High School Administrators' Views about Work-Private Life Balance[1]

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Abstract

Working life is as essential and indispensable as private life for people. Paying equal attention to work and private life is the way to balance these living spaces. Work-private life balance is essential both for the uninterrupted functioning of organizations and for the employees to continue their private lives healthily. This study aims to reveal school administrators' views on work-private life balance. Of qualitative research methods, a phenomenological research design was used to examine the subject in-depth, obtain rich findings, and understand the phenomenon better. The study participants comprised 50 school administrators, 19 females, and 31 males, selected using purposeful and snowball sampling methods from 275 public high school administrators working in four central districts of Mersin in the 2021-2022 academic year. All the data were collected through face-to-face interviews and divided into codes, categories, and subcategories using content analysis. At the end of the analysis, the findings relating to five themes were created considering the literature. Although the work-private life balance was taken into account when asking questions to study participants, it was discovered that school administrators working in public high schools experienced a work-private life imbalance.

Keywords: work-private life balance, work-private life balance in school organizations, school administrators

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Introduction

In the current world, where working life holds an indispensable place in employees' lives as much as private life, the working lives of individuals have taken precedence over their private lives. Meanwhile, the boundaries between living spaces are nearly eliminated, and the living spaces have melded together. Work-private life balance can deteriorate when individuals experience challenges in finding themselves among the intermingling living spaces and cannot fulfill the expected duties. Work-private life balance is defined as individuals giving equal importance to both living spaces and protecting their physical and mental health (Byrne, 2005; Lockwood, 2003).

Work-private life balance, a concept that first appeared in 1930, is now described by time, commitment, and satisfaction. According to relevant literature, various theories address whether an employee's work and private life influence each other from their respective unique perspectives. These theories could be listed as role theory, spill-over theory, enrichment theory, segmentation theory, balance theory, instrumentality theory, internal-conflict theory, work-family boundary theory, and systems approach.

Various disciplines, including sociology and psychology, study the societal roles imposed on individuals today. According to Dinç Kahraman (2010), cultural and social values shape individuals from childhood based on their biological genders, perpetuating gender inequalities and discrimination primarily initiated and endorsed within the family. As individuals strive to fulfill societal gender roles learned from their upbringing and the responsibilities of their work-life roles, they encounter challenges and struggle to maintain a work-life balance. Positive experiences in the workplace can extend beyond the organization, affecting personal life, while negative events in personal life can hinder one's ability to perform effectively within the organization. Tuğsal (2017) discusses the spill-over theory, suggesting that work experiences continue to impact personal life. Conversely, Özaydın (2013) argues that achieving success and happiness in work life can positively influence personal life, referring to the enrichment theory. The enrichment theory differs from the spill-over theory in terms of emphasizing the impact of job satisfaction on other domains of life.

The segmentation theory posits that work and personal life events remain independent (Ballıca, 2010). Additionally, the balance theory explains how individuals may focus on other life domains to cope with challenges and negative emotions. According to Mutlu (2016), the balance theory explains that employees try to feel better by focusing on other life domains in response to negative emotions caused by failures, unhappiness, and similar situations in their personal or work lives.

According to the instrumentality theory, which considers the events in one life domain as indicators of the other life domain, it is argued that one life domain facilitates the other (Polat, 2019). However, when employees are caught between the responsibilities of different roles they need to fulfill in their life domains and are forced to make choices between these roles, they may experience internal conflicts that negatively impact work-life balance. Varol (2015) highlights the internal conflicts that arise when job expectations clash with individual traits, values, and opinions.

Clark (2000) presents a theory of work-family boundaries, suggesting that the relationship between work life and personal life is a complex system that extends beyond emotions. Küçükusta (2007) emphasizes the system approach, which considers work life, family life, and social life as separate yet interconnected systems, offering a comprehensive understanding of work-life balance. In this perspective, events or circumstances in an individual's personal life inevitably influence their work life to some extent.

Theories and approaches explaining the work-private life balance put forward two views: those that argue that there is an interaction between work and private lives and those that argue that these living spaces continue independently (Polat, 2019). Regardless of which theoretical perspective one considers the work-life balance, relevant research reports, and policies highlight the significance of the multidimensional aspect of work and private life balance. Governments, legislators, and employers have developed various policies to protect employees' work-private life balance. The employees' work-private life balance is a critical issue that could affect them, the organization where they work, their families, and their social environment in various ways.

Work-life balance is crucial because it helps people to prioritize their work and personal duties, which results in increased overall pleasure and well-being. A lack of balance, also referred as a work-life imbalance, can cause stress, and burnout, and have a negative impact on both mental and physical health. It might also result in decreased productivity and job dissatisfaction. In literature, the causes of work-private life imbalance are divided into organizational and personal factors (Akçil, 2019). Organizational factors that cause work-private life imbalance are classified as role ambiguity, role conflict, interpersonal conflict, responsibility, involvement in management, management style, job security, excessive workload, career barriers, physical spaces, and environmental conditions. In case employees are expected to fulfill several roles in an organization, the ambiguity of roles that they experience from time to time may lead to problems such as burnout, loss of motivation, and reluctance to go to work, causing work-private life imbalances (French & Caplan, 1973; Kanbur, et al., 2016). Similarly, Tabancalı and Su (2021) emphasize that school administrators cannot perceive job pessimism, low motivation, and tension because of the ambiguity of their roles. In some cases, the choices made by employees trying to fulfill their roles in the organization regarding role conflicts (Ertem Eray, 2017). For instance, school administrators, who previously worked as teachers in educational organizations, could not adapt to their new duties and responsibilities, missed their old ways of working, and failed to behave professionally about their decisions (Gökçe & Şahin, 2003). This situation may cause various role conflicts for them. While employees experience role conflicts among themselves, they may also experience conflicts with other employees, groups, or groups who do not share the same thoughts, beliefs, values, and views. The sources of interpersonal conflicts that negatively affect the work-life balance of the employee in an organization comprise interpersonal incompatibilities, intra-organizational hierarchy, goal differences, the size of the organization, and excess responsibilities (Aşan & Aydın, 2006; Gümüşeli, 1994; Karip, 2010). In addition, the excessive workload in the organization negatively affects the work-life balance of employees and administrators. Because of the excessive workload, employees feel inadequate, under pressure, and unwilling against the work to be done, whereby many works in the organization may get disrupted, and disruptions may happen in the organization's operation (Dağdeviren, Eraslan, & Kurt, 2005; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Thompson, et al., 2005). An increase in the responsibilities that employees should fulfill and their limited authority despite the responsibilities imposed on them may cause deterioration in their work-private life balance. Similarly, educational organizations' employees feel pressured and obliged to fulfill their responsibilities regardless of the increasing responsibilities (Ballıca, 2010; Tabancalı & Su, 2021).

As in all organizations, the managers' responsibilities can be more than those of other employees. However, it is argued that managers rarely want to share their authority and responsibilities. Therefore, they do not allow employees to participate in management, and the negative effects of this state on employees who cannot take part in management cause work-private life imbalance for themselves and managers (Akçil, 2019; Balcı, 2014; Uyar, 2007).

Personal factors that cause work-private life imbalance are classified as gender, education, and career planning. Various research findings about the significance of gender factors in work-private life balance may be found in the relevant literature. For instance, some studies show gender causes a significant difference in employees' work-private life balance (Alkan, 2019; Ballıca, 2010; Küçükşen & Kaya, 2016; Küçükusta, 2007; Lookwood, 2003; Polat, 2019). Some studies show that gender roles and gender stereotypes do not have any effect on the work-private life balance of employees (Akın, 2019; Altun Dilek, 2015; Çobanoğlu et al., 2019; Dilek & Yılmaz, 2016; İzki, 2019; Yılmaz & Altınkurt, 2015). Likewise, there are different opinions about the education of employees. It is indicated that as the adequacy of employees' education level increases concerning the work, the duties and responsibilities assigned to them in the organization increase accordingly (Ballıca, 2010). Career planning, another personal factor affecting the work-life balance, has an important place in many aspects of an employee's working life. Employees feel happy, motivated, and productive when the organization manager supports them in career planning. In contrast, they feel unhappy, abandoned, and unwilling when the organization manager does not support them with the courses they want to attend, the vocational training they want to take, and when they are not given the opportunity for career development (Öztürk, 2016).

Work-private life balance disruptions produced by personal and organizational matters cause some negativity in an employee's life. These negative emotions can cause psychological, psychosomatic, personal time dissatisfaction, family-related problems, and workplace problems. For instance, it is stated that work-life imbalances bring about psychological consequences such as anger, stress, tension, reluctance to work, burnout, and anxiety disorder in employees (Frone, 2000; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Perrewe, Hochwarter, & Kiewitz, 1999).

Although various theories defend different views on work-private life balance, recent studies show that the work-private life balance of individuals can affect themselves, their families, social environments, and the organizations where they work. Therefore, work-private life balance, a study topic that attracts the attention of different disciplines, has gained its place in research studies and educational organizations in recent years. Alkan (2019), the researcher who addresses the subject from a work-private life balance perspective in education organizations, argues that primary school teachers have less difficulty establishing a work-private life balance than other teachers. Similarly, Akın (2019), Dilek and Yılmaz (2016), and Yılmaz and Altınkurt (2015) state that high school teachers have more difficulty in establishing a work-private life balance than other teachers do. The work-life balance in educational organizations is associated with various variables and studied with samples involving teachers and academic staff. However, no qualitative study has explored the views of high school administrators about their problems in establishing a work-life balance, the reasons behind these problems, and methods of coping with them. Hence, this research may contribute to the literature. In addition, this research is believed to guide the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) officials, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students in maintaining the work-private life balance of school administrators. This study explores the views of high school administrators on work-private life balance. In line with this purpose, we addressed the following research and sub-research questions.

1. What are the views of high school administrators about work-private life balances?

1.1. What problems do high school administrators face balancing work and private lives?

1.2. What are the views of high school administrators about the reasons behind the problems they experience in balancing their work and private lives?

1.3. What are the high school administrators' methods of coping with the problems they experience balancing their work and private lives?

Method

Research Model

A phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research methods, was chosen in this study to thoroughly explore the work-private life balances from the perspectives of high school administrators. The phenomenological research design allows for collecting data from its natural environment from a deep perspective and enables the revealing the accurate information directly through individuals who have experienced the event (Creswell, 2017; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Therefore, a phenomenological research design was adopted in this study, as the work-private life balance can be explained well in line with the participants' views, and the findings obtained can be presented with impartiality.

Study Group

A study group of 50 school administrators, 19 women, and 31 men, was formed using the maximum variation sampling method from purposive sampling methods by considering the gender distribution of high school administrators; participants who volunteered for the study could meet with the researcher for an interview, worked in different school types, had unique characteristics in terms of age, marital status, number of children, working years, and time spent in administration. In purposive sampling methods, the aim is to include participants who can meet the predetermined criteria in the study group (Gliner, Morgan, & Leech, 2015). In addition, since the number of female school administrators was less than the number of male school administrators, the contact details of female school administrators were taken from other participants in the study group and those who became a reference to the study

and were included in the study, using the snowball sampling method. After specifying the study participants, codes were given to all participants using a randomized method.

Data Collection Tool and Technique

In order to collect the data, primarily, the relevant literature was examined by the researcher, the research question and sub-research questions were taken into account, and a draft form consisting of semi-structured interview questions was prepared. The draft form was submitted to six faculty members and two school administrators who were experts in educational administration to evaluate, and necessary revisions were made in line with the expert opinions. Before finalizing the interview form, pilot interviews were conducted to see whether the questions worked, and the views of school administrators were obtained about the interview questions. The interview form revised per these views, was given its final shape, and the data were collected through a face-to-face interview in this study. In the interview form, firstly, general information about participants' work and private lives was obtained, then whether the two areas of life reflect on each other was asked, and finally participants' views on balancing the two areas of lives were taken.

Data Collection Procedure and the Researcher's Role

After requesting permission to conduct the research, the participants' most convenient days and hours were determined, and appointments were made for the interviews. The interviews took place between 11.10.2021 and 10.12.2021. The interview dates and times were rearranged for the interviews that could not take place. Before conducting the interview, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research, assuring that the data would not be used beyond the research purpose and that the researcher would keep what they mentioned confidential. The importance of ethical values was reemphasized, and the participants were informed by defining the work-private life balance. The participants were informed about the approximate interview duration, and consent forms in which they declared that they voluntarily participated were obtained. In addition, permission was requested to record the interview using a voice recorder. Before proceeding to the interview questions, the participants were asked about daily life and warmed up for the interview. The interviews lasted 35 minutes on average.

Interviews were paused from time to time because of the sound of the school bell, the phone, and the teachers who came to ask questions. In such circumstances, the researcher tried to re-motivate the participant's attention to the interview by acting naturally and making binding sentences regarding the topic. Considering the validity and reliability of the data, the researcher avoided asking leading questions to the participants during the interview and was careful not to show any reaction, indicating that she approved or rejected the opinion, concealing her personal beliefs against the responses. In addition, the researcher recorded the entire data collection process by writing a research diary.

Data Analysis

In this study, the data were collected as audio recordings of 35 minutes on average and converted into written documents of 362 pages. The audio recordings and written documents were compared to increase the reliability of the data. The data in written documents were analyzed using the content analysis method. Berg and Lune, (2019) state that the content analysis method is employed to analyze, code, and organize the research data. As a result of the content analyses codes, categories, and sub-categories were created considering the relevant literature. In addition, four experts from the educational administration coded the interview documents of six randomly selected participants to ensure validity and reliability. The comparison of the coding results obtained separately in terms of similarities and differences with the researcher's codings was conducted. According to the reliability calculation formula suggested by Miles and Huberman (2015) for reliability, the minimum agreement rate should be 80% (Reliability= agreement/agreement+disagreement). In the analysis conducted, the intercoder reliability coefficient based on Miles and Huberman was calculated as .90. Then, the themes, categories, and sub-categories were created by classifying the codes with common features and were presented in tables.

Ethical Committee Approval

The Ethical Committee of Mersin University approved the study; No. 116 on September 07, 2021.

Results

Although the work-private life balance was emphasized in interview questions, it was determined that the work-private life imbalance was underlined by the participants. The views of participants were grouped into four themes, 13 categories, and 41 sub-categories and presented in tables.

Factors Affecting the Work-Private Life Balance of High School Administrators

The factors affecting the work-private life balance of high school administrators are addressed under two themes: organizational and personal factors. The organizational factors affecting high school administrators' work-private life balance are grouped under four categories and 12 sub-categories presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Organizational Factors Affecting the Work-Private Life Balance of High School Administrators

Categories	Sub-categories
Excessive Workload	Workload in vocational high schools
	Workload in boarding schools
	Lack of staff
Role Ambiguity	Diversity and intensity of work
	Official paperwork
	Obligation to teach
	Working beyond working hours
Interpersonal conflict	Teacher-related problems
	Parent-related problems
	Student-related problems
Ignoring the views of teachers on the structuring of the MoNE	Changes being made without getting teachers' views on the work
	Need for a teacher professional law

Excessive Workload

Participants state that they are overwhelmed by excessive workloads because of the many duties and responsibilities they have to fulfill in their work. From the participants' remarks, the excessive workload differs per school type, and the workload in *vocational high schools* is higher than in other school types. The reference statement of a participant working in a vocational high school is:

"...You know, occupational health and safety in vocational high schools are more important than in other school types. We try to ensure that our students benefit from this occupational health and safety service in atelier and laboratory conditions, so we are very busy, and sometimes we have no time to eat" (P18).

In addition, using the following sentences, school administrators working in the boarding school explained that the workload is also more in *boarding schools*.

"There is a boardinghouse in our school. It becomes a problem on the weekend. I am responsible for the boarding house. Since you are responsible for that student, you follow him from the moment he leaves his house. That is why the excessive workload is in here" (P34).

Besides, one participant remarked that the *lack of staff* in schools causes excessive workload, is:

"This school is like this. I have to work with only one vice principal because of the number of students. When there is only one vice principal, half or more of the work falls to me, so I came here. I mean, I am doing the duties of a vice principal after 15 years." (P39).

Role Ambiguity

Participants emphasized that one of the organizational factors influencing their work-private life balance is the ambiguity of roles in their working lives. As in the following, one participant noted that the *diversity and intensity of work* are one causes of role ambiguities:

"We have a very busy working life. Paperwork, students, and daily work of the school. In this regard, it is really intense. So, we cannot finish the tasks on time. Work is always ahead, and we are running behind. I would say so." (P8).

Participants stated that *official paperwork* takes their time the most among their duties in administrative processes.

"Actually, the unnecessary paperwork of the Ministry of National Education has been the case in recent years. We have to respond to many things, no matter whether they are relevant or not to us" (P35).

One of the participants, who had to deal with both teaching and official paperwork, stated that having teaching obligations causes role ambiguities:

"We do not have a professional definition. I am currently working as the vice principal as a second duty. My main job is still teaching, and therefore I have to teach six hours a week" (P18).

In addition, the participants, who stated that they could not fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the role they had to carry out in their working life, expressed that their work and private lives were mixed because they had to *work beyond the working hours*.

"My school life somehow gets into our house… As things in our school inevitably steal time from home, I have to make explanations to my family. For example, I explain about coming to school on the weekend and doing something on the weekend" (P45).

Interpersonal Conflicts

Participants stated that their work-private life balance is negatively affected due to interpersonal conflicts that sometimes take place in organizations where they work. According to the participants, the problems causing interpersonal conflicts differ by school type. However, all participants stated that the *teacher-related problems* were mostly related to the curriculum.

"Teachers challenge us in terms of school timetable. According to their social life outside, teachers ask to have two hours free in her/his teaching schedule, one hour free, let me pick up the child at this hour, at that hour. They make us tired…. If the comfort in the workplace is disturbed, our comfort is also disturbed. The teacher's comfort is also disturbed (P21)."

Participants also remarked that *parent-related problems* challenged them more than teacher-related problems, as follows: *"...when students start high school, the interest of parents decreases. Let me put it this way, even students do not want their parents to come to school. Therefore, this disconnected relationship between students and parents and the indifference of parents to school is one of the most challenging factors for us."* (P14).

In addition to parent and teacher-related conflicts, *student-related problems* also appear to cause conflicts. *"…Teachers' criticisms generally regarding the fact that the kids have low academic achievement, have lots of behavioral disorders and don't even know how to ask for permission. There come complaints stating that students are in a much worse condition than the previous students"* (P22).

Ignoring the views of teachers on the structuring of the MoNE

Finally, the participants emphasized that ignoring the views of teachers on the structuring of the Ministry of National Education is one of the organizational factors affecting the work-private life balance, and one of the factors for this is *the change being made without getting teachers' views on work* as follows:

"The fact that they do anything without consulting us also makes us look worthless. I personally feel worthless. It doesn't matter, I do my own work. I'll come and go. I fulfill my duty. Whatever the instructions are, I'll follow them. I have no authority. I do what they say. Nobody is asking anything. I want to be consulted and valued" (P13).

The participants stated that the changes are made without taking their opinions seriously, and this negatively affects their work-private life balance. A reference statement stating that they *need a teacher profession law* protecting their personal rights to establish a work-private life balance is as follows:

"For example, when the director of a population registry office in a city in Turkey wants to be appointed to another city, he/she acts as the director of the population registry or the editor-in-chief. However, there is no such concept for school principals and administrators. When the school principal in province A wants to be appointed to province B, he goes there and starts working as a teacher. He loses all his personal rights. This makes you demoralized. It means, when we do not have professional law or professional rights, this reflects on everything, both in our working and private life" (P17).

Personal Factors Affecting the High School Administrators' Work-Private Life Balance

Personal factors affecting the high school administrators' work-private life balance are grouped and presented under three categories and 10 sub-categories in Table 2.

Table 2.

Personal Factors Affecting the High School Administrators' Work-private Life Balance

Categories	Sub-categories
Gender	Gender roles
	Gender stereotypes
Career planning	Lack of norm staffing
	Economic reasons
	Not desiring to work as a teacher
	Desire for promotion
	Desire for leading others
	Thinking that the current administrators are incompetent
Administration knowledge and skills	In-service training for administrators
	Lack of experience

The study participants noted that the personal factors affecting the work-private life balance are gender, career planning, and administration knowledge and skills.

Gender

Only female participants stated that gender is one of the personal factors affecting the work-private life balance. Several participants indicated that they experienced work-private life imbalance because of their gender roles, as follows:

"...I am a mother and also a housewife at home. I may have difficulties in following them, or perhaps I cannot spare enough time for them, or I may cause disruptions in my housework, or when it comes to social life, I cannot spare time for myself. This is our biggest problem as women. We spare it for work, for home, and for the children. Let's say when you have a family or there is a situation created for you. You wear that robe right now. You work, you are a mother, and you are a housewife" (P48).

In addition, female participants also described the work-private life imbalances they experience due to *gender stereotypes* as in the following:

"We feel that you are in a male-dominated society in one way or another here... Sometimes I feel that it is because I am a woman. I mean, they look at administration as if it is not a woman's job.

Administration is the man's job. For example, a colleague had said that when you first came here, I was not sure you could fulfill the responsibilities. It was a man who said this" (P34).

Career Planning

Some participants, who thought that the school administration job has no gender, stated that they made their career planning as school administrators because *lack of norm staffing* relating to their fields. A sample reference remark regarding the lack of norm staffing is as follows: *"I cry and think of resigning. Next day, I change my mind because there is no norm to go for now"* (P6).

On the other hand, the following statements indicate that many participants are forced to become school administrators due to *economic reasons*: *"Why do we continue working as administrators? Now, my wife is not working. While you are working as a school administrator, your additional classes are guaranteed. You get a full tuition fee. That is what concerns us. It is definitely a factor"* (K47).

Also, the participants pointed out that another factor in planning their careers as school administrators was that they did *not desire to work as a teacher.*

"I am a teacher of Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge. Once I start teaching, I have to teach for 30 hours. Because there is already a shortage of teachers. I can no longer find the capacity in myself to teach 30 hours of classes" (P39).

In addition, the participants who *desired promotion* in their organizations planned careers as school administrators.

"After nearly 20 years, I wanted to move to administration. When I first became a teacher, I had a dream for myself that I would retire as a branch manager" (P33).

Similarly, one participant, who had the *desire to manage others*, stated: *"I am happy with one-to-one communication with students when I enter the classes, but I do it to have an impact on more things. I do this to be of some benefit to many things"* (P29).

Finally, participants who believed that *current administrators were incompetent* planned careers as school administrators, although they believed it would result in a work-private life imbalance.

"Actually, the reason I became the administrator is that I worked with incompetent administrators. The inappropriate behaviors and attitudes of the person in the administrative position made me say why I should not lead him. The idea that I would lead him instead of he would lead me" (P21).

Administration knowledge and skills

Participants pointed out that one of the personal factors affecting the work-private life balance is administration knowledge and skills. As in the following, some participants emphasized that school management should not be perceived as a task alone and that all administrators should receive *in-service training*:

"I would say that is what I think. The administrators should receive at least one year of administration training. I mean, we need to receive it for one year. You somehow learn how to manage people, or to be exact, these works, and paperwork" (P36).

On the other hand, the participants, who have been school administrators for four years or less, never mentioned in-service training for administration. They claimed that their work-life imbalances were a result of a lack of management experience. A sample reference statement regarding the sub-category of lack of experience is as follows: *"It never finishes. It is always left for the evening. However, this could also be due to my lack of experience. I have been working as an administrator for one month"* (P15).

Views of High School Administrators on the Consequences of Work-Private Life Imbalance

The high school administrators' views about the consequences of work-private life imbalance are grouped under four categories and 12 sub-categories and presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
The Consequences of Work-Private LifeImbalance of High School Administrators

Categories	Sub-Categories
Psychological consequence	Depression
	Anxiety
	Introversion
Psychosomatic consequences	Blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease
	Psychiatric drug use
Personal time dissatisfaction	Taking work to home
	Neglecting oneself
	Sleeplessness
	Irregular eating habit
Family-related problems	Family conflicts
	Neglecting partner and children
	Spending poor quality time at home

Psychological Consequences

Participants stated that they experienced various negativities both in their professional and private lives because of work-private life imbalances. They stated that work-private life imbalance had psychological consequences on them such as depression, anxiety, and introversion. The views of one of the participants concerning the sub-category of *depression* are as follows:

"I am very unhappy right now. Why? Because you cannot do things completely. So I cannot give myself entirely to my home and family. Although I try to do things exactly in my job, I am unhappy here. I feel depressed. There is no energy" (P23).

Another participant had the following views on anxiety: "*…but sometimes we cannot do duties such as paperwork, writing, and writing letters because of dealing with students' discipline problems and other problems. It also increases the work stress in my mind. It continues even when I go home. I mean, I am always concerned about finishing and completing them?"* (P15). Participants emphasized that besides having a feeling of depression and anxiety, they experienced introversion because of work-private life imbalances.

"I mean, if I have a bad time that day, if I am depressed, if I am bored, I go home as if the whole world is on me, and I cannot even talk. So I don't want to talk at all. I don't even want to open my mouth" (P34).

Psychosomatic Consequences

The participants, whose psychological moods deteriorated as a consequence of work-private life imbalances, seem to have suffered from some psychosomatic diseases known to be of psychological origin. Sample participant remarks regarding psychosomatic consequences such as *blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease* are as follows.

"...How can you stay balanced at school? How do you not get on your nerves? How do you go home healthy? I don't know about that, but I am going through totally bad things. I get very tired. I also got diabetes because of this stress. I had a new diabetes and a blood pressure problem this year, related to each other. I have more headaches. I mean, I am burning out. Education should not be like this. It is very terrible" (P25). Similarly, the remarks of participants indicate that the participants who lost their physical health, as well as those who lost their mental health because of work-private life imbalances, needed to *use psychiatric drugs*.

"For example, I have ringworm right now. I mean, my body somehow reflects it externally. It kind of reflects as fatigue. It reflects physically. For example, I used to be very angry before. I could burst out immediately. For example, I started to take psychological medicine right now" (P49).

Personal Time Dissatisfaction

One of the participants, who stated that they experienced *personal time dissatisfaction* because of work-private life imbalance, expressed that they had *to take work home*: "*I have to do class schedule, additional class payments, and payment. Regarding the payments, since I play with numbers, there is a high chance of making mistakes when there is a lot of noise, and people entering and going out of the room. You can do it more peacefully and better at home*" (P21).

Another participant's expressions indicating that they experience personal time dissatisfaction in the sub-category of *neglecting oneself* are as follows: "*I guess I am doing the biggest injustice to myself. I cannot spare time for myself. My priorities are always others. When we are at school, our students and when we go home, our children are our priority*" (P11).

The reference remarks of participants, who cannot complete the tasks they need to fulfill in their working life and suffer *sleeplessness* problems because of having to work for a long time, are as follows;

"*...I try not to take time from home as much as possible. I work after 24.00 or after 01.00 at night. I work when everyone is asleep. I forfeit my sleep. I cannot print out the documents from home. I share them with teachers. They download and the download time takes to these colleagues' attention. Sir, you did it at 03.29 at night… I experience these 25-30 times a year without exaggeration*" (P45).

In addition to the participants who stated that they suffered from sleeplessness problems, some participants also stated that they experienced *irregular eating habits* as a consequence of work-private life imbalance. "*I cannot understand when the lunch break takes place. Because even at lunch break, people come and go. I try to eat if I have free time. I usually have a snack in my room*" (P9).

Family-Related Problems

Participants pointed out that work-private life imbalances were reflected not only in their work life but also in their private lives as family-related problems. Here is a reference statement of a participant on *family conflicts*:

"*When I go home, I feel that this tiredness and tension. My wife and child are negatively reflected in this situation. I feel guilty. I always try to control it, to stop it. This turns into another factor that makes me extra tired. I feel that the tolerance, patience, and understanding that I have to show to my kid or my wife run out at school.*" (P22).

The participants stated that *neglecting their partner and children* as a consequence of the work-private life imbalance caused them to feel unable to fulfill their duties.

"*I feel like I am in a vacuum. Because you are neither here nor there. I think we miss out on some things. There are things we fail to do in the family, at least in the context of the children, in the context of our partner, as a father, as a son. From this perspective, we have many responsibilities not fulfilled.*" (P41).

In addition, the participants, who spent most of their time on their work life, pointed out that *spending poor quality time at home* causes problems between them and their families.

"*We have no energy left when we go home. We do not have the energy to spare for our children. They actually need that. We have little tolerance towards them. I mean, when I go there, I react to the slightest noise. Low and poor quality time is spent*" (P30).

Views of School Administrators Who Think They Have Established a Work-Private Life Balance

The views of school administrators who think that they have established a work-private life balance are grouped under seven categories and four sub-categories and presented in Table 4. When the views of school administrators who think that they have established a work-private life balance are examined, it appears the participants actually establish a balance between their living spaces by prioritizing their work life over their other living spaces.

Table 4.

Views of School Administrators Who Think They Have Established a Work-Private Life Balance

Categories	Sub-categories
Methods followed by school administrators who think that they have established a work-private life balance	Postponing private life Regular and planned work Repressing thoughts Not sparing time for oneself
Suggestions of school administrators who think that they have established a work-private life balance	Behaving professionally Exhibiting emotional labor behavior Getting used to problems and gaining experience

Methods Followed by School Administrators Who Think They Have Established a Work-Private Life Balance

The participants who thought that they had established a work-private life balance, were asked about the method they followed, and they had remarks about prioritizing their work life and *postponing their private life*.

"I usually prioritize the working life. This is my main job. This is where I earn my living… Although some of my needs and desires are pushed aside, it is worth it. I should have an eye on it" (P1).

Similarly, the reference remarks of one of the participants, who thought that they had established a balance owing to *regular and planned work*, are as follows:

"There are priorities. We have regular and instant works at school. We put in order what should be done in time. I try to work regularly. I don't move on to another work without finishing one work" (P5).

However, participants thought that they established a work-private life balance by *repressing thoughts*. *"Regarding administration, I have grown up that it would be unethical, wrong, and immoral to offend, victimize, and cause difficulties for people because of one's private life. Our job is sacred and a top priority. In order to prevent this, I try to do my job at school by totally ignoring that part of my mind at home or any problems that arise in my private life"* (P22).

While attempting to meet their duties and responsibilities in their private lives by prioritizing their professional lives, the participants who felt a lack of time for themselves reported that they began the day early by forsaking sleep. *"Now, life begins at 7:00 a.m. for people. I get up at 5.30. I don't steal time from my family. I do my sports between 5.30 and 7.00 when the kids are sleeping. I ride my bicycle. For example, I swim between those hours. When they wake up, I have come home and finished my sport"* (P37).

Suggestions of School Administrators Who Think They Have Established a Work-Private Life Balance

When we asked the suggestions of school administrators who think they have established a work-private life balance to the school administrators who are unable to establish a work-private life balance or had difficulties in establishing a work-private life balance, they stated that they should *behave professionally* on duty. *"... I learned to put things aside and look at things professionally. Administration also had a very positive reflection on my normal life"* (P4).

The participants' remarks indicate that in addition to behaving professionally in school management, *exhibiting emotional labor behavior* is considered critical in establishing a work-private life balance.

"During my 30-year teaching career, I have always compared administration to a good theater actor. I mean, in five minutes, I have to be able to play five different roles. Why did a student come? S/he will ask something if you smile at that student. Your director calls. You get serious at that moment. Someone else has come. You may have a different facial expression or a sign of anger. So I would say, in that sense, a person who does not act well can never be a good administrator" (P14).

In addition, the reference remarks of the participants, who stated that a work-private life balance can be established by *getting used to problems and gaining experience* during the school administration process, are as follows: *"...Human learns some things. As the years pass and progress in administration, I do what should be done at work. I do home-related things at home. I don't take them here and there. When you don't take the two to one another, this time both those at work and home become a bit more peaceful. So in this sense, I try to do this"* (P4).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the views of high school administrators on work-private life balances. As a result, the findings emerged the following themes of organizational and personal factors affecting the work-private life balance of high school administrators, consequences of work-private life imbalance of high school administrators, and views of school administrators who think that they have established a work-private life balance.

School administrators' workload and work intensity differed according to school types. According to the findings, participants, particularly those working in vocational high schools, have difficulties understanding and completing the documentation required for students' internship applications, which includes financial calculations. As a result, administrators may feel as if they are merely doing clerical tasks rather than more meaningful educational activities. This could be due to a lack of training or experience in these areas, as well as a lack of unambiguous instructions for paperwork. It could also point to the need for more simplified and user-friendly documentation processes to help school administrators. This finding contradicts the research findings of Çobanoğlu et al. (2019), Gürbüzkol (2018), and İzki (2019), who argue that workloads are similar according to school types. We also found that the conflicts between school administrators and teachers, parents, and students differed according to school type. Supporting this finding, the research findings showed that the conflict matters between school administrators and other school stakeholders were different according to school types (Altun Dilek, 2015; Yıldızoğlu & Burgaz, 2014). While school administrators working in regions with low socio-economic status have conflict due to the indifference of families (Yücetaş Artan, 2019), school administrators working in schools that accept students without examination have problems with student discipline problems. It is important to note that different types of schools may have different demands, pressures, and working conditions, which can lead to different types of stressors for school administrators. These stressors can affect the work-private life balance of school administrators differently. Thus, this finding highlights the need to provide school administrators with specific and tailored support based on the types of schools they work in to promote their work-private life balance.

In addition, the findings of this study showed that the ambiguity of roles, such as workload, diversity, and intensity of work, causes school administrators to experience work-private life imbalance. The study's findings suggest that the ambiguity of school administrators' duties and responsibilities can lead to work-private life imbalance. In literature, similar findings showed that the ambiguity of roles in an organization causes work-private life imbalances (Alkan, 2019; Ünlü, 2013). This could be due to the lack of clear expectations for the workload, and intensity of their work, making it challenging for them to effectively manage and organize their time. Our finding could also indicate a need for clearer job descriptions and the allocation of necessary tools to aid school administrators in efficiently managing their workloads and maintaining work-life balance.

We found that school administrators complained about the top-down changes made in the structuring of the MoNE without obtaining the views of school administrators and the need for a Teacher Professional Law to protect their rights. This was an organizational factor that caused the work-private life imbalance. The research findings reported by Başdemir (2012) and Can and Çelikten (2000) support this research finding. They state that because of the organizational structure of MoNE, the participation of subordinates in the decision is very limited. It might result in a work-private life imbalance for school administrators, who may be pressured to work longer hours or complete additional responsibilities without adequate support or resources. A Teacher Professional Law would define school administrators' rights and responsibilities, as well as give a framework for solving any conflicts or difficulties that may occur.

While all female participants have stated that their gender is one of the personal reasons affecting their work-private life balance, male participants have not mentioned anything about gender. Our study

discovered that female school administrators had difficulty establishing a work-private life balance due to gender roles and gender stereotypes. Therefore, they experienced personal time dissatisfaction in that they left their personal lives aside. It is necessary to carefully interpret the finding that female participants experienced work-private life imbalances due to their gender. Determining whether opinions on work-life balance vary by gender is beyond the scope of this study. Although female participants emphasized that gender is an important variable in work-private life balance, this finding does not mean that male participants do not experience work-private life imbalance. In literature the research results about the relationship between gender and work-private life balance are contradictory. While some findings argued that gender is not a determinant in employees' work-private life balance (Akın, 2019; Çobanoğlu et al., 2019; İzki, 2019), some others emphasized that gender is a vital variable in establishing a work-private life balance (Alkan, 2019; Polat, 2019).

School administrators have difficulty protecting their mental and physical health because of the work-private life imbalance. School administrators who cannot protect their mental and physical health experience psychological and psychosomatic disorders. The research results in the literature emphasize that psychological conditions such as nervousness, anxiety, and tension that cause poor performance, burnout, dissatisfaction, and alienation are important consequences of work-private life imbalance (Birkan, 2020; Esin, 2017; Mutlu, 2016). These findings reveal the importance of the existence of support services such as counseling and employee assistance programs and accessing these resources to maintain the mental and physical health of school administrators. Furthermore, creating an organizational climate that encourages work-life balance will help protect their mental and physical health.

In addition, the study concluded that as the time spent by school administrators in management increased, they realized their lack of management training and, therefore; they needed in-service training since they experienced work-private life imbalances. Similar to our findings, several researchers such as Cobanoglu et al. (2019), Esin (2017), and Sayın (2017) have stated that school administrators require in-service training in management. The school administration is a complex task that requires a wide range of abilities, including budgeting, human resource management, and communication. School administrators lacking the necessary training in these areas may struggle to effectively manage their schools and may experience work-private life imbalances. In-service training is a method of providing school administrators with ongoing professional development. It can assist them in developing the skills and information required to effectively manage their schools, while also assisting them in improving their work-private life balance.

One of the critical consequences of the school administrators' work-private life imbalance is family-related problems. Regardless of their marital status, school administrators cannot spare enough time for their partners, children, and relatives, whereby they experience family conflicts. The literature is also arguing that work-private life imbalances cause family problems (İzki, 2019; Küçükşen & Kaya, 2016). This finding highlights the importance of providing family-friendly policies that can help alleviate some of the pressures on school administrators and support them in balancing their work and private lives. Furthermore, school administrators must be conscious of the negative impact that work-life imbalance can have on their family relationships and try to find time for their families despite their heavy workload.

When examining the findings from the opinions of school administrators who believe they have established a balance between work and private life, it is understood that the participants are actually unable to create a balance between work and personal life, but rather consider their work lives as sacred and create a way of life by prioritizing them. It is noted that due to the intensity and diversity of their work lives, it is much more difficult for school administrators to allocate personal time for themselves compared to teachers working in the same organization (Altıok Gürel, 2018; Çobanoğlu et al., 2019). It has been determined that the participants try to establish a work-private life balance by sacrificing their natural needs such as sleep in the limited time, to release stress and recharge, relax, and break away from their work and personal life routines.

Participants who indicate that they have achieved a balance between work and private life have some recommendations for school administrators who cannot balance their work and private lives. They have stated that many negative situations can be overcome by behaving professionally in their work lives without adding emotions. Some of the participants have also stated that school administration should be seen as a separate role, just like a theater actor, and that the school administrator can balance

their work and private life by hiding their emotions, focusing on their role, and fulfilling their duties as school administrators. In light of these findings, it is understood that school administrators who think they have achieved a balance between work and private life actually cover up their real feelings by behaving emotionally. Among the recommendations of school administrators who think they have achieved a balance between work and private life, the last one is to adapt to problems and gain experience. Participants have stated that some things in school administration can be gained through experience over time and that problems can be adapted to as one gets older.

Implications

We can make some suggestions to researchers and practitioners to help school administrators establish a work-private life balance. Because of the work they must complete, most school administrators need more time to meet their basic needs. School administrators suggest reducing their workload and working hours so that they can have time for themselves during lunch breaks, which are their break times. Additionally, the reasons for teachers being forced into school administration roles by the MoNE should be investigated, solution-focused studies should be planned and opinions should be exchanged regarding the decisions to be taken in terms of implementation. School administration should be removed from being an additional duty to teaching and should be made into a professional profession through a professional law that protects their rights. Authorities should remove school management from being a duty in addition to teaching and turn it into a professional profession under a professional law that protects personal rights. They also should plan management training for school administrators before and after starting their duties.

Although this study showed no clear association between gender and work-private life balance, one should not ignore the views of female school administrators, and authorities should develop various policies to prevent their work-private life imbalance. Future research should investigate the types of support that help school administrators establish a work-private life balance and support their personal and work lives. Finally, at the data collection stage of the study, the participants stated that the interview questions of this study provided an opportunity to mirror themselves and that the MoNE employees, policymakers, and parents should read the study. These research findings are limited to the responses to the interview questions given by public high school administrators working in central districts of Mersin province between 2021 and 2022. Therefore, different findings could be obtained when the same topic is studied with larger samples using different research methods.

Acknowledgment

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