Chapter 16
Discovering a Balance in Self-Care Techniques for Female Higher Education Leaders

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ABSTRACT

Although the growing number of women in leadership roles in higher education is a noteworthy achievement, these leaders nevertheless confront particular difficulties, such as gender prejudice, social expectations, and the need to balance work and family obligations. These difficulties frequently lead to increased stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction, highlighting the need for self-care for their general wellbeing and productivity at work. This study suggests a methodical literature analysis to investigate and assess self-care techniques designed especially for female academic leaders. The study's three main goals are to examine the particular difficulties faced by female leaders in higher education, pinpoint evidence-based self-care strategies that work, and make suggestions for institutional support networks that foster resilience and wellbeing. Using databases like JSTOR, ERIC, and PubMed, the process entails a comprehensive assessment of academic publications released within the past ten years. Studies will be the main focus of the inclusion criteria.

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INTRODUCTION

As more women take up leadership roles in colleges and universities, the role of female leaders in higher educational institutions has grown dramatically in recent years. High levels of responsibility, a fast-paced work environment, and the constant need to strike a balance between work and family duties are some of the particular difficulties that these positions provide. These demands are exacerbated for female leaders by gendered leadership dynamics and social expectations, which frequently call for them to overcome implicit prejudices and stereotypes while demonstrating their competence. Even though there are now more women in higher education leadership roles, the gender gap in higher education leadership remains a global problem due to the unequal and sluggish progress made toward parity. Self-care becomes not only a luxury in this stressful environment, but a vital tactic for maintaining resilience, effectiveness, and general well-being. Achieving both professional and personal fulfilment requires understanding and putting self-care strategies into practice. The precise self-care practices that women leaders in higher education may use to support their physical, mental, and emotional well-being are examined in this chapter. It looks at evidence-based strategies that address the particular demands they encounter, such fostering supportive professional networks, reducing burnout, and managing work-life integration. Additionally, it highlights the necessity of redefining self-care as a crucial leadership skill rather than a self-indulgent act, enabling women to lead in a sustainable manner and motivate their colleagues. In addition to lowering stress and increasing resilience, female leaders may provide an example of balanced leadership for the academic communities they serve by cultivating self-care-focused routines.

The increasing number of women in leadership positions in higher education has made a significant step towards gender parity in academia. However, female leaders still face unique obstacles that affect their productivity, general health, and contentment at work. These challenges include social expectations, gender prejudice, and the difficulty of juggling personal and professional obligations. These ongoing difficulties lead to negative consequences such as diminished job satisfaction, professional burnout, and problems with physical and mental health. Resolving these problems is essential for both institutions that benefit from the efforts of the leaders and for the leaders themselves.

This study investigates self-care techniques tailored to female academic leaders by thoroughly examining the body of current literature over the past ten years. The review focuses on important self-care techniques, such as practicing mindfulness, exercising, managing time well, and building strong social support systems. These behaviours have a major positive impact on people's physical, mental, and emotional well-being, enabling them to handle leadership problems more skilfully.

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