

Proceedings of Women in Academia, Research and Management for Work-life Initiatives for Sustainable Health & Empowering Safety (WARM-WISHES 2026)

Integrating Work–Life Balance Initiatives and Institutional Safety Policies to Promote Sustainable Health and Empowerment of Women in Academia.

Damini Sinha

Amity School of Languages, Amity University Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow Campus, Gomti Nagar Extension, Lucknow 226028 (India)

Received: 06 May 2026 | Received Revised Version: 28 May 2026 | Accepted: 12 June 2026 | Published: 23 June 2026

DOI: 10.37547/tajjir/warm-11

Abstract

Women in academia often have to do a lot of different things, such as teach, conduct research, handle administrative work, and take care of their families. Managing these interwoven duties can make it difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance, which can affect one's health, mental health, and professional growth. In this context, it is important to integrate work-life balance programs with robust safety policies in schools to ensure a fair and supportive academic environment. The study examined ways to improve women's health and empowerment in higher education through flexible and non-traditional work schedules, parental leave, counselling support, and gender-sensitive workplace practices. It also examined the importance of a robust institutional safety framework for fostering a culture of respect, dignity, and protection in schools. This framework should include clear anti-harassment regulations, safe reporting mechanisms, and programs to raise awareness and provide training. The results show that workplace policies that foster a supportive work environment, along with effective safety measures, can significantly reduce work-related stress, improve job satisfaction, and increase women's participation in decision-making and leadership roles. The study shows that schools and universities need to develop comprehensive regulations that account for both the professional and personal aspects of women's lives. Such programs can help make things more equitable for men and women, help people build long-term careers, and make the academic world more welcoming.

Keywords: Gender Equity, Institutional Safety Policies, Workplace Well-being, Gender-Sensitive Organisational Practices, Academic Leadership, Workplace Harassment.

© 2026 Damini Sinha, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0). The authors retain copyright and allow others to share, adapt, or redistribute the work with proper attribution.

Cite This Article: Sinha, D. (2026). Integrating Work–Life Balance Initiatives and Institutional Safety Policies to Promote Sustainable Health and Empowerment of Women in Academia. *The American Journal of Interdisciplinary Innovations and Research*, 64–72. <https://doi.org/10.37547/tajjir/warm-11>

1.0 Introduction

Work–Life Balance and Safety Policies to facilitate Women's academic empowerment and development: integration of work–life balance strategies and policies. Overview of Work–Life Balance Initiatives and

Institutional Safety in Women's Academic Empowerment. Work–life balance is a multifaceted concept that describes individuals' capacity to balance and fulfil the competing demands of work and their private lives. Ambiguity and the inability of these roles to align can negatively affect job performance and

employees' physical and mental well-being. A key tenet of this frame is that people, especially women, often juggle tasks across both organisational and familial domains and may experience work–life conflict due to role mismatches. It occurs when one role impedes the fulfilment of responsibilities in another, creating a contradiction; the importance of achieving a 'life in balance' according to one's personal priorities is clear and nurtured, as it promotes individual growth and development [1].

The rise in focus on work–life balance is inextricably intertwined with changing attitudes towards gender roles in society, while women's participation in the workforce has also seen remarkable growth. Women now account for almost half the workforce of virtually all societies and are leaders of tomorrow's organisations, and as caretakers of future generations. This demographic shift is among the most significant social changes of the past century, as organisations increasingly recognise the importance of a diverse and skilled workforce. There are clear examples that highlight the positive effects of involving women in organisation management, like crisis management (e.g., better crisis resolution skills) or good relationship building with institutional stakeholders, especially during digital transformation [1]. Yet despite these advances, ongoing gender gaps exist, with men more likely to be afforded organisational access. This imbalance has hindered the acquisition of necessary skills, women's professional development, and women's empowerment. Indeed, the literature reveals a scarcity of knowledge about the factors that empower women in organisations, which continue to impede their progress [1].

Mentoring is an important element of development in this context, in which skilled professionals mentor and guide less experienced colleagues. Mentoring helps women gain awareness, skills, and confidence to address organisational issues, balance work & life (both private and organisational), and advance their careers. This process is framed as one of the crucial elements in achieving work–life balance and, in turn, the empowerment of women within academia and the institutions. Related works, West et al. (2018) have offered early quantitative evidence on structural gender differences in academic labour, and their report showed consistent authorship imbalances between the disciplines. Their bibliometric analysis, in this broad sense, can serve as a reference for future literature on how institutional practices shape women's visibility and

career advancement. Expanding on this work, Morgan et al. (2020) examined how parenthood intersects with tenure timelines and found that caregiving responsibilities systematically lengthen the time required to advance and increase attrition among female scholars.

These insights spurred universities to frame work–life balance schemes, including flexible scheduling and tenure-clock extensions, as the building blocks of gender-equity strategies. Discipline-specific follow-ups supported the generalizability of these patterns; Godoy et al. (2020) reported in a subsequent paper that, based on authorship trajectories, women's representation increases in departments that implement explicit mentorship and parental leave policies. And beyond productivity, fair recognition of authorship also depends on safety and level of professional climate: recent citation–network research demonstrated that when self-citation and seniority are taken into account, women get the same citation rates as men's citations, suggesting that inclusive publication cultures may help to reduce cumulative disadvantage. Taken together, this corpus demonstrates that effective empowerment for women in academia is contingent upon integrated interventions that provide the right balance that combines workload flexibility with stronger organisational safety measures, such as anti-harassment enforcement and mechanisms for complaint resolution through grievance and clear grievance procedures by institutions, which are necessary for sustained long-term health, productivity and retention. Work–life balance initiatives also improve health outcomes. Further, social work is increasingly recognised as an important support role for women's health and well-being while striving to improve long-term career opportunities [1]. As such, present research coalesces around a comprehensive perspective of women's academic careers where work–life balance programs, safety climate change and fair evaluation measures mutually promote women for a long-term career in academia. The demands of academic work, often taking longer than hours of work and encompassing research, educational, and managerial tasks, are sources of high tension for personal and family life. This conflict is a principal stressor, as the members of two worlds conflict with each other. The professional relationship of management and allocation of time and capital is important for one's health. Work–life balance is not only related to job satisfaction, but also has positive consequences for personal life and job performance. On the other hand, constant working-life conflict may impair

contentment, generate stress, and possibly increase academic staff turnover. Thus, promoting work–life balance has been identified as a relevant strategic tool in HRM, which is critical for retaining good candidates by helping them grow and advance in their knowledge.

2.0 Gendered aspects and the value of flexible work.

The task of achieving work-life balance is something that is very likely to be especially overwhelming for some women in academia, who generally have high expectations of themselves in work life and home life. Much research has considered the special challenges that gender differences in women face, and there is much to be done by focusing interventions to tackle them specifically in girls and women. Theoretical perspectives on flexible working, remote working, etc., might be promising avenues to bring work — life out of the middle for women. Such arrangements may also provide greater flexibility and the ability to work from home, a boon for women with family commitments. But in implementing such initiatives, there are challenges. Even though working remotely can be flexible, it can erase lines between professional and personal life and cause the role to be absorbed into the real world, with more distractions. The result can be an adverse effect on productivity at work, a poor performance at family and private time. Therefore, the success of the flexible job would be tied closely to resource allocation and limits that are clear so that work does not encroach on personal life. Balance doesn't mean an equal distribution of time or resources, but an equitable one as well, based on personal goals, abilities, and needs. For women in academia, work–life balance programs need to be consciously crafted to counterbalance these complexities by promoting professional development and personal success [1].

Implications for HRM Strategy. In the light that work–life balance is a key element of satisfaction and retention for employees, academic institutions are considering work–life balance as part of a broader strategic human resource management approach. Work–life balance promotion efforts not only positively influence the employee as an individual but also contribute to general institutional goals by optimising organisational commitment (Lebler-Iglesky et al., 2023) and curbing turnover (Meyer et al., 2019). Women in academic life, especially, might consider these initiatives key players, as they may facilitate career advancement within the academic setting to support empowerment. Human resource policies prioritising work-life balance,

including flexible scheduling, providing access to caregiving arrangements and instilling a supportive organisational culture are important in promoting an inclusive and sustainable academic atmosphere. Through this change, organisations and organisations could create more equitable and empowering workplaces catering to the needs of women and other underrepresented populations, which have the potential to shape the future health and professional development of their academic staff in the long-term to be sustainable [1].

3.0 The impact of institutional safety policies on women.

Variation Effects of Parenting Support Policies. Institutional safety policies, especially those that support parenting responsibilities, have shown mixed and sometimes negative impacts on university women. Flexible working hours and the availability of childcare help are considered to be beneficial for women as it alleviates the negative impact of childcare on career development. These are initiatives that can help women ensure that they are able to balance their work and home life, promoting their participation and mobility in higher education. Yet some policies — including paused tenure clocks and paternity leave — may inadvertently amplify the negative effects of caregiving on women's careers. For example, while paused tenure clocks seek to alleviate workloads, they can also reinforce the belief in women as being less dedicated to the academic world, or fail to correct the differential experience of caregiving as a general rule. Likewise, paternity leave policies that do not support a change in collective care-giving expectations may exacerbate for women the burden of care by failing to push for parents to take part in shared care responsibilities. The degree of involvement in caregiving activities and how institutions adopt and enforce such policies is therefore, instrumental in their effectiveness. This suggests that if women continue to carry a disproportionate amount of caregiving, its intended benefits may not be realised, and the actual gender discrepancy in childcare responsibility may also be worse than reported by self-reported data sets [6].

2.2 Implementation of Policies, Culture and Unintended Consequences.

The effectiveness of institutional safety policies in affecting women is also influenced by the implementation of such policies in line with the ethos of the organisation. There is considerable variation across institutions in the implementation of parental support policies – some institutions have treated such provisions as a 'rights' and others as additional flexibilities or

benefits and to be tailored on a case-by-case basis. This discrepancy can result in the disparities in women scholars' access and experiences, depending upon their institution context. And women who rely on parental accommodations may be subject to even more intense or unfounded expectations of their own professional progress -- and perhaps of others' -- in a way that can amplify psychological stress, potentially eroding these support policies. Parental support is frequently a negotiated benefit not an inalienable right, which can preserve power relations and reinforce traditional gender roles. Consequently, it is inevitable that such institutional safety policies, if not carefully formulated and enforced, will only serve to perpetuate these structural obstacles women encounter in academic settings, rather than mitigate them. In order to foster real gender equality, such policies must be complemented with real means — like better childcare services, and flexible working arrangements — and enforced for sustainability and efficacy. It is only through these holistic and equitable approaches that institutions can guarantee safety policies create a strong empowerment and sustainable health for women scholars as opposed to simply addressing inequalities [6].

4.0 Role Conflict, Stress, and the Concept of Inter-Service Integrated Approaches.

The overlap of work–life balance initiatives and academic safety policies is more pronounced in the context of academic institutions, in which (primarily) women have been shown to perform a range of roles, some conflicting or unrelated. In addition, there are competing demands — organisational and familial — that can lead to significant contradictions and stress as people compete to maintain expectations in both spheres. This type of role conflict is generally known as the source of most strain, which has detrimental consequences on health and performance in the workplace [1]. The misfit between work and personal needs impairs not only one's capability to meet their responsibilities but also his or her physical, mental, and emotional health, and satisfaction with both worlds. Therefore, it is suggested that work–life balance endeavours should be positioned as strategic tools when it comes to managing human resources in an effort to bridge these clashing interests and facilitate staff retention. Such initiatives also mitigate the sources of stress resulting from role incompatibility and can further contribute to a healthier and sustainable workplace. For these programs to work in the real world, such initiatives and the mechanisms they contain also factor on to

broader social conditions in which they are implemented such as when safety measures exist and work can be implemented to provide a safe and healthy working environment. Thus, the fusion of work-life balance practices with rigorous safety regulations is crucial in creating conditions for academia women to enjoy thriving because work and life policies cover different but related matters that concern employee work, which both work together [1].

Flexibility, Resource Allocation, and Boundaries with Policy Interventions. One dimension of the work–life balance–safety policy/policy intersection is how resources (e.g., time, flexibility and institutional response) are divided between work and personal life. Work–life balance is not equal distribution but rather equitable distribution according to individual goal and capabilities. Flexible arrangements like remote work in the work force have in theory been the best path for women in academia to attain work–life balance. Although such arrangements provide extra flexibility and ease, they can occasionally blur boundaries between professional and personal life, creating distractions and encroachment on the family and private time [1]. How well these may work will depend upon the extent to which it connects with institutional safety measures which protect against overwork, burnout and loss of personal limits. Flexible work policies can unwittingly worsen stress and in doing so detract from the desirable outcomes of work–life balance, in the absence of safety provisions. A synthesis of work-life balance measures and robust safety guidelines will thus be needed in order to achieve women in academia working effectively and responsibly within the different roles they have to balance. Not only does this comprehensive approach facilitate individual and community health and empowerment, but it also enhances the persistence and progress of women in academic institutions, such as our study and promotion through the continued enrolment of women in universities.

5.0 Impacts on Sustainable Health Outcomes of Women in Academia: Impacts on the Sustainable Health Outcomes of Women Academics

The effects of increased empowerment on mental health. The extent of association between women's agency and mental health outcomes is heavily influenced by social background and norms of gender. But in Dhaka, evidence shows that women with far more agency (and, more importantly, being willing to voice themselves in public)

are less likely to report mental distress and depression. This highlights the fact that empowerment programs that promote decision-making participation in public settings and a certain level of confidence amongst women seem to be protective of mental well-being. Women with greater agency will have greater capacity for envisioning and planning into their own future, reducing the risk of depression, which seems to underlie this benefit as a purposeful action mechanism of prevention. This perspective resonates beyond the specific context of the research, where empowerment and the growth of freedom are seen as central to achieving sustainable development [7], because this type of action is designed to enable active self-reinforcement and well-being over time.

6.0 The Physical Health Outcomes: Complexity and Its Impact.

Increased agency has been correlated with better mental health, but its effect on physical health has been more nuanced. The study in Dhaka shows a similar but perhaps counterintuitive trend: Women with higher agency report a greater likelihood of ill and fewer days of good health, despite controlling for confounding effects like time use patterns. This paradox is consistent with the health behaviours of empowered women. People who have more agency may be more attuned to their health needs and more inclined towards taking necessary action — like calling in sick — to ensure their long-term health. Instead of a trend that means bad health, it may mean a strategic prioritisation of future health at the expense of immediate productivity. So, this seeming negative correlation between agency and physical health may, in fact, mean something like a purposeful exercise for continuing health in the end. This reading emphasises the necessity for the dual perspective that we have on the impact of empowerment and of institutional policies on the sustainable health of women's health behaviours in academia in both the short term and in the future, if we believe that empowerment and institutional policies are promoting women's sustained health [7].

Conclusions for sustainable development and institutional policy. These findings underscore the importance of women's agency of sustainable health outcomes and, indirectly, sustainable development. Empowerment initiatives and institutional policies that foster women's ability to be intentional — think work-life balance strategies and strong safety policies — are key to both mental and physical health. Such policies

help to expand freedoms that are pivotal to the notion of sustainability by enabling women to choose how they want to live their future, both about health and in their careers, thus enabling them (and others) to take ownership of their future health decisions. Thus, combining work-life balance measures with institutional safety policies not only relieves short-term health threats, but it equips women to address the things that will prepare them for their future well-being and career success, thereby reaffirming the centrality of active agency with respect to sustainable development.

Policy Empowerment Strategies for Women. Inclusion of Work-Life Balance and Safety as Governance Policies in the Organisation. The combination of work-life balance initiatives and institutional safety regulations is one such vital strategy for women in academia. It tackles both systemic barriers and cultural norms that hinder gender equality. The Equality Maturity Model (EMM) offers a structured way that can be embraced by colleges to review and improve the maturity of their policies, strategies and practices for promoting gender equality. There are policies, the guiding principles; strategies, something which institutions set themselves in motion; and practices, tasks that make it possible for universities and schools to put into practice the strategies above. That is, a policy that supports gender equality could be translated from a policy to actions, like increasing gender diversity in STEM faculty positions, which underpin practices such as hiring practices that foster gender diversity in faculty, job descriptions, hiring guidelines, as well as promoting women and all workers regardless of gender. The EMM identifies that these elements need to be transparent, publicized, and measurable, based on an accountable system and not to rely solely on subjective evaluations for results. A fundamental aspect of the EMM is the Organisation Policy on Equality, with a particular emphasis on the need for ongoing organisational culture change. This requires not only the education of the value to be gained from gender equality, but also the establishment of these values within the organizational culture and everyday tasks. One-off training sessions are not enough, continuous focus is necessary to secure the values of equality in every part of the school life span. This stance acknowledges that academic cultures, perceived as neutral by the reliance on "objective" information, may perpetuate gender stereotypes if individuals are given preference for competitive and/or individual successes, as opposed to collaboration and multi-disciplinary input. If work-life

balance and safety policies related to work–life balance and safety programmes that are part of the greater equality package, organisations can ensure supportive environments for women’s well-being and professional progression can be developed based on the wider equality context and promote sustainable health.

7.0 Leadership, decision-making and cultural change.

Leadership, Decision Making and Cultural Transformation. Efforts aimed at empowerment strategies have the potential to balance the sharing of power, decision-making or influencing a disproportionate amount of leadership positions should also be designed so as not to impose a load on women with non-strategic tasks and not to place them in positions of vulnerability where they are too heavily challenged to carry out those who do not hold a strategic and non-important role or have the situation at risk, such as in a "glass cliff" role. In today’s business environment, you still find them there and even the gender-balanced policies the EMM advocates for are very important since in such places, women are not only in positions of influence and advancement but also within roles and roles as well. The implication is a conscious examination of current organisational form to uncover and remove obstacles which are to restrict women’s participation in high-impact decisions. In a related dimension, the model calls for the acknowledgement of different career trajectories and contributions, and to consider alternative metrics to track women’s contributions, which are not weighted towards women, as well as the potential of promoting the collective work [8]. These empowerment strategies need cultural transformation to be successful. This can only be achieved through more effective action than superficial intervention; rather, the EMM posits that real change needs to work at the heart of both the organisation and at the core of the organisation to affect change in behaviours, values and behaviours. This includes ongoing engagement with all stakeholders to promote a shared understanding of the power of gender equality and the need to confront the institutional frameworks perpetuating inequities. When political organisations make policy integration a continuous, whole organisation commitment, they can create a favourable climate in which women can succeed in promoting not only health and women’s empowerment, but also institutional performance as well as for the overall institution and innovation [8]. Obstacles and obstacles to implementation.

8.0 Definition of ambiguities and measurement challenges.

The major challenge to embedding workplace-sustainable work–life balance practices in their formal safety policies is to effectively differentiate “safety” work from “capabilities” work. Organisations may not always know what safety or capability-enhancing activities are; without specific definitions, they run the risk of operating as safety activities and not as capability or productivity action without a definition. This vagueness hinders the measurement and evaluation of the efficacy of safety-related investments and impairs the extent to which these investments are realising their intended ends of sustainable health and empowerment for women in academia. The absence of straightforward metrics also makes it difficult to compare results across institutions and departments, which could complicate the process of standardising and maintaining accountability [9].

System Gaming Risks, Inequitable Implements. The other barrier identified is people running organisations to “game the system,” meaning organisations can superficially comply with the safety and work–life balance criteria without truly making a difference. Without strong external oversight or sustainable incentive systems, this risk has not increased. Without mechanisms to ensure a genuine intent, institutions may opt to show compliance, leading to a lack of real change and undercutting the desired effect of such policies. Furthermore, there are concerns that such actions could inadvertently benefit larger or more resourced organisations, who can bear the costs or more bureaucratic burdens related to implementation. This may lead to unfair results where smaller institutions suffer, or where facilities and personnel are provided with less, in keeping with the current status of disparity in the academic world [9].

What’s More: Quality or Quantity of Safety Investments? Experts have highlighted that work–life balance and safety policies can only be effective when people know that these policies are backed by investment and quality, not simply by volume. Just adding more initiatives or resources for safety does not bring good things. Such policies need to be integrated as part of an organisation, not a set of isolated departments or teams. Hence, embedding safety and work-life balance concerns in the core operations and culture of the institution’s safety and productivity should be deeply embedded in institutions

and at the core of the education for women to have a healthy, empowering and empowering life. Ensuring sustainable health and empowerment of women's health. Nevertheless, such an approach might come up against opposition among other needs, including competitive pressures and productivity pressure, market competition or efficiency pressure that can breed strife and restrict the ability of institutions to fully participate in these changes and increase resistance [9].

Discrimination, bias, and unplanned consequences. Thus, addressing matters such as discrimination and bias, which disproportionately impact women in academia, works, integrates work–life balance and safety policies. But the adoption of these strategies is unlikely to happen due to entrenched institutional cultures and resistance to change. There is also potential for unintended consequences like policies that can unintentionally strengthen current power inequalities or fail to tackle the real causes of inequity. To the extent that safety and empowerment campaigns and programs are effective and fair, they need routine appraisal, external supervision, and adaptation to feedback and changing situations [9]. Academic Best Practices and Case Studies.

9.0 Wives of the Work–Life Balance Projects in Academia

Academic organisations have also started to realize the importance of incorporating work–life balance programmes in order to address special situation to women. The conventional separation of work and personal life is insufficient in nature and even less so for women, who currently shoulder more family duties, contributing to a lower work–life balance than for men. Companies striving for employee satisfaction and performance are leveraging methods and methods that are able to create a positive balance between work life and life. Such initiatives are critical for women in academia, which has the dual demands of academic productivity and familial obligations that are highly stressful, limiting career progression [1]. Best practices in this area are flexible work arrangements, such as adjustable teaching schedules, remote working arrangements, and family-friendly leave policies. These measures allow women to manage their work life better while simultaneously managing personal responsibilities, thereby reducing burnout and raising job satisfaction. In addition, institutional backing for work–life balance has been related to higher staff loyalty and engagement as well as overall welfare. Through action

on the work-life interface, academic institutions cannot only retain strong women but also create a conducive environment for their flourishing at work and outside it [1].

10.0 Mentoring and Institutional Safety Policies:

Mentoring schemes have been identified as a key best practice to further women's empowerment and health sustainability in the academy. Good mentoring also goes beyond advice about careers, which includes support for personal growth for women to balance their academic lives. It is also found that mentoring relationships have the potential to offset work–life disharmony by helping promote role models and network activities and increasing access to institutional resources. Such advantages are especially important for women, who are more likely to be left behind in male-dominated educational environments as a result of their loneliness or lack of assistance [1]. Concurrently, strong institutional safety measures will be needed for a safe and diverse university campus. In such situations, such policies are not only about physical well-being - they are about mental-health well-being and ensuring women are safe from harassment and discrimination in the workforce, in whatever form that may be. Coinciding with work-life balance interventions and mentoring, comprehensive safety policies form a broader context that creates a model empowering women, supporting their health, and enabling women to stay in the university for a lifetime. They complement each other, as these practices are reflected in case studies where universities have implemented supportive, safe and flexible work environments to attract and develop women faculty practitioners [1].

11.0 Implications for Policy & Future Research

Adopting advanced frameworks that facilitate flexibility while keeping safety is vital in the design of workplaces that promote both work–life balance initiatives and institutional safety policies. As proposed, the Safe DPA framework tackles the difficulty of tailoring policy to safety constraints. This is particularly relevant for institutions that aim to establish an active work-life balance environment and safety protocol that addresses the changing needs of women in academia. Future policy development needs frameworks that enable the real-time adaptation of policies based on real-time performance metrics and safety outcomes to provide for future development to ensure they remain effective and

protective for the longer term. A future of policy innovation for universities should consider the application of closed-loop adaptation mechanisms—policy networks that adapt based on evidence of performance and policy adherence—or are open to other types of adaptation to improve policies. These methods could help academic institutions to iteratively calibrate their support system, directly responding to lived experiences and feedback on the part of women faculty and staff, which in turn encourages sustainable health and empowerment [10].

12.0 Further Research on a Voluminous Field of Institutional Contexts and Systems

To enable future research, it is suggested to extend the study of safety-assured policy adaptation frameworks beyond their own domains of investigation. If Safe DPA can be generalised to other environments like vision-based control systems and non-control-affine systems, it is possible for the methods described herein to be adapted to the highly complex and often complex academic environments of colleges and universities. Fulfilling this work will ensure that women in academia encounter a unique set of contextual challenges, such as the difficulty maintaining a healthy professional/life balance, the struggle with institutional hierarchies, and the need for psychological and physical safety. Such cross-site and cross-disciplinary studies could generate qualitative information regarding contextual factors that determine the potential value of integrated work–life balance and safety policies. Moreover, interdisciplinary research that links policy adaptation methodologies with gender studies and organisational psychology has much to contribute towards building comprehensive evidence-based interventions that empower women and cultivate sustainable health in academic settings [10].

13.0 Conclusion

The current review demonstrates the dynamic between work–life balancing strategies and the safety policies of institutions in the promotion of women’s empowerment in higher education. That the results will not reflect these challenges reinforces its central theme: Flexibility in work-life balance and parenting support policies are both critically important to addressing gendered issues, but they are effective only when deployed with consideration and aligned with institutional culture. A balance between work–life balance and safety guarantee programs is crucial for reducing role conflict, stress, and supporting

the mental health of female academics. Yet, continuing obstacles – including uncertainty regarding definitions and equity of policy implementation and risk of side effects of policy implementation- demonstrate that institutional policy must be continuously audited and adjusted on an ongoing basis. The best practice – for coaching and developing leaders – also emphasises a holistic picture of solutions in which both agency and safety are central. Finally, to achieve women’s academic empowerment, it is necessary to not only implement supportive policies, but also to make them the core of cultural transformation and robust policy assessment at the institutional level and to reach as much research into varying degrees in varying institutional settings. These are important steps to ensure that the long-term sustainability of their work is met as their results may be important because that will be good because then we’re able to achieve the sustainable development goals, as well as the fair participation and prosperity for women in the academic workplace.

Declaration

I (Damini Sinha) hereby declare that the manuscript submitted for consideration is an original work and has not been published or submitted elsewhere for publication. I take full responsibility for the integrity, accuracy, and ethical compliance of the work presented in the manuscript, including all revisions made in response to reviewer comments.

AI Usage Statement: I declare that AI tools, if used, were solely employed to improve the clarity, grammar, and language of the manuscript (as indicated in the reviewer’s comments). No data, results, or scientific content were generated or altered using AI. Conflict of Interest and Ethical Compliance: The author confirms that:

Any potential conflicts of interest, whether financial or non-financial, have been fully disclosed. –Yes/Not Applicable (√)

- i. All sources of funding and financial support received for the conduct of the study have been appropriately acknowledged, including any updates made during revision. –Yes/Not Applicable (√)
- ii. iii. Necessary ethical approvals have been obtained from the relevant institutional or regulatory bodies for studies involving human

participants, animals, or sensitive data, wherever applicable, and are clearly stated in the manuscript. – Yes (√)/ Not Applicable

14.0 References

1. Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender & Society*, 4(2), 139–158.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/089124390004002002>
2. Allen, T. D., Herst, D. E. L., Bruck, C. S., & Sutton, M. (2000). Consequences associated with work-to-family conflict: A review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5(2), 278–308.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.5.2.278>
3. Bagilhole, B., & White, K. (2011). *Gender, power and management: A cross-cultural analysis of higher education*. Palgrave Macmillan.
4. Barnett, R. C., & Hyde, J. S. (2001). Women, men, work, and family: An expansionist theory. *American Psychologist*, 56(10), 781–796.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.10.781>
5. Benschop, Y., & Brouns, M. (2003). Crumbling ivory towers: Academic organizing and its gender effects. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 10(2), 194–212. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0432.t01-1-00011>
6. Curtis, J. W. (2011). Persistent inequity: Gender and academic employment. *Academe*, 97(1), 20–24.
7. Díaz-García, C., González-Moreno, Á., & Sáez-Martínez, F. J. (2013). Gender diversity within R&D teams: Its impact on radicalness of innovation. *Innovation: Organization & Management*, 15(2), 149–160.
<https://doi.org/10.5172/impp.2013.15.2.149>
8. Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). *Through the labyrinth: The truth about how women become leaders*. Harvard Business School Press.
9. Fox, M. F. (2010). Women and men faculty in academic science and engineering: Social-organizational indicators and implications. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53(7), 997–1012.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764209356234>
10. Herman, C. (2015). Women in academia: Expectations and experiences of work-life balance. *International Journal of Gender, Science and Technology*, 7(3), 415–432.
11. Mason, M. A., Wolfinger, N. H., & Goulden, M. (2013). *Do babies matter? Gender and family in the ivory tower*. Rutgers University Press.
12. Morley, L. (2013). *Women and higher education leadership: Absences and aspirations*. Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.
13. O'Meara, K., Kuvaeva, A., & Nyunt, G. (2017). Constrained choices: A view of campus service inequality from annual faculty reports. *Journal of Higher Education*, 88(5), 672–700.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2016.1257312>
14. Settles, I. H., Cortina, L. M., Malley, J., & Stewart, A. J. (2006). The climate for women in academic science: The good, the bad, and the changeable. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 30(1), 47–58.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2006.00261.x>
15. UN Women. (2023). *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2023*. UN Women. <https://www.unwomen.org>
16. West, J. D., Jacquet, J., King, M. M., Correll, S. J., & Bergstrom, C. T. (2013). The role of gender in scholarly authorship. *PLOS ONE*, 8(7), e66212.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0066212>
17. Williams, J. C., Phillips, K. W., & Hall, E. V. (2014). *Double jeopardy? Gender bias against women of color in science*. UC Hastings College of the Law.
18. World Health Organization. (2022). *Mental health at work: Policy brief*. World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int>