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Subjective Well-Being, Women Academics, and the Consequences of the Pandemic

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Abstract

This study examines how COVID-19 affected the reported post-pandemic happiness levels of female faculty in Turkey based on the changes occurred in the private sphere and work life. Analyzing the data based on the questionnaires completed by 328 women in academia in Turkey, multilevel models firstly demonstrate that concerns for prospective careers related to the pandemic have a strong decreasing impact on women's happiness levels. As opposed to these worries, institutional support is reported to have an improving effect. Unlike expected, increased time spent on housework and childcare do not predict the reported happiness levels of women academics at a statistically significant level, whereas support received from partner/spouse during this period enhances these levels. Additional single predictor multilevel models reveal the positive effect of job and financial satisfaction, while the negative impact of the pandemic on research productivity and the subsequent reactions of one's institution have decreasing effects, the latter also being the sole predictor for which there is variance at the level of academic rank. Findings of this study emphasize the need for higher education institutions in Turkey to include the notion of well-being in related plans and policies, and to support women academics' careers during unprecedented times and beyond.

Keywords: women, higher education, pandemic, subjective-well-being, happiness, quantitative methods