

Female Faculty Navigating Professional Journeys in Higher Education of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Farooq Abdullah¹ Riffat Sultana² Nida Nisar³

¹ Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST), Mirpur, AJK, Pakistan.

✉ farooq.abdullah@must.edu.pk

² Visiting Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST), Mirpur, AJK, Pakistan.

✉ riffat.sociology@must.edu.pk

³ Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST), Mirpur, AJK, Pakistan.

✉ nida.soc@must.edu.pk

This article may be cited as Abdullah, F., Sultana, R., & Nisar, N. (2025). Female Faculty Navigating Professional Journeys in Higher Education of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. *ProScholar Insights*, 4(2), 179-187. <https://doi.org/10.55737/psi.2025b-42093>

Abstract: Academia is often perceived as a meritocratic and egalitarian space, yet it remains laden with structural barrier that disproportionately affect women in their professional journeys within higher education institutions. This study explored these barriers in the context of higher education in AJK. We used quantitative research design and employed cross-sectional research method in the positivistic tradition. We collected data from a sample of 35 women academicians from one public sector co-educational university in AJK by means of simple random sampling technique. We employed a questionnaire of 21 items in data collection. The findings revealed that the challenges women face in their professional careers are structurally embedded within gendered institutional norms of higher education, as theorized by Acker (1990). Experiences of alienation, work-family conflict, the glass ceiling, low self-esteem, and exclusion from decision-making are not isolated issues but reflect deeply ingrained patriarchal values within the higher education system of AJK.

Keywords: Higher Education, Women, Academicians, Professional, Alienation, Glass Ceiling



Corresponding Author:

Farooq Abdullah

Lecturer, Department of Sociology,
Mirpur University of Science and
Technology (MUST), Mirpur, AJK,
Pakistan.

✉ farooq.abdullah@must.edu.pk

Introduction

Academia, often idealized as a meritocratic and egalitarian space, remains burdened by structural barrier that disproportionately affect women in their professional journeys within higher education institutions (Podreka, Gaber, & Smrdelj, 2024; Seron, Silbey, Cech, & Rubineau, 2018). Despite global progress in gender equality and increased female enrolment, Quick (2015) noted that women's representation in academic power and tenured positions remains low—particularly in developing countries like Pakistan. Joel (2019) emphasized that addressing the structural factors shaping these trajectories is essential to overcoming systematic inequalities that hinder women's academic advancement and contribution in knowledge production.

Studies by Daminger (2020) and Stokas (2023) revealed that structural dimensions—such as institutional, cultural, and policy-related framework—shape academic environment and influence career progression. Parr (2023) identified key structural barriers, including alienation, lack encouragement of women, the glass ceiling, delayed marriages, work family conflict, exclusion from decision-making, and low self-esteem. Foxx (2025) and James (2014) argued that higher education structure is often imbued with patriarchal norms and gendered expectations, reinforcing male dominance and marginalizing women in both overt and subtle ways.

Lester (2006) stated that women in higher education are frequently alienated from the institutional culture, decision making and power status. This means that women are marginalized through exclusion while limiting leadership opportunities and progress by means of stereotypes. In spite of good qualification and potential, Owens (2024) added, women still feel alienated or outsiders in male dominated academic spaces where are boys club

dominated the academic profession. Williams (2023) found that such exclusionary practices often lead women to emotional exhaustion, low job satisfaction, and even withdrawal of aspirations.

Although the institutional policies seem neutral seemingly, however these are always men centred norms that ignore the specific barrier women face (De Welde & Stepnick, 2023). These included childcare, mentorship, and gender sensitive policies are lacking women to become more isolated in higher education spaces. O'Connor (2020) noted that women's contribution is often less valued authenticating the Acker's (1990) claim of gendered organization that disadvantaged women systematically.

In the patriarchal context of Pakistan, Noorani and Shakir (2021) emphasized that women's alienation is surrounded by the cultural expectations of meeting the demands of family over career. Likewise, Haeri (2002) added that sociocultural expectations often limit their mobility and participation in academic growth. It is imperative to note that this alienation is not individual rather than embedded in institutional structure that require transformation within the institution to ensure their inclusion (Afzal, Arshad, & Naseem, 2024).

Sarwar and Imran (2019) stated that women's encouragement in academic remained a critical barrier in structural dimension of academia. Abdullah and Ullah (2022) revealed, although women grew to some extent, but their journey is obstructed by the institutional culture that failed to actively sport and motivate them in academic progression. Normally, Abdullah and Nisar (2024) added, women feel discouraged in pursuing their academic tasks due to persistence of male dominance. Such discouragement is owing to the absence of mentoring and networking programs and gender sensitive policies that less likely recognise the women's contribution in academia (Abdullah, Matloob, & Malik, 2024).

Besides, Abdullah et al. (2024) highlighted in another study that sociocultural expectations further exacerbated the situation, particularly in patriarchal societies women are always expected to prioritise their families. Such burden often leads to stagnation of career and even withdrawal from academic career. In addition, lack of senior female role models and supportive women lowers the aspirations of women from being a successful academician (Abdullah, Nisar, & Malik, 2024). It is pertinent to mention here that without institutional mechanism of mentoring, encouragement and promotion, women's professional journey remains constrained and gendered. Abdullah, Nisar, and Ahmed (2025) suggested that to address this structural gap is essential to foster gender equity and harness the full potential of women in academia.

Bain and Cummings (2000) described invisible barriers of glass ceiling that shaped the structural dimensions of women academics' careers in academia. These systematic obstacles prevented women academics from growing in the academic and leadership positions despite having qualifications and research publications. Horner (2004) and Peterson (2016) found that most of the opportunities are skewed in favour of male faculty through informal networks, biased evaluations and male centric norms.

In countries like Pakistan, Imran (2023) noted that these barriers are further reinforced by the patriarchal norms and their enforcement that limit women from mentorship. Fakhr (2018) noted that women are often stuck in the mid careers academic roles while having limited access to power structures including research funding which limit their professional growth. Arifeen (2015) further unveiled that policies may exist, but the issue remains with the execution.

Fakhr and Messenger (2020) said that glass ceiling perpetuated gendered hierarchies in higher education and contributed to women's underrepresentation in higher positions. Yousaf (2018) suggested structural transformation to address the inclusive criteria for women compared to men to dismantle the discriminatory norms.

Delayed marriages are one of the reasons that significantly influenced the career transitions of women academicians. Loughran and Zissimopoulos (2004) argued that women pursuing the academic careers are with often delayed marriages because their focus often remain on their studies, research, and professional advancements. While in patriarchal societies, Jones (2007) added that early marriages are considered normative due to cultural resistance and social scrutiny.

Arooj, Iqbal, and Khan (2025) identified various reasons of postponing the marriages by women academics. These include family pressures, stigmas, and most importantly the assumptions about choices in these patriarchal societies



like Pakistan. Furthermore, Epstein (2022) stated that institutions rarely acknowledged the gendered realities of balanced academic demands and societal expectations of marriages and family life. He and Wu (2021) asserted that women indulge in the conflicting roles and could not navigate themselves without any adequate support at home as well as universities. However, Di Nallo and Lipps (2023) contended, delayed marriages support women to achieve their early academic goals, but they are also exposed to the structural and cultural conflict that shaped their professional careers.

Miller and Riley (2022) conducted a study on work-family conflict that significantly influences the women academicians' career transitions in higher education. Magadley (2021) added that this conflict arising from the demand of academic work to publish research, teachings, and administrative duties, significantly clashes with family responsibilities of child rearing and household duties. In patriarchal societies, James-McCarthy, Brooks-McCarthy, and Walker (2021) stated that women are expected to prioritise their families over career. Thus, make it difficult for them to meet the rigid expectations of academic career.

Acker (1990) highlighted that higher education typically operated in male dominated model that assumed uninterrupted career trajectories and overlooked the caregiving responsibilities. Consequently, Horta and Tang (2023) discussed that women experienced delayed promotions, opted part time work, withdrawal of career, leading to uneven career progression and hence, contribute to their underrepresentation. Rosa (2022) sceptically emphasized the absence of institutional support flexible hours, family structure and childcare facilities on campus further intensified this conflict. Liang (2025) highlighted that work family conflict is not only personal issue but a structural challenge that affected professional journey of women, their performance, and career transitions.

A key structural issue faced by women in their absence from the decision-making roles in academia that influence their career aspiration in higher education (Bracken, Allen, & Dean, 2023). They further stated that governance structure in academia is often male dominated that limit women's influences on policy related issues of promotions, recruitment, workload distribution, and research funding. De Welde and Stepnick (2023) also stated women's exclusion is due to failure of institutional policies and practices to address the women's issues in professional journey.

Abdullah, Matloob, and Malik (2024) highlighted the absence of women in decision-making processes and the poor implementation of gender sensitive policies, such as flexible work hours, mentoring services, and family support system. Hakiem (2022) further noted that women face limited opportunities for professional development, slower promotions, job dissatisfaction, and even withdrawal. This marginalization is reinforced by the lack of female role models, weakened aspirations and persistent male-dominated leadership. Similarly, Li and Horta (2022) argue that structural exclusion not only hinders women's career progression but also threatens institutional diversity and innovation.

Self-esteem of women is often overlooked in higher education (Thelma & Ngulube, 2024). This structural factor also influences their career transition of women due to systematic biases, limited recognition, and persistence of underrepresentation. Quick (2015) argued that low self-esteem badly affects the confidence with fear of being failure in male dominated academic structure where women internalized the societal and institutional messages questioning their competence (Yousaf, 2018), discouragement from promotions (Epstein, 2022) and research and senior academic positions (Abdullah & Ullah, 2016). These psychological barriers are not purely personal rather than reinforced by the structural inequalities included biased performance evaluation, lacking mentoring and exclusion from decision making networks (James-McCarthy et al., 2021).

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in feminist institutionalism and the theory of gendered organizations (Acker, 1990), which assert that institutional structures are not gender-neutral but systematically shaped by patriarchal norms that privilege men and marginalize women. Academia, though portrayed as a merit-based space, is embedded with structural barriers—such as the glass ceiling, work-family conflict, and exclusion from decision-making—that disproportionately hinder women's academic progression. These structures are reflected in formal policies and informal cultures that normalize male-dominant networks, reinforce gender stereotypes, and overlook the specific challenges faced by women. The concept of structural dimensions includes institutional, cultural, and policy-based factors that define women's



professional experiences. Research (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001; Airini et al., 2011) identifies key variables such as alienation, lack of encouragement, delayed marriages, low self-esteem, and limited leadership roles—all contributing to interrupted or stagnant career trajectories for women in academia. Particularly in patriarchal societies like Pakistan, these barriers are intensified by social expectations, limiting mobility, recognition, and inclusion. Thus, the theoretical lens emphasizes that women’s underrepresentation and constrained academic careers are not personal shortcomings but outcomes of deeply embedded institutional biases.

Conceptualization: We conceptualized this research in the following way.

Dependent Variable: Academic journey

Independent Variables: Alienation, encouragement, glass ceiling delayed marriages, work-family conflict, decision making, and low self-confidence.

Hypothesis: Based on above conceptualization, we developed and tested the following hypothesis by using linear regression model.

Women academicians’ academic journey is predictor of alienation, encouragement, glass ceiling delayed marriages, work-family conflict, decision making, and low self-confidence.

Research Methodology

We used a quantitative research design to examine the barriers to women academicians’ academic journey in higher education in AJK. This structured and randomized process allowed for objective data collection and analysis. We employed a cross-sectional research method to gather data at a single point in time, enabling the identification of patterns and trends within the population. We conducted this research in one public university in AJK. Out of 92 women academics, a sample of 35 was selected using a table of random numbers through simple random sampling. This technique ensured that each individual has as equal and independent chance of selection, reducing bias and enhancing representativeness. A 21-item questionnaire was developed to collect data in a structured and efficient manners. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), applying both univariate and bivariate analyses.

Key Findings

This section of the study presents the findings from univariate and bivariate analysis. The data is interpreted with the help of theoretical lens.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of Qualification, Income, and Designation.

Variables	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Qualification	MS/M.Phil	20	57
	PhD	08	23
	MA	07	20
Income	PKR 90,000 to PKR 140,000.	04	11
	PKR 140,001 to PKR190,001	08	23
	PKR 190,002 to PKR 240,002	13	37
	>PKR 240,003	10	29
Designation	Lecturer	23	66
	Assistant Professor	11	31
	Professor	01	03

The results in Table 1 present the frequency distribution of the participants based on their qualification, income, and designation. A majority of the respondents held an MS/M.Phil degree (57%), followed by PhD holders (23%) and those with a master’s degree (20%). In terms of income, 37% of the participants earned between PKR 190,002 and PKR



240,002, while 29% earned above PKR 240,003. A smaller proportion earned between PKR 140,001 and PKR 190,001 (23%), and only 11% earned between PKR 90,000 and PKR 140,000. Regarding designation, the majority were Lecturers (66%), followed by Assistant Professors (31%), with only one participant (3%) holding the position of Professor. These distributions highlight that most women academicians are concentrated at the lower academic and income tiers, with fewer advancing to senior roles or higher income brackets.

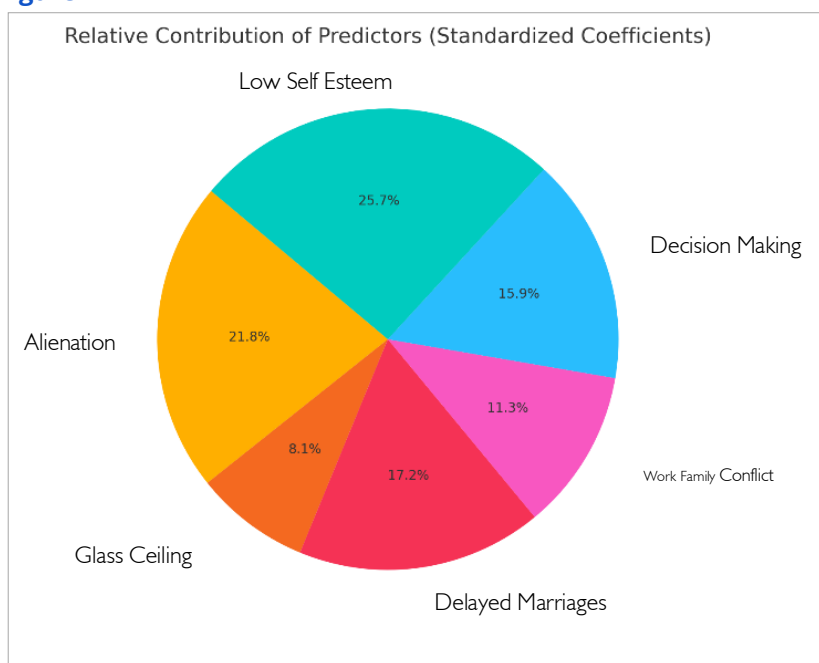
Table 2

Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Women's Professional Journey in Academia

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Alienation	-.268	.068	-.621	-3.411	.000
Glass Ceiling	.242	.110	-.230	3.736	.000
Delayed Marriages	-.451	.132	.490	2.233	.000
Work-family Conflict	-.321	.098	-.322	-5.875	.000
Decision Making	-.101	.087	-.452	-2.001	.003
Low Self Esteem	-.100	.133	-.732	-4.253	.004
(Constant)	5.176	.621		8.675	.000
F = 12.627, Sig. = .000		R Square = .721, Adjusted R Square = .681			
Total number of observations = 35					

The regression analysis reveals significant predictors impacting women academicians' professional challenges in higher education. The model explains approximately 72.1% of the variance ($R^2 = .721$, Adjusted $R^2 = .681$), indicating a strong fit. Alienation ($\beta = -0.621$, $p < .001$) and work-family conflict ($\beta = -0.322$, $p < .001$) are strong negative predictors, suggesting that increased alienation and conflict between work and family significantly hinder women's academic careers. Interestingly, delayed marriages ($\beta = 0.490$, $p < .001$) show a positive beta value, indicating a potentially strategic or adaptive role in career progression, though the unstandardized coefficient is negative, requiring cautious interpretation. Glass ceiling effects ($\beta = -0.230$, $p < .001$) and low self-esteem ($\beta = -0.732$, $p = .004$) also negatively impact professional growth. Furthermore, limited involvement in decision-making ($\beta = -0.452$, $p = .003$) is a significant barrier. Collectively, these findings underscore how structural and psychological constraints—especially alienation, low self-esteem, and lack of agency—critically shape the academic trajectories of women in higher education.

Figure 1



Discussions

The findings of our study are interpreted through Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organizations. We found that women academicians' professional careers are deeply embedded in the structural and cultural fabric of gendered higher education of AJK. Acker contends that organizational processes in higher education inherently gendered, privileging male norms while systematically excluding women from academic positions.

We found that women often experienced alienation and work-family conflict, as these institutions tended to define the "ideal academic workplace" as one where individuals are expected to be fully dedicated to work, unburdened by domestic responsibilities. Acker also asserted that the ideal higher education workplace is, in fact, gendered and men dominated. We also found that a lack of institutional flexibility further creates a biased and disadvantageous environment for women, who struggle to balance multiple roles. Our findings confirm Acker's argument that women in academia continuously try to manage their overlapping responsibilities. Furthermore, our findings highlighted the impact of the glass ceiling and low self-esteem—significant barriers to women's advancement. According to Acker, such barriers are not incidental but are products of an organizational culture that undervalues women's contributions and limits their access to power structures.

Exclusion from decision-making processes also underscores the gendered nature of institutional authority, where women are marginalized in shaping academic policies that directly affect them. Interestingly, delayed marriages appear to be a strategy adopted by women to focus on academic growth, reflecting a resistance to traditional gender roles—though this choice, too, is shaped by structural pressures rather than pure agency.

The interconnection of these barriers validates Acker's argument that gender inequalities are embedded in organizational routines, rules, and assumptions. These rules, policies, and assumptions are developed and designed by men, without any contribution of women. Thus, the obstacles experienced by women in academia are not merely personal struggles but are outcomes of institutionalized gender norms perpetuated by men. We suggest the transformation within universities is essential to reimagine structures, policies, and culture in order to eradicate these gendered biases by creating an equitable space for women academicians, where they can experience sustained growth.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the challenges faced by women in their professional career are structurally embedded within gendered institutional norms of higher education, as theorized by Acker (1990). We found that women academicians' experiences of alienation, work-family conflict, the glass ceiling, low self-esteem, and exclusion from decision-making cannot be treated as isolated problems; rather, they are symptoms of deeply ingrained patriarchal values within the higher education of AJK. These structures continue to define the "ideal academic" through a male-centric lens, that disadvantaged women systematically—in balancing professional careers and family responsibilities. The strategic choices of delaying marriages reflect women's efforts to navigate these constraints, yet even this decision is shaped by broader societal and institutional pressures. We suggest that, to ensure gender equity and academic inclusion, there is a critical need for higher education institutions to reform their organizational cultures, policies, and leadership models. Only through such structural transformation can women's academic trajectories be fairly supported, valued, and advanced within academics.



References

- Abdullah, F., & Nisar, N. (2024). Women Academicians and Autonomy: Constructing Identities in Higher Education. *International Journal of Social Sciences Bulletin*, 2(4), 1053–1060. <https://ijssbulletin.com/index.php/IJSSB/article/view/161>
- Abdullah, F., & Ullah, H. (2016). Physical Violence on Women: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Areas of Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir. *Journal of Gender and Social Issues*, 15(2), 113. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A497793910/AONE?u=anon~54132f5b&sid=googleScholar&xid=c3282c17>
- Abdullah, F., & Ullah, H. (2022). Lived Experiences of Women Academicians in Higher Education Institutions of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. *South Asian Studies*, 37(02), 323-340. <https://sasj.pu.edu.pk/9/article/view/1292>
- Abdullah, F., Ahmed, N., Shaheen, I., & Sultana, R. (2024). Women academicians' career progression in higher education of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. *Regional Lens*, 3(1), 86-94. <https://doi.org/10.62997/rl.2024.31042>
- Abdullah, F., Matloob, T., & Malik, A. (2024). Decision-Making Trajectories of Working Women in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. *Policy Research Journal*, 2(4), 2189-2197.
- Abdullah, F., Nisar, N., & Ahmed, N. (2025). Career Trajectories of Women Academics in Higher Education of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. *The Knowledge*, 4(2), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.63062/tk/2k25b.42057>
- Abdullah, F., Nisar, N., & Malik, A. (2024). Gendered higher education and women academicians' career development. *The Regional Tribune*, 3(1), 418-428. <https://doi.org/10.63062/trt/v24.076>
- Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender & society*, 4(2), 139-158. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124390004002002>
- Afzal, A., Arshad, M., & Naseem, Z. (2024). Familial and socio-cultural barriers faced by working women: Evidence-based study of district Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Applied Social Sciences*, 15(1), 43-62. <https://socialsciencejournals.pjgs-ws.com/index.php/PJASS/article/view/770>
- Airini, Collings, S., Conner, L., McPherson, K., Midson, B., & Wilson, C. (2011). Learning to be leaders in higher education: What helps or hinders women's advancement as leaders in universities. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 39(1), 44–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143210383896>
- Arifeen, S. R. (2015). *Ethical Selves and Glass Chains: A Complex Understanding of Career Experiences Through the Voices of British Pakistani Women*. Lancaster University (United Kingdom).
- Arooj, A., Iqbal, S., & Khan, M. L. (2025). Psychological Wellbeing, Life Satisfaction and Hopelessness in Delayed Marriages. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, 9(3), 65-69. [https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2025\(9-III\)06](https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2025(9-III)06)
- Bagilhole, B., & Goode, J. (2001). The contradiction of the myth of individual merit, and the reality of a patriarchal support system in academic careers: A feminist investigation. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 8(2), 161-180. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135050680100800203>
- Bain, O., & Cummings, W. (2000). Academe's glass ceiling: Societal, professional-organizational, and institutional barriers to the career advancement of academic women. *Comparative education review*, 44(4), 493-514. <https://doi.org/10.1086/447631>
- Bracken, S. J., Allen, J. K., & Dean, D. R. (2023). *Women in academic leadership: Professional strategies, personal choices*: Taylor & Francis.
- Daminger, A. (2020). De-gendered processes, gendered outcomes: How egalitarian couples make sense of non-egalitarian household practices. *American Sociological Review*, 85(5), 806–829. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122420950208>
- De Welde, K., & Stepnick, A. (2023). *Disrupting the culture of silence: Confronting gender inequality and making change in higher education*: Taylor & Francis.
- Di Nallo, A., & Lipps, O. (2023). How much his or her job loss influences fertility: A couple approach. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 85(4), 873-897. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12907>
- Epstein, C. F. (2022). *Woman's place: Options and limits in professional careers*: Univ of California Press.
- Fakhr, Z. (2018). *Exploration of female academic staff experiences in a conservative and gendered society: A case study of selected universities in Pakistan*. London Metropolitan University,
- Fakhr, Z., & Messenger, H. (2020). *Gender inequality and academic freedom in Pakistani higher education*. In *Faculty and student research in practicing academic freedom* (pp. 67-84): Emerald Publishing Limited.



- Foxx, D. C. (2025). *An Examination of Racial Disparities in College Athletics Leadership: A Study of Social and Cultural Forces Impacting Pathways to Athletic Directorship in Collegiate Athletics*. <https://hdl.handle.net/10919/135543>
- Haeri, S. (2002). *No shame for the sun: Lives of professional Pakistani women*. Syracuse University Press.
- Hakim, R. A. D. (2022). Advancement and subordination of women academics in Saudi Arabia's higher education. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 41(5), 1528–1541. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2021.1933394>
- He, G., & Wu, X. (2021). Family status and women's career mobility during urban China's economic transition. *Demographic Research*, 44, 189–224. <https://doi.org/10.4054/demres.2021.44.8>
- Horner, S. (2004). *The 'glass-ceiling' phenomenon in the career development of successful academic women*. Sheffield Hallam University (United Kingdom).
- Horta, H., & Tang, L. (2023). Male and female academics' gendered perceptions of academic work and career progression in China. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 77(3), 515-536. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12419>
- Imran, R. (2023). *Work-family responsibilities and support for women academics in Pakistan*. The University of Waikato, James-McCarthy, K., Brooks-McCarthy, A., & Walker, D.-M. (2022). Stemming the “Leaky Pipeline”: an investigation of the relationship between work-family conflict and women's career progression in academic medicine. *BMJ Leader*, 6(2), 110–117. <https://doi.org/10.1136/leader-2020-000436>
- James, O. R. (2014). White like me: The negative impact of the diversity rationale on white identity formation. *NYUL Rev.*, 89, 425.
- Joel, A. A. (2019). *Organisational support throughout the maternity journey: the perceptions of female academics in selected UK Universities*. University of Salford (United Kingdom).
- Jones, G. W. (2007). Delayed marriage and very low fertility in Pacific Asia. *Population and Development Review*, 33(3), 453–478. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2007.00180.x>
- Lester, J. R. (2006). *Setting the stage for gender equity: Gendered performances in community colleges*. University of Southern California.
- Liang, L. (2025). *Analysis of Dual Roles: Work-Life Balance Experiences of Female Professors and Mothers in California*. Pepperdine University,
- Loughran, D. S., & Zissimopoulos, J. M. (2004). *Are There Gains to Delaying Marriage?: The Effect of Age at First Marriage on Career Development and Wages*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Labor and Population.
- Magadley, W. (2021). Moonlighting in academia: a study of gender differences in work-family conflict among academics. *Community, Work & Family*, 24(3), 237-256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2019.1678458>
- Miller, K. E., & Riley, J. (2022). Changed landscape, unchanged norms: Work-family conflict and the persistence of the academic mother ideal. *Innovative Higher Education*, 47(3), 471–492. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-021-09586-2>
- Noorani, I., & Shakir, K. (2021). *Pakistani Women and Traditional Values: The Role of Culture in Work-Life Balance*. In *Work-Life interface: Non-western Perspectives* (pp. 343-378): Springer.
- O'Connor, P. (2020). Why is it so difficult to reduce gender inequality in male-dominated higher educational organizations? A feminist institutional perspective. *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews: ISR*, 45(2), 207–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03080188.2020.1737903>
- Owens, W. (2024). *Disenfranchised by Design: Exploring the Growing Gender Gap in Education* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Parr, C. (2023). *Choosing Gender or Race: Portraits of Female, White Ally Higher Education Administrators Committed to Making Socially Just Spaces for BIPOC Women in their Institutions* (Doctoral dissertation, Southern New Hampshire University).
- Peterson, H. (2016). Is managing academics “women's work”? Exploring the glass cliff in higher education management. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 44(1), 112–127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143214563897>
- Podreka, J., Gaber, M. A., & Smrdelj, R. (2024). *Unveiling structural barriers: Gender inequality in the academic field*. In *Handbook of equality of opportunity* (pp. 705-732): Springer.
- Quick, F. (2015). *Inequality in academic psychology: Rethinking the basis of privilege and disadvantage*. University of Surrey (United Kingdom).



- Rosa, R. (2022). The trouble with 'work-life balance' in neoliberal academia: A systematic and critical review. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 31(1), 55-73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2021.1933926>
- Sarwar, A., & Imran, M. K. (2019). Exploring women's multi-level career prospects in Pakistan: Barriers, interventions, and outcomes. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 1376. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01376>
- Seron, C., Silbey, S., Cech, E., & Rubineau, B. (2018). "I am not a feminist, but. . .": Hegemony of a meritocratic ideology and the limits of critique among women in engineering. *Work and Occupations*, 45(2), 131-167. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888418759774>
- Stokas, A. G. (2023). *Reparative universities: Why diversity alone won't solve racism in higher*. JHU Press.
- Thelma, C. C., & Ngulube, L. (2024). Women in leadership: Examining barriers to women's advancement in leadership positions. *Asian Journal of Advanced Research and Reports*, 18(6), 273-290. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajarr/2024/v18i6671>
- Williams, R. A. (2023). *Men of color in higher education: New foundations for developing models for success*. Taylor & Francis.
- Yousaf, R. (2018). Underrepresentation of women: Academic excellence and positions of power in universities. <https://tuprints.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/id/eprint/7722>

