

Chapter 10

A Qualitative Research on the Work–Family–Life Balance Perception of Working Fathers

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ABSTRACT

Work-life and work-family-life balance can be expressed as the balance between the demands of an individual's work life and private life, and the demands of work life and family life. The issue of ensuring the harmony between work-family and work-life is taken into consideration by researchers, and studies on this subject are gaining momentum day by day. As in many countries around the world, family-friendly organization practices are taking place in Turkey to address this situation, and many social policies are implemented in order to harmonize the areas of work-life and work-family life. However, although studies on working women are included in detail, studies related with working fathers are very rare. In the study, the concepts of work-life balance and work-family-life balance will be discussed in detail. In addition, the fact of being a working father for working fathers who tend to establish work-family-life balance, and the thoughts of working fathers about whether they can establish a work-family-life balance will be discussed within the scope of the interviews.

INTRODUCTION

Work-life and work-family life balance can be expressed as the balance between the demands of an individual's work life and private life, and the demands of work life and family life. The issue of ensuring the harmony between work-family and work-life is taken into consideration by researchers, and studies on this subject are gaining momentum day by day. Ensuring the balance between work-life and work-family life is of great importance for the individual, society and organization. The state and organizations recognize that working individuals experience faltering at the stage of achieving the balance between work-life and work-family life, and develop a number of practices and policies aimed at achieving the balance of work-life and work-family life. Namely, a man who is an employee and a father who cannot

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balance work-family life, will be squeezed between his roles and reflect this negatively both in his way of raising his children and his business and social life, and this will return as a behavior and mentality towards the detriment of society. In order to prevent this vicious cycle, it is necessary to reduce the prominence of sharp lines between the living spaces of individuals. From this point of view, there are many social policies and practices in our country aimed at work-life balance and work-family life balance, with the aim of facilitating balance between these areas. Those who cannot balance their living spaces and have to compromise on one area when they spend more time are mostly known to be working women. As in many countries around the world, family-friendly organization practices are taking place in Turkey to address this situation, and many social policies are implemented in order to harmonize the areas of work-life and work-family life. However, although studies on working women are included in detail, studies related with working fathers are very rare. In the study, the concepts of work-life balance and work-family life balance will be discussed in detail. In addition, the fact of being a working father for working fathers who tend to establish work-family-life balance, and the thoughts of working fathers about whether they can establish a work-family-life balance will be discussed within the scope of the interviews.

THE CONCEPT OF WORK-FAMILY LIFE BALANCE

The family is one of the cornerstones of society. As one of the indicators reflecting a unity and social life, the family is defined as an organization and the smallest social structure that forms according to certain rules in meeting and carrying out the material/spiritual needs of its members when it is considered as a social group, economically and socially in terms of the relations and interaction between its members (Günindi and Yaşa Giren, 2011: 351). Nuclear family consists of only mother, father and children while an extended family consists of a mother, father, wife, husband, sister, brother, son, daughter who are related by marriage or blood, by adoption, who live in the same house, who constantly communicate with each other, and who have income in common (Ağdemir, 1991). Based on the definitions of the family, it can be concluded that the family is the most important basic unit of the society and that it has always maintained its importance in all societies from past to present.

It is quite difficult to include conceptual recognition aimed at fully explaining the state of work-family balance or the balance of work and family life. Most of the authors have a mismatch of ideas about the issue of work-family balance, and whether it is possible to achieve harmony of work and family life. In the light of empirical studies, two conceptual definitions of work-family life balance can be given. The first and most widely accepted definition of work-family life balance is the absence of conflict or interference between work and family roles. Work-family life balance represents the extent to which participation in work or home is facilitated by experiences, skills and opportunities gained and developed at home or at work. Work-family life balance has a two-sided dimension as work facilitating family life and family facilitating working life. (Frone, 2003: 145).

Work-family life balance is a new and popular concept. However, the balance becomes ambiguous as many authors do not fully conceptualize the balance and interpret it in different ways (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011: 172).

Balance in the absence of work-family conflict: Work-family life balance is generally considered to be the absence of conflict between work and family roles. In their research, Duxbury and Higgins (2001: 6) concluded that with the balancing of work and family roles, the situation of experiencing work-family

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