THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPECIFIED FACTORS
AND ROLE STRAIN IN EMPLOYED MOTHERS

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by
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ABSTRACT

One of the most dramatic changes in the past decade has been the increased participation of mothers of young children in the labor force. The issue of balancing employment and motherhood is a particularly salient one for these women, and one which needs to be addressed and explored in greater detail. The purpose of this study was to further pursue the area of women's multiple role combination further, and specifically to examine the relationship between various specified factors and the role strain experienced by women returning to work following the birth of their first child.

Ten variables were identified from the literature as influencing a woman's ability to combine both employment outside the home and a family. A descriptive survey design was used to obtain the data relating to the selected variables as well as to measure role strain. The variables were measured with both previously developed and tested instruments, as well as questions formulated by the researcher. The sample consisted of women, either married or living with a partner, who had returned to employment outside the home following the birth of their first child. The names of potential participants were obtained from the files of the Saskatoon Community Health Unit. These potential participants were telephoned in order to obtain their confirmation prior to sending them a questionnaire. The positive response rate from the survey (94.17%, n=113), as well as the additional handwritten comments provided by some of the participants, indicated that women are indeed interested in and concerned about this subject.
Results of the study indicated that maternal identity, or the confidence and comfort a woman experiences within the maternal role, was the most strongly correlated to, and the best predictor of role strain. A higher degree of maternal identity correlated with a lower level of role strain.

Other findings revealed that women who were satisfied with their job and were satisfied with their childcare arrangements also experienced a lower level of role strain. As may be expected, women who worked part time or casual had a lower level of role strain than the women who were employed full time.
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CHAPTER 1
PROBLEM, PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Problem

There is a limited amount of information available in the nursing literature which addresses the experience of women returning to work following the birth of their children. However, statistics show that women are, with increasing frequency, returning to employment following the birth of their infants. In Saskatchewan, in 1985, over 52% of women with a youngest child less than three years of age were employed outside the home, compared to 28% in 1975 (Statistics Canada, 1987b). Although dual-career families are replacing single breadwinner households, women continue to bear primary responsibility for child rearing, increasing their potential for both role conflict and role strain. These women are faced with the demands and obligations inherent in the roles of spouse, worker, and parent.

While role combinations in certain situations can be beneficial and result in enhanced self esteem and well being (Thoits, 1987; Verbrugge, 1983), the interface of work outside the home and family responsibilities can also be a serious issue for employed mothers, resulting in role conflict, stress, and ultimately role strain (Collins & Tiedje, 1987; Cooke & Rousseau, 1984; Elman & Gilbert, 1984; McBride, 1988; Moen & Dempster-McClain, 1987; Walker, 1989b).

The persistence of role strain in varying degrees and intensity can affect an individual's overall health and well-being, ultimately leading to a deterioration of physical and mental health (Froberg,
Gjerdingen, & Preston, 1986). Negative responses associated with role strain can range from psychological symptoms such as depression or anxiety, to behavioural reactions including increased smoking or additional conflict in personal relationships (Canadian Advisory Status on the Council of Women, 1989). Intervention and methods to decrease role strain would appear to have a positive influence on the overall health of employed mothers.

An understanding of the dynamics involved in the situation of employed mothers is especially crucial for nurses. Nurses who have an understanding of the issues facing women who are returning to employment following the birth of their children can provide information and support to these women. Community health nurses in particular, because of their direct and repeated contact with these women in prenatal classes, postnatal home visits, and child health conferences, have a unique and significant opportunity to identify and assist women who are having difficulty fulfilling multiple role obligations. By exploring the relationship of various factors to the experience of role strain, community health nurses may assist women to better understand the rationale behind the development of role strain, and to develop appropriate coping strategies to reduce role strain.

The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between various factors and the role strain experienced by women returning to work following the birth of their first child. An examination of the factors associated with and influencing a mother's ability to fulfill
multiple role obligations, especially those roles of work and mother, must be carried out in order that these factors can be described, explained, predicted, and controlled.

**Justification**

In 1986, the National Institute of Mental Health convened a panel of experts in the United States to propose a research agenda for women's mental health. The research priority receiving the most attention was that of the effects of women's multiple roles on their mental health (McBride, 1988). Nurses and other professionals on the panel stressed the need for research that would investigate role conflict/role burden as a major source of stress for young and middle aged women.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (1987) also recognized the need for further research in the area of women's mental health. The Association acknowledged the stress which results from women's "double day", i.e. the combined responsibility and stress of employment and aspects of family care and household maintenance. They recommended that women's mental health be made a priority by national and provincial agencies that fund research in the area of mental health.

These recommendations, as well as the lack of adequate information in the nursing literature relating to this topic, served as the impetus for this study. Nurses who come into contact with employed mothers must be aware of the factors influencing role strain, as well as the attitudes and perceptions these women possess regarding their various roles, in order to assist them in combining multiple roles.
Literature Review

The level of role strain experienced by women combining work and family roles is contingent on a number of factors. Some of these factors concern external barriers, while others are internal and often not operating at a level of conscious awareness. A more detailed description of these factors, as derived from the literature, will be provided within the conceptual framework. This section will explore the literature to emphasize the methods, findings, limitations, and present state of research regarding role strain. However, before this is possible a definition and explication of role strain, the key concept within this study, is essential.

Role strain has become a widely used term in role theory language following Goode's (1960) classic discussion of this topic. Goode defined role strain as "the felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations" (p. 483). Biddle and Thomas (1966) further clarified its meaning by identifying properties inherent in role strain. They portrayed role strain as occurring due to an external stimulus (pressure of role demands), invoking an internal reaction (felt difficulty in fulfilling role demands).

Role strain is depicted as enduring hardships, challenges, conflicts, or other problems that people experience as they engage in normal social roles over a period of time (Kaplan, 1983). This explanation of role strain as occurring due to the problems and conflicts experienced in everyday life is notably applicable to the situation of working mothers. The role strain of working mothers is the result of demands, such as taking their child to a medical appointment.
during work hours or finding time to bake brownies for the school bake sale, that are common in normal social roles.

Another term commonly referred to in the "women and employment" literature is that of role conflict. There is, however, a distinction between role conflict and role strain. Role conflict refers to the contradictory norms or expectations within a role, therefore serving as an antecedent or source of role strain (Burr & Nye, 1979). Thus role conflict, role accumulation, role ambiguity, role incongruity, and other stressful antecedents become the source or etiology of role strain, with role strain serving as the manifested outcome of these factors.

Goode's definition of role strain, the felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations, is used in the present study since it clearly characterizes the undesirable state perceived by the individual as a result of multiple role obligations. The felt difficulty in meeting given role demands, as a result of the total role obligations being perceived as overdemanding, clearly portrays the image of role strain as adopted in the present study.

It became apparent after reviewing the literature relating to women's multiple role occupancy that the research could be divided into three broad categories: a focus on the negative aspects of multiple role occupancy, a focus on the positive aspects of multiple role occupancy, and an examination and analysis of the quality and experiences associated with various roles.

**Negative Aspects of Multiple Role Occupancy**

The negative effects of multiple role occupancy resulting in role
conflict and role strain have been examined by a number of researchers (Aneshensel, Frerichs, & Clark, 1981; Elman & Gilbert, 1984; Voyandoff & Kelly, 1984). For example, using a random sample of 200 Michigan teachers Cooke and Rousseau (1984) investigated the effects of family roles and work-role expectations on strain. They found that high work role expectations contributed to perceived role conflict. They also found that the combination of marital and maternal roles caused nonwork roles to change and become increasingly demanding, resulting in increased inter-role conflict and role strain. Low role expectations resulted in less significant findings of role strain.

A study undertaken by Cleary and Mechanic (1983) examined particular constellations of roles and demands in order to determine those most closely related to distress, an attribute of role strain. They found that employed married women experienced slightly less distress than housewives, but having children in the household was especially stressful for employed women, and counteracted the advantage of employment. These studies provide further evidence to support the association between multiple role occupancy and related negative effects such as distress or role strain.

Kessler and McCrae (1982) provided a clear and explicit discussion of conditions under which a wife's employment may lead to increased distress. Their results indicated that the benefits of employment are reduced by the stress of maintaining a household and that this stress is also increased by the presence of young children in the home.

Kessler and McCrae's (1982) research findings also revealed that outside employment had psychological benefits only for those who were
satisfied with their jobs and for those whose sex role beliefs were consistent with their employment status. These findings support the hypothesis that employment outside the home, combined with the duties and obligations associated with raising children, increases role strain and results in distress among married women.

**Positive Aspects of Multiple Role Occupancy**

Another focus of research dealing with multiple role occupancy emphasizes the positive aspects of role combinations resulting in enhanced self esteem and well being (Crosby, 1987; Thoits, 1987; Verbrugge, 1983). For example, Verbrugge (1983) interviewed 714 adults in the Detroit area and obtained from 589 of these adults a week long health record in order to test the effect of multiple roles on the health of both men and women. The results demonstrated that employed married parents tended to have the best health profile, as indicated by such factors as illnesses incurred and pills, medicines, and treatments used, while people with none of these roles tended to have the worst health profile. A summary of their results revealed that the combination of job and family roles had no special effect, positive or negative, on health. People with multiple roles did tend to have the best health, but this was due to straightforward effects of each role, not to any special effect of combining roles.

Subjective feelings of well-being are another measure commonly used to substantiate the benefits of multiple role occupancy. A study undertaken by Kandel, Davies, and Raveis (1985) analyzed the relationships among the occupational, marital, and household roles of
women in relation to their stressfulness. They also examined associations between role-specific strains and the women's subjective feelings of well-being. Their sample consisted of a probability sample of 197 women, single and married, parents and nonparents, employed and nonemployed. They found that the lowest level of depressive symptoms were among those with the role combination married, employed, and parent. However, their study failed to take into account the ages and number of children in the home, as well as other important factors such as type of occupation and attitudes toward employment.

There are other limitations to the studies presented above. The use of cross-sectional designs in this area makes it extremely difficult to establish a causal relationship between multiple role occupancy and women's health. The question remains: To what extent are positive relationships between multiple roles and health due to the fact that healthier people take on more roles (Froberg, Gjerdingen, & Preston, 1986)? Waldron and Herold (1986) propose that there are multiple causal relationships linking employment status and women's health, including such factors as an individual's perceptions and attitudes. The literature which deals with individual attitudes and perceptions and multiple role occupancy will now be examined.

**Attitudes and Experiences Associated with Multiple Role Occupancy**

Previous research fails to take into account the quality of experiences within a role. An individual's perception and attitudes towards various factors associated with the role might either contribute to, or decrease role strain. Recent researchers discredit the "harm
versus benefits" debate of multiple role occupancy, and have formulated a new perspective examining the nature of the experiences within a role and the individual perceptions and attitudes involved, not merely the number of roles a woman occupies.

An example of such a study which examined individual perceptions and attitudes was that undertaken by Hall (1987). Through her nursing experience Hall encountered numerous first-time mothers who expressed concern about their ability to combine employment outside the home with mothering. Due to the lack of professional literature in this area she conducted an exploratory study to examine the experience of first-time mothers returning to work. The substantive theory generated from this approach indicated that first-time mothers viewed their return to work as a process of role redefinition consisting of three stages: taking on multiple roles, experiencing role strain, and reducing role strain. The process of role redefinition required women to examine their perception and expectations of themselves in their roles of parent, spouse, and worker, and to change their identities in order to accommodate and accomplish multiple role obligations.

The women in Hall's (1987) study felt that the role strain they were experiencing forced them to re-examine their expectations of themselves in the roles they occupied. The importance of acknowledging individual expectations, attitudes, and perceptions in regard to the various roles women occupy becomes apparent if alleviation of role strain is desired. These attitudes and perceptions will be dealt with in the proposed study.

Hall's (1987) study, although closely related to the topic area of
this research, has limitations. The use of a qualitative approach necessarily affected the sample size, and therefore limits the generalizability of the findings. The participants of this particular study all came from a privileged socio-economic group, which restricts the findings even further. However, research of this nature is essential in order to obtain the participants' perceptions of their situations and to provide the framework and basis on which future research can be built.

As well as individual attitudes and perceptions, factors and characteristics within a role become extremely important to consider when dealing with role strain. An example of a study taking these points into consideration was that of Moen and Dempster-McClain (1987). Moen and Dempster-McClain analyzed data from the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey in order to examine work-time preferences of 224 dual-earner couples with children ages 12 and under. Using a role strain perspective, they hypothesized that six factors are related to an employed parent's stated preference for fewer work hours: gender, family obligations, current work hours, perceived work-family interference, occupational status, and job flexibility. The preference for working less is assumed to be related to role strain, with extended cross-pressures and increased role strain resulting in a greater desire to work less. Although they did examine a variety of associated factors, Moen and Dempster-McClain failed to take into account individual perceptions and attitudes towards various roles, two very important components which have an impact upon the individual's experience in the roles of spouse, parent, and worker (Crosby, 1987). The approach,
A conceptual framework, and literature review were extensive and well documented, and future research based on this background work but also taking into account individual attitudes, perceptions, and values, would assist in generating valuable information in this area.

The three trends or categories of research dealing with women's multiple role occupancy revealed results which are inconsistent and inconclusive. There are a number of limitations and ambiguous assumptions in previous research which must be resolved or accounted for in future research. A number of extraneous variables were often ignored in prior research. The effects of modifying variables such as age, education, income, and type of occupation should be considered and included in future research.

Previous research often failed to identify environmental supports and stresses, such as flexible working hours and locating satisfactory day care arrangements which indirectly, but importantly, have an impact on a woman's ability to manage multiple roles. Also, depression was frequently employed as a measure of well-being. While depression has been shown to be a sensitive psychological barometer of life strain (Ross, Mirowsky, & Huber, 1983), more direct and discrete measures of strain, such as those used in the present study, would provide for reliable and consistent findings.

Most of the research to date on the impact of combining work and family responsibilities has been inconclusive, contradictory, or contingent on other intervening variables (Haw, 1982; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1980; Semchuk, 1986). It becomes evident that future research must deal more closely with the factors and individual attitudes
associated with women's occupany in the multiple roles of spouse, parent, and worker.

The present study acknowledges prior research approaches, findings, and limitations. Based on the foregoing analysis, the present research study was undertaken to enhance the positive aspects of prior research and to address the limitations in order to generate sound information and enhance understanding of employed mothers and role strain.

**Conceptual Framework**

The present study of working mothers was conceptualized from a role strain perspective, in which the role strain experienced by women returning to work following the birth of their first child was viewed as being associated with a complex interrelationship among a number of variables. An extensive review of the literature was undertaken to determine which variables were necessary to measure in terms of their relationship with role strain.

Some of the variables identified were mentioned in the literature review in the previous section. The review of the literature also suggested the need to measure some of the more personal characteristics of the individual, such as attitudes and perceptions associated with a particular role. The variables identified as reflecting individual attitudes and values include attitude toward work, maternal identity (how the woman feels about herself as a mother), and more general feelings such as job satisfaction and satisfaction with child care arrangements. These personal attitudes and the demographic and more
specific variables derived from the literature constitute the independent variables measured in the present study.

Therefore the variables or factors dealt with in this study, as they relate to role strain, included: sex role attitudes, maternal identity, social support, child care arrangements, occupation, employment schedule, job satisfaction, income, educational level, and age. This section of the conceptual framework will explain each of these variables in more detail. The discussion will begin with role strain, the dependent variable, followed by associated factors, the independent variables.

Role Strain - The Dependent Variable

A detailed description of role strain was included in a previous section of the literature review, therefore for the purpose of the conceptual framework a succinct definition of the term will be provided. Role strain refers to the felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations (Goode, 1960), and is the manifested outcome or response to the influence of stressful antecedents. Role strain occurs due to an external stimulus (the pressure of role demands) invoking an internal reaction (felt difficulty in fulfilling role demands).

Factors Associated with Working Mothers' Role Strain

- The Independent Variables

Sex Role Attitudes / Attitude Toward Work. Sex roles are defined as those expectations for behavior and attitudes that the culture
defines as appropriate for men and women, while sex role attitudes are an individual's perception and belief about the appropriate activities and behavior required in various roles (Andersen, 1983).

Sex role attitudes are believed to exist on a continuum, with the "traditionalist" and "egalitarian" viewpoints occupying opposite ends of the scale. The traditionalist ideology centers mainly around division of labor and responsibility within the family and views women's primary responsibility and concern as assuming the roles of homemaker and mother (Larsen & Long, 1988). This prescribed division of labor is often justified by beliefs about innate sex differences, and the primacy of the maternal role among women (Hock, Gnezda, & McBride, 1984). On the other hand, the egalitarian viewpoint asserts that women in general should hold a job if they want to, and believes that no one is harmed if they do so (Waite, 1978).

Another perspective which further clarifies women's sex role attitudes toward work was presented by Barbery (1983). At one extreme, home-oriented women behave in the traditional female role and seek fulfillment through their relationship as wife and mother. At the other extreme are the career-oriented women, characterized as independent, highly motivated to achieve, and seeking fulfillment through their work.

Research indicates a change in women's sex role attitudes toward work over the past few decades from traditional to more egalitarian (Mason, Czajka, & Arber, 1976; McBroom, 1987; Thornton, Alwin, & Camburn, 1983). These findings indicate that women are becoming more career than home oriented.

However, even though it appears that women are becoming more
career oriented, the effect of an infant on sex role attitudes and sex related self attributions must be taken into account, since children also influence the attitudes and perceptions which mothers assume. The birth and rearing of children appears to have a traditionalizing effect on sex-related self descriptions, with mothers of preschool children expressing increased tenderness (Feldman, Biringen, & Nash, 1981), increased emphasis and focus on the importance of children, and an increased desire to nurture (Krogh, 1985). As well, research undertaken by Hock, Gnezda, and McBride (1984) reveals that although the majority of women plan to return to work within the first year of their child's birth, most women experience ambivalence when it actually comes time to return to work. These feelings of uncertainty are related to the conflict which exists between beliefs about infants' needs, and the mothers' plans to work outside the home.

On the other hand, a woman who was highly career oriented may perceive her career role as equal to or possibly more important than her mothering role, and view the baby as an impediment to the development of a professional career (Majewski, 1986). These attitudes must also be considered when examining the relationship between sex role attitudes and role strain, and therefore were dealt with in the context of this study.

Maternal Identity. The arrival of a first child signals a major change for women in terms of roles and responsibilities. Roles have to be reassigned, new duties assumed, status positions shifted, values reoriented, and new financial demands dealt with (Brouse, 1988; Hall,
Following the birth of her child, a woman undergoes the cognitive process of identity reformulation in which she integrates the maternal role into her established role set (Pickens, 1982). This identity reformulation enables the woman to identify herself as mother, as well as to evaluate her perception of the adequacy of her performance within this newly established role. A positive maternal self evaluation indicates perceived confidence and comfort within the maternal role, while a negative self evaluation indicates lack of confidence and uncertainty within the maternal role.

The influence of maternal identity on the level of role strain appears to be somewhat ambiguous (Mercer, 1985). Would an increased perception of maternal identity compel these women to assume the "superwoman syndrome", whereby they would try to undertake and fulfill all roles perfectly, increasing the potential for role strain (Hall 1987; Scarato & Sigall, 1979)? Or would a positive evaluation of themselves in the maternal role allow them to successfully manage the competing demands and obligations of work and family roles (Cooke & Rousseau, 1984; Voyandoff, 1988)? These questions and similar concerns are pursued in the present study.

Social Support. There is growing evidence to suggest that social support acts as a buffer, decreasing the potentially harmful effects of stress from a variety of life events (Cronenwett, 1985; Hirsch & David, 1983; Rook, 1987; Thoits, 1982). Several investigators have studied social support during family expansion and found social support to be
related to improved postpartum adaptation and transition to parenthood (Crnic, Greenberg, Robinson, & Ragozin, 1984; Cutrona, 1984; Mercer, 1986).

Social support is a complex concept involving two commonly measured major dimensions, that of network or structural support and that of perceived support (Funch, Marshall, & Gebhardt, 1986). "Social network" measures include such structural properties as: marital status, number of friends, and frequency of contact, while "perceived support" measures are based on the individual's evaluation of the relationship.

Perceived social support has been found to be a stronger predictor of health outcomes and positive well-being than network support (Schaefer, Coyne, & Lazarus, 1981). Perceived social support appears to involve two distinct types of support: socio-emotional aid, including affect, affirmation and belonging; and instrumental aid, including tangible aid and advice or information (Funch et al., 1986).

Perceived social support, as defined in the preceding description, and its relationship with role strain was examined in the present study.

Child Care Arrangements. The need for satisfactory child care has repeatedly been shown to be an important factor for employed mothers (Sund & Ostwald, 1985). At a time when new parents are exploring their own attitudes about parenting responsibilities, they also must broaden their views of parenting to include caregivers outside the family. Locating and maintaining quality child care is a central task in workmother integration (Collins & Tiedje, 1987; Sund & Ostwald, 1985).

Feelings of guilt about leaving their infants in alternative forms
of child care, as well as beliefs regarding exclusive maternal care for infants, may influence role strain experienced by women returning to work. Hall (1987) reported in her study that women returning to work following the birth of their first child often felt that they were not fulfilling their maternal responsibility.

Clearly, child care can be a significant source of stress for employed mothers, and finding high quality, affordable, consistent day care is a major task - a task which can be extremely difficult to accomplish. Selecting child care is a complex decision-making process involving numerous variables. In addition to concerns regarding quality, parents' preferences and selection of care arrangements are influenced by such factors as family income, number of hours for which care is required, and availability and cost of various options (Status of Women Canada, 1986). Therefore, child care arrangements may also be associated with role strain and were examined within this study.

**Occupation.** Although the number of women with jobs has increased dramatically over the past decade, women continue to work in occupations in which they have traditionally been the majority. Statistics Canada 1981 Census revealed that 74% of the labor force who reported working in clerical, service, sales, medicine and health, and teaching occupations were women (Statistics Canada, 1984). Research indicates that the occupation in which a mother is employed outside the home is an important and influential variable to consider when dealing with life events and multiple roles, both in terms of associated duties, and the type of women who occupy the position (Barbery, 1983; Haw, 1982; Kessler
Barbery (1983) discovered significant differences in women's predispositions toward their jobs and family life based on their occupational category. Women in professional positions had high scores reflecting a positive attitude toward careers outside the home, while women in non-professional positions obtained lower scores, reflecting a more negative attitude toward jobs, and characterizing women who are more home oriented.

A study undertaken by Killien (1987) revealed that women who were committed to their professional careers were more likely to delay childbearing. Their ability to combine family and career obligations once the decision to have children was made was not examined. The previous studies suggest that the type of occupation a woman is employed in may also influence her level of role strain. Therefore, the relationship between occupation and role strain was examined in the present study.

Employment Schedule. Issues concerning the number of hours spent working for pay, as well as how those hours are organized and their relationship to role strain will be considered under the title of employment schedule.

Full time/Part time employment. The decision to choose part time rather than full time employment may be a necessary compromise that is made in response to conflicting pressures of work/family situations. Part time work brings extra income to the family while avoiding some of the hardships of combining home and labor force responsibilities, and
also enables mothers to spend time with their children (White, 1983).

Time demands, or lack of time to adequately fulfill multiple role obligations are a frequently cited concern among working mothers (Keith & Schafer, 1980; Moen & Dempster-McClain, 1987; Voyandoff & Kelly, 1984). A study of employed parents by Moen and Dempster-McClain (1987) revealed that over half the mothers would prefer to work fewer hours per week on jobs outside the home in order to spend more time with their spouse and children.

When examined under this perspective, part time employment would appear to help relieve role strain. However, the conditions and costs of part time employment must also be examined. Part time work is limited and concentrated in the clerical, service, and sales sectors, at the lowest levels, and rarely with any opportunity for change or advancement (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1987). Part time work is also predominantly low-paid, with few benefits and little security (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1987). Therefore, full time versus part time employment is a significant factor which may also influence the role strain experienced by working mothers.

Scheduling - flexibility. Another aspect of employment assumed to influence role strain is the flexibility or ease in adjusting work schedules / work hours (Barling & Barenbrug, 1984). Women must be allowed flexibility to adjust their hours of work in order to deal with such family responsibilities as medical appointments (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1987). Previous research also reiterates this proposition, stating a need for more innovative and
flexible arrangements of working hours (Elman & Gilbert, 1984; Moen & Dempster-McClain, 1987).

Whether or not a woman is allowed the opportunity to adjust her work schedule to accommodate family responsibilities can reasonably be assumed to influence her level of role strain.

**Job Satisfaction.** Another factor which must be explained within the conceptual framework is the quality of a woman's employment relationship, or her perceived job satisfaction. As Warr and Parry (1982) hypothesized, a woman who finds her paid employment rewarding and satisfying may well experience more widespread psychological benefits than a woman who dislikes or is dissatisfied with her occupational role.

Kessler and McRae (1982) discovered that a significant benefit of employment was found only among those employed wives who were "very satisfied" with their jobs. Among those who were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied", employment actually increased psychological distress. A study by Cleary and Mechanic (1983) also revealed that job satisfaction was negatively correlated with depression. In view of these findings it is hypothesized that job satisfaction may also be associated with role strain.

**Income.** Study of the influence of income level on the outcome of role strain and various other psychological states has resulted in conflicting findings. Kessler and McRae (1982), in their research on the effects of wives' employment on their mental health, discovered no meaningful association between income and well-being. In contrast to
this study, Cleary and Mechanic (1983) found that the effects of children in the household on distress were strongest among working women with lower family incomes. Sund and Ostwald (1985) also reported that the higher the family income, the lower the family stress score. Another study which included income level as a variable reported that women with higher incomes tend to hire outside help more than women with lower incomes. The higher income level made it possible to purchase outside help and therefore assist in meeting multiple role demands (Gray, 1979). It becomes evident from these studies that income level may also be associated with role strain experienced by employed mothers.

Educational Level. Results of the 1981 Census of Canada (Statistics Canada, 1984) indicated that women with higher levels of schooling make up a larger proportion of the employed labor force. Approximately two-thirds of employed women had a certificate, diploma, or at least some education in addition to high school. Research also indicates that educational level has an influence on labor force participation and the experience of such participation. Kandel, Davies, and Raveis (1985) discovered that educational level was negatively associated with depressive symptomatology in women who occupy multiple roles. Waite (1980) concluded in her research that women with greater amounts of formal education were more likely than others to continue to work at their job while they are bearing children. The effect this has on the level of role strain experienced was not examined.

A study by Hock, Gnezda, and McBride (1984) revealed that mothers with 12 years or less of education were more home oriented than mothers
with more than 12 years of education, suggesting more traditional attitudes in the less educated group. Based on the literature, it is postulated that there is a correlation between education and role strain. A woman who is more highly educated is also inclined to be career oriented, maintain an occupation of professional status, and support a higher income. Since these factors, as previously discussed, are hypothesized to be associated with lower levels of role strain, education and role strain may also be associated.

**Age.** Maternal age has been included as a demographic variable in a number of studies, although it is more often used to determine the homogeneity of the sample than to test for relationships or association. However, in studies where age has been included as an independent variable, the findings have been contradictory. Sund and Ostwald (1985), in their exploration of dual-earner stress, discovered a negative relationship between age and stress. Keith and Schafer (1980) concluded that younger couples reflected greater role strain, and that this was not always associated with the presence of children. These findings suggest that age also independently influences role strain.

However, research by Voyandoff (1988) found that a woman's age was not significantly related to the level of work/family conflict reported. Kandel, Davies, and Raveis (1985) also found no significant relationship between the age distributions and the outcome of depression associated with multiple roles. In view of the conflicting evidence regarding age and role strain, age was examined further in the present study.

The preceding factors - sex role attitudes, maternal identity,
social support, child care arrangements, occupation, employment schedule, job satisfaction, income, educational level, and age were posited as major factors relating to the role strain experienced by women returning to work following the birth of their first child.

The following diagram illustrates the variables which were examined and their relationship to role strain.

![Diagram showing specified variables]

Figure 1. Specified Variables
Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the study, the review of the literature, and the conceptual framework, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What is the relationship between an employed woman's attitudes and perceptions i.e. attitude toward work role, job satisfaction, maternal identity, perceived social support, and the level of role strain experienced?

2. What is the relationship between the demographic variables of age of the mother, educational level of the mother, household income, and the level of role strain experienced?

3. What is the relationship between such work related factors as type of occupation, full-time/part-time employment, work schedule flexibility and the level of role strain experienced?

4. What combination of factors provides the most predictive power towards projecting the outcome of role strain?
CHAPTER 2
METHODOLOGY

Design
A descriptive survey design was utilized for the purpose of this study. According to Brink and Wood (1983) this type of design is employed in order to describe the relationship among variables. Therefore a design of this nature is well suited to study the relationship between specified variables and the experience of role strain.

Sample
The target population was women, either married or living with a partner, who had returned to work outside the home following the birth of their first child. The sample selected to represent this population was obtained from the health records of the three Health Centres of the Saskatoon Community Health Unit. Given the nature of this study, the criteria for selection of participants were as follows:

1. Female parent, married or living with a partner.
2. Had as her eldest child a healthy infant between the ages of 10 to 12 months.
3. Was employed either full time or part time outside the home.
4. Had been back at work for at least two months prior to being contacted.
Obtaining the Sample

A list of the names and addresses of potential participants was obtained from the health records of infants ages 10 to 12 months inclusive from the files of the three health centers of the Saskatoon Community Health Unit. The number of potential participants obtained at each health center was proportionate to the number of clientele served in each area. A separate list of names was also obtained at this time from the health records of those infants 13 months old in order to provide additional participants if they were required. These records indicated the age and birth order of the child, as well as name, occupation, and address of the parents.

According to Cohen (1977), a sample of 68 subjects is required in a correlation equation with 10 independent variables, an $R^2$ of .3 for the expected effect size, at an alpha of .05, and having a power of 80%. Using the same criteria in a regression equation: 10 independent variables; effect size of .3; alpha .05; and power of 80% would require a sample size of 49. Lowering the effect size to .1 from .3 would require a sample size of 157 in order to yield a power of 80%.

Therefore a sample size of 100, which results in a power of 99% when the effect size .3, and a power of 60% when the effect size is reduced to .1 was the size of the sample necessary for the purposes of this study.

According to Dillman (1978), prior confirmation of participation with a mailed questionnaire will lower the non-response rate. Based on this fact and the results from a recent study which used this sampling technique and yielded a response rate of 89% (Rennie, 1989), 120 participants were contacted by telephone for prior confirmation (see
## Operationalization of the Variables

### Section I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Direct question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Standard Occupational Classification (Statistics Canada, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Schedule</td>
<td>Full-time/part-time and flexibility options formulated by researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>Multiple choice question formulated by researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Income distributions (Statistics Canada, 1987a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Level</td>
<td>Scale of educational levels formulated by researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Arrangements</td>
<td>Scale of options formulated by researcher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>Social Support Scale (SSS) (Funch, Marshall &amp; Gebhardt, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Role Attitudes</td>
<td>Women's Attitudes Toward Careers Scale (Barber, 1983)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Identity</td>
<td>Myself As Mother (Walker, 1982)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Strain</td>
<td>Gray's Measure of Role Strain (Gray, 1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Strain Questionnaire (PSQ) (Osipow &amp; Spokane, cited in Psychological Assessment Resources)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 1 - Operationalization of Variables**
The Instrument

Data were collected with a mail questionnaire (see Appendix B). The decision to use a questionnaire was based on the desire to reach the largest possible sample (Polit & Hungler, 1987) of working women, a group who is extremely busy and difficult to contact.

The questionnaire was composed of three sections which contained both general questions designed by the researcher and instruments previously constructed and tested. Operationalization of the conceptual framework is presented in Table 1.

Section I was composed of questions concerned with general information: age; education; occupation, categorized according to the Standard Occupational Classification (Statistics Canada, 1981); income, divisions made according to Statistics Canada 1987 income information; and child care arrangements, developed by the researcher.

Section II contained three previously developed instruments which measured social support, maternal identity, and women's attitude toward the world of work and its role in their lives. The Social Support Scale (SSS) was developed by Funch, Marshall, and Gebhardt (1986). Their five item scale measures perceived support from available sources. Reliability data for the SSS were collected from three samples and showed internal consistency ranging from 0.61 to 0.84. Both criterion and construct validation techniques were generally supportive of the usefulness of the SSS, demonstrating its effectiveness as a measure of social support.

Maternal Identity was measured with the semantic differential scale Myself as Mother (SD-Self). This scale measures the evaluative
dimension of the concept *Myself as Mother*, using a 22-item, 7-point semantic differential scale (Walker, 1982). Internal consistency reliability values range from .81 to .85 using coefficient alpha. Construct validity was demonstrated by correlating the two initial evaluative factors with the Seashore Self Confidence Scale, with $r = .41$ and .62. High scores on this scale indicate positive maternal self-evaluations, with low scores indicating maternal self-evaluations that are less positive (Walker, Crain, & Thompson, 1986).

The Women's Attitudes Toward Careers Scale (WACS) was used to measure the women's attitudes toward work and its role in their lives (Barbery 1983). Reliability estimates of the 32 items comprising the WACS indicate homogeneity of content ($r = .90$). Evidence of construct validity was tested by Barbery checking her scale classification of home versus career oriented women against classifications of the same subjects with the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (1959) and the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (1981), which revealed consistent findings for a statistically significant number of subjects. The scale also demonstrated significant differences in the way women in different occupational categories (housewives, non-professionals, and professionals) responded.

Section III, the final section, contained two instruments to measure role strain. The first instrument, Gray's Measure Of Role Strain (1979), consists of four questions relating to various types of role strain, which subjects respond to on a Likert-type scale. Validity of the questions was established through review and consultation with numerous doctoral students in professional psychology, as well as
psychologists with experience in research. Reliability was established through a test/re-test procedure with doctoral students and showed no significant differences in responses. Although psychometric measurements were not presented with this instrument, reliability and validity have been examined and established by other methods.

The final instrument consisted of a section of the Occupational Stress Inventory constructed by Osipow and Spokane (cited in Psychological Assessment Resources, 1987). The forty item, Likert-type response questionnaire titled the Personal Strain Questionnaire (PSQ) measures the following dimensions of strain: vocational strain, the extent to which the respondent is having difficulty in work quality and output; psychological strain, the extent of adjustment and/or mood problems the respondent reports; social strain, the extent of disruption in interpersonal relationships; and physical strain, complaints about physical illness or poor self-care habits. Osipow and Spokane demonstrated reliability through a two week test-retest procedure which resulted in a reliability coefficient of .94 for the PSQ. Internal consistency analysis using alpha coefficients revealed a score of .94 for PSQ. Validity data for the PSQ has been established through factor analysis, correlational studies, and numerous other studies conducted with the use of this instrument.

The combination of the Gray's Measure of Role Strain and the PSQ allowed for a complete and thorough measure of role strain. Reliability of the use of the two scales in combination was determined through Cronbach's alpha. In contrast to Gray's (1979) scale which measures the individual's conscious perception of the level of strain experienced,
the PSQ assesses **symptomatic** manifestations of role strain, two distinct and vital components of role strain necessary for this study.

**Pretest / Pilot Study**

Seven questionnaires were distributed to a convenience sample of employed mothers in order to establish clarity of instruction, research adequacy, and to identify any other unforeseen problems. Respondents were asked to comment specifically on: (1) length of time taken to complete the questionnaire; (2) whether the directions were clear and easy to understand; (3) whether the questions were clear and easy to understand; (4) if any of the questions offended them; (5) any other comments they may have had. Minor changes in the directions were made on the basis of the comments in the pretest. Income levels were also adjusted by increasing the upper limits. No other alterations were deemed necessary, with additional comments received being very supportive of the study.

**Data Collection Procedure**

Following approval of the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing Ethics Committee, as well as consent for the access to subjects by the Research and Development Committee of the Saskatoon Community Health Unit, the sample was obtained as outlined previously in the sample section of this chapter. Collection of potential participants' names took place over a period of two days, August 11 and August 15, 1989. Telephone contact with potential subjects for confirmation of participation occurred from August 21 to August 27, 1989. The entire
population representing the 10 to 12 month age group was used for this study.

The questionnaire, along with an explanatory letter (see Appendix C), was mailed on Monday August 28, 1989, to subjects who met the specified criteria and had agreed to participate during the telephone contact. A stamped self-addressed envelope was included to encourage questionnaire return. The use of follow-up reminders has been found to be effective in achieving higher response rates for mailed questionnaires (Dillman, 1978; Polit & Hungler, 1987). Therefore a follow-up reminder was forwarded to all participants ten days later to thank respondents and re-appeal to nonrespondents (see Appendix D).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the College of Nursing Ethics Committee, as well as the Saskatoon Community Health Unit (Appendix E). Voluntary participation, an important ethical consideration, was made explicit in the telephone contact (see Appendix A), as well as in the cover letter (see Appendix C). Consent to participate was indicated by the return of the questionnaire. Although no individual risks or benefits were foreseen, the benefits to women in general were indicated.

Anonymity and confidentiality were assured by keeping the list of participant's names in a locked drawer until the completion of the study, at which time they were destroyed. Lack of individual identification on the questionnaires also assured anonymity. These ethical considerations, as well as the guarantee that identity or
individual circumstances would not be revealed in the published report, were included in the covering letter to participants.

Analysis

Analysis of the data involved three major statistical procedures: analysis of variance (ANOVA), correlation, and stepwise multiple regression. ANOVA examines the differences among groups through an analysis that considers the variation across all groups at once. In ANOVA, the independent variable is at the nominal level and the dependent variable is at the interval or ratio level (Munro, Visintainer, & Page, 1986). ANOVA was used in this study to determine if women possessing a particular variable differed from one another with regard to role strain.

Correlation is a procedure for quantifying the relationship between two or more variables (Munro, Visintainer, & Page, 1986). It measures the strength and indicates the direction of the relationship. This procedure was used to determine the relationship between various factors (the independent variables) and role strain (the dependent variable).

Multiple regression analysis is a method used for understanding the effects of two or more independent variables on a dependent measure and is performed with the intention of predicting outcomes and explaining interrelationships among variables. Use of the stepwise multiple regression technique allows for the inclusion of all independent variables in order to determine which combination of variables provides the most predictive power. Dummy coding was used for
the categorical variable "occupation". The use of stepwise multiple regression allowed the researcher to select from the pool of potential predictor variables those variables that in combination had the greatest predictive power, and ultimately project the outcome of role strain.

Descriptive statistics were used to report the demographic data of the study population. All data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSSX INC., 1988).

**Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The following section will briefly describe the limitations and delimitations associated with the present study in order that interpretation of the findings can be made accordingly.

**Limitations**

Use of prior telephone contact with potential participants may have introduced a bias by excluding clients who did not have telephones. However, this is a minor concern since only five of the 153 potential participants were unable to be contacted due to lack of a telephone listing.

The study sample was drawn from the files of the Saskatoon Community Health Unit (SCHU) which contains the names of children who have received immunizations at the SCHU. This method of obtaining a sample excludes those who have not attended SCHU, those who have been lost to follow-up, and those who have recently moved to Saskatoon.
Delimitations

The specific selection criteria with which the study sample were chosen limits the generalizability of the findings to that of a population with similar characteristics.

Comparison of the study sample with national research suggests that this sample may not be representative of the general population in terms of age, education, and occupation. The average age of the mothers in this study was 28.8 years, therefore their approximate average age at the birth of their first child would be 27.9 years. The average age of women at the birth of their first child in a national survey was 25.7 years (Statistics Canada, 1986), two years younger than the present sample.

The women in this study were more highly educated than the women in a national survey, with 73.9% having some form of post secondary education, compared to 48.2% of the employed women in Canada having some form of post secondary education (Statistics Canada, 1984). The percentage of women employed in the major occupational categories was fairly consistent between the present study and the National average, except for two categories. In the present study 25.2% of the women were employed in "medicine and health" compared to 8% in the National survey, with a corresponding decreased number of women in the present study employed in the service positions (7%) compared to the national survey (15%) (Statistics Canada, 1984).
CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

The initial portion of this chapter will provide some background information and analysis in terms of response rate, reliability and validity of the data, as well as a general description of the characteristics of the sample. The remainder of the chapter will describe the results of the analysis of the relationship between specified factors and role strain, as identified previously in the research questions.

Response Rates

Telephone Response Rates

One hundred and fifty-three potential participants who met the previously stated criteria were obtained from the files of the three health centers. It was decided to contact the entire population by telephone to determine their eligibility and willingness to participate. The following is a breakdown of this initial contact:

115 eligible and willing to participate
20 did not return to work
2 returned to work and then quit
7 not yet back at work for two months
3 not willing to participate
5 no telephone listing
1 moving out of the city

153
An additional five participants were required to make up the 120 participants, the number which was previously determined by sample size calculations. These five participants were systematically selected, beginning randomly, from the list of women obtained from the 13 month old infant category. These five women were contacted and agreed to participate, making up the required 120 participants.

**Questionnaire Response Rate**

Of the 120 questionnaires mailed out, 113 were completed and returned for a response rate of 94.17%. While this high response rate may be partially attributed to the initial telephone contact made with potential participants, it also demonstrated the interest and commitment these women possessed in relation to the subject matter of this study.

One hundred and eleven of the 113 completed questionnaires were eligible for use in the analysis. Two questionnaires were not included in the analysis, one because it was returned following the cut-off date, and the other because the mother had recently separated from her husband and therefore no longer met the stated selection criteria.

**Reliability of the Data**

Reliability of the Social Support Scale, Maternal Identity Scale, Women's Attitudes Toward Careers Scale, Gray's Measure of Role Strain, and the Personal Strain Questionnaire were tested with Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency. The coefficients for each of these scales are presented in Table 2.
Table 2. Reliability Coefficients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Scale</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Support Scale</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Identity Scale</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Attitude Toward Career Scale</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray's Measure of Role Strain</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Strain Questionnaire</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>.899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray's Measure of Role Strain and Personal Strain Questionnaire combined</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>.928</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Polit and Hungler (1987) coefficients in the vicinity of .70 or even .60 are acceptable in determining a scale's internal consistency. Correlation coefficients for the above scales exceeded that of .70, confirming their reliability, except for the Social Support Scale with an alpha of .494.

There are contributing factors which account for the lower correlation coefficient of the Social Support Scale, the length of the scale being the most significant. The reliability of psychosocial scales is partly a function of their length. In order to improve the reliability of a scale, more items tapping the same concept are necessary (Polit & Hungler, 1987). The fact that the Social Support Scale consisted of only five items was definitely a contributing factor
to its lower reliability. However the decision to use a short scale was a purposeful one, especially when its demonstrated reliability scores were reported to have ranged from .61 to .84. A longer scale would add to the overall length of the questionnaire and possibly decrease the response rate.

The second factor which influenced the reliability of the Social Support Scale was the homogeneity of the sample. According to Polit and Hungler (1987) the more homogeneous the sample (in other words, the more similar their scores on a particular scale), the lower the reliability coefficient will be. Potential scores for the Social Support Scale ranged from 5 to 20, with the sample obtaining a mean score of 10.73, and standard deviation of 2.55. Therefore the similarity of scores was also a contributing factor to the lower reliability coefficient.

Shelley (1984) contends that reliabilities as low as .60, and sometimes .50, when few items are available are adequate when using scales or tests for research. Therefore the Social Support Scale was included in the study, with the analysis and interpretation of the results made taking the lower reliability score into account.

Reliability of Gray's Measure of Role Strain combined with the Personal Strain Questionnaire was also tested with Cronbach's alpha in order to determine the degree of accuracy with which the combined scales were measuring the attribute role strain. The results indicated (alpha of .928) that the combined scale had a higher degree of internal consistency than either of the scales had individually, therefore supporting and justifying the use of the two scales combined to measure the dependent variable "role strain".
Characteristics of the Sample

Table 3 represents a summary of background information on the subjects from the questionnaires. The mean age of the mothers was 28.8 years, with a range in age from 20 to 37. The infants' mean age was 11.04 months. The majority of the women had at least a grade twelve education (93.7%), with almost three quarters of the women surveyed (73.8%) having completed some form of post secondary education.

Sixty-two percent of the women worked full time, with the remainder working part time or casual. In terms of occupation, 32.4% were employed in clerical and related positions, 25.2% in medicine and health, with teaching and sales each accounting for 9.0%. The women in the sample worked an average of 32.5 hours per week, were satisfied in their current jobs, were allowed flexibility in their work schedule to deal with family matters, and had a combined household income ranging from $20,000 to $39,999.

The most popular form of childcare arrangement used was taking the infant to a sitter (45.9%). A large percentage of the women used a combination of childcare arrangements (31.5%), with the typical combination being a relative in the home along with taking the infant to a sitter. A great majority of the women sampled (74%) expressed being very satisfied with their particular form of childcare arrangements.
Table 3. Summary of Sample Characteristics.

**Continuous Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>N.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of Mother (years)</td>
<td>28.78</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>101</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age of Infant (months)</td>
<td>11.04</td>
<td>.947</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours/week worked</td>
<td>32.46</td>
<td>11.32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Support Scale</td>
<td>10.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maternal Identity Scale</td>
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<td>8.81</td>
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<td>Attitude Toward Work Scale</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.50</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Strain Score</td>
<td>75.18</td>
<td>18.18</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>111</td>
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**Categorical Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Absolute Frequency (N)</th>
<th>Relative Frequency (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than Grade 12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical School or Diploma</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some University</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Degree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Category</th>
<th>Absolute Frequency (N)</th>
<th>Relative Frequency (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Administration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Related</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Health</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical and Related</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabricating/Repair/Assembly</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Workstatus**                         |                        |                             |
| Fulltime                               | 69                     | 62.2                        |
| Part time                              | 37                     | 33.3                        |
| Casual/temporary                       | 5                      | 4.5                         |
| **Total**                              | 111                    | 100.0                       |

| **Job Satisfaction**                   |                        |                             |
| Not Satisfied                          | 2                      | 1.8                         |
| Somewhat Satisfied                     | 48                     | 43.2                        |
| Very Satisfied                         | 60                     | 54.1                        |
| Missing                                | 1                      | 0.9                         |
| **Total**                              | 111                    | 100.0                       |
Table 3 continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Category</th>
<th>Absolute Frequency (N)</th>
<th>Relative Frequency (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>53.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>111</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare Arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative in Home</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitter Comes in</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take to Relatives</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take to Sitters</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>111</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Childcare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Satisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Satisfied</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>111</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $19,999</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 to $39,999</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $59,999</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 and above</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>111</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Role Strain Scores

The dependent variable "role strain" was measured using two separate scales which were combined in order to provide a more complete and thorough measure of role strain. For the purposes of this section the two scales used to measure role strain will be analyzed and discussed separately to provide an account of the role strain experienced by the women in this study. The results of the first scale, Gray's Measure of Role Strain, are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Gray's Measure of Role Strain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical Value</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA N</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA N</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD N</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was clear from the responses to the questionnaire that the
majority of women surveyed had experienced strain between various demanding roles. Gray's Measure of Role Strain measured the individual's conscious perception of the strain experienced, and the results indicated that these women indeed perceived themselves as experiencing strain. Strains between home and career obligations were reported by 85.5% of the sample, while 69.3% reported strain between personal needs and career obligations. Of the women sampled, 69.3% also reported strains between personal needs and home obligations, and an overwhelming 92.8% of the women reported strains due to the lack of time to do everything.

The other scale used to measure role strain was the Personal Strain Questionnaire (PSQ), which assessed the symptomatic manifestations of role strain. The results of this scale are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Personal Strain Questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Mild Stress</th>
<th>Maladaptive Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Strain</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Strain</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Strain</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Strain</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the (PSQ) revealed a much lower percentage of the women surveyed experiencing stress and strain, with the majority of women in each of the categories scoring within the "normal" range. A possible reason for this difference, as opposed to Gray's Measure of Role Strain where the majority of women reported experiencing strain, can be related to the fact that the PSQ assesses the symptomatic manifestations of role strain. Although these women may consciously feel they are under strain, they may not be experiencing the symptoms described and measured by the PSQ. The use of the two scales combined to measure role strain provided for a more complete and thorough measure of the dependent variable role strain.

**Results Related to the Research Questions**

**Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between an employed mother's attitudes and perceptions i.e. attitude toward work role, job satisfaction, maternal identity, perceived social support, and the level of role strain experienced?

Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationship between a woman's attitude toward work, job satisfaction, maternal identity, perceived social support, and her level of role strain. Table 6 provides the results of these correlations.
Table 6. Intercorrelations of Selected Independent Variables and the Dependent Variable - Role Strain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Attitude Toward Work</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Maternal Identity</th>
<th>Social Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Strain</td>
<td>-.149</td>
<td>-.335**</td>
<td>-.441**</td>
<td>-.224*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
** p < .001

The results of the analysis showed that maternal identity, or the confidence and comfort a woman experiences in the maternal role, was the most highly correlated with role strain (r = -.441, p < .001). Those women who had a higher degree of maternal identity, or a more positive maternal self-evaluation, had lower levels of role strain.

A significant negative relationship also existed between job satisfaction and level of role strain (r = -.335, p < .001). This correlation suggests that those women who were satisfied with their current job were likely to experience a lesser degree of role strain. Social support was also inversely related to role strain (r = -.224, p < .05), indicating that women with a higher degree of social support are likely to experience a lower level of role strain. There was a low inverse, non-significant, relationship between the women's attitude toward work and her level of role strain.
Research Question 2

What is the relationship between such demographic variables as age of the mother, educational level of the mother, household income, and the level of role strain experienced?

The relationship between age of the mother and level of role strain experienced was examined using Pearson correlation. The results of the analysis revealed a very low, nonsignificant relationship between age and level of role strain \( (r = -0.006, p = 0.477) \).

The second variable in the question, namely the relationship between the educational level of the mother and the level of role strain experienced, was examined using analysis of variance (ANOVA). As displayed in Table 7, the results were nonsignificant \( (F(5,105) = 1.73, NS) \), suggesting that there was no significant difference in mean role strain among the groups according to educational level.

Table 7. Summary of Analysis of Variance for Education on Role Strain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3411.77</td>
<td>682.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>41419.26</td>
<td>394.47</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Results are nonsignificant.
ANOVA was also used to determine if role strain differed according to household income. As summarized in Table 8, there was a significant difference for mean role strain according to household income (F (3,105) = 2.76, p < .05).

Table 8. Summary of Analysis of Variance for Household Income on Role Strain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3113.66</td>
<td>1037.89</td>
<td>2.76 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>39484.52</td>
<td>376.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

The Least-Significant-Difference (LSD) post hoc procedure was then used to identify which group within the "household income" category was significantly different from the others. The results of this procedure indicated that the "under $19,999" and the "$40,000 to $59,999" income categories were significantly different (having higher mean role strain scores) from the "$20,000 to $39,999" and the "$60,000 and above" income categories (with lower mean role strain scores) ( p < .05). It is interesting to note that the first and third categories of income from the ranked four levels of income experienced a higher mean role strain score, whereas the second and fourth categories displayed a lower mean role strain score. The role strain scores did not decrease as the
income increased, as may have been expected.

Research Question 3

What is the relationship between such work related factors as type of occupation, full-time/part-time employment, work schedule flexibility, and the level of role strain experienced?

The first work related factor, type of occupation and its relationship to role strain, was examined using ANOVA. As the results in Table 9 demonstrate, there was no significant difference in mean role strain among the groups according to their occupation ($F(6,91) = 1.57$, NS).

Table 9. Summary of Analysis of Variance for Occupation on Role Strain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3579.84</td>
<td>596.64</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>34691.55</td>
<td>381.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Results are nonsignificant

ANOVA was also used to determine if role strain differed according to work status (full time/part time employment). A significant difference between the groups was revealed ($F(2,108) = 4.26$, $P < .05$), with the results summarized in Table 10.
Table 10. Summary of Analysis of Variance for Work Status on Role Strain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3275.98</td>
<td>1637.99</td>
<td>4.26 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>41555.04</td>
<td>384.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

The Scheffe post hoc procedure was then applied to identify which group within the employment status category was significantly different from the others. The results indicated that those women who worked full time had significantly higher role strain scores than the part time and casual groups (mean = 92.04, p < .05).

The final component of this question, the relationship between work schedule flexibility and mean role strain scores, was examined using ANOVA. As portrayed in Table 11, the results are nonsignificant (F (2,108) = .410, NS), indicating that there was no significant difference among mean role strain scores according to the flexibility allowed in the women's work schedule.
Table 11. Summary of Analysis of Variance for Work Schedule Flexibility on Role Strain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>337.74</td>
<td>168.87</td>
<td>.410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>44493.29</td>
<td>411.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Results are nonsignificant

Research Question 4

What combination of factors provides the most predictive power towards projecting the outcome of role strain?

A stepwise multiple regression was performed to determine which of the independent variables previously described and listed in the conceptual framework were the best predictors of the dependent variable, role strain. Dummy coding was used for the categorical variable occupation.

The results of the stepwise regression analysis are presented in Table 12, and indicate that four variables, namely maternal identity, work status, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with childcare, were the subset of variables which account for the greatest proportion of variance in the dependent variable role strain. The overall $R^2$ was .384.
Table 12. Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis — Selected Independent Variables with Role Strain (n=111).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Cumulative R-Square</th>
<th>R-Square Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Maternal Identity</td>
<td>-.410</td>
<td>-4.85</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Work status</td>
<td>-.273</td>
<td>-3.22</td>
<td>.0018</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.283</td>
<td>-3.37</td>
<td>.0011</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Satisfaction with Childcare</td>
<td>-.217</td>
<td>-2.57</td>
<td>.0118</td>
<td>.384</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R-Square = .38; F = 13.70; p < .05

The first variable in the equation, and the best predictor of role strain, was maternal identity which accounted for 16.6% of the variance. The remaining three variables, work status, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with childcare, together accounted for the remainder of the 38.4% of the variance. Maternal identity, work status, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with childcare were all negatively correlated with level of role strain, that is, women who had a more positive maternal self-evaluation, worked part time or casual, were more satisfied with their jobs, and were also more satisfied with their childcare arrangements, had a lower level of role strain.
**Other Findings**

During the course of the data analysis it became apparent that further interpretation and investigation of the variables and their relationship with one another might be instructive. This additional analysis would provide a better understanding of the relationships between the variables and help clarify the results which were obtained from this study. Two variables in particular, namely maternal identity and attitude toward work, suggested further analysis. The remainder of this chapter will focus on the results of the additional analysis.

**Attitude Toward Work**

Attitude toward work was not significantly related to role strain as may have been expected, therefore its relationship with the other variables was examined in order to better determine its influence within the study. The relationship between a woman's attitude toward work and her occupation was examined using ANOVA. As the results in Table 13 indicate, there was a significant difference between the occupational groups with regard to their attitude toward work score \( F(6,91) = 2.60, p < .05 \).
Table 13. Summary of Analysis of Variance for Occupation on Attitude Toward Work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1044.98</td>
<td>174.16</td>
<td>2.60 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>6093.55</td>
<td>66.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

The LSD post hoc procedure was then used to determine which group within the "occupation" category was significantly different from the others. The results indicated that the "management and administration" and the "teaching and related" occupations were significantly different from the "sales" and "service" occupations. The management and teaching, also referred to as professional occupations, scored higher on the attitude toward work scale indicating they were more career oriented than the sales and service, or non-professional occupations. These results, with the professional occupations having a more positive attitude toward work than the nonprofessional occupations, are consistent with previous research (Barbery, 1983).

ANOVA was also used to determine if attitude toward work differed according to educational level. As summarized in Table 14, there was a significant difference for attitude toward work with regard to education (\( F (5,105) = 3.27, p < .05 \)).
Table 14. Summary of Analysis of Variance for Education on Attitude Toward Work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1121.12</td>
<td>224.22</td>
<td>3.27 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>7204.25</td>
<td>68.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

Once again, the LSD post hoc procedure was used to establish whether or not a particular educational group was significantly different from the others. The results indicated that the "university degree" group were significantly different from the "less than grade 12", "high school graduate", and the "technical or business school diploma" groups, with the university degree group achieving a higher attitude toward work score. These results are not unusual, since it has been shown that women with a higher educational level are also more career oriented (Hock, Gnezda, & McBride, 1984).

Maternal Identity

Of all the independent variables examined, maternal identity was the one which correlated most highly with, and was the best predictor of, the dependent variable role strain. Those women who had a higher maternal identity score (a more positive maternal self-evaluation) had a significantly lower level of role strain. The impact and influence of
maternal identity within this study warranted its further investigation.

When the variables were examined as to their relationship with maternal identity, only "occupation" resulted in a significant difference. The use of ANOVA revealed a significant difference in maternal identity scores with regard to occupation ($F (6,91) = 3.24$, $p < .05$). The results are displayed in Table 15.

Table 15. Summary of Analysis of Variance for Occupation on Maternal Identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>$F$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1434.29</td>
<td>239.05</td>
<td>3.24 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>6705.85</td>
<td>73.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$

The Scheffe post hoc procedure identified the "medicine and health" as well as the "clerical and related" groups to be significantly different from the "service" group. Women in the "service" occupations achieved a lower maternal identity score.
CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

One of the most dramatic changes in the past decade has been the increased participation of mothers of young children in the labor force. The issue of balancing employment and motherhood is a particularly salient one for these women, and one which needs to be addressed and explored in greater detail. The purpose of this study was to pursue the area of women's multiple role combination, and specifically to examine the relationship between various specified factors and the role strain experienced by women returning to work following the birth of their first child.

Ten factors were identified from the literature as influencing a woman's ability to combine employment outside the home and a family. A descriptive survey design was used to obtain the data relating to the selected factors as well as to measure role strain. The positive response rate from the survey (94%, n = 113), as well as the additional hand written comments provided by some of the participants, indicated that these women were indeed interested in and concerned about this subject matter.

Results of the survey indicated that the independent variable maternal identity was the most strongly correlated to, and the best predictor of, the dependent variable role strain. A higher degree of maternal identity, or a more positive maternal self-evaluation, correlated with a lower level of role strain.

Job satisfaction was also significantly correlated with role
strain. Those women who were more satisfied with their job displayed a lower level of role strain. A similar relationship existed between satisfaction with childcare and role strain - women who were more satisfied with their childcare arrangements displayed a lower level of role strain.

Work status was also a significant factor in terms of level of role strain. Those women who worked full time had significantly higher role strain scores than the part time and casual groups.

Social support had a significant negative correlation with role strain. A higher level of social support was correlated with a lower level of role strain.

Household income had an interesting relationship to role strain. Two of the ranked four levels of household income, namely the lowest and the third income brackets, had a significantly higher mean role strain score than the second and the highest income levels.

The remainder of this chapter will provide a more detailed discussion of the results outlined above by focusing on each research question in particular.

**Discussion Related to the Research Questions**

**Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between an employed mother's attitudes and perceptions i.e. attitude toward work role, job satisfaction, maternal identity, perceived social support, and the level of role strain experienced?
Attitude toward work. Attitude toward work, or sex role attitude, as measured with the Barber work attitude scale (1983) had a very low, nonsignificant, negative correlation with role strain. While the relationship itself was not significant, the direction of the association indicated that those women with a more egalitarian attitude (i.e. were more career oriented) experienced a lower level of role strain.

The nonsignificant relationship between attitude toward work and role strain requires further exploration. Although previous studies have not examined the relationship between work attitude and role strain in particular, a relationship which has been examined is that between work attitude and female labor force participation (Laing, 1986; Mason, Czajka, & Arber, 1976). These studies found sex role attitude toward work to be an important predictor of female labor force participation. A more egalitarian sex role orientation correlated with increased labor force participation.

Based on these findings it may be postulated that women with a higher work attitude score (which, according to previous research, would correlate with increased labor force participation) would also have a lower level of role strain. The logical reason is that the less role strain a woman experienced, the more likely she would be to join and remain a member of the labor force.

However, the results of this study question whether in fact there is a relationship at all between role strain and labor force participation, or whether other factors (such as finances) are more influential in determining if a mother will join the labor force. While
an examination of the relationship between role strain and labor force participation was not the intent of this study, the present findings as well as that of previous research would provide sufficient reason for further examination. What remains apparent from this study is that the attitude a woman possesses towards employment does not seem to affect her level of role strain or influence her ability to combine multiple roles.

The additional analysis undertaken to determine the relationship between attitude toward work and the other independent variables yielded results consistent with previous research (Barbery, 1983). Women in the professional occupations (management/administration and teaching) had significantly higher work attitude scores that the nonprofessional occupations (sales and service). In terms of education, women with a university degree had a significantly higher work attitude score than women with a lower level of education, another finding consistent with Barbery's.

These findings, being consistent with previous research, provide support that the attitude toward work scale was indeed measuring what it was intended to within this study. The relationship between attitude toward work and role strain was one which had not previously been examined; therefore the results of this study will be tentative until additional research in this area is undertaken.

**Job satisfaction.** The second variable in the question, job satisfaction, had a significant negative correlation with role strain. An increased level of job satisfaction resulted in a decreased level of
role strain. These findings are consistent with, and supportive of, previous research which document the psychological benefits experienced by employed mothers who find their job satisfying ( Cleary & Mechanic, 1983; Kessler & McRae, 1982; Warr & Parry, 1982).

Maternal identity. Of the variables examined in this study, maternal identity was the most significant in its relationship to role strain. Maternal identity, as measured by the semantic differential scale Myself as Mother, determined the women's self-evaluation in the maternal role. A high maternal identity score indicated a positive self-evaluation and included feelings of confidence and comfort within the maternal role. High maternal identity scores were related to lower role strain scores. These findings are consistent with previous research which document the benefits of a positive maternal self-evaluation (Cooke & Rousseau, 1984; Voyandoff, 1988).

These results help to clarify some of the questions posed earlier in the conceptual framework regarding the influence of maternal identity. The results of this study suggest that a woman who has developed a positive evaluation of herself in the maternal role will more successfully manage the competing demands and obligations of family and work roles, as manifested by a lower level of role strain.

The implications and significant impact of maternal identity on a woman's ability to combine employment and motherhood became evident from this study, and warrant further exploration. However, when maternal identity was examined as to its relationship with the other variables the only significant relationship which was detected was that between
maternal identity and occupation.

Women in the "medicine and health" as well as the "clerical and related" occupations scored significantly higher on the maternal identity scale than did the "service" occupations. Although this finding may have significant implications, with the data available it is impossible to determine, or even speculate on, the reason for this difference.

There were no significant differences in maternal identity scores among the groups according to age, education, income, or work status, findings which are in part inconsistent with other research. Previous research indicates that employment status influences maternal identity indirectly through the mediating effects of perceived stress (Walker, 1989b). However, no significant correlation was found between maternal identity and the number of children or maternal age (Walker, 1989a). Clearly more research needs to be conducted to clarify and obtain a better understanding of the concept "maternal identity" and its influence on role strain and a woman's ability to combine family and employment.

Social support. A significant negative relationship existed between social support and role strain. A higher level of social support correlated with a lower level of role strain. These findings are consistent with previous research which suggests that social support acts as a buffer, decreasing the harmful effects of stress and strain (Cronenwett, 1985; Rook, 1987; Thoits, 1982).

Social support in this particular study may not simply have acted
as a buffer against stress but may also have facilitated the transition to parenthood, that is, facilitated a higher maternal identity, thereby indirectly lowering the level of role strain experienced. Crnic, Greenberg, Robinson, and Ragozin (1984) found in their study of maternal stress and social support that mothers with more support reported significantly greater satisfaction with life events and parenting, decreasing their level of stress and role strain.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between such demographic variables as age of the mother, educational level of the mother, household income, and the level of role strain experienced?

Age. Age of the mother in this study population was not significantly related to the level of role strain experienced. This is consistent with the work of Kandel, Davies, and Raveis (1985), and Voyandoff (1988), who reported no significant relationship between maternal age and the outcome of depression, or maternal age and the level of work/family conflict.

However, these findings are contrary to those of Keith and Schafer (1980) who discovered that younger women experienced greater work-family strain than older women. Sund and Ostrand (1985) reported similar findings - the older the couple, the lower the family stress score. The fact that the sample for this study was limited to those women with a first born child only, as opposed to previous research in which the study sample was not so restricted, may have influenced the
nonsignificant relationship between age and role strain. Presumably one child might engender less role strain than more than one or several children. Previous research which examined the relationship between maternal age and such outcomes as stress and strain did not control for the number of children, therefore the number of children may, in fact, act as a confounder when age was studied as a variable, influencing the results.

In addition, the limited age span of this particular study population (minimum 20, maximum 37; mean = 28.78, SD = 3.25) may not have been large enough to detect a significant relationship between role strain and age. A larger maternal age range may be necessary to effectively test this relationship.

**Education.** A significant difference was not found between the various educational levels and role strain scores. A previous study by Waite (1980) indicates that women who have a higher level of education are more likely to continue employment while starting a family. A similar study by Hock, Gnezda, and McBride (1984) revealed that women with increased education are more career oriented than those with less education who are more home oriented.

While findings from previous research regarding the influence of education may appear to be contrary to the present study, a word of caution must be sounded as to the relationship examined in each study. Previous research has examined education in terms of labor force participation, job commitment, and employment attitudes only, with no exploration of the actual impact or influence education has on the
performance and management of various roles. The relationship between education and labor force participation has not been addressed in this study.

Additional analysis undertaken in this study to examine the relationship between education and work attitudes revealed that women with a university degree were more career oriented than women with a lower level of education, findings similar to previous research. However, in terms of role strain, the difference in educational preparation of women in this study was not significant with regard to their role strain scores.

Household income. Household income had an interesting relationship to role strain. Analysis revealed that the "under $19,000" and the "$40,000 to $59,999" income categories were significantly different from the "$20,000 to $39,999" and the "$60,000 and above" income categories, the latter two having lower mean role strain scores. Logic and previous research (Cleary & Mechanic, 1983; Sund & Otswald, 1985) indicate that the lower income families experience additional stress and strain. However, the fact that the second highest income category ($40,000 to $59,999) was also significantly different from the other groups with regard to role strain scores is harder to justify and explain.

Perhaps the families in the "$40,000 to $59,999" income bracket have higher standards of living than they can reasonably afford, increasing their strain in financial terms, as opposed to the "$20,000 to $39,999" income bracket families who are able to financially maintain
their lifestyles. It would be necessary to obtain further data regarding the families' lifestyles and spending habits in order to adequately analyze the underlying reason behind the difference in mean role strain scores related to income.

It is interesting to note that the average family income for two-earner families in Canada is $49,156 (Statistics Canada, 1987a), which falls within the income category experiencing a higher mean role strain score in this study. While the findings from the present study cannot be generalized to all two-earner families in Canada, further research to determine if this income group is experiencing higher role strain is warranted.

**Research Question 3**

What is the relationship between such work related factors as type of occupation, fulltime/part-time employment, work schedule flexibility, and the level of role strain experienced?

**Occupation.** The results of this study indicate that the type of occupation in which a woman is employed does not result in a significant difference with regard to her mean role strain score. Whether a woman is employed in a professional (management, social sciences, teaching, medicine, and health) or a nonprofessional (clerical, sales, service, fabricating) occupation did not significantly influence her level of role strain. Previous research suggests that women in professional positions are more career oriented and more inclined to pursue their careers (Barbery, 1983), an examination once again of labor force
participation as opposed to role strain which was the intent and focus of this study.

It is noteworthy to point out that the highest mean role strain scores were reported in the occupational category "sales" (mean = 98.50, SD = 10.76) and "management and administration" (mean = 98.33, SD = 8.08), with the lowest mean role strain score being reported by the "clerical and related" occupational category (mean = 81.03, SD = 18.50). One may speculate that women in the clerical and related positions may be functioning optimally in their jobs, thereby not experiencing additional strain. However, this whole area regarding the influence of a woman's occupation on her level of role strain is inconclusive and cannot be fully explained with the data available.

Work status. In terms of employment status (full time, part time, casual/temporary), women employed full time had significantly higher role strain scores than the part time or casual/temporary groups. These findings are consistent with a number of previous studies (Keith & Schafer, 1980; Moen & Dempster-McClain, 1987; White, 1983) which emphasize the time demands associated with balancing employment and motherhood.

However, as identified previously, part time employment has additional drawbacks. Part time employment is limited to predominately clerical, sales, and service sectors, and often has poor salaries, few benefits, and little security (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1987). As identified by Duffy, Mandell, and Pupo (1989), the resultant accommodation part time employment provides is far from
perfect, but may be the best available option for these women in their present life situations.

The results of this study support this inference, with the part time and casual employees portraying a lower mean role strain score. The benefits of part time employment to mothers in general have been demonstrated. The challenge lies in promoting its availability in all occupational categories, as well as competitive salary, benefits, and security.

Work flexibility. A surprising finding from this study was the issue of work schedule flexibility. Results of this variable indicated that there was no significant difference between the groups based on their work schedule flexibility and mean role strain score. Those women with a higher degree of flexibility in their work schedule did not necessarily have a lower level of role strain. This is contrary to previous studies which demonstrate the benefits flexibility and adjustment of work schedules can have for an employed mother (Barling & Barenbrug, 1984; Elman & Gilbert, 1984).

A possible explanation for the inconsistent results from this study could be related to the large percentage of women who were allowed flexibility in their work schedule. Of the study sample, 53.2% reported "always" having flexibility in their scheduling, 44.1% reported "some" flexibility, and only 2.7% reported "never" being allowed flexibility. It would appear that lack of flexibility was not a major issue for this group of women, which would account for its insignificant influence on role strain.
Research Question 4

What combination of factors provides the most predictive power towards projecting the outcome of role strain?

A combination of four factors provided the most predictive power, accounting for 38.4% of the variance in role strain. These four factors included maternal identity, work status (full time, part time or casual), job satisfaction, and satisfaction with childcare.

Maternal identity, or the confidence and comfort a woman experiences in the maternal role, was the best predictor of role strain, accounting for 16.6% of the variance. Women with a higher maternal identity score had a lower role strain score. These findings provide further support for the significance of establishing a positive maternal identity, in order to manage the demands and strain associated with balancing employment and motherhood.

Work status and job satisfaction were both negatively correlated with role strain, accounting for an additional 9.5% and 7.7% of the variance each respectively. Women who were employed part time or casually and were more satisfied with their job experienced a lower level of role strain. Once again the advantages and benefits of part time employment and job satisfaction are demonstrated, as was discussed in an earlier section of this chapter.

Satisfaction with childcare was the final predictor variable to emerge from the equation, accounting for an additional 4.6% of the variance in role strain. Women who were more satisfied with their childcare arrangements displayed a lower level of role strain. This is
supportive of previous research which documents the importance of finding high quality, affordable, consistent childcare (Collins & Tiedje, 1987; Hall, 1987; Sund & Ostwald, 1985).

It is interesting to note that almost half of the women sampled (45.9%) were taking their child to a care giver's home. The second most popular form of childcare arrangement was that labeled "combination" with the typical combination involving the child being cared for by a relative in the home and being taken to a care giver.

A surprising majority of the women (73.9%) were satisfied with their particular childcare arrangements. It must be emphasized that these women had just recently returned to their jobs, and had not required the services of an alternate caregiver for any great length of time. Also, the fact that they only had to arrange care for one child, as opposed to two or more, did simplify the situation. With these two factors in mind, the high percentage of women expressing satisfaction with their childcare arrangements appears more realistic. The fact does remain however, that satisfaction with childcare was related to a decrease in role strain, providing further evidence to support the importance of the child care issue.
CHAPTER 5

CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study was undertaken in order to examine the relationship between selected factors and the role strain experienced by women returning to employment following the birth of their first child. The results of the data analysis, as well as a detailed discussion were provided in previous chapters. This chapter will outline some considerations for nursing practice based on the results of the present study, as well as provide recommendations for future research.

Considerations for Nursing

It is unrealistic to change existing practice or implement new practice methods based solely on the findings of this study due to its exploratory nature and design. However several observations, suggestions, and areas for consideration can be made for both the practice setting and for future research. The focus and intent of this study reinforces the need for nurses to examine and look at women, children, and mothering from a sociological and psychological context and not exclusively a biomedical framework. Nursing has the opportunity to incorporate theory and concepts from a variety of disciplines to provide optimal care and assistance to its clientele. Nurses should take advantage of this opportunity and step beyond the "traditional" nursing role to see their clients in a more holistic perspective. The considerations derived from this study will reflect the incorporation of sociological and psychological context.
Considerations for nursing practice will be discussed as they relate to community health nurses in particular. Community health nurses, because of their frequent and repeated contact with this group of women, are most likely to intervene and assist these women.

Because self-concept and attitudes are important predictors of maternal role attainment (Mercer 1986), and therefore maternal identity as well, information and feedback should be provided to women about their mothering at every available opportunity. Mothering behaviors should continue to be reinforced and increased emphasis should be placed on basic child care and growth and development. The results of this study support nurses, both in the community and obstetrical units, providing anticipatory guidance to build the woman’s confidence and comfort within the maternal role, and ultimately increase her maternal identity.

There is also a more psychological and emotionally oriented aspect of maternal identity. The new mother must integrate the role of "mother" into her established role set so that she is comfortable in this new position. Discussions, both individually and in groups, which allow the mother to verbalize the feelings and concerns she may be experiencing may assist her in gaining confidence and comfort in her role as mother. The benefits of a support group have been previously demonstrated, and in fact Cronenwett (1980) found that women employed outside the home were significantly more likely to continue meeting with a postpartum group for over a year than women who were not employed.

The results of this study indicate that women employed part time or casual had a lower level of role strain than those women employed
full time. A discussion of the effects of full time and part time employment can be provided by the nurse, and associated issues such as benefits and job security can be reviewed. The drawbacks associated with part time employment are those related to the lack of benefits and little security (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1987). Government, unions, and the employing agencies could be lobbied to increase both benefits and security for part time workers, in order to make part time employment a feasible option for employed mothers, rather than a sacrifice.

Job satisfaction had a significant negative correlation with role strain - those women who were more satisfied with their jobs experienced lower levels of role strain. This is a fairly straightforward and logical outcome, with few associated implications for nurses. However, nurses could discuss with the mothers the relationship between job satisfaction and role strain in order that they can establish a better understanding of their present life situation. Those women who are not satisfied with their present job may consider changing occupations, or going into some other related line of work if this is possible and appropriate for them.

The results of this study indicate that women who were satisfied with their childcare arrangement experienced a lower level of role strain. The availability of high quality, affordable, and consistent childcare cannot be stressed enough. Nurses may counsel parents and help them decide and choose the particular form of childcare which is suitable for them. A large percentage of the women in this study (31.5%) used a combination of childcare arrangements. Childcare which
is located on the employment site may help alleviate some of the problems associated with finding a caregiver, especially one that is conveniently located. Government and employing agencies should be lobbied to provide such child care services to help relieve mothers of the strain associated with childcare arrangements.

**Future Research**

This study, because of its exploratory nature and design, has generated several questions for further research. Some of these include:

1. A closer examination of the various reasons women cite for assuming employment outside the home, whether it is for financial, personal, or professional reasons, or a combination of factors. These factors as well may influence the level of role strain experienced, and would therefore contribute to the results of the present study.

2. A replication of the present study using the same study sample following the birth of their second and/or subsequent child. This would help to determine whether number of children is a confounder of such variables as satisfaction with childcare, maternal age, and work schedule flexibility. It would also be interesting to compare the mean role strain scores mothers obtained when they had one child, and also when more than one child was involved.

3. A longitudinal study, using the same study sample and measuring the same variables, over a six-month to one-year time span. A hierarchical regression equation could then be used to determine if the variables measured at the initial testing predicted the dependent
variable role strain which was measured at the final testing six-months
to one-year later. A longitudinal study would provide more support in
determining a cause - effect relationship, if in fact one exists,
between the independent variables and the dependent variable role
strain.

4. A replication of the present study using a more heterogeneous
sample, such as the inclusion of adolescent and single parents. The
results of such a study could be generalized to a larger portion of the
population than that limited by the present study.

5. An examination of the relationship between role strain and
labor force participation. Previous research has examined a number of
variables with regard to their relationship with labor force
participation (i.e. attitude toward work, education, occupation). An
understanding of the relationship between role strain and labor force
participation may help clarify some of the results obtained in this
study, such as the insignificant correlation between attitude toward
work and role strain.

Conclusion

Since over half of the women in Saskatchewan with a youngest child
less than three years of age are employed outside the home (Statistics
Canada, 1987b), the issue of women combining a family and job is a
timely and significantly important one. Research indicates that the
combination of family responsibilities and employment can result in role
strain, or the felt difficulty in fulfilling multiple role obligations.
The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between
various specified factors and the role strain experienced by women returning to employment following the birth of their first child.

Maternal identity, or the confidence and comfort a woman experiences in the maternal role, emerged as the most important predictor of role strain. Women who had a higher maternal identity experienced a lower level of role strain.

Work status (full time versus part time/casual employment) was the next predictor variable to emerge. Women who were employed part time or casual had a lower level of role strain.

In terms of job satisfaction and satisfaction with childcare arrangements, the third and fourth predictor variables, women who were satisfied with their jobs and were satisfied with their particular form of childcare arrangement had a corresponding lower level of role strain.

The results of this study will add to the data regarding women combining family and employment, and will also help nurses to better understand and provide support to these women. Measures to promote and increase a woman's confidence and comfort within the maternal role would appear to be an effective intervention to decrease the level of role strain. Discussions with these women regarding the benefits of part time employment, as well as the implications satisfaction with their job and childcare arrangements has on their level of role strain could also be provided.

Involvement in multiple roles can have a positive effect on a woman's sense of mastery and pleasure (Baruch & Barnett, 1987). Assisting women to combine the roles of mother and employee with the least amount of stress possible will assure they are achieving the
maximum benefit role combination can offer, for both themselves and their families.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

INITIAL TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH MOTHERS
Hello, <name>,

My name is Brenda Hemmelgarn, I am a graduate student at the College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan. I am interested in the experience of women returning to work following the birth of their first child. Your knowledge, personal experience, and input in this area will be extremely valuable in order to better understand this situation and assist other women in combining a family and job outside the home.

I am mailing a questionnaire to a select group of women whose names were obtained with the approval of the Saskatoon Community Health Unit. This questionnaire concerns such issues as your attitude toward work and its role in your life, how you feel about yourself as a mother, as well as general questions such as type of child care arrangements used.

The questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to complete. A self-addressed, stamped envelope will be enclosed for return of the questionnaire. All information will remain completely confidential, and your name will never appear on the questionnaire, nor on written or published reports of this study.

Would you be willing to participate? (If yes continue; if no discontinue interview and thank mother).

In order to meet the requirements of this study I will have to ask you a few questions.

Are you presently employed outside the home, either full-time or part-time? (If yes, continue; if no, discontinue the interview and thank the participant).

Have you been back at work for at least two months? (If yes, continue; if no, discontinue the interview and thank the participant).

Does your child have a medical problem that requires constant and close supervision from a physician? (If no, continue; if yes discontinue the interview and thank participant).

Confirm address and postal code.

Thank participant.
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE
General Instructions:

1. The Questionnaire is divided into three sections, please complete each section as instructed.
2. When you have completed the questionnaire, please return it in the self-addressed post-paid envelope.

Reminder: The information contained in this questionnaire will remain confidential.

Section I Questions in this section are concerned with general information relating to your age, education, job, income, and child care arrangements. Please follow the instructions in each question, or circle the appropriate answer.

1. Month of your child's birth. _____
2. In what year were you born? _____
3. Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed.
   (1). Less than Grade 12.
   (2). High school graduate.
   (3). Technical or business school diploma.
   (4). Some university
   (5). University degree.
   (6). Graduate degree.
   (7). Other ________________
4. In what job are you presently employed outside the home?

5. Do you work: (please check)
   (1). Full time ___ Number of hours per week ___
   (2). Part time ___ Number of hours per week ___
   (3). Casual/temporary ___ Number of hours per week ___

6. How satisfied are you with your present job?
   (1). Not satisfied.
   (2). Somewhat satisfied.
   (3). Very satisfied.

7. Do you have flexibility in your work schedule?
   Example. Reschedule hours or allowed time off to take your child to a health related appointment.
   (1). Never
   (2). Sometimes
   (3). Always
8. What is your combined (total) household gross annual income?

(1). Under $19,999  
(2). $20,000 to $39,999  
(3). $40,000 to $59,999  
(4). $60,000 and above

9. Please indicate the present form of child care arrangements you are using.

(1). Relative in your home.  
(2). Live in Nannie/sitter.  
(3). Sitter comes to your home.  
(4). Child taken to relative's home.  
(5). Licensed day care.  
(6). Child taken to sitter's home.  
(7). Combination of above (please specify the numbers) ________  
(8). Other. __________

10. How satisfied are you with these child care arrangements?

(1). Not satisfied.  
(2). Somewhat satisfied.  
(3). Very satisfied.

Section II  This section deals with the attitudes and perceptions you have in regards to your social support, maternal identity, and role and involvement in work. Please follow the instructions in each part.

(A). Social Support

When a woman is trying to manage the many duties and obligations involved in being a mother and working outside the home the people around her can sometimes help and sometimes make things harder, even if they don't realize it. Please circle the answers below which best indicate how helpful these people are.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all helpful</th>
<th>A little helpful</th>
<th>Usually helpful</th>
<th>Completely helpful</th>
<th>Does not apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spouse/partner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworkers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MYSELF AS MOTHER

The purpose of this section is to measure the meanings of certain ideas. Please work at a fairly high speed through the form. Do not worry or puzzle over any item. It is your first impression that is important.

Please read the underlined phrase at the top of this page. Then, for each of the pairs of contrasting words listed below, put a check in the space closest to the word which best describes how you feel at this time about yourself as a mother. There are no right or wrong answers.

Example: Valuable __:__:__:__:__:__: Invaluable
Meaning you feel more valuable than invaluable about yourself as a mother.

Fast __:__:__:__:__:__: Slow
Pessimistic __:__:__:__:__:__: Optimistic
Graceful __:__:__:__:__:__: Awkward
Weak __:__:__:__:__:__: Strong
Kind __:__:__:__:__:__: Cruel
Hopeless __:__:__:__:__:__: Hopeful
Good __:__:__:__:__:__: Bad
Hard __:__:__:__:__:__: Soft
Successful __:__:__:__:__:__: Unsuccessful
Unwilling __:__:__:__:__:__: Willing
Tough __:__:__:__:__:__: Fragile
Vigorous __:__:__:__:__:__: Feeble
Dangerous __:__:__:__:__:__: Safe
Complete __:__:__:__:__:__: Incomplete
Far __:__:__:__:__:__: Near
Rugged __:__:__:__:__:__: Delicate
Severe __:__:__:__:__:__: Lenient
Mature __:__:__:__:__:__: Immature
The statements below reflect your attitude toward the world of work and its role in your life. Please record how you feel about each of the statements. There are no right or wrong answers. It is best not to spend too much time on any one statement, just circle the answer which best describes your feelings at this time.

Instructions: Circle the letters which indicate whether you:

- strongly agree (SA)
- mildly disagree (MD)
- mildly agree (MA)
- strongly disagree (SD)

Example:
I see myself as employed through-out my adult life. SA MA MD SO

means you mildly disagree with the statement.

1. I see myself as employed through-out my adult life. SA MA MD SD
2. I would be perfectly happy being a full-time wife and mother. SA MA MD SD
3. Women must make accommodations in their careers for family needs. SA MA MD SD
4. I need more in my life than what being a wife and mother can give me. SA MA MD SD
5. I like activities that are mentally challenging. SA MA MD SD
6. Feeling loved and needed is more important to me than pursuing a career. SA MA MD SD
7. The opportunity to get out and work with people I enjoy means more to me than the nature of the job. SA MA MD SD
8. Even when both partners work, the home and children are primarily the woman's responsibility. SA MA MD SD
9. Being able to express myself through my work will mean a great deal to me. SA MA MD SD
10. It is more important for the man to have a successful and rewarding career than it is for the woman. ........................................... SA MA MD SD

11. Woman who hope to have successful careers must do so at the expense of home and family....... SA MA MD SD

12. I am determined to achieve my educational/vocational goals. ........................................... SA MA MD SD

13. I have a good sense of who I am and what I'm about. ........................................... SA MA MD SD

14. I want a job that is challenging and will help me grow. ........................................... SA MA MD SD

15. Men's attitudes toward successful women would not keep me from striving to be the very best in my field. ........................................... SA MA MD SD

16. How I spend my time is usually determined by what others in my life want to do..... SA MA MD SD

17. Women need to develop areas of interests and skills in addition to those of wife and mother.. SA MA MD SD

18. Personal accomplishment in my chosen field is very important to how I feel about myself..... SA MA MD SD

19. The kind of work a person does for a living helps define "who they are." ..................... SA MA MD SD

20. A job should mean more to a person than the pay s/he collects. ..................................... SA MA MD SD

21. Most successful women are not very feminine.. SA MA MD SD

22. Being successful creates more problems than it's worth. ........................................... SA MA MD SD

23. I would rather be recognized for my personality and looks than for my abilities............. SA MA MD SD

24. I do not plan to seek advanced training in my field SA MA MD SD

25. It is not as important for women to develop their potential as it is for men............. SA MA MD SD

26. If both partners work, opportunities to enhance the man's career should take priority over all else SA MA MD SD
27. The responsibility for home and family should be equally shared when both partners work............ SA MA MD SD

28. Women should seek work that will be consistent with family needs in terms of work hours, leave time, re-entry, etc......................... SA MA MD SD

29. Women should not work full-time while their children are young......................... SA MA MD SD

30. I want a job which will allow for advancement and recognition based on the quality of my work...... SA MA MD SD

31. I have not limited myself to only traditional careers for women in my educational/vocational planning..... SA MA MD SD

32. If others do not feel there is much importance or merit to what I am doing, I will usually drop it SA MA MD SD

Section III
The purpose of this section is to gather information about being employed and being a mother. Please follow the instructions in each part.

(A).

Instructions: Circle the letters which indicate whether you:
strongly agree (SA) mildly disagree (MD)
mildly agree (MA) strongly disagree (SD)

1. I often feel a strain in trying to fulfill both home and career obligations...................... SA MA MD SD

2. I often feel a strain between my personal needs and career obligations...................... SA MA MD SD

3. I often feel a strain between my personal needs and home obligations..................... SA MA MD SD

4. I often feel a strain because of the lack of time to do all the things I want to do.... SA MA MD SD
Instructions: Read each statement carefully. For each statement, circle the number which fits you best.

Circle 1 if the statement is rarely or never true.
Circle 2 if the statement is occasionally true.
Circle 3 if the statement is often true.
Circle 4 if the statement is usually true.
Circle 5 if the statement is true most of the time or always.

Example:
"I don't seem to be able to get much done at work" 1 2 3 4 5
Means this is usually true for you.

1. I don't seem to be able to get much done at work. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I dread going to work, lately. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I am bored with my work. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I find myself getting behind in my work, lately. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I have accidents on the job of late. 1 2 3 4 5
6. The quality of my work is good. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Recently, I have been absent from work. 1 2 3 4 5
8. I find my work interesting and/or exciting. 1 2 3 4 5
9. I can concentrate on the things I need to at work. 1 2 3 4 5
10. I make errors or mistakes in my work. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Lately, I am easily irritated. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Lately, I have been depressed. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Lately, I have been feeling anxious. 1 2 3 4 5
14. I have been happy, lately. 1 2 3 4 5
15. So many thoughts run through my head at night I have trouble falling asleep. 1 2 3 4 5
16. Lately, I respond badly in situations that normally wouldn't bother me. 1 2 3 4 5
17. I find myself complaining about little things. 1 2 3 4 5
18. Lately, I have been worrying.
19. I have a good sense of humor.
20. Things are going about as they should.
21. I wish I had more time to spend with close friends.
22. I quarrel with my spouse.
23. I quarrel with friends.
24. My spouse and I are happy together.
25. Lately, I do things by myself instead of with other people.
26. I quarrel with members of the family.
27. Lately, my relationships with people are good.
28. I find that I need time to myself to work out my problems.
29. I wish I had more time to spend by myself.
30. I have been withdrawing from people lately.
31. I have unplanned weight gains.
32. My eating habits are erratic.
33. I find myself drinking a lot lately.
34. Lately, I have been tired.
35. I have been feeling tense.
36. I have trouble falling and staying asleep.
37. I have aches and pains I can not explain.
38. I eat the wrong foods.
39. I feel apathetic.
40. I feel lethargic.

THE END!

THANK-YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING.
APPENDIX C

EXPLANATORY LETTER TO RESPONDENT
<date>

Dear <participant>

Thank you for agreeing to answer this questionnaire. As I mentioned on the telephone, your name was selected, with the approval of the Saskatoon Community Health Unit, from a list of women who have returned to work following the birth of their first child. I am a graduate student at the University of Saskatchewan, supervised by Professor Gail Iaing, and this study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for my Master's Degree in Nursing. This study is designed to focus on the experience of women returning to work outside the home following the birth of their first child. Information necessary to understand this experience have been included in the questionnaire.

Since you are a member of a very select group, I feel that your knowledge and experience will be invaluable in assisting other women who are seeking to combine a job and a family. This information will also be extremely important for nurses in order that they can assist these women in combining multiple roles. Your participation is important. Please answer the questions as they relate to your situation as a mother and employee outside the home.

The questionnaire consists of three sections, and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Please be assured that the information you provide will be kept totally confidential. Your name will never appear on the questionnaire. Your name, address, or anything that could identify you will not be used in written or published reports of this study.

Thank-you for completing the questionnaire, it's return will indicate your consent to participate. Please return it as soon as possible. Your decision to participate or not will not affect any services you receive from the Saskatoon Community Health Unit.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, or if you would like information regarding the results of the study, I can be contacted at home at 373-8308, or through the College of Nursing at 966-6221.

Sincerely,

Brenda Hemmelgarn RN, BSN
APPENDIX D

REMINDER LETTER
<date>

Dear <M> <Iname>

Last week a questionnaire seeking your attitudes, perceptions and experience of combining a family with employment outside the home was mailed to you. If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Your input is extremely important to the overall value of this study.

If by chance you did not receive the questionnaire, or it has been misplaced, please contact me at 966-6221 and I will mail you another one.

Thank-you once again.

Sincerely,

Brenda Hemmelgarn RN, BSN
APPENDIX E

ETHICAL APPROVAL
Ethical Certification

NAME OF APPLICANT: Brenda Hemmelgarn

TITLE OF PROJECT: "The Relationship Between Specified Factors and Role Strain in Employed Mothers"

The members of the review committee, having examined the application for the above-named project, consider the procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

April 18, 1989

Date

S. Fowler-Kerry, M.N.
Assistant Professor
Chairperson, Ethics Review Subcommittee
Graduate Studies and Research Committee

SFK/rd
Research subjects to whom access is obtained through the Saskatoon Community Health Unit have the right to expect that all the information they provide to an investigator is held with the utmost confidentiality. Your position as an investigator will make accessible to you information not otherwise obtainable. As a condition of cooperation with your research, to the extent of providing you with access to the names and addresses of individuals, the Saskatoon Community Health Unit requires your commitment to protect and respect the confidence of your subjects, our clients. Notwithstanding any other conditions to which the Health Unit has asked you to comply, access to clients on record with the Saskatoon Community Health Unit will be provided only on condition that this form is returned to the Medical Health Officer with your signature signifying your understanding of and agreement to this condition.

__________________________
Signature of Investigator

__________________________  
Date

Return to:

Medical Health Officer,
Saskatoon Community Health Unit,
#200, 350 Third Avenue North,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
S7K 6G7