

## **The Impact of Covid-19 Outbreak based on Gender Perspective in Higher Education in Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to examine the gendered aspect of academic job transition, during which the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated. This study performed 29 interviews with Indonesian academics between October 2020 and February 2021. Zoom data were analyzed using interpretive phenomenological analysis with semi-structured interviews. Consequently, a widespread and long-lasting pandemic developed, affecting academia and reinforcing the establishment of new gender disparities. Additionally, this study elucidates two points: First, invisible academic labor is predominantly carried out by women. This unrecognized and undervalued activity adds to the institutionalization of gendered work organizations. The second factor is health. Women are particularly vulnerable to Covid-19 because they are heavily involved in the care economy. From a social perspective, women are more likely to face the double burden of balancing their productivity and household responsibilities owing to the rules governing working from home.

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### **Key words**

Covid-19, gender inequality in academia, empowerment of female lecturers, domestic and academic responsibilities

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## Introduction

The coronavirus disease (Covid-19) outbreak has resulted in an unprecedented calamity. Covid-19 exposure increases daily. Since late March 2020, more than 100 countries, including China, India, Indonesia, and the United States, have imposed complete or partial lockdowns. Governments worldwide have developed WFH (work-from-home) rules that encourage citizens to spend more time at home and prohibit large crowds. Since March 16, 2020, the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic has altered all aspects of civilizations, including education. The COVID-19 pandemic is projected to influence numerous domains, including gender, education, and work (Alon, Doepke, Olmstead-Rumsey, & Tertilt, 2020). Previous research has evaluated pre-and post-pandemic attitudes toward gender roles. The participants in this study supported and reinforced standard sexual identity norms and categorizations (Rosenfeld & Tomiyama, 2020). Another study discussed gender-based discrimination experienced by females in the workplace in their research (Sheltzer & Smith, 2014). A study on working female opinions discovered several fundamental characteristics associated with prejudice against female workers (Tiwari, Mathur, & Awasthi, 2018).

In addition, female wages are frequently lower than male wages in the labor market. Women's participation in the economy is rarely enhanced through improvements in their living standards. Park (2021) stated that differences in educational attainment between males and females could explain the wage disparity between the sexes. However, gender disparities in academic rewards may also contribute to gender wage gaps. The government must prioritize gender equality and balance in human resource management policies to achieve gender equality and balance (Rubery & Koukiadaki, 2016). In addition, Ace and Banu (2001) proposed that gender equity in selecting official structures within ministries/agencies, provinces, districts/cities, and unit-level education is required to minimize gender inequality in education. Affirmative policies that enable particular groups or subgroups to achieve an equivalent position in the same field anticipated being included in the National Accreditation Board's assessment of high-quality universities (Dzuhayatin, 2017).

According to Rosenfeld and Tomiyama (2020), Covid-19 has impacted general ideas of general conceptions of gender relations, and additional analysis is needed to examine issues other than gender relations. Alon et al. (2020) asserted that the long-term and broad consequences of this pandemic would be dissimilar and more intense for females than males. It is necessary to highlight that gender culture and

work-life balance disproportionately affect female academic pursuits in their early years (Vohlídlová, 2021). In the literature, there has been much discussion on female caregiving responsibilities. Some believe that children are stumbling blocks in female advancement to higher positions (Véliz, 2020). This is corroborated by Dzuhayatin (2017), who found that females who feel a heavy responsibility for domestic work exhibit greater reluctance than their husbands and have subordinate occupations if their spouse earns a good salary, all personal characteristics that contribute to the gender gap. For females who are formal employees, the challenges they encounter during the pandemic are more about balancing school or work policies at home, continuing gender exploitation at work and home, and feeling a heavier load of housekeeping and childcare than males in pandemic conditions (Meraviglia & Dudka, 2021).

Almost all universities altered their online learning activities during the pandemic. This situation impedes academics' ability to perform their work. During the pandemic, the Indonesian economy weakened, resulting in a decrease in the number of students and their income at various private universities. Small private tertiary institutions eventually experienced a decline in financial performance, leading to university closures (Syahputra, 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all aspects of university organization, especially lecturer productivity, where the learning system has changed to online and lecturers have switched to teaching and conducting research from their respective homes. According to a study conducted by KC (2019), advances in statistical methods allow researchers to estimate the underlying productivity with greater precision and confidence, where the amount of time available for the study and the efficiency of the survey in conducting research are essential elements in determining the productivity of a researcher. A recent study of 4,500 lecturers revealed substantial and disparate reductions in the time spent studying, teaching, and conducting research (Myers et al., 2020). Despite applications increasing by 20–30% during the pandemic, numerous publications have noted that most are still submitted by male academics (Beck, 2020). Numerous educational institutions devoted to conducting research do not favor female academics, especially in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Female research resources are a prerequisite, in which funding is still experiencing external economic constraints in conducting research (Véliz, 2020).

The gender gap in tenure evaluation has been extensively documented by academics (Antecol, Bedard, & Stearns, 2018), and it has been shown that most females experience this inequality as a disadvantage (Günçavdı, Göktürk, & Bozoglu, 2017). The public sphere has traditionally been associated with males,

whereas the private sphere has traditionally been associated with females (Dildar, 2015). According to Günçavdı et al. (2017), female academics perform most gender-based unpaid and academic labor tasks. The gendered division of labor tasks found in this study were further increased by the pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic serves as a lens to examine the gendered aspect of labor between males and females, is a significant and continuing change in academic job organizations. Many changes brought about by the pandemic, such as the increasing demand for online education, economic disparity, and insufficient funding, have made post-pandemic work difficult. This study sought to investigate, from a gender perspective, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Indonesian higher education. This study aims to illuminate the requirements and challenges encountered by different genders in the higher education system during the pandemic by examining the disparate effects of the pandemic on male and female lecturers.

### **Theoretical Background and Literature Review**

This study was guided by theoretical frameworks based on a gender perspective. Inequalities between males and females are caused by gender biases and unequal access. Almost every society has inequity between males and females (Cook & Glass, 2014). This trend is particularly apparent in education and research (Sampson & Gresham, 2017). The pandemic has transformed researchers' working environments in higher education, requiring them to reallocate their time between research, job-related responsibilities, and household activities (Cui, Ding, & Zhu, 2022; Krywult-Albańska & Albański, 2021).

Academic institutions are essentially gendered, as they are not autonomous entities, but are embedded within patriarchal societal frameworks. Despite assertions that promotion and tenure are subject to objective, meritocratic criteria and academic performance in general, other characteristics such as socioeconomic status, color, and gender play a significant role in determining a fulfilling career in the academic world. For example, academia is not mother-friendly (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019). Weaknesses in female competence, ability, and commitment are stereotyped as motherhood penalties for females with degrees (Glauber, 2018). Academics presume that an ideal academic worker is a white man with very little responsibility for caregiving beyond his academic career (Bleijenbergh, van Engen, & Vinkenburgh, 2013).

Evidence worldwide indicates that female scholars, already disadvantaged in certain professions before the Covid-19 pandemic, have been disproportionately

disadvantaged by the epidemic's consequences (Andersen, Nielsen, Simone, Lewiss, & Jagsi, 2020). In Australia, female scientists are 1.5 times more likely than their male counterparts to lose their positions, time, paid employment, and professional opportunities, according to the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering and Science & Technology (quoted in Gewin, 2020). Lockdown techniques have had a significantly and negative impact on academic females who have recently undertaken childcare duties (Korbel & Stegle, 2020). Overall, research production has dropped due to Covid-19-related conflicting commitments associated with parenthood, homeschooling, and other care activities that primarily females perform. Female researchers experience the most significant decline in research productivity (Andersen et al., 2020; Manzo & Minello, 2020). While males submitted and published more academic articles than predicted during the coronavirus epidemic, females published fewer scientific publications than expected (Andersen et al., 2020; Flaherty, 2020). Several findings from previous research have shown that females are more stressed, worried, and anxious than males. (Gonzales & Griffin, 2020). These findings have been related to various circumstances, including job loss, unemployment, social isolation, and the realization that one will not satisfy family obligations (Lee, 2020).

During the pandemic, female nonacademic family activities hindered their work. Personal reflections offer separate stories about working during a pandemic and performing multiple roles (Aldossari & Chaudhry, 2021; Plotnikof et al., 2020). This study reveals that individuals adopt and internalize stereotypical gender norms, even during epidemics. The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted perspectives on gender norms. Therefore, additional research is needed to understand gender roles and equality (Rosenfeld & Tomiyama, 2021). Gender-based analyses should be used to investigate how the pandemic has affected people's perceptions of gender roles and to give females a voice (Alon et al., 2020; Manzo & Minello, 2020).

## **Research Methods**

The methods and procedures used in this study are described in detail in the following section.

### **The Sample**

This study was conducted by recruiting individuals from various institutions via social media, contacting university research centers, and participants' recom-

mentations at different career stages and in multiple family situations. This study recruited respondents who worked in various academic institutions because of the differences in the intensity of research conducted in these organizations. Participants were selected from universities across Indonesia to ensure a geographically diverse sample. The participants came from large cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, Makassar, Mataram, and Padang. To protect the privacy of the respondents, this study does not attribute any answers to specific universities. Between October 2020 and February 2021, we interviewed Indonesian academics during the COVID-19 outbreak. In all cases, the academics interviewed worked from home or at another non-university organization. Three professors, ten assistant professors, ten associate professors, and six tenured lecturers were interviewed.

A purposive sampling procedure was employed and the selected individuals were identified, contacted by email, and invited to participate in the study. Not all respondents who answered the email were willing to participate in interviews via Zoom. All interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participants. Online interviews were conducted via Zoom by providing a choice of day and time; the interviews lasted approximately 26–50 minutes each. The researcher explained the scope of the research to the participants before the interviews began, and the participants were permitted to record the interview process. The participants were allowed to freely express their experiences during the conversation. This study involved lecturers in tertiary institutions, both female and male, who were asked to provide an overview of their academic activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. The difference between female and male academics in terms of publication productivity and their academic activities during the pandemic has been frequently studied. The participants worked at the institutions up to 20 years with an average of fewer than five years. In terms of family status 20 respondents were married and had children ranging from one to five.

## Data Collection

This study used in-depth interviews to explore the gender perspectives of female and male lecturers in higher education during the pandemic. For this purpose, a semi-structured interview form was developed that allowed us to examine the problem holistically. The following questions were posed to participants in the interviews according to the theoretical framework formulated in the study.

1. Do you engage in any problem-solving activities during the pandemic when working at home?

2. Do you feel more connected to your students during the online activities? (Yes/No) ... (If yes, describe the reasons)
3. How much research has been conducted in this field during the pandemic? Can you explain the challenges you faced during the research?
4. What problems did you encounter during your presentations, meetings, and lectures? Is there any particular problem that you have experienced?
5. How did you respond as a lecturer during the current pandemic when the government issued the “Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka” (Independent Campus Learning)?
6. How do you perform your role as a husband-or-wife in the household and as a worker during this pandemic, when most of your work as a lecturer is done online?
7. Do you think that gender equality equally occurs well in tertiary institutions? What are the roles of leaders in higher education in this regard?

### Data Analysis

The NVivo 12 program was used to analyze the data for interpretive phenomenological research (interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), as proposed by Tindall, Smith, Flower & Larkin, 2009). NVivo 12 Qualitative Data Analysis was used to analyze the data from an interpretive and phenomenological approach. The NVivo software significantly reduced the number of manual tasks associated with data analysis, thereby allowing researchers to spend more time exploring trends, themes, connections, and responses to each research question (Adu, 2019). The researchers chose IPA to gain insight into how respondents see their individual and interpersonal lives, and to identify how an individual makes meaning of particular phenomenon in a given scenario. The interpretative phenomenological approach is a method for comprehending and interpreting human experiences concerning any phenomena and is specifically effective in supplementing data (Clark, 1999). Following Tindall et al. (2009), the researchers in this study took the following steps.

- The first step was to transcribe interviews taped via the Zoom application verbatim.
- The second step involved listening to individual recordings, gathering information, and repeatedly reviewing the transcripts.
- In the third step, each analysis involved construction of a specific sequence by identifying significant quotations in the transcripts.

- The fourth step was relating code-generated themes and quotes from the transcript.
- The fifth step was to determine the core theme by examining the possible relationships between the subthemes.
- In the sixth step, the codes and themes developed by the researchers were analyzed and discussed until a compromise was reached. Principal pieces were constructed by connecting the subthemes of the transcripts based on important aspects.

In the final step, results were categorized using theme mapping

## Findings

According to the interviews, female and male academics were affected differently by the transition to online academic contexts. The patriarchal distinction in the private domain is maintained when academics' homes are converted into workspaces. Female academics view their academic responsibilities as highly flexible in balancing their roles as lecturers, mothers, and household managers. They tried to divide their time well, with most of their professional work occurring at night, to avoid interference with their daytime duties as housewives. Therefore, female academics, compared to their male scholars and spouses, tended to have less free time and more significant home duties (Fetterolf & Rudman, 2014; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2020). Despite the unprecedented nature of the crisis, no institutional support framework could help them cope with increased caregiving responsibilities (Nash & Churchill, 2020).

Thus, this research produced five important academic themes of life during the Covid-19 pandemic: teaching activities, research activity, Covid-19 from the perspective of gender justice, gender-based accountability in life, and gender responsiveness during Covid 19, as discussed in the Findings.

### Teaching Activity

Females are much more likely to work in contingent roles and have higher academic teaching duties than males. They have been assigned a significant number of primary and beginner courses. They guide a substantial number of students, a significant percentage of whom require exceptional attention (Gibney, 2017). These disparities are exacerbated for teachers of color who frequently require additional service and mentorship tasks to support the institution's diversity and inclusion in-

itiatives (Titani-Smith, 2017). Females and males differ in behavior, with females being more concerned about others' well-being and males being more self-sufficient (Feldman, 1993). Females are generally perceived as caring, sensitive, loyal, and understandable (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

I try to help my student if he has problems related to his academic and personal life. This creates an additional burden on the work as a lecturer. (F3)

During the pandemic, academics have been obliged to adapt their teaching methods and course content, as well as their resources, student evaluation methods, and test formulas, due to the move toward distant learning (Mishra, Gupta, & Shree, 2020). In our survey, the academics who responded stated that they found online teaching to be more important and something that ensured the continuity and quality of online learning during crises. They attributed this to students losing direct engagement, technological difficulties, and a lack of prepared virtual teaching resources.

It does not matter what I do; I try to help everyone, whether scientists or inorganic chemists. (M2)

Our interviews showed that remote education substantially impacted the jobs of undergraduate, graduate, and PhD students as supervisors. In contrast to traditional head supervision, online supervision has become a more personalized mode of communication. Students' work grades may improve, but this will require significant instructor training.

When interacting offline in the class, everything is clear. This study contrasts online, where students appear less enthusiastic during lectures and ask fewer questions to offline lectures. (M7)

Female instructors reported making efforts to be more accessible in response to the fears and psychological needs of students. They confirmed their agreement to be contacted by instant messaging platforms, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

They can contact me at any time, and they do (...) As a result, I frequently contact students using various tools and at various times. (F7)

In contrast, the male interviewees focused only on the course material and technical help provided to the students. They placed little emphasis on students' mental wellness.

I am not convinced that the students will require [assistance]. (...)students at one of the universities where I work are extraordinarily self-sufficient and adult. They are entirely dedicated to professional growth at my university. (M6)

As a result, female lecturers assume the role of helping students improve their overall psychological well-being. In contrast, male lecturers saw their roles as limited to class materials and technical support. Male lecturers primarily focused on issues related to distance education. Female academics often consider the perspectives of their students and the emotional and psychological demands of teaching during a pandemic. The dynamic contribution of female lecturers is significant for achieving this goal. Previous studies established that female academics perform most of their emotional and nursing work in higher education institutions (Heijstra, Einarsdóttir, Pétursdóttir, & Steinþórsdóttir, 2017). This shows that female lecturers perform their roles well; it is consistent with earlier studies revealing that female lecturers showed higher overall job satisfaction than their male colleagues, despite significant gender pay differences (Baisakalova, 2006).

## Research Activity

The impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated the disparity between females and males in academia regarding research opportunities (Flaherty, 2020). For instance, journals in certain domains have reported that the gender disparity in paper submissions is widening (Amano-Patiño et al., 2020). Females face peer-reviewed bias (Helmer, Schottdorf, Neef, & Battaglia, 2017). The unequal success rates of female researchers in grant applications are based on the peer review process rather than research quality (Witteman, Hendricks, Straus, & Tannenbaum, 2019). These workplace challenges are further exacerbated by rising expectations in the home. Females are increasingly expected to perform housework, care for (and, in some cases, teach) their children, and care for elderly parents and relatives. Therefore, even without COVID-19, females are likely unable to successfully absorb the increased work.

I believe that my scientific work, in particular, is thriving right now. I have sent, written, and completed [research] since I began working from home. Five articles are complete and have been submitted. Thus, this is a rather remarkable result for two months. (M2)

The productivity of research has grown in practically every aspect imaginable. I've made tremendous progress in the last three months; I've learned, read, and written a lot. I am not sure I could have accomplished as much in, maybe, six months of the complete job. (F5)

In their responses, female academics commented that the most noticeable impact of postponing conferences was the loss of opportunities to exhibit research, seek input, and propose research ideas. The female participants expressed frustration with their inability to devote full attention to active engagement in online conferences and workshops while working from home. Because of their family duties, they were unable to actively participate in discussions or other academic misconduct activities of the type found at conferences. Several participants emphasized that a lack of networking opportunities and informal interactions could impede the development of cooperative projects.

Everyone has the opportunity to meet new people at every conference. Sometimes, it is just casual discussions over a break, and you do something with these people. (F6)

Males claimed that the pandemic allowed them to network with other researchers and saw this as a chance to improve their ties to others' research.

So, we only communicate with others via Google Meet or Zoom., which significantly reduces the transaction expenses associated with establishing cooperation with people from other countries. As a result, I see career potential here for myself and my coworkers. (M4)

Pandemics, for me, are a possibility. It, in my opinion, is a tremendous opportunity. To begin with, I can work remotely from any location and at any time. The individual is easy to get along with. (M5)

According to the female lecturers, the pandemic has provided more opportunities for women because of their dual roles as lecturers and housewives. Zoom

is an online media platform that allows people to spend time at home.

Training activities and meetings between lecturers for research collaboration activities using Zoom can lower costs incurred and still be more productive amid limitations and busyness, as well as being a housewife. (F16)

The promotion and advancement of female academics are likely to be affected by this compared with male academics. Female careers in higher education require institutions to monitor these effects and implement policies to support and maintain continuity among female lecturers. This influence on the promotion and recruitment of employees based on productivity is essential in higher education. Where publication is an aspect of productivity, this study confirms that female productivity has decreased because of the pandemic compared to that of male lecturers. Females in academia have been disproportionately affected by these changes. Research hours for females have also reduced during the pandemic, and they face disproportionate challenges in balancing work and family life (Myers et al., 2020). Based on 40,000 preprints from the Social Science Research Network (SSRN), it has been found that female productivity decreases relative to males despite increased overall research productivity, which is more pronounced at higher-ranked universities (Cui et al., 2022).

### **COVID-19 from a Gender Equal Perspective**

The Covid-19 pandemic, which has prompted critical reflections in various domains, including gender, education, and employment, is projected to have an effect (Alon et al., 2020). According to an examination of health-related products, males have more problems that require attention than females. Unfortunately, the outbreak caused a vast health catastrophe that dramatically affected social life and the economy. Females encounter various gender-related issues depending on their culture, life circumstances, and habits. Examining female lives within the context of sociocultural debates offers insight into personal experiences (McLaughlin, 2003). Numerous studies have discovered that the primary causes of gender gaps are sociocultural influences that prioritize males over females (Suryadi & Pratitis, 2001). The Monash University study described above demonstrates that professional disruptions encountered by females, such as childbirth, affect females' careers (Farida & Wardana, 2020). Gender differences are also a result of sociocultural and religious attitudes. For instance, there is an idea that males are the producers of livelihoods and family heads, and hence, their education must take priority. According

to Coate and Howson (2016), a lecturer's career is considered a male career (stereotypical masculinity).

In the social environment, changes in mindset need to be carried out by the community, where equality needs to be done so that no one dominates, where both males and females who work as lecturers can work together and contribute positively to advance the world of education. (M9)

During this pandemic, the erasure of the divide between work and home complicated female academics' ability to juggle employment, childcare duties, and housework. The policy on Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) compels colleges to alter their curricula significantly. Furthermore, universities should implement this strategy by early 2021. The added labor required to adjust courses in the face of an epidemic makes it much more difficult for female academics to fulfill the fundamental activities necessary for career advancement. As Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim established the concept of "Merdeka Belajar" (Free to Learn), intending to develop exceptional human resources by prioritizing the implementation of character qualities that foster each student's thinking ability and creativity (Savitri, 2020). Merdeka Belajar meant freedom of learning for teachers and students in the COVID-19 era, allowing students to study freely, relax, and smile without pressure, to master their natural talents without forcing them.

Redesigning the curriculum to suit the Merdeka Belajar campus program as extra work during a pandemic hinders academic tasks like researching, lecturing, and community outreach that support academic careers. (F2)

### **Gender-Based Accountability in Life**

During the pandemic, female academics were reintroduced into the domestic sphere and faced with household and academic tasks. Males did not significantly assist household work and functioned as the family's public face when shopping or engaging in other outdoor activities. Although the public world was dominated by spending during quarantine, males were assigned to these activities, while females were assigned to housework. Cooking and caring for the house are examples of female responsibilities. Even a simple encounter such as the following is a powerful statement regarding gender roles. Many female academics, including Participants 4,

9, and 11 expressed similar sentiments.

My husband helps with household chores such as washing clothes and shopping for household needs. It makes it easier for me to take care of household chores, children, and work. (F4)

My husband, a family leader, helps and guides his child in online learning when experiencing technical problems related to lessons, including meeting household needs outside the home. (F9)

We divide the tasks well where my husband has a role externally related to family and household. Meanwhile, I focus more on caring for the children and cleaning the house. (F11)

### **Gender-Responsive During Covid 19**

This pandemic has highlighted the broader and more pernicious problems associated with restrictive work arrangements and the exploitation of females and people working in the care industry through the disproportionate accumulation of labor and unpaid work. Our research demonstrates that gender equality discourses, particularly those focused on advancing females to highly strategic university positions, cannot resolve the systemic disparities faced by female academics. According to statistical comparisons of gendered lecturers and students, gender disparity is frequently regarded as a problem that is resolved. The gender dimension of the academic profession, on the other hand, demonstrates the magnitude of the structural divide. The university should be a space that empowers females by cultivating feminist and postcolonial criticism. Universities are also hotbeds for gender-based exploitation.

Serving as an official in a university environment is challenging, but I still feel the differences and boundaries, especially when communicating with the leadership. They seem to keep their distance, and I did not expect that. (F4)

Male and female officials who occupy positions within the university still have a higher proportion of men than women. (F7)

To ensure that everyone at universities can survive the pandemic and resume productive lives following it, leaders, must be prepared to tackle the problem of

developing policies that ensure equitable resource allocation. Gender equality is meaningful only if female and service providers who nurture and care can participate in decision-making in their institutions to ensure that policies protect the most vulnerable populations. Universities require compassionate leaders to develop compassionate policies; communal and organizational compassion must be valued alongside productivity and excellence objectives. Leaders comprehend the context and understand which redistribution policy to implement to avoid favoring certain groups and oppressing others.

The leaders in every university, both private and public, have a significant role in creating policies that are more directed toward gender equality, wherein in the decision-making process, females have the same rights to represent their voices in decision-making participation. (F10)

### **Discussions and Implications**

This study reaffirms the gender issues in higher education. Female respondents reported much more concern about caring for their students and assisting them with technology and other related problems at the university. The male lecturers who answered the questions were neither aware of, nor did they respond to this need. According to a previous study, female teachers have higher standards of nurturing and emotional care for their students than male lecturers (Malisch et al., 2020). These considerations have undoubtedly added to the pressure on female instructors and increased their workloads during the pandemic.

Sociocultural factors are the primary reason for gender differences (Suryadi & Pratiti, 2001). In addition, there is a sociocultural assumption that a woman's education is not of great significance when compared with her role as a mother and wife, and there is a cultural ambiguity in which men still have greater importance than women. Indeed, as females in Indonesia to have higher university degrees than males, their chances of getting a job are greater. Although female lecturers are usually present, the lack of female administrators in education sector has been investigated and is considered a global concern (Selzer & Robles, 2019). Previous research has found that females in Indonesia face disadvantages in achieving gender equality, particularly in job opportunities, because of religious beliefs, traditional patriarchal norms, and women's primary roles as housewives and wives (Murniati, 2012). Furthermore, systems and social cultures regard academics as a masculine vocation, resulting in lower female representation in higher education, particularly

at the senior level, which is synonymous with male leadership (Morley, 2014).

The productivity of female lecturers has increased during Covid-19, amid women's dual roles as workers and housewives. This is indicated by increased research activity and female lecturers' desire to participate in online and offline conferences during the pandemic. This is contrary to research showing that female academics are most affected by academic productivity (Staniscuaski et al., 2021). Female lecturers with dual roles as housewives think about how to remain productive as academics by improving their careers and caring for their families, starting with raising children and other household matters. This aligns with previous research revealing that women prioritize their role as mothers in the family (Lutter & Schröder, 2020). Leaders in tertiary institutions are essential for empowering the academic community, both men and women, to reduce gender tensions, especially during a pandemic. This complex problem during the Covid-19 pandemic requires sensitive and sympathetic leaders to reduce tension (Tevis, 2021).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Gender equality is a requirement for all tertiary institutions in Indonesia, with no distinction made between men and women, because they are considered to have the same needs. Therefore, policies, infrastructures, and facilities that support women's employment and daily work performance are beneficial. Establishing gender-responsive policies, infrastructure, and facilities will also improve performance and reduce gender biases in dealing with cultural, academic, and bureaucratic challenges.

Beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, findings concerning the construction of a long-term vision for universities are relatively egalitarian and sustainable. The academics could return to "normal" following the pandemic, as this might imply the persistence of inequitable intellectual employment (Motta, 2020). Results showed that academics lack effective coping methods for dealing with work-related stress levels. During the crisis, most additional work concentrated on the effects of Covid-19 on academic and household tasks. The magnitude of this adverse impact is determined by females' economic, social, and cultural conditions, and continues by stating that the cause of Indonesia's gender gap is sociocultural elements that are difficult to overcome in a short time. The sociocultural component contends that females' education is insignificant compared to their social roles as mothers and wives, and their cultural ambiguity (Suryadi & Pratitis, 2001).

To advance gender parity in university institutions, the government must priori-

tize gender equality and balance in human resource management policies. In Indonesia, which has a reasonably large population and a patriarchal culture, female quotas are needed to realize the dream of female representation. That is considered an effective technique for reducing discrimination against women in the workplace against females (Morley, 2014). Furthermore, Ace and Banu (2001) have stated that including the gender component in the nomination of structural officials in ministries/agencies, provinces, districts/cities, and educational units is a prerequisite for reducing the gender gap in education. In addition, we advocate reassessing career and ownership conditions following the recommendations of Gonzales and Griffin (2020). This study demonstrated how academic work and personal life are intertwined.

The results of this study indicate that leadership invests in childcare support for female academics working from home and provides on-campus childcare facilities for female employees. Productivity discrepancies experienced by female academics can be addressed and eliminated by providing research assistance, customizing application forms, and improving the mechanisms to explain differences. Leaders in higher education are expected to project messages of compassion and concern in order to reduce anxiety and fear. More flexible work arrangements that encourage and improve career prospects, and more effective childcare systems can help counter the unequal effects of the pandemic. Studies exploring this phenomenon have been conducted in many countries but not in Indonesia. Although the respondents in this study were domiciled in Indonesia, their experiences were typical of those on whom the pandemic had an impact globally. This study is limited to several private and public universities in Indonesia; therefore, it is necessary to conduct further research with a more significant number of respondents and compare private and state universities concerning gender policies during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

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*Appendix 1. Respondent Data*

<b>Female (F) and Male(M)</b>	<b>Kids</b>	<b>R&amp;D Intensif (Yes/No)</b>	<b>Position</b>
F1	2	Y	Assistant Professor
F2	1	Y	Assistant Professor
F3	3	N	Lecture
F4	3	Y	Associate Professor
F5	2	Y	Lecture
F6	4	N	Associate Professor
F7	1	Y	Professor
F8	5	N	Lecture
F9	2	Y	Assistant Professor
F10	2	N	Assistant Professor
F11	3	N	Associate Professor
F12	2	N	Lecture
F13	2	Y	Lecture
F14	1	N	Associate Professor
F15	4	N	Associate Professor
F16	3	Y	Associate Professor
M1	2	Y	Assistant Professor
M2	1	Y	Assistant Professor
M3	1	Y	Associate Professor
M4	5	Y	Assistant Professor
M5	4	Y	Professor
M6	4	Y	Assistant Professor
M7	3	N	Associate Professor
M8	4	Y	Assistant Professor
M9	2	Y	Professor
M10	2	N	Lecture
M11	3	Y	Associate Professor
M12	1	Y	Associate Professor
M13	0	Y	Assistant Professor