

Leadership Excellence and Gender in Organizations

Managing the negative effects of parenting in academia: Gender, institutional policies, and collegial support

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Managing the Negative Effects of Parenting in the Academy: Gender, Institutional Policies, and Collegial Support

Abstract

Navigating a career while raising a family can be challenging, especially for women in the academy. We examined two sides of caregiving: how caregiving responsibilities and the role of partner support affects faculty members' professional lives (Study 1), and how collegial support for using a tenure clock extension policy affects pre-tenure women's careers (Study 2). Study 1 ($n = 753$) showed that as the number of caregiving responsibilities that interfered with professional life (e.g., unexpected interruptions during the day) increased, faculty experienced decreased career satisfaction and increased desire to leave their position. Gender moderated this effect during the pre-tenure years; women, but not men, suffered in terms of career outcomes when they had at least one (or more) aspect of their professional life affected by caregiving. Sharing parenting responsibilities with a partner did not buffer the demands of caregiving on career outcomes. In Study 2 ($n = 63$), among pre-tenure female faculty who took advantage of the tenure clock extension policy, perceptions of collegial support for using this policy increased were related to career satisfaction and workplace belonging. This type of support was particularly beneficial to women who had recently experienced gender-based job discrimination. We discuss implications of the role that institutions can play to support early career stage women.

Keywords: family work relationship, academic environment, career satisfaction, caregiving, tenure clock extension policy, faculty