A research for Exploring the Social Intelligence as a Way of Coping with Work-Family (WFC)/Family-Work (FWC) Conflict

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1. INTRODUCTION

Individuals inevitably find themselves dragging between work and home under the effects of conflicts from work to family or family to work. The fact that people cannot be escaped from conflicts brings some questions to the mind, such as, how conflict cases can be managed, how the balance between work and family can be established, to what extent the skills possessed by individuals may help them for reducing conflicts they will meet, what are the strengths that reduce conflicts and make the life in balance. Any conflict case required relationships between individuals and this state may be associated with social intelligence. Indeed, social intelligence is based on individual’s ability of establishing harmonious relationships with other people. However, it is observed that there is a lack in the literature to examine the relationship between social intelligence and conflict. It is also clear that researches are necessary which discussed social intelligence in the organizational context.

Relationships between emotional intelligence and social intelligence concepts are emphasized in the literature. At this juncture, researches which are trying to explain the relationships between emotional intelligence and work-family/family-work conflict are manifested the necessity of the researches which are going to analyze the relationships between social intelligence and work-family or family-work conflicts. Therefore, hypotheses suggested in this research can be defined as follows:

H₁: Social intelligence has a significant and negative effect on work-family conflict.

H₂: Social intelligence has a significant and negative effect on family-work conflict.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate social intelligence (which is a type of intelligence that takes attention as focusing social human relations and being embedded in the general intelligence scenery) in organizational context and to demonstrate whether or not social intelligence take a role in reducing work-family/family-work conflict. In the life fiction focusing on going and returning work to home under the
work pressure, today's people began to give meaning to the need of socializing, with his relationships which is intensively established with the people in work and home. Responses received from organizations and people from the workplace environment and opposing to this responses received from family members cause work-family / family-work conflict while they are affecting individuals. In this relationship platform in which one is dragged along one side to another, good relations are desired while uncontrollable or poor relations are triggering work-family/family-work conflicts. At this point, whether or not social intelligence is going to reduce work-family/family-work conflict will be clarified. Moreover, the importance of social intelligence in conflict management should be emphasized. These are revealing the importance of this research.

2. METHODOLOGY

The data of this study were gathered in terms of a self-completion questionnaire. The research is conducted with the employees of service organizations due to intensive working hours and intensive relations between individuals in these organizations. 348 employees attended the research. But, after the preassessment for the data some of the questionnaires removed from the whole data because of missing responses. Thus, after the elimination process of the responses, the final sample is consisted of 321 questionnaires. This sample is statistically significant for the research. The questionnaire of the research is composed of some scales. Social intelligence is was measured by Tromso Social Intelligence Scale which is developed by Silvera, Martinussen and Dahl (2001) as a self-report scale for measuring social intelligence levels of people. This scale is composed of three subscales which are named as social information processing, social skills and social awareness. It should be stated that, Tromso Social Intelligence Scale is generally used as a valid and reliable scale in the researches which are aimed to determine the level of social intelligence. Work-family conflict and family-work conflict were measured sequentially using the Work-Family Conflict Scale and Family-Work Conflict Scale both of which are employed by Netemeyer, Boles ve McMurrian (1996). These scales are also used as valid and reliable scales in the literature both separately and together. In this study, factor analyze is utilized for the scales and findings demonstrated that each of the scales has same structure as in the other researches in the literature. Cronbach alpha coefficients are also examined for the scales and each of the scales has an acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficient as in the researches conducted before in the literature.

3. FINDINGS

In the study, correlation analyze was utilized for discovering the relationship between social intelligence and work-family/family-work conflict and the direction of any relationship. Findings showed that there isn’t any relationship found between social intelligence (with its dimensions) and work-family conflict. On the other side the significant and negative relationship found between social intelligence (as a whole concept) and family-work conflict \( (r = -0.313) \). This relationship also examined in terms of the dimensions of social intelligence. Such an examination demonstrated that being as dimensions of social intelligence, social information processing \( (r = -0.228) \), social skills \( (r = -0.183) \) and social awareness \( (r = -0.283) \) have significant and negative relationship between social intelligence and family-work conflict.
Afterwards, for confirming the hypotheses of the research, assuming social intelligence has a significant and negative effect on work-family or family-work conflict, regression analyze was utilized in the study. Findings presented that social intelligence hasn’t got any significant effect on work-family conflict. Depending on this, the first hypothesis of the research is rejected. In contrast to this, findings exhibited that both social intelligence as a whole variable and its dimensions separately have a significant and negative effect on family-work conflict. Therefore, the second hypothesis of the research is supported.

4. CONCLUSION

Conflicts which will occur in work and family dilemma based on relationships between individuals. Emphasis of social intelligence which has turned to interpersonal relationships required to questionize the effective role of social intelligence on work and family dilemma. The findings of the research exhibits that, not work-family conflict, but family-work conflict will reduce when social intelligence level becomes higher.

Today’s business life requires intensive and long working hours. Competition consists in the labor market reveals the importance of meeting the requirements of the job anyone has. In such an environment business may be perceived as an obligation by individuals. Even if individuals are directing their workplace relationships well enough, it is not possible for them to escape from the duties and responsibilities of their work. All of these explanations present the clues for why social intelligence doesn't take any role for reducing work-family conflict. On the other hand, a work-centered life may be better in the aspect of business-oriented thought, but on the contrary, it will establish a ground for conflict cases. However, social intelligence can be take role for reducing conflicts in this direction. When individuals become aware of new states or problems related to family members or family and speak about this awareness, family members thought that they are not falling from grace in the face of work. When individuals act as knowing reactions of their family members to situations, family members may tend to become far from conflict behaviors. Work-family conflicts will be reduced with social intelligence as soon as individuals are focusing on creating solutions for problems of family members and are improving new forms of social relationships in front of the new situations they met. In brief, individuals should accustom themselves to use social intelligence in the context of its dimensions for struggling against conflicts. Moreover, implementations for developing social intelligence with the efforts of both the individuals and organizations may be useful for reducing conflicts in work and family dilemma.