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Investigating the Leaky Pipeline: Gendered Effects of Caregiving Policies on Academics

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INVESTIGATING THE LEAKY PIPELINE: GENDERED EFFECTS OF CAREGIVING POLICES ON ACADEMICS

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ABSTRACT

INVESTIGATING THE LEAKY PIPELINE: GENDERED EFFECTS OF CAREGIVING POLICES ON ACADEMICS

Despite implementation of caregiving policies in universities, women remain underrepresented in high faculty ranks in academia, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields. This study investigates the gendered effects of caregiving policies at regional comprehensive universities by integrating the Work-Home Resources (W-HR) Model and feminist economics. Using survey data and interviews, the research examines how caregiving responsibilities relate to work-life conflict and academic responsibilities, revealing nuanced influences on career trajectories. Hypotheses tested include the negative relationship between caregiving demands and research, the moderating effect of institutional support, the association of work-family guilt with research, and variations across faculty ranks. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

Keywords: caregiving policies, leaky pipeline, gender inequalities, women in academia

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Investigating the Leaky Pipeline: Gendered Effects of Caregiving Polices in Academia

Although women receive more doctorates across disciplines, they are underrepresented in high faculty ranks in academia (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021a; 2021b; 2021c). This phenomenon observed in STEM fields is called the "leaky pipeline," although it exists across disciplines (Allen-Hermanson, 2017; Buckles, 2019; Cardel et al., 2020). Previous studies have suggested this may occur due to the way birth, adoption, and childcare responsibilities (i.e., the motherhood penalty) impact women's careers (Grandey et al., 2020; Minnotte, 2021), particularly given that biological and tenure clocks often have overlapping timelines (Center for Work-Life Law, 2013).Although most universities now implement caregiving policies, many continue to struggle with retention of female faculty suggesting that current policies are not addressing the still existing disparities at hand (Antecol et al., 2018; Burch, 2022; Morgan et al., 2021).

This reality is likely due to the unequal expectations and responsibilities between men and women. Studies at research-intensive universities suggest that men may benefit in their career advancement, while women continue to face challenges in their careers during these periods (Antecol et al., 2018). A contributing factor to this disparity is that women academics are more likely to have partners who are also in academia or other high-demand professions. This situation leads to complex negotiations around career and home life responsibilities (Mason et al., 2009). This phenomenon, known as the "two-body problem," can exacerbate the challenges women face in achieving a balance between their professional and personal lives (Schiebinger et al., 2008). Additionally, societal expectations and cultural norms play a significant role in perpetuating gender disparities in caregiving and household duties. Despite progress towards gender equality, women continue to navigate expectations to fulfill the majority of domestic

roles, and these expectations are compounded by the demanding nature of academic careers, where the pressure to publish, secure funding, and contribute to academic service can be vigorous (Misra et al., 2011).

These disparities affect not only the well-being and work-life balance of women academics but also their professional achievements. Studies have shown that women's academic productivity, measured in terms of publications and research grants, is negatively impacted by caregiving and household responsibilities, contributing to slower career progression and lower representation in senior academic positions (Hunter & Leahey, 2010). Efforts to address these challenges include institutional policies aimed at supporting work-life balance, such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and childcare support. However, for these measures to be effective, they must be accompanied by cultural shifts within academia and society at large, promoting a more equitable distribution of caregiving and household responsibilities between genders (O'Meara et al., 2014).

The aim of this study is to examine the gendered effects of caregiving policies at regional comprehensive universities using mixed method techniques and multistage sampling. The premise for this research is grounded in the understanding that societal norms often place a heavier caregiving burden on women, which could hinder their professional growth. The Work-Home Resources (W-HR) model suggests that resources are finite and that the demands of one role can deplete the resources available for another, leading to strain and reductions in performance. This is reinforced by Role Strain Theory, which posits that conflicting demands between work and home roles can negatively affect an individual's performance in both domains (Goode, 1960). For academics, this may manifest as reduced research output or teaching effectiveness. Based on the W-HR model, it is expected that academics with caregiving

responsibilities will report lower academic productivity because caregiving can significantly deplete personal resources, leaving less available for academic endeavors.

This research draws on the concept that unequal caregiving demands can limit the time and energy available for research, teaching, and other professional activities, influencing career paths and retention in the academic field. This imbalance of resources and demands aligns with feminist economics, specifically in examining how work is divided along gender lines within households and the workforce, often assigning women to unpaid, caregiving tasks and men to paid, market-oriented work (Bianchi et al., 2000). This division is not just a matter of personal choice but is influenced by societal norms, economic structures, and institutional policies that reinforce gender inequalities, arguing that these divisions contribute to disparities in power, resources, and opportunities between genders, affecting individual well-being, career trajectories, and economic outcomes. The intersection of the W-HR model with feminist economics suggests that the impact of caregiving on academic productivity and career progression will be more pronounced for women.

Integrating the Work-Home Resources (W-HR) model and feminist economics, I hypothesize the following:

H1: There is a significant relationship between the extent of caregiving demands (hours spent on child caregiving per week, caregiving tasks) and perceived time allocation towards academic research.

H2: Faculty members with higher levels of institutional support (availability and length of parental leave and tenure extension) will experience less impact of caregiving demands on their perceived time allocation towards academic research, with a larger effect for male faculty.

H3: There is a positive relationship between perceived time allocation toward academic research and work-family guilt, as well as time-based work-family conflict.

H4: The impact of caregiving demands on perceived time allocation toward academic research varies across faculty ranks, with early-career faculty (e.g., Assistant Professors) experiencing a greater impact compared to more senior faculty (e.g., Professors).

The exploration of work-family guilt, particularly its effect on the relationship between caregiving responsibilities and academic productivity, reveals a pronounced impact on female faculty (Chen & Cheng, 2023). This research, integrating the Work-Home Resources (W-HR) Model with Role Strain theories, posits that work-family guilt arises as a psychological response to the conflict between personal and professional goals, exacerbating productivity challenges within traditional gender frameworks. This effect is particularly pronounced for women in STEM as they face unique challenges, including underrepresentation, bias, and barriers to career advancement, which contribute to the leaky pipeline phenomenon (Shockley et al., 2017; Aycan & Eskin, 2005). The relationship between guilt and productivity may be more pronounced in STEM fields due to the high demands and competitive nature of these disciplines, which often require significant time and energy for research and publication.

Leaky Pipeline

Despite achieving parity at the bachelor's degree level, where women earn 50.3% of science and engineering bachelor's degrees, representation diminishes slightly at the postgraduate levels, accounting for 46.2% of master's and 41% of doctoral degrees (NCSES, 2022). In the professional domain, women's participation in the STEM workforce was reported at 34% in 2019 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020; NCSES, 2019). Disparities become more pronounced within specific STEM fields. For instance, women made up 66% of bachelor's degrees in social

and behavioral sciences and 64% in agricultural and biological sciences in 2020. Yet, they were significantly underrepresented in engineering and computer sciences, earning 24% of engineering degrees and 26% in mathematics and computer sciences (NCSES, 2022).

Supporting the leaky pipeline phenomenon, the W-HR model emphasizes the importance of work-home spillover, meaning home responsibilities can affect work outcomes and vice versa. Recent research has shown that work-home balance is essential for individual and family well-being (Zamarro & Prados, 2021), and that access to resources such as flexible work arrangements and support for caregiving responsibilities can lead to positive spillover effects (Cardel et al., 2020; Minnotte, 2021). Research also suggests that the loss of income, prestige, and job security associated with the leaky pipeline may lead academic women to experience a sense of unfulfilled potential, leading to negative health outcomes such as burnout, depression, and chronic stress following the identity-related stress and anxiety due to the barriers they face in their academic careers (Cardel et al., 2020; Ysseldyk et al., 2019). This highlights the need for not only academic but also personal support for women in STEM fields and illustrates that the leaky pipeline can have negative impacts beyond the careers of academic women. Work-family conflict, defined as a form of tension where demands of work and family roles are incompatible, leads to conflict between the two (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This conflict is a commonly proposed source of the leaky pipeline in academia, where women are disproportionately affected. Studies have shown that women in academia face unique challenges, including underrepresentation, bias, and barriers to career advancement, which are exacerbated by work-family conflict (Cardel et al., 2020; Gabriel et al., 2023). This phenomenon contributes to slower career progression and lower representation in senior academic positions for women, particularly in STEM fields.

Caregiving Policies

Caregiving policies first became federal legislation in 1993 with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which provides eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year for certain caregiving and medical reasons, including the birth or adoption of a child, and remains in use today (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2022). Many states have since implemented additional caregiving policies to support their employees during these transitional periods, including paid or unpaid leave, employee assistance programs (EAPs), and flexible work arrangements, but the lack of paid parental leave at the national level has left organizations, including universities, to develop their own caregiving policies. Burch (2022) found that, among the 88 universities examined in a comparator sample of regional comprehensive institutions, 59% have parental leave policies that incorporate a paid element.

This fragmented approach to caregiving policies underscores the tenets of feminist economics, which identify that the traditional economic framework does not fully recognize or value care work. Although care work may not directly contribute to the GDP, it contributes to the economic and career gender disparities at hand. Feminist economics critiques traditional economic models and theories from a feminist perspective, aiming to promote gender equity in economic outcomes. It highlights the unequal economic challenges faced by men and women and emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the effects that gender roles and expectations have on economic outcomes, calling for policies that address these specific challenges (Antecol et al., 2018). Gender-aware policies that consider the gendered nature of caregiving responsibilities, such as providing affordable childcare and flexible work arrangements, may be more effective in promoting gender equity (Antecol et al., 2018). Women faculty members in STEM face more challenges related to work-life balance than their male counterparts, and

gender-aware policies can address the specific barriers to gender equality faced by women (Cardel et al., 2020; Gabriel et al., 2023; Minnotte, 2021; Zamarro & Prados, 2021).

These workplace caregiving policies aim to support employees who have caregiving responsibilities for family members, which may include children, elderly parents, or disabled relatives. These policies typically provide support such as paid or unpaid leave, flexible scheduling, telecommuting, and job sharing. It is widely believed that such policies have positive impacts on both employees and organizations; however, research has shown that parental leave policies may not be working as well as intended for women (Antecol et al., 2018; Burch, 2022; Morgan, 2021). Despite the availability of these policies, many women still face challenges in taking parental leave and returning to work, such as lack of job security, discrimination, and financial barriers (Morgan, 2021). Additionally, some studies suggest that mothers may experience negative career consequences after taking parental leave, including reduced earnings and career advancement opportunities, even when compared to fathers (Minnotte, 2021).

Caregiving Policies in the Academic Context

Academia is characterized by the need for continuous research, publishing, teaching, and service, which can make it difficult for faculty to balance caregiving responsibilities and an academic career. Research has shown that women are still disproportionately responsible for caregiving and may face challenges in maintaining this balance (Grandey et al., 2020; Minnotte, 2021). Additionally, women are often expected to prioritize their caregiving responsibilities over their academic careers, which can lead to lower pay, fewer opportunities for advancement, and reduced job security, making it difficult for women to achieve their full potential in academic settings (Antecol et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2021; Gabriel et al., 2023; American Association of University Women, 2021).

Gabriel et al. (2023) call for action to address these challenges by proposing the adoption of flexible work arrangements, such as reduced teaching loads, to support women during these critical times. However, Burch et al. (2023) argues that parental leave policies, while well-intentioned, may not be effective in promoting gender equality in academia if they are not gender aware. Under gender-neutral policies, the unequal distribution of caregiving responsibilities between men and women means that women are still likely to face more challenges. For example, research has found that tenure clock stopping policies, while gender-neutral, disproportionately benefit male faculty members as they are more likely to have a spouse who can take on caregiving responsibilities, allowing them to focus on their academic careers and publish more research (Antecol et al., 2018). Cardel et al. (2020) provide a comprehensive roadmap for equity in academia, recommending improvements to caregiver policies such as the implementation of tenure clock stopping policies, paid parental leave for all caregivers, and return-to-work programs. Cardel and colleagues (2020) suggest policies should be designed to be gender-aware, recognizing that women are more likely to take on caregiving responsibilities and providing support to both parents to ensure that caregiving responsibilities are shared equally.

Work-Family Guilt

The landscape of academia, traditionally viewed through the lens of meritocracy, is scrutinized for its embedded gendered norms and practices, particularly in the context of caregiving responsibilities. Aarntzen and colleagues (2021) offer a comprehensive analysis of how individual gender role beliefs, alongside organizational and national norms, influence work-family guilt among parents in Europe. Work-family guilt, defined as the emotional distress or discomfort that arises when one perceives that they are failing to meet the demands of their work or family roles (Aarntzen et al., 2019), is a significant factor in this context. Aarntzen et al.'s

(2019) study suggests fathers who adhere to traditional gender role beliefs experience less guilt, suggesting that societal expectations about gender roles significantly affect parental guilt. Aarntzen et al.'s (2019) finding is particularly relevant to academia, where the expectation to prioritize work can exacerbate feelings of guilt among mothers striving to fulfill both caregiving and professional roles. Importantly, the study highlights the role of organizational norms in shaping parents' experiences of guilt. While broader societal norms undoubtedly influence gender roles, this study suggests that immediate contexts, such as workplace environments and personal beliefs, may be more directly impactful on individuals' experiences of guilt and, consequently, work-family conflict.

Building from this, Aarntzen and colleagues (2022) later highlight the pronounced impact of implicit gender stereotypes in the differential guilt experienced by mothers and fathers when prioritizing work over family, attributing this disparity to the internalization of societal norms that traditionally associate women with caregiving roles and men with breadwinning roles. They found that fathers whose implicit gender stereotypes align with traditional views report less guilt in work-family conflict situations. Conversely, for mothers, especially those with strong implicit gender stereotypes, the guilt is more pronounced, underscoring the societal expectation burden placed on women to juggle work and family responsibilities seamlessly.

Chen and Cheng (2023) offer insights into the gendered effects of caregiving in academia in highlighting the bidirectional and reciprocal nature of work-family guilt with work-family conflict and its subsequent impact on professional performance. In examining its role as a mediator in the work-family interface, the research emphasizes that work-family guilt encompasses both work-to-family and family-to-work guilt and highlights the complexity of the work-family interface. These findings indicate that the amount of time spent on work or family

tasks indirectly influences work-family guilt through increased work-family conflict. Additionally, a positive relationship between work-to-family guilt and work performance was observed, suggesting that feelings of guilt may motivate employees to improve their work performance to compensate for perceived neglect of family responsibilities under certain conditions, which offers an interesting perspective for future research in the work-family domain.

Present Study

For the present study, I sought to examine the gendered effects of caregiving policies and experiences on perceived allocation towards research for academics at regional comprehensive universities. For this study, I used data collected via a cross-sectional survey sent to faculty at all ranks at public regional comprehensive universities. In addition, interviews were conducted with 32 faculty who volunteered following survey completion. Through survey data and semi-structured interviews, the study explores the relationship between caregiving demands and perceived time allocation toward research, the moderating role of institutional support, and variations across faculty ranks. The findings aim to inform policy recommendations to enhance gender equity in academia.

Method

Participants

The initial sample included 200 participants. Multistage sampling techniques were used to help improve external validity by selecting participants from different regions and comprehensive universities. Prior to data analysis, eight participants were excluded due to a lack of informed consent verification, and 39 were excluded for indicating no children or caregiving responsibilities. This resulted in a final sample of 153 participants. Due to the limited sample

size, participants were not limited to STEM fields. The ages of the participants ranged from 26 to 61 years with a mean of 41.92 (*SD* = 6.94). Most participants identified as female (71.9%), with a smaller percentage identifying as male (27.5%) and non-binary (0.7%). Most self-identified heterosexual (95.4%), with the remaining identifying as gay/lesbian (1.3%), asexual (2.0%), bisexual (0.7%), and queer (0.7%). Participants were predominantly White European (87.8%), with smaller representations from other races including Black/African American (3.4%), Asian/Asian American (5.4%), American Indian/Alaska Native (0.7%), and other (2.7%). The majority were not Hispanic or Latino (91.3%).

Academic ranks varied, including full professors (27.6%), associate professors (30.3%), assistant professors (23.0%), non-tenure instructors (15.8%), and adjunct or part-time faculty (3.3%). Most participants were married (91.4%), followed by those living with a partner (3.3%), single (2.6%), and divorced (2.6%). Most participants reported earning $100,000 or more in their household (79.1%). Participants reported having between 0 and 4 children, with one child being both the median and mode (*n* = 71). The presence of elder care responsibilities was minimal, with the majority indicating no elder care responsibilities (86.9%). Caregiving responsibilities varied, with participants reporting up to 168 hours spent on childcare per week with a mean of 46.09 (*SD* = 32.17). Additionally, most of the sample (76.3%) reported utilizing institutional policies designed to assist with caregiving.

Measures

Work-family conflict was measured using the time-based work-to-family conflict subscale developed by Netemeyer et al. (1996), which captures conflicts arising from work demands interfering with family time. Scores were calculated such that higher scores indicate more work-family time-based conflict. Cronbach's α = .86. See Appendix A for full scale.

Work-family guilt was measured using the Work-Family Guilt Scale, developed by McElwain (2008) and is comprised of two subscales: Work Interference with Family Guilt (WIFG) and Family Interference with Work Guilt (FIWG). The WIFG subscale measures guilt stemming from work responsibilities interfering with family life, including feelings of inadequacy in family care and regret over not spending enough time with family due to work. The FIWG subscale measures guilt arising from family responsibilities interfering with work life, capturing feelings of inadequacy in fulfilling work obligations and regret over not dedicating enough time to work due to family demands. Scores were calculated such that higher scores indicate more work-to-family guilt and family-to-work guilt, respectively Scores were calculated such that higher scores indicate more work-to-family guilt. Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$. See Appendix B for full scale.

Caregiving demands was assessed using self-reported time spent caregiving (i.e., hours per week), and self-reported caregiving activities (i.e., providing emotional care, transportation, etc.). An index variable was created to represent caregiving demands by first summing the number of categories of care and then multiplying this by self-reported caregiving hours. Higher values indicate a greater degree of caregiving demands. See Appendix C for related survey items.

Perceived time allocation toward research was measured using the item, "I do not have enough time to perform quality research." This item was assessed via a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with higher scores reflecting greater perceived limitations in time available for research. See Appendix D for related survey items.

Institutional support was measured by assessing both the availability and the use of parental leave and tenure extension policies. Availability was measured by asking if these policies were offered at the institution (yes or no). Use of these policies was measured by asking

participants if they had utilized them (yes or no). The duration of parental leave was measured by the self-reported number of weeks taken, and the duration of tenure extension was measured categorically as none, 6 months, or 12 months. An index variable was created for parental leave by multiplying use of parental leave and length of parental leave. In addition, an index variable was created for tenure extension by multiplying use of tenure extension and length of tenure extension. See Appendix E for related survey items.

Procedure

Survey

The survey began by assessing demographic items (e.g., age, gender, faculty rank, marital status, number and age of children, year in which caregiving policies at current university were used, department) that may influence the study's outcomes. The survey then assessed caregiving commitments to assess their influence on work-life conflict and guild, as well a perceived time allocation toward research, directly addressing the research questions. Additional measures investigated faculty perceptions of their role centrality and self-efficacy in managing work and family life, as well as evaluating overall well-being, work-family conflict, and burnout, to explore the personal consequences of fulfilling dual roles. Finally, items on time management and psychological detachment measured the operational challenges and stress responses, giving further insight into the strategies faculty employ to cope with the demands of their dual responsibilities. All participants were able to enter to win one of eight $25 gift cards.

Interviews

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing for in-depth exploration of individual experiences associated with caregiving and academic roles and productivity at regional comprehensive universities. Participants were contacted from the initial

survey distributed to academic professionals, which included a question regarding interest in participating in further interviews, leading to a total of 32 participants being interviewed. Each interview lasted approximately sixty minutes and was conducted via Zoom video conferencing (see Appendix F for the full Interview Script). This method allowed the interviews to be recorded and transcribed verbatim using Zoom's transcription feature. The accuracy of the transcriptions was verified to ensure they authentically represented the participants' statements.

The analysis of the transcribed interview data, which aimed to explore participants' experiences and perceptions of institutional support, caregiving responsibilities, and work-family balance, commenced with an open coding process. Codes were generated inductively, reflecting key themes, concepts, and ideas directly expressed by the participants. Following the initial coding, the data were organized into potential themes by grouping similar codes. This involved an iterative process of comparing and contrasting the codes, identifying patterns, and grouping related codes into preliminary themes. For instance, codes pertaining to "support from colleagues" and "effects of institutional policies" were aggregated under the broader theme of "Support Mechanisms." The preliminary themes were subsequently reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the collected data. Validation of these themes was conducted by revisiting the original transcripts, ensuring that the themes adequately captured the participants' experiences. Additional validation was sought through feedback from peers who reviewed the themes and provided critical insights. Categories, explanations, and examples can be found in Appendix G.

Results

The results section presents the findings from the analyses conducted to test the study's hypotheses. The hypotheses examined were: (1) there is a positive relationship between the

extent of caregiving demands (hours spent on child caregiving per week, caregiving tasks) and perceived academic research resource allocation; (2) faculty members with higher levels of institutional support (availability and length of parental leave and tenure extension) would experience a lower negative impact of caregiving demands on their academic research, with a larger effect for male faculty; (3) there is a positive relationship between perceived resource allocation to academic research and work-family guilt, as well as time-based work-family conflict; and (4) which hypothesized that the impact of caregiving demands on academic outcomes varies across faculty ranks, with early-career faculty (e.g., Assistant Professors) experiencing a greater negative impact compared to more senior faculty (e.g., Professors).

Descriptive Statistics

The correlation matrix (see Table 1) provides a comprehensive examination of the relationships between various continuous and categorical variables relevant to the study on the gendered effects of caregiving in academia. The continuous variables include age, leave time, time of tenure extension, caregiving demands, work-to-family time-based conflict (WFCTime), work-to-family guilt (WIFG), and perceived time allocation toward research. The categorical variables include gender, racial background, marital status, number of children under 18, faculty rank, use of parental leave, use of tenure extension, and length of tenure extension.

The data indicate that female faculty spend an average of 49 hours per week engaged in caregiving compared to their male counterparts ($M = 39.2$), though a *t*-test indicated no significant differences. Of the 153 participants, 42 self-identified as male, 110 as female, and 1 as non-binary. Men and women were of similar ages with men having a mean age of 41 ($SD = 5.25$) and women of 42 ($SD = 7.50$). Male faculty reported significantly higher spousal caregiving hours than women, $t(121) = 2.29$, $p = .01$, with a mean difference of 13.12 hours,

95% CI [1.76, 24.48]; indicating male faculty reported that their spouse allocated more hours toward caregiving than they did. In addition, Work-Family Guilt was significantly higher in female faculty than in male faculty, $t(100) = -2.72$, $p = .004$, with a mean difference of -0.557, 95% CI [-0.96, -0.15], as was Family-Work Guilt, $t(100) = -2.87$, $p = .003$ with a mean difference of -0.445, 95% CI [-0.75, -0.14].

Notable effect sizes were observed in the significant findings, with medium effect sizes for spousal child caregiving hours (Cohen's $d = 0.45$), WIFG (Cohen's d = 0.58), and FIWG (Cohen's d = 0.62). Women also reported significantly more elder caregiving hours than males, $t(122) = -1.86$, $p = .03$, with a mean difference of -0.89 (95% CI [-1.83, 0.058]). Additionally, women were offered significantly more institutional support than men, specifically in terms of leave time, $t(120) = -3.434$, $p < .001$, with a mean difference of -3.603 (95% CI [-5.680, -1.525]).

Hypothesis Testing

To examine Hypothesis 1, caregiving demands was regressed onto perceived time allocation toward research. The regression model for research included marital status as a control variable, due to significant zero order correlation with the outcome variable of interest. Results indicate that caregiving demands did not have a significant relationship with perceived time allocation toward research ($\beta = 0.53$, $p = .58$).

To examine Hypothesis 2, interaction variables were created first by multiplying caregiving demands with the created index variables for parental leave and tenure extension, respectively, then standardizing each interaction term to address issues of multicollinearity and to ease interpretation. Results indicate that parental leave ($\beta = -0.50$, $p = .68$) and tenure extension ($\beta = -0.08$, $p = .40$) do not significantly moderate the association between caregiving demands and perceived time allocation toward research.

In order to assess the impact of gender, the file was split by gender and the regression equations to assess Hypothesis 2 were re-run. Results were not significant for women faculty. When considering male faculty, results indicate there was a significant moderation of tenure extension use and duration on perceived time allocation toward research for male faculty (β = -0.40, p = .04). These results indicate that male faculty who did not use (or did not have available) a tenure extension associated with the birth or adoption of a child, indicated caregiving demands interfered with having enough time for their research.

To examine Hypothesis 3, work-to-family time-based conflict was regressed onto perceived time allocation toward research, controlling for marital status, caregiving hours, and caregiving tasks. Results indicate that work-to-family time-based conflict is significantly associated with research (β = 0.23, p = .01). In addition, work-to-family guilt was regressed onto perceived time allocation toward research, controlling for marital status, caregiving hours, and caregiving tasks. Results indicate that work-to-family guilt is significantly associated with research (β = 0.37, p < .001). Taken together, these results suggest that work-to-family time-based conflict and work-to-family guilt is associated with feelings of not having enough time for research for faculty.

To examine Hypothesis 4, the data was split by faculty rank with caregiving demands regressed onto perceived time allocation toward research. Results indicate no significant association between caregiving demands and perceived time allocation for research for full professors (β = 0.12, p = .30), associate professors β = 0.13, p = .13), assistant professors (β = 0.05, p = .98), nor for non-tenure instructors (β = 0.01, p = .74). Lastly, for adjunct or part-time faculty, the model could not be computed due to insufficient valid cases.

Supplementary Analyses

To further examine the gendered impacts associated with Hypothesis 3, the data was split by gender and the models regressing work-to-family time-based conflict and work-to-family guilt on perceived time allocation toward research. Results indicate that work-to-family time-based conflict was not significantly associated with perceived time allocation toward research for either male or female faculty. Interestingly, work-to-family guilt was associated with perceived time allocation toward research for female faculty only ($\beta = 0.39$, $p = .001$). This suggests that for female faculty, work-to-family guilt is associated with feelings of not having enough time for research.

Interview Results

The qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews provided additional insights that were not captured in the survey data. For example, the interviews revealed that while many faculty members are aware of institutional support policies, there is a significant gap in the perceived effectiveness and accessibility of these policies. Participants expressed that although policies like parental leave and tenure extension exist, the implementation and support from administration were often inconsistent, leading to stress and confusion. Moreover, the interviews highlighted the importance of informal support systems, such as collegial support and understanding from department chairs, which were crucial in helping faculty manage their dual roles. Participants also shared that emotional and psychological support from peers and family members played a significant role in their ability to balance caregiving and professional responsibilities, which was not accounted for in the survey. The interview data provide a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of faculty, revealing that the effectiveness of caregiving policies is not solely dependent on their existence but also on their practical implementation and the supportiveness of the academic and home environments.

Support Mechanisms

The qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews revealed diverse experiences regarding support mechanisms available to academic faculty navigating caregiving demands. Institutional Policies and Practices were a major theme, with participants reporting a wide range of experiences based on the clarity and comprehensiveness of the support provided by their institutions. Faculty members who benefited from clearly articulated and generous parental leave policies, such as specified weeks for leave and tenure clock extensions, expressed gratitude and satisfaction with their experience. However, other participants encountered significant challenges due to ambiguous policies and poor administrative practices, which included confusion over leave benefits and inconsistent communication from human resources departments.

Collegial Support emerged as another recurring factor influencing participants' ability to manage their professional responsibilities during caregiving periods. Support from colleagues ranged from practical help, such as covering classes or sharing administrative tasks, to emotional support, such as gifts or kind sentiments, which helped ease the transition back to work. Particularly noteworthy was the role of department chairs, who were pivotal and memorable when they actively facilitated workload adjustments and provided moral support. Effective leadership within departments seemed to have significantly enhanced faculty members' experiences by making them feel valued and supported during these times.

Family and Community Support also played a vital role in helping faculty members balance their dual responsibilities. The support from partners and family members, who often took on additional household or childcare duties, seemed to make a significant impact in the leave and return-to-work process. Participants frequently highlighted how having a supportive

partner enabled them to maintain their professional productivity. Participants who had family close by leaned on these individuals for support, and those who did not noted this as a major difficulty. Additionally, support from community or support groups and friends provided emotional comfort and practical assistance, which was especially valuable during the postpartum period and the subsequent return to work.

Challenges Faced

Participants articulated a range of challenges that compounded the difficulties of balancing academic responsibilities with caregiving. Health and Logistics were frequently cited as significant barriers. Some faculty members experienced health issues during pregnancy that impacted their ability to perform their work duties effectively. These issues ranged from common symptoms such as nausea to more severe conditions, such as pre-eclampsia, requiring medical interventions like bed rest or hospitalization. Logistical challenges also surfaced, with participants noting difficulties in scheduling medical appointments around teaching commitments and the physical strain of fulfilling work duties while pregnant. Adjustments in the workplace, such as relocating classrooms closer to restrooms, were sometimes necessary, though not always possible, indicating a gap in institutional accommodation for pregnant faculty members.

Career Concerns emerged as another critical challenge, particularly regarding the impact of caregiving demands on career progression. Some participants expressed anxiety about how taking parental leave might affect their tenure review and job security. There was a prevalent concern among faculty members about the potential negative perceptions of their professionalism due to their need for leave, which they feared might influence their career

advancement or interpersonal relationships unfavorably. This was predominately self-inflicted pressure but impacted decisions, nonetheless.

Many participants reflected on the challenge of Work-Life Balance in the struggle to maintain academic productivity while managing caregiving responsibilities. Faculty members described the difficulties of returning to work post-leave and the ongoing struggle to balance parental duties with professional obligations. The emotional and psychological strain of trying to meet high standards in both domains often led to these academics feeling guilty, overwhelmed, and inadequate in their roles.

As faculty prepared for the return to work, many women coordinated with colleagues, adjusted their teaching loads, coordinated childcare, and set up supportive measures to facilitate a smooth transition. This preparation was crucial in managing the dual demands of professional responsibilities and new parenting roles. Conversely, male faculty often focused on the logistical aspects of returning to work, such as managing teaching responsibilities and relying on collegial support to cover classes during the leave period.

Policy and Administrative Experiences

The interviews highlighted significant themes related to Policy Clarity and Accessibility. Participants often discussed the challenges associated with understanding and accessing information about parental leave policies and other support mechanisms available at their institutions. This lack of clarity frequently led to uncertainty and stress, as faculty members struggled to navigate their rights and the options available to them. Effective communication from human resources and administrative departments was identified as crucial yet often lacking. Participants detailed instances where inconsistent information or poor communication

compounded their difficulties, making it challenging to make informed decisions regarding their leave and support options.

Additionally, Administrative Support and Hurdles shaped much of the participants' experiences. When administrative support was proactive and efficient, it significantly eased the process of managing leave and allowed faculty members to focus more on their health and familial responsibilities rather than bureaucratic stress. However, many participants reported facing bureaucratic inefficiencies that included delays in processing leave requests or mismanagement of paperwork.

Participants also discussed their Experiences with Specific Policies, noting that their experiences often varied based on the specific parental leave and support policies in place at their institutions. These policies directly influenced their ability to manage work-life balance, health, and career progression effectively. Some participants provided positive feedback on specific policies that allowed them a semester off or flexible work arrangements, which significantly aided their transition back to work. Conversely, others highlighted the need for policies that are more adaptive to the varying needs of parents, suggesting that one-size-fits-all approaches were often inadequate.

Emotional and Psychological Impact

The emotional and psychological impacts of balancing academic responsibilities with caregiving were profound. Stress and Adjustment Issues were commonly reported, with many participants describing high levels of stress due to the need to balance their roles effectively. The stress was often compounded by concerns over career progression, job security, and managing physical health during pregnancy. The transition to parenthood, while maintaining an academic

career, posed significant adjustment challenges, with many faculty members struggling to find a new equilibrium between their personal and professional lives.

Moreover, there was a clear call for more robust emotional and psychological support systems, including counseling services, peer support groups, and more empathetic management practices. Such support structures were deemed helpful for aiding faculty members in their navigation of the challenges of parenthood and academia effectively. Participants who had access to supportive networks within the university often described these as helpful in alleviating feelings of isolation and providing a shared space for discussing challenges and strategies.

Various Emotional and Psychological Strategies emerged as well, with many faculty members demonstrating considerable resilience in the face of these challenges. Participants employed various coping strategies, such as structured planning, mindfulness techniques, and leaning on a network of supportive colleagues and family members. These strategies were crucial in managing stress and maintaining well-being.

Gendered Differences in Responses

Although the themes previously discussed were prevalent regardless of participant gender, there were some discrepancies in specific content. For example, female faculty members often reported a more intense struggle in balancing the demands of their professional and caregiving roles, noting a lack of adequate and effective institutional support that considers the specific challenges faced by mothers, particularly concerning breastfeeding and the availability of appropriate spaces for nursing. Male participants frequently commented on the need for more inclusive support that accounts for the active roles many modern fathers want to play in caregiving and often encountered institutional policies that did not adequately support or even acknowledge paternity leave as equally crucial. As one may expect, women detailed more

substantial challenges related to physical recovery from childbirth and the psychological impacts of separating from their infants. These challenges were compounded by the demands of their academic roles, where they felt pressured to quickly return to full productivity. Many challenges highlighted by male participants involved limited time available for paternity leave. Furthermore, women frequently discussed the emotional toll of returning to work, particularly the guilt and stress associated with leaving their young children in care others. These feelings were often intensified by the perception that their professional environment inadequately acknowledged their new caregiving status. Men's responses, while also noting emotional challenges, tended to focus on the logistical aspects of balancing work and family. However, those who were more involved in caregiving also shared concerns about the lack of recognition of their emotional and psychological needs as fathers.

Discussion

Analyses were expected to reveal significant associations between caregiving demands and perceived time allocation toward research, with the idea that heavier caregiving duties may impact faculty research and overall well-being. The analyses also investigated how institutional support policies may mitigate these effects, highlighting any disparities in their effectiveness for male and female faculty members. Although the quantitative analyses reveal largely insignificant results, the interviews maintained these ideas and suggest that the survey did not adequately encapsulate the experiences of academic caregivers. Interviews with faculty members maintained significant themes of emotional strain, work-life conflict, and the critical role of institutional and peer support, which corroborate theories from feminist economics and W-HR model.

Theoretical Implications

Contrary to expectations based on the W-HR model, which suggests that caregiving depletes personal resources necessary for professional productivity, the survey results revealed that these variables alone may not significantly predict perceptions of research allocation. This could indicate that the actual resource depletion might either be buffered by unmeasured factors or that the depletion does not manifest in ways detectable by traditional metrics used in academic settings. This aligns with principles from feminist economics, which argue that the economic systems and societal norms inherently fail to recognize and appropriately value the labor involved in caregiving, typically seen in the persistent systemic undervaluation faced by women.

The nonsignificant findings may also support a reinterpretation of Role Strain Theory in academic contexts. Traditionally, Role Strain Theory suggests that managing multiple roles simultaneously can lead to conflicts that adversely affect one's performance (Goode, 1960). In this context, the absence of statistically significant findings could imply that either the supports currently in place are effectively mitigating role strain more than the quantitative data indicates, or, conversely, that these supports are failing but the study's metrics could not adequately capture the strain experienced by faculty. This interpretation is particularly relevant in discussions about the support available to faculty with caregiving responsibilities. Although the institutional policies may be perceived as adequate, the qualitative data—illustrated by faculty descriptions of guilt and stress from juggling academic and caregiving duties—suggest that these policies may not be alleviating the psychological burdens as intended. Such feelings align closely with Role Strain Theory, which posits that the stress from role conflict may not overtly affect job performance but can subtly erode individuals' well-being and satisfaction. This discrepancy underscores a potential gap between the intention of institutional support mechanisms and their

practical effectiveness, particularly in how they support female faculty, who often bear a disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities.

Additionally, in revisiting the "leaky pipeline" phenomenon discussed earlier, these non-significant findings suggest a more complex interplay at work than previously understood. The literature underscores systemic barriers that contribute to the underrepresentation and attrition of women in STEM fields, suggesting that these barriers are not merely a matter of policy inadequacy but also a reflection of deeper cultural and structural inequities. The minimal impact of supposed support mechanisms, as revealed by this study, underscores a critical need for reevaluating how support is structured and delivered within academic institutions.

Limitations

There were limitations to the study that should be acknowledged. First, the survey did not seem to adequately capture the experiences of faculty caregivers. The interviews also emphasized the importance of informal support systems within academic settings, which were not adequately captured by the survey, such as valued the support from colleagues, which often mitigated the shortcomings of formal institutional support. Additionally, there exists a potential for bias in that the survey required self-selection into the study, which limits the generalizability of findings. For example, it may be that individuals who choose to participate in the study are those who are more affected by or have unique experiences with caregiving policies, whether that be uniquely positive or negative. Similarly, individuals who choose to participate may be those who are more motivated or interested in the topic, which may introduce bias in terms of work- and well-being outcomes. This may be especially prevalent due to the self-pressures expressed in the interview portion in that many academics expressed a need to prove their professional success in conjunction with motherhood. There were also limitations regarding

sample size, especially considering the use of multistage sampling techniques and the unique sample requirements, which further limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations and settings. Finally, the study's non-experimental design does not allow causality to be established between caregiving policies and the gendered effects on faculty, meaning other variables may influence promotion and tenure rates, work- and well-being outcomes, and caregiving responsibilities, which may confound the observed relationships. Overall, these limitations can be addressed in future research through using more comprehensive measures of these variables, reaching a more diverse range of participants in both the survey and the interview stage, and obtaining a large enough sample size for appropriate power.

Practical Implications

The findings from this study nonetheless emphasize the need for academic institutions to reevaluate and enhance their support systems for caregiving faculty. While policies may exist on paper, the qualitative data revealed that these are often perceived as insufficient or ineffective. Institutions should consider developing more comprehensive caregiving and leave policies that go beyond basic legal requirements to address the specific needs of caregiving faculty, such as providing flexible scheduling or other support for emergency caregiving needs. For example, institutions can offer options to spread leave entitlements across the academic year, allowing faculty to reduce their hours without taking a continuous block of leave. This flexibility can help faculty manage ongoing caregiving responsibilities more effectively while maintaining their professional commitments. Furthermore, ensuring that policies are not only communicated clearly but also implemented effectively is necessary, which may involve training for department heads and administrators to handle requests sensitively and efficiently.

The emotional and psychological toll highlighted in the qualitative responses also calls for creating more supportive work environments that acknowledge and address these challenges. Institutions may benefit from providing and promoting mental health resources specifically tailored to the needs of faculty balancing caregiving responsibilities, such as encouraging the formation of peer support groups or networks can help reduce the sense of isolation many caregiving faculty experience. Such communities can offer emotional support and practical advice, creating a more inclusive academic environment.

To further support faculty, institutions can explore on-site caregiving solutions, which can significantly reduce the stress and logistical challenges associated with off-site caregiving, such as developing on-site facilities for childcare can provide faculty members with convenient access to high-quality care solutions, reducing commute times and anxiety over the well-being of their loved ones. Although expensive, on-site care facilities can dramatically increase the work-life balance satisfaction among faculty, fostering a more supportive and inclusive workplace culture. This can also serve as a strong recruitment and retention tool for talented faculty who are caregiving. In addition to formal leave or time off, institutions may allow faculty to work from home or remotely when caregiving duties demand their presence can help maintain productivity. Permitting faculty to adjust their teaching or office hours to better accommodate caregiving schedules may also be beneficial in communicating respect for the dual roles many faculty members play, helping them manage their responsibilities without sacrificing professional advancement.

Conclusion

Despite the largely nonsignificant quantitative results, the qualitative data offers a compelling narrative that reaffirms the critical need for robust support systems and policies

tailored to the needs of caregiving faculty. This research underscores the inadequacies in current institutional support mechanisms which, although designed to facilitate work-life balance, fall short in mitigating the profound emotional and professional challenges faced by faculty caregivers. Participants' reflections reveal a significant emotional toll associated with balancing caregiving duties and academic responsibilities, particularly among female faculty members who often experience compounded pressures. These narratives not only highlight the practical challenges in navigating institutional policies but also the emotional strains of leaving young children for work, which current support structures inadequately address. The findings advocate for a broader interpretation of institutional support beyond formal policies, encompassing a culture of empathy, flexibility, and genuine support within academic communities. In light of these findings, institutions should reconsider the structure and delivery of support, ensuring it addresses both the logistical and emotional needs of faculty. In closing, policies should be evaluated not just on their presence but on their practical implementation and impact, fostering an environment that truly supports the diverse needs of academic faculty.

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Table 1

Correlation Matrix

	Variable	*n*	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Age	126	41.92	6.94	-													
2	Gender	152			0.07	-												
3	Race	147			-0.04	-0.17*	-											
4	Marital	150			0.09	-0.02	-0.14	-										
5	Children	152			-0.06	0.03	-0.04	0.05	-									
6	Rank	151			0.49**	-0.07	-0.08	0.04	0.12	-								
7	Leave Use	151			0.28**	-0.07	0.02	0.04	-0.03	-0.03	-							
8	Leave Time	122	8.25	5.42	-0.23*	0.30**	-0.18	0.03	0.19*	-0.18*	-0.19*	-						
9	Ten. Use	141			0.08	-0.03	-0.12	-0.04	-0.15	-0.03	0.09	-0.12	-					
10	Ten. Time	109	2.44	0.615	-0.01	0.01	-0.05	-0.04	0.01	-0.17	-0.12	-0.24*	0.16	-				
11	Caregiving demands	149	223.13	205.82	-0.18*	0.10	-0.11	-0.24**	0.01	-0.06	-0.26**	0.05	-0.01	0.12	-			
12	WFCTime	117	2.74	0.953	0.05	0.08	0.16	-0.03	0.03	0.17	0.09	-0.20*	-0.23*	0.05	-0.02	-		
13	WIFG	102	3.05	0.981	-0.08	0.26**	0.07	0.04	0.07	0.01	0.19	-0.14	-0.06	0.12	-0.04	0.63**	-	
14	Research	116	4.04	0.869	-0.04	0.08	-0.03	-0.23*	-0.01	0.06	-0.08	-0.08	0.06	0.20	0.09	0.24*	0.35**	-

Note. For Gender, male was coded as 0, with female coded as 1. Asterisks denote statistical significance with *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, and ***$p < .001$.

Table 2

Correlation Matrix - Males

	Variable	*n*	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Age	126	41.14	5.25	-												
2	Race	152			-0.02	-											
3	Marital	147			0.27	-0.31*	-										
4	Children	150			-0.04	0.12	0.03	-									
5	Rank	152			0.71***	-0.01	0.28*	-0.05	-								
6	Leave Use	151			0.20	-0.13	0.14	-0.15	0.20	-							
7	Leave Time	151	5.65	4.38	-0.37*	-0.28	-0.01	-0.07	-0.12	-0.18	-						
8	Ten. Use	122			-0.07	-0.55**	-0.04	-0.35*	-0.04	0.09	0.19	-					
9	Ten. Time	141	2.44	0.67	-0.24	-0.17	-0.23	0.11	-0.29	0.05	-0.22	0.12	-				
10	Caregiving demands	109	191.12	188.15	-0.20	-0.12	0.01	0.226	-0.12	-0.27	-0.16	0.06	0.20	-			
11	WFCTime	149	2.62	0.88	-0.26	0.33*	-0.36*	0.02	0.20	0.20	-0.07	-0.22	0.27	0.01	-		
12	WIFG	117	2.66	0.92	-0.30	0.29	-0.27	-0.05	0.03	0.33	-0.31	-0.19	0.20	0.09	0.66**	-	
13	Research	102	3.94	1.03	-0.07	-0.19	-0.14	0.01	0.07	0.03	-0.22	0.34*	0.51**	0.10	0.31*	0.34*	-

Note. Asterisks denote statistical significance with *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, and ***$p < .001$.

Table 3

Correlation Matrix – Females

	Variable	*n*	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Age	126	42.22	7.49	-												
2	Race	152			-0.04	-											
3	Marital	147			0.06	-0.12	-										
4	Children	150			-0.07	-0.11	0.06	-									
5	Rank	152			0.45**	-0.13	0.00	0.16*	-								
6	Leave Use	151			0.314**	0.09	0.03	0.01	-0.11	-							
7	Leave Time	151	9.25	5.47	-0.24*	-0.09	0.05	0.25**	-0.20	-0.19*	-						
8	Ten. Use	122			0.11	0.06	-0.04	-0.10	-0.03	0.09	-0.26*	-					
9	Ten. Time	141	2.44	0.60	0.06	0.04	0.00	-0.04	-0.11	-0.19*	0.08	0.18	-				
10	Caregiving demands	109	235.70	211.87	-0.18*	-0.09	-0.28**	-0.05	-0.03	-0.26**	0.09	-0.03	0.09	-			
11	WFCTime	149	2.78	0.98	0.09	0.10	0.03	0.04	0.16	0.05	-0.04	-0.24	-0.04	-0.04	-		
12	WIFG	117	3.22	0.96	-0.06	0.01	0.13	0.14	0.01	0.16	-0.19	0.07	-0.19	-0.13	0.35*	-	
13	Research	102	4.08	0.80	-0.04	0.10	-0.27**	-0.02	0.06	-0.13	0.00	-0.05	0.00	0.08	0.20*	0.35**	-

Note. Asterisks denote statistical significance with *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, and ***$p < .001$.

Table 4

Demographics and Gender Differences

Variable	Gender	*n*	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t	df
Age	Male	35	41.14	5.25	-1.08	-0.78	124
	Female	91	42.22	7.49			
Rank	Male	42	2.24	1.03	-0.17	-0.85	84.57
	Female	109	2.40	1.18			
WIFG	Male	31	2.66	0.92	-0.56**	-2.77	59.71
	Female	71	3.22	0.96			
FIWG	Male	31	2.05	0.75	-0.45**	-2.80	54.13
	Female	71	2.49	0.71			
Elder Hours	Male	36	0.44	1.50	-0.89	-1.34	123
	Female	89	1.33	3.84			
Child Hours	Male	36	39.28	29.06	-9.73	-1.62	74.00
	Female	88	49.01	33.25			
Caregiving Demands	Male	42	38.52	31.49	-6.52	-1.09	86.15
	Female	110	45.05	36.82			
Inst Support	Male	38	7.11	4.50	-2.92**	-3.15	84.07
	Female	100	10.02	5.69			

Note. Asterisks denote statistical significance with *p < .05 and **p < .01.

Table 5

Hypothesis 1 Regression Output

Measure	Research				
	β	SE	t	p	ΔR^2
Constant	5.31	0.57	9.39	<.001	
Marital Status	-0.44	0.19	-2.30	0.02	0.05
Caregiving Demands	0.05	0.09	0.56	0.58	0.00
R^2	0.05				

Note. Research = perceived time allocation toward research; for R^2, $p = 0.6$

Table 6

Hypothesis 2 Regression Output

Measure		Research				
		β	SE	t	p	ΔR^2
Constant		5.13	0.57	9.06	<.001	
	Marital Status	-0.38	0.19	-1.99	0.06	0.01
	Caregiving Demands	0.12	0.11	1.12	0.27	0.01
	Caregiving * Leave	-0.05	0.14	-0.41	0.68	0.01
	Caregiving * Tenure	-0.08	0.07	-0.85	0.40	0.01
R^2		0.07				

Note. Research = perceived time allocation toward research; for R^2, $p = 0.40$

Table 7

Hypothesis 2 Regression Output by Gender

Measure	Research							
	Males				Females			
	β	SE	t	p	β	SE	t	p
Control								
Constant	5.56	2.10	2.65	0.01	5.14	0.56	9.21	<.001
Marital Status	-0.52	0.73	-0.73	0.47	-0.39	0.19	-2.05	0.04
Caregiving	0.20	0.23	0.88	0.39	0.07	0.12	0.61	0.55
Caregiving * Leave	-0.21	0.23	-0.92	0.37	0.02	0.18	0.12	0.90
Caregiving * Tenure	-0.40	0.16	-2.12	0.04	0.05	0.08	0.62	0.54
R^2	0.18				0.09			

Note. Research = perceived time allocation toward research; for Males R^2, p = 0.04; for Females

Table 8

Hypothesis 3a Regression Output

Measure	Research				
	β	SE	t	p	ΔR^2
Constant	4.75	0.67	7.09	<.001	
Marital Status	-0.43	0.19	-2.25	0.03	0.05
Caregiving Hours	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.52	0.01
Caregiving Tasks	-0.16	0.26	-0.59	0.56	0.01
Work-to-Family Time-Based Conflict	0.23	0.08	2.54	0.01	0.04
R^2	0.11				

Note. Research = perceived time allocation toward research; for R^2, $p = 0.01$

Table 9

Hypothesis 3b Regression Output

Measure	Research				
	β	SE	t	p	ΔR^2
Constant	4.18	0.80	5.22	<.001	
Marital Status	-0.40	0.24	-1.68	0.10	0.03
Caregiving Hours	0.00	0.00	1.30	0.20	0.01
Caregiving Tasks	-0.22	0.27	-0.81	0.42	0.03
Work-to-Family Guilt	0.37	0.08	3.91	<.001	0.04
R^2	0.18				

Note. Research = perceived time allocation toward research; for R^2, $p < 0.001$

Table 10

Hypothesis 4 Regression Output

Measure	Research				
	β	SE	t	p	R^2
Full Professor					
Constant	6.12	1.01	6.04	<.001	0.12
Marital Status	-0.70	0.35	-1.99	0.06	
Caregiving Demands	-0.19	0.18	-1.07	0.30	
Associate Professor					
Constant	5.73	1.27	4.50	<.001	0.13
Marital Status	-0.61	0.43	-1.45	0.16	
Caregiving Demands	0.24	0.16	1.55	0.13	
Asst. Professor					
Constant	5.29	1.08	4.89	<.001	0.05
Marital Status	-0.43	0.38	-1.15	0.26	
Caregiving Demands	-0.00	0.18	-0.02	0.98	
Non-tenure Instructor					
Constant	4.34	1.96	2.21	0.05	0.01
Marital Status	-0.18	0.68	-0.26	0.80	
Caregiving Demands	0.11	0.33	0.34	0.74	
Adjunct or Part-time					
Constant	3.98	0.50	7.97	0.02	0.03
Caregiving Demands	-0.18	0.78	-0.23	0.84	

Note. Research = perceived time allocation toward research.

Table 11

Hypothesis 3 by Gender – Work-to-Family Conflict

Measure	Research				
	β	SE	t	p	R^2
Male					
Constant	4.75	2.82	1.68	0.10	0.18
Marital Status	-0.40	0.83	-0.48	0.63	
Caregiving Hours	0.01	0.00	1.14	0.26	
Caregiving Tasks	-0.90	0.62	-1.44	0.16	
WFCTime	0.31	0.23	1.36	0.19	
Female					
Constant	4.77	0.66	7.23	<.001	0.12
Marital Status	-0.44	0.18	-2.39	0.20	
Caregiving Hours	0.00	0.00	-0.11	0.91	
Caregiving Tasks	0.14	0.29	0.50	0.62	
WFCTime	0.17	0.09	1.92	0.06	

Note. Research = perceived time allocation toward research.

Table 12

Hypothesis 3 by Gender – Work-to-Family Guilt

Measure	Research				
	β	SE	t	p	R^2
Male					
Constant	5.32	2.76	1.93	0.07	0.20
Marital Status	-0.58	0.82	-0.71	0.49	
Caregiving Hours	0.01	0.01	1.11	0.28	
Caregiving Tasks	-0.96	0.64	-1.49	0.15	
WIFG	0.29	0.23	1.30	0.21	
Female					
Constant	4.01	0.83	4.82	<.001	0.19
Marital Status	-0.41	0.24	-1.70	0.09	
Caregiving Hours	0.00	0.00	-0.86	0.39	
Caregiving Tasks	0.08	0.30	0.28	0.78	
WIFG	0.39	0.096	3.40	0.00	

Note. Research = perceived time allocation toward research; WIFG = work-to-family guilt.

Appendix A

Work Family Conflict (12)			
Netemeyer, R. G., Boles, J. S., & McMurrian, R. (1996). Development and validation of work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales. Journal of Applied Psychology, 81(4), 400-410			
INSTRUCTIONS: How often have you experienced each of the situations listed below in the PAST MONTH? Work is defined as any activity related to your job, including the time you spend at your work site, commuting, and working while at home.			
Q#	**Var. Name**		**Response Scale**
		Time-based Work-to-family conflict	1 = never 2 = rarely 3 = sometimes 4 = often 5 = a great deal
	WFC1	My work keeps me from family activities more than I would like.	
	WFC2	The time I must devote to my job keeps me from participating equally in household responsibilities and activities.	
	WFC3	I have to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities.	

Appendix B

Work-Family Guilt Scale (14)			
McElwain, A. K. (2008). An examination of the reliability and validity of the Work-Family Guilt Scale. Doctoral dissertation, University of Guelph. ISBN: 978-0-494-47606-2) WIFG (a = .87); FIWG (a = .85)			
Q#	**Var. Name**		**Response Scale**
	WIFG1	I feel guilty for not being able to take care of my spouse/partner as well as I would like to.	1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neutral 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
	WIFG2	I feel guilty for not being able to take care of my children as well as I would like to.	
	WIFG3	I feel inadequate at my family care responsibilities.	
	WIFG4	I regret not being around for my family as much as I would like to.	
	WIFG5	I feel bad because I frequently have to take time away from my family to deal with issues happening at work.	
	WIFG6	I feel guilty for not showing as much interest to my spouse/partner as I wish.	
	WIFG7	I feel guilty for not showing as much interest to my children as I wish.	
	WIFG8	I am ashamed of how often I have difficulty being attentive while at home because I am thinking about my work.	

Appendix C

Caregiving (5)			
Q#	**Var. Name**		**Response Scale**
	Childcare time	How many hours do you allocate towards child caregiving in an average week?	Open
	Partner Childcare	How many hours does your partner allocate towards child caregiving in an average week?	Open
	Eldercare time	How many hours do you allocate towards elder caregiving in an average week?	Open
	Partner Eldercare	How many hours does your partner allocate towards elder caregiving in an average week?	Open
	Caregiving Tasks	Please indicate the types of caregiving tasks you regularly perform (select all that apply).	Physical care (bathing, feeding, etc.); Educational activities (homework help, schooling at home); Emotional support; Medical care or coordination; Household tasks related to caregiving; Transportation; Other (open)

Appendix D

Job Demands (12)			
Apaydın, C. (2007). The workload of faculty members: The example of educational faculties in Turkey. *College Student Journal*.			
INSTRUCTIONS:			
Q#	**Var. Name**		**Response Scale**
		Academic Workload	1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neutral 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree
		I do not have enough time to perform quality research.	

Appendix E

Parental Leave (5)			
Q#	**Var. Name**		**Response Scale**
	Parental Leave	Have you or are you currently using your university's parental leave policy?	0 = no 1 = yes
	Year of Leave	In which year did you take your parental leave? Please provide the year (e.g., 2023).	Open
	Parental Leave length	How much time are you allowed to take according to your university's parental leave policy?	Open
	Tenure Extension	Have you or are you currently using your university's tenure extension policy?	0 = no 1 = yes
	Tenure Extension length	How much time are you allowed to take according to your university's tenure extension policy?	0 = none 1 = 6 months 2 = 12 months

Appendix F

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

PROVIDE INFORMATION AND OBTAIN CONSENT

INTERVIEWER: Hi. My name is _____. This is _____. We are researchers from Western Kentucky University conducting a series of interviews with you and other faculty as part of an effort to understand faculty caregiving experiences and navigating parental leave within their institutions. We will also be asking about your health and wellbeing. We have prepared a series of questions to ask you; and we will take no more than an hour of your time today.

We want to assure you that your participation is strictly voluntary. You should not feel obligated to participate in this interview, and you may withdraw from this study at any time. We are also requesting your permission to audio and video record this interview. To protect your personal identification, we will not use your name during the interview and your personal information will in no way be linked to any transcribed record of today's conversation. I will ask for your verbal consent to participate in this interview and to be recorded before the interview commences. This consent will be recorded.

The information that you provide today will be used for research purposes. Certain comments may be quoted to illustrate points identified through our analysis and used in research projects. To ensure confidentiality, we will remove all personal identifiers of yourself or others before making use of your comments.

Before we begin, do you have any questions?

INTERVIEW INTRODUCTION

Let's begin. Thank you for your time today. I'll be talking with you about your experiences with caregiving and using your institution's parental leave policy. I'll also be asking about your health and wellbeing in an effort to understand your unique experiences.

BEGIN RECORDING

*****TURN ON THE RECORDER AND MAKE SURE IT IS RECORDING PROPERLY*****

Interviewer: I am _____ (name of interviewer) and I am being assisted by _____ (names of research assistant note takes). Today is _____ (state the date), and I am interviewing participant number _____ (unique code) about (his or her) caregiving experiences and use of parental leave policies. I will be recording the interview in its entirety and have turned the recorder on. I need to make sure that I have your verbal consent to be interviewed for this research project and give you full assurance that your identity and all of your responses are completely confidential in accordance with the Western Kentucky University Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements for the protection of human research subjects. Do I have your permission and consent to proceed with the interview?

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Please share your current academic position and institution.

Pregnancy and Work Experience *~ 5 minutes*

- Share your or your partner's experience of being pregnant while working.
    - Describe specific challenges and the support you received.
- What changes or strategies would you have made to improve your work experience during pregnancy?
    - *Were there any memorable positive experiences or support you received during your pregnancy?*

Parental Leave Journey *~ 10 minutes*

- Describe the process of arranging and taking parental leave at your university.
    - What were some challenges? Any institutional support?

- Discuss the nature of your parental leave (duration, paid or unpaid) and how you and your partner managed childcare during this time.
    - *Was this the amount of time you wanted to take?*
    - *Was it paid or unpaid, and by whom?*
    - *How did you manage your academic responsibilities before and after your parental leave?*

Transition and Balance *~ 15 minutes*

- How did you manage your academic responsibilities surrounding your parental leave.
    - What strategies helped ensure a smooth transition during your absence and upon return?
- Tell me about your return to work, including preparations, challenges, and any support or resources provided by your university.
    - *Were there any memorable positive experiences or support you received during your return to work?*
    - *[for women caregivers - What was your experience with breastfeeding or pumping?]*
    - *What was your experience with your colleagues' perceptions?*

Divisions of Labor *~ 15 minutes*

- How was the division of labor at home managed between you and your partner during your leave, in relation to caregiving?
    - *How much time did you spend on childcare during your leave?*
- How has the division of labor evolved at home since your return to work? Has it influenced your work-life balance or professional choices?
    - *How much time did you spend on childcare after your return to work?*

Reflections and Changes *~ 15 minutes*

- In what ways did taking parental leave impact your professional life, including promotions, research funding, tenure progression, productivity, etc.?
- If you could suggest one major change in how academia addresses caregiving experiences, what would it be?
- Is there anything else you'd like to discuss regarding your caregiving experience in academia?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Interviewer: Is there anything that we have not talked about or that you think we should know about in terms of how you experience caregiving and how your institution and its policies can better support your caregiving?

Interviewer: Thank you for your participation in this research project. Again, your responses and our discussion during this interview are strictly confidential. If you have any questions or would like to talk with a member of the research team please contact the principal investigator, Katrina Burch, at 270-745-3918.

Appendix G

Theme	Sub-Categories	Description	Examples	
Support Mechanisms	Institutional Policies and Practices	Formal rules, regulations, and structured supports provided by the institution, such as parental leave, tenure clock extensions, and flexible scheduling.	*P7:* "But for me that has been the best part, is the flexibility that I have. That I'm able to take my kids to school, and I'm able to pick my kids up every day, like I can do that. I can set my schedule and classes that I teach to where I can do that. Yeah, sometimes there's meetings that fall, and we have to figure something out, but for the most part I take them to school every day and pick them up."	*P3: "*I think something that was helpful is the flexibility that is inherent in this job position that I'm able to work at the times that work for me, or in the spaces that work for me so I could work in the spaces where I felt comfortable or could work around doctors appointments and things like that. That contributed to making that experience really positive because I could just lean into the flexibility already in this job."
	Collegial Support	Informal support received from colleagues and superiors, capturing how colleagues share workloads, provide emotional support, and help create a supportive work environment	*P9:* "Colleagues reached out and just like texted, like, 'Hey, I hope things are going well.' People mailed gifts... I think there were probably 4 or 5 Amazon packages that came from colleagues and not just in my own department... they sent just a little something, and that felt really nice and just... people do care at work. And they're happy that, you know. I'm having a baby, and it's not just oh, right, somebody, you know they're off. They're taking leave, or whatever."	*P5:* "There were a whole bunch of us who had kids in grade school or younger and so I think it was just kind of baked in, you know. It was just part of the culture in the department, I think, to be supportive about those kinds of things, and to understand those kinds of demands that people had on them."
	Family and Community Support	Support from family members, friends, and community networks, including the availability of childcare, emotional support from partners, and	*P18: "*From time to time other neighbors would kick in and provide a little bit care giving. We don't have any family who live in town with us, so we couldn't rely on that. But we do have some wonderful neighbors and elders and friends."	*P2:* "We used a lot of family and friends as support. We also had a day care for the older children. In one instance my partner worked night shift, and he would com home during the day and that would be my relief."

	assistance from broader community resources.		
Challenges Faced			
Health and Logistics	Focuses on the physical and logistical challenges encountered by caregiving faculty, such as health issues related to pregnancy or caregiving, transportation problems, and the organization of daily routines that accommodate both professional and personal life.	*P19*: "3 years ago, and they literally put a laminated sign over a closet a jander's closet door, and said, 'This is the breastfeeding room,' so that they'd be ADA compliant, and it was comically terrible."	*P10:* "But even where it is offered there's often a long waiting list to get on to get into the child care, and it's harder to get into. You can get into Harvard more easily than you can get into a good childcare, you know."
Career Concerns	Reflects concerns related to the impact of caregiving responsibilities on professional growth and academic advancement, including worries about how taking leave might affect tenure processes, job security, and opportunities for research and collaboration.	*P2*: "If anything I think that parental leave probably negated some advances because of my need for child care. It's strictly limited what I can do and when I could do it. I couldn't necessarily go for those positions that required more time and effort and concentration, such as the administrative roles, because I was limited by my need to be a parent."	*P29:* "All the people that I got tenure with all got promoted to full, and I took a lot longer… and they were all men for the most part, or childless female colleagues that got hired after me and got tenured right around the same time, and all everybody was promoted to full, but I was like the last one in my department, even though I was the first of all these newer hires."

Work-Life Balance	Difficulties in maintaining a balance between professional obligations and personal life, specifically with caregiving duties conflicting with academic responsibilities and the subsequent impact overall work satisfaction and performance.	*P7:* "You know, you sleep when the baby sleeps. That's a very true statement. The part they don't tell you is, the baby doesn't sleep a lot, so. that's probably the worst part, and then, like sometimes, like in between times, like I would try to work on my classes preparing for the fall semester, or my husband he's off on Saturday and Sunday. So sometimes I would work, you know, on those days, because I would have he would be able to take care of the baby during those times."	*P3:* "The struggle that I have felt is now that--now that caregiving is a consistent part of my life--is having the support for when caregiving duties and work duties get in the way of each other."
Policy and Administrative Experiences			
Policy Clarity and Accessibility	How clear and accessible institutional policies are to the faculty, including the ease with which faculty can understand and utilize available resources and supports related to caregiving.	*P6:* "One of the things that was frustrating about that was that it kind of seems like nobody really exactly knew what was happening and for each person, HR said slightly different things. And a lot of this was probably through word of mouth and at different times and with different people in different positions. And so it really seems like nothing is set in stone and standard, which is for better and for worse as you're doing it both ways."	*P13:* "There are more resources that are needed, so like having a lactation space like having either access to childcare or people that can even help find access to childcare or some type of support for childcare... having those resources and communicating them to individuals so they know what is available at the institutional level and aren't left wondering would be really helpful."

Administrative Support and Hurdles	Effectiveness of administrative processes in supporting caregiving faculty, including the efficiency of HR departments, the responsiveness of administration to caregiving needs, and the bureaucratic challenges that may complicate the utilization of institutional supports.	*P17:* "It didn't seem like a great idea, and I asked HR a few times, you know, is there any way I can take like a different kind of leave, like a leave of absence or something else, just for those last 2 to 3 weeks so I don't take over those classes for the last days of spring semester? And they said, No, there's absolutely no way for that to happen, so that felt a little unfortunate and created more backend work for me."	*P6: "*I'm pretty sure I sent a kid's social security number or something by an email, but I was like, how else do you want me to deliver this document to you? Like you said, you need this, and I have no other way to do this. And they wouldn't like be explicit, 'well, stop by the office and do whatever.' But there was also something for the same HR person who said, 'oh, if you want to use the lactation room, you have to let us know three weeks in advance and blah, blah, blah, and you need this and this and this…'"
Experiences with Specific Policies	Experiences with specific institutional policies, such as the implementation of parental leave or childcare facilities, and their effectiveness and the real-life impacts on faculty members' professional and personal lives.	*P22:* "I get this like rejection letter being sent back saying that your you know parental leave has been denied… just saying that you had a child isn't enough to qualify for leave… I'm like very clear in our contract, and like the legality of all these things, and I was like you one do not have to disclose medical information about this, right? Because non birthing parents are allowed to take parental leave, fostering, adoption… So for her to say that that form of taking home a a brand new child was not enough, and then I had to have a medical reason to to take maternity leave was wild to me."	*P21:* "Salary people, you come to work, you leave, you get paid. There's no…definition of how many hours you're supposed to be there, like they can't enforce that either, unfortunately, so in the office we we all sort of agreed… as salaries people like, if you don't come in for more than 4 hours, then just take a day off sick leave or a vacation day, but don't come in and try to leave and do all that."
Emotional and Psychological Impact			

Stress and Adjustment	Psychological stress and emotional burdens associated with balancing academic responsibilities with caregiving, such as feelings of stress due to role conflict, adjustments to new parenting roles, and the general mental health of caregiving faculty.	*P14:* "There has to be space for us to know better how we can serve our students, but also serve ourselves, right? So you know the adage about putting on your own life mask before you put on somebody else's sometimes is is absolutely true. Self preservation is very important when you're trying to emotionally hold hold things together, and that can be very, very challenging."	*P4:* "it was really hard to come back to work. My baby was not even 3 months when the semester started, and I cried all the time. Yeah, it was really really hard to come back to work."
Emotional and Psychological Strategies	Strategies faculty employ to cope with the emotional and psychological challenges of caregiving, including seeking mental health resources, developing personal coping mechanisms, and utilizing institutional supports designed to aid emotional well-being.	*P1:* "Upon return, I mean, I just like told people, 'Hey, you know like I just got off of maternity leave, so I'm trying to like catch up on emails and stuff. I'm gonna prioritize so... the things that are most important I'm gonna deal with first. Work backwards until I get caught up.'"	*P22: "*I've been trying...to just sort of say, 'Hey, like these are boundaries like, you wouldn't expect someone to be working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week like, you know?' Like, let's have some like reasonable expectations and and being really upfront... on a syllabus or something about what those expectations are about returning emails like when you can expect things back. And then also, like encouraging students to... create and try to maintain those boundaries for themselves, because... many of them are nontraditional."

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