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# EMPLOYED MOTHERS: UNDERSTANDING ROLE BALANCE, ROLE OVERLOAD and COPING

By

Willow McVeigh

B. A. University of Vermont, 2003

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

(in Human Development)

The Graduate School

The University of Maine

May, 2006

Advisory Committee:

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# EMPLOYED MOTHERS: UNDERSTANDING ROLE BALANCE, ROLE OVERLOAD and COPING

By

Willow McVeigh

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Sandra L. Caron

An Abstract of the Thesis Presented
in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science
(in Human Development)
May, 2006

This study examined the levels of role balance, role overload and ways of coping among 105 working mothers employed at a large Northeastern university. Factors such as employment status, age, income, education, the number of hours spent at work and number and age of dependents were also examined. In addition, women will be asked to rate the importance of several workplace policies.

No significant differences were found for levels of role balance, role overload and ways of coping by employment group or by age of dependents.

Hours worked per week and number of children were significant for reducing unexplained variance in role balance scores for the entire sample. Education was also significant for reducing unexplained variance for escape-avoidance coping for the entire sample.

For only those mothers with children under 18, age of subjects, hours worked per week and number of children were significant for reducing unexplained variance for role balance. Hours worked per week was significant for reducing unexplained variance for role overload only in those mothers with children under 18. Finally, women reported workplace policies that they found important.

This study was limited by a small sample size and a lengthy questionnaire. Implications for future research are discussed.

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# Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

Employed mothers have a heavy work load in the office, at home and elsewhere in their lives. There are numerous conflicts and hassles that employed mothers must face on a daily basis. Although not all mothers have the same experience, it is safe to say that they generally have a variety of demands upon them. None of this is meant to imply that men do not have a heavy work load or that they do not experience strain while balancing family and work, yet this research focuses on women in order to examine their specific position in the context of multiple roles.

## Changes in Maternal Employment

In the last half-century there have been steady changes in the number of mothers entering the workforce in the United States. According to the U.S. Bureau of Census Statistics in 2004, of families with children six or under, 53.2% were dual-career families. This percentage increases to 60.7% in those families with children six or older in which both parents are employed (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2005). The percentage for families in which both parents were employed, with children under six in 2004 is almost twice the percentage it was in 1969, which was 28.6% (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1970).

Among married women with children, the statistics demonstrate that well over half are employed. For married women with children six or older, 69.2% were employed and over 59% of married women with children under six are employed. Despite the reasons that these women decide to enter the workforce, whether they be financial, career-motivated or merely to fill the time while children are in school, these statistics

demonstrate the emergence of women with young children in the workforce and provide a framework for examining the issues facing women that will be addressed in the proceeding chapters.

## Expectations of Working Mothers

The expectations of mothers comes from external and internal sources. Societal pressures are present that often create a conflict between work and family for working women (Gorman & Fritzsche, 2002). In addition, women are still expected by their spouses to be responsible for the majority of household management which puts a strain on their time (DeMeis & Perkins, 1996). Finally, women's perceptions of their role also plays into effect to determine how they feel about society's expectations as well as their responsibility for child care and household management (Mederer, 1993).

### Societal Expectations

As the number of employed mothers has increased over the past several decades and the role of women as employees has changed, it appears that the role of mother and wife has not changed. For the most part, the predominant societal view expects women to provide care for their families and be fully committed to their maternal role and take on many responsibilities (Chasteen & Kissman, 2000; Gorman & Fritzsche, 2002). Women are under social pressures to be capable and caring which can put them at risk for stress related symptoms (Eliot 1994; Kenney & Bhattacharjee, 2000). In a study that examined the perception of employed and non-employed mothers, mothers who delayed

or terminated employment were seen as more dedicated and less selfish than those who chose to work (Gorman & Fritzsche, 2002).

## Household Management

In terms of the home, employed women are still primarily responsible for the majority of household labor and management, childcare and elder care (Eliot, 1994; Hall, 1972; Mederer, 1993; Wortman, Biernat & Lang, 1991) and employed mothers work close to the equivalent of two full time jobs (DeMeis & Perkins 1996). Although employed women work more total hours in comparison to their stay-at-home counterparts or men, the range of household activities they perform does not decrease (DeMeis & Perkins, 1996). Although women work considerably more hours and experience more overloads at home than men and regardless of employment status, they are still expected to be responsible for all of the household tasks (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler & Wethington 1989; Hughes & Galinsky, 1988). The act of balancing work and family is a task which affects women by putting a strain on their time and energy ((Hughes & Galinksy, 1988; Kenney & Bhattacharjee, 2000).

## Women's Perceptions

Mederer (1993) and Holahan and Gilbert (1979) found that women's attitudes about their home role can determine the extent to which they adopt the traditional role of wife and mother. This depends on the level to which their spouse is supportive and the extent to which the distribution of household labor is equal (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Mederer, 1993). Mederer (1993) found that the more housework women did, the less fair

they felt the housework distribution was and the more conflict they experienced. Holahan and Gilbert's (1979) research supports this notion. This finding was directly related to the woman's level of education and socioeconomic status, with high levels of these two variables associated with women's redefinition of her role (Mederer, 1993). However, Tingey and Kiger (1996) found that their sample of working mothers did not experience overload, perhaps in part to the notion that they take pride in their management of the home. This is also supported by Gilbert, Holahan and Manning (1981).

# Chapter 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

To address the position of employed mothers, the literature from the past forty years relating to roles, stress, coping and employer programs for working mothers are examined. The studies that are included in this review represent the concerns and questions of various scholarly disciplines. This approach was utilized in order to demonstrate the widespread impact of work upon mothers and create a comprehensive view of the issue. This review will begin by setting the framework for looking at the multiple roles that women occupy and the level of role conflict and overload in women's lives. Next the review will address coping theory, coping strategies that women use to deal with role conflict and conclude by looking at the policies of employers that can help working mothers find balance.

## Roles

### Role Ease and Role Balance

While examining the multiple roles of women it is important to establish some language for the review. Role ease refers to low levels of role overload (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Role balance refers to the level of organization that an individual possesses that allows her to attend sufficiently to each role and hopefully experience minimal role overload (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). In essence, those people with high levels of role ease and role balance will experience lower levels of stress due to multiple roles (Marks & MacDermid, 1996; Stuart & Garrison, 2002). Women constantly try to balance the demands from their multiple roles (Kenney, 2000; Lazarus& Folkman, 1984;

Stuart & Garrison, 2002) and when these roles are balanced, women can avoid experiencing role overload (Amatea & Fong; Marks & MacDermid, 1996; Stuart & Garrison, 2002)

## Role Strain and Role Overload

On the opposite end of role balance is role strain, conflict and role overload. Role conflict arises when there are conflicting demands between roles that a person occupies (Reilly, 1982). For example, a female employee may need to work overtime yet she also needs to be home to care for her children; this situation creates conflict between two inflexible demands. High frequency of role conflict can lead to role overload (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Role overload is defined as conflict occurring when the level of demand exceeds a person's available resources when the person has too many tasks that require attention (Reilly, 1982, Repetti et al, 1989).

## Role Theory

Most role theory relies on the scarcity approach ( Moore, 1960) which asserts that people have limited time and resources, and these limits will inevitably create role conflict. One of the major theorists of the scarcity approach is Goode (1960) who established a role theory based on the notion that the entire role system is more influential than each individual role. Individuals must make decisions regarding roles that require adjustments and bargaining (Goode, 1960). This process is based on internal and external norms (Goode, 1960). Goode's theory (1960) assumes that people will over-perform at work and under-perform in other roles due to the value hierarchy that is

stipulated by society. The problem with this theory is that level of commitment to roles and the level of role within each role will determine the level of role strain and how energy and time are utilized rather than social norms quality (Marks, 1977; Stephens & Franks, 1999).

The expansion hypothesis, suggested by Marks (1977) and expanded upon by Marks and MacDermid (1996), differs from Goode's theory in that it does not view energy and time as limited and static, but as elastic. Marks' hypothesis suggests that people will decide how to use their time and energy and will manipulate roles and resources to find extra energy for each role (Marks, 1977). Much of a person's manipulation of tasks is due to role commitment and that person's desire to limit role overload (Marks, 1977; Marks, 1994), rather than in response to how the role performance is ranked or rated by an external party (Goode, 1960).

In addition to this hypothesis, Marks and MacDermid (1994) propose that the level of role strain will depend on role balance. Role balance is a form of self-organization in which use of time, energy and role commitment will determine how balanced a woman's roles are (Marks, 1994; Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Another determinant of role strain and overload which must be considered is the quality of the experience within each role (Marks & McDermid, 1994; Stephens & Franks, 1999). If the commitment and quality are high within all roles, role balance and ease can be achieved.

## Women's Multiple Roles

Role involvement is defined as the number of roles with which a person identifies (Verburgge, 1987). Some of the roles women occupy include those of spouse, parent, employee, caretaker to an elder, (Eliot, 1994; Hock; Kenney, 2000; Sahibzada et al, 2005; Stephens & Franks, 1999; Verbrugge, 1987) and as Amatea & Fong (1991) suggest even a leisure and community role. Research has primarily demonstrated that the more roles a woman occupies the better her chances for experiencing stress buffering effects (Amatea & Fong, 1991; Marks & MacDermid, 1996; Stuart & Garrison, 2002).

## Past Research on Role Overload and Strain

Although both members of dual-career families are exposed to role conflict, overload and spillover, research has demonstrated, in many contexts, that working women are more susceptible to role overload than their male counterparts (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler& Wethington, 1989; Crouter, 1984; Eliot, 1994; Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Wortman, Biernat & Lang, 1991). The demands that women face on a daily basis can leave them exhausted (Eliot, 1994; Hock et al, 1988) and can be detrimental to their health (Eliot, 1994; Kenney, 2000; Stuart & Garrison, 2002).

### General Overload

The extent of role overload will depend on the level of demands imposed upon a person and other factors in the person's environment (Reilly, 1982, Repetti et al, 1989). Multiple roles cause mothers to juggle roles at certain times. Research has shown that the more role-juggling incidents that women experience in a day, the better her chances for having low satisfaction at the end of the day (Williams, Suls, Learner & Wan, 1991).

Mothers who had to juggle roles frequently in a day had greater negative feelings and less task enjoyment as well as increased stress due to task interruption (Williams et al, 1991).

Other demands and minor stresses that women are exposed to include demands from family (Galinsky & Stein, 1990; Tingey & Kiger, 1996) aging parents (Eliot, 1994; Stephens & Franks, 1999) as well as impositions on relaxation (Reifman, Biernat & Lang, 1991). In addition, women with partners who help do not contribute significantly to household management are also exposed to higher levels of stress (Repetti et al, 1989). Along with stress, women working at a large manufacturing plant, cited that when they had concerns at home, their work performance would suffer (Crouter, 1984).

**Work Hours**

Employed mothers work a great deal and hours of work each week can add to overload and stress (DeMeis & Perkins, 1996; Long Dilworth, 2004; Scharlach, 2001). A heavy workload is often associated with high levels of stress among working mothers (Reifman, Biernat & Lang, 1991). Often mothers feel that their hours are too rigid (Crouter, 1984) and demands from work and cause them to experience stress (Galinksy & Stein, 1990). Inflexible schedules also create overload for parents as they attempt to balance work and family in sometimes limited frames of time (Tingey & Kiger, 1996).

**Children**

Employed moms with young children are exposed to high levels of role strain and overload from the demands of parenting and working (Galinsky & Stein, 1990; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, Kenney, 2000; Scharlach, 2001). In a study comparing employed and stay-at-home mothers with young children, employed mothers often felt more conflict and sadness about working than mothers who did not have to work (Owen

& Cox, 1991). Mothers working jobs with inflexible schedules often felt that they had difficulty with childcare when their job required them to work overtime (Crouter, 1984). In addition, women with partners who do not contribute significantly to childcare are also exposed to higher levels of stress (Repetti et al, 1989).

**Career Engagement**

A study examining the conflict between maternal and professional roles determined that the rewards can be high but so can the stress from managing those roles (Gilbert, Holahan & Manning, 1981). Amatea and Fong (1991) found that career commitment was positively associated with role strain. That is as the level of career commitment increases, role strain increases. Holahan and Gilbert (1979) also demonstrated that career mothers, who supposedly had higher career commitment, had higher levels of conflict than working mothers

On the other hand, career engagement has been shown to have mitigating effects on role overload as women derive satisfaction from all of the roles they occupy (Barnett & Marshall, 1991). Work commitment was shown to decrease role strain and conflict among working mothers in samples collected by O'Neil and Greenberger (1994) and Elman and Gilbert (1984). In addition, women with high dual-commitments, that is commitment to both the professional and maternal role, also experienced less role strain (O'Neil & Green, 1994). This is also supported by Marks' (1977) expansion hypothesis and the research of Holahan and Gilbert (1979).

## Coping Theory

Two major theories on coping will be examined to set a framework for coping with role overload. The two different theories were developed by Hall (1972), and Lazarus and Folkman (1984). The major difference between the two models is that Hall's model identifies three different types of coping with role conflict and the model of Lazarus and Folkman's model establishes two types of coping with stressful situations.

### Hall's Model

We will begin by looking at Hall's model which looks at coping with role conflict as a function of the scarcity hypothesis (1972). Hall (1972) described roles as a person's sub-identity, which all have a common connection in the core and compete for a share of the total identity of a person. Hall (1972) postulates that the greatest role conflict that a working woman experiences arises from inter-role conflict. Inter-role conflict refers to the conflicts between two different roles rather than intra-role conflict, which refers to conflict within one role (Hall 1972).

Hall's model of coping establishes three different types of coping that women will engage in to reduce role strain and overload. These include Type I: structural role redefinition; Type II: personal role redefinition; and Type III: reactive role behavior (Hall, 1972). Structural role redefinition is a process in which the person tries to reduce demands and set new expectations, whereas personal role redefinition requires the person to change her own perceptions and attitudes about expectations rather than changing the expectation (Hall, 1972). The final type of coping, reactive role behavior, refers to a person's efforts to meet the demands by improving role performance (Hall, 1972).

**Lazarus and Folkman's Model**

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) base their model of coping on how people respond to stressful situations. To begin, we must examine some of the vocabulary set by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). Stress is seen as a "relationship between the person and environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding her resources and endangering her well-being " (Lazarus & Folkman, pg. 11). Cognitive appraisal of stress occurs on two levels, during primary appraisal, the person examines the situational relevance and in secondary appraisal, the person evaluates the situation and looks for coping options (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping refers to a person's continually changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage demands that are stressful or incongruent.

The theorists establish two functions of coping: emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping (Elman & Gilbert, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Before looking at these functions of coping, it is important to note that neither type of coping is viewed as "good" or "bad", but rather as efforts put forth by a person to manage specific demands (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis & Gruen, 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Emotion-focused coping involves regulating emotional reactions to stressful events (Elman & Gilbert, 1984) in order to alleviate emotional stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Through emotion-focused coping, the person changes the meaning of the situation without actually changing behaviors or events or avoids the emotions brought up by the situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Some strategies used are to maintain optimism, deny or refuse to acknowledge certain demands, distort reality (Lazarus & Folkman,

1984). Some other strategies that don't involve a change in perception include exercising, meditating, venting or drinking (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Problem-focused coping refers to a person's efforts to change the conflict situation (Elman & Gilbert, 1984; Folkman et al, 1986) by defining the problem and finding alternatives and is an objective, analytical process (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Strategies used in problem-focused coping can be either inward or outward (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Inward problem-solving refers to changes made on a personal level, whereas outward problem-solving refers to changes that are made in the environment in which the problem exists (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

## Factors that Influence Coping

Lazarus and Folkman (1984), identify several resources that influence coping. Those resources include, health, optimism, problem solving and social skills, social support and material resources. Aspects of a person's life that can hinder coping are personal and environmental constraints as well as level of threat from the stress the person is exposed to (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This is supported by Kenney (2000) who cites a few healthy qualities that women can adopt such as assertiveness, hardiness and the ability to love, trust and confide. High self-esteem has also been shown to prevent the negative effects from overload (DeLongis, Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Kenney, 2000) as well as having good social skills (Eliot, 1994).

**Coping Responses**

According to DeMeis and Perkins (1996), the most common coping response among working mothers was to work as efficiently as possible and the least common response was to decrease responsibilities. Another strategy women use is to set priority to certain activities and duties in order to achieve the most important goals first (DeMeis & Perkins, 1996). One mother describes her coping strategies for dealing with her professional and maternal roles: "The only way to survive is to be as flexible as possible about goals [and] maintain a sense of humor…" (Gilbert, Holahan & Manning, pg. 423.) These responses are frequent, as most women increase role behavior in response to high role demands and feel that this is the most effective strategy (Elman & Gilbert, 1984; Gilbert, Holahan & Manning, 1981; Hall, 1979; Kenney, 2000).

Research has also shown that women use certain strategies that are detrimental to their well-being. Chasteen and Kissman (2000) identify several of these unhealthy coping strategies such as, alcohol or drug use, overeating, depression or passive-aggressive behavior. Other unhealthy strategies, which often lead to more stress, were control, perfectionism, and low self-confidence, all of which decrease a woman's overall health (Kenney, 2000).

Although many of these strategies are common, there are several alternative strategies that women can utilize. Chasteen and Kissman (2000) suggest that a family have open lines of communication and that mothers allow themselves to meet their own needs for relaxation or leisure. For this to be effective, women will need support from their partner, as well as be able to identify their own needs and feel comfortable expressing them (Chasteen & Kissman, 2000). Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler and

Wethington (1989), suggest that couples find ways to examine spousal support and create awareness of the different stressors in each others' lives.

**Policies and Programs**

Employed mothers are working harder and longer than they have in the past (Galinsky & Swanberg, 2000) and an understanding of the roles, overload and coping strategies can help working mothers manage their roles and assist employers in designing policies that help mothers balance conflict more effectively. First we will look at the specific policies that employers have used. Based on suggestions from prior research of employed mothers, we will also examine what women can accomplish in groups or be encouraged to do on their own.

In response to the emergence of dual-career families, employers have begun to develop programs that assist their employees in meeting the demands of their lifestyle. Galinsky & Stein (1990) examined the human resource policies of several large employers and large educational institutions by interviewing human resource directors and found that the organizational culture of the workplace will strongly influence a woman's ability to handle her multiple roles. In addition, job demands need to be manageable for employee well-being and employers can help by setting reasonable standards for employees (Galinksy & Swanberg, 2000; Sahibzada, 2005). Policies designed for employees to help reduce overload included assistance with child care, flexible time policies, training programs, employee assistance programs, counseling, fitness programs and elder care programs (Galinsky & Stein, 1990, Hughes & Galinksy, 1988).

Childcare, which has been shown to be a predictor of stress, is an important offering of an employer (Crouter, 1984; Galinsky & Stein, 1990; Galinksy & Swan, 2000; Hughes & Galinsky, 1988; Long Dilworth, 2004; Tingey & Kiger, 1996) and can include an agency service, offering child care on the premises, or improvement in quality of existing child care services (Galinksy & Stein, 1990). Scharlach (2001) found that adequate, affordable child care was the highest need among a sample of adults employed at a large university.

Flexible time, part-time work, and parental leave are also important in helping employees to meet the many demands of their lives (Galinsky & Stein, 1990). Using interview data from over 50 employees at a large manufacturing plant, Crouter (1984) suggests several programs that are designed to assist working parents. Some of these suggestions include: flexible scheduling, benefits for part-time employment, exceptional maternity and paternity leaves as well as job sharing (Crouter, 1984). An important feature of flexible time policies is whether employers offered pro-rated benefits to part-time employees (Galinsky & Stein, 1990), which is not a widespread offering among employers.

Among on a sample of employed mothers with young children, Elman and Gilbert (1984) examined role conflict, coping and career engagement. Based on their findings, Elman and Gilbert (1984) suggest that to help women reduce overload, we need to change the attitudes and expectations of working mothers. Similarly, Gilbert, Holahan and Manning (1981) also suggest that programs be designed to assist mothers to identify internal and external roles demands, to evaluate the social norms and expectations, to

prioritize among their role demands and to be educated about the services available to help them (Gilbert, Holahan & Manning, 1981).

Chasteen and Kissman (2000) recommend mutual support groups in which women can discuss their needs with their peers and as a group, and find constructive, healthy ways to deal with their stress. The training programs that employers offered ranged from counseling services to seminars on elder care and stress and well-being (Galinsky & Stein, 1990, Stephens & Franks, 1999). Employers can establish programs in which women help one another to change their response to their environment (Eliot, 1994). This can be done through teaching relaxation techniques, cognitive therapy, time management and teaching people to pay attention to their personal needs.

## Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the levels of role balance, role overload and ways of coping among mothers who work. Other factors such as employment status, number and age of dependents and the number of hours spent at work were examined. Specifically, mothers employed full time at the University of Maine were surveyed about these issues. The present study focused on the following four research questions:

### Research Question 1

Do mothers, divided by employment group, differ on the level of role balance, role overload and coping?

For this question, subjects were broken into three categories based on employment status: faculty, professional or classified. Subjects were also divided into

two sub-groups, those with at least one child under 18 in the home and those with no children under 18 in the home.

**Research Question 2**

What is the multiple relationship between subjects' age, education, and household income and their level of role balance, role overload and ways of coping?

Controlling for that relationship, how much additional variance in role balance, role overload and ways of coping can be explained by the number of hours spent working? This research question examined the entire sample and those with at least one child under 18.

**Research Question 3**

Controlling for the multiple relationship between subjects age, education, household income and average hours worked per week and their level of role balance, role overload and coping, how much additional variance in role balance, role overload and ways of coping can be explained by the number of children parented by subjects.

This research question examined the entire sample and those with at least one child under 18.

**Research Question 4**

What suggestions do employed mothers have to improve their workplace, and thereby improve their role balance?

Questions from the *Working Women Count* questionnaire were included in this study to answer this research question.

# Chapter 3

# METHODOLOGY

## Subjects

The questionnaire was sent to 600 women employed full time at the University of Maine. Only those who are mothers were asked to complete the questionnaire. Specifically, the questionnaire was distributed to a random group of 200 faculty, 200 professional, and 200 classified working women in order to allow for comparisons between these three groups.

The final sample included 105 mothers: 25 faculty, 37 professional and 43 classified employees. The response rate was 18%. All of the following demographics are presented in Table 3.1. The sample was primarily Caucasian (95%), 1% of the sample was Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 1% Hispanic, 1% Native American and 2% identified with other ethnicities. The majority of subjects were married (83%), 2% living together, 10% were divorced, 2% widowed, 2% single and 1% separated,. The majority of subjects were 40-49 (44%), 7% were 20-29, 20% were 30-39 and the rest (29%) were 50 or older.

Subjects ranged in education and income. Fourteen percent of the sample had either a high school diploma or GED, 13% had completed some college, 8% had an associates degree, 13% had graduated college, 9% had completed some graduate school. 31% had earned their Master's degree and 12% had earned their Doctorate. In terms of annual household income, 15% of subjects earned $20,000-$39,999, 29% earned $40,000-$59,999, 23% earned $60,000-$79,999, 17% earned $80,000-$99,999 and 16% earned $100,000 or more each year.

Table 3.1
Characteristics of the Entire Sample

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| **Race/Ethnicity** | | |
| White | 99 | 95.2 |
| Other | 5 | 4.8 |
| **Relationship Status** | | |
| Married | 87 | 82.9 |
| Living Together | 2 | 1.9 |
| Separated/Divorced | 12 | 11.5 |
| Widowed | 2 | 1.9 |
| Single | 2 | 1.9 |
| **Education** | | |
| High School/GED | 15 | 14.3 |
| Some College | 14 | 13.3 |
| Associates Degree | 8 | 7.6 |
| College Graduate | 14 | 13.3 |
| Some Graduate School | 9 | 8.6 |
| Masters Degree | 32 | 30.5 |
| Doctorate | 13 | 12.4 |
| **Income** | | |
| $20,000-39,999 | 15 | 14.6 |
| $40,000-59,999 | 30 | 29.1 |
| $60,000-79,999 | 25 | 24.3 |
| $80,000-99,999 | 17 | 16.5 |
| $100,000 or more | 16 | 15.5 |
| **Average Hours worked/week** | | |
| Under 40 | 16 | 15.4 |
| 40-50 | 74 | 71.2 |
| More than 50 | 14 | 13.5 |
| **Number of Children** | | |
| 1 | 38 | 36.9 |
| 2 | 43 | 41.7 |
| 3 | 11 | 10.7 |
| 4 | 8 | 7.8 |
| 5 | 2 | 1.9 |
| 7 | 1 | 1 |
| **Age** | | |
| 20-29 | 8 | 7.6 |
| 30-39 | 21 | 20.0 |
| 40-49 | 46 | 43.8 |
| 50 or older | 30 | 28.6 |

In regard to average hours worked per week, the majority of subjects (71%) worked 40-50 hours per week, 15% of subjects worked under 40 hours per week and 14% worked more than 50 hours per week. Approximately 37% of the sample had only 1 child, 41% had 2 children, 11% had 3 children, 8% had 4 children, 2% had 5 children and 1% had 7 children.

When asked about the roles they identified with, the majority checked parent (96%), employee (94%), and spouse or partner (86%), and Other roles noted by subjects were student and daughter.

## Procedure

The questionnaire was sent via campus mail to 600 female employees of the University of Maine (Appendix A). A cover letter was included to inform subjects of the nature of the research (Appendix B) as well as a letter of informed consent (Appendix C) and a post-card for participants to return that excluded them from receiving follow-up mailings (Appendix D). However, the initial response rate was satisfactory, thus no additional mailings were sent. A self-addressed return envelope was also included so subjects could return their questionnaires. Participation in this study was completely voluntary and all information was kept confidential.

## The Questionnaire

The 101 item questionnaire included questions relating to demographics, suggestions for improving the workplace, role balance, role overload and ways of coping.

**Demographics**

Basic demographic information was collected in order to describe the sample (Items 1-10). These items consist of questions about age, ethnicity, marital status, number and age of dependents, education level, socioeconomic status, employment status, and hours worked per week. Women were also asked what roles they identified with.

**Suggestions for Employers**

This information was gathered using one question with eight options (Items 11-18) from the *Working Women Count* questionnaire, developed by the Women's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor (Nussbaum & Reich, 1994). The portion used from this questionnaire included suggestions that women might make to improve the workplace and have been shown to decrease role strain and overload.

**Role Balance**

This was determined using a four item measure that is scored on a five-point scale (Items 19-22) developed by Marks, Huston, Johnson and MacDermid (2001). These four items were rated from strongly disagree to strongly agree. For example, "Nowadays, I seem to enjoy every part of my life equally well." Scores can range from 4 to 20 points with a higher score indicating greater role balance.

**Role Overload**

Role overload was assessed based on the 13-item Role Overload Scale (Items 23-35) developed by Reilly (1982). Examples of items include: “There are times when I can’t meet everyone's expectations” and “I feel I have to do things hastily and maybe less carefully in order to get everything done”. This scale consists of items rated on a five point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Scores can range from 13 to 65, with the higher score indicating greater role overload.

**Ways of Coping**

The Ways of Coping assessment (Items 36-101), developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), was used to measure coping. This assessment, based on the coping theory of Lazarus & Folkman (1984) defines coping as problem-focused or emotion-focused and establishes eight scales for describing these two types of coping. These eight factors include: confrontive coping, distancing, self-control, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape-avoidance, planful problem-solving and positive reappraisal (Folkman et al, 1986). Each of these factors corresponds to one of the two coping functions: problem focused or emotion focused (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984). This assessment consists of items rated on a four-point scale from 0-does not apply and/or not used, 1- used somewhat to 3- used a great deal. Scores among the eight scales range from 0-12 (Accepting Responsibility), 0-18 (Confrontive Coping, Distancing, Seeking Social Support and Planful Problem Solving), 0-21 (Self-Control and Positive Reappraisal) and 0-24 (Escape-Avoidance) (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988).

## Data Analysis

Research question one was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance. The dependent variables were role balance, role overload, ways of coping. The independent variable was employment category. Scheffe was used for post hoc tests for this question. Questions two and three were analyzed using a multiple ordinary least squares regression with ordered entry. For research question two, dependent variables were role balance, role overload and ways of coping. The first set of independent variables were subjects' age, education and income. Controlling for these factors, the second model examined average hours worked per week and the third model will examine number of children. Research question four used descriptive statistics; frequencies and percentages are reported for each item/scale.

# Chapter 4

## RESULTS

The purpose of this research was to determine the levels of role balance , role overload and ways of coping among employed mothers. In addition, basic demographic information and suggestions for improving the workplace were collected.

Respondents were divided into three categories based on employment status: classified, professional and faculty. Among the sample, 41% were classified employees (n=43), 35% were professional employees (n=37) and 24% were faculty (n=25). Data was analyzed for the entire sample and for two sub-groups to determine if age of dependents had any influence. The sub-groups included mothers with at least one child under the age of 18 (n=68) and those women with no children under 18 (n=37). The results for each research question are presented below.

### Research Question 1

The first research question was "Do mothers, divided by employment group, differ on the level of role balance, role overload and coping?" For this question, subjects were divided into three categories based on employment status: faculty, professional or classified. Subjects were also divided into two groups, those with at least one child under 18 in the home and those with no children under 18 in the home."

Scores on Role Balance can range from a low of 4 to a high of 20. Role overload scores can range from a low of 13 to a high of 65. Coping scores are divided into eight factors: confrontive coping, distancing, self-control, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape-avoidance, planful problem-solving and positive reappraisal and

can range from 0 to 24. Using one way analysis of variance, results revealed that no significant differences were found for employment category for role balance, role overload or coping. No significant differences were found for either of the two sub-groups. Results are presented in Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and Table 4.4.

**Entire Sample**

For the entire sample, classified employees had mean scores of 14.60 for role balance and 42.28 for role overload, professional employees had mean scores of 14.59 for role balance and 41.64 for role overload and faculty had mean scores of 14.88 for role balance and 42.67 for role overload. Employment group was not significant for role balance (p=.917) or role overload (p=.780).

In terms of coping, classified employees had a preference for planful problem-solving and self-controlling coping with mean scores of 15.92 and 15.85, respectively**.** Classified staff scored lowest on escape-avoidance with a mean score of 13.34. Professional staff had a mean score of 16.57 for self-controlling coping and a mean of 15.51 for planful problem-solving. Professional staff also scored low on escape-avoidance with a mean score of 13.21. Faculty had a mean score of 14.56 for self-controlling and a mean score of 14.54 for planful problem-solving. Faculty scored lowest on escape-avoidance with a score of 11.57. Employment group was not significant for any of the eight coping factors. P-values for the eight coping factors are as follows: Confrontive coping (p=.476), distancing (p=.345), self-controlling (p=.184), seeking social support (p=.527), accepting responsibility (p=.189), planful problem-solving (p=.451), positive reappraisal (p=.910) and escape-avoidance (p=.204).

Table 4.1

Role Balance, Role Overload and Ways of coping for the entire sample

| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Role Balance | Classified | 43 | 14.6047 | 2.76147 |
| | Professional | 37 | 14.5946 | 2.74327 |
| | Faculty | 25 | 14.8800 | 3.45591 |
| | Total | 105 | 14.6667 | 2.90777 |
| Role Overload | Classified | 43 | 42.2791 | 5.36446 |
| | Professional | 36 | 41.6389 | 5.74284 |
| | Faculty | 21 | 42.6667 | 5.90198 |
| | Total | 100 | 42.1300 | 5.57349 |
| Confrontive | Classified | 40 | 11.4000 | 3.62187 |
| | Professional | 34 | 11.0000 | 3.28449 |
| | Faculty | 24 | 10.3333 | 3.05979 |
| | Total | 98 | 11.0000 | 3.36752 |
| Distancing | Classified | 39 | 11.2051 | 3.06233 |
| | Professional | 35 | 11.1714 | 3.23115 |
| | Faculty | 24 | 10.0833 | 3.41247 |
| | Total | 98 | 10.9184 | 3.21297 |
| Self-controlling | Classified | 40 | 15.8500 | 3.75909 |
| | Professional | 35 | 16.5714 | 3.25654 |
| | Faculty | 23 | 14.5652 | 5.35831 |
| | Total | 98 | 15.8061 | 4.06052 |
| Seeking Social Support | Classified | 37 | 13.4595 | 3.96929 |
| | Professional | 35 | 13.3429 | 4.41217 |
| | Faculty | 24 | 12.2917 | 4.11233 |
| | Total | 96 | 13.1250 | 4.15553 |
| Accepting Responsibility | Classified | 40 | 8.1000 | 3.45521 |
| | Professional | 35 | 6.9429 | 2.78592 |
| | Faculty | 24 | 6.9583 | 2.67808 |
| | Total | 99 | 7.4141 | 3.07395 |
| Planful Problem Solving | Classified | 39 | 15.9231 | 4.20767 |
| | Professional | 35 | 15.5143 | 3.75242 |
| | Faculty | 24 | 14.5417 | 4.87210 |
| | Total | 98 | 15.4388 | 4.21843 |
| Positive Reappraisal | Classified | 37 | 13.2703 | 4.77056 |
| | Professional | 35 | 13.0857 | 4.26595 |
| | Faculty | 24 | 12.7500 | 4.65553 |
| | Total | 96 | 13.0729 | 4.51954 |
| Escape Avoidance | Classified | 36 | 13.3889 | 4.37054 |
| | Professional | 34 | 13.2059 | 3.91407 |
| | Faculty | 23 | 11.5652 | 3.62850 |
| | Total | 93 | 12.8710 | 4.05995 |

Table 4.2

Role Balance, Role Overload and Ways of Coping for Mothers with children under 18

| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Role Balance | Classified | 28 | 14.4286 | 2.74103 |
| | Professional | 24 | 14.0833 | 2.79622 |
| | Faculty | 16 | 14.0625 | 3.69628 |
| | Total | 68 | 14.2206 | 2.96671 |
| Role Overload | Classified | 28 | 43.3214 | 4.94453 |
| | Professional | 23 | 43.0870 | 5.78331 |
| | Faculty | 14 | 44.0714 | 6.21987 |
| | Total | 65 | 43.4000 | 5.45951 |
| Confrontive | Classified | 26 | 11.7692 | 3.90187 |
| | Professional | 22 | 11.2273 | 3.65059 |
| | Faculty | 15 | 10.2000 | 3.16679 |
| | Total | 63 | 11.2063 | 3.64629 |
| Distancing | Classified | 26 | 11.0385 | 3.32843 |
| | Professional | 22 | 11.7273 | 3.56146 |
| | Faculty | 15 | 10.0000 | 4.05322 |
| | Total | 63 | 11.0317 | 3.59196 |
| Self-controlling | Classified | 26 | 16.4231 | 3.28844 |
| | Professional | 22 | 16.5000 | 3.59563 |
| | Faculty | 14 | 13.9286 | 5.09093 |
| | Total | 62 | 15.8871 | 3.94264 |
| Seeking Support | Classified | 23 | 14.5652 | 4.28344 |
| | Professional | 22 | 13.5000 | 4.32875 |
| | Faculty | 15 | 11.2667 | 3.69298 |
| | Total | 60 | 13.3500 | 4.29357 |
| Accepting Responsibility | Classified | 26 | 8.2308 | 3.38594 |
| | Professional | 22 | 7.3182 | 2.99820 |
| | Faculty | 15 | 6.5333 | 2.55976 |
| | Total | 63 | 7.5079 | 3.09981 |
| Planful Problem-solving | Classified | 25 | 16.4000 | 3.90512 |
| | Professional | 22 | 15.8182 | 4.08990 |
| | Faculty | 15 | 13.5333 | 4.61158 |
| | Total | 62 | 15.5000 | 4.23781 |
| Positive Reappraisal | Classified | 23 | 13.1739 | 4.58904 |
| | Professional | 22 | 12.4091 | 4.18227 |
| | Faculty | 15 | 11.8000 | 4.57009 |
| | Total | 60 | 12.5500 | 4.39732 |
| Escape Avoidance | Classified | 23 | 13.3913 | 4.39772 |
| | Professional | 21 | 13.1905 | 3.81601 |
| | Faculty | 14 | 11.4286 | 3.65249 |
| | Total | 58 | 12.8448 | 4.03407 |

Table 4.3

Role Balance, Role Overload and Ways of Coping for Mothers with no children under 18

| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Role Balance | Classified | 15 | 14.9333 | 2.86523 |
| | Professional | 13 | 15.5385 | 2.47034 |
| | Faculty | 9 | 16.3333 | 2.54951 |
| | Total | 37 | 15.4865 | 2.64178 |
| Role Overload | Classified | 15 | 40.3333 | 5.74042 |
| | Professional | 13 | 39.0769 | 4.87274 |
| | Faculty | 7 | 39.8571 | 4.29839 |
| | Total | 35 | 39.7714 | 5.05316 |
| Confrontive | Classified | 14 | 10.7143 | 3.04905 |
| | Professional | 12 | 10.5833 | 2.57464 |
| | Faculty | 9 | 10.5556 | 3.04594 |
| | Total | 35 | 10.6286 | 2.80845 |
| Distance | Classified | 13 | 11.5385 | 2.53691 |
| | Professional | 13 | 10.2308 | 2.42053 |
| | Faculty | 9 | 10.2222 | 2.16667 |
| | Total | 35 | 10.7143 | 2.42015 |
| Controlling | Classified | 14 | 14.7857 | 4.44070 |
| | Professional | 13 | 16.6923 | 2.71982 |
| | Faculty | 9 | 15.5556 | 5.91843 |
| | Total | 36 | 15.6667 | 4.30946 |
| Seeking Support | Classified | 14 | 11.6429 | 2.61966 |
| | Professional | 13 | 13.0769 | 4.71631 |
| | Faculty | 9 | 14.0000 | 4.41588 |
| | Total | 36 | 12.7500 | 3.94516 |
| Accept | Classified | 14 | 7.8571 | 3.69734 |
| | Professional | 13 | 6.3077 | 2.35884 |
| | Faculty | 9 | 7.6667 | 2.87228 |
| | Total | 36 | 7.2500 | 3.06478 |
| Problem Solving | Classified | 14 | 15.0714 | 4.73066 |
| | Professional | 13 | 15.0000 | 3.18852 |
| | Faculty | 9 | 16.2222 | 5.09357 |
| | Total | 36 | 15.3333 | 4.24264 |
| Positive Reappraisal | Classified | 14 | 13.4286 | 5.22883 |
| | Professional | 13 | 14.2308 | 4.32346 |
| | Faculty | 9 | 14.3333 | 4.60977 |
| | Total | 36 | 13.9444 | 4.64724 |
| Escape Avoidance | Classified | 13 | 13.3846 | 4.50071 |
| | Professional | 13 | 13.2308 | 4.22599 |
| | Faculty | 9 | 11.7778 | 3.80058 |
| | Total | 35 | 12.9143 | 4.16125 |

Table 4.4

Analysis of Variance for Role Balance, Role Overload and Ways of Coping Between employment groups for the entire sample, Mothers with children under 18 and those with no children

| **ANOVA for the Entire Sample** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Role Balance | Between Groups | 1.495 | 2 | .748 | .087 | .917 |
| | Within Groups | 877.838 | 102 | 8.606 | | |
| | Total | 879.333 | 104 | | | |
| Role Overload | Between Groups | 15.687 | 2 | 7.843 | .249 | .780 |
| | Within Groups | 3059.623 | 97 | 31.543 | | |
| | Total | 3075.310 | 99 | | | |
| Confrontive Coping | Between Groups | 17.067 | 2 | 8.533 | .749 | .476 |
| | Within Groups | 1082.933 | 95 | 11.399 | | |
| | Total | 1100.000 | 97 | | | |
| Distancing | Between Groups | 22.183 | 2 | 11.092 | 1.076 | .345 |
| | Within Groups | 979.164 | 95 | 10.307 | | |
| | Total | 1001.347 | 97 | | | |
| Self-Controlling | Between Groups | 55.993 | 2 | 27.996 | 1.723 | .184 |
| | Within Groups | 1543.324 | 95 | 16.246 | | |
| | Total | 1599.316 | 97 | | | |
| Seeking Social Support | Between Groups | 22.467 | 2 | 11.233 | .646 | .527 |
| | Within Groups | 1618.033 | 93 | 17.398 | | |
| | Total | 1640.500 | 95 | | | |
| Accepting Responsibility | Between Groups | 31.576 | 2 | 15.788 | 1.695 | .189 |
| | Within Groups | 894.444 | 96 | 9.317 | | |
| | Total | 926.020 | 98 | | | |
| Planful Problem-Solving | Between Groups | 28.662 | 2 | 14.331 | .802 | .451 |
| | Within Groups | 1697.470 | 95 | 17.868 | | |
| | Total | 1726.133 | 97 | | | |
| Positive Reappraisal | Between Groups | 3.949 | 2 | 1.975 | .095 | .910 |
| | Within Groups | 1936.540 | 93 | 20.823 | | |
| | Total | 1940.490 | 95 | | | |
| Escape-Avoidance | Between Groups | 52.685 | 2 | 26.343 | 1.620 | .204 |
| | Within Groups | 1463.767 | 90 | 16.264 | | |
| | Total | 1516.452 | 92 | | | |
| **ANOVA for Mothers with Children under 18** | | | | | | |
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Role Balance | Between Groups | 2.063 | 2 | 1.032 | .114 | .892 |
| | Within Groups | 587.628 | 65 | 9.040 | | |
| | Total | 589.691 | 67 | | | |
| Role Overload | Between Groups | 8.738 | 2 | 4.369 | .143 | .867 |
| | Within Groups | 1898.862 | 62 | 30.627 | | |
| | Total | 1907.600 | 64 | | | |
| Confrontive Coping | Between Groups | 23.438 | 2 | 11.719 | .878 | .421 |
| | Within Groups | 800.879 | 60 | 13.348 | | |
| | Total | 824.317 | 62 | | | |
| Distancing | Between Groups | 26.611 | 2 | 13.306 | 1.032 | .362 |
| | Within Groups | 773.325 | 60 | 12.889 | | |
| | Total | 799.937 | 62 | | | |
| Self-Controlling | Between Groups | 69.435 | 2 | 34.717 | 2.331 | .106 |
| | Within Groups | 878.775 | 59 | 14.894 | | |
| | Total | 948.210 | 61 | | | |

Table 4.4 Continued

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Seeking Social Support | Between Groups | 99.564 | 2 | 49.782 | 2.872 | .065 |
| | Within Groups | 988.086 | 57 | 17.335 | | |
| | Total | 1087.650 | 59 | | | |
| Accepting Responsibility | Between Groups | 28.625 | 2 | 14.312 | 1.514 | .228 |
| | Within Groups | 567.121 | 60 | 9.452 | | |
| | Total | 595.746 | 62 | | | |
| Planful Problem-Solving | Between Groups | 80.494 | 2 | 40.247 | 2.339 | .105 |
| | Within Groups | 1015.006 | 59 | 17.203 | | |
| | Total | 1095.500 | 61 | | | |
| Positive Reappraisal | Between Groups | 17.827 | 2 | 8.914 | .452 | .638 |
| | Within Groups | 1123.023 | 57 | 19.702 | | |
| | Total | 1140.850 | 59 | | | |
| Escape-Avoidance | Between Groups | 37.459 | 2 | 18.729 | 1.157 | .322 |
| | Within Groups | 890.145 | 55 | 16.184 | | |
| | Total | 927.603 | 57 | | | |
| **ANOVA for Mothers with no Children under 18** | | | | | | |
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Role Balance | Between Groups | 11.079 | 2 | 5.540 | .784 | .465 |
| | Within Groups | 240.164 | 34 | 7.064 | | |
| | Total | 251.243 | 36 | | | |
| Role Overload | Between Groups | 11.058 | 2 | 5.529 | .206 | .815 |
| | Within Groups | 857.114 | 32 | 26.785 | | |
| | Total | 868.171 | 34 | | | |
| Confrontive Coping | Between Groups | .175 | 2 | .088 | .010 | .990 |
| | Within Groups | 267.996 | 32 | 8.375 | | |
| | Total | 268.171 | 34 | | | |
| Distancing | Between Groups | 14.049 | 2 | 7.024 | 1.214 | .310 |
| | Within Groups | 185.094 | 32 | 5.784 | | |
| | Total | 199.143 | 34 | | | |
| Self-Controlling | Between Groups | 24.651 | 2 | 12.326 | .650 | .528 |
| | Within Groups | 625.349 | 33 | 18.950 | | |
| | Total | 650.000 | 35 | | | |
| Seeking Social Support | Between Groups | 32.613 | 2 | 16.306 | 1.051 | .361 |
| | Within Groups | 512.137 | 33 | 15.519 | | |
| | Total | 544.750 | 35 | | | |
| Accepting Responsibility | Between Groups | 18.266 | 2 | 9.133 | .971 | .389 |
| | Within Groups | 310.484 | 33 | 9.409 | | |
| | Total | 328.750 | 35 | | | |
| Planful Problem-Solving | Between Groups | 9.516 | 2 | 4.758 | .253 | .778 |
| | Within Groups | 620.484 | 33 | 18.803 | | |
| | Total | 630.000 | 35 | | | |
| Positive Reappraisal | Between Groups | 6.153 | 2 | 3.076 | .135 | .874 |
| | Within Groups | 749.736 | 33 | 22.719 | | |
| | Total | 755.889 | 35 | | | |
| Escape-Avoidance | Between Groups | 15.803 | 2 | 7.901 | .441 | .647 |
| | Within Groups | 572.940 | 32 | 17.904 | | |
| | Total | 588.743 | 34 | | | |

**Mothers with Children under 18**

For women with at least one child under 18, classified employees had mean scores of 14.43 for role balance and 43.32 for role overload, professional employees had For women with at least one child under 18, classified employees had mean mean scores of 14.08 for role balance and 43.08 for role overload and faculty had mean scores of 14.06 for role balance and 44.07 for role overload. Employment group was not significant for role balance (p=.892) or role overload (p=.867).

In terms of coping, classified employees had a preference for planful problem-solving with a mean of 16.40 and self-controlling coping with mean score of 16.42. Classified employees scored low on escape-avoidance as well with a mean score of 13.40. Professional staff had a mean score of 16.50 for self-controlling coping and a mean of 15.81 for planful problem-solving. Professional staff scored low on escape-avoidance with a mean score of 13.20. Faculty had a mean score of 13.96 for self-controlling and a mean score of 13.53 for planful problem-solving. Again, faculty scored lowest on escape-avoidance with a mean score of 11.43. Employment group was not significant for any of the eight coping factors. P-values for the eight coping factors are as follows: Confrontive coping (p=.421), distancing (p=.362), self-controlling (p=.106), seeking social support (p=.065), accepting responsibility (p=.228), planful problem-solving (p=.105), positive reappraisal (p=.638) and escape-avoidance (p=.322).

**Mothers with no Children under 18**

For women with no children under 18, classified employees had mean scores of 14.93 for role balance and 40.33 for role overload, professional employees had mean

scores of 15.54 for role balance and 39.07 for role overload and faculty had mean scores of 16.33 for role balance and 39.07 for role overload. Employment group was not significant for role balance (p=.465) or role overload (p=.815).

In terms of coping, classified employees had highest scores for planful problem-solving with a mean of 15.07 and self-controlling coping with mean score of 14.79. For escape-avoidance, classified staff had a mean of 13.40. Professional staff had a mean score of 16.69 for self-controlling coping and a mean of 15.00 for planful problem-solving. Professional staff had a mean score of 13.23 for escape-avoidance. Faculty had a mean score of 15.55 for self-controlling and a mean score of 16.22 for planful problem-solving. Faculty scored a mean of 11.78 for escape-avoidance. Employment group was not significant for any of the eight coping factors for women with no children under 18. P-values for the eight coping factors are as follows: Confrontive coping (p=.990), distancing (p=.310), self-controlling (p=.528), seeking social support (p=.361), accepting responsibility (p=.389), planful problem-solving (p=.778), positive reappraisal (p=.874) and escape-avoidance (p=.647).

## Research Question 2

The second research question was "What is the multiple relationship between subjects' Age, Education, and Household Income and their level of Role Balance, Role Overload and Ways of Coping? Controlling for that relationship, how much additional variance in role balance, role overload and ways of coping can be explained by the number of hours spent working? This research question examined the entire sample

(n=105) and the first sub-group, those with at least one child under 18 (n=68)." Results are presented below and in Tables 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10.

**Role Balance- Entire Sample**

In Step I of the model, for the entire sample, the multiple relationship between the independent variables age, education, and household income and the dependent variable, role balance was r=. 128. That means that 1.6% of the variance in role balance was explained by Step I. None of the independent variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in the role balance. In Step II of the model, for the entire sample, average hours worked per week explained an additional 7.8% of variance in role balance. Average hours worked per week was significant for reducing unexplained variance in role balance (p=.005). See Table 4.5.

**Role Overload- Entire Sample**

In Step I of the model, for the entire sample, the multiple relationship between the independent variables age, education, and household income and the dependent variable, role overload was r=.172. That means that 3% of the variance in role overload was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in role overload for the entire sample

In Step II of the model, hours worked per week explained an additional 1.9% of variance in role overload. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in role overload for the entire sample (p=.181). See Table 4.6.

**Confrontive Coping- Entire Sample**

In Step I of the model, for the entire sample, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable confrontive coping was r=.242. That means that 5.8% of the variance in confrontive coping was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in confrontive coping for the entire sample.

In Step II of the model, for the entire sample, hours worked per week explained an additional 0% of variance in confrontive coping. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in confrontive coping for the entire sample (p=.972). See Table 4.7.

**Distancing- Entire Sample**

In Step I of the model, for the entire sample, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable distancing was r=.193. That means that 3.7% of the variance in distancing was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in distancing for the entire sample.

In Step II of the model, for the entire sample, hours worked per week explained an additional .2% of variance in distancing. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in distancing for the entire sample (p=.330).

Table 4.5

Multiple Regression for Role Balance. a). Final Model- Entire Sample, b). Final Model- Mothers with Children under 18

**a).**

| | Adjusted R Square | Change Statistics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | | R Square Change | Sig. | Beta |
| Step I | -.014 | .016 | .661 | N/A |
| Step II | .056 | .078 | .005* | -.285 |
| Step III | .083 | .035 | .054 | -.198 |

i. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATIO
ii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATIO, Av. hours worked per week*
iii Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATIO, Av. hours worked per week, Number of Children

**b).**

| | Adjusted R Square | Change Statistics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | | R Square Change | Sig. | Beta |
| Step I | .039 | .084 | .026* | -.292 |
| Step II | .260 | .222 | .000* | -.483 |
| Step III | .304 | .052 | .033* | -.245 |

i. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE*, EDUCATIO
ii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATIO, Av. hours worked per week*
iii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATIO, Av. hours worked per week, Number of Children*

Table 4.6

Multiple Regressions for Role Overload. a). Final Model- Entire Sample, b). Final Model- Mothers with Children under 18

**a.)**

| | Adjusted R Square | Change Statistics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | | R Square Change | Sig. | Beta |
| Step I | -.002 | .030 | .423 | N/A |
| Step II | .011 | .022 | .145 | .153 |
| Step III | .025 | .024 | .127 | .169 |

i. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATIO
ii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATIO, Av. hours worked per week
iii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATIO, Av. hours worked per week, Number of Children

**b.)**

| | Adjusted R Square | Change Statistics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model | | R Square Change | Sig. | Beta |
| 1 | -.033 | .017 | .794 | N/A |
| 2 | .052 | .097 | .016* | .320 |
| 3 | .063 | .026 | .200 | .190 |

i. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATIO
ii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATIO, Av. hours worked per week*
iii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATIO, Av. hours worked per week, Number of Children

Table 4.7

Multiple Regression for Confrontive Coping. a). Final Model- Entire Sample, b). Final Model- Mothers with Children under 18

**a.)**

| | Adjusted R Square | Change Statistics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | | R Square Change | Sig. | Beta |
| Step I | .027 | .058 | .142 | N/A |
| Step II | .016 | .000 | .972 | .004 |
| Step III | .029 | .022 | .147 | .157 |

i. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE*, EDUCATION
ii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION, Av. hours worked per week
iii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION, Av. hours worked per week, Number of Children

**b.)**

| | Adjusted R Square | Change Statistics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | | R Square Change | Sig. | Beta |
| Step I | .096 | .141 | .011* | .338 |
| Step II | .081 | .001 | .831 | .027 |
| Step III | .076 | .011 | .396 | .114 |

i. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE*, EDUCATION
ii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION, Av. hours worked per week
iii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION, Av. hours worked per week, Number of Children

Table 4.8

Multiple Regression for Self-controlling. a). Final Model- Entire Sample, b). Final Model- Mothers with Children under 18

**a.)**

| | Adjusted R Square | Change Statistics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | | R Square Change | Sig. | Beta |
| Step I | .001 | .034 | .381 | N/A |
| Step II | -.005 | .005 | .500 | .072 |
| Step III | -.013 | .004 | .574 | .062 |

i. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION
ii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION, Av. hours worked per week
iii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION, Av. hours worked per week, Number of Children

**b.)**

| | Adjusted R Square | Change Statistics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | | R Square Change | Sig. | Beta |
| Step I | .031 | .080 | .035* | -.319 |
| Step II | .015 | .001 | .766 | -.040 |
| Step III | -.003 | .001 | .825 | .031 |

i. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION*
ii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION, Av. hours worked per week
iii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION, Av. hours worked per week, Number of Children

Table 4.9

Multiple Regression for Escape-Avoidance. a). Final Model- Entire Sample, b). Final Model- Mothers with Children under 18

**a).**

| | Adjusted R Square | Change Statistics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | | R Square Change | Sig. | Beta |
| Step I | .069 | .101 | .058* | -.219 |
| Step II | .064 | .005 | .480 | .075 |
| Step III | .059 | .006 | .449 | .082 |

i. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION*
ii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION, Av. hours worked per week
iii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION, Av. hours worked per week, Number of Children

**b.)**

| | Adjusted R Square | Change Statistics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | | R Square Change | Sig. | Beta |
| Step I | .094 | .144 | .021* | -.349 |
| Step II | .092 | .014 | .360 | .122 |
| Step III | .085 | .010 | .444 | .107 |

ii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION*
ii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION, Av. hours worked per week
iii. Predictors: (Constant), INCOME, AGE, EDUCATION, Av. hours worked per week, Number of Children

Table 4.10

Variance Explained by Independent Variables*

| **Entire Sample** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variables | Age, Education and Income | Hrs./ week | Number of children | Total Variance explained |
| Role Balance | - | 7.8% | 3.5% | 12.9% |
| Role Overload | - | - | 9.7% | 7.7% |
| Confrontive | - | - | - | 8% |
| Distancing | - | - | - | 6.7% |
| Self-controlling | - | - | - | 1.2% |
| Seeking social support | - | - | - | 4.3% |
| Accepting responsibility | - | - | - | 5.6% |
| Planful problem-solving | - | - | - | 4.6% |
| Positive reappraisal | - | - | - | 3.3% |
| Escape-avoidance | 10%[1] | - | - | 11.2% |
| **Mothers with Children under 18** | | | | |
| Variables | Age, Education and Income | Hrs./ week | Number of children | Total Variance explained |
| Role Balance | 8.4%[2] | 22.2% | 5.2% | 35.6% |
| Role Overload | - | 9.7% | - | 14% |
| Confrontive | 14%[3] | - | - | 15.2% |
| Distancing | - | - | - | 7.1% |
| Self-controlling | 8%[4] | - | | 8.2% |
| Seeking social support | - | - | - | 7.6% |
| Accepting responsibility | - | - | - | 8.9% |
| Planful problem-solving | - | - | - | 2.5% |
| Positive reappraisal | - | - | - | 5.6% |
| Escape-avoidance | 14%[5] | - | - | 15.9% |

* Percentages noted for independent variables only where variance was either close to significant or significant

[1] Education
[2] Age
[3] Age
[4] Education
[5] Education

**Self-controlling- Entire Sample**

In Step I of the model, for the entire sample, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable self-controlling was r=..088. That means that .8% of the variance in self-controlling coping was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in self-controlling for the entire sample.

In Step II of the model, for the entire sample, hours worked per week explained an additional 0% of variance in self-controlling. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in self-controlling for the entire sample (p=.921). See Table 4.8.

**Seeking Social Support- Entire Sample**

In Step I of the model, for the entire sample, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable seeking social support was r=.184. That means that 3.4% of the variance in seeking social support was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in seeking social support for the entire sample.

In Step II of the model, for the entire sample, hours worked per week explained an additional .5% of variance in seeking social support. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in seeking social support for the entire sample (p=.50).

**Accepting Responsibility- Entire Sample**

In Step I of the model, for the entire sample, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable accepting responsibility was r=.216. That means that 4.7 % of the variance in accepting responsibility was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in accepting responsibility for the entire sample.

In Step II of the model, for the entire sample, hours worked per week explained an additional .1 % of variance in accepting responsibility. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in accepting responsibility for the entire sample (p=.703).

**Planful Problem-solving- Entire Sample**

In Step I of the model, for the entire sample, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable planful problem-solving was r=.196. That means that 3.8% of the variance in planful problem-solving was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in planful problem-solving for the entire sample

In Step II of the model, for the entire sample, hours worked per week explained an additional 0% of variance in planful problem-solving. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in planful problem-solving for the entire sample (p=.960).

**Positive Reappraisal- Entire Sample**

In Step I of the model, for the entire sample, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable positive reappraisal was r=.158. That means that 2.5% of the variance in positive reappraisal was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in positive reappraisal for the entire sample.

In Step II of the model, for the entire sample, hours worked per week explained an additional .7% of variance in positive reappraisal. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in positive reappraisal for the entire sample (p=.415).

**Escape-Avoidance- Entire Sample**

In Step I of the model, for the entire sample, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable escape-avoidance was r=.318. That means that 10% of the variance in escape-avoidance was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in escape-avoidance for the entire sample.

In Step II of the model, for the entire sample, hours worked per week explained an additional .6% of variance in escape-avoidance. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in escape-avoidance for the entire sample (p=.480). See Table 4.9.

**Role Balance- Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I of the model, for mothers with children under 18, the multiple relationship between the independent variables age, education, and household income and the dependent variable, role balance was r=.290. That means that 8.4% of the variance in role balance was explained by Step I. Only age of subjects made statistically significant contributions (p=.026) to the reduction of unexplained variance in role balance.

In Step II of the model, for mothers with children under 18 average hours worked per week explained 22% of variance in role balance. This finding was significant (p=.000) for reducing unexplained variance in role balance. See Table 4.5.

**Role Overload- Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I of the model, for mothers with children under 18, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and role overload was r=.132. That means that 1.7% of the variance in role overload was explained by Step I. None of the independent variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in role overload.

In Step II of the model, for mothers with children under 18, average hours worked per week explained 9.7% of variance in role overload. Average hours worked per week was significant for mothers with children under 18 for reducing unexplained variance in role overload (p=.016). See Table 4.6.

**Confrontive Coping-Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I of the model, for mothers with children under 18, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and confrontive coping was r=.376. That means that 14 % of the variance in confrontive coping was explained by Step I. Only age of subjects made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in confrontive coping (p=.011).

In Step II of the model, for mothers with children under 18, average hours worked per week explained 1% of variance in confrontive coping. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in confrontive coping for mothers with children under 18 (p=..331). See Table 4.7.

**Distancing-Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I of the model, for mothers with children under 18, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and distancing was r=.209. That means that 4.4% of the variance in distancing was explained by Step I. None of the variables made a statistically significant contribution to the reduction of unexplained variance in distancing for mothers with children under 18.

In Step II of the model, for mothers with children under 18, average hours worked per week explained 0% of variance in confrontive coping. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in distancing for mothers with children under 18 (p=.802).

**Self-controlling-Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I of the model, for mothers with children under 18, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and self-controlling was r=.283. That means that 8% of the variance in self-controlling was explained by Step I. None of the variables made a statistically significant contribution to the reduction of unexplained variance in self-controlling.

In Step II of the model, for mothers with children under 18, average hours worked per week explained .1% of variance in self-controlling. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in self-controlling for mothers with children under 18 (p=.755). See Table 4.8.

**Seeking Social Support-Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I of the model, for mothers with children under 18, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and seeking social support was r=.271. That means that 7.3% of the variance in seeking social support was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in seeking social support for mothers with children under 18.

In Step II of the model, for mothers with children under 18, average hours worked per week explained .2% of variance in seeking social support. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in seeking social support for mothers with children under 18 (p=.710).

**Accepting Responsibility-Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I of the model, for mothers with children under 18, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and accepting responsibility was r=.292. That means that .1% of the variance in accepting responsibility was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in accepting responsibility for mothers with children under 18.

In Step II of the model, for mothers with children under 18, average hours worked per week explained .1% of variance in accepting responsibility. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in accepting responsibility for mothers with children under 18 (p=.821).

**Planful Problem-solving-Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I of the model, for mothers with children under 18, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and planful problem-solving was r=.147. That means that 2.2% of the variance in planful problem-solving was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in planful problem-solving for mothers with children under 18.

In Step II of the model, for mothers with children under 18 average hours worked per week explained 0% of variance in planful problem-solving. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in planful problem-solving for mothers with children under 18 (p=.980). See Table 4.10

**Positive Reappraisal-Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I of the model, for mothers with children under 18, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and positive reappraisal was r=.170. That means that 2.9% of the variance in positive reappraisal was explained by Step I. None of the variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in positive reappraisal for mothers with children under 18.

In Step II of the model, for mothers with children under 18 average hours worked per week explained 1.8% of variance in positive reappraisal. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in positive reappraisal for mothers with children under 18 (p=.351). See Table 4.10

**Escape-Avoidance-Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I of the model, for mothers with children under 18, the multiple relationship between the independent variables and escape-avoidance was r=.379. That means that 14% of the variance in escape-avoidance was explained by Step I. Education was significant for reducing unexplained variance in escape-avoidance (p=.043)

In Step II of the model, for mothers with children under 18, average hours worked per week explained 1.4% of variance in escape-avoidance. Average hours worked per week was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in escape-avoidance for mothers with children under 18 (p=.360). See Table 4.9.

## Research Question 3

The third research question was "Controlling for the multiple relationship between subjects age, education, household income and average hours worked per week, how much additional variance in role balance, role overload and ways of coping can be explained by the number of children parented by subjects. This research question will examined the entire sample (n=105) and those with at least one child under 18 (n=68)." Results are presented below and in Table 4.5 through 4.10 for role balance, role overload, and the 8 individual scales for the Ways of Coping measure.

### Role Balance- Entire Sample

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 9.4% of variance in role balance. Only average hours worked per week was significant for role balance.

In Step III of the model, for the entire sample, number of children explained an additional 3.5% of variance in role balance. Number of children was close to significant for explaining variance in role balance for the entire sample (p=.054). See Table 4.5

In the final model, for the entire sample, the multiple correlation coefficient with the dependent variable, role balance, was r=.307. That means that a total of 12.9% of the variance was explained by the entire model. For the entire sample, average hours per week made statistically significant contribution to the reduction of unexplained variance in role balance. The standardized regression coefficient (Beta) for the entire sample was -.297 for average hours per week. See Table 4.10

**Role Overload- Entire Sample**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 4.9% of variance in role overload. None of the independent variables were significant for role overload.

In Step III of the model, for the entire sample, number of children explained an additional 2.8% of variance in role overload. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in role overload for the entire sample (p=.103). See Table 4.6.

In the final model, the multiple correlation coefficient with the dependent variable, role overload, was r=.275. That means that a total of 7.7% of the variance was explained by the entire model. None of the independent variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in role overload in the final model. See Table 4.10

**Confrontive Coping- Entire Sample**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 5.8% of variance in confrontive coping. None of the independent variables were significant for confrontive coping.

In Step III of the model, for the entire sample, number of children explained an additional 2.2% of variance in confrontive coping. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in confrontive coping for the entire sample (p=.147). See Table 4.7

In the final model the multiple correlation coefficient for confrontive coping was r=..204 for the entire sample. That means that a total of 8% of the variance was explained by the entire model. None of the independent variables were significant for reducing unexplained variance in confrontive coping in the final model. See Table 4.10

**Distancing- Entire Sample**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 3.9% of variance in distancing. None of the independent variables were significant for distancing.

In Step III of the model, for the entire sample, number of children explained an additional 2.8% of variance in distancing. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in distancing for the entire sample (p=..110).

In the final model the multiple correlation coefficient for the dependent variable, distancing, was r=.258. That means that a total of 6.7% of the variance was explained by the entire model. None of the independent variables made a statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in distancing in the final model. See Table 4.10

**Self-controlling- Entire Sample**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for .8% of variance in self-controlling. None of the independent variables were significant for role balance.

In Step III of the model, for the entire sample, number of children explained an additional .4% of variance in self-controlling. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in self-controlling for the entire sample (p=.559). See Table 4.8.

In the final model, the multiple correlation coefficient for self-controlling was r=..108. That means that a total of 1.2% of the variance was explained by the entire model. None of the independent variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in self-controlling for the final model. See Table 4.10.

**Seeking Social Support- Entire Sample**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 3.9% of variance in seeking social support. None of the independent variables were significant for seeking social support.

In Step III of the model, for the entire sample, number of children explained an additional .4% of variance in seeking social support. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in seeking social support for the entire sample (p=.574).

In the final model, the multiple correlation coefficient for seeking social support, was r=.205. That means that a total of 4.3% of the variance was explained by the entire model. None of the independent variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in seeking social support in the final model. See Table 4.10.

**Accepting Responsibility- Entire Sample**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 4.8% of variance in accepting responsibility. None of the independent variables were significant for accepting responsibility

In Step III of the model, for the entire sample, number of children explained an additional .8% of variance in accepting responsibility. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in accepting responsibility (p=.393).

In the final model, the multiple correlation coefficient for accepting responsibility was r=.237. That means that a total of 5.6% of the variance was explained by the entire model. None of the independent variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in accepting responsibility in the final model. See Table 4.10.

**Planful Problem-Solving- Entire Sample**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 3.8 % of variance in planful problem-solving. None of the independent variables were significant for planful problem-solving.

In Step III of the model, for the entire sample, number of children explained an additional .8% of variance in planful problem-solving. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in planful problem-solving for the entire sample (p=.381).

In the final model the multiple correlation coefficient for the dependent variable, planful problem-solving was r=.216. None of the independent variables were statistically significant in contributing to the reduction of unexplained variance in planful problem-solving in the final model. See Table 4.10

**Positive Reappraisal- Entire Sample**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 3.2% of variance in positive reappraisal. None of the independent variables were significant for positive reappraisal.

In Step III of the model, for the entire sample, number of children explained an additional .18% of variance in positive reappraisal. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in positive reappraisal for the entire sample (p=.755).

In the final model the multiple correlation coefficient for positive reappraisal was r=.183. That means that a total of 3.3% of the variance was explained by the entire model. None of the independent variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in positive reappraisal in the final model. See Table 4.10

**Escape-Avoidance- Entire Sample**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 10.7% of variance in escape-avoidance. Only education came close to being significant for escape-avoidance (p=.057.)

In Step III of the model, for the entire sample, number of children explained an additional .6% of variance in escape-avoidance. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in escape-avoidance for the entire sample (p=.449). See Table 4.9.

In the final model the multiple correlation coefficient for the dependent variable, escape-avoidance, was r=.336 for the entire sample. That means that a total of 11.2% of the variance was explained by the entire model. None of the independent variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in escape-avoidance for the entire sample. However, education came close to statistical significance for reducing unexplained variance in escape-avoidance. Standardized regression coefficients (Beta) for this variables was -.212. See Table 4.10.

**Role Balance- Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 30.4% of variance in role balance. Both average hours worked per week and number of children was significant for role balance.

In Step III of the model, number of children explained 5.2% of variance in role balance. Number of children was significant for mothers with children under 18 (p=.033). See Table 4.5

In the final model, for mothers with children under 18, the multiple correlation coefficient for role balance was r=.599. That means that 35.6% of the variance was explained by the entire model. For mothers with children under 18, average hours worked per week and number of children made statistically significant contributions to

the reduction of unexplained variance in role balance. The standardized regression coefficient (Beta) was -.495 for average hours worked per week and -.245 for number of children. These coefficients demonstrate that average hours worked per week accounted for more overall variance for role balance than number of children. See Table 4.10

**Role Overload- Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 11.4% of variance in role overload. Only average hours worked per week was significant for role overload.

In Step III of the model, for mothers with children under 18, number of children explained 2.6% of variance in role overload. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in role overload for mothers with children under 18 (p=.20). See Table 4.6.

In the final model, for mothers with children under 18, the multiple correlation coefficient for role overload was r=.374. That means that 14% of variance was explained by the entire model. Average hours worked per week was statistically significant for contributing to the reduction of unexplained variance in role overload. The standardized regression coefficient (Beta) for this variables was .349. See Table 4.10.

**Confrontive Coping- Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 14.1% of variance in confrontive coping. Only age was significant for confrontive coping.

In Step III of the model, for mothers with children under 18, number of children explained an additional 1.1% of variance in confrontive coping. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in confrontive coping for mothers with children under 18 (p=.396). See Table 4.7.

In the final model the multiple correlation coefficient for confrontive coping was r=.391. This means that a total of 15.2% of the variance was explained by the entire model. For mothers with children under 18, age made a statistically significant contribution to the reduction of unexplained variance in confrontive coping. The standardized regression coefficient (Beta) for this variable was .307. See Table 4.10.

**Distancing- Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 4.4% of variance in distancing. None of the independent variables were significant for distancing.

In Step III of the model, for mothers with children under 18 number of children explained 2.7% of variance in distancing. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in distancing for mothers with children under 18 (p=.214).

In the final model the multiple correlation coefficient for the dependent variable, distancing, was r=.266. This means that the entire model explains 7.1% of variance on distancing. None of the independent variables made a statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in distancing for mothers with children under 18. See Table 4.10.

**Self-controlling- Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 8.1% of variance in self-controlling. None of the independent variables were significant for self-controlling.

In Step III of the model, for mothers with children under 18, number of children explained .1% of variance in self-controlling. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in self-controlling for mothers with children under 18 (p=.825). See Table 4.8.

In the final model, the multiple correlation coefficient for self-controlling was r=.287. That means that 8.2% of the variance was explained by the entire model. Education made a statistically significant contribution to reduction of unexplained variance for self-controlling. The standardized regression coefficient for self-controlling was -.315. See Table 4.10.

**Seeking Social Support- Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 7.5% of variance in seeking social support. None of the independent variables were significant for seeking social support.

In Step III of the model, for mothers with children under 18, number of children explained .1% of variance in seeking social support. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in seeking social support for mothers with children under 18 (p=.785).

In the final model, the multiple correlation coefficient for seeking social support, was r=.278. That means that the entire model explains 7.6% of variance for seeking social support. None of the independent variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in seeking social support for mothers with children under 18. See Table 4.10.

**Accepting Responsibility- Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 8.6% of variance in accepting responsibility. None of the independent variables were significant for accepting responsibility.

In Step III of the model, for mothers with children under 18, number of children explained .3% of variance in accepting responsibility. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in accepting responsibility for mothers with children under 18 (p=.689).

In the final model, the multiple correlation coefficient for accepting responsibility was r=.303. That means that 8.9% of the variance was explained by the entire model. None of the independent variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in accepting responsibility for mothers with children under 18. See Table 4.10.

**Planful Problem-Solving- Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 2.2% of variance in planful problem-solving. None of the independent variables were significant for planful problem-solving.

In Step III of the model, for mothers with children under 18, number of children explained .3% of variance in planful problem-solving. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in planful problem-solving for mothers with children under 18 (p=.699).

In the final model the multiple correlation coefficient for the dependent variable, planful problem-solving was r=.156. That explains a total of 2.5% of variance for the entire model for planful problem-solving. None of the independent variables were statistically significant in contributing to the reduction of unexplained variance in planful problem-solving. See Table 4.10.

**Positive Reappraisal- Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 4.5 % of variance in positive reappraisal. None of the independent variables were significant for positive reappraisal.

In Step III of the model, for mothers with children under 18, number of children explained .9% of variance in positive reappraisal. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in positive reappraisal for mothers with children under 18 (p=.484).

In the final model the multiple correlation coefficient for positive reappraisal was r=.183. This explains a total of 5.6% of unexplained variance. None of the independent variables made statistically significant contributions to the reduction of unexplained variance in positive reappraisal. See Table 4.10.

**Escape-Avoidance- Mothers with Children under 18**

In Step I and Step II, the independent variables age, education, income and average hours worked per week, accounted for 15.8% of variance in escape-avoidance. Only education was significant for escape-avoidance.

In Step III of the model, for mothers with children under 18, number of children explained .1% of variance in escape-avoidance. Number of children was not significant for reducing unexplained variance in escape-avoidance for mothers with children under 18 (p=.444). See Table 4.9.

In the final model the multiple correlation coefficient for the dependent variable, escape-avoidance, was r=.410. That means that a total of 15.9% of the variance was explained by the entire model. Education came close to statistical significance for reducing unexplained variance in escape-avoidance. The standardized regression coefficient (Beta) for this variable was -.306. See Table 4.10.

## Research Question 4

The fourth research question was "What suggestions do employed mothers have to improve their workplace, and thereby improve their role balance? Questions from the *Working Women Count* questionnaire were included in this study to answer this research

question." These items asked the respondent to rate how important the following items are to their workplace: more flexible work hours, information about or support for child or elder care, insuring equal opportunity in the workplace, paid leave to care for newborns or seriously ill relatives, on-the-job training opportunities to learn new skills, giving employees more responsibility for how they do their jobs and improving pay scales Percentages for women's responses are reported in Table 4.12 and below.

The first question on the *Working Women Count* questionnaire (Nussbaum & Reich, 1994) addressed women's desire to have more flexible schedules. For the entire sample, 61% rated this question as very important, 22% were neutral and 17% felt that this item was not very important.

The second question asked if information about child care was an important offering of an employer. For the entire sample, 33% rated this as not very important, 38% were neutral and 29% felt that information about child care was very important.

The third question asked if equal opportunity was important in the workplace. For the entire sample, 60% felt that this was very important, 24% were neutral and 16% felt that this was not important.

The fourth question asked if paid leave was important. For the entire sample, 70% felt that this was very important, 18% were neutral and 12% felt that this was not important.

The fifth question inquired as to how important paid training was. For the entire sample, 57% felt that this was very important, 31% were neutral and 12% felt that this was not important.

The sixth question asked subjects if increased employee responsibility was important. For the entire sample, 50% felt that this was very important, 31% felt were neutral and 19% felt that this was not important.

The seventh question asked subjects if improving pay scales were important. For the entire sample, 81% felt that this was very important, 14% were neutral and 5% felt that this was not important.

The final question allowed for open-ended responses that ranged from topics from flexible time, paid leave and employee responsibility to more accurate pay as well as other concerns. Classified subjects offered the following responses: more options for retirement and health insurance benefits for part-time employees, allowing classified employees to work from home, more accurate pay for the work completed, paid leave and a private room for breast pumping. The only professional subject who responded to this item wished that the university had paid maternity leave. Finally, the faculty subjects hoped that the number of female faculty should better represent population demographics and another felt that her workspace was much too crowded and not adequately equipped with computer equipment.

Table 4.11

Suggestions for the Workplace from the Working Women Count Questionnaire

| **Questions** | **Very Important** | **Neutral** | **Not Important** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Flexible Hours | 61% | 22% | 17% |
| Information about Childcare | 29% | 38% | 33% |
| Equal Opportunity | 60% | 24% | 16% |
| Paid Leave | 70% | 18% | 12% |
| Paid Training | 57% | 31% | 19% |
| Employee Responsibility | 50% | 31% | 19% |
| Improving Pay scales | 81% | 14% | 5% |

# Chapter 5

# DISCUSSION

The goal of this research was to determine if any differences existed between the levels of role balance, role overload and ways of coping among mothers who work at the University of Maine. Mothers in this study were divided into three groups based on their employment status; Classified, professional and faculty. Several variables were also examined including the roles subjects identified with, the number and age of dependents, the number of hours spent at work as well as basic demographic information in order to learn more about the sample.

The women in this study identified with similar roles to those cited by women in previous research. Those roles include spouse or partner, parent and employee. (Kenney, 2000; Sahibzada et al., 2005 and Verbrugge, 1987). Additional roles cited by participants in this study were those of daughter and student. Although responses for daughter (8%) and student (11%) are low, this is, in part, due to the fact that these responses were not listed on the questionnaire, but were written in as "Other" by the participants.

## Research Question 1

The first research question established if any differences existed between the levels of role balance, role overload and ways of coping of subjects by employment group. Data were analyzed for the entire sample, those with children under the age of 18 and those with none.

According Holahan and Gilbert (1979), women who have a high commitment to their professional careers, experience more role overload and conflict than "working mothers". In alignment with this finding, the professional and faculty category would have a higher overload and less balance than those in the classified category. However, this was not supported by the data. Women in all three groups scored high on role overload, role balance, and similarly on the Ways of Coping measures.

Work commitment has also been found to decrease role overload. Women with a high commitment to both work and family roles often have less stress (O'Neil & Green, 1994; Elman & Gilbert, 1984). Women across employment groups did not differ on scores for role balance or role overload, and as previously mentioned, women had moderately high levels of role balance and role overload. Although this study did not include a measure of career commitment, some basic assumptions were made about subjects based on employment group. None of the findings were significant for this question and do not support previous research that has demonstrated stress inducing and stress mitigating effects of career commitment.

Research has also demonstrated that balanced roles can reduce role overload (Amatea & Fong, Marks & MacDermid, 1996, Stuart & Garrison, 2002). For the entire sample, results for role balance and role overload for women in each employment category were moderately high, indicating high levels of role balance and role overload. This finding is interesting in comparison to previous research using the same measures (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) as the women in this sample appear to be experiencing high levels of balance and overload simultaneously. While women faculty had the highest role balance and the highest levels of role overload, there was no significant differences

between them and the other two groups of women. Women in each employment group, in the entire sample, women with children under 18 and those with none, scored within less than three points of one another on role balance and role overload.

When looking at just those subjects with at least one child under the age of 18, the classified employees had the highest levels of role balance and the highest levels of role overload. Although not significant, this finding is interesting as high levels on both scales was not anticipated. Similar to the entire sample, those with at least one child under 18, scored within less than three points of one another on role balance and role overload. Among, those with no children under the age of 18, the faculty employees had the highest role balance and the classified staff had the highest role overload scores. This finding suggests that perhaps, the classified staff, because they have less flexibility than the faculty, have higher overload.

For the entire sample and the two sub-groups, the two ways of coping that were most utilized by subjects were self-controlling (emotion-focused coping) and planful problem-solving (problem-focused coping). Self-controlling is defined by efforts to regulate feelings and actions (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Examples of this type of coping are internal efforts such as keeping feelings from interfering or keep others from knowing what is occurring. Planful problem-solving includes efforts to alter the situation with an analytic approach (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Examples of this type of coping includes increased efforts, plans of action, focus on the next step or coming up with alternatives. None of the results were significant for employment group and coping.

Activities similar to those of planful problem-solving were utilized by mothers in previous studies. For example, in response to high role demands, mothers worked as

efficiently as possible and set priority to activities (DeMeis & Perkins, 1996). Other studies also support that women found these increased efforts and behaviors to be effective (Elman & Gilbert, 1984; Gilbert, Holahan & Manning, 1981; Hall, 1979; Kenney, 2000).

Although the authors of the Ways of Coping assert that no type of coping is viewed as unhealthy (Folkman et al, 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), strategies have been identified by researchers in the past including alcohol or drug use, overeating or passive-aggressive behavior that are viewed as unhealthy (Chasteen & Kissman, 2000; Kenney, 2000). These activities are listed as choices for escape-avoidance. For the entire sample, subjects had a low response to these items.

## Research Question 2

The second research question examined the multiple relationship between subjects' age, education, and income and their level of role balance, role overload and ways of coping. This question also looked at any additional variance in role balance, role overload and ways of coping that could be explained by the number of hours spent working. For this research question the entire sample (n=105) and the first sub-group (n=68) were examined.

The first model looked at age of subjects, education and income. It was important to control for these variables to determine if the other two variables had any influence. For women with children under 18, subjects' age, education and income explained a small portion of scores in role balance and age was significant for role balance for the first model. This findings is in alignment with Kenney's (2000) finding that older

women had less stress than middle-aged or younger women. Kenney (2000) attributed this to the fact that as women age, they develop healthier habits to be able to manage stress and overload more effectively. For the entire sample, age was also significant for explaining variance for scores on confrontive coping. This type of coping includes confronting the problem head on, expressing feelings of frustration or anger or trying to get someone to change their mind.

Education of subjects was not significant for balance or overload, but was significant for self-controlling coping for women with children under 18. Education was almost significant for the entire sample and was significant for women with children under 18 for escape-avoidance. It is important to refer back to research question one and the fact that many of the items of escape-avoidance have been identified as unhealthy (Chasteen & Kissman, 2000; Kenney, 2000). Women in the higher education groups, including those with Doctorates, Master's degrees and those who had graduated college, had lower scores on escape-avoidance than those in the other education groups including, those who had a high school diploma or GED, some college or an associates degree. These results demonstrate that subjects education plays a role in how much this coping factor is utilized.

The second model examined role balance, role overload and coping in terms of average hours worked per week. Long hours spent working and a heavy workload add to the stress that employed mothers experience (DeMeis & Perkins, 1996; Long Dilworth, 2004; Reifman et al, 1991; Scharlach, 2001). The demands of these hours often makes it difficult to balance work and family successfully (Tingey & Kiger, 1996). For the entire sample and those with children under 18, hours worked per week was significant for

explaining variance in role balance scores. For the entire sample, this percentage was 8. For women with children under 18, this percentage was 22. This finding supports previous research, demonstrating that hours spent at work can adversely effect role balance.

For women with children under 18, average hours worked per week was also found to be significant for role overload, explaining over 9% of variance in subjects' scores. Again, this result demonstrates that the number of hours a mother spends working does determine her levels of role overload.

## Research Question 3

The third research question, asked whether number of children can explain variance in role balance, role overload and ways of coping. Past research has shown that employed mothers with young children experience high levels of overload and stress (Galinsky & Stein, 1990; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Kenney, 2000; Scharlach, 2001). In addition, it has also been demonstrated that employed mothers, compared to stay-at-home mothers, have more overload (Owen & Cox, 1991). For this question, number of children was significant for explaining 5.2% of variance in role balance scores only for women with children under 18. This finding supports previous research in that, those with at least one child under the age of 18, have more struggles balancing work and family on a daily basis than the entire sample.

## Research Question 4

The final research question aimed to collect information about workplace changes that women felt were important. This portion asked women to respond to seven items relating to workplace policies. Previous findings have shown that family-friendly policies related to child care, flexible time and schedules, training programs, employee assistance programs, counseling, fitness programs and elder care programs (Galinsky & Stein, 1990; Hughes & Galinksy, 1988).

The most important items were improving pay scales, paid leave, flexible schedules and equal opportunity. Over 50% of the women in this sample felt that flexible hours was very important.

This supports previous findings. Flexible time and schedules are offered in many forms to meet the needs of employees, including job sharing and benefits for part-time employees (Crouter, 1984; Galinksy & Stein, 1990). One classified respondent claimed that the university could "provide more options for retirement and health insurance benefits for those who accept part time positions."

The second question asked if information about child care was an important offering of an employer. Surprisingly, as this was one of the most frequently cited concerns for women in other studies (Crouter, 1984; Galinksy & Stein, 1990; Hughes & Galinsky, 1988; Long Dilworth, 2004; Tingey & Kiger, 1996; Scharlach, 2001). This question prompted responses in the low and mid ranges suggesting that either women do not need such a service, or perhaps are satisfied with options their employer already provides.

The third question inquired about equal opportunity. This question was rated very highly among all three employment groups. This finding is not surprising as equal opportunity policies directly effect female employees at any institution.

The fourth question asked if paid leave was important, this question was felt to be very important by more than half of the women in the sample. In previous research, paid leave for maternity, paternity and elder care were cited as being important in helping employees meet the demands between work and family (Crouter, 1984; Galinsky & Stein, 1990). One professional subject offered this response, "I enjoy my job a great deal but am dismayed that the university has no paid maternity leave."

The fifth question inquired as to how important paid training was. Although this question elicited mostly evenly distributed responses across the range, this could be due to the fact that paid training and tuition reimbursement are a part of the benefits package for University of Maine employees.

The sixth question asked subjects if increased employee responsibility was important. This question, like the previous, had an even distribution of scores across the range and again, perhaps this is either not very important to subjects, or is an advantage that they already have.

The seventh question asked subjects if improving pay scales were important. Most of the sample felt that this was very important. One classified subject stated that there needed to be "more opportunity for pay to reflect work accomplished (between current positions, I do some AAII work but receive AAI pay)."

## Limitations

Although this research yielded many significant results, there were several limitations that could have hindered the findings. The major limitation of this study was the vagueness of who was to respond. Although the questionnaire asked that all women who were mothers respond, it became clear through several email inquires from subjects, that perhaps, many women who were mothers but had no children in the home did not respond. In addition, this study would have been more direct if only those women with children under the age of 18 in the home were asked to respond. The sample was also mostly homogenous in terms of race and ethnicity. This limits any interpretations or inferences that can be made from some of the past research that may contain more heterogeneous populations.

Another limitation of this research was the length of the questionnaire. Specifically, the Ways of Coping questionnaire is extremely long and added to the overall length of the survey. The length may have discouraged subjects from replying and may have led to subjects to finish questionnaire quickly or not complete the ways of coping at all. Although there is no way of knowing how many of the 600 surveyed female employees were actually mothers, the response rate is fairly low. Had the questionnaire been more concise, the response rate may have been higher.

Additionally, the questionnaire did not directly measure career commitment, rather assumptions were made about employment category and career commitment. A one-item rating of career commitment would have been all that was necessary to measure career commitment and would have limited any assumptions that were made about women in the three employment groups.

In terms of data analysis, using a multiple ordinary least squares regression with ordered entry with only 68 subjects does limit the reliability of results for mothers with children under 18.

## Implications

Regardless of the limitations previously mentioned, this research provides numerous insights into the world of employed mothers, role balance, role overload and coping. Mothers in this study had moderate levels of role balance and role overload. These levels may appear different in contrast with different groups. Future research that included men in the study and/or non-employed mothers would create interesting comparisons between levels of balance and overload. In addition, other variables need to be examined to determine if they play a role in levels of role balance and role overload. These factors include, but are not limited to, number of role juggling incidents per day as well as number of daily hassles per day and perceived levels of spousal and peer support.

The results from responses to Working Women Count demonstrate that employed mothers have many concerns in the workplace. Further investigation needs to be conducted into other areas that women feel their employer could improve balance, lessen overload and use effective coping to deal with stress. A follow-up study should be conducted to include interview data with more open-ended responses from employed mothers. This type of response would enlighten areas that were not touched on in the current questionnaire and help employers find ways to improve their workplace, making family-friendly changes and improvements on various levels.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

**1. Age_____**

**PLEASE CIRCLE ONE IN EACH CATEGORY:**

2. Ethnic Background
a. Asian
b. Black or African American
c. Caucasian
d. Hawaiian/Pacific Islands
e. Hispanic
f. American Native/Alaskan Native
g. Other

3. Marital Status
a. Single
b. Married
c. Living together
d. Separated
e. Divorced
f. Widowed

4. Education Level
a. Some high school
b. High school/GED
c. Some College
d. Associate Degree
e. College Graduate
f. Some Graduate school
g. Masters Degree
h. Doctorate

5. What is your Annual Household Income Before Taxes $ _____

6. How many hours on average do you work per week?_____

7. Employment Status (Please Circle one)
a. Professional
b. Faculty
c. Classified

8. Please circle the roles you identify with.
a. Spouse/Partner
b. Parent
c. Employee
e.Other_____

9. How many children do you have?_____
10. Please list their ages_____

Here's a list of changes that might provide you with a better workplace. Please let us know how important each item is to you by rating each one from 0 (not important to you) to 10 (very important to you). You may use any number more than once.
11. __ More flexible work hours
12. __ Information about or support for child or elder care
13. __ Insuring equal opportunity in the workplace
14. __ Paid leave to care for newborns or seriously ill relatives
15. __ On-the-job training opportunities to learn new skills
16. __ Giving employees more responsibility for how they do their jobs
17. __ Improving pay scales
18. __Other_____

**Here are some questions relating to the many different roles in your life. Please rate each question from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree by circling the corresponding number.**

**Please answer these questions as honestly and accurately as possible.**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Not Sure | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

19. I am pretty good at keeping different parts of my life in balance; I generally don't let things slide.
**1 2 3 4 5**

20. Nowadays I seem to enjoy every part of my life equally well.
**1 2 3 4 5**

21. Work time, couple time, friend time, family time, leisure time- I find satisfaction in everything I do.
**1 2 3 4 5**

22. I try to put a lot of myself into everything I do.
**1 2 3 4 5**

23.I have things to do which I don't really have the time and energy for.
**1 2 3 4 5**

24. There are too many demands on my time.
**1 2 3 4 5**

25. I need more hours in the day to do all the things which are expected of me.
**1 2 3 4 5**

26. I can't ever seem to get caught up.
**1 2 3 4 5**

27. I don't ever seem to have any time for myself.
**1 2 3 4 5**

28. There are times when I cannot meet everyone's' expectations.
**1 2 3 4 5**

29. Sometimes I feel as if there are not enough hours in the day.
**1 2 3 4 5**

30. Many times I have to cancel commitments.
**1 2 3 4 5**

31. I seem to have to overextend myself in order to be able to finish everything I have to do.
**1 2 3 4 5**

32. I seem to have more commitments to overcome than some other women I know.
**1 2 3 4 5**

33. I find myself having to prepare priority lists (lists which tell me which things I should do first) to get done all the things I have to do. Otherwise I forget.
**1 2 3 4 5**

34. I feel I have to do things hastily and maybe less carefully in order to get everything done.
**1 2 3 4 5**

35. I just can't find the energy in me to do all the things expected of me.
**1 2 3 4 5**

**Instructions:** To respond to the statements in this questionnaire, you must have a **specific stressful situation** in which you experienced a conflict due to your **multiple roles** in mind. Take a few moments and think about the most stressful situation that you have experienced in the **past week**. By "stressful" we mean a situation that was difficult or troubling for you, either because you felt distressed about what happened, or because you had to use considerable effort to deal with the situation. The situation may have involved your family, your job, your friends, or something else important to you. Before responding to the statements, think about the details of

this stressful situation, such as where it happened, who was involved, how you acted, and why it was important to you. While you may still be involved in the situation, or it could have already happened, it should be the most stressful situation that you experienced during the week. As you respond to each of the statements, please keep this stressful situation in mind. Read each statement carefully and indicate by filling in the number in front of each question, to what extent you used it in the situation. Please respond by circling the number that corresponds to each item.

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Does not apply or not used | Used somewhat | Used quite a bit | Used a great deal |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 36. I just concentrated on what I had to do next—the next step. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 37. I tried to analyze the problem in order to understand it better. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 38. I turned to work or another activity to take my mind off things. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 39. I felt that time would make a difference—the only thing was to wait. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 40. I bargained or compromised to get something positive from the situation. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 41. I did something that I didn't think would work, but at least I was doing something. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 42. I tried to get the person responsible to change his or her mind. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 43. I talked to someone to find out more about the situation. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 44.. I criticized or lectured myself. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 45. I tried not to burn my bridges, but leave things open somewhat. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 46. I hoped for a miracle. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 47. I went along with fate; sometimes I just have bad luck. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 48. I went on as if nothing had happened. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 49. I tried to keep my feelings to myself. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 50. I looked for the silver lining, so to speak; I tried to look on the bright side of things. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 51. I slept more than usual. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 52. I expressed anger to the person(s) who caused the problem. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 53. I accepted sympathy and understanding from someone. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 54. I told myself things that helped me feel better. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 55. I was inspired to do something creative about the problem. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 56. I tried to forget the whole thing. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 57. I got professional help. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 58. I changed or grew as a person. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 59. I waited to see what would happen before doing anything. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 60. I apologized or did something to make up. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 61. I made a plan of action and followed it. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 62. I accepted the next best thing to what I wanted. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 63. I let my feelings out somehow. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 64. I realized that I had brought the problem on myself. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |

| 0<br>Does not apply<br>or not used | 1<br>Used<br>somewhat | 2<br>Used quite<br>a bit | 3<br>Used a<br>great deal |
|---|---|---|---|

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 65. | I came out of the experience better than when I went in. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 66. | I talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 67. | I tried to get away from it for a while by resting or taking a vacation. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 68. | I tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs, or medications, etc. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 69. | I took a big chance or did something very risky to solve the problem. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 70. | I tried not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 71. | I found new faith. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 72. | I maintained my pride and kept a stiff upper lip. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 73. | I rediscovered what is important in life. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 74. | I changed something so things would turn out all right. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 75. | I generally avoided being with people. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 76. | I didn't let it get to me; I refused to think too much about it. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 77. | I asked advice from a relative or friend I respected. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 78. | I kept others from knowing how bad things were. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 79. | I made light of the situation; I refused to get too serious about it. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 80. | I talked to someone about how I was feeling. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 81. | I stood my ground and fought for what I wanted. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 82. | I took it out on other people. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 83. | I drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 84. | I knew what had to be done, so I doubled my efforts to make things work. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 85. | I refused to believe that it had happened. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 86. | I promised myself that things would be different next time. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 87. | I came up with a couple of different solutions to the problem. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 88. | I accepted the situation, since nothing could be done. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 89. | I tried to keep my feelings about the problem from interfering with other things. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 90. | I wished that I could change what had happened or how I felt. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 91. | I changed something about myself. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 92. | I daydreamed or imagined a better time or place than the one I was in. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 93. | I wished that I could change what had happened or how I felt. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 94. | I had fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 95. | I prayed. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 96. | I prepared myself for the worst. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 97. | I went over in my mind what I would say or do. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 98. | I thought about how a person I admire would handle this situation and used that as a model. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 99. | I tried to see things from the other person's point of view. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| 100. | I reminded myself how much worse things could be. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 101. | I jogged or exercised. | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** |

**APPENDIX B: RECRUITING LETTER**

***IF YOU ARE NOT A MOTHER, PLEASE DISCARD THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!!***

**EMPLOYED MOTHERS : UNDERSTANDING ROLE BALANCE, ROLE OVERLOAD AND WAYS OF COPING**

My name is Willow McVeigh, I am a graduate student in the Human Development program here at UMaine. I would greatly appreciate if you took a few moments to respond to this questionnaire for my Masters Thesis. I truly understand the value of your time and hope that you will find participation in this study helpful and meaningful.

The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes. In addition, your response will be completely confidential. The additional information in this packet includes a consent form, questionnaire and return card.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about this research. You may reach me at (207) 899-9155 or on first class at willow.mcveigh@umit.maine.edu. You may also contact my advisor Dr. Sandra Caron at (207) 581-3138 or on first class at sandra.caron@umit.maine.edu.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Willow McVeigh

## APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

Thank you for considering participation in this study. This research is being conducted by Willow McVeigh, a graduate student in the Human Development program at the University of Maine under the guidance of Dr. Sandra Caron, a professor in the Human Development program also at the University of Maine. The purpose of this research is to examine the multiple roles that working mothers identify with, any overload they experience in attempting to meet these demands as well as coping skills they utilize to ease stress.

**What will you be asked to do?** Upon deciding to participate, you may begin to take the questionnaire which should take approximately 20 minutes. Questions will cover basic demographic information, role balance, role overload and coping strategies. Please complete this questionnaire by February 28, 2006. When you submit your questionnaire, please submit the return postcard separately. This card will let us know that you have completed a questionnaire and will keep you from receiving any follow-up mailings.

**Risks.** With the exception of your time and any inconvenience, the only risk that you may experience due to participation will be emotional. Although there are no serious risks expected, you may contact the UMaine Counseling Center during regular business hours (207) 581-1392 or visit the center at 125 Cutler Health Center. You may also contact the after hours crisis line at (207) 581- 4020.

**Benefits.** Hopefully this research will help you have a greater awareness of your multiple roles and how these roles affect your daily life. Despite any direct benefit to you, this research will help us to identify possible ways to help working mothers cope with their role demands and improve workplace policy.

**Confidentiality.** To insure your anonymity, do not put your name or any identifying information on the questionnaire. Please also be assured that when you respond to this questionnaire, no identifying information will be available and your responses will be completely anonymous. Completed questionnaires will be kept securely in a locked cabinet where only the investigators will have access and will be destroyed once the research is complete.

**Voluntary.** Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to take part, you may stop at any time or skip questions that make you uncomfortable.

**Contact Information.** If you have any questions, you may reach me at (207) 899-9155 or on first class at willow.mcveigh@umit.maine.edu. You may also contact my advisor Sandra Caron at (207) 581-3138 or at sandy.caron@umit.maine.edu. If you have any questions about the rights of research participants, please contact Gayle Anderson, Assistant to the University of Maine's Protection of Human Subjects Review Board at (207) 581-1498 or at gayle.anderson@umit.maine.edu. Thank you!

**Consent.** Completion and submission of the questionnaire implies your understanding of the above information and consent to participate in this research.

**APPENDIX D: RETURN POSTCARD**

**I have completed and submitted the questionnaire.**

**Name_____**

**To: Sandy Caron**
**C/O Willow McVeigh**
**5749 Merrill Hall**
**Room 220**

## BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Willow McVeigh was born in 1979 in Winterport, Maine to Sarah and John McVeigh. Willow attended Hampden Academy and graduated in 1998. Upon graduating, Willow attended the University of Farmington for two years and graduated from the University of Vermont in 2002 with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. After graduating in 2002 and returning to Maine, Willow decided to attend graduate school at the University of Maine. While attending graduate school, Willow spent much of her time volunteering for local non-profit organizations in the Bangor area. Willow is a candidate for the Master of Science degree in Human Development from the University of Maine in May, 2006.