



Understanding the Work-Life Balance of Female Faculty Members with Young Children in a State University

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Abstract. This research investigated how university teacher-mothers with young children balance their professional and maternal roles. Using narrative analysis, the research investigated the challenges, coping mechanisms, and institutional support mechanisms required by five purposively chosen teacher-mothers from various campuses of a state university. Findings indicated that teacher-mothers experience perpetual challenges, including pressure from regular teaching, administrative tasks, research tasks, and extension and production activities. Balancing these roles with motherhood was complicated and draining, often resulting in work and family life conflicts. Coping mechanisms involved preparing lessons in advance, prioritizing childcare over work when needed, seeking assistance from family and community members, and strictly following official working hours to maintain clear boundaries. Participants emphasized the urgent need for institutional support, including an on-campus childcare facility and clear-cut policies for flexible working hours. These mechanisms would make it easy to find reliable childcare and offer much-needed flexibility to adjust to the unpredictable demands of caring for young children. This research surmises the need to develop family-friendly policies in academic institutions to develop a more inclusive and supportive environment for female faculty members. By recognizing their dual roles as educators and mothers, universities can achieve work-life balance and improve faculty well-being and productivity.

Keywords:

Teacher-mothers;

Work-life balance;

Women in academe;

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INTRODUCTION

State universities and colleges (SUCs) in

the Philippines, under the governance of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), are mandated to focus on four key areas:

instruction, research and development, extension services, and production, as outlined in Republic Act No. 8292, also known as the Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997. Adhering to this mandate, faculty members are required to perform the fourfold tasks to teach, conduct research and extension programs, and engage in the production activities of the state university. This study inquired how women faculty members who are mothers of young children balance their multiple roles.

Since very little is published in this area of educational research in the Philippines, looking into the perspectives of university instructors hopes to provide an understanding of their roles as mothers and wives as well as teachers and academic leaders. Probing on their experiences in the academic setting, this study described the persistent challenges and coping mechanisms that they employed to achieve work-life balance. This can be a valuable context for understanding contemporary challenges in the educational setting as a whole, particularly in state universities.

Through the personal narratives of university teacher-mothers, this explored the personal reflections of women teachers in their personal lives and careers. It focused on their duties and responsibilities as government employees working as teachers in a state university and their maternal duties while describing mechanisms and strategies that helped them achieve work-life balance.

Upon careful analysis, this study described the challenges based upon the fourfold functions of university teacher-mothers such as teaching requirements and routine classroom management, demands of administrative tasks when university teacher-mothers have office designations, duties on conducting research, extension programs, and production projects. Their coping mechanisms are preparing lessons and instructional materials in advance, prioritizing the child over teaching and office responsibilities, seeking help from immediate family members and the community, and managing work within office hours. Lastly, the supportive mechanisms they need are having a daycare center within the campus premises and a clear and explicit policy allowing faculty members to adopt flexible work schedules.

METHOD

This study used Narrative Analysis (Creswell, 2018) to develop an understanding of how university teacher-mothers balanced their teaching careers and familial roles. In this study, the experiences of university teacher-mothers were explored; focusing on how they responded to challenges of mothering while teaching to achieve work-life balance. It aimed to capture the value of university teacher-mother experiences, which were analyzed through thematic analysis. This design described the essence of participants' experiences. The data were analyzed using QDA Miner software, through a three-phase thematic analysis process, which involved coding, annotation, retrieval, and analysis to extract overarching themes, following the Braun and Clark (2006) method.

This study explored the familial and teaching responsibilities of university teacher-mothers from a state university in the Philippines. The state universities were under the policies and governance of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). This study dissected their daily responsibilities, classroom duties, administrative tasks, and extracurricular engagements in the context of state universities, which have a unique performance evaluation, continuing professional development, and academic communities. Moreover, it explored challenges and coping mechanisms to balance their familial and teaching roles. Lastly, the study inquired about the supportive mechanisms and policies that university teacher-mothers needed to achieve work-life balance.

This study used a purposive sampling method, wherein the five (5) female faculty members: mothers of young children aged 0-6, and who had careers in university teaching voluntarily shared their experiences. They were from five different campuses of the state university under study. All have designations and research projects apart from their required teaching faculty load. As an exclusion criterion, university teacher-mothers actively pursuing master's or doctorate are not included, to maintain more homogenous experiences from the participants.

Table 1. Demographics of University Teacher-Mothers

Code	Age	Years of teaching	Number of Children	Age of child/ren
TM01	38	16	1	5 years
TM02	36	14	1	2 years
TM03	40	15	1	5 months
TM04	42	19	1	2 years
TM05	33	9	1	4 years

The teacher-mothers were interviewed individually in Filipino, for approximately 60-90 minutes via the Google Meet Recording Application using a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide. Audio recordings were transcribed manually. The following main questions were asked of the participants: (1) How do you describe your typical work day? (2) How can you describe your challenges as a teacher and mother? (3) How do your husband, family, and colleagues help you manage your teaching and mothering duties? (4) How does your institution help you manage your teaching and mothering duties?

Ethical Consideration

For each participant, the informed consent and the study's objective were thoroughly explained before the interview. They were also notified via their registered e-mail address along with the written copy of the informed consent, the objectives of the study, and the interview questions. Measures were implemented to ensure the confidentiality of participant responses. Participants' identities were anonymized, and codes were used in reporting the findings to prevent the disclosure of their identities. They were free to withdraw from the interview at any time without any cost.

The interview and transcribed data collected from this study were categorized as confidential, so the audio files of interviews were deleted after the transcription, only the researcher and transcriber had access to these files. The transcriber signed a written non-disclosure agreement for all the transcribed files.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After a thorough analysis of the experiences of university teacher-mothers, the following themes were deduced:

Challenges of university teacher-mothers

Teaching requirements and routine classroom management

As one of the four key functions of university faculty, instruction is one important role that they must fulfill. This includes 18 hours of teaching per week and five hours of consultation with students while being required to stay on campus from eight in the morning until five in the afternoon for regular work hours. In cases where faculty members have overtime teaching load (known as extra teaching load, ETL) they must render additional time beyond the required 40 hours per week, thus some faculty members leave the office at seven or even eight at night.

Usual routine work embedded in their teaching activity is the preparation of course syllabi, instructional materials such as PowerPoint presentations, and checking of examination papers or other student output.

Although university instructors are mostly trained teachers, managing teaching responsibilities along with other responsibilities becomes a challenge when it occupies too much time in a day for teacher-mothers while also managing the responsibilities of mothering. Depending on family needs, teacher-mothers choose to either take extra work hours to add financial income or work within the required work hours to manage familial tasks such as household chores or taking care of the young children.

A participant mentioned:

"On a typical day, I prepare myself before heading to work, travel, then teach. During breaks, I check papers, organize lectures, PowerPoint slides, or video lectures. I also visit the cooperating schools when I have a schedule because I'm a supervising instructor. Then, I return to campus if I have another class, teach again, and I get home around seven pm, sometimes eight if there's heavy traffic. Right now, the extra teaching load (ETL) helps my family because my child has special therapy needs, costing around 15,000 per month. That extra

income is a big help. The downside is that I have to stay longer on campus, but when I get home, I make sure to spend time playing with my child before they go to bed, even though it's just our bonding time at night. Since our house is a bit far, I leave early, but I prepare my child's lunch and everything they'll need for the day, like extra clothes, snacks, and fruits, before I leave for work." (TM 04)

Faculty members who are mothers of young children are torn between earning additional income for the family and spending more time with their children. Looking deeply at the family structure, the professional and domestic responsibilities within the household present a huge challenge for teacher-mothers, who find themselves balancing the demanding roles of both teacher and mother (Chauhan, 2021) since the household chores and child-rearing are usually assigned to women. Teaching like any other profession demands time and skills to improve, while the participants notably have excellent skill sets to accept more work or be promoted in various capacities of teaching, they are opting to focus more on their children's needs and set aside the opportunities for promotion or earning more.

Demands of administrative tasks when university teacher-mothers have office designation

In cases when teacher-mothers are designated with capacities other than teaching, challenges arise in managing office deliverables and mothering responsibilities. University teacher-mothers feel guilt or are struggling because they choose to prioritize the well-being of their children over work. Although they recognize the value of their contribution to their offices, they always describe work as secondary to their mothering duties. They either bring kids to work, work from home if possible, or delegate other tasks to colleagues to focus more on taking care of their children.

According to these teacher-mothers, they cannot leave their office designation as they can see their invaluable contribution to the office, they are handling, they describe it as something that they bring improvements to, something that brings them professional fulfillment but with boundaries especially when it concerns their children. A participant said:

"Since I have an office designation and sometimes I have to work from home, which is the case for me, the President allowed it. What I do is assign someone to be in charge at the office when there are urgent or family matters, as long as I reassure them that if there are major decisions, I will be present for that. But it's okay with them, or it's like an online consultation, or email consultation, so it's not a problem as long as there are specific instructions. For example, there are times when I need to go out of town or attend official business. My practice is to bring my child with me. My colleagues are okay with it as long as we have separate accommodations, which I personally handle. They are amenable to having my son with me; it doesn't really interfere because he's quiet, but they never said it's prohibited. Sometimes, a colleague with children even asks, 'Ma'am, can I also bring my child?' So, as long as the institution doesn't shoulder the expenses, the group is okay with it as well." (TM 03)

The experiences of university teacher-mothers show the complex forces of their teaching and mothering roles. Even with the challenges of managing office work and taking care of their kids, these teacher-mothers stay committed to their professional roles because they see the positive impact they make. However, they always put their children's well-being first, often feeling guilty when work takes time away from their families. They try to balance by bringing their kids to work, working from home, or asking colleagues for help. This shows their constant effort to meet work demands while prioritizing their families. Their stories emphasize the deep satisfaction they get from their jobs, but with clear limits when it comes to their children, showing the difficult nature of handling both roles.

Duties on conducting research, extension programs, and production projects

University faculty members especially those in Associate Professor rank are required to conduct research work and publish research papers at least once in two years, a task that requires extensive study, analysis, and time. They are also tasked to engage in extension projects, which often involve community outreach and practical applications of their academic expertise, adding another layer of responsibility to their academic role. Furthermore, managing production activities, such as overseeing

laboratory work or coordinating with industry partners, demands time, attention, and effort for these university teacher-mothers. One participant discussed:

"For other work like research and extension, I've already submitted a proposal, and it was approved for implementation this year because we really need to conduct research. I haven't published anything this year yet because I've been busy and focused on my child, but I don't regret it because my child is healthy. I always say that even if I'm in a meeting, if my helper calls to tell me the baby is feeling hot, I immediately run home to check on him, because my child is my priority." (TM 03)

Although conducting research and engaging in extension projects and production programs is one of the key mandates of state universities in the Philippines, teacher-mothers often describe this as their lowest priority because it takes up too much of their time. They understand the importance of research and extension work as part of their academic responsibilities, but they find it challenging to manage because they also have to teach, fulfill office duties, and prioritize their roles as mothers and wives.

Balancing these demands means that teacher-mothers frequently have to make difficult choices about how to allocate their time and energy. They often prioritize tasks that have immediate impacts on their students and their families, leaving less time for research and extension activities. This situation describes the need for more supportive programs within universities to help teacher-mothers manage their various roles more effectively, such as providing additional resources or creating more flexible schedules. This way, they can contribute fully to all aspects of their professional and personal lives without feeling overwhelmed.

Coping mechanisms that university faculty employ in achieving work-life balance

Preparing lessons and instructional materials in advance

University faculty employ various coping mechanisms to achieve work-life balance, one of which is preparing lessons and instructional materials in advance. By planning and organizing coursework ahead of time, faculty

members can reduce the stress and anxiety associated with last-minute preparations. This approach allows for more efficient time management, enabling faculty to allocate specific periods for teaching, research, and personal activities. The predictability and control over their schedule that comes with advanced preparation help faculty handle their professional responsibilities without encroaching on their time particularly when urgent concerns about the health condition of their children arise. One faculty member said:

"A saying that, 'you reap what you sow' is true for me, I've proven this when there's an emergency and I need to go to my child's therapy. Since we're still doing blended learning, I've already prepared video lectures so that if I suddenly can't hold a synchronous class, I have a ready video lecture for the students to watch. I've also uploaded all the activities and group work related to our class on Google Drive. We have a good allocation for that since we have the paid version of the account. That's why I'm able to do these things. Maintaining lessons on Google Drive has been really helpful." (TM 04)

Additionally, preparing materials in advance helps faculty maintain clear boundaries between work and personal life, ensuring they can enjoy downtime without the constant pressure of pending tasks. This method provides flexibility to handle unexpected events and gives faculty more opportunities for professional development and collaboration with colleagues. By streamlining their workload and enhancing the quality of their instructional materials, faculty can achieve a more balanced and fulfilling professional and personal life. One teacher-mother explained:

"For me, since I have an office and sometimes need to attend meetings outside the campus or undergo training for several days in another place, I have ready activities designed for asynchronous modality. I know that there will be times I won't be able to attend class physically or hold a synchronous class, so I need to plan the teacher and student activities for the entire semester. Actually, it's helpful for me to know my teaching loads in advance, so I can prepare ahead of time." (TM 02)

Preparing instructional materials in advance helps female faculty maintain a clear separation between work and personal life,

which can reduce lingering pressure on pending tasks. This practical approach allows faculty to enjoy their downtime without the impending stress of incomplete work thereby helping in a healthier work-life balance. Additionally, the flexibility gained from this method enables faculty to handle unexpected events more effectively which can ensure that their workload remains manageable even when unforeseen circumstances arise.

Prioritizing the child over teaching and office responsibilities

University teachers who are mothers of young children often prioritize their children's needs over their teaching and office responsibilities. They view themselves primarily as caregivers, with their role as a mother taking precedence over their professional duties. This perspective leads them to focus more on their children's well-being, sometimes at the expense of their teaching obligations, because they believe that their primary responsibility is to their family. This result agrees with Serra-Labrador (2022), where it was emphasized that mothers are often expected to embody an idealized image of nurturing and tending to their children and households. This perception can make it challenging to escape the idea that women are primarily seen as homemakers rather than educators and wage-earners. Two participants discussed:

"There are times when I really ask for permission from the Dean, especially when my child has a check-up. In those cases, I make sure the students have tasks while I'm away, or if it's an online class, I ensure that the activities are set based on the syllabus so that it won't be embarrassing for me to ask for permission from the Dean. Because, honestly, it's a bit embarrassing. But pride in the work we do is important, and as a teacher, that's the identity I want my students to remember about me. That's why I don't neglect my responsibilities, even though I know my child should be my priority." (TM 02)

"As for advice to fellow working mothers, no matter how frustrating or how many demands our responsibilities and roles bring, always choose family first. I don't know, but for me, family is the ultimate source of inner peace and satisfaction. And your child, they'll grow up knowing you and will

remember the memories you've shared together." (TM 03)

As a result, these teachers may see their work as secondary to their main role as mothers. They are willing to adjust their schedules, reduce their office hours, or take on fewer professional responsibilities to ensure they can devote enough time and attention to their young children. This prioritization reflects their commitment to being present and supportive parents, which they consider more important than their professional achievements during this stage of their children's lives.

This result agrees with the published research of Collins et al. (2020) and Tabassum & Nayak (2021) women often feel pressured to prioritize their roles as mothers and caretakers, conforming to the idealized domestic role that is assigned to them due to prevailing gender stereotypes. This can lead to women feeling obligated to prioritize their family duties over other aspects of their lives, potentially limiting their personal and professional opportunities.

Seeking help from immediate family members and the community

State university teachers who are mothers of young children often seek support from their immediate family members to balance their professional and parental roles. They rely on their husbands to share parenting responsibilities, ensuring that their children receive the necessary care and attention. This partnership allows teacher-mothers to manage their teaching and office responsibilities more effectively, knowing that their children are well cared for by a trusted family member. One teacher-mother said that:

"It's different when it comes to family closeness, for example, my in-laws, like his uncle, I can't just easily trust them since I only knew them when I got married, but since I see their family ties and culture, and they're all fine, my trust in them has also been built. It's like I trust them enough, and I know that the Uncle won't break that trust. Even at school, if my child throws a tantrum or says, 'Mommy, I want to go to Mommy,' and wants to come with me to work, and the Dean calls me for a meeting or asks me to work on papers, I carry my child with me. And at the same time, when his

uncle is there, I call him, and he'll take care of my child. So even if my child is with me at school, I can still work properly because my child's Uncle is there to take care of him." (TM 01)

In addition to their husbands, these mothers also turn to extended family members such as grandparents, uncles, and aunts for support. Grandparents often provide daily caring roles, offering a familiar and loving environment for the children. Uncles and aunties also step in to help with various tasks, from babysitting to running errands, and fetching from school, which creates a strong support network lessening the pressures of parenting for teacher-mothers. One faculty member explained:

"I have my in-laws pick up my child. It worked out well because my in-laws just retired after the pandemic. At first, we had the problem of figuring out who would drop off and pick up my child, but leaving him at home was easier. Now, the situation has changed because my sister's child is in Grade 1, and she needs to be there during lunch to feed him. So, my in-laws have been taking over that responsibility." (TM 01)

Beyond the family circle, university teacher-mothers often utilize community resources to ensure their children's well-being. They enroll their children in barangay kindergarten, where teachers and support staff provide educational and social development. In some communities, barangay police or community social workers also participate in looking after the children, ensuring their safety, and helping them with any immediate needs. This community involvement provides an added layer of support, helping teacher-mothers manage their multiple roles more effectively to ensure a sense of security and community care for their children. One teacher-mother said:

"Since our neighbors know my child, they also help watch over him. We enrolled him in the daycare at the barangay, not because he gets special treatment since they know he's the Barangay Captain's grandson, but it helps because he's well-known by the barangay officers and the watchmen. I feel at ease knowing that there are many people keeping an eye on my child, especially since he has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and can't just go out on his own." (TM 01)

The experiences of university teachers who are mothers of young children agree with Kotini-Shah (2022) who construed that women teachers are adopting different strategies, such as multitasking during classes, encouraging their children to become more self-reliant in their studies, and seeking assistance from family members, including their spouses. In addition, Ahmad, et al., (2024) and Febrianto (2022) suggested that family members' support is very essential in achieving work-life balance for working women, especially those with children, shared responsibilities lessen not only the care duties but also the emotional load and guilt of mothers while performing their career responsibilities.

Managing work within office hours

Teacher-mothers often struggle to manage their work within office hours to maintain a work-life balance between teaching and mothering responsibilities. By focusing their tasks from eight in the morning to five in the afternoon, they try to complete their teaching, administrative duties, and meetings efficiently. This approach helps teacher-mothers to maximize productivity so that they can ensure that their work does not spill over into their time at home with their children. One faculty member narrated:

"Now that he's getting older, I'm getting more late because he tries to catch up with me. I need to explain things to him, and I don't like leaving without saying goodbye. It's just more dramatic now. So, from there, I'm usually in the office by 8 to 8:30 AM, and around 4:55 PM, I'm already ready to clock out so that I don't leave the office beyond 5 PM. Usually, I'm at the time clock by 5:01 or 5:02, which is unusual compared to when I was single, when I wouldn't even notice the time if I left at 7 or 8 PM. But now, I start heading out by 5:05 PM, so I can get home by 5:30 PM if I'm lucky, or around 5:40 PM. During office hours, I make sure to get all my work done at the office. When I'm at the other campus where I fulfill my teaching load requirement, I also finish everything I can before heading home." (TM 03)

Maintaining a strict work schedule allows these mothers to be present for their children during early development. By completing their teaching and office responsibilities

within office hours, they can dedicate their evenings and weekends to family time, particularly in providing the attention and care their young children need. This separation of work and home life helps teacher-mothers overcome the overwhelming feelings of mothering and teaching along with other responsibilities such as doing research and extension projects. Another teacher-mother said:

"As much as possible, I try to complete all tasks, whether in the office or teaching, within the time I'm at school because once I'm at home, there's nothing I can do. Of course, I'm still breastfeeding, and I even go home during my lunch break to breastfeed my child. So, once I've rendered my service hours, the rest of the time at home is for my family. I think I've become wiser in terms of time management since I had a baby because I work faster and more efficiently. I'm more focused now, maybe because I'm more inspired by my baby and my family in general." (TM 05)

Moreover, managing work within office hours requires careful planning and prioritization. University teachers applied more diligence in organizing their tasks, setting clear boundaries, and sometimes delegating responsibilities to ensure that they could meet their professional obligations without compromising their family time. This disciplined approach not only supports their children's well-being but also contributes to their work-life balance. While this result seems burdensome for university faculty members who are mothers, Hillier (2023) noted the same adjustments that working mothers employ for them to fulfill both roles seamlessly. On the upside, teacher-mothers are employing work efficiency, however, this may also pose danger when they are overwhelmingly loaded with work and need extra time outside office hours.

Supportive mechanisms that university teachers need to achieve work-life balance

Having a daycare center within the campus premises

University faculty members with young children are requesting the establishment of a daycare center within the campus premises. This facility would provide a safe and convenient space for their children,

allowing parents to focus on their teaching and administrative duties with peace of mind. Knowing that their children are nearby and well-cared for in a familiar environment can reduce the stress and anxiety associated with balancing professional and parenting responsibilities. One faculty member narrated:

"I've heard news that there will be a daycare at the main campus, in the old library building which was turned into the publication office and then a clinic. I think that's what they're planning to turn into a daycare. From what I know, the Provincial Governor is handling the project, and the university is supposed to adopt it, but that was under the previous administration. However, it wasn't implemented then, so I'm not sure what's happening now." (TM 05)

Having an on-campus daycare center also allows faculty members to visit their children during breaks. These visits can strengthen the parent-child bond, providing emotional reassurance to both the parent and the child. It can provide parents the flexibility to spend time with their children during the workday, which can be particularly beneficial for nursing mothers or those who want to ensure their children are comfortable and happy throughout the day (Cunningham, 2024). One teacher-mother said:

"There are times when I wish that there is a daycare inside the school. Because, after all, we have guidelines in place, and it's not just for working moms but also working dads. Aside from me, other employees—also suggested that we should have a daycare. So, I think it would be great if we had a daycare here on the campus, so people with young children can leave them there. I feel settled now, and I realize I'm fortunate with my setup because I see my colleagues struggling, especially those whose spouses also have jobs. They ask me how I manage to go to work early and still get home late." (TM 01)

Moreover, an on-campus daycare center can serve as a valuable resource when regular childcare arrangements are suddenly disrupted. If a nanny is sick or unavailable, or if other caregiving plans fail, faculty members can rely on the daycare center as a reliable backup. This support can help during unexpected disruptions without compromising their professional

commitments, allowing them to maintain their work schedules without sacrificing their children's care. This support system can help achieve peace of mind for teacher-mothers, so they can better perform their roles more effectively and with less worry. Another faculty member explained:

"What I want, and I think others on campus also want, is for us to have a Child Minding Center, where you can leave your child while you're at school, so at least you're still close to them. That's what I hope for because so far, we don't have anything like that yet." (TM 05)

This result is clearly stated in various studies (Aquino, 2023; Basak, 2022; Hillier, 2023; Boakye, 2021) because daycare centers are a lifeline for working mothers of young children, as they can provide a nurturing and stimulating environment where their children can explore through educational programs and social interactions, which in turn allow mothers to pursue their careers with a sense of peace and assurance, knowing their children are safe, loved, and growing.

A clear and explicit policy allowing faculty members to adopt flexible work schedules

Currently, despite the existence of a Gender and Development Office, the university lacks a specific policy that addresses flexible work schedules for faculty members who are mothers of young children. This gap describes the large area where the university could improve its support for these faculty members. The absence of such a policy means that many mothers may struggle to balance their professional responsibilities with their roles as primary caregivers. One teacher-mother explained that:

"When I saw that in the list of questions, I also started to think, is there a policy? Because before, there were so many Gender and Development seminars, and we always had to attend. They would always talk about working moms, but it didn't feel like it existed at the university. I don't feel like it exists. So, I'm not sure because, for me, whenever I bring my child to school, there's always that thought at the back of my mind—can I? Like, is it okay? Can I bring him here? Because later on, I might be told it's not allowed, or I might be a bother. At least, if I know the rules, I won't do it

again. Things like that, or is it really allowed? Because if it is, I would set up a proper station for my child here." (TM 01)

Although the Gender and Development Office is ideally positioned to advocate for and implement policies that support the needs of working mothers, without a clear and explicit policy on flexible work schedules, the office's potential to effect meaningful change is limited. Faculty members may feel unsupported and undervalued, knowing that their challenges are not formally recognized or addressed by the institution. As noted by Milkie et al. (2023) and Castro et al. (2022) policies must be enhanced with the concept of an ideological work–family alignment that aligns cultural beliefs about teachers and the teaching profession while integrating the idea that women are also mothers. One faculty member discussed:

"It seems there's no formal policy for working mothers here in the university. The Civil Service Commission allows flexi-time, but we don't have a written policy. Support is limited to occasional financial help, like for a sick child. Though the Gender and Development (GAD) unit proposed initiatives like flexible work arrangements, a breastfeeding station, and a childcare center, these plans haven't been fully implemented yet. So far, I haven't benefited from or seen any specific policies for working moms." (TM 03)

Introducing a policy that allows flexible work schedules for mothers of young children would demonstrate the university's commitment to gender equity and the well-being of its staff. Such a policy would be a proactive step towards creating an inclusive and supportive work environment. It would also align with the specific goals of the Gender and Development Office, establishing that the university is committed to addressing the specific needs of all its faculty members. By implementing this policy, the university can set a positive example for other institutions by focusing on the importance of supporting working mothers and a family-friendly academic environment. One participant discussed:

"Flexible working hours are very important since child care can be unpredictable. There should also be policies for attending medical appointments and allowing parents to bring their children if

supervised. Clear guidelines and designated spaces would give parents peace of mind, making it easier to balance work and child care. (TM 05)

This result was previously discussed in published papers (Basak, 2022; Dhia, 2024; Gašić et al., 2024) wherein the implementation of policies on flexible work schedules showed high importance because it can support female faculty members to align their work commitments with personal and family responsibilities thus lessening the negative effect to their work-life balance.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

University faculty members face challenges in balancing their teaching careers and motherhood, particularly to the fourfold functions of university teacher-mothers such as teaching requirements and routine classroom management, demands of administrative tasks when university teacher-mothers have office designations, and duties on conducting research, extension programs, and production projects. Faculty members must consistently prepare and deliver lectures, grade assignments, and manage classroom dynamics, which can be time-consuming and exhausting, especially for mothers with young children. Holding office designations often means additional responsibilities such as participating in committee work, attending departmental meetings, and fulfilling other administrative duties. These tasks require time and effort, complicating the balance between professional and personal life. Conducting research is a core component of academic careers, involving the design and execution of studies, data analysis, and publication of findings. The intensive nature of research can conflict with the immediate needs of motherhood, making it challenging for faculty members to manage both roles effectively. Faculty involvement in extension services and production projects demands additional time and commitment, as these roles often require community engagement and practical applications of their expertise. Balancing these responsibilities with motherhood adds to the complexity of their workload.

Their coping mechanisms include preparing lessons and instructional materials in advance, prioritizing the child over teaching and office responsibilities, seeking

help from immediate family members and the community, and managing work within office hours. By organizing teaching materials ahead of time, university teacher-mothers can reduce last-minute stress and ensure their teaching duties do not interfere with family time. When necessary, teacher-mothers prioritize their children's needs over professional obligations, which may involve rescheduling or temporarily delegating tasks to colleagues. Utilizing the support of family and community members is essential. This assistance can include childcare, household tasks, and emotional support, enabling teacher-mothers to manage their responsibilities more effectively. Adhering to a work schedule that fits within official office hours helps to establish clear boundaries between work and family time. This strategy helps to prevent work-related tasks from intruding on personal time and helps promote better work-life balance.

Lastly, the supportive mechanisms they need include having a daycare center within the campus premises and a clear and explicit policy allowing faculty members to adopt flexible work schedules. Establishing a daycare center on campus would provide a convenient and reliable childcare solution for faculty members. This would lessen the burden of finding suitable childcare and allow mothers to be close to their children during work hours. Implementing flexible work schedules is also important because policies that detail flexible hours would let female faculty members adjust their work schedules to better fit their commitments.

By addressing these needs, universities can develop an academic community that not only supports the professional growth of female faculty but also appreciates and accommodates the dual roles of female faculty members who are also mothers.

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