4-29-2021

Realities of a pandemic: A qualitative study of women faculty with caregiving responsibilities

Dimple Sunayna Johnson
West Chester University of Pennsylvania

Angela Kline
*West Chester University of Pennsylvania*, akline@wcupa.edu

Recommended Citation
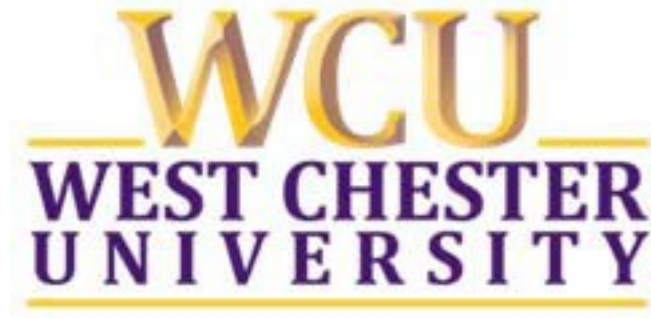
Realities of a pandemic:
A qualitative study of women faculty

Dimple Sunayna Johnson – Presenter

Dr. Angela Kline - Faculty Mentor & Presenter

College of Business & Public Management

Overview

- Background & Significance
- Women Faculty in Higher Education
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion
- Conclusion & Future Research
- Next Steps

Background & Significance

- Evolution of higher education environment
    - Increased struggle for women
    - Juggling work and home

- Onset of COVID-19
    - caregiving experience
    - virtual lifestyle
    - safer at home measures

- Purpose of the study
    - understand & deduce workplace support and stress
    - understand caregiving experiences

Women Faculty in Higher Education

- Stress
  - feeling of being overloaded and out of control in an uncertain circumstance (Cohen et al., 1983)

- Emotional labor
  - "development, management, and performance of affective work" (lawless, 2018, p. 86)

- Support
  - exhibit lower levels of stress (Eisenberger et al., 2016) with organization support, especially in times of crisis (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002)

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
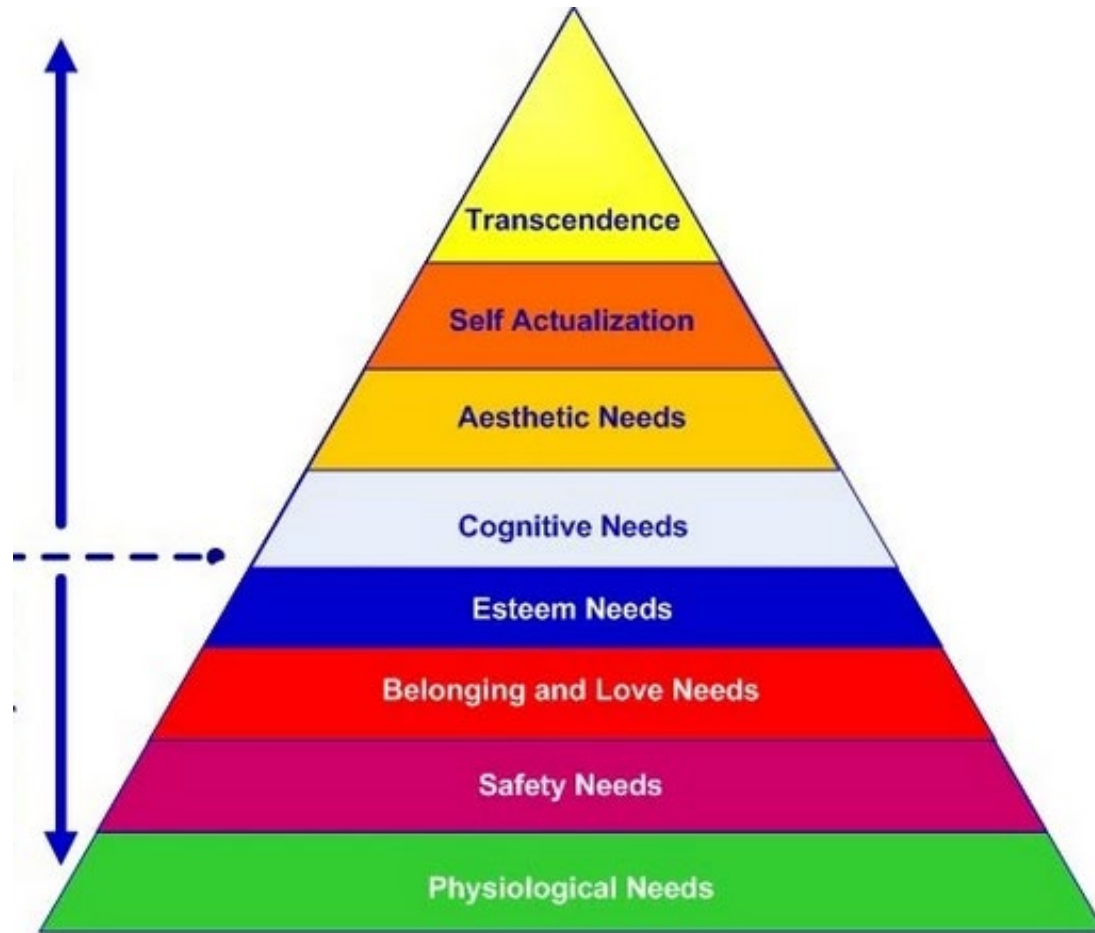
Methodology – Data Collection

- Opportunity sampling – recruited using listserv and social media

- Confidential semi-structured virtual interviews

- Inclusion criteria: Full-time caregiving female faculty in Spring 2020

- 16 open-ended core questions and other associated questions
  - Demographics
  - Support
  - Stress

Methodology - Sample

- Sample of 14 participants

- North America (n = 12); Europe (n = 2)

- Faculty-only role (n = 11); Faculty/administrator role (n = 3)

- Married (n = 12); In a relationship (n = 2)

- Child caregiving (n = 13); other caregiving (n = 1)

Methodology - Analysis

- Thematic analysis

- Holistic understanding, examining meaning

- Analysis post data collection
  - Data segmented
  - Preliminary analysis
  - Adjusting themes
  - Categorizing using Maslow's Hierarch of Needs

Findings

- External Sources of Support

- Institutional Concern for Students

- Emotional Labor
  - Navigating Student Needs and Emotions
  - Navigating Role Conflict – Mom and Professor

- Limited Memory of that Time

Navigating Role Conflict – Mom & Professor

I was probably a bad mom. I think I did some shoddy parenting, but we have managed.

What stands out to me is how hard it was to be present with my kids because it was just so stressful thinking about everything else. I knew as a mom all your kids want is for you to just play with them and be with them, but it's like you're so worried about everything else. It was really hard for me to just be a Mom who's not looking at my phone not worried about what's falling apart at work and just be there with them.

Navigating Role Conflict – Mom & Professor

With every single experience, it's a double-edged sword. It's either I'm feeling guilty because I was working. And, so therefore, you know, they had to do something for themselves [...] if you say that to somebody who you know, they go, oh my god, she didn't make the kids lunch and it makes you feel so guilty. And to the other side of when I'm enjoying spending time with the kids, I'm then in the back of my head going, I should be doing this for the work. So, there's that constant guilt. I think is what I will never forget.

Discussion

- Physiological & Safety Needs
  - No advancement to cognitive levels

- Balance between institutional criticism and understanding

- Asking for Help vs. Offering to Help
  - Talk about it!

Conclusion & Future Research

- Ongoing mental health support for caregivers
    - Processing the loss experienced during 2020-21

- Continued Research on Caregiver Support

- Explore transition back to classroom

Next Steps

- Edit manuscript to incorporate feedback

- Submit manuscript to Review of Public Personnel Administration

- Follow-up study with women faculty on their return to the workplace

References

Boncori, I. (2020). The never-ending shift: A feminist reflection on living and organizing academic lives during the coronavirus pandemic. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *27*(5), 677-682.

Cohen, S, Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein R (1983) A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 24*(4), 385-396.

Eisenberger, R., Malone, G. P., & Presson, W. D. (2016). Optimizing perceived organizational support to enhance employee engagement. *Society for Human Resource Management and Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2*, 3-22.

Lawless, B. (2018). Documenting a labor of love: emotional labor as academic labor. *Review of Communication*, *18*(2), 85-97.

Lendák-Kabók, K. (2020). Women's work–life balance strategies in academia. *Journal of Family Studies*, 1-19.

Matud, M. P. (2004) Gender differences in stress and coping styles. *Personality and Individual Differences, 37*(7), 1401-1415.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. In J. M. Shafritz & A. C. Hyde (Eds.), Classics of public administration (pp. 114-121). Cengage Learning.

McLeod, S. (2007). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. *Simply psychology*, *1*, 1-8.

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *16*(1), 1609406917733847.

Rhoades, L., & Eisenberger, R. (2002). Perceived organizational support: A review of the literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*(4), 698-714.

Safaria, T., Othman, A., & Wahab, M. N. A. (2012) Gender, academic rank, employment status, university type and job stress among university academic staff: A comparison between Malaysia and Indonesia context. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *1*(18), 250-261.

Slišković, A., & Seršić, D. (2011). Work stress among university teachers: Gender and position differences. *Archives of Industrial Hygiene and Toxicology, 62*(4), 299-307.

Tytherleigh, M. Y., Webb, C., Cooper, C. L., & Ricketts, C. (2005). Occupational stress in UK higher education institutions: A comparative study of all staff categories. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *24*(1), 41-61.

Wong, L. (2018, November 14) There's a stress gap between men and women. Here's why it's important. *The New York Times.*

Yates, D. (2011). Researchers look for ingredients of happiness around the world. University of Illinois News Bureau. *Life Sciences.* Retrieved from https://news.illinois.edu/view/6367/205291

Zamarro, G., Perez-Arce, F., & Prados, M. J. (2020). *Gender Differences in the Impact of COVID-19*. Working Paper. https://tinyurl. com/CESRGenderDiffs.