çalışma sistemi, iş, aile ve özel yaşamdaki rol ve taleplerin çakışması ile ortaya çıkan iş-yaşam çatışmasına neden olabilmektedir. Kişilerin çalışma saatlerini aile ve arkadaşları ile etkileşim içerisinde bulunabilecekleri fiziksel ortamlarda geçirdiklerinde, bu kişilere harcamaları gereken zaman ve enerjinin arttığı, işe yönelik ve yakınlarına yönelik sorumlulukları arasındaki sınırların bulanıklaştığı ve iki yönlü talep artışının çalışanları işlerine ve ailelerine yönelik çatışmalara sürüklediği literatür incelemesinde dikkat çekmektedir. Uzun ve düzensiz çalışma saatleri, örgütün büyüklüğü ve yapısı, düşük ücretler, üst yönetimin olumsuz tutumu, iş ilişkileri, çalışan performansı ile ilgili faktörler iş-yaşam çatışmasına neden olurken çeşitli kişisel ve ailevi faktörler de çatışmaları arttırmaktadır. Tüm bu faktörler bir iş-yaşam çatışması olasılığını yaratırken, Covid-19 Pandemisi gibi beklenmedik bir faktörün ortaya çıkması bu olasılığı daha da güçlendirmektedir.*

*Tüm bu hususlardan yola çıkılarak bu çalışmada Covid-19 Pandemisi nedeniyle evden çalışmaya geçişin, çalışanların iş-yaşam çatışması üzerindeki olası etkilerini araştırmak ve çalışanlara ve yöneticilere çatışmaları önlemek için önerilerde bulunmak amaçlanmıştır. Araştırma örneklemini uluslararası bağımsız bir araştırma şirketinin (Türkiye) merkez ofisinde tam zamanlı çalışan ofis çalışanları arasından seçilmiştir. Katılımcılara yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği kullanılarak pandemi nedeniyle evden çalışma sistemine geçilmesinin çalışma hayatlarında, ev yaşantılarında ne gibi etkileri olduğu, sorunları çözmeye veya önlemeye yönelik ne tür tedbirler aldıkları ve yöneticilerinden nasıl bir destek bekledikleri ile ilgili sorular sorulmuştur. Verilen cevaplar incelendiğinde dört temel tema ve bu temalara bağlı alt temalar elde edilmiştir. Bunlar pandeminin ev ve iş yaşamına etkileri; evden çalışmanın avantajları, dezavantajları, tutum ve davranışlara etkileri; iş-yaşam çatışması yaratan durumlar ve önleme yöntemleri; pandeminin psikolojik ve duygusal etkileri şeklindedir. Evden çalışmaya geçen katılımcıların tüm günü evde geçirmeleri sebebiyle eve yönelik görev ve sorumluluklarının arttığı görülmüştür. Pandemi öncesinde ofiste yürütülen işlerin, ofiste kullanılan dizüstü ve masaüstü bilgisayarların eve taşınması, evlerde internet bağlantısının olması ve ofis telefonlarından yapılan görüşmelerin cep telefonlarıyla devam etmesi gibi yeni düzenlemelerle aksamadan devam ettiği görülmüştür. Evden çalışmanın avantajları arasında işe gidip gelirken harcanan zamandan tasarruf edilmesi, dezavantaj olarak ise sosyal hayatın pandemiden olumsuz etkilenmesine vurgu yapıldığı görülmüştür. Sosyal izolasyon nedeniyle dış dünya ile fiziksel bağın en aza indirilmesi, hem katılımcıların hem de ev ortamını paylaştıkları kişilerin davranışlarında değişikliklere neden olmuştur. Erken kalkmak ve günü planlama şeklinde yeni davranışlar sergilemek, kitap okumak, spor yapmak veya farklı hobilere yönelmek olumlu psikolojik ve fiziksel sonuçlar olarak belirtilmiştir. Ev ortamının paylaşıldığı kişilerin, katılımcıların ev çalışma sistemine uyum sağlayacak şekilde tutum ve davranışlar geliştirdiği görülmüştür. Hastalanma veya yakınlarına bulaştırma korkusu, sosyalleşme imkanlarının azalmasından kaynaklanan sorunlar, uyum sağlamada zorluk, motivasyon ve konsantrasyon güçlüğü katılımcıların yaşadığı psikolojik ve duygusal etkiler olarak gözlemlenmiştir.*

*İş-yaşam çatışmasını önlemek için katılımcıların geliştirebilecekleri bireysel çözümlere öz disiplin, planlama, etkili zaman yönetimi gibi örnekler sunulmuştur. Bu sayede işleri ve ev yaşamları için önceliklerini belirlemeleri ve beklentilerin yarattığı stresle baş etmeleri kolaylaşacaktır. Bireysel çaba yeterli olmadığından, ev hayatının paylaşıldığı bireylerden destekleyici davranışlar talep etmek de önemlidir. Yönetsel stratejilere bakıldığında ise, projelerin ekip çalışması gerektirmesi ve kararların fikir birliği ile hızlı bir*

*şekilde alınması gerektiği gerçeğinden yola çıkılarak çalışanların iletişim ve ekip çalışması sorunlarına odaklanmak birincil ihtiyaç olarak görülmüştür. Çalışmada, katılımcıların pandemi öncesi çalışma düzeninde takım çalışması için edindikleri bazı yetkinliklerin yanı sıra, net bir şekilde tanımlanmış iş süreçlerine ve farklı rol paylaşımlarına sahip olmaları, ekip çalışmasının sanal ortamda devam etmesine olanak tanımaktadır. Tüm bu koşullara rağmen ekip çalışmasında sorun yaşadıklarını belirten katılımcıların yaşadıkları uyum sorunu ekip üyeleriyle değil, pandeminin neden olduğu alışılmadık durumlara ilgili olduğu saptanmıştır. Pandemi süreci yeni çalışma tarzını kontrol edememe ve etkin bir şekilde yönetememe algısı da çalışanların stres düzeyini arttırmaktadır. Çalışma saatlerinin netleştirilmesi ve kişinin iş dışı yaşamının buna göre planlanması, motivasyon artırıcı iletişimi sağlamak, bu süreçte işsiz kalmaktan korkan çalışanlar için açık, şeffaf ve adil davranışlar sergilemek de yöneticilerin geliştirebilecekleri bazı çözüm önerileri olarak belirlenmiştir.*

*Çalışmanın bazı kısıtları bulunmaktadır. Örneklem için araştırma şirketinin merkez ofisinde çalışan tam zamanlı ofis çalışanları seçilmiş, diğer ülkelerdeki çalışanlar pandemi öncesinde de evden çalışma sistemini kullandığından örnekleme dâhil edilmemiştir. Proje bazında görevlendirilen geçici çalışanlar, tam zamanlı çalışan kriterlerini karşılamadığı ve saha çalışmalarını yöneten çalışanlar ofis ortamında çalışmadığı için örneklemden çıkarılmıştır. Çalışma tek bir sektöre odaklandığından, elde edilen bulguları Covid-19 Pandemisi nedeniyle evde çalışma sistemine geçen diğer sektörlerle genellemek mümkün değildir. Kuşkusuz olası etkiler de sektörler arasında farklılık gösterecektir. Katılımcıların iş, özel ve aile hayatları hakkında farklı veri toplama teknikleri kullanılmadığı veya gözlem yapılmadığı için elde edilen bulgular katılımcıların ifadeleriyle sınırlıdır. Gelecekteki çalışmalarda şirketin farklı ülkelerdeki çalışanları ile görüşülerek çalışanların evden çalışmaya bakışı karşılaştırmalı olarak değerlendirilebilir. Ayrıca farklı sektörlerde ve farklı meslek gruplarını kapsayacak çalışmalar yapılabilir.*