A Qualitative Study on Family-Work and Work-Family Conflicts Experienced by Academic Mothers During the Covid-19 Pandemic*

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Covid-19 Pandemi Döneminde Akademisyen Annelerin Yaşadıkları Aile-İş ve İş-Aile Çatışmasına Yönelik Nitel Bir Çalışma

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Abstract

Individuals who try to balance their work-family life with limited time and limited energy may experience family-work and work-family conflicts when they have problems in this balance. The difficulties they experience while fulfilling family and work demands may cause academic mothers to experience work-family and family-work conflicts. The Covid-19 pandemic has also affected the family-work balance of academic mothers. The aim of this study is to reveal the views of academic mothers with 0-6 age group children about work-family and family-work conflict situations experienced during the pandemic process. For this purpose, this study was conducted in a qualitative research design and the data were collected with a semi-structured interview form using the interview technique. The study group consists of 13 academic mothers. The data were analyzed with the descriptive analysis technique. As a result of the analysis, four main themes were reached. These themes are; daycare/childcare, family-work conflict, work-family conflict and need of social support. As a result of the research, it was revealed that academic mothers experienced family-work conflict and work-family conflict and especially needed social support.

Keywords: Pandemic process, family-work conflict, work-family conflict, academic mothers, qualitative research.

Öz

Kısıtlı zaman ve kısıtlı enerji ile iş-aile hayatını dengelemeye çalışan bireyler, bu dengede sorun yaşadıklarında aile-iş ve iş-aile çatışması yaşayabilmektedir. Aile ve iş taleplerini yerine getirirken yaşadıkları zorlular akademisyen annelerin de iş-aile ve aile-iş çatışması yaşamalarına neden olabilmektedir. Covid-19 pandemi süreci de akademisyen annelerin aile-iş dengesini etkilemiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, 0-6 yaş grubu çocuğu olan akademisyen annelerin pandemi sürecinde yaşadıkları iş-aile ve aile-iş çatışması durumlarına ilişkin görüşlerini ortaya koymaktır. Bu amaçla bu çalışma nitel araştırma deseninde yürütülmüş ve veriler görüşme tekniği kullanılarak yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu ile toplanmıştır. Çalışma grubu 13 akademisyen anneden oluşmaktadır. Veriler betimsel analiz tekniği ile analiz edilmiştir. Analizler sonucunda dört ana temaya ulaşılmıştır. Bu temalar; kreş/çocuk bakımı, aile-iş çatışması, iş-aile çatışması ve sosyal desteğe duyulan ihtiyaçtır. Araştırma sonucunda akademisyen annelerin aile-iş çatışması ve iş-aile çatışması yaşadıkları ve özellikle sosyal desteğe ihtiyaç duydukları ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Pandemi süreci, aile-iş çatışması, iş-aile çatışması, akademisyen anneler, nitel çalışma.

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1. Introduction

In people's lives their family comes first and then comes their work. However, for some people this situation can sometimes be the opposite. Regardless of the fact that the area of the priority for people, they must have enough energy and enough time to manage these. Because both family responsibilities, work responsibilities, roles, and expectations could sometimes negatively affect people life. People who try to find a balance between family and work life may experience various psychological and/or physical problems if they cannot achieve this balance, they may encounter various problems both in their family life and their work life. Many factors disrupt the balance of family and work life for people who have stalemated between family and work life. For example, the Covid-19 pandemic which has affected the world since the end of 2019, has significantly affected both the family and work life of the people and has brought many negativities for people.

Today we live in a new world where sociability means keeping distance. These developments show that we are on the threshold of a new future to indicate before and after Covid-19. For this reason, many areas in the world, including education are going through a global reset. The Covid-19 pandemic has been a global wake-up call to change the way people perceive the world as more than just a crisis. Especially the education sector has undergone many changes in this process and continues to change (Bozkurt and Sharma, 2020). The transition from face-to-face education to distance education is one of these changes. However, the sudden transition to distance education has brought various difficulties and problems for both educators and students. Because everyone was at home during the pandemic the house works and home responsibilities increased and this situation left households in the lurch in many issues. Academic mothers have had their share of these difficulties. With the distance education process, while academic mothers were trying to follow their training works and at the same time trying to manage their family responsibilities, their workloads have increased. It is thought that this process causes many problems in the work-life balance of academic mothers and also many academic mothers have experienced family-work and work-family conflicts. In this direction, it was planned to conduct research on the family and work-life of academic mothers during the pandemic.

Over the years researchers have aimed to discover and understand the numerous ways of family and work roles affect each other (Barling and Sorensen, 1997; Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1999). Although some researchers have assumed that the work and family worlds are separate (Brotheridge and Lee, 2005), research articles examining many work-family interfaces documented that the two areas affect each other and are influenced by each other (as cited in Karima et al. 2012).

The main question of this research is "what are the views of the academic mothers regarding the family-work and work-family conflict situations during the pandemic?". When the relevant literature was examined, many studies were found that dealt with family-work and work-family conflict in different ways, but no one-on-one studies on family-work and work-family conflict studies were found especially for academic mothers who have children in the 0-6 age group. Coughlin and Sethares (2017) stated that the role of caring for children is carried out mostly by the mothers, as mothers tend to be the primary caregivers at home (cited in Mariyana and Betriana 2021). The study by Mason and Goulden (2002), found that having a child also negatively affected women's academic careers.

Based on the literature, having a child under 6 years old may cause work-family conflict and family-work conflict for academic mothers. Because, usually, for mothers their children come first of all. In this direction, it is thought that the study will contribute to the literature by calling attention to the family-work and work-family conflict situations experienced by academic mothers during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Pandemic Process

The Covid-19 pandemic emerged in Asia in December 2019 and turned into a pandemic that affected the whole world in as little as four months as of March 2020 (WHO, 2020; as cited in Bozkurt, 2020). This disease, which is called Covid-19 epidemic disease, progressed to the most remote parts of each country, and caused many victimizations to humanity.

On March 11th, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the Covid-19 outbreak a global pandemic. The stay-at-home orders in this process has profoundly transformed the lives of nearly every household. For those telecommuting became common, altering the nature of work (Guyot and Sawhill 2020; as cited in Carlson et al. 2021). The whole world has begun to take measures in several areas. In particular, higher education institutions took rapid action and decided to suspend education in higher education on the subject. As of March 16, 2020, education and training in higher education institutions were suspended, as of March 23, 2020, distance education started with digital facilities in all universities with distance education capacity (Saraç, 2020).

Almost all schools in the world have been closed to control the spread of the pandemic, as the Covid-19 disease, which has spread all over the world, seriously affects the higher education system. According to UNICEF, at end of April 2020, schools have been vacationed in 186 countries and some regions in 8 countries. Almost the entire world student population has been affected by this situation in various ways. The closure of schools affected students, teachers, and families negatively and brought different social and economic problems for them. Higher education in particular is one of the most important sectors affected by this process (Erkut, 2020).

After the closure of schools, childcare centers, and businesses providing domestic services removed important supports for parents' labor force participation (Collins et al. 2020). Covid-19 has upended societies and dramatically altered everyday life across the globe (Nelson, 2020). The world's economies and maintenance of our daily lives are built on the invisible and unpaid labor of women. Before the crisis started, women have been done nearly three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men. Social distancing measures, school closures, and overburdened health systems have put an increased demand on women to cater to the basic survival needs of the family and care for children. Students at home as of March 2020 due to the pandemic, existing gender norms have put the increased demand for childcare and domestic work on women (UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief, 2020). In April 2020, study conducted by Boston Consulting Group on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on working parents in the United States, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, and France concluded that even before the Covid-19 crisis hit, many working parents struggled to balance work and home life, but the pressures of the pandemic have made a tough situation that much tougher. With the closure of schools and daycare centers, parents have become full-time childcare providers and home-school teachers, even as they try to meet their work responsibilities. Farré et al. (2020) concluded that the Covid-19 crisis appears to have reinforced gender inequalities in both paid and unpaid work, in the short term.

3. Family-Work and Work-Family Conflict

Being able to manage multiple roles at the same time is a concern for many employees. With the erosion of the notion of work and nonwork (Kanter, 1977), the management of multiple roles has become increasingly salient for both people and organizations (as cited in Rothbard et al., 2005).

Individuals when growing up first gain a place in social life and then in work life for themselves. For this reason, family and work-life constitute an inseparable whole for individuals. And within this whole, individuals take on various roles. Family and work-related roles are the most prominent roles a person assumes throughout him/her life. Although family and work roles are very important, people's energy and time are unfortunately limited (Özdevecioğlu and Doruk, 2009). Individuals who have tried to balance their work-life with limited time and limited energy might experience family-

work and work-family conflict when they have problems with this balance. Whichever profession she does, especially the family-related roles of working mothers are among their priorities for this reason the delays in these priorities might cause working mothers to experience conflict. As the result's of the research done by Lonska et al. (2021) all groups of employees who experienced work-life balance difficulties during the Covid 19 emergency have been partially confirmed, i.e. women in the 18-44 age group and respondents with minor children in the household more likely faced difficulties of work-life balance. According to Kul's study (2021) it was found that work-life balance deteriorated more, responsibilities increased and adaptation became difficult, especially in families with children, married and with both parents working.

The fact that women have multiple roles as mother, employee, and individual can cause women to feel inadequate in some issues by bringing various problems. One of the most common problems faced by women is the problem of balancing family, work, and the private sphere (Küçükşen and Kaya, 2016). The roles and responsibilities of gender may cause difficulties for women academics who try to balance work-life. Since the burden of most academics with maternal roles at home increases, even more, this situation often may cause academic mothers to come unhinged and identity confusion due to the excess role (Yıldız, 2018: 30). Nevertheless, women try to take part in working life to gain a reputation in society or to acquire a social environment. With the inclusion of women in working life, the balance in the family has changed and this situation especially affected the motherhood role of working women in the family (Baş, 2019).

With the industrial revolution, the separation between family and work areas has blurred and it has become a necessity to effectively manage the interactions and role expectations between family and work to ensure the work-life balance of the individuals. Since the academic profession is very difficult to draw the boundaries between work and life in terms of its quality, and when the extra responsibilities required by being a woman and a mother are included in this difficulty, it can become very difficult for female academics to protect their work-life balance (Bayramoğlu, 2018). Considering the many problems faced by women in work life, as well as the problems they have experienced in their family life, especially the work of academic mothers may be more difficult. Because academic mothers, have to study for their academic advancement to write an article, do research can unhinge the work-life balance of academic mothers.

Conflicts that individuals experience are a two-way conflict type, from family to work (family-work conflict) and from work to family (work-family conflict) (Frone et al., 1992). Family-to-work conflict occurs when the pressures from the family and work domains are mutually incompatible, and as a result, participation in the work role is made more difficult by participation in the family role (Weer and Greenhaus, 2017). On the other hand, work-family conflict, is a conflict that prevents the individual from fulfilling his/her family responsibilities, family role is made more difficult because of participation in the work role (Frone et al., 1992). Since family and work represent two of the most central fields of adult life, conflicts can affect each other regardless of their direction (family to work/work to family).

In the study of Korkmazer and Aksoy (2020), it was concluded that the perception of excessive workload negatively affects the quality of life, and positively affects work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. In Özkan's (2019) study, compared to men, women had more work-family conflicts, and women who did not have assistants for housework and childcare had more work-family conflicts.

3.1. Types of Family-Work and Work-Family Conflict

The demands of family and work roles in human life can often turn into family-work and work-family conflict. Because individuals may experience various conflicts between these roles from time to time due to the incompatibility of family and work roles. The concept of conflict, which we encounter in

all areas of life, generally refers to behaviors and emotional states such as incompatibility, stress, hostility, distress, and anxiety (Akkirman, 1998).

Family-work and work-family conflict occurs in three ways;

- **Time-based conflict;** when time devoted to one role interferes with fulfilling responsibilities of another role this conflict occurs,

- **Strain-based conflict;** anxiety interferes with fulfilling responsibilities of another role,

- **Behavioral-based conflict;** this type of conflict occurs when specific behaviors or values expected in one role are incompatible with behaviors or values expected in another role (Işık et al., 1985).

In the last 50 years, while the importance of professional roles has increased, especially in women's lives, the working role has begun to change dramatically (Barnett and Hyde, 2001; Schultheiss, 2006; as cited in Karimi et al., 2012). These changes are more common in higher education institutions where women enter and graduate from vocational schools at equal or higher rates than men (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000; as cited in Karimi et al., 2012). Women have less time to devote to their careers because of their domestic responsibilities (as cited in Wolfinger et al.).

The academic profession requires intensive study, especially during the doctorate and associate professorship periods. Since academic studies are activities that require concentration and time, academics often need to carry their work home, as it causes them to work for a long time outside of work hours. In other words, it increases the possibility of working at home for academics (Bayramoğlu, 2018). In their study, Öztan and Doğan (2015) stated that in the period between the post-doctoral and associate professorship, when the intensive working strategy was followed, especially the academics who had children were worn out more and felt more guilty. Voydanoff, 1988; Dex and Bond, 2005; Kinnunen and Mauno, 1998; as cited in Stier et al. according to authors such as one of the factors that cause family-work and work-family conflict is having small children at home.

Despite the rapid increase in the number of female academicians in Turkey, it is seen that the number of women decreases as the academic title ranks rise. As a matter of fact, according to the Higher Education Information Management System 2020 data, although women make up 45% of the academic staff in Turkish Universities, it is seen that male academicians are more involved in professor and associate professor positions (Şahin and Kanmaz, 2020). The main reasons are that women's responsibilities in work and family life are effective in this process. Because, in addition to their academic research, academic mothers also have family and child responsibilities, which negatively affect academic promotion processes. According to the results of the research conducted by Şentürk (2015), female academics have to spend much more effort than their male colleagues in the same steps of the academic hierarchy to rise in the academy.

In this study Asst. Prof. Merve "I'm 45 years old, I have 3 male academic friends who are the same age as me, they have been professors for at least 7 years. Still, I am an Asst. Prof. Now you consider the situation for academic mothers…" She emphasizes the place of academic mothers in the academic ranks.

The article "Women in science are battling both Covid-19 and the patriarchy" (Buckee et. al, 2020) emphasizes that inequality is the last straw for many women, the final straw is the inequality they face in domestic responsibilities. There is a lot of evidence that women professors spend more time doing domestic responsibilities than their male counterparts. It has been stated that these responsibilities, especially the burden of childcare, fall largely on women, since almost all of the world work from home. During the Covid-19 crisis, the productivity gap also increased between female and men academics because female academics were able to write fewer articles than men.

A problematic issue in academics is the idea of "publish or perish" which adds much more strain on the workloads of academic staff (as cited in Işık et al., 2014). But how can an academic mother who has a 0-6 age group child do this?

In this study Asst. Prof. Sinem "I think the pandemic process is a period in which male academics would experience a boom in publications. Because they sit at home and just broadcast in their extracurricular time. Is this the case for female academics and especially for academic mothers?".

Megan Frederickson emphasized that mothers are at the point of burnout because they have both work and they are a parent as well. "I am a tenured professor and a scientist. I have a lab, grants, and grad students. I write academic articles and I teach, and I'm writing a book. I am also a mom. So, I cook, clean, and nurture. Before this pandemic, I already had my hands full, and I often wondered what would finally make me fall off the ball. But I never thought it would be a virus, especially one I haven't even contracted. For the months, I have been staying at home around the clock with my wonderful partner and our delightful six-year-old son. I would say that I have been working from home, except that very little scholarly work gets done with a six-year-old child, unless he is glued to a screen" (Frederickson, 2020) regardless of the which country, she emphasizes how difficult the academic works for mothers. Turkey's women's employment report by the EU accession process showed that tasks such as childcare and elderly care, with family responsibilities in Turkey, are seen in woman's responsibility (especially the 0-5 age group children's daycare) (Özcan, 2019).

4. Method

In light of the theoretical framework and empirical findings, it was thought that conducting a qualitative research method is more appropriate to this subject. In the study, the phenomenological design was preferred, and interview forms are used as a data collection tool.

The phenomenology design focuses on the phenomena that can appear in various forms, that are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding and are used in the detailed investigation of these phenomena that are not completely familiar to the individual (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). Then the results were interpreted using the descriptive analysis technique.

Academic mothers were informed about the study. They were assured that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw anytime they want. The interviews were recorded on a recorder after academic mothers allow. Each interview lasted approximately 35–45 min. At the report stage, academic mothers' names were not used in the study, they were replaced by nicknames.

The most important reason for the study sample to be selected from academic mothers who have children in the 0-6 age group is that academics is a profession that requires intense effort and time. It is assumed that academic mothers can experience more family-work and work-family conflict. Because academic mothers who have taken on the roles of both a wife, mother, and working woman should be able to balance the time and energy required for these roles very well, like a good organizer. The reason why the child age range is determined as 0-6 years is that children in this age range are preschool children who do not want to spend too much time without their parents. Many needs of children in this age group have to be met by their parents. In addition, due to social roles mothers are involved more, in this process for their children. Voydanoff (1988) also emphasized that having children in the preschool period (between the ages of 0-6 group) may cause conflict for individuals (cited in Giray and Ergin, 2006).

This study was conducted by ethical rules with Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University ethics committee report dated 03.02.2021, meeting number 2021/22, and decision number 2021/72. After securing ethical approval, data were collected from March to April 2021.

4.1. Validity and Reliability

In the study, the raw data were checked to determine whether the results were realistic to ensure internal validity, namely credibility. To ensure external validity, direct quotations of the data were included, and a purposeful sampling method was used (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). Before preparing the interview questions, to increase the internal validity of the research, a conceptual framework was created by scanning the literature in the national and international fields related to the research subject, and the items considered to be included in the interview form were determined. To evaluate the items in terms of purpose, meaning, and scope, three instructors who are experts in their fields were interviewed. In qualitative research, validity is the most important factor that should be checked, especially during the presentation and analysis of data.

4.2. Data Collection Procedure

In the study, a semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool. In the semi-structured interview, after the researcher prepares the questions in line with the planned scope and by the purpose of the subject, these questions can be changed or added to the subject in the interview process (Güler et al., 2015).

4.3. Sample Characteristics

In this study, purposeful sampling method was used. Data were gathered from academic mothers who work in public universities and have 0-6 a age group child during the Covid-19 pandemic. The purposeful sampling method is the preference of individuals who are thought to have more information in line with the purpose of the study to conduct in-depth research. No more relevantly different experiences were reported after the eleventh participant. However, two more academic mothers were included into study to ensure that theoretical saturation was reached.

Table 1. Information About the Participants in the Study Group

No	Academic Title	Name	Age	Age of Children	Education Type	Children Care
1	Asst. Prof.	Sinem	38	2	Distance education program	I and my husband
2	Asst. Prof.	Merve	45	5	Distance education program	And my husband
3	Asst. Prof.	Dilan	41	4,5 (twin)	Distance education program	Baby-sitter
4	Asst. Prof.	Nil	39	4 and 9	Distance education program	Grandfather and grandmother
5	Asst. Prof.	Gül	39	2,5	Distance education program	My sister and her husband
6	Asst. Prof.	Gamze	35	2 and 6	Distance education program	I and my mother
7	Assistant	Su	33	4,5	Distance education program	Preschool
8	Asst. Prof.	Nur	42	6	Distance education program	I
9	Asst. Prof.	Rüya	39	3,5 and 10	Distance education program	I and my husband
10	Academic (PhD candidate)	Tülin	35	3,5	Distance education program	I and my husband
11	Asst. Prof.	Cansu	31	4	Distance education program	Preschool
12	Asst. Prof.	Tansel	39	4	Distance education program	I and my husband
13	Academic (PhD candidate)	Mehtap	33	1,5	Distance education program	My husband, grandmother, and grandfather

According to Table 1, thirteen academic mothers participated in the study, and their age is 31–45 years old. Ten out of thirteen mother's status are assistant proffesors (Asst. Prof.).

4.4. Data Analysis

The obtained data were analyzed with the descriptive analysis technique. In the descriptive analysis, the data obtained from the study group can be given in the form of quotations without changing as they are. Necessary quotations were made by giving a name (nickname) to the academics in the study group.

The problem sentence of this study is "what are the views of academic mothers about family-work and work-family conflict situations during the Covid-19 pandemic?".

The sub-problems are;

1. What are the problems experienced by academic mothers regarding childcare and the quality of time they spend with their children during the pandemic?

2. What are the problems caused by the family responsibilities of academic mothers while they are fulfilling their responsibilities regarding their work during the pandemic?

3. What are the problems caused by the work of academic mothers during the pandemic, while they are fulfilling their family responsibilities?

4. What are the expectations of academic mothers from their spouses, families, managers, and colleagues?

Within the framework of the findings, four major themes reflect the challenges academic mothers are faced during the Covid-19 pandemic;

Table 2. Themes and Codes Revealed as A Result of the Analysis

Themes	Codes
Daycare/Childcare	Lack of Preschool in Childcare
	Bored Children
	Lonely Children
	Children Addicted to Technology
Family-Work Conflict	Childcare Responsibilities
	Domestic Responsibilities
	Procrastination of Academic Works
Work-Family Conflict	Work Responsibilities
	Working Hours
Need of Social Support	Manager and Co-Worker Support
	Spouse Support
	Family Support

4.4.1. Daycare/Childcare

During the pandemic process, academic mothers tried to spend quality time with their children as much as they could and stated that they usually tackle childcare issues themselves, some of the academic mothers received help from caregivers, grandmothers, sisters, and partners due to their situation.

If we look at the difficulties experienced by the academic mothers in childcare, some of the academic mothers' views on this issue are as follows:

Lack of Preschool in Childcare

My kids are 4,5-year-old twins, they should normally be in preschool but they spend time with the babysitter and me. I think I and the babysitter is quite insufficient in terms of social, mental, and motor upskills for my children. For this reason, I believe that the pandemic process will leave significant and irreparable shortcomings in the future of children (Asst. Prof. Dilan).

Bored Children

My son, who is 6 years old was going to a kindergarten affiliated with the Ministry of Education before the pandemic. He quite bores at home because he got used to social life at kindergarten (Asst. Prof. Gamze).

Lonely Children

The early days of the pandemic seemed very good. We were always at home, but this situation changed when the workload started to increase. Before the pandemic, I realized that I can't do the activities we did to have a good time with my child, during this period, and this disturbs me incredibly. My son got lonely very much (Asst. Prof. Nur).

Children Addicted to Technology

I found time to care for and support my children in terms of education and training, I observed that their academic success increased. But on the other hand, lack of friendship made my children very isolated, and they became extremely technology addicted (Asst. Prof.Rüya).

4.4.2. Family-Work Conflict

Academic mothers stated that they experienced family-work conflict due to the high family responsibilities at home while trying to carry out their schoolwork from home during the distance education process.

If we look at the comments of academic mothers about the family-work conflict they experience, some of the academic mothers' views on this issue are as follows:

Childcare Responsibilities

I have a 5 years old daughter. I can only do my academic studies after my daughter is asleep. Before that, I cook food and tidy up them, wine and dine, play with her and then try to put her to sleep. Finally, I go on the computer for academic studies as a tired, exhausted academic mother. How can you be productive at this time of the night? Academic mothers live through the family-work conflict to the end and more… (Asst. Prof. Merve).

Domestic Responsibilities

My work efficiency decreased as my domestic responsibilities increased. Especially in the first months of the pandemic process, I had a hard time getting my head together (Assistant Su).

I feel worthless and dull in terms of my job (lecture dimension). I sometimes forget that I am an academic because of housework, and I live role conflict. Am I a mother, a caretaker, a cleaner, a prisoner, a cook, a house lady, or a dishwasher, who am I? I am seemingly an academic at this time (Asst. Prof. Rüya).

Procrastination of Academic Works

My family situation caused me to delay my academic studies in my job. Because I can't keep up with everything. No matter how early I wake up, I do compulsory work, but apart from that, I cannot spare time for my academic studies as before the celibacy or pandemic process (Asst. Prof. Tansel).

This suggests that having a child between the 0-6 age group limits academic mothers' academic careers, and the ability to accept and retain professorships. For this reason, academic mothers may always be faced with family-work conflict.

4.4.3. Work-Family Conflict

Academic mothers expressed that by the request of their managers in different periods they have to attend online meetings during the process of spending time at home with their children. Their manager asks them to go to school for distance education. These demands cause academic mothers to experience work-family conflicts.

If we look at the comments of academic mothers about the work-family conflict they experience, some of the academic mothers' views on this issue are as follows:

Work Responsibilities

If there is no one to take care of my child at that time, I am in a state of saying stop boy, quiet boy. My online lessons are taking a long time. I have to prepare lesson material and that means extra time. I can say that I am tired of stealing from my child's time. We have disorganized life. We started to live with a messy house and messy head. Because I see that I haven't had enough time for anything. If I cook one day, the dishes remain, if I do the lesson preparation, the cleaning remains, if I want to write an article, I cannot see my child that evening. In the evenings when I say let's put everything aside and play with my child, I get a message from my telephone that at 20:00 X meeting will be held, you must participate (Asst. Prof. Cansu).

While the lessons continue, on the other hand, the graduate student is waiting for an answer as soon as he sends his work, the administrator is waiting for the needs of the official document he sent, but your child is also waiting for you. The child needs to sleep on time, eat and drink. Sometimes I feel sorry for my child as I catch up with my schoolwork, I have to ignore the questions he asked me. Because I have to respond to the official documents in a short time or I have to check the work of the students, in this case, of course, my child gets angry, and I often feel trapped (Asst. Prof. Merve).

Working Hours

Being able to work at any time of the day, regardless of day or night have an overtime concept is very exhausting for academics. I cannot spare time for myself (socially). I need psychological support, although we teach similar lessons, unfortunately, the cobbler's children have no shoes (Asst. Prof. Rüya).

4.4.4. Need of Social Support

Social support is a mutual exchange where emotional and physical comfort is provided through helping relationships with family, friends, co-workers, managers, and others. If an individual's social needs are left unmet, this may become a source of discomfort, and conflict (Ojha, 2011).

Expectations of academic mothers from their spouses, family, managers, and colleagues, some of the academic mothers' views on this issue are as follows:

Manager and Co-Worker Support

I expect understanding and support from our department management and my friends (Assistant Su).

I cannot get any support from my manager. I need this support. Although we have switched to distance education, our manager wants academics to go to school and teach in our room. However, schools are closed, and our children are at home (Asst. Prof. Nil).

Spouse Support

My expectation of my spouse, for housework and childcare, he should help me as best as he can. If we both work and we have equal rights, then he should be as responsible for the housework and the childcare as I do. Unfortunately, it is not so easy to change men in our culture (Asst. Prof.Tansel).

No one is helping me at home right now, even my husband. However, I need his help (Asst. Prof. Nur).

Family Support

I need my mother's support very much. I cannot keep up with the housework and childcare alone. But she can't understand me (Asst. Prof. Merve).

The interviews were conducted to reveal the difficulties faced by academic mothers.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Work-family and family-work conflict occurre in a three-way; time-based conflict; spouse's work, presence of small children at home, strain-based conflict; tension experienced by the individual regarding his/her job or family, family conflicts, insufficient support of a spouse, etc., behavioral conflict; it is a type of conflict mostly experienced by those who work as managers. Their families expect warm relations from managers and employees expect openness (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). Academic mothers naturally expect social support from their spouses, and families, then from their managers and colleagues. Because social support provided in the workplace (managers, colleagues) and non-work social networks (especially spouse and family) is among the extremely important factors that manage role conflicts (Baki and Piyal, 2020). Research has demonstrated that the availability of social support at work helps to reduce the negative experience of work-family conflict (Anderson et al., 2002; Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1986; Thomas and Ganster, 1995; as cited in Ojha, 2011).

Different studies such as Chauhan (2020), Boston Consulting Group, (2020), Del Boca et al. (2020), and Lonska et al. (2021) also describe how it is likely that women will take on disproportionately more of the household and childcare duties. Farré et al. (2020) stated that the lockdown, paired with the closing of schools, eliminates the ability to outsource childcare through formal channels (e.g., schools), and greatly reduces the ability to outsource through informal channels (e.g. grandparents).

In this study, Asst. Prof. Rüya "because of housework I sometimes forget that I am an academic, and I live role conflict. Am I a mother, a caretaker, a cleaner, a prisoner, a cook, a house lady, a dishwasher, who am I?" It is seen that this academic mother needs support from her spouse and family. These results corroborated with that study conducted by Yıldız (2018) the roles and responsibilities of gender may cause difficulties for women academics who try to balance work-life. Since the burden of most academics with maternal roles at home increases, even more, this situation often may cause academic mothers to come unhinged and identity confusion due to the excess role.

The sharing of an academic mother, entitled weekend plan on her Twitter account; the dream she had on Friday; "complete the unfinished work, write a result, analyze. What is happening in reality at home on Saturday-Sunday; cleaning, cooking, boiling the soup, ferment yogurt, give the children bath …." It is one of the best examples of the family-work conflict that academic mothers go through.

Of course, the management of this process is not easy for academic mothers who can not get sufficient support from their spouses and family. For these reasons, academic mothers can sometimes feel incomplete, and burnout caused by inadequacy. These results are corroborated by a range of studies carried out.

According to Lonska et al. (2021), the consequences of continuous remote work and access to the employer, burnout syndrome, and the need to care for children while fulfilling job responsibilities, these factors have a significant impact on work-life balance and quality of life. Del Boca et al. (2020) reveals that in Italy, work-life balance satisfaction shows that working women with children aged 0–5 are those who find balancing work and family more difficult during Covid-19 and working women with young children, especially those aged 0–5, are those particularly affected, by bearing the excess burden to a higher extent.

In this study Asst. Prof. Merve, "while cooking, taking care of children, doing housework, you think about your academic studies. While doing academic studies, you think about your children or your home responsibilities. You do half motherhood, you do half of your work, and even the time taking yourself is half quality. As a result, I cannot fully catch up with my child, I cannot go through the whole hog of housework and academic studies. The pandemic has added spice to my life. Now I started to get psychological support, I use medication. I have frequent crying spells after screaming to my child unnecessarily ..."

According to different studies, it has been observed that academic mothers have lots problems. The results of the studies are in line with the results of this study. In the research conducted by Öztan and Doğan (2015), female academics stated that they had more problems than men in allocating time to their academic studies due to their family responsibilities. In the study conducted by Tolay and Baysal (2020), it was found that married female academics have much family-work conflict than single academics. According to Mustafayev and Bayraktaroğlu's (2014) research carried out on academics in Turkey and the UK, family-work and work-family conflict levels of academics in Turkey are higher than, life satisfaction levels have concluded that there is lower. According to the results of the study conducted by Dikmen and Maden (2012), it was concluded that regardless of the education level, status, income, term of office of women, their traditional roles at home continue, that is, the responsibilities related to housework largely belong to women. In their study Toren and Moore (1998) suggested that women's career trajectories are characterized by "hurdles", i.e., at each rank, they stay longer, and their advancement probability is lower than men's. The study conducted by Wolfinger et al. (2008) results in points to both dual-career issues and childrearing obligations as affecting women's struggles to achieve equality in academia. They expect these issues will become more salient in the years, as the number of women with doctoral degrees continues to rise. And they have explained that inequities persist both in household labor and the relative importance placed on men's and women's careers. The results of this study are also similar to the results of Wolfinger's research. Because it was observed that the academic status of ten of thirteen academic mothers is still Asst. Prof.

Various suggestions can be made by the result of this study:

• Spouses can take more responsibility in family matters by providing adequate support to their wives by seeing academic mothers as working women, not just a mother.

• School administration can consider maternity status while giving workload to academic mothers,

• Colleagues can try to provide the adequate support to academic mothers who need support,

• For preschool-age children, daycare opportunities may be provided at the campus of universities. Because childcare is of utmost concern for academic mothers.

- Family-friendly policies can also be implemented in universities to ensure the work-life balance of academics.

The family-work and work-family conflict that academic mothers experience while trying to climb the strenuous steps of the academy, should not be regarded as the problem of academic mothers only. Because in a society, for healthy individuals to grow up, children must receive enough maternal support and university students have to receive sufficient academic support. On the other hand, academic mothers who can get enough social support can be more successful and happier in both their family life and work life. A happy mother at home and a happy woman employee in the workplace exhibit positive behaviors that can positively affect her environment.

To date, there are no qualitative studies about family-work conflict and work-family conflict among academic mothers who have children in the 0-6 age group. Using a phenomenological approach, it is tried to draw attention to the family-work and work-family conflict of academic mothers. With different subjects using different methods, many studies may be done with academic mothers who work in foundation universities. This research may be addressed again with academic mothers who live in different cultures. It is hoped that their family, spouse, and administrators can notice family-work and work-family conflicts of academic mothers and they will support them sufficiently.

5.1. Limitations and Future Directions for Research

As it is necessary to draw a boundary in every study, this study has limitations. The limitation of this study is that this study was conducted with academic mothers who work at public universities and have a child in the 0-6 age group.

After the pandemic, distance education began in universities and everyone stayed at home. As a result, the family burden of academic mothers has increased by onefold, and then academic mothers begun to experience family-work and work-family conflict. Implications of this study especially can inform administrators, about the work-family and then the family-work conflict of academic mothers. Of course, the problems faced by academic mothers are not limited to this study's results. It is thought that by drawing attention to the family-work and work-family conflicts experienced by academic mothers during the Covid-19 pandemic, this research will contribute to the literature and shed light on different studies (like family-work balance, stress, working conditions, etc.) in the future. Many more studies are needed to compare this study's results.

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