



# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK-FAMILY AND FAMILY-WORK CONFLICT AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS: A STUDY ON WATCHKEEPING OFFICERS

İş-Aile Ve Aile-İş Çatışması İle Demografik Özellikler Arasındaki İlişki: Vardiya Zabıtlarına Yönelik Bir Araştırma

**Instructor Dr. Osman ARSLAN**

Kocaeli University, Maritime Faculty, Department of Maritime Transportation and Management Engineering, Kocaeli/Turkey  
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4384-3510

**Instructor Ozan Hikmet ARICAN**

Kocaeli University, Maritime Faculty, Department of Maritime Transportation and Management Engineering, Kocaeli/Turkey  
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2061-6112

**Instructor Dr. Ali Umut ÜNAL**

Kocaeli University Karamürsel Vocational School, Department of Motor Vehicles and Transportation Technologies, Kocaeli/ Turkey  
ORCID ID:0000-0002-2575-6379

**Ahmet Can YARAMIŞ**

Kocaeli University, Maritime Faculty, Maritime Management Department, Kocaeli/Turkey  
ORCID ID:0000-0002-2833-1341

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## ABSTRACT

In this study, the relationship between work-family conflict and family-work conflict and demographic factors of watchkeeping officers, who are among seafarers who have been separated from their families and social life for a long time and work in difficult sea conditions, were examined. The sample of the study consists of 104 participants who have the qualifications of deck and engine officers working on oceangoing ships. The scale developed by Netemeyer et al., (1996) was used to measure work-family and family-work conflict. The data used in the study were collected by questionnaire technique and the obtained data were analyzed using t-test and Anova test. According to the results of this study, it was determined that the work roles of the participants affected their family life, while the family roles did not affect their work life much.

**Keywords:** Watchkeeping Officer, Work-Family Conflict, Family-Work Conflict, Demographic Factors.

## ÖZET

Bu çalışmada ailelerinden ve sosyal hayattan uzun süre ayrı kalan ve zorlu deniz koşullarında çalışan gemi çalışanları içerisinde yer alan vardiya zabıtlarının iş-aile çatışması ve aile-iş çatışması ile demografik faktörler arasındaki ilişkisi incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemini uzak yol gemilerinde çalışan güverte ve makine zabiti yeterliliğine sahip 104 katılımcı oluşturmaktadır. İş-aile ve aile-iş çatışmasını ölçmek için Netemeyer et al., (1996) tarafından geliştirilen ölçek kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada kullanılan veriler anket tekniği ile toplanmış ve elde edilen veriler t-testi ve Anova testi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre katılımcıların iş rollerinin aile yaşantısını etkilediği, aile rollerinin ise iş yaşantılarını çok etkilemediği saptanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Vardiya Zabiti, İş-Aile Çatışması, Aile-İş Çatışması, Demografik Faktörler.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the rapid change in life conditions affects not only individuals but also families, which are the basic elements of society. Today, it has become a very important issue to provide and maintain the balance between work and family life. The problem of not establishing this balance between the work and family lives of individuals causes work-family conflict. In general, conflict can be defined as a disagreement between two or more people arising from various reasons (Koçel, 2015). The fact that a person does not adopt or dislike the notion or event that he or she opposes is the source of conflict.

Considering that most of the goods that are the subject of world trade are transported by sea, ship employees who carry out the management and administration of ships have great responsibilities. Ship crew stay away from their families and social life for a long time and work in difficult sea conditions. The working conditions of seafarers are undoubtedly much heavier than the conditions of employees working in other sectors. Ship crews work for days or even months without going ashore on ships that are constantly oscillating in harsh sea conditions such as bad weather and storms due to the nature of maritime. Therefore, being away from their families for a long time and not being able to fulfill their responsibilities regarding

their families may cause conflicts arising from work or family. In this study, the relationship between work-family and family-work-based conflicts of watchkeeping officers, who have great responsibilities in the management and operation of the ship, with demographic factors was investigated.

## 2. WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

In general terms, conflict is a concept that arises in negative relations and opposition situations between individuals and is based on the inability to communicate as desired, purpose, desire, and changing value judgments (Folger, et al., 2013). According to another definition, conflict is the emotional environment that arises as a result of disagreements between individuals or groups (Çarıkçı & Çelikkol 2009). In terms of people, conflict arises in the form of tension when both psychological and physiological needs are not met (Bingöl, 1997). Work-family conflict is expressed as a situation of incompatibility between a person and his/her job, or in other words, between a person and his/her family (Kopelman et al., 1983; Netemeyer et al., 1996). Work-family conflict arises when the individual has more than one role at the same time, such as working parents and spouses (Dublin, 1997). It is a situation that arises when an individual has more than one role in work and family environments and cannot balance them and their roles cannot meet their expectations (Kolbaşı & Bağcı, 2018). These conflicts may arise for reasons such as work-related responsibilities, business travel, overtime, working hours, and work obligations that must be fulfilled at home (Hennessy, 2005).

When the literature on work-family conflict is examined, the factors affecting work and family conflict; personal factors are discussed in three groups as work-related and family-related factors. Personal factors that are effective in experiencing work-family conflict; are concepts such as personality, gender, age, marital status, and education level (Korkmazer, 2018). Work-related factors, on the other hand, are the factors that may arise in the workplace such as the working environment of the people, incompatibility with colleagues, constant overtime work, and communication problems with managers (Çetinceli & Çarıkçı, 2020). When we look at the family-based factors, many factors experienced in the family of the individual can affect the work of the person. The main of these factors are; the age and number of children, the time allocated to the family, and both parents working together (Çetinceli & Çarıkçı, 2020).

## 3. FAMILY-WORK CONFLICT

It is the type of conflict that occurs when individuals' family responsibilities and the wishes of family members override their work-related responsibilities (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Greenhaus & Powell 2003). In family-work conflict, the demands of family members prevent the fulfillment of work-related responsibilities by taking the individual's resources (Frone et al., 1992). In general, family-work conflict is defined as the conflict that occurs due to the family's interference with work or the conflict from family to work (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Nielson et al., 2001). The main factors that reveal family-work conflict are the characteristics of the family. Accordingly, factors such as the marital status of the person, the number and age of children, problematic children, the presence of children who have not reached school age, and the presence of elderly people in need of care in the family cause family-work conflict (Özdevecioğlu & Doruk, 2009).

Establishing a certain balance between work and family life and preventing conflict will make significant contributions to increasing the quality of life of people, protecting family integrity, protecting the mental health of the person and his family, and increasing the performance of people at work (Yılmaz & Şahin, 2008).

## 4. THE CONCEPT of SEAFARER and WATCHKEEPING OFFICER

It is seen that the concept of the seafarer is confused with the concept of the seafarer, which is used in a broader sense. However, the seafarer is a concept that is qualified for anyone who has a relationship with the sea for scientific, sporting, civil, or military purposes. Seafarer, on the other hand, is the name given to the members of a profession specified in the maritime legislation (Cömert, 2008). According to the Regulation on Seafarer and Pilots, published in the Official Gazette No. 30328 dated 10.02.2018, "Seafarer: means the ship's captain, officers, assistant officers, trainees, crew and auxiliary service personnel". If we are to explain the seafarer, the crew members who work under the captain's command and have officer and crew qualifications are called crew. In addition, people such as cooks and stewards who have any professional qualifications that can make up the crew are called seafarer (Cömert, 2008).

There are approximately 1,647,500 seafarers around the world, of which 777,000 are officer class and 873,500 are crew class. There are 118,539 seafarers in our country. Among these, the number of officers working actively is 47,310 (UAB, 2018). Officers working onboard can be grouped as the deck, machine, and auxiliary classes. The officers, who are the focus of our study and defined among the seafarers, have important responsibilities in the management and management of the ship. In addition to the hard work of the officers on the ship, they frequently encounter the audits of large companies (Arıcan, 2019). When the officers of the watch are separated from their families for a long time and the difficulty of working conditions at sea are added to these responsibilities, conflicts may arise between work and family life. Both the seafarers themselves and their families have difficulties in terms of the social environment. In the absence of their spouses, who are seafarers, families have to take on much more of their responsibilities than they normally would. In this case, it is seen that seafarers are insufficient in their relations with the social environment due to their profession (Taşdelen et al., 2016). The long separation of seafarers from their families, the feeling of alienation from the family and the role differentiation experienced cause emotional problems of seafarers (Rydstedt & Lunch, 2010).

## 5. METHOD

In the study, the effects of demographic characteristics of watchkeeping officers working on oceangoing ships on work-family and family-work conflict were examined. In this study, a questionnaire form was used as a data collection tool. The sample of the study consists of 104 participants who have the qualifications of deck and engine officers working on oceangoing ships. The scale used to determine the relationship between the level of work-family and family-work conflict experienced by watchkeeping officers and demographic factors consists of 10 statements developed by Netemeyer et al., (1996). The scale consists of two dimensions and is in the form of a 5-point likert. SPSS Statistics 22 package program was used in the analysis of the data. Statistical information such as mean, frequency, t test and anova test were used in data analysis. In the study conducted by Apaydın (2004), the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient calculated for the work-family conflict dimension consisting of five statements was determined as 0.86 and the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient calculated for the family-work conflict dimension consisting of five statements was determined as 0.82.

## 6. FINDINGS

Considering the demographic characteristics of the people participating in the research, the age-related findings were terminated as 48 years old and above due to the short working time of the watchkeeping officers at sea. Age-related findings are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Findings Related to Age

Age Ranges	Frequency	Percent
18-22	26	25,0
23-27	20	19,2
28-32	23	22,1
33-37	10	9,6
38-42	11	10,6
43-47	4	3,8
48 years and older	9	8,7
Total	103	99,0
Not entered	1	1,0
Total	104	100

When Table 1 is examined, the age range with the highest rate among the 104 participants is the age range of 18-22 with 25%. The lowest rate is 3.8% in the age range of 43-47. This supports the view that the working time at sea is shortened in advanced ages.

The findings regarding gender, one of the demographic factors, are given in Table 2. According to the table, 1.9% of the participants are female and 98.1% are male.

Table 2. Findings Related to Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	2	1,9
Male	102	98,1
Total	104	100,0

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that only 2 of the 104 participants are women. Women's participation in ship working life is still at very low levels.

The findings regarding the marital status of the participants participating in the study are given in Table 3. According to Table 3, 32.7% of the participants are married and 67.3% are single.

Table 3. Findings Regarding Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Married	34	32,7
Single	70	67,3
Total	104	100,0

When Table 3 is analyzed, 34 of the 104 participants are married. The marriage rate remains low because seafarers are constantly away from their homes due to long-distance voyages on the ship and especially because they take part in the ship at a very young age.

The findings regarding the number of children of the participants are given in Table 4. According to Table 4, while 29.8% of the participants have children, 70.2% do not. It is seen that among these, the rate of watchkeeping officers who have 2 children has the highest rate with 12.5%.

Table 4. Findings Regarding the Number of Children

Number of Children	Frequency	Percent
1	12	11,5
2	13	12,5
3	5	4,8
4 and more	1	1,0
Total	31	29,8
Not entered	73	70,2
Total	104	100,0

Demographic findings regarding the education levels of the participants are given in Table 5. According to Table 5, 69.2% of the participants completed undergraduate education, 17.3% high school, 7.7% graduate education.

Table 5. Findings Regarding Education Level

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
Primary School	1	1,0
Secondary School	4	3,8
High School	18	17,3
Undergraduate education	72	69,2
Master's/PhD	8	7,7
Total	103	99,0
Not entered	1	1,0
Total	104	100,0

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that 80 out of 104 participants received undergraduate and graduate education. Seafarers add alternatives to their career plans by giving importance to their education throughout their working life. It can also be said that future academic career plans are made with graduate education.

Considering the working time of the participants in the same ship management, Table 6 shows that 79.8% of the participants worked between 0-5 years and 13.5% between 6-10 years in the same ship.

Table 6. Findings Regarding the Working Time in the Institution

Work Period	Frequency	Percent
0-5 years	83	79,8
6-10 years	14	13,5
11-15 years	4	3,8
16-20 years	2	1,9
Total	103	99,0
Not Entered	1	1,0
Total	104	100,0

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that a great majority of the 104 participants left the institution they were in after 5 years. Only 2 participants continue to work in the institution for 16 years or more. It is seen that the seafarers continue to work with different companies as their experience period increases. There are also economic reasons and requests for changes in working conditions in the occurrence of this situation.

When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that the total working time of the participants at sea is between 0-5 years with 43.3%. This situation reveals that, considering the difficulties of working on a ship due to the nature of the sea, being away from family and social life for a long time, and work stress, watchkeeping officers stop working at sea after the first 5 years of their profession.

Table 7. Findings Regarding Total Working Time

Total Working Period	Frequency	Percent
0-5 years	45	43,3
6-10 years	29	27,9
11-15 years	16	15,4
16-20 years	3	2,9
21 years and older	9	8,7
Total	102	98,1
Not entered	2	1,9
Total	104	100,0

When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that 45 participants out of 104 left the ship after 5 years. It is seen that 9 participants have been in the sea for more than 20 years. It is seen that seafarers have less time to stay at sea due to the difficulty of life on the ship, longing for land life and being away from their loved ones. It can be said that those who worked on the ship for many years continued to work due to their getting used to the sea life and other reasons.

Participants' age and work-family and family-work conflict scale were analyzed by applying the ANOVA test. The obtained results are given in Table 8.

Table 8. Age and Conflict Scale Relationship ANOVA Test

	Age Range	N	Average	F	P
Work Family Conflict	18-22	26	2,89	0,920	0,009*
	23-27	20	2,84		
	28-32	23	2,92		
	33-37	10	3,10		
	38-42	11	3,07		
	43-47	4	4,15		
	48 and older	9	2,91		
Family Work Conflict	18-22	26	2,76	1,068	0,284
	23-27	20	2,85		
	28-32	23	2,84		
	33-37	10	3,30		
	38-42	11	2,45		
	43-47	4	2,68		
	48 and older	9	2,25		

According to Table 8, when the relationship between age and conflict scale was examined, a significant difference was found in work-family conflict ( $p < 0.05$ ), while no significant difference was found in family-work conflict. Accordingly, it is observed that age is not effective in family-work conflict, but it is effective in work-family conflict.

The relationship between the marital status of the participants and work-family and family-work conflict was analyzed by applying the T test. The obtained results are given in Table 9.

Table 9. Relationship Between Marital Status and Conflict Scale T-test

	Marital Status	N	Average	F	P
Work Family Conflict	Married	34	3,27	2,237	0,013*
	Single	70	2,84		
Family Work Conflict	Married	34	2,94	0,219	0,641

\* $p < 0,05$

According to Table 9, when the relationship between marital status and conflict scale was examined, no significant difference was found in family-work conflict, while a significant difference was found in work-family conflict ( $p < 0.05$ ). Married people were found to be more affected with an average of 3.27 in the analysis of work-family conflict.

The education levels of the participants and the work-family and family-work conflict scale were analyzed by applying the ANOVA test. The obtained results are given in Table 10.



Table 10. The Relationship Between Education Level and Conflict Scale ANOVA Test

	Education Level	N	Average	F	P
Work Family Conflict	Secondary School	5	2,72	0,97	0,410
	High School	18	2,78		
	Undergraduate E.	72	2,98		
	Master's/PhD	8	3,52		
Family Work Conflict	Secondary School	5	2,20	0,599	0,617
	High School	18	2,88		
	Undergraduate E.	72	2,78		
	Master's/PhD	8	2,78		

\*p&lt;0,05

When the relationship between education level and conflict scale is examined according to Table 10, no significant difference was found according to work-family conflict and family-work conflict.

The working periods of the participants and the scale of work-family and family-work conflict were analyzed by applying the ANOVA test. The obtained results are given in Table 11.

Table 11. The Relationship Between Working Periods and Conflict Scale ANOVA Test

	Working Period	N	Average	F	P
Work Family Conflict	0-5 years	83	2,92	4,154	0,008*
	6-10 years	14	3,67		
	11-15 years	4	2,60		
	16-20 years	2	1,30		
Family Work Conflict	0-5 years	83	2,74	1,434	0,237
	6-10 years	14	3,17		
	11-15 years	4	2,31		
	16-20 years	2	2,00		

\*p&lt;0,05

According to Table 11, when the relationship between working period and conflict scale was examined, a significant difference was found in work-family conflict depending on working period; no significant difference was found in family-work conflict. Accordingly, it can be said that work-family conflict is effective but not effective on family-work conflict.

## 7. CONCLUSION

According to the results of the study, when the relationship between age and conflict scale was examined, no significant difference could be detected in family-work conflict depending on age; it can be said that work-family conflict differs significantly depending on age. This means that age has no effect on family conflict, but on work family conflict. In the work-family conflict part of the relationship between age and conflict scale, the higher averages in the 33-37, 38-42 and 43-47 age ranges indicate that the participants in this age range are more affected. It is seen that the conflict experienced increases as the age increases. This can be explained as the responsibilities and roles of individuals towards both work and family as the age increases.

When the relationship between marital status and conflict scale is examined, there is no significant difference in family-work conflict depending on marital status; A significant difference was found in work-family conflict. This result can be attributed to the fact that married watchkeeping officers undertake more than one duty towards their children, spouses and other family members in the work-family conflict.

When the relationship between education level and conflict scale was examined, no significant difference was found in work-family conflict and family-work conflict. Accordingly, it was seen that the level of education had no effect on the conflict experienced by the watchkeeping officers. Although education level has a great effect on personal development, it is seen that it has no effect on family relations, duties and responsibilities related to the family.

When the results of the Anova test regarding working period and conflict scale were examined, no significant difference was found in family-work conflict; A significant difference was found in work-family conflict. According to this, work-family conflict and family-work conflict are higher in watchkeeping officers working between 6-10 years compared to other working periods. According to Taşdelen, et al., (2016), who conducted a similar study, it was concluded that the perception of work-family and family-work conflicts of seafarers aged 1-5 years is higher than other employees.

Work-family conflict was detected at a higher rate in watchkeeping officers due to work-related problems. Similar results were obtained in some studies too (Kolbaşı & Bağcı, 2018; Turunç & Erkuş, 2010).

According to the results of the study, a balance should be established between work and family life by eliminating the problems experienced in the field of business.

On the ship, work and life are intertwined. Because the ship is an environment in which seafarers maintain both their workplace and their daily lives. Working in the same social environment for a long time during the working contracts of the watchkeeping officers forces them mentally. For this reason, work-family conflict of watchkeeping officers is more common than people working in other sectors and employment areas. In order to reduce the level of conflict, the necessity of establishing a healthy work-life balance that prevents the watchkeeping officers from being separated from social life and their families for a long time has emerged. Arslan (2021), in his study, emphasized the importance of establishing a work-life balance of the maritime labour force, arranging short and flexible working periods for this, and ensuring that they do not stay away from their families for a long time by ensuring land-sea rotation and that they should be involved in more social life. In addition, improving communication facilities, especially the internet, on board the ship's employees to communicate more frequently and quickly with their families motivates them more at work (Arslan, 2021). Thus, family relationships can be further strengthened during the seafarers' stay at sea.

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