

## THE DYNAMICS OF THE CHALLENGES OF FEMALE ACADEMICS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the problems of women working in the education sector, because in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic there were many changes, especially women who had multiple burdens. The research was conducted at two universities, Universitas Prof. Dr., Moestopo (Beragama) and Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati (Unswagati) Cirebon. The research method used is a qualitative research method through a descriptive study approach, with a case study approach at two universities as an empirical investigation effort to explore and analyze the phenomenon of female academics during the Covid-19 pandemic. Informants interviewed female lecturers from two universities in depth (in-depth interview). The results of the research show that female lecturers tend to accept the double burden they experience; female lecturers do not yet have a time table agenda that is implemented properly to ensure that their academic work priorities go well; and the Key to Dexterity of Female Lecturers in the Pandemic Period Although accompanied by strong motivation, several lecturers admitted that they were still having difficulties with the double burden condition which experienced a double burden role, still seeing the importance of the role of the household and placing it as a top priority.

### INTRODUCTION

Based on research in the US, women carry a heavier burden than men in caring for children during the Covid-19 pandemic, even while at work. Highly educated working women who have school-age children at home reduce their working hours compared to highly educated women

without young children and compared to men, as a result of the pandemic. *Women tend to experience higher levels of psychological distress than men.* However, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the US, a new gap emerged between women with and without children. *Women with children reported experiencing significantly higher*

*levels of stress than women without children.* Meanwhile, for men with or without children, there is a much smaller gap in difficulty (Zamarro et al., 2020). On the other hand, the status of women is always interesting to discuss, study, both their existence, characteristics and problems that always arise along with the pace of development of society in development. In large numbers must be the basic capital in development, if these women have high productivity, and their potential is increased and their skills are trained so that they do not become a burden, but become development capital.

The strategic role of women in development is expected to have an influence on the resulting policies. Policies that are more in favor of gender equality and justice. (Soemartono, 2013). The Law of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. This is as stated in Article 27 paragraph 1 which states: "All citizens are equal to their position in law and government and are obliged to uphold the law and government". According to research (Duncanson et al., 2020), the pandemic has had an impact on the widening of the gender gap among Australian academics/researchers. Based on research at various universities, during the pandemic the number of submissions to academic journals of researchers. During the pandemic (WFH) and the shift to online learning methods, the workload of female academics increased to 50 hours a week, working in the evenings and weekends. Many female respondents said they were disturbed because teaching hours increased and their working time also increased during the pandemic. Less research time. Women researchers who have responsibilities (husband/children) experience the heaviest burden.

Meanwhile, according to (Hill et al., 2020), from several research results (Investing in Women in Indonesia), stated

that 56 percent of respondents surveyed in the study said that their work was affected by Covid-19. As many as 31 percent reported they experienced a reduction in working hours and wages. As many as 12 percent of female workers experienced a reduction in income, while only 6 percent of male employees experienced the same thing. Women workers who have to work from home are constrained by domestic work. As a result, 63 percent of female respondents experience fatigue because they have to take care of the house, take care of children and work from home. The state of gender disparity during COVID-19 has brought an unprecedented crisis to universities around the world. But female academics in Indonesia face additional challenges. In Indonesia, women do not hold the highest executive positions in universities. This results in gender-biased university policy making. In various parts of the world, preliminary studies confirm that the COVID-19 pandemic has made female academics bear a heavier teaching burden. As a result, they have less time to do research and publish publications than male academics. Worldwide, the number of journal articles published by female academics decreased significantly during the pandemic. Get weekly notes on important political and societal issues.

## **METHOD**

Based on the data needs in this study, therefore for data collection techniques used several steps and stages carried out by researchers in the case study method; choosing the theme, case or topic in the field that the researcher is good at and is interested in; Researchers collect literature or reading material as much as possible in the form of journals, scientific magazines, results of previous research, books, magazines, newspapers related to the case. Literature reading is very important to broaden the horizons of researchers in the

field to be researched and sharpen the formulation of the problem to be proposed (Yin, 2018); Formulate focus and problem, collect research data. In the case study method, the data were obtained from interviews, participant observation, and documentation. In this study, the researcher interviewed female lecturers from two different universities, Universitas Prof. Dr. Moestopo (Beragama) Jakarta and Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati Cirebon. After completing the data, the data is said to have been able to answer the research objectives. Furthermore, data processing and data analysis from this stage will obtain important information in the form of research findings. Researchers interpret the data according to the context of the problem and research objectives. From the interpretation carried out, a conclusion will be obtained (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

### **Literature Review**

In this case, female lecturers have the potential to experience a double burden during the pandemic where: 1) the teaching burden of female lecturers during WFH tends to remain large or there is no difference; 2) the burden of monitoring children's education at home makes female lecturers have to divide their time between work and their attention to the education of children studying at home; and 3) the burden of taking care of the household makes female lecturers at home bound by their role as housewives. To analyze this, the researcher is interested in analyzing several female lecturers in higher education, on the basis of 1). In general, women who have children (still minors/toddlers) are reported to experience much higher stress levels than women without children. 2). Women who are in the academic field/exemplified by lecturers, are less efficient and effective in carrying out their work as lecturers. 3). Women have the same performance burden as male lecturers (teaching, compiling

research reports, making teaching materials, making books, articles for journals, and other academic activities), but the results are not optimal. 4). women experience fatigue because they have to take care of the house, take care of children and work from home (Work from Home). 5). Women's physical health is more affected by fatigue due to increased household burdens than men. According to Inaya Rakhmani (University of Indonesia), Evi Eliyanah (Malang State University), Zulfa Sakhiyya, Semarang State University (2021), female researchers, in the results of their research conducted in the academic world, Indonesian women bear the biggest burden during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has brought an unprecedented crisis to universities around the world. But female academics in Indonesia face additional challenges. In Indonesia, women do not hold the highest executive positions in universities. This results in gender-biased university policy making. In various parts of the world, preliminary studies confirm that the COVID-19 pandemic has made female academics bear a heavier teaching burden. As a result, they have less time to do research and publish publications than male academics. Worldwide, the number of journal articles published by female academics decreased significantly during the pandemic. Get weekly notes on important political and societal issues. We must be careful in understanding the deep-rooted gender inequality in higher education and beyond. We conducted an exploratory study on 27 Indonesian female academics working in the humanities and social sciences. Our informants come from various regions and public and private universities in Indonesia. This rapid change means that academics have to spend hours redesigning courses, checking student assignments, and making sure job support tools (such as internet networks and other online teaching tools) are properly available. Like women

workers and care and care providers who do not have stable jobs, Indonesian women academics have to bear the double burden of paid and unpaid work.

### **Women and the Covid-19 Pandemic from Several Research Results**

Research in the US shows that women carry a heavier burden than men in caring for children during the Covid-19 pandemic, even while at work. Highly educated women workers who have school-age children at home reduce their working hours compared to highly educated women without young children and compared to men, as a result of the pandemic. Women tend to experience higher levels of psychological distress than men. However, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the US, a new gap emerged between women with and without children. Women with children reported experiencing significantly higher levels of stress than women without children. Meanwhile, for men with or without children, there is a much smaller gap in difficulty. (Zamarro et al., 2020) In the research, Investing in Women in Indonesia, it was stated that 56 percent of respondents surveyed in the study said that their work had been affected by Covid-19. As many as 31 percent reported they experienced a reduction in working hours and wages. As many as 12 percent of female workers experienced a reduction in income, while only 6 percent of male employees experienced the same thing. (Hill et al., 2020) Women who have academic competence or scientific ability or experience as lecturers at universities . Academic means all educational institutions that are academic in nature. This means that it is scientific, scientific, theoretical without a direct practical meaning. Women during a pandemic in Indonesia (from several research results) female workers who have to work from home are hit by domestic work. As a result, 63 percent of female respondents experience fatigue and feel more pressured

because they have to take care of the house, take care of children and work from home. Significantly more women reported having higher levels of productivity than before the pandemic than men. Women's physical health is more affected by fatigue due to increased household burdens than men. Mental health of women is significantly more affected than men.

### **Dimension of Lecture Management**

On the campus of Prof. University. Dr. Moestopo (Beragama), all female lecturers in carrying out lecture activities as well as male lecturers, there is no difference, said the Gunung Jati Swadaya University, Cirebon. Until now, lectures are still distance learning (PJJ), using the Microsoft team provided by the University. Female lecturers also carry out lecture activities with their respective conditions, which of course take care of the household (domestic activities) and activities as lecturers. During the pandemic or the work from home period, teachers provide different experiences and require different preparation or learning facilities. This has the effect of changing habits and learning techniques that are not small. One of the descriptions of facilities that is in the spotlight is the need for internet signals which are the backbone of the distance learning process (Johnson et al., 2021). One of the descriptions of these conditions is as illustrated by 1) "During WFH, learning can be carried out well, because it is facilitated by uniformity of application from the University, namely the Microsoft Teams program. Even though there are often technical problems, the signal is less stable. But in general it is not reduce the quality of learning." 2) "Lectures can run interactively well and students take lectures enthusiastically, but sometimes online lectures are constrained by internet signals at the student's domicile, where some of our students come from villages located around the City Area." 3) "Lectures

run during WFH in my opinion are less effective, there are many obstacles in the online learning process, one of which is a less stable wifi, or a disconnected network/signal, the relationship between lecturers and students is also not well established, different from lectures with face-to-face (off line), where the emotional connection is more established between lecturers and students ". 4) "if some students have problems with internet network connections, 5). "During WFH, the quality of students greatly reduces the quality of students where students only listen and there is no response at all". 6). "Students do not understand the material presented by the lecturer, they are bored when learning online and many lose their concentration in studying". 7) "The change in learning style made me surprised, because I have not fully mastered technology. I still have to practice and learn a lot. There are no pros and cons , just trying to adapt by improving the skills of mastering technology." 8) "Alhamdulillah, during the pandemic, I love the good commitment with students. They are very cooperative and support the lecture program by utilizing this technology. And they also feel happy doing distance learning, and stay diligent in attending lectures." 8). "Despite online lectures, committed students feel they have an obligation to always attend virtual face-to-face meetings. Their commitment is to attend online lectures and interact directly with teachers."

The commitment of lecturers and students is important for lecturers to carry out the distance learning process well. On the other hand, if the distance learning process is not anticipated with a strong commitment from both lecturers and students, the distance learning process during the pandemic can be at risk of decreasing the competence of higher education graduates as a whole.

## **Dimension of Work Priority during Work from Home**

Prioritization is especially useful when the support team becomes overloaded, with more tasks they can handle at the same time (Puspitawati, 2018), as the female lecturers put it:. 1) "Working from home or working from home certainly has the same obligations and responsibilities as working from the office. However, in practice, the implementation of work from home turns out to have challenges and obstacles that are not easy, because not all sectors of work can be done from home. There are many factors that can affect the implementation of work from home such as the absence of work tools and communication, lack of coordination, disruption of the "domestic" environment in the household, 2). "Because WFH learning is done from home, teaching and household work can be done at the same time, household chores are usually neglected before WFH because there is a teaching schedule and they have to go to campus, so as long as WFH can be done well. " 3) "I've never made a special priority by making a time table during WFH, everything runs like normal everyday life." 4). "As long as WFH does not make a special schedule, it will continue as before WFH, only the time is reduced". 5) "during the WFH period, your teaching and research work targets were achieved as before the pandemic was not, because during the pandemic all teaching, researching and child care activities at home all overlapped with one another". 6) "Equally busy. Housework is work that is never finished and always takes up more time than office work. Since office work is a project it means there will be an end." 7) "More busy taking care of the domestic household. Because the work at home doesn't stop there continuously from morning to night. We can rest while sleeping. Meanwhile, if the office has time to rest." 8). "Because I am a single Mom, all domestic and office workloads are equally heavy and I



have to make peace with time, family (children), work, and health so that everything can run well. can live it well."9). "In my opinion the quality of teaching and researching has decreased considerably during WFH". 10). that the quality of teaching has decreased somewhat, although it is more due to problems with internet facilities, not because of the multiple burden conditions experienced." 11) "In my opinion, the quality of teaching and research is still good, the results are between before WFH and after WFH. In fact, the trend is increasing and being able to be more productive because they use time to take care of research than during WFO. Time often runs out on the road, so when you get home you are tired and not can do nothing else." 12). "During the pandemic, household problems seem to never end compared to working from the office. Meanwhile, children's education continues with an online pattern and requires mother's supervision as a teacher. To overcome all these obstacles, a priority scale is made in carrying out activities."

### **Dimension of Agility of Female Lectures**

In the context of the agility of female lecturers, the author tries to reveal the concrete things those female lecturers do to ensure that their daily functions are carried out, especially in overcoming the multiple burdens in their household. The context is illustrated as the answers of the informants, namely the female academics/female lecturers who explained, namely: 1). "The way I manage my household is by prioritizing the needs of my husband and children, after that I will do other jobs. Because when WFH becomes more flexible, especially in teaching and research work." 2) "During the pandemic period for teaching and learning activities and carrying out research, productivity has greatly decreased compared to before the pandemic. This is because we are more focused on taking care

of children and the household compared to the learning process and research activities and community service." 3) "As a female lecturer during the WFH teaching process, there are obstacles that exist from within the family (children and husband) so that it is difficult to distinguish between work time and personal affairs" 4). "Dividing time between family and office time because it is very difficult to work at home because there are many obstacles as an academic woman and instinct as a woman." 5) "The most important thing for women is to be able to know/aware of their duties and responsibilities as women. So that as women they are able to carry out their duties well as mothers for their families, and as lecturers in their institutions." 6). "I communicate with my husband, and children at home, regarding what we will do during WFH, we must know each other's activities. And support and help each other in the process of learning, working, etc. during WFH." 7). "Very intense because closer communication and direct discussions make the atmosphere at home more relaxed ... and so on".

In the end, good communication is one of the key efforts made by female lecturers to ensure that families can work well together during the pandemic to support the role of female lecturers in carrying out their obligations in the tridharma of higher education.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Lecturer Challenges in Teaching during Pandemic**

An overview of classroom management is important to provide an objective perspective from each teacher on the quality of learning during the pandemic. The pandemic period or the period of distance education for teachers provides a different experience and requires different preparation or learning facilities. This has the effect of changing habits and learning techniques that are not small. One of the

descriptions of facilities that is in the spotlight is the need for internet signals which are the backbone of the distance learning process. Although there is a view that learning is going well, the diverse locations of students, especially some in rural areas, can be one of the obstacles that need attention. This internet signal problem eventually caused the lecturer to finally provide a softcopy of his presentation material either via email or the class whatsapp group so that it could be studied independently (Aini et al., 2020).

This shows that the problem of the lack of an internet signal can ultimately affect the attitude of lecturers in ensuring that their students continue to obtain the required understanding material. Although in the end there is no guarantee that the submitted material can be read properly by students. Referring to various opinions of lecturers, another issue that is of concern to lecturers in distance learning is the issue of bonding relationships between lecturers and students, where social relations that occur are not established in an informal atmosphere so that it has an impact on the relationship gap between lecturers and students when compared to before the pandemic. Another issue is that the students' lack of focus in the learning process will have an impact on material that is not conveyed properly to students. The loss of concentration in learning will clearly impact the quality of students' understanding of the course material they take, especially if the lecturer of the course, in this case a female lecturer, is not ready with the distance learning model that changes old habits instantly. The lack of student understanding clearly has consequences for the competence of the students themselves at the time of graduation (Sabir Ahmad et al., 2021).

However, in general, the lecturers appreciate the commitment of students to continue to follow the distance learning

process well. The commitment of lecturers and students is important for lecturers to carry out the distance learning process well. On the other hand, if the distance learning process is not anticipated with a strong commitment from both lecturers and students, the distance learning process during the pandemic can be at risk of decreasing the competence of higher education graduates as a whole. In this case, the commitment of lecturers and students is an important keyword that must be realized in distance classes. From the description above, it is illustrated that in managing classes during distance learning during the pandemic, female lecturers experience several important challenges that must be faced, including: 1) technical problems, especially internet signals that have an impact on disparities between students in implementing distance education; 2) weak bonding between lecturers and students; 3) students are not focused on distance learning; and 4) the challenge of building student commitment to attend classes. These four issues will clearly have an impact on increasing pressure from lecturers, especially female lecturers, in carrying out their WFH duties.

### **Priority of Female Lecturers in the Implementation of their Responsibilities**

In carrying out their responsibilities during the pandemic, female academics or lecturers are required to commit to the distance learning process. However, this depends on the ability of the lecturers themselves in carrying out the teaching process in their respective homes smoothly. One thing that is of concern is the ability of lecturers to prioritize their work, especially in dividing time between teaching and other necessary household chores such as housework, to children's education. Based on the description in the research results subsection, it is illustrated that the effort to divide time during the pandemic is a

challenge for each lecturer. What is interesting is that for some female lecturers this division of work priorities is commonplace and acceptable. For some female lecturers, of course, this can be done easily. This is somewhat different from the academic conditions in other countries such as Australia, where according to (Duncanson et al., 2020) where female academic respondents tend to admit that they are disturbed because of the increased working time. In other words, female academics at the two universities that are the locus of research tend to be more accepting of the multiple burden situation they experience.

This becomes a dilemma, considering that the time division of lecturers has an impact on dedication to the implementation of the tridharma of higher education, such as research that is not optimal. On the other hand, lecturers also do not all have a good agenda to ensure that their work priorities can still be carried out. Even though several other lecturers stated that they already had a time table of priority jobs that were chosen to take precedence, it was still not easy for the lecturers, especially female lecturers, especially to pursue teaching and research targets while still handling their busy lives taking care of domestic work. The busyness of taking care of domestic or household work is very clearly illustrated when the interviewees are asked to compare the busyness of their wives and husbands in carrying out their daily functions, both in terms of office work and activities at home. This condition is in line with the findings of (Duncanson et al., 2020) female researchers tend to take on the heaviest and much bigger responsibilities at home, including taking care of their elderly children and parents. The conditions conveyed by some of the female lecturers who were interviewed illustrate that in the end the priority of work is difficult to do considering that female lecturers experience multiple burdens or multiple burdens in the household, both as

breadwinners and as housekeepers. This becomes difficult to separate because traditionally this function is attached to the role of women in the family. In this context, (Minello, 2020) statement is important to note that husband and wife should be able to face a short-term reorganization together to divide time to care for their family and work. Interestingly, the condition of WFH is also more or less considered to help female lecturers reduce their mobility from home to office which has been spending their time in a day. This is also an opportunity for lecturers to increase their daily productivity. This condition illustrates that female lecturers during the pandemic did not experience a decrease in motivation. The condition of not losing the motivation of the female lecturers is reflected in the answers of the lecturers when asked about household problems and children's education during the implementation of WFH and the lecturers' efforts to overcome them in various ways. The motivation is important to maintain so that the conditions that (Minello, 2020) fears do not occur, where (Minello, 2020) worries that in the next few years if there is no change in the situation, having a household will be considered unpopular among female academics. The description of the context above illustrates that despite experiencing multiple burdens, generally female lecturers do not see this as a problem and they still have the motivation to maintain their performance during the pandemic.

Based on the results of the research and the description of the analysis above, it can be concluded that female academics or lecturers prioritize their duties and responsibilities: 1) Female lecturers tend to accept the multiple burden conditions they experience; 2) female lecturers do not yet have a time table agenda that is well implemented to ensure that their academic work priorities go well; and 3) multiple burden constraints are not considered a



problem/do not reduce the motivation of female lecturers in carrying out their duties during the pandemic.

### **The key to Agility of Female Lecturers in a Pandemic Period**

In the context of the agility of female lecturers, the author tries to reveal the concrete things those female lecturers do to ensure that their daily functions are carried out, especially in overcoming the multiple burdens in their household. In this context, it is illustrated that female lecturers are still trying to prioritize the needs of household management first. Even though it is accompanied by strong motivation, some lecturers admit that they are still having difficulties with the multiple burden condition. This makes some female lecturers who admit that they experience difficulties in carrying out the multiple burden roles they experience, continue to view the importance of their household roles and place them as a top priority. In this case, the role of female lecturers in motivating their families to work well during the pandemic is an important situation that needs to be conditioned to carry out their duties as lecturers well. Some female lecturers communicate well with their families to provide understanding. In the end, good communication is one of the key efforts made by female lecturers to ensure that families can work well together during the pandemic to support the role of female lecturers in carrying out their obligations in the tridharma of higher education. It can be concluded that in the context of the agility of female lecturers in overcoming the multiple burdens they experience, in addition to requiring strong motivation, they also require good communication skills with their families to be able to work together.

The pandemic teaches us some important lessons, that mothers and fathers together must face a short-term reorganization to divide time caring for

family and work. In the long run, these changes in productivity will affect careers. Those with less family care duties will aim for a brilliant career. Academics will all participate together in competitions for promotions and positions, whether they are in the role of parent or not. The reality is that a career in the academic world today (academic publications, the ability to obtain research budgets, teaching hours) does not consider achievements in the family. It is feared that in the next few years, being married/parenting will be considered disadvantaged/left behind/unpopular for female academics. There needs to be understanding, and a clear and fair division of tasks within the family. Further understanding needs to be given, that female academics (teachers and lecturers) have the right to take care of their families outside of work.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the description of the results and analysis of the research, it can be concluded several things as follows: In managing classes during distance learning during the pandemic, female lecturers experience several important challenges that must be faced, including: 1) technical problems, especially internet signals which have an impact on disparities between students in implementing distance education; 2) weak bonding between lecturers and students; 3) students do not focus on distance learning; the camera is not opened, even though preparing the material is very maximal with overlapping time taking care of domestic household. and 4) the challenge of building student commitment to attend classes. These four issues will clearly have an impact on increasing pressure from lecturers, especially female lecturers, in carrying out their WFH duties. Based on the results of the research and the description of the analysis above, it can be obtained a description of the

phenomenon of how female academics or lecturers in Indonesia, especially on the object of research in prioritizing their duties and responsibilities, namely: 1) Female lecturers tend to accept the multiple burden conditions they experience; tired body, time to reduce, it is not felt; 2) female lecturers do not yet have a time table agenda that is implemented properly to ensure that their academic work priorities are going well, this must be designed, because to help minimize activities that are less productive than the existing time table; and 3) multiple burden constraints are not considered a problem/do not reduce the motivation of female lecturers in carrying out their duties during the pandemic. It can be concluded that in the context of the agility of female lecturers in overcoming the multiple burdens they experience, in addition to requiring strong motivation, they also require good communication skills with their families to be able to work together.

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