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**Is The Ivory Tower Made of Glass?: Examining Work Experiences of Women Faculty at
Butler University**

A Thesis

Presented to the Department of History, Anthropology and Classics

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

and

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Butler University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for Graduation Honors

Erin E Mahan

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Abstract

The guiding research question for this study is: “What are the structural, cultural, and situational factors that affect women faculty’s experience at Butler University?” While this project focuses broadly on women as an identifying group, it also requires attention to the intersectionality of individuals’ experience as issues such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disabilities are also factors shaping women’s experiences. The information from this study draws attention to the experiences that women faculty have related to their gender and potentially facilitate change starting at Butler University. This paper will discuss the experiences of women faculty at Butler University regarding their gender. It will specifically talk about the gendered issues of tenure, equality of pay, difference in types of work, and familial obligations as these seem to be the most prominent findings from research at Butler.

Is The Ivory Tower Made of Glass?: Examining Work Experiences of Women Faculty at Butler University

There are many inequalities that women face within the workplace in the United States. The realm of academia displays the dichotomy between working men and women. In order to create a more equal work environment, it is important to recognize the factors that play into gender inequality within the workplace. Using ethnographic interviews, existing literature on the topic, and a survey, this project will examine the experiences of women faculty at Butler University and how gender has affected their work experience.

I understand that there is an intersectionality of individuals' experiences as issues such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disabilities may also be factors. I will attend to these issues as they come up in my research, although my research focuses on women as an identifying group and inequities common among them. Academia is an interesting place to think about gender inequity as there are more women now earning PhDs than men for over a decade now, so understanding what is happening in their experiences of inequality is significant (Perry, 2021). My hope is to use the information from this study to draw attention to the inequalities that women faculty face and potentially facilitate change starting at Butler University.

Methods

This study employed three primary research methods, which have been carefully developed and are regularly employed in ethnographic science: open-ended interviews, a literature review, and a survey.

First, I conducted open-ended interviews with current and former women professors from Butler's faculty either in person or over Zoom. I reached out to possible interviewees via email using my own connections within Butler as well as connections through my research advisor (see

appendix for copy of email). The purpose of these interviews was to collect data about the experiences of women faculty at Butler University and to better understand the factors contributing to these experiences. I conducted interviews of about 20 to 30 minutes in length, depending on the expertise and willingness of the informants. I used a menu of possible questions as a guide for the interview but allowed the conversation to flow naturally from one topic to the next. Using this open-ended approach, I was able to tailor each conversation to my informant's areas of expertise and elicit information that was qualitatively relevant to the study.

For my second research method, I conducted a literature review. I researched and analyzed previous literature on the topic of gender inequalities within the realm of academia. I used anthropological and academic databases in order to find sources. These materials were carefully analyzed for patterns including the structural, cultural, and situational factors that contribute to the inequalities that are faced by women in academia.

The third research method was a survey of all women faculty on Butler's campus. The survey was developed using Qualtrics software and included 22 questions. Questions were designed to assess respondents' views on their work experiences at Butler. In addition, the survey included questions related to demographics (e.g., age and ethnicity) and situation/status (e.g., job rank and tenure status). There were optional open-ended questions in which respondents were able to detail their experiences in their own words. A link was distributed to all potential participants by email in order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of responses. There were a total of 91 survey responses.

Finally, I carefully transcribed and coded the interviews and survey data, looking for prominent themes as well as any outlier data. I used inductive coding in which I read through all of the data and grouped them into thematic categories. This final step of content analysis

combined and compared the knowledge that I acquired from my literature review, interviews and survey results. I coded all of my gathered materials by searching for keywords and phrases as well as categorizing them according to general patterns and in relation to the overall objectives of the project. I used these methods in order to evaluate the state of gender experiences at Butler, identify key themes, and point to some possible solutions.

Findings

As I analyzed the data, it became clear that while there are a variety of factors that affect gendered experience of women faculty members, there was a prominent connection between structural and cultural factors. I had originally predicted that there would be a clear division between the factors, however, the structural factors, such as pay and tenure, are inherently cultural. This is due to these factors being affected by the innate gender biases of the society that creates them, thus making them cultural in nature. Therefore, my initial outlook on the causes of women faculty's experiences in academia shifted as there was no longer a clear dichotomy between structural and cultural themes.

Joan Acker (1990) created the theory of gendered organizations in which she describes similar ideas. She describes that a work organization being gendered "means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine" (p. 146). Thus, the structure of a work organization, in this case, academia, is biased towards the male worker as they have traditionally been viewed as those populating the majority of the workforce. These biases make women workers' experiences different from their male counterparts and promote gender segregation and inequality. Acker (1990) points out that "the structure of the labor market, relations in the workplace, the control of the work process, and the

underlying wage relation are always affected by symbols of gender, processes of gender identity, and material inequalities between men and women" (p. 145). She explains that these underlying assumptions of men as the embodiment of the typical worker in turn affect all aspects of work organizations. These aspects can include hiring, colleague interactions, leadership, and compensation.

According to this ideology, women will not have access to the same experiences as men within work organizations. This has been the experience of many women within academia. Acker's theory of gendered organizations has been applied to many situations within academia in other scholarly work. One article uses Acker's theory in order to find systemic inequalities within academia that could affect professional advancement for mid-career women faculty in STEM (Hart, 2016). This is just one example of the scholarly literature in which this theory is used. I use this theory as background for my findings as it explains the inherent gender biases of work organizations, such as academia, that are reflections of the society that creates them.

Equality of Pay

Monroe and Chiu (2010) conducted a study to see if there was a "pipeline problem" within academia, in other words that there is not a difference in gender inequality once there are more women in the hiring pool. They did find that there was a significant difference between the number of men and women in higher levels of academia. However, they found that "this disparity represents a problem of advancement and not an absence of candidates" (p. 306). Therefore, there are plenty of women who want to be in academia at a high level, but they are unable to reach those positions due to biases that exist within the system. Monroe and Chiu (2010) also argue against the idea that addressing the pipeline issue will alleviate the inequalities. As these authors note, "merely increasing the pool of qualified women has not led to a

commensurate number of women rising to the top in academia.” (303). Women faculty still tend to hold lower-level and lower paid positions within the system. In a 2022 Gallup poll, only 35% of women faculty members agreed or strongly agreed that they were being paid fairly compared to 47% of male faculty (Spitalniak 2022). Thus, women faculty members at many institutions feel that they are not being compensated adequately as related to their male colleagues.

At Butler, many female professors claimed to struggle with factors similar to those discussed in existing research. One prominent issue mentioned frequently by interviewees is the lack of equal pay between male and female professors of the same job status. One example is Professor H who discussed her personal problem with the inequality of pay at the university. She was hired at the same time as multiple male faculty in her department and she took the pay that was given to her as she was unaware that her male counterparts were given a higher starting salary. However, it was brought to her attention that there was a pay difference between her and the men who were hired even though she came in with more research published and better evaluations than them. She described feeling foolish for accepting the pay that was given to her and felt as though “they got [her] for less.”

There are issues within the system of the university, often department-specific, that create an unequal pay structure for faculty members linked to gender. Typically, people in higher-ranked positions are paid more money than those in lower-ranked positions. However, across all full-time faculty, women are paid less than male faculty. A 2020 study by the American Association of University Professors showed average annual salaries for women (\$79,368) to be far lower than for men (\$97,738) (AAUP, 2020). This would appear to support the notion that gender-in addition to rank-is a factor in pay inequities among faculty.

Many survey participants explained their unhappiness with the lack of equality when it comes to compensation. Some claim that they have received raises, as a sign that the Butler has recognized the inequity, but “it was too late to undo the retirement account discrepancy, which accumulated over years.” This interviewee went on to add that since “retirement contributions are based on your salary,” in her estimation, “male colleagues who were hired at the same time will retire with, in some cases, twice as much in their accounts.” While there is no way of verifying this assertion, it should be acknowledged that the impression exists that there is this degree of inequity. Several participants expressed concern that, especially for faculty who have been at the university for a long time, raises will not be enough to make up for years of lower pay than their male counterparts. This also poses a problem as many participants also pointed out that they are expected to do much more, in the form of care and service-related work, in addition to usual teaching and research obligations, than many of the men in their departments, though they know they are being paid less.

Equality of pay is a gendered issue throughout the global workforce, however, specifically at Butler, women are referencing lack of salary transparency as a key issue. Without transparency, it is difficult to prove the inequality of pay. Though there is discussion of pay discrepancies, many participants cited the lack of specific proof that they have to assert this, although there are some female faculty members who were able to do so and received raises in return. One survey respondent explained that she came to Butler at the same time as a male professor who had the same credentials, however, he shared his salary with her and she realized he was being paid much more. He explained to her that “his salary was higher because he had a wife to support. I had a child to support. I filed a complaint and my salary was raised.” Though

her salary was subsequently raised, the issue arises that this was not recognized by the university when she originally got the job.

Tenure and Promotion

The tenure process is another area where women are disadvantaged within academia. Tenured professors have more job security as they “are not ‘at-will’ and cannot easily be fired or furloughed” (Monroe and Chiu, 2010, p. 307). It is generally understood that upon receiving tenure faculty are guaranteed employment until they leave or retire. However, due to the previously mentioned gendered structure of academia in connection with cultural factors such as family and student evaluations, which will be discussed later, there tend to be inequalities in how male professors qualify for tenure compared to female professors. Much of this has to do with many institutions’ requirements for published research rather than service work in order to go up for tenure.

A tenure-track professor begins as an assistant professor and is then reviewed at different points throughout their academic career in order to be promoted to associate and then full professor. Evaluations are based on one’s research and publications, teaching abilities, and service work. However, in general women faculty tend to do different types of jobs within academia than their male counterparts. Weisshaar (2017) points to two earlier studies that “demonstrated that women tend to exhibit higher levels of university service work and put more time into teaching than men” (Fox, 2005 and Pyke, 2014, p. 555). Thus, a system that privileges research and publishing can cause women, who are more likely to be involved in service work, to either be less inclined or able to be considered for tenure (Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017).

The problems within the tenure process at Butler that were brought up in the survey results and interviews consisted of the types of work asked of women versus men professors, as well as the unequal process of deciding who receives tenure.

One faculty member stated that she “witnessed men with far fewer qualifications than women in the same department get tenure while their female colleagues were let go.” However, she continues to say that “this has improved quite a bit in recent years.” Another respondent discusses her experience with the promotion process in terms of the amount of work that women faculty do over male colleagues.

I've assessed many promotion portfolios of both male and female professors. From these experiences, I think that women actually just do more, especially when they direct programs, compared to the male workload or productivity in administrative loads. I am speaking mainly of my own department, but I've heard complaints from women who have worked with male colleagues who don't do their share of the work on a project.

These sentiments seemed to be a trend throughout the survey and interview responses. It is important to point out that many Butler women faculty, especially those who have been at Butler for a number of years, claim that the tenure process has become more equal in recent years. One survey respondent said that she “[has] been reviewed fairly and given opportunities” which was similar to the responses of a few other survey and interview answers. Thus, there seems to be a spectrum of opinions on the tenure process and whether it is gender-biased at Butler. This could be attributed to a variety of factors including department or college affiliation, or other factors that could not be identified through the survey responses.

One main issue that was identified connected the tenure process at Butler to the issue of increased service work or care-related work by women faculty that goes unnoticed or undervalued in evaluation for promotion. Prior research has found that at many universities research and publications are put above service work when evaluating faculty for tenure (Social

Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017). Care-related work is usually not considered. However, this poses a problem for women faculty as these types of labor tend to fall on them due to an assumption that women are more likely to take on service and care-related jobs (Guarino and Borden, 2017). This relates to the inherent bias that women are caretakers within society. This was a topic that was discussed constantly in interviews and survey responses at Butler. One survey respondent stated:

Especially as a new faculty member, male colleagues often asked me to engage in secretarial tasks. I pushed back and suggested that we share the secretarial work. My comments were not appreciated by them. Also, I'm expected to do more service than male counterparts and that takes time away from teaching and scholarship. I want to do my fair share of service/admin work for my program but it shouldn't be disproportionate. My setting boundaries around my service has negatively impacted some opportunities in my college. Also, the kinds of service that I do at the college level aren't always recognized because it's often focused in particular areas that have only a small impact on other areas.

There appears to be an expectation for women professors to assume more of the service roles, which are deemed more “female,” in their departments although those types of work are generally not given as much credit.

One interviewed professor explained how women faculty at Butler tend to take on more responsibilities such as committee work, departmental parties, and other “housekeeping” tasks as compared to their male counterparts. She continued to discuss how she did not necessarily think this was demanded of them but rather just happened. However, these service responsibilities take away from research and other tasks. While departments and colleges value service responsibilities, there is not generally as much of an emphasis on them when considering faculty for tenure (Guarino and Borden, 2017, p. 673). Therefore, women faculty are more likely to be at a disadvantage when it comes to promotion as they tend to be the ones taking on these roles.

Another professor that was interviewed had similar ideas about this topic as she stated that “the work that women tend to do goes largely unrecognized.” She was pointing to the lack of recognition for increased service and care work among women faculty. The big issue with this is that these tasks take time and energy from these women faculty members, while many of their male counterparts are not completing the same kinds of tasks. Rather, male professors tend to have more time for research and publications which are more recognized and thus lead to promotion and tenure more often.

Invisible Work

Along with service, other forms of care-work that women faculty often take on can be referred to as invisible work. This includes such activities as family and home obligations, student mentoring and advising and writing letters of recommendation (Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017).

Invisible work (Daniels, 1987) is something that is prevalent in all areas of work as women tend to have responsibilities that are not recognized by their superiors such as family obligations and care-related jobs such as being mentors for students. Women faculty tend to have more of these kinds of responsibilities than their male counterparts. The Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group writes that “teaching and service are often seen as more ‘feminine’ activities, entailing service to others. Research and administration, in contrast, are often seen as more ‘masculine’ because they demand innovation and leadership” (2017, p. 231). This subsequently affects women faculty members’ ability to receive tenure, as previously discussed, because “these tenure systems emphasize individual achievement over group achievement and thus, spending more time on ‘masculine’ work consequently earns higher rewards within the academy” (2017, p. 231). In sum, women faculty do not get as much

recognition for the work that they do in academia as the types of work they tend to do is not seen as of the same importance as research and publications.

Many women professors take on nurturing roles for students at Butler which falls into the care-related work category. This is due to some being viewed as “maternal” to their students, which draws students to them with issues both academic and otherwise. While the women faculty who discussed this in interviews and survey responses made it clear that they are happy to be there for their students, they pointed to the extra time and mental capacity that it takes to do so. This allows for faculty to connect with their students in a positive way, however, one survey respondent pointed out that there is also “an emotional and physical toll that I wonder how many of my male colleagues experience.” Thus, there are other types of work that women professors do on a daily basis that many of their male counterparts are not doing, or not participating in as frequently, which, as one interviewee put it “is absolutely work, but often unrecognized.”

Due to the lack of recognition of this “invisible work,” many women professors who take on these tasks are not eligible for the same career advancement as the men in their departments. One survey response exemplifies this saying that “important things that women often do more than men are not valued in our annual evaluation system. For example, academic advising, career-mentoring, and supporting students with mental health and other non-academic challenges” which circles back to the differences in tenure evaluation between women and men faculty. According to a study done by Guardino and Borden (2017), the national sample of 19,000 faculty members from over 143 colleges and universities shows that women performed 30 more minutes per week of service than men and 1.5 more service activities per year (Flaherty, 2017). Since much of this work is not counted towards tenure, many women faculty are putting

in hours and work towards important tasks but not receiving the same compensation or promotions as their men colleagues.

Familial Obligations

Familial obligations are also a large factor in the cultural issues of women faculty's gendered experience in academia. Having a family can affect a woman's amount of outside-of-work responsibilities as well as their timeline for tenure. Earning tenure requires that a faculty member produce a specific amount of research and associated publications, typically within 5-6 years of being hired; however, women who start families and must take maternity leave during that time run into issues of maintaining the same timelines as their male counterparts. Monroe, et al. (2008) explain how these responsibilities are placed on women in many cases due to inherent societal expectations:

...the relationship between familial responsibilities and gender discrimination is a subtle one, in part because the gender role models that society imposes are so deeply ingrained they often become confounded with biology. Childbirth and breast-feeding are, of course, biologically based, but they occupy relatively short periods in the overall span of a woman's professional life. Child-rearing and child-care, by contrast, represent vast investments of time and effort that have no biological requirements, but are traditionally constructed as responsibilities of women (p. 221-222).

Thus, even though not biologically required, the societally-expected care that women have to take of their families can hinder their ability to be as productive as their male counterparts or their female counterparts who do not have children.

Specifically at Butler, many women faculty members discussed the challenges with family obligations in relation to their work. Of the 80 survey respondents, over 66 percent have children. Many responses related to family centered around deciding between having a family or advancing one's career. Although men faculty were not surveyed here, there is existing evidence to support that they do not usually have the same dilemma, or at least not to the same degree

(Lisnic, Zajicek & Kerr, 2019). This relates to the tenure process as well, as respondents discussed their decision to be tenure-track employees due to the perceived time commitment of tenure while also having to be the main caretakers of their children. One statistic showed that 69% of tenure-track men are married with children as compared to only 41% of tenure-track women (Bracken, et al, 2006, p. 16). Those who brought up familial responsibilities affecting their careers in academia expressed having to make tough decisions between the two. However, respondents differed in opinions on the flexibility of academia as well as on their levels of dissatisfaction with the disparity between men and women regarding family responsibilities. Some respondents felt that academia allowed them to have a more adaptable schedule to their family obligations while others had the opposite idea though this accounted for less than half of the responses regarding this topic.

One survey respondent explained her personal experience with familial obligations at Butler. She discussed her views on the differences of how family affects job trajectory between men and women faculty. Her narrative shows how women faculty may have to limit their careers in order to take care of their families due to the demanding asks of the tenure process.

I have chosen to be an instructor instead of pursuing a tenure-track job because I have a young child that is my priority right now and I know I can't dedicate enough focus/energy into publishing on the time frame required/working 50 hour weeks. I am at peace with my decision, but I do think it would be different if I was a man, or if the academic environment took those kinds of things into consideration.

This also shows that some women faculty, while knowing that there is a difference between familial obligations between men and women in academia, are comfortable in their decisions to put family over promotion. One professor who was interviewed discussed how she is an associate professor rather than a full professor due to her desire to spend more time with her

children. She pointed out how she was happy to do so as she would be away from them for longer hours and have much more work if she had taken the route towards promotion.

A large issue besides tenure and promotion that was discussed was the individual guilt experienced by Butler women faculty. That is, some respondents explained their internal conflict of whether they should be spending more time with their families than at work or vice versa.

One professor who was interviewed talked about her role as a mother and wife outside of being an academic. She feels the weight of societal expectations as well as those that she places on herself. She expressed feeling guilty about not having as much time to spend with her family due to her work. Some coworkers will innocently bring up things like “shouldn’t you be with your kids?” or “why are you here, you have a family” if she is working late. While she recognizes that these are coming from the best place, it piles on guilt that she is already feeling. These comments and assumptions made by others can be unintentionally harmful towards mothers in academia as many of them experience guilt of putting their work over their families. Much of this guilt results from decades-old societal norms, which assume women will stay home with their families.

On the other side of this are those who are not mothers. There are also certain assumptions made of women faculty without children. One interviewee discussed hearing that women who are not partnered or parents should have more work to do or be more productive as they do not have familial obligations. She pointed out that this is problematic as there should not be a difference in workload connected to outside obligations. This relates back to the inherent idea of women as caretakers because if a woman is without children, society expects her to make up for that in other ways.

Sexual Harassment

Within current literature about gender dynamics within academia, there is much discussion about sexism within the workplace (Monroe et al. and Riley et al.). There are many women who experience blatant or subtle sexism in their daily work lives by coworkers or others that they interact with. This is not just in the realm of academia but in every workplace. While not all sexist acts are intentional, there are pervasive sexist biases within society that can contribute to these microaggressions towards women. Within a professional environment, women must negotiate how to respond to sexist comments or actions which can leave women feeling helpless or powerless.

In my interviews and survey, Butler women faculty discussed examples of sexist comments and acts that they have experienced while at the university. One interviewee talked about how she was told by a male colleague that the only reason that she got her job was because she has nice legs. Another described how “male professors commented on [her] body, one telling [her] he liked [her] ankles because they weren’t fat, and he did not like fat ankles.” These are examples of blatant sexism that women faculty at Butler experience from their colleagues. However, these are not just men saying these things: some respondents discussed women colleagues perpetrating these sexist comments and actions as well. One interviewee discussed having to take a leave of absence from Butler due to torment by another woman colleague. She described going to her dean about leaving due and being confronted with the assumption that “[her] husband makes a good salary” implying that she should feel fine leaving. Consistent with dominant gender biases, the dean’s response reflects broader societal assumptions that male workers are providing the primary financial support to their families; it also assumes a heteronormative family structure.

Student Interactions

Women faculty's experience can also be affected by students who they interact with every day. Gender certainly influences interactions between women faculty and students, however, it is important to note that intersectional factors, including race and age, may also be involved in these interactions (Lilienfeld, 2016).

Butler women faculty discussed a variety of experiences related to student interactions based on their gender. One topic that was recurring was that students tend to question women's authority as professors. This issue was brought up multiple times throughout the survey results and interviews. One survey respondent explained her negative interactions with male students related to grading. She explained how male students especially tend to challenge her and in some cases in disrespectful, "line-crossing" ways.

Every semester I am given a hard time about my grading, especially from male students. As a matter of fact, I have actually deducted points for disrespectful behavior. This behavior is always from male students. On the other hand, THREE of my male colleagues have said that they never have trouble with students giving them a hard time about grading, and yet I know for a fact that at least two of them grade as stringent as I do. For some reason, male students are comfortable challenging me as a female instructor. I am convinced that this has everything to do with gender. (By the way, I am not talking about an honest question concerning a grade. I am talking about behavior that borders and sometimes crosses into bullying.)

Another survey responder discussed the overall perception of women faculty and how they are consequently treated. She also touched on the topic of treatment by students who are asking for something from the professor (i.e. a higher grade), assuming that they will receive it:

I think the perception that women are "givers" can unconsciously motivate students to attempt to take advantage of them (e.g. requesting extensions for assignments) that perhaps they wouldn't pursue with a male professor. I think my language choices, in an attempt to display my compassion for students, can actually be perceived as weak or unassertive language, when that's not my intention or mindset.

Another factor that plays into this treatment by students is age as younger women faculty tend to be questioned even more on their abilities. One interviewee attributed her negative student interactions to gender and age as she feels that her competence is questioned by students due to her age as well as being a woman. She also discussed self-presentation as being friendly, which can be read as not being as knowledgeable as her colleagues who do not present the same way. Another faculty member who was interviewed discussed her having to justify her knowledge on the subjects that she teaches as she is questioned regularly by students. Some students specifically ask her what qualifies her to teach their class as well as challenge her on topics within the course.

On the other hand, some respondents discussed their positive interactions with students and said they felt that they were able to connect with them better because they were women. One interviewed professor explained how students tend to feel comfortable with someone who they see something of themselves in. She went on to describe how there are many young women who come to her as they feel comfortable talking to her. A survey respondent said: "I feel that students feel that I am approachable and that they can share thoughts with me." Thus, there are perceptions of both negative and positive experiences regarding student interactions and women faculty. Much of it seems to also be rooted in gender (female versus male students). This also reflects the caring narrative that women faculty have as students seem to feel more comfortable coming to them to discuss issues.

Situational Factors: COVID-19

Situational factors refer to those that occur 'in the moment'. These can exacerbate other aspects of gender experience by enhancing gender inequalities that were previously prevalent. The most prominent situational factor in higher education over the past few years has been the

COVID-19 pandemic. One specific aspect—working from home—shined a spotlight on gender inequities within the workforce. Working from home furthers the women as caretakers argument because “faculty with young or school-aged children— especially women— had to juggle teaching their students with overseeing their children’s distance learning from home” (Kramer, 2020). Although a substantial number of women work full-time jobs in our modern society, most of the time they still take on the majority of childcare and household responsibilities (Germano, 2019).

Interestingly, Butler women faculty did not mention the pandemic much when discussing their experience with gender. There was not a survey or interview question specifically relating to COVID-19 experiences, but due to the timing of the survey as well as the impact that was discussed within literature on academia, it was surprising that there was not more of a discussion about it within the results. However, there were a few survey responses and one interviewee who did feel it important to highlight their hardships during this time. When asked how gender has affected their career in academia, one survey respondent discussed the childcare issue due to the pandemic. She described how she struggled to take care of her children while working full-time as they were out of school.

This [example] is pandemic-specific, but the drop in available childcare during this time period has caused me to fear being perceived as "unprofessional" if I cannot be on campus for the usual number of hours. Just finding childcare to cover typical work hours feels like working a second job right now.

Another survey respondent had similar issues with childcare with the pandemic keeping her children at home.

During the pandemic even more so, I struggle to stay focused and be productive. If a child is sick or needs support, I take on those roles because I have a more flexible work schedule than my partner.

My research results show that some women faculty members had increased childcare responsibilities due to the pandemic. While many women faculty with children seem to be the

main caregivers for their families normally, the pandemic, with children being schooled from home, made this role even more difficult.

Another pandemic-related issue brought up was the increased stress placed on faculty members as a whole, in great part due to having to change class plans and moving onto Zoom. This stress was heightened for women faculty members, however, because the pandemic increased the amount of care work, they had to do as well. Students were coming to them with their own anxieties about the pandemic while they were wrestling with them in their own way. One professor described how the 2020-2021 school year was “the most difficult year of [her] professional life,” due to the stress of having to change all of her class plans and try to navigate the semester in the best way for her students. Responses relating to COVID-19 emphasized the struggle for faculty in balancing students' needs and being mindful of their own physical and mental wellbeing.

Study Limitations

The methods employed in this study were in line with existing research and the findings contribute to the explanation of work experiences by women faculty. However, as is the case with any study, there were limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the results. One limitation is related to sample size. There were a total of ten interviews conducted and 91 survey responses received from women faculty. While data received from both methods was useful, generalizing the results may be limited due to the small number of study participants. In addition, not all survey respondents included written explanations of their experiences, which may impact interpretation of results. Further, these results were also taken specifically from Butler University, which is a small, private university. Faculty at larger and/or public institutions may have different experiences than those at Butler. Though the findings here are revealing

about one institution, future research might expand to public and/or larger institutions as well as engage more participants to share their experiences.

Another limitation is the inability to focus on other factors besides gender. While gender plays the predominant role in these women's experiences in academia, it is critical to point out that there are other factors at work as well. These include race, class, and age, which were briefly touched on throughout, however, not examined in depth as the study focused on gender specifically. However, continuing research could collect data more specifically connecting these intersectional factors and how they play into women's experience in academia.

A final limitation was the amount of information that had to be left out as it would be too revealing of participants' identities. Due to the need to maintain anonymity for this study, there were certain aspects of interviews that could not be included, such as background information and current positions at Butler. For survey results, departments and academic areas were also not included as it would have risked revealing faculty identities at a small institution like Butler. It is important to note, however, that specific departments or colleges could contribute to differing gender experiences. These experiences can vary depending on the leadership as well as the environment that is specific to that department or college. Thus, these results could be more enlightening in terms of factors that led to certain gender experiences of women faculty.

Conclusions

Several clear themes emerged as a result of examining the gender experiences of Butler women faculty. While there were many interesting discoveries throughout this research, the most prominent were concerns about pay, promotion, "invisible labor" in the workplace, and familial obligations. When asked if gender has affected their career in academia, almost 80% of surveyed

respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed. There are clearly aspects of the faculty experience at Butler that could use review in terms of gender equality.

In regard to the issue of pay, the main point brought up by participants was the lack of equality between pay of different genders in the same role. A recommendation for this would be to review the current policies regarding pay structure at Butler with a focus on the disparity between genders. It was mentioned that Butler instituted equity pay increases, however, this does not change anything for those who have received a lower salary than their male counterparts for years. These women faculty do not have the same amount in retirement contributions as the men who were hired at the same time. Also, salary transparency could help address this issue as it would not only shed more light on the compensation of faculty but also allow pay discrepancies to be assessed.

The promotion and tenure process at Butler includes an emphasis on the research and publication component. However, this is not always as easily obtained for women faculty as previously discussed in this paper. A recommendation for this would be to look at the current process for tenure and promotion in order to reassess the standards for those applying. There are differences in the type of work done by faculty, especially women faculty, and that should be recognized in conjunction with promotion and tenure. An example of new policies being put in place is at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis as they implemented new promotion and tenure options, which will now include diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work in faculty evaluations as of 2021 (Flaherty, 2021). Taking steps such as this and recognizing other aspects of being a professor aside from research and teaching, will begin to create a more equal environment for all academics.

The term “invisible labor” refers to the work that women faculty do that is not always recognized. This mainly includes increased service and care work that is performed on a daily basis without extra compensation or recognition. Butler women faculty that participated in this study suggested that the extra time and energy required for these activities often takes away from regular responsibilities. Therefore, a recommendation for Butler would be to reevaluate the job responsibilities that are being done within departments. These can be dispersed among all faculty members or there could be compensation for this “invisible labor” that is being done by so many women faculty.

Finally, a major theme is the issue of familial obligations, which affects all faculty with children, however, generally women faculty are the most affected. Women tend to take on the responsibilities of childcare and thus have to do this along with their full-time jobs. Especially with the pandemic, childcare has become a struggle for many. A recommendation to address this would be to open a childcare center on campus that would allow children of all faculty to attend during work hours. This would allow faculty with young children who are unable to find childcare, to focus on their classes during the day. The parental leave policy was a large topic of discussion as Butler has recently changed it to eight weeks of paid parental leave. However, while many were pleased with this new benefit, participants pointed out that this is not enough time to resume a full-time job with a newborn. A suggestion could be to make it a full semester of paid parental leave in order to make it easier for a parent to transition.

Overall, this research on gendered experiences of Butler University women faculty provided a variety of different insights. While there were both positive and negative responses to the experiences of women faculty, it is important to recognize that even a few negative experiences warrant a change. By hearing the stories of Butler women faculty, it is possible to

acknowledge the difference of experience that is had by these women. With this information the university and its departments are able to access the issues and hopefully work to resolve them. It is also important to recognize that these are experiences at Butler but also elsewhere. While Butler University has made some steps towards gender equality on campus, there are still many aspects that need to be dealt with as this research shows. However, the first step that must be taken is to ask the women faculty themselves what they need as they are the ones experiencing these inequalities every day.

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