UNIVERSITY OF THE CUMBERLANDS

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Dissertation of

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The Meaning of Role Strain:

Voices of Parents in Doctoral Counselor Education and Supervision Programs

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ABSTRACT

Balancing multiple roles can lead to role strain, including role confusion, role conflict, role overload, and role contagion. In the counselor education and supervision (CES) profession, recognized roles include counselor, educator, supervisor, leader, advocate, researcher, and scholar. In a doctoral CES training program, the minimum additional roles of student and intern increase individuals' role identities. These academic and professional roles compound family domain roles, gender roles, and other social roles. Although existing research within CES has addressed mothering and graduate education, and graduate students' experiences with multiple roles and relationships, no CES publications have studied the role-strain experiences of doctoral student-parents from CACREP-accredited CES programs. This study used Goode's theory of role strain, interpretive phenomenological inquiry, and photovoice data collection and analysis methods to explore the role-strain experiences of nine doctoral student-parents from CACREP-accredited CES programs. Results of the study support the role-strain depletion and enrichment hypotheses, indicating that role strain has both adverse and beneficial meaning. Factors influencing role strain include role management skills, parenting roles and responsibilities, social and cultural influences, relationships, support, self-care, and COVID-19. Implications of the study suggest ways for students, counselor-educators, administrators, and policymakers to collaborate on advocacy and change for doctoral student-parents. With the support of future research, these implications may assist consumers with ways to minimize role-strain burden, prevent impairment and attrition, and increase CES doctoral student-parents' coping, self-care, and wellness.

Keywords: Role strain, counselor education and supervision (CES), doctoral students, parents, phenomenology, photovoice

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the enduring support of my Chair and committee, University of the Cumberlands' faculty and staff, the research participants, professional and personal mentors and colleagues, and my family.

I want to thank my Chair, Dr. Adrienne Baggs, and committee members Dr. Anita Pool and Dr. Tammy Hatfield, for your mentoring, encouragement, and insightful feedback. Your investment in me as your student pushed me to mature personally and professionally by sharpening my thinking and elevating my work. My experiences entering motherhood as a doctoral counselor education and supervision (CES) student were heard, understood, acknowledged, and handled sensitively and compassionately. My doubts and fears of facing academic barriers as a doctoral student-parent were alleviated by your validation and trust in my capabilities and strengths. I am forever grateful to have received your support, been your student, and learned from you.

The University of the Cumberlands' Department of Counseling Dean, faculty, and staff should also be acknowledged. All faculty and staff contributed to my growth and professional development. In particular, Dr. Lyons's leadership created an academic culture of professionalism, acceptance, and creativity that supported my professional identities, academic and career goals. Dr. Tiffany Darby, my previous advisor and professor, normalized parenthood in CES and modeled the value and importance of being a professional and mother. The support you provided during my pregnancy and post-partum was meaningful and inspiring; I hope to pay forward your wisdom on balancing parenthood and professional roles as a counselor-educator and supervisor.

I want to thank the research participants who were committed to the process, generous with their time, honest about lived experiences, and trusting of the process. Your narratives and photographs built this study and advanced the literature on parenthood in graduate education, specifically CES. With your voices heard and understood, the need for advocacy and change in the culture of academia for student-parents becomes more evident and palpable. I am confident that your contributions will validate doctoral students in CACREP-accredited CES programs and inspire consumers to increase support for this population.

My professional acknowledgments would not be completed without thanking my mentors and colleagues. Dr. Annette Vaccaro, Dr. Marie Wilson, and Bonnie Berkowitz, MA, ATR-BC, ATCS have mentored me in counseling and art therapy since 2008. These words are not enough to describe how much you have contributed to my growth and development over the years. My doctoral studies began with your encouragement, and your support and guidance along the way contributed to my success and perseverance. Thank you for believing in me.

To the Dream Team, my colleagues, peers, and friends Traci Bitondo, MA, LPC, ATR-BC, ACS, ATCS, and Shawn Graham, MA, LCPC/CADC, I would not have survived my doctoral studies or dissertation without you. Your colleagueship and friendship provided comfort and strength during challenging times. Although our studies were remote, I never felt isolated or alone in the process because of your support. I am thankful to have shared this doctoral journey with you, walking alongside each other step by step.

Last but perhaps most important, I would like to acknowledge my family's role in completing my doctoral studies and dissertation. To my husband Greg, thank you for supporting me with every step of my doctoral study journey. Through this process, I have learned how valuable a supportive partner is to the doctoral student experience. My success would not have been possible without your love, encouragement, sacrifice, and belief in my ability to persevere. To my human children, Lachie and Reggie, and my fur-baby, Darla, you inspired this dissertation topic and motivated me to accomplish it. To my mother, father, brother (Lewis), sister (Shannon), late fur-brother (Digger), and fur-brother (Boomer) thank you for shaping who I am today and providing me with the tools that I needed to choose the right direction. As a family, you have provided me with wisdom, a sympathetic ear, stimulating discussions, and happy distractions. In particular, Greg, Mum, and Shannon thank you for selflessly helping with childcare and creating a space for me to achieve this dissertation.

DEDICATION

"Dant Vulnera Vitam" wounds give life. This motto adorns my family crest,

accompanied by the image of a pelican vulning itself to provide for its children. For many

years, my family has been the pelican and I, the offspring. My family has made endless

sacrifices to get me where I am today, including completing my dissertation. To my

family, for everything you sacrificed to help me achieve my dreams, I dedicate this

dissertation to you. Your wounds gave me life.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Parenthood marks a pivotal role achievement for many adults; however, the role of parent frequently results in the experience of role strain, especially when combined with academic and work roles (Allen, 2001; Burden, 1986; Cowan & Cowan, 1988; Home, 1997; Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985; Newman, 2000; Newman & Newman, 2018; Voydanoff, 2005). More than any other social role, the parent role is highly time-consuming, with first-time parents often underestimating the time demands of infants and toddlers (Newman & Newman, 2018). In this context, researchers have broadly explored the experiences of parenthood during graduate education (Andersson, 2019; Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009; Moyer et al., 1999). Further, researchers have studied parenthood experiences explicitly within the fields of medicine (Jarvie & Levy, 2019; Kin et al., 2018; Krause et al., 2017; Mwakyanjala et al., 2019; Stack et al., 2019; Westrick, 2016), science (Bascom-Slack, 2011; Stenzel, 2019), and social work (Wladkowski & Mirick, 2020). However, in the field of counselor education and supervision (CES), limited research exists on graduate student-parents' experiences, and there is no research on the experience of role strain for CES parents.

Supported by an overview of relevant literature, this study highlights role strain as a personal concern for CES student-parents. Gaps in the existing literature supported the need for the study and clarified the study's purpose. This chapter defines the study's research questions, assumptions, delimitations, and essential terms. Finally, a researcher positionality statement illuminates the lens through which the study was approached, including an examination of the role of biases in methodological decision making.

Statement of the Problem

In the mid- to late 2000s, approximately one quarter of students enrolled in doctoral programs had dependent children (Mason, 2006, as cited in Springer et al., 2009), with women accounting for approximately 7% to 8% of this population (Golde & Dore, 2001; Kulp, 2016, 2019; Mason et al., 2009; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020). Although this number may not seem significant based on the total number of doctoral students nationwide, it is relevant for CES programs because 70% to 75% of the counseling profession is female (Evans, 2010; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2017). Further, with women completing their doctoral degrees at the average age of 33, their time in graduate school coincides with their childbearing years (Hoffer et al., 2006; Mason, 2009). In fact, Kuperberg (2009) estimated that nearly half of the 7% to 8% of women doctoral students who were mothers would give birth while enrolled in graduate studies.

For all doctoral students, academic stress can contribute to an unhealthy work–life balance (Golde, 2005; Schmidt & Hansson, 2018), mental stress and fatigue (Appel & Dahlgren, 2003; Schmidt & Hansson, 2018), and burnout (Nagy et al., 2019; Swords & Ellis, 2017). Attrition rates of up to 50% for face-to-face programs and 50% to 70% for online doctoral programs have occurred, depending on professional specialty (Gardner, 2008; Lovitts & Nelson, 2000; McBain, 2019; Rigler et al., 2017; Schmidt & Hansson, 2018). Underrepresented populations are at a higher risk of attrition from doctoral studies (McBain, 2019), and student-mothers constitute the highest at-risk group in the American academe (Lynch, 2008; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2007). For graduate student-mothers, attrition occurs at a higher rate because of the added strain of

balancing parent and student roles (Carter et al., 2013; Lynch, 2008; Rindfuss et al.,

1980). Documented personal concerns that result from this strain include gender and

baby penalties; perceived stigma and discrimination; time-management struggles;

delayed onset of goal achievement; lack of programmatic support and resources;

physical, mental, and emotional concerns; and role strain (Andersson, 2019; Holm et al.,

2015; Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009; Moyer et al., 1999; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal

et al., 2014). Single mothers who engage in multiple-role experiences have the highest

perceived role-strain stress, coupled with diminished life satisfaction (Sumra & Schillaci,

2015). Because of increased stress levels associated with multiple-role engagement,

single mothers may be at risk for adverse health outcomes such as coronary heart disease

and depression (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015).

Considering these personal concerns, research experts have advised against

starting a family while in graduate school (Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006; Lynch, 2008;

Mason et al., 2013; Morrison et al., 2011; Sallee, 2011; Wolfinger et al., 2008, 2009);

however, delaying fertility may only exacerbate graduate students' personal concerns.

Delaying parenthood, even for students whose partner carries the child, can lead to lower

overall fertility (Mason & Goulden, 2004; Trepal et al., 2014), missed opportunities for

children (Kuperberg, 2009), personal regret (Williams, 2004), and future health risks for

mother and child if pregnancy is achieved at a later age (Thompson, 2002; Oakley et al.,

2016). Further, delaying parenthood creates missed opportunities for graduate students,

including developing new skills and maturity, changing worldviews, and forming broader

social networks and connections (Silva & Pugh, 2010). In addition, missed

opportunities—for example, physical, cognitive, and emotional absence from families

while fulfilling simultaneous roles—can generate intense feelings of guilt for graduate

students (Trepal et al., 2014). Stress within roles, simultaneous incompatible role

demands without adequate resources to meet expectations, and the preoccupation with

one role while performing another are characteristics of the role-strain experience. The

study's overarching problem is that role strain among CES student-parents leads to

multiple personal concerns. The specific problem addressed in this study was the lack of

knowledge about CES student-parents lived experiences with role strain.

Overview of the Literature

Within the field of counselor education and supervision (CES), the intersecting

role experiences of student and parent have been studied from only three limited

perspectives: (a) counselor-educator mothers navigating the professional pipeline

(Alexander-Albritton & Hill, 2015; Hermann et al., 2014; Neale-McFall et al., 2018;

Stinchfield & Trepal, 2010; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012), (b) mothers navigating their

doctoral studies (Holm et al., 2015; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014), and

(c) in the context of the mentoring relationships between these two groups (Bruce, 1995;

Solomon & Barden, 2016). Outcomes from the literature on graduate student-mothers

have revealed many personal concerns for doctoral students, including gender and baby

penalties; perceived stigma and discrimination; time-management struggles; delayed

onset of goal achievement; lack of programmatic support and resources; physical, mental,

and emotional concerns; and role strain (Andersson, 2019; Holm et al., 2015; Kulp, 2016;

Kuperberg, 2009; Moyer et al., 1999; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014).

Role strain is the "felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations" (Goode, 1960,

p. 483) arising from conflicts within the mind, body, and spirit when negotiating and

balancing role demands. Role strain is an affective, feeling state in which individuals

experience depleted emotional resources and the possibility of anxiety, guilt, burden,

fatigue, tension, frustration, and exhaustion (Creary & Gordon, 2016; Goode, 1960;

Lengacher, 1993). Although role strain is considered a universal and naturally occurring

phenomenon, the experience of role strain is unique to each individual—that is, the role

obligations people face relate to the specific combinations of their assumed roles (Goode,

1960, 1973). Role-strain experiences are influenced by personal history, including an

individual's "baggage of norms," previous experience with rewards, social philosophy,

and unique cultural pressures (Goode, 1973, p. 99).

The degree of felt role-strain stress depends on an individual's coping ability

(Goode, 1960). Success in negotiating or bargaining role obligations relies upon the

strength of an individual's ego, self-esteem, resources, and judgment in decision making

(Goode, 1960). Researchers examining the effects of role strain on individuals have

proposed two theoretical experiences: the depletion hypothesis, which leads to the

deleterious effects of role strain, and the enrichment hypothesis, which results in

advantageous effects of role strain (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Simon, 1992; Sumra &

Schillaci, 2015).

Studying role strain in the context of parenting has clarified culturally influenced

parent roles—for example, in addition to being mothers, today's mothers are expected to

fulfill the roles of homemaker, expert, caretaker, and nurturer (Chira, 1998; Glenn, 1994;

Hays, 1996; Hochschild & Machung 1989, 2012; Lynch, 2008; McMahon, 1995; Oakley,

1979; O'Reilly, 2004; Tam, 2019). Similarly, today's fathers are expected to assume the

additional roles of provider, mentor, role model, teacher, protector, disciplinarian, and

authoritarian (Canfield, 1996; Elmore, 2001; Forste et al., 2009; Halford. 2006; Kimmel,

1997; McDowell & Day, 1991; Marsiglio et al., 2000; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Phillips,

1992; Yeung et al., 2001). When people experience a role—for example, the role of

mother or father—as internally inconsistent with other roles, such as student and

employee, their attempts to conform to the cultural norm can result in conflict, inadequate

performance of separate roles, and psychological distress (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Cohen

& Janicki-Deverts, 2012; Home, 1998; Pleck, 1981, 1995; Rothbard, 2001; Silverstein et

al., 2002; Tiedje et al., 1990).

Dickens et al. (2016) examined CES doctoral students' experiences with multiple

roles and relationships. Although Dickens et al. did not explore the role of parenting in

relationship to experiences with multiple roles and relationships, results of Dickens et al.

support both the depletion and enrichment hypotheses of role strain: CES students

experience role confusion, role conflict, and role strain when balancing two or more roles

associated with their doctoral programs—yet this experience can be "transformational"

(Dickens et al., 2016, p. 243). Although no previous literature has focused on the role-

strain experiences of CES parents, Holm et al. (2015), Pierce and Herlihy (2013), and

Trepal et al. (2014) conducted phenomenological studies on the experiences of mothers

in doctoral CES programs. Findings consistent with the depletion hypothesis have

revealed that CES student-mothers struggle to balance multiple roles, experience

tremendous guilt in fulfilling multiple roles, and frequently sacrifice their wellness to

maintain simultaneous roles (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014). Findings

consistent with the enrichment hypothesis have revealed that CES student-mothers can

successfully integrate and balance multiple role identities (Holm et al., 2015) and experience rewards in pursuing their degrees while parenting (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013).

In their recommendations for future research, Holm et al. (2015), Pierce and Herlihy (2013), and Trepal et al. (2014) identified a need for future studies to explore the experience of parenting within CES doctoral programs among a more diverse sample—for example, gathering the experiences of fathers, single parents, and parents from minority populations, including queer parents. Regarding CES student-parents' experiences, a need was identified for research to address the lack of diversity, the personal concern of role strain, the competing role-strain hypotheses, and the impact of role strain on academic performance. Understanding the meaning of role strain for CES students with varied intersectional identities could give a voice to the student experience and help educators tailor interventions to minimize the impact of role strain on program performance.

Need for the Study

Existing literature has extensively documented the deleterious effects of role strain, revealing a high likelihood that these effects will harm students' program performance. Role-strain effects that can negatively influence students' performance include psychological distress; emotional strain; power differential, boundary, and ethical issues (Dickens et al., 2016, p. 245); and decreased productivity and engagement (Holmes et al., 2012; Solomon & Barden, 2016; Sorcinelli, 1994). Despite the connection between role strain and parenting and the effects of role strain on program performance, researchers have not yet explored CES student-parents' role-strain experiences. Studying

CES student-parents' experiences could help counselor-educators understand the meaning of role strain for individual students.

Further, several studies have explored graduate student-mothers' experiences in doctoral counselor education (Holm et al., 2015; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014); however, no publications have intentionally included the parenthood experiences of CES fathers, single parents, or parent identities such as minority parents, queer parents, or disabled parents. Literature has often separated the parenting role into gendered divisions, thereby excluding the role-strain challenges for alternative intersectional parent identities such as same-sex or single parents (Cloughessy et al., 2019; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2011). The absence of counselor education literature incorporating a diverse sample of CES student-parents has led to an incomplete understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Holm et al., 2015; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014).

In addition, the worldwide coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has tremendously affected today's CES student-parents' lived experiences. COVID-19 is the worst global health crisis in the past 75 years, "one that is killing people, spreading human suffering, and upending people's lives" (United Nations, n.d., para. 1). As of November 22, 2020, the United States has seen 11,789,012 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 252,460 deaths reported to the World Health Organization (WHO; 2020a). Worldwide, there have been 57,882,183 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 1,377,395 deaths reported to the WHO (2020b). To understand the role strain of today's CES student-parents, it is essential to consider the impact of COVID-19 on work–family obligations.

Today's CES student-parents' role obligations are at an all-time high because of widespread illness and many premature deaths. COVID-19 closed the doors of schools, daycare facilities, and on-site work environments, leaving parents with the sole responsibility of childcare, homeschooling, and entertainment amid working and studying from home (Atabakhsh, 2020; Chirumbolo et al., 2020; Cluver et al., 2020; Garbe et al., 2020; Harvey, 2020; Roos et al., 2021). Under the stress of COVID-19, myriad roles may accumulate for CES student-parents, including COVID-19 specific roles (teacher, playmate), parent roles (homemaker, expert, caretaker, nurturer, provider, mentor, role model, protector, disciplinarian, and authoritarian), CES professional roles (counselor, educator, supervisor, leader, advocate, researcher, and scholar), academic roles (student, intern, graduate assistant), other family-domain roles (spouse, daughter, sister), gender roles, and employment roles. As these roles accumulate, role overload, role conflict, role contagion, and role strain are inevitable.

Because it is an ethical and educational responsibility of counselor-educators to address the personal concerns of students (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014; Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2015), counselor-educators must increase their understanding of the role strain that occurs when CES students attempt to balance parenthood with graduate education. Consequently, the needs for this study are many: (a) to explore the meaning of role strain for parents in CACREP-accredited CES programs; (b) to give a voice to diverse parents and their experiences in CES; (c) to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the role-strain experiences of parents in CACREP-accredited CES programs; (d) to increase diversity in the literature on parenthood in CES; and (e) to increase counselor-

educator awareness of how the role-strain experiences of CES student-parents may

impact program performance.

Statement of Purpose

Because of the established connection between role strain, parenthood, and

program performance, and because approximately one quarter of students enrolled in

doctoral programs have dependent children (Mason, 2006, as cited in Springer et al.,

2009), the counseling profession and its policyholders must begin to understand the

meaning of role strain for parents in CACREP-accredited CES programs. The purpose of

this interpretive phenomenological study was to explore the meaning of role strain for

parents enrolled in CACREP-accredited doctoral CES programs. From reviews of

documents and interviews of parents in CACREP-accredited CES programs about their

role-strain experiences, the meaning of the role-strain phenomenon among CES parents

in graduate education could emerge. Further, applying Munhall's (2012, 2013)

interpretive phenomenological approach provided a voice within counselor education for

CES student-parents with diverse intersectional identities. This voice legitimized

differences and provided a greater understanding of the meaning of the experience for

self and others (Munhall, 2013). The study's second purpose was to highlight the

diversity of experiences among CES student-parents. As a result of this study, counselor-

educators and policyholders could deliver tailored gatekeeping interventions for students

instead of offering standardized interventions determined by an aggregate of subjects

collapsed to a statistical mean (Munhall, 2013).

Research Questions

To explore the meaning of role strain for parents enrolled in CACREP-accredited doctoral CES programs, this study included semistructured interviews based on Munhall's (2012, 2013) interview protocol utilizing one central research question and two subquestions:

1. As a parent, what does it mean to experience role strain in a doctoral CES program?

    a. How is role strain experienced in relation to intersectional aspects of identity?

    b. In what ways, if any, do historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures contribute to role strain?

Assumptions of the Study

I made several assumptions regarding this study. The first assumption was that participants were competent to participate in all aspects of the study. Specifically, I assumed participants would comprehend all aspects of the informed consent for research and participate voluntarily, knowing their rights. Participants would provide honest, detailed, comprehensive, and meaningful responses to the interview questions. Participants would commit to all aspects of the data collection and analysis procedures, including an orientation session, initial interview, follow-up interview, phone contact, the collection of a complete set of photographs for document review, the use of a logbook, and adherence to ethical considerations related to photovoice methods. Participants would appropriately use photo consent forms and have the knowledge, skills, and means to take and share digital photos.

The second assumption was that the adverse effects of role strain would have more meaning for parents in doctoral CES programs than would the advantageous effects of role strain. This assumption relied on two points: (a) The study's literature review produced more studies that described the struggles, challenges, and detrimental effects of role strain on people's psyche, behavior, and overall well-being, compared to the number of studies examining the alternative; and (b) The word *strain*, in role strain, implies hardship. As a noun, *strain* implies force, pressure, or strenuous effort. As a verb, *strain* involves creating tension or exerting oneself to the point of injury. Therefore, experiences associated with the word *strain* would likely reflect adversities over achievements.

The third assumption was that aspects of participants' intersectional identities and situatedness within the world would contribute to their role-strain experiences. This assumption centered on the premise that an individual carries a generational, political, sociocultural, and traditional history of experiences rich with unique differences, beliefs, attitudes, and varying understandings of meaning. The fourth and final assumption was that the data collection and analysis procedures would provide an accurate understanding of participants' lived experiences of role strain for parents in a CACREP-accredited doctoral CES program.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the researcher's choices that describe the study's boundaries (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Peoples, 2021). A study's delimitations indicate how the researcher narrowed the scope of the study, including the inclusionary and exclusionary decisions and why those decisions came to be (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Peoples, 2021). I chose an interpretive phenomenological approach for the current study because

of my positionality described in depth in a later section. As a part of the population under

investigation, it was impossible to bracket myself from the data; therefore, the

interpretive approach allowed me to take a position, make my biases known, and make

interpretations shaped by my personal experiences and background (Creswell, 2017).

Photovoice Delimitations

Three modifications were made to the original photovoice method. First, I added

two questions to Wang's (1999) SHOWeD technique. Second, I replaced the collective

group discussion with one-on-one interviews in the data collection and data analysis

methods. Finally, I removed participant and subject faces in published photos. Regarding

the SHOWeD technique, participants in existing studies have criticized the method as

rigid, allowing only limited participant interpretation and exploration of their experiences

(McIntyre, 2003; Shumba & Moodley, 2018). To address these criticisms, I added two

questions, creating a ME addition to the acronym SHOWeD (SHOWeD ME). The two

additional questions were, "What else should be said about this picture to describe the

Meaning of it?" and, "Is there anything *Else* to say about this picture?" These two

questions provided opportunities for participants to reflect on and interpret the meaning

associated with each photograph, thereby allowing lingering thoughts or feelings to

emerge in response to the imagery.

Traditional photovoice data collection and analysis methods occur within a group

setting; however, authors have flagged this process as a confidentiality concern (Shumba

& Moodley, 2018). To address this concern, I replaced the group setting with individual

interviews. Individual interviews allowed participants a confidential space to express

themselves freely and deeply without influence from others (Jurkowski, 2008; Newman,

2010; Shumba & Moodley, 2018). Additional steps to protect participant and their subject confidentiality included removing faces from photo imagery (even with appropriate consent) and replacing the names of participants and their subjects with pseudonyms (Shumba & Moodley, 2018).

Researcher Positionality

At the time of conducting the study, I was a Ph.D. candidate in a CACREP-accredited CES program. I was also a three-quarter-time counselor-educator and a private practice counselor, art therapist, and clinical supervisor. I fulfilled a leadership position within the counseling profession, and I was a colleague, wife, daughter, sister, and friend. Above all, I was the parent of an infant who arrived during the final weeks of my doctoral internship, which coincided with the first stay-at-home (shelter in place, lockdown, quarantine) order for the State of New Jersey. To my role as a researcher, I brought personal experience as a parent in a CACREP-accredited CES program to the inquiry process. I understood the current study's environmental context and had valuable insight into my role-strain experiences.

Regarding my own role-strain experiences, I feared achieving motherhood while enrolled in the CES program. I doubted my ability to balance academic, work, and family roles, and I assumed that parenthood would thwart academic progress. I confided in a few faculty and peers about my pregnancy after personal experiences of stigma and discrimination, and I felt guilty about the ongoing sacrifices made to accomplish this dissertation. Despite these adverse role-strain experiences, I achieved my personal, academic, and career goals while remaining well. As I moved forward with the study, I reflected on my growth process and began to see the advantageous effects of role strain.

Finally, I was confident that these role-strain experiences would result in a more mature and integrated sense of self.

Although my role-strain experience strengthened this study, it could have created biased judgment and thereby altered the meaning of role strain for other parents in CACREP-accredited CES programs. Because of the unlikelihood that I could effectively bracket myself from the phenomenon under investigation, I chose to proceed with an interpretive phenomenological research methodology, which allowed me to make my biases known and contribute to new understandings of meaning through an examination of intersubjectivity.

Figure 1 conceptualizes several key concepts of Munhall's (2012, 2013) interpretive phenomenological approach to finding meaning within participants' lived experiences of a phenomenon. Meaning is discovered through intersubjectivity—the point at which the participant's and researcher's worldview, life-world (temporality, spatiality, embodiment, relational), and background overlap (Munhall, 2012, 2013). This conceptual framework holds the study together from beginning to end. Chapter 1 introduces the conceptual framework as related to my lived experience. Chapter 2 provides existing research on others' worldviews as related to the study. Chapter 3 identifies the triangulation of data collection methods that enabled participants' and my worldview to emerge. Chapter 4 provides thick descriptions of the participants' worldviews following data collection. Finally, Chapter 5 provides my interpretation of new meaning that arose through intersubjectivity, culminating in my personal reflection of the research.

Figure 1

Finding Role-Strain Meaning: A Conceptual Framework

Intersubjectivity → **New Meaning**

Temporality   Spatiality   Spatiality   Temporality

"Background" →   ← "Background"

Embodiment   Relational   Relational   Embodiment

Participant's
Worldview

Researcher's
Worldview
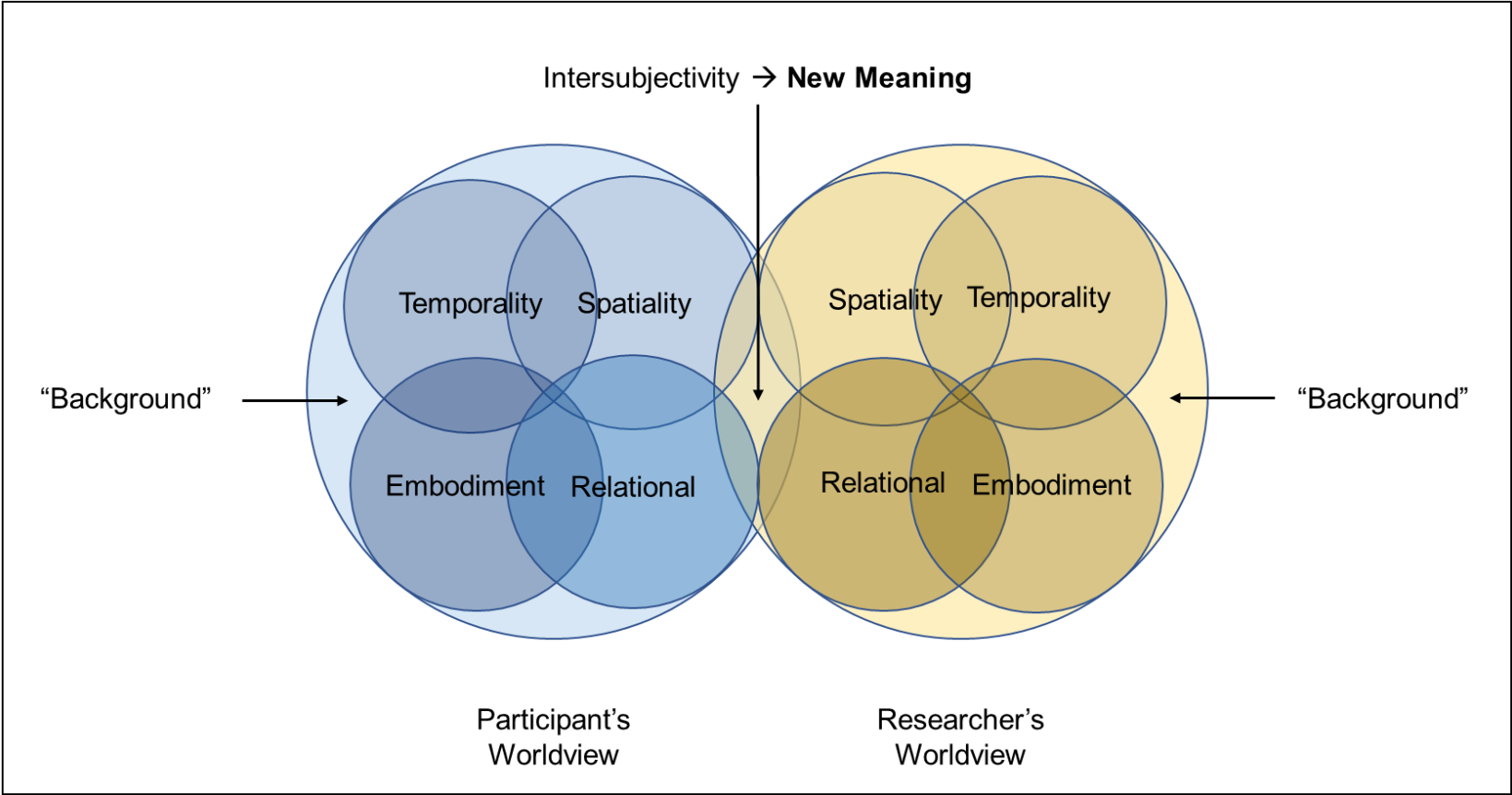
Note. From "A phenomenological method," by P. L. Munhall, 2012, in *Nursing research: A qualitative perspective* (5th ed, pp. 113–175). Jones & Bartlett Learning, pp. 139, 143.

By making my position within the research known and explicitly identifying my assumptions, theoretical orientation, and rationale for methodological decision making at the outset of the study, I began my commitment to the process of ongoing critical self-reflection. Multiple trustworthiness measures strengthened this study's credibility, discussed in Chapter 3. Trustworthiness was achieved through the research strategies of purposeful sampling, prolonged field engagement, member checking, journaling/reflexivity, triangulation, thick descriptions, peer debriefing, and member checking. Member-checking sessions provided the intersubjective space for the participant and me to agree, disagree, compromise, or form new meaning together (Munhall, 2013).

Definitions of Terms

Backgrounds: People's backgrounds are where they are situated, including their past, present, and views of what can be. Backgrounds provide conditions for human actions and perceptions (Munhall, 2013).

De-centering: De-centering is the process of becoming unknowing by acknowledging personal biases, preconceptions, assumptions, intuitions, motives, theories, previously learned knowledge, and ideas that might guide understanding the participant's experiences; also referred to as "getting out of your own way" by attempting research as a blank slate (Munhall, 2013).

Depletion hypothesis: The depletion hypothesis identifies the adverse effects of role strain (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Cohen & Janicki-Deverts, 2012; Home, 1998; Rothbard, 2001; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; Tiedje et al., 1990).

Embodiment: Embodiment is the body type one is born into (healthy or not, male, female, other; Munhall, 2013).

Enrichment hypothesis: The enrichment hypothesis identifies the advantageous effects of role strain (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; Thoits, 1983).

Expectation: Expectations are the scripts or expectations for behavior unanimously understood by social actors (everyday people; Biddle, 1986).

Intersubjectivity: Intersubjectivity includes the overlapping subjective lenses that the researcher and participants bring to a qualitative study together (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Life-worlds: Life-worlds include individuals' unique differences, beliefs, attitudes, and varying understandings of meanings based on temporality, spatiality, embodiment, and relational thrownness (Munhall, 2013).

Relational: Relational is the specific relational context into which one is born, including country, nationality, having an intact or not intact family, siblings, friends, support, colleagues, and others (Munhall, 2013).

Role: A role is a patterned characteristic of social behavior (Biddle, 1986).

Role conflict: Role conflict occurs because of simultaneous incompatible role demands; when two (or more) roles clash with each other (Creary & Gordon, 2016; Home, 1997, 1998).

Role contagion: Role contagion is a preoccupation with one role while performing another (Home, 1997, 1998).

Role identities: Role identities are the characters and roles people create when fulfilling specific social positions (McCall & Simmons, 1978, as cited in Varpio et al., 2018).

Role overload: Role overload occurs when there is insufficient time and resources to meet the demands of many social roles (Creary & Gordon, 2016; Home 1997, 1998).

Role relationships: A role relationships is a pattern of role bargains and an ongoing process of role-behavior selection to reduce role-strain stress (Goode, 1973).

Role strain: Role strain is the felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations (Goode, 1960, p. 483).

Role transitions: Role transitions are changes in roles over time that occur during life stages (Rodgers & White, 1993).

Social position: Social positions are the parts or identities assumed by social actors (Biddle, 1986).

Spatiality: Spatiality is the specific location, culture, and economic status into which one is born (Munhall, 2013).

Temporality: Temporality is the specific time in history into which one is born (Munhall, 2013).

Thrownness: Thrownness is the process of being born into the various aspects of one's life-world (Munhall, 2013).

Unknowing: Unknowing means listening with the "third ear"; hearing new and varying interpretations of reality by disregarding personal mental chatter that may interfere with the listening process (Munhall, 2013, p. 153).

Chapter Summary

This interpretive phenomenological study's primary purpose was to explore the meaning of role strain for parents in CACREP-accredited CES programs. This study provided a voice within counselor education for CES student-parents with diverse intersectional identities. Through interpretive phenomenology, parents' voices within CACREP-accredited CES programs could highlight and legitimize differences, as well as clarify the meaning of experience for self and others (Munhall, 2013). This study's results could encourage counselor-educators and policyholders to deliver tailored interventions for student-parents struggling with the role-strain impact on program performance.

The upcoming chapters include the study's literature review, methodology, results, and discussion. Chapter 2, the literature review, describes the problem of role strain by providing evidence of a social, educational, and personal concern that warranted further exploration. Goode's (1960, 1973) theory of role strain grounds the study theoretically and helps connect role strain to parenthood and parenthood to doctoral CES students' multiple role experiences. In addition, Chapter 2 introduces the impact of role strain on students' psyche, behavior, wellness, and program performance. The chapter concludes by outlining counselor-educators' ethical and accreditation responsibilities to intervene when students' role strain interferes with program performance.

Chapter 3 details the methodology of the study. Chapter 3 presents the study's research questions; the role of the philosophical assumptions and social constructivist interpretive framework in qualitative research; the rationale for the research design; a description of the research sample, data collection, and analysis methods; measures of

trustworthiness; and the limitations of the research design. Chapter 4 summarizes the

study's findings, and Chapter 5 discusses the study's outcomes, including implications

for the profession of counseling and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

Parenthood experiences during graduate education have been broadly explored

(Andersson, 2019; Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009; Moyer et al., 1999) and studied within

several fields, including medicine (Jarvie & Levy, 2019; Kin et al., 2018; Krause et al.,

2017; Mwakyanjala et al., 2019; Stack et al., 2019; Westrick, 2016), science (Bascom-

Slack, 2011; Stenzel, 2019), and social work (Wladkowski & Mirick, 2020). Within the

profession of CES, parenthood experiences have been studied from the dual perspectives

of mothers navigating the professional pipeline (Alexander-Albritton & Hill, 2015;

Hermann et al., 2014; Neale-McFall et al., 2018; Stinchfield & Trepal, 2010; Trepal &

Stinchfield, 2012), mothers navigating their doctoral studies (Holm et al., 2015; Pierce &

Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014), as well as in the context of the mentoring relationship

between professional-mothers and student-mothers (Bruce, 1995; Solomon & Barden,

2016). To date, no CES publications have intentionally studied the parenthood

experiences of all parents, including fathers, single parents, queer parents, minority

graduate student-parents, disabled parents, and others. Outcomes from the literature on

mothers, both general and specific, have revealed many personal concerns for doctoral

students, including delayed family planning (Andersson, 2019); gender and baby

penalties (Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009); delayed onset of goal achievement (Holm et al.,

2015; Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009; Moyer et al., 1999; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal

et al., 2014); perceived stigma and discrimination; increased financial hardship; physical

health issues; mental health concerns; time-management struggles; overwhelming

feelings of guilt; lack of programmatic support; lack of resources; and role overload

(Holm et al., 2015; Moyer et al., 1999; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014).

Considering these personal concerns, previous researchers have advised against starting a family while in graduate school, recommending delaying until securing a tenure position (Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006; Lynch, 2008; Mason et al., 2013; Morrison et al., 2011; Sallee, 2011; Wolfinger et al., 2008; 2009).

However, biological and social factors affect a woman's fertility (Kuperberg, 2009). Delaying childrearing, even for students whose partner carries the child, can lead to alternate personal concerns, such as lower overall fertility (Mason & Goulden, 2004; Trepal et al., 2014), missed opportunities for children (Kuperberg, 2009), personal regret (Williams, 2004), and health risks for mother and child if pregnancy is achieved (Thompson, 2002; Oakley et al., 2016). Further, a delay in childrearing can create missed opportunities for students, including the chance to develop new skills and maturity, change worldviews, and form broader social networks and connections (Silva & Pugh, 2010).

The absence of literature related to fathers, single parents, and queer parents in doctoral CES programs has rendered an incomplete understanding of parenthood experiences for all CES student-parents (Holm et al., 2015; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014). Because it is an ethical and educational responsibility of counselor-educators to address students' personal concerns (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2015), counselor-educators must increase their understanding of role strain for CES students attempting to balance parenthood with doctoral studies. Using Goode's (1960, 1973) theory of role strain as a framework for enhancing understanding, this chapter reviews the literature on role strain related to parenthood and specifically to parenthood role strain for doctoral CES students. The literature review describes the problem, outlines specific

ethical and educational considerations for counselor-educators, and provides evidence of a social, educational, and personal concern that warranted further investigation.

Personal Concerns of Doctoral CES Students

The difficulties associated with pursuing a doctoral degree are well studied; such difficulties involve multiple stressors, including "peer-pressure, frequent evaluations, low status, high workload, paper deadlines, financial difficulties, pressure to publish, active participation in scholarly environment, including conferences . . . lack of permanent employment, and an uncertain future" (Schmidt & Hansson, 2018, p. 2). For many students, the stressors associated with doctoral studies can contribute to an unhealthy work–life balance (Golde, 2005; Schmidt & Hansson, 2018), mental stress and fatigue (Appel & Dahlgren, 2003; Schmidt & Hansson, 2018), burnout (Nagy et al., 2019; Swords & Ellis, 2017), and attrition rates of up to 50% for face-to-face programs and 50% to 70% for online doctoral programs, depending on the area of study (Gardner, 2008; Lovitts & Nelson, 2000; McBain, 2019; Rigler et al., 2017; Schmidt & Hansson, 2018).

The cost of attrition is high for both the institution and the student (Willis & Carmichael, 2011). Students who do not complete their degree waste the university's resources and drain the doctoral program's resources (Pauley et al., 1999; Willis & Carmichael, 2011). Further, students who do not complete their doctoral programs may experience feelings of devastation (Sternberg, 1981; Willis & Carmichael, 2011), identity disruption (Carter et al., 2013), and depression, as well as bouts of violence toward self and others (Hinchey & Kimmel, 2000; Lovitts, 2001; Willis & Carmichael 2011).

Because of race, ethnicity, gender, or citizenship, underrepresented populations have higher risk of attrition from doctoral studies (McBain, 2019). Student-mothers constitute the highest at-risk group in the American academe (Lynch, 2008; NCES, 2007). In the literature on mothers in higher education, attrition occurs at a higher rate because of the added strain of balancing both parent and student roles (Carter et al., 2013; Lynch, 2008; Rindfuss et al., 1980). Documented personal concerns resulting from this strain include gender and baby penalties (Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009); perceived stigma and discrimination (Holm et al., 2015; Trepal et al., 2014); time-management struggles and delayed onset of goal achievement (Carter et al., 2014; Holm et al., 2015; Lynch, 2008; Mason et al., 2013; McAlpine & Norton, 2006; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020; Mwakyanjala et al., 2019; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012); lack of programmatic support and resources (Holm et al., 2015; Kuperberg, 2009; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Springer et al., 2009; Trepal et al., 2014); physical, mental, and emotional health concerns (Holm et al., 2015; Moyer et al., 1999; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014); and role strain (Dickens et al., 2016; Herlihy & Corey, 2016; Home, 1997, 1998). In the following paragraphs, explanations of each personal concern situate the current research problem within the literature and provide readers with detail to support the current study's rationale.

Gender and Baby Penalties

Issues regarding gender and baby penalties for mothers in graduate education programs are prevalent within the literature (Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009); however, to understand the context of gender and baby penalties, it is essential to describe the "good-

enough" graduate student. In a study on the effects of parenthood during graduate school on Ph.D. recipients' paths to the professoriate, Kulp (2016) described the good-enough or ideal graduate students as eager, committed to their fields of study, and available at any time without notice. Good-enough graduate students prioritize their education, complete all assignments and doctoral milestones as expected (Holm et al., 2015; Moyer et al., 1999), and follow the logical order and sequence of a program of study (Holm et al., 2015). Additionally, good-enough graduate students engage in opportunities to assist the faculty (fulfilling teaching assistant positions, collaborating on research), participate in other departmental activities (residency, accreditation), and complete their degrees within the time limits set forth by the program (Holm et al., 2015).

Living up to these expectations can be challenging for graduate student-parents because of conflicts with cultural expectations to prioritize being a "good-enough" mother (Kulp, 2016) or father. Culturally bound, good-enough parents are willing to sacrifice their own needs for their children (Espinoza, 2010; Estes, 2011; Kulp, 2016; Lynch, 2008). Further, academic culture does not often support an open discussion of parenting within academic institutions (Drago et al., 2006; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020). Consequently, parents can receive penalties if they are perceived as less committed or less productive because of caregiving responsibilities (Drago et al., 2006; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020). In an attempt to balance academic and family needs, graduate student-parents are less likely to become socialized into academic departments (Kulp, 2016). They may also be less likely to obtain essential career-related resources such as coauthorship of papers (Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006). Unfortunately for parents in graduate programs, failure to participate in these kinds of opportunities places them at a

disadvantage when competing for academic jobs (Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006; Kulp, 2016; Wolfinger et al., 2008).

Regarding graduate student-mothers specifically, gender and baby penalties are high; women with children show the lowest overall tenure-track job attainment rates (Kulp, 2016; Mason et al., 2013). Data summarized from Mason et al. (2013), Wolfinger et al. (2008), and Morrison et al. (2011) have suggested that graduate mothers with children under age six are 22% less likely than are fathers and nonparents to attain tenure-track positions after graduation, and compared to both fathers and nonparents, these mothers take 29% longer to attain tenure-track positions. In addition, regardless of parenting status, women are overrepresented in part-time nontenure-track positions, and they are 43% more likely than are men to hold adjunct teaching positions (McMahon & Green, 2008). Regarding the employer institution type, women are less likely compared to men to attain prestigious research institution positions, and graduate mothers are even less likely than women without children are to attain jobs at research institutions (Kulp, 2016; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). Thus, the gendered effect of employer institutional type is magnified for mothers—both gender and parenting status penalize their likelihood of securing jobs at research institutions (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). These gender and baby status penalties related to job attainment are stigmatizing and discriminatory experiences for graduate student-mothers.

Perceived Stigma and Discrimination

For graduate students, the fear that being a parent will penalize them when seeking a faculty position is stigmatizing and discriminatory (Holm et al., 2015; Trepal et al., 2014). As the case law of *Back* v. *Hastings* (2004) shows, this fear is not unfounded.

In *Back v. Hastings*, a faculty member was denied tenure because of the perception that her workload would decrease post-tenure because of childrearing. To avoid such stigma and discrimination, women have intentionally planned their pregnancies around university breaks (Gatta & Roos, 2014) or even hidden pregnancies out of fear of stigma (Jones et al., 2013).

In Holm et al.'s (2015) phenomenological study of counseling doctoral students becoming mothers, several participants described unexpected negative, stigmatizing, and discriminatory interactions with counselor-educators. Stigmatizing and discriminatory statements from faculty have occurred after witnessing graduate students become visibly pregnant during graduate studies. For example, in response to observing a graduate mother's growing abdomen, one faculty member stated, "You don't actually expect that you're going to get a job with that, do you?" (Holm et al., 2015, p. 11). The stigma of academics and administrators not taking mothers seriously as students or professionals occurs with such frequency that it has been termed "mommy-tracking" (Trepal et al., 2014, p. 31).

Participants from another study described experiencing similar discriminatory messages from faculty regarding gender bias and the perception that children are barriers to opportunities and degree completion (Trepal et al., 2014). In Trepal et al.'s study of doctoral student-mothers in counselor education, a graduate student described having an opportunity with faculty rescinded after the faculty member learned she was becoming a single mother through a divorce. Another participant from this study was denied maternity leave from a graduate assistant position, and a third participant was told, "Don't have kids" (Trepal et al., 2014, p. 41) as advice for achieving her doctoral degree.

Time Management, Delayed Onset of Goal Achievement, and Financial Strain

The academic expectations of graduate students are many. Some academics have espoused a doctoral commitment of 60 to 70 hours per week with no time left for life outside of study (Carter et al., 2013). Moreover, Moyer et al. (1999) identified a commitment of 85 to 90 hours per week for students, including coursework, clinical practicum, and up to 20 hours per week of research rotation (Moyer et al., 1999). This problematic ideal is out of reach for many graduate student-parents who must balance study with childrearing and often with employment as well (Carter et al., 2013).

Authors studying the impact of parenting on graduate students have agreed that life events such as pregnancy, the loss of a pregnancy or death of a family member, the birth of a child, and the duties of childrearing can lengthen the academic timeline of graduate students (Carter et al., 2014; Holm et al., 2015; Lynch, 2008; Mason et al., 2013; McAlpine & Norton, 2006; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020; Mwakyanjala et al., 2019; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012). In a quantitative study of almost 3,000 Ph.D. recipients, Kulp (2016) found that mothers took on average one year longer to graduate than did the average Ph.D. recipient. In a qualitative study by Holm et al. (2015), participants described how pregnancy and childbirth affected their projected doctoral timelines and delayed their graduation dates and ability to begin work in the field. In Holm et al.'s study, the participants expected delays in their programs; however, the postponements led to feelings of stress, frustration, and poor self-image, particularly when participants compared themselves to peers with whom they began their course of study.

Considering the time constraints of graduate students who must balance multiple roles, achieving educational goals seems primarily dependent on students' ability to implement time-management skills successfully. Time, as such, becomes a considerable sacrifice for graduate student-parents who must rearrange their schedules to accommodate studying, childrearing, and often employment (Holm et al., 2015; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013). The reallocation of time to accommodate various roles (student, parent, family member, employee) leads to time sacrifices with family, friends, and self (Holm et al., 2015; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013). These time restrictions contribute to a pattern of loss: losing time with family and friends (missing out), losing time to care for self, losing the quality of schoolwork produced, and losing financially (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013).

In Moyer et al.'s (1999) study on challenges facing female doctoral students and recent graduates, financial concerns were reported by 38% of participants ($n = 213$). Moyer et al. found participants with children cited the need for a more generous financial budget to remain in their programs while caring for children. Graduate parents acknowledged the need to maintain or seek employment while studying to "[make] ends meet" (Moyer et al., 1999, p. 614). Maintaining employment while pursuing a doctoral degree places pressure on the graduate student-parent, whose time is divided among multiple roles. Although graduate students may find their study timeline lengthened by significant life events, women without sufficient financial resources or support networks may find that these life events stop academic progression completely (Gardner, 2009; Mason et al., 2013; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020).

Lack of Programmatic Support and Resources

As previously stated, pregnant women, parenting women, or both may struggle to remain in graduate education without a strong financial, academic, or social support system (Gardner, 2009; Mason et al., 2013; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020). However, for women, and potentially for all parents, the academic system is typically viewed as providing few childbearing or childrearing supports (Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020; Springer et al., 2009). In various studies, student-parents in graduate programs have reported a lack of programmatic resources on a peer level (Holm et al., 2015), on a faculty level (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014), on a programmatic level (Holm et al., 2015; Kuperberg, 2009; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013), and on an organizational level (Holm et al., 2015; Kuperberg, 2009).

Regarding a lack of peer support, graduate students have described feeling disconnected from peers during their transition to parenthood, feeling lonely, and feeling unable to rely on fellow students for support (Holm et al., 2015). In addition, graduate students have found support from faculty unreliable or conditional (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014), even when faculty have admitted to being parents themselves (Trepal et al., 2014). For example, in Trepal et al. (2014), one student described a faculty member who failed to acknowledge the student's childbirth that occurred during the semester. Another faculty member, a mother herself, told a graduate student-parent, "Don't use your children as an excuse when you can't do something" (Trepal et al., 2014, p. 38). Although researchers have agreed that giving special treatment to graduate student-parents would be a disservice to them (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013), support systems are crucial in ensuring an individual's mental health (Lightsey, 1996; Pierce & Herlihy,

2013; Ulione, 1996). As such, mentoring relationships that provide a balance of support, safety, challenge, collaborative discussion, and flexibility regarding assignment deadlines may be particularly important for this population (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013).

Extensions of deadlines at the programmatic level could also be a resource that prevents graduate students from being penalized when childbirth or childrearing interrupts curriculum milestones (Holm et al., 2015). Further, graduate students rarely receive childcare opportunities from their programs (Holm et al., 2015). Although full-time childcare is not something that graduate students expect, resources such as a short-term child-care center and a lactation room could allow on-campus students to take care of themselves, attend class or meetings, and use other campus resources without childcare barriers (Holm et al., 2015).

In a study of 62 schools, Mason et al. (2007) found that 76% offered on-site childcare programs, 50% provided childcare subsidies, and 10% had programs for emergency backup childcare. In a similar study, Kuperberg (2009) reviewed 20 schools and found 60% had on-site childcare available to students, 30% provided childcare subsidies, and 25% offered emergency backup childcare to graduate students. Regarding university policies that support graduate students through maternity or parental leave, Mason et al. (2007) found that only 26% of programs offered leave, and only 10% offered paid leave for graduate and research assistantships. In contrast, Kuperberg (2009) found that 65% of programs (13 out of 20) offered some variation of a maternity or parental leave policy to students. Further, 45% of schools extended time limits on receiving a degree to students who took maternity or parental leave (Kuperberg, 2009).

Although these numbers might appear encouraging, women with children comprise approximately 7% to 8% of all doctoral students (Golde & Dore, 2001; Kulp, 2016, 2019; Mason et al., 2009; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020), a number particularly relevant to CES because 70% to 75% of the counseling profession is female (Evans, 2010; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2017). Of these 7% to 8% of women doctoral student-mothers, Kuperberg (2009) estimated that nearly half would give birth while enrolled in school. Further, the statistics do not address the percentages of male, transgender, gender-neutral, nonbinary, agender, pangender, or genderqueer parents of children; literature regarding the experiences of members of these groups is not yet available. Considering the complex and multifaceted ways people experience gender, the need to provide support and resources to all graduate student-parents is of great concern. Without official organizational policies in place that give recourse to parents enrolled in graduate education, students must negotiate the terms of childbearing and childcare without safety or support (Kuperberg, 2009). Without safety, support, and appropriate resources, graduate student-parents may sacrifice their wellness by being overwhelmed, overworked, and overscheduled (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013).

Physical, Mental, and Emotional Health Concerns

Myers et al. (2003) asserted, the "underlying philosophy of counselor education rests on a foundation of wellness for professionals and professionals-in-training" (p. 273). Even though graduate student-parents are concerned with the familial, social, financial, and time sacrifices they make to pursue an advanced degree (Carter et al., 2013; Holm et al., 2015; Kulp, 2016; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020; Moyer et al., 1999; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014), the greatest sacrifice seems to be students' overall

wellness (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013). In particular, women socialized to do most household

and childcare duties often leave very little time for self-care when fulfilling educational

and personal roles (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014). The "superwoman"

identity, characterized by perfectionism and the need to be successful in all roles,

exacerbates physical stress and mental and emotional stress, including feelings of anxiety

and guilt (Holm et al., 2015; Moyer et al., 1999; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al.,

2014).

Somatic complaints common to graduate student-parents include lack of sleep and

exhaustion (Holm et al., 2015), migraine headaches (Moyer et al., 1999), somatic

manifestations (such as rapid heart rate), and neglectful eating and exercising habits that

contribute to weight gain (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013). Mental health experiences range from

depression, including postpartum depression (Holm et al., 2015; Moyer et al., 1999); low

self-esteem, isolation, and relationship strain (Moyer et al., 1999; Pierce & Herlihy,

2013); spiritual disconnection (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013); and panic attacks (Pierce &

Herlihy, 2013); to overwhelming feelings of guilt (Holm et al., 2015; McAlpine &

Norton, 2006; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Stenzel, 2019; Sutherland, 2010; Trepal et al.

2014).

For graduate student-parents, guilt frequently arises from their absence from

family and not feeling present in either parent or doctoral student roles. For example, one

participant from Trepal et al.'s (2014) study on doctoral student-mothers in counseling

education said, "I struggle with feeling like a bad mom, a horrible employee, and a

debilitated student. I feel like I don't do anything well because I'm always thinking I'm

in the wrong place whenever I'm there" (p. 36). Stress within roles, simultaneous

incompatible role demands without adequate resources to meet expectations, and

preoccupation with one role while performing another are characteristics of role-strain

experiences.

The Theory of Role Strain

Goode (1964, 1973) introduced the theory of role strain to address sociological

factors and problems that exchange theories and role theories failed to address. Each

sociology division's basic tenets inform role theory and provide an alternative mode of

perceiving social reality. In the theory of role strain, social reality becomes

understandable by exploring several factors, including the importance of urges, impulses,

and motives that lead to social action (social force); rational and self-seeking

resourcefulness; nonconformity with group values; and the causes of order and stability

that can occur even when people are not committed deeply to shared norms (Goode,

1973). Goode (1973) asserted that this theoretical view is better suited to real social

interactions in a complex modern society whereby social conformity occurs without deep

moral commitment. In the next section, a review of the basic tenets of exchange theory

and role theory shows the philosophical underpinnings of Goode's (1964, 1973) theory of

role strain.

Basic Tenets of Exchange Theory

According to Cropanzano and Mitchen (2005), exchange theory, or social

exchange theory, can be traced back to the 1920s with the work of Malinowski (1922)

and Mauss (1925); however, several authors have agreed that Homans (1958, 1961)

significantly inspired how readers have come to know social exchange theory today

(Cook & Rice, 2006; Cook et al., 2013; Emerson, 1976; Varey, 2015). Over the past 60

years, social exchange theory has become one of the most widely applicable and influential conceptual frameworks in social science disciplines for understanding workplace behavior (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). According to Cropanzano et al. (2017), social exchange theory is not a single theory; rather, it is a "family of conceptual models" (p. 1).

Although confusion exists among varying perspectives and definitions of social exchange theory concepts, all social exchange theories share several standard features (Cropanzano et al., 2017). First, social exchange theories conceptualize social life as involving a series of transactions between two or more parties (Cook & Rice, 2006; Cook et al., 2013; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Emerson, 1976; Mitchell et al., 2012; Varey, 2015). Through a reciprocal process, these exchanges of activity (tangible or intangible) form the quality of the relationship between the person and the target (Blau, 1964; Cook & Rice, 2006; Cook et al., 2013; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Gergen, 1969; Gouldner, 1960). Further, researchers have applied the behaviorism principle of reinforcement to examining the development of relationships; thus, high quality relationships develop when someone is rewarded by the social interaction (Cook & Rice, 2006; Cook et al., 2013; Homans, 1958, 1961). In contrast, when an exchange's cost exceeds the payoff, a low quality relationship may develop and extinguish behavioral action (Cook & Rice, 2006; Cook et al., 2013; Homans, 1958, 1961). Collectively, these concepts form three shared features of all social exchange theories: (a) a person's initial treatment toward a target individual, (b) a target's reciprocal responses (both attitudinal and behavior) to the action, and (c) the relationship formation (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

In addition, social exchange theory's shared features underpin three core assumptions or characteristics: rules of exchange, resources exchanged, and exchange relationships (Porter, 2018). Rules of exchange include negotiated reciprocal norms or expectations of behavior that guide exchange processes (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Porter, 2018). Negotiated rules are structured, specifying how resources are exchanged between parties, by whom, and when; these rules typically characterize quid pro quo or economic exchange transactions (goods-for-services; Porter, 2018). Reciprocity rules are variable and interdependent; one person provides a resource, and the other party inevitably returns the favor because of felt obligation (Porter, 2018). For people to develop a trusting, loyal, and mutual commitment, or high quality relationship, both parties in an exchange must abide by the rules of exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

The resources exchanged during a social transaction vary, ranging from tangible value to symbolic relevance (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Porter, 2018). Foa and Foa (1974, 1980) organized typically exchanged resources into six categories: money, goods, services, information, love, and status (Foa & Foa, 1974, 1980; Porter, 2018). Resources exchanged during a social transaction depend upon the universalistic (exchanged with anyone) or particularistic (specific to a person) needs of the people or parties involved (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Foa, 1971; Porter, 2018). According to Foa and Foa (1974, 1980), social exchanges that are more concrete and less particularistic are more likely to be exchanged in a short-term, quid pro quo manner; in contrast, exchanges that are highly particularistic and symbolic exchange in a more flexible and evolving way.

Finally, exchange relationships are the outcomes of ongoing social or economic exchanges (Porter, 2018). Exchanges that follow the rules of reciprocity typically result in social exchange relationships, whereas exchanges that follow negotiated rules result in economic (business) exchange relationships (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gouldner, 1960; Porter, 2018). Economic exchange relationships include clearly and decidedly outlined obligations to hold each party accountable to one another (Molm, 2003; Porter, 2018). Social exchange relationships are considered high quality, characterized by trust (Porter, 2018); care, fairness, and beneficial consequences (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005); strong relationships; and interpersonal connectedness (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Social exchange relationships produce employees' most effective work behaviors and attitudes, engendering personal unspecified and diffuse obligations, feelings of gratitude, and enduring social patterns (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

The cost–benefit analysis of social exchange theory is apparent in the decisions of graduate students to assume the parent role during their academic programs. Generally, clear, negotiated rules or expectations of behavior between the student and teacher are outlined in the course syllabi, such as fulfilling rigor expectations, attending class on time and as scheduled, participating in classes, maintaining a professional demeanor, and completing all assignments specified by the course instructor. When students fulfill these expectations, they receive the reward of good grades—ergo, an economic exchange relationship.

For any soon-to-be parent, the decision to take on the role of parent while engaging in a rigorous graduate program comes with many costs. Such costs include

medical visits, maternity/paternity leave, sleepless nights and exhaustion with a new

baby, increased financial hardship, time constraints stemming from increased work–

family load, the unpredictable needs of children, and, consequently, the possibility of

poor academic performance (a concrete and universalistic negotiated consequence).

However, the benefits of achieving the status (role) of parent and experiencing the love of

a child (a reciprocal, particularistic, symbolic, and culturally influenced need) have a

significantly higher quality relationship exchange and, therefore, are likely to outweigh

the consequences of poor academic performance. This example is prevalent in literature

that has studied the attrition of graduate student-parents. Repeatedly, graduate student-

parents decide to forgo their student role for family roles, even when they have made

significant sacrifices of time, money, social relationships, and self-care (Carter et al.,

2013; Lynch, 2008; Rindfuss et al., 1980). In the next section, a thorough exploration of

role related to theory grounds Goode's (1960, 1973) theory of role strain.

Basic Tenets of Role Theory

The concept of *role* is one of the most widely studied ideas within the social

sciences, appearing with endless application in sociology and social psychology as a

perspective for studying social issues (Biddle, 1986). Despite its popularity, role theory

authors have not unanimously defined role concepts, agreed on assumptions about roles,

or accepted explanations for role phenomena (Biddle, 1986; Goode, 1973). Confusion

regarding definitions, assumptions, and explanations has led role theory researchers to

organize the field into differing perspectives, including functional role theory, symbolic

interactionist role theory, structural role theory, organizational role theory, and cognitive

role theory (Biddle, 1986). Regardless of the authors' differences of opinion, role theory

has an agreed-upon set of fundamental tenets that remain useful in alleviating human

problems (Biddle, 1986).

Although role theorists often disagree on their assumptions of basic role concepts,

they are mostly similar in philosophic orientation (Biddle, 1986). Role theory began with

ideas about life as a theatrical metaphor (Biddle, 1986). Using this metaphor, role

theorists have likened the differentiated and predictable "roles," "parts," and "scripts"

played within the theatre to social behaviors played by social actors (everyday people)

who similarly perform roles, parts, and scripts of daily living (Biddle, 1986). As such,

role theory is concerned with three core concepts: the patterned characteristics of social

behavior (role); the parts or identities that are assumed by social actors (social position);

and the scripts or expectations for behavior that performers unanimously understand

(expectation; Biddle, 1986). Altogether, role theory concerns the fact that "human beings

behave in ways that are different and predictable depending on their respective social

identities and the situation" (Biddle, 1986, p. 68). Most role theorists believe that

expectations are learned through experience, that people are aware of the expectations

they hold, and that expectations are the primary catalysts of the roles they assume

(Biddle, 1986).

During each life stage, individuals can simultaneously perform multiple roles

based on multiple social positions (Goode, 1973). For example, when a woman is born,

she assumes the life-role of daughter; when she enters into the school system, she also

becomes a student; when she enters into the workforce, she accumulates the role of

employee; when she marries, she becomes a wife; and when she gives birth, she becomes

a mother. In the case of graduate student-parents, they may experience all five of these

roles simultaneously: daughter/son, student, employee, spouse, and parent. Role theorists

have claimed that individuals accumulate varying roles throughout the lifespan by

keeping roles, transferring roles, leaving roles, and beginning new roles (Burr, 1972). The

changes in roles over time, or role transitions, occur during life stages and can range in

felt difficulty from easy to challenging depending on timing and social context (Rodgers

& White, 1993). In addition, role transitions can have a corollary effect, wherein the

initiation or delay in one role can affect the initiation or delay in another. An example of

this idea in the literature includes a woman's delay into the mother role secondary to her

extension of time in the student role (Andersson, 2019; Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006;

Lynch, 2008; Mason et al., 2013; Morrison et al., 2011; Sallee, 2011; Wolfinger et al.,

2008, 2009).

As people move in and out of roles, they learn about the new role's expectations

and modify their behavior to conform socially (Goode, 1973; Newman & Newman,

2018). Each role an individual assumes brings a personal history and social philosophy

based on norms and values (Goode, 1973). This social philosophy influences the

acceptance, emotional commitment, conformity, behavior, ideals, perceived obligations,

and value of each role (Goode, 1973). Value commitment to a role varies according to

social position, age, gender, race, ethnicity, occupation, geographic region, and religion

(Goode, 1973). For example, when a female child is raised in a family that values

education highly, she might value her role of student over her role of friend and thus

prioritize studying over socializing. If she pursues graduate education and becomes

pregnant, gendered social pressure might encourage her to place more value on the role

of mother, because women are often socialized to become primary caregivers and

homemakers (Hays 1996; Lynch, 2008). However, society's values, ideals, and role

obligations may not be congruent with the female student's personal or familial values

ideals and role obligations. In this case, the student may begin to feel a surge in the

demands and intensity of multiple intersecting roles, a point at which she will likely

experience role conflict, role overload, role contagion, and role strain (Goode, 1973;

Newman & Newman, 2018).

Theory of Role Strain

Goode's (1960, 1973) theory of role strain integrates basic concepts of role theory

with select concepts from Blau's (1964) and Homans's (1950, 1958, 1961) social

exchange theories. Goode's (1960, 1973) theory of role strain rests on the general idea

that institutions are made up of role relationships, and thus approaches both social action

and social structure through the concept of *role strain*. To explain the function of role

strain in social structures, Goode (1973) provides the visual images of a suspension

bridge or geodesic dome, wherein all parts are held together by the tensions each section

puts on the others (i.e., the pressures and counter-pressures of daily social interactions).

Assuming that people always face a scarcity of resources needed to fulfill role

obligations, people are motivated by the necessity of allocating resources for maximum

gain through role bargaining (exchange; Goode, 1973). Role relationships, therefore, are

seen as a pattern of role bargains and an ongoing process of role-behavior selection to

reduce role-strain stress (Goode, 1973). Although these concepts suggest that role strain

is a normal, natural process for all individuals, Goode (1960, 1973) proposed that

people's ability to cope with role-negotiation processes results in the degree of felt role-

strain stress. Therefore, an individual's success in negotiating or bargaining role

obligations depends on the strength of an individual's ego, self-esteem, resources, and decision making (Goode, 1960).

Tenets of Goode's Theory of Role Strain

Operationally defined by Goode (1960), role strain is the "felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations" (p. 483). Role strain stems from conflicts within the mind, body, and spirit generated from negotiating and balancing role obligations (Goode, 1960). Role strain is a feeling state in which individuals experience depleted emotional resources and the possibility of anxiety, guilt, burden, fatigue, tension, frustration, and exhaustion (Creary & Gordon, 2016; Goode, 1960; Lengacher, 1993). Despite role strain occurring universally for all, the experience for each person is unique—the set of role obligations people face relates to the specific combination of their assumed roles (Goode, 1960, 1973). Further, the external social pressures, internal values, ideals, and emotional commitments that contribute to role strain are influenced by an individual's personal history, "baggage of norms," previous experience with rewards, social philosophy, and unique culture (Goode, 1973, p. 99).

External and Internal Sources of Pressure

External social pressures affecting the experience of role strain within the work–family domain include excessive work time (Creary & Gordon, 2016; Goode, 1973), schedule incompatibility, work spillover, job tension (Creary & Gordon, 2016), insufficient resources (Goode, 1973), and sociocultural messages about how to be a "good parent" (detailed later; Lynch, 2008). Internal stressors can result from people's feelings of inadequacy regarding their ability to fulfill roles and live up to internalized ideals of parenthood related to varying role obligations (Holm et al., 2015; McAlpine &

Norton, 2006; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Stenzel, 2019; Sutherland, 2010; Trepal et al.

2014). Further, internal sources of pressure can occur from lack of sleep (Holm et al.,

2015) as well as from other mental health experiences ranging from depression (including

postpartum depression; Holm et al., 2015; Moyer et al., 1999) to low self-esteem,

isolation, and relationship strain (Moyer et al., 1999; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013). For

women specifically, internal pressure can result from struggles to achieve the

"superwoman" identity, characterized by perfectionism and the need to succeed in all

roles (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013). As it relates to the work–family domain, the most

common consequences of role strain affecting work are job burden, job interruptions, job

changes, and job distress (Creary & Gordon, 2016). The most common consequences of

role strain in the family domain are family burden and family distress (Creary & Gordon,

2016).

Role Conflict, Role Overload, and Role Contagion

As the theory of role strain developed over time, authors identified three

additional and distinct role-strain dimensions that can and often do co-occur with role

strain: role conflict, role overload, and role contagion (Coverman, 1989; Hirsch &

Rapkin, 1986; Home, 1998). Role strain occurs when a person experiences stress within

one or more roles (Creary & Gordon, 2016). Role conflict occurs when two (or more)

roles clash (simultaneous incompatible demands; Creary & Gordon, 2016; Home, 1997,

1998). Role overload occurs when a person has many social roles but not enough

resources to fulfill all of them (insufficient time to meet demands; Creary & Gordon,

2016; Home 1997; Home 1998). Finally, role contagion occurs when an individual has a

preoccupation with one role while performing another (Home, 1997, 1998).

An example of role strain, including the three role-strain dimensions just mentioned, can be seen in CES students' experiences. Role strain might occur if a doctoral CES student experiences stress while navigating higher education challenges. Role conflict might occur if this doctoral CES student is a parent and must choose between attending class or their child's sports game when both are scheduled simultaneously. Role overload is experienced when the student provides childcare (role of parent), studies for exams (role of student), serves mental health clients (role of counselor), fulfills teaching assistant duties (role of educator), meets with supervisees (role of supervisor), volunteers at a local professional conference (role of leader), and conducts research with a mentor (role of scholar/researcher). Finally, role contagion becomes evident if the CES student is preoccupied with thoughts about their child while performing one or more of their education roles.

Competing Hypotheses

In a study that evaluated stress and the multiple-role woman, Sumra and Schillaci (2015) tested two hypotheses related to the theory of role strain: The depletion hypothesis and the enrichment hypothesis (Simon, 1992). The depletion hypothesis, or the scarcity hypothesis, proposes that an increase in roles leads to role overload and strain (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). This hypothesis suggests that attempts to maintain multiple roles can create stress, role conflict, an inability to perform separate roles adequately, and adverse psychological distress (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Cohen & Janicki-Deverts, 2012; Home, 1998; Rothbard, 2001; Tiedje et al., 1990).

The enrichment hypothesis, also referred to as role enhancement, accumulation, or expansion hypothesis (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974; Thoits,

1983), suggests that multiple-role engagement "enhances an individual's resources, social connections, power, prestige, and emotional gratification" (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015, p. 24). This hypothesis suggests that balancing multiple roles can buffer against stress (Rothbard, 2001), increase feelings of well-being (Barn, 2008; Rothbard, 2001; Verbrugge, 1989), and positively affect psychological health (Martire et al., 2000; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015).

Findings from Sumra and Schillaci's (2015) study, which included over 300 participants, indicated that women who engaged in more roles did not show significantly higher perceived stress compared to women engaged in few roles, nor did they exhibit significantly reduced or enhanced life satisfaction. Further, women who engaged in more roles had greater social networks than did those with fewer roles. Results related to the depletion hypothesis indicated that single mothers who engaged in multiple roles experienced the highest perceived stress, coupled with diminished life satisfaction. Thus, because of increased stress levels associated with multiple-role engagement, single mothers may be at risk for adverse health outcomes such as coronary heart disease and depression (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015).

Role Strain and Parenthood

Parenthood marks a pivotal status (role) achievement for many adults; however, studies examining the role of parent have frequently produced a recurring theme of role strain (Allen, 2001; Burden, 1986; Cowan & Cowan, 1988; Home, 1997; Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985; Newman, 2000; Newman & Newman, 2018; Voydanoff, 2005). The parent role is highly time-consuming, more time-consuming than any other social role, with first-time parents often underestimating the time demands of infants and toddlers

(Newman & Newman, 2018). Children, especially infants and toddlers, are highly

dependent on their parents for survival, and they require much involvement from parents

in all of their behaviors (Newman & Newman, 2018). Parents sense this need, and the

role of parent intensifies, occurring concomitantly with anxiety and fear about failing to

meet the parent role (Newman & Newman, 2018). Newman and Newman cautioned first-

time parents in particular, because they may be especially prone to the internal pressures

of anxiety and low confidence in their ability to fulfill the parent role, in addition to the

external sociocultural messages that parents receive about what it means to be a "good

parent."

Modern Society's Good-Enough Parent. Posited by Halford (2006) and

supported in Coltrane (2004), Fox (2001), and Pleck (1987), the modern meanings and

practice of parenting are profoundly gendered. Ideologies behind what it means to be a

good mother or good father vary historically, socially, culturally, and according to

intersectional identity (gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation, religious affiliation,

and the like). Because beliefs about motherhood and fatherhood are mainly sociocultural,

sociocultural changes are likely to alter what it means to be an effective parent (Mead,

1969; Morman & Floyd, 2002, 2006). As it relates to childrearing in the U.S., the role of

caretaker is traditionally expected for women in a way it is not for men (Lynch, 2008).

This traditionally held American ideology (Chira, 1998; Glenn, 1994; Hays, 1996;

Lynch, 2008; McMahon, 1995; O'Reilly, 2004) creates increased role strain for working

mothers and in fact is exemplified by the term "working mother" (Lynch, 2008, p. 587).

As Lynch (2008) explained, the term working mother "juxtaposes two words with

antithetical cultural images: worker/mother; provider/homemaker; public/private. . . .

Thus, employment and family are portrayed for women dichotomously—with the result

that women are described as being *either* [emphasis original] 'work oriented' *or*

[emphasis original] 'family oriented'" (p. 587).

In a study on gender roles and the American academe, Lynch (2008) called

attention to the gendered differences in parenting and their impact on graduate student-

mothers. Lynch (2008) noted that men did not experience the same unequal perception of

being a family man or a worker: Employment was perceived as a part of fathers' role to

support their children (Garey, 1999; Lynch, 2008). Because of such patriarchal social

arrangements, mothers must engage in a parenting style referred to as *intensive mothering*

(Hays 1996; Lynch, 2008; Oakley, 1979).

Intensive mothering is a "child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing,

labor-intensive, financially expensive enterprise" (Lynch, 2008, p. 586). Intensive

mothering includes fulfilling all role obligations of today's ideal mother (Lynch, 2008;

McMahon 1995), assuming that she is the best person to care for her offspring (Lynch,

2008). Intensive mothering involves putting a child's needs above her own, responding to

all of the child's needs and desires, and investing significant resources at every stage of

development (Hays, 1996; Lynch, 2008). For today's women, work outside the home

may also be a preference or a necessary reality; however, sociocultural beliefs and

ideologies maintain women's role in childrearing and attending to the household

(Richardson, 1993). Consequently, the social role of mothers often results in a physically

and emotionally draining "second shift" (Hochschild & Machung 1989; Lynch, 2008),

whereby after working for an outside organization (first shift), mothers return home to

care for their children and household (second shift).

The idea that some types of supervision can only be provided by mothers is an ideology directly linked to sociocultural concepts of childrearing (Lynch, 2008). As Tam (2019) described, "A good mother is no doubt the beating heart of a family" (p. 1). Outcomes from Lynch's (2008) study, including interviews with 30 mothers from doctoral programs across the U.S., revealed that immediate family members, daycare centers, neighbors, and fathers were not considered capable of providing a level of supervision and care at least equal to the level of supervision and care provided by mothers. As described by Lynch's (2008) participants, fathers, in particular, were "inadequate cooks," "bad with homework," "too sloppy to be left alone with the kids," and "in need of supervision themselves" (p. 598).

This traditional view of motherhood as the exclusive domain of women is widely accepted by the majority of contemporary American women (Glenn, 1994; Hays, 1996; Lynch, 2008; Chira, 1998). However, not all families contain a woman, for example, single-father families or same-sex unions of men (Tam, 2019). Further, several authors have argued that the comparing and contrasting of mother and father roles within the literature on parenting creates a bias that leaves fathers in a deficit situation (Cummings et al., 2004; Deutsch et al., 2001; Dienhart, 2001; Fuligni & Brooks-Gunn, 2004; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). A traditional "good-enough" father assumes a position of power, focuses on achievement, provides material resources for the family, focuses on discipline versus affection, and maintains emotional distance from his children (Silverstein et al., 2002). In contrast, today's "good-enough" father is involved and present with his children (Morman & Floyd, 2006; Yeung et al., 2001).

Yeung et al. (2001) collected data from 1,761 children (aged 0–12 years) to study children's time with fathers in intact families. Yeung et al. found that fathers spent 67% as much time as did mothers with their children on weekdays and 87% as much time on weekends. According to Halford (2006), these changes in involvement levels can be attributed to a shift in work institutions beginning to offer more men work-from-home opportunities (Halford, 2006). Thus, even when fathers are "at work" within the home, their physical presence provides availability in an everyday, accessible, and flexible way (Halford, 2006).

Today's "good-enough" father is characterized by demonstrations of love and affection and by being involved, nurturing, and consistent in childrearing (Canfield, 1996; Forste et al., 2009; Kimmel, 1997; McDowell & Day, 1991; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Waller, 2002). Modern perspectives on good fathering show the father providing and demonstrating care (Forste et al., 2009; Kimmel, 1997; Marsiglio et al., 2000), moral and ethical guidance, emotional support, economic stability, and psychosocial support to female partners (Forste et al., 2009; Marsiglio et al., 2000). In addition, modern fathers provide mentorship (Canfield, 1996; Phillips, 1992), role modeling (Canfield, 1996; Forste et al., 2009; Kimmel, 1997; Morman & Floyd, 2006), wisdom, knowledge (Forste et al., 2009; Kimmel, 1997; Morman & Floyd, 2006), encouragement (Elmore, 2001), and discipline (Canfield, 1996; Forste et al., 2009; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Phillips, 1992). Further, today's fathers provide forgiveness (Morman & Floyd, 2006; Phillips, 1992), acceptance, authority (McDowell &Day, 1991), protection, sacrifice (Forste et al., 2009; Morman & Floyd, 2006), hard work, and trust (Forste et al., 2009).

In notable research, Morman and Floyd (2006) conducted two studies that assessed fathers' and sons' perceptions of what it meant to be a good father. The first study involved 374 fathers, and the second study examined data from 99 father–son pairs. The participant samples included fathers with varied relationship statuses, ethnicities, degrees of education from varied geographic locations, including Puerto Rico, the Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, and South/Southeast areas of the U.S. (Morman & Floyd, 2006). Results from the study were organized into a list of referents (many previously noted) that characterized the participants' beliefs of what it meant to be a good father. The authors found that the participants' use of the referents was unrelated to participants' ethnic backgrounds, marital status, coresidential status, or education levels and was only slightly related to participants' ages or numbers of children. The authors did not suggest the identified referents of good fathering could be generalized to all populations; however, the findings confirmed several universal "good" fathering qualities.

Summarizing the literature on today's good-enough parents, it becomes clear that a mother's role includes the subroles of homemaker, expert, caretaker, and nurturer. However, the subroles of caretaker and nurturer also appear in the literature on what it means to be a good father. Additional subroles that good fathers assume include provider, mentor, role model, teacher, protector, disciplinarian, and authoritarian. Unfortunately, previous researchers have often separated the parenting role into gendered divisions, thereby failing to investigate the challenges for same-sex or single-parented families and implying that parents will fail to meet the complete needs of children when either a mother or father is not part of the family (Cloughessy et al., 2019, Martino & Cumming-

Potvin, 2011). As such, it is essential to note the qualities of a good-enough parent,

regardless of family structure (single-parent, same-sex parents, transgender, adopted, and

so on), including the ideologies of sacrifice, responsibility, nurturing, protecting, moral

obligation, lifelong commitment, guidance and support, role modeling, kindness and

respect, communication and openness, discipline, and acceptance (Tam, 2019).

As gendered roles, mother and father roles remain continually in flux and may

vary across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and sexual orientations (Silverstein et al.,

2002). Although not always valued, followed, or practiced, sociocultural parent-role

ideologies are frequently imposed and influenced by generational parenting, other

mentoring authorities, and peers; in addition, parent-role ideologies are often internally

inconsistent within individuals (Pleck 1981; Roy, 2006; Silverstein et al., 2002). When

gender roles such as the role of mother or father are experienced as internally inconsistent

with other roles, attempts to conform to the cultural norm can result in psychological

stress, including conflict and role strain (Pleck 1981, 1995; Silverstein et al., 2002). Thus,

to understand the role strain of today's good-enough parent, it is important to consider the

impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on society and the parents' role.

Good-Enough Parenting during COVID-19. At the time this dissertation was

being written, the world was facing unprecedented and troublesome times because of the

COVID-19 pandemic. Today (November 22, 2020), at least 57,882,183 cases of COVID-

19 have been confirmed globally, including 1,377,395 deaths (WHO, 2020b). Although

many countries have been working to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on

health, economic, and societal consequences, the long-term impact of COVID-19 on

community, work, and family intersections is unknown.

The work–family social domain has been hit by COVID-19, facing immense pressure to maintain balance with few supports (Atabakhsh, 2020; Morrison & Morrison, 2021). To prevent the spread of illness, numerous businesses, schools, and daycare facilities have closed their doors for in-person services, and many parents employed as healthcare workers or parents who may have contracted the virus are living away from their families (Atabakhsh, 2020; Chirumbolo et al., 2020). As a result, parents must fulfill all childcare and homeschooling responsibilities while working from home (Atabakhsh, 2020; Chirumbolo et al., 2020; Cluver et al., 2020; Harvey, 2020). In addition, without school, children lack access to group activities, team sports, or playgrounds, forcing parents to increase their role quantity to include teacher and playmate (Atabakhsh, 2020; Chirumbolo et al., 2020; Cluver et al., 2020; Harvey, 2020).

For many children, schooling provides a consistent learning environment, stimuli to improve skills, physical and psychological health, meals (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020), socialization, and safety (Cluver et al., 2020). Depending upon parents' social position, resources, and life circumstances, their ability to provide a consistent learning environment, developmentally appropriate stimuli, physical and psychological health, meals, and safety may be limited (Cluver et al., 2020). Parents may not have the financial and technological resources to support distance learning (Graham, 2020). They may not be able to provide adequate supervision because of their own need to work, and they may not be able to provide a safe environment for children in circumstances of domestic or interpersonal partner violence (Cluver et al., 2020). Consequently, parents' additional demands during COVID-19 create struggles to fulfill a good-enough parenting role. When the parent role is added to other adult roles, such as spouse, worker, student,

teacher, and playmate, the parent becomes more susceptible to role overload, role conflict, role contagion, and role strain. In the case of doctoral CES students, the degree of role strain may be exponentially high because of the added academic and professional roles of student, intern, counselor, educator, supervisor, researcher, scholar, and leader.

Role Identity and Multiple-Role Students

CES doctoral students who decide to balance parenting while pursuing graduate education add to both their number of roles and the types of role identities they assume. According to McCall and Simmons (1978), as cited in Varpio et al. (2018), role identities are the characters and roles that people create for themselves when fulfilling specific social positions. For each individual, multiple roles are lived across all experiences, with each role not confined to a specific environment but informing a person's identity at all times (Varpio et al., 2018). For example, the role of mother is not confined to a woman's home environment. The role of mother informs a woman's identity while she is also at work (i.e., "a working mother") or supporting her children's extracurricular activities (i.e., "soccer mom").

Existing research across various professional disciplines has confirmed that balancing multiple roles can lead to role confusion, conflict, overload, contagion, and strain (Dickens et al., 2016; Herlihy & Corey, 2016; Home, 1997, 1998). With inadequate support, role strain frequently results in tension, stress, intrapersonal distress, and burnout (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Barnett & Marshall, 1992; Coverman, 1989; Dickens et al., 2016; Harrison, 1980; Home, 1997; Lois, 2006; Varpio et al., 2018; Simon, 1995). Exploring the unique meanings of role strain for individual doctoral CES students could

validate current and future doctoral student experiences and help educators understand factors contributing to attrition (Dickens et al., 2016).

Role-Strain Experiences of Doctoral CES Parents

In the CES profession, recognized roles include counselor, educator, supervisor, leader, advocate, researcher, and scholar. In a doctoral CES training program, the additional roles of student, intern, and (in some cases) graduate assistant may add to a person's role identity, which may already include several family-domain roles (son/daughter, sibling, spouse, parent), gender roles, employment roles, and any additional roles assumed because of COVID-19 (teacher, playmate). Combining education and family can be incredibly challenging for graduate students—both are "greedy institutions that demand exclusive time commitments and high flexibility" (Home, 1997, p. 336). Further, many graduate students fulfill an employment role in order to survive and care for their families (Home, 1997). Home (1997) explained, "Even 'veteran jugglers' find it difficult to negotiate time and money for less tangible activities such as studying and thesis writing, when both family and the university compete for their limited time and energy" (p. 344).

Dickens et al. (2016) examined counselor education doctoral students' experiences with multiple roles and relationships. The sample of participants in their phenomenological study included eight women and two men. Dickens et al. concluded that the counselor education doctoral students experienced role confusion, role conflict, and role strain when balancing two or more roles associated with their doctoral program. Words that were used to describe participant experiences included "trial by fire," "overwhelming," "overburdening," "challenging," "uncomfortable," "scary," and a

"struggle" (Dickens et al., 2016, pp. 243–246). In addition, participants described their experiences as "transformational," providing opportunities to develop their personal and professional selves (Dickens et al., 2016, p. 243). Additional positive effects that students experienced when balancing the multiple roles and relationships included friendships and collegial relationships with professors, modeling, and feeling prepared to be "an expert in the field" (Dickens et al., 2016, p. 244).

No known research in the counseling literature has specifically addressed role strain for doctoral CES parents; however, as previously stated, researchers have studied professional-mothers holding CES academic positions (Alexander-Albritton & Hill, 2015; Hermann et al., 2014; Neale-McFall et al., 2018; Stinchfield & Trepal, 2010; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012), CES doctoral student-mothers' experiences (Holm et al., 2015; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014), and the mentoring relationships between counselor-educator-mothers and student-mothers (Bruce, 1995; Solomon & Barden, 2016). For example, in a case study of two female counseling doctoral students, Bruce (1995) presented information about counselor-educator mentoring relationships with students and identified barriers faced by students by analyzing the students' perceptions and behaviors within a doctoral CES program. Although not specific to studying the role of mother within the field of CES, Bruce's (1995) research was significant for the field of counseling education because women constitute the majority of graduate students and, further, because mentoring improves student retention, development, competence, satisfaction, achievement, and career advancement. Bruce did not specifically address doctoral student role strain; however, Bruce addressed the role counselor-educator-mentors play in minimizing gender differences among students and in

assisting students in balancing academic and family responsibilities. The essence of Bruce's research emerged in a participant statement regarding the strain associated with balancing the role of student and parent: "I can do this. I can be professionally successful and still be the person I am. I am going to live with a certain amount of guilt when balancing my commitments to school and family. I just have to do the best I can to take care of the most important things" (p. 145).

Holm et al. (2015), Pierce and Herlihy (2013), and Trepal et al. (2014) conducted phenomenological studies specific to the experiences of mothers in doctoral CES programs. However, to date, no known quantitative studies exist specific to mothers in doctoral CES programs. Holm et al. (2015) focused on the experience of students becoming mothers while in a doctoral CES program; Trepal et al. (2014) focused on all mothers (generally) within a doctoral CES program, and Pierce et al. (2013) focused on the wellness of doctoral students who were mothers in CES programs. A summary of the research findings includes several important points for doctoral counselor education program leaders and educators to consider regarding mothers who are students. First, student-mothers struggle to balance multiple roles (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013); second, they may experience tremendous guilt from the strain of balancing the mother role with the student role (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014); and third, they consistently sacrifice components of their wellness to maintain various roles (consistent with the depletion hypothesis; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013). Despite these challenges, the findings show doctoral CES students who are mothers can successfully integrate and balance the identities of student and mother (Holm et al., 2015), and they can experience rewards in pursuing their doctoral degrees while parenting (consistent with the enrichment

hypothesis; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013). Finally, increased supportive mentoring is the most salient protective factor for new mothers in counselor education programs (Holm et al., 2015); university policies, in contrast, constitute a significant hindrance (Holm et al., 2015).

Findings from these qualitative studies validate the need for future research regarding parents' role strain in doctoral CES programs. Further, in Trepal et al. (2014), one participant suspected that fathers had more freedom to be doctoral students, assuming their wives/partners would take on the caretaker role. This assumption has not been substantiated because there is no known research on fathers' experiences in doctoral counselor education programs. However, the assumption supports a need for future research that may support or dispute this claim. Holms et al. (2015), Pierce and Herlihy (2013), and Trepal et al. (2014) identified a need to study the experience of parenting within CES doctoral programs from a more diverse sample, including the experiences of fathers, single parents, parents from minority populations, and queer parents. Understanding the meaning of role strain for all CES students with varying intersectional identities could give a voice to the student experience and help educators tailor interventions to support students and minimize the impact of role strain on program performance.

The Impact of Role Strain on Program Performance

Although Dickens et al. (2016) found many positive effects of doctoral counselor education students balancing multiple roles and relationships, the coinciding adverse effects must be considered from a gatekeeping perspective. Gatekeeping of students is both an accreditation and an ethical responsibility of counselor-educators (ACA, 2014;

CACREP, 2015; Freeman et al., 2016; Letourneau, 2016; Schuermann et al., 2018; Teixeira, 2017). The process of gatekeeping includes monitoring and evaluating students' knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, and remediating or preventing those who lack professional competence from progressing (CACREP, 2015, standard 6.B.3.f) by requiring students to address any personal concerns that may affect professional competency (ACA, 2014, standard F.8.d).

From a gatekeeping perspective, counselor-educators must acknowledge the "psychological distress" and "fear" that could occur for students who experience inconsistencies in role definitions (Dickens et al., 2016, p. 245). Power differential, boundary, and ethical issues may occur for CES students when dual relationships arise from multiple co-occurring roles (ACA, 2014, standard F.10.c., F.10.d.; Dickens et al., 2016; Schwab & Neukrug, 1994; Sullivan & Ogloff, 1998). For example, an inconsistency occurs when a doctoral CES student becomes a teaching assistant (TA) for one of the student's faculty members in a class where students are the TA's peers. In this case, the CES student is both TA and peer, responsible for grading, assessment, and evaluation (authority role), as well as peer support/friendship (social role). In this situation, special precautions must transpire to ensure that the CES faculty and TA avoid role conflict that may compromise the training experience or grades assigned (ACA, 2014, standard F.10.d.).

Solomon and Barden (2016) published an article on a mentorship framework for CES mothers. Although written from the CES educators' perspective, the authors reinforced the importance of counselor education program leaders acknowledging mothers' potential emotional barriers in academia. Emotional strain, such as mothers'

guilt at trying to balance family and academic career expectations (Solomon & Barden;

2016; Sutherland, 2010), might lead to decreased productivity and engagement (Holmes

et al., 2012; Solomon & Barden, 2016; Sorcinelli, 1994). If CES mothers face emotional

strain when trying to balance family and academic careers (Bruce, 1995; Solomon &

Barden; 2016; Sutherland, 2010), and this strain might lead to decreased productivity and

engagement (Holmes et al., 2012; Solomon & Barden, 2016; Sorcinelli, 1994), then

doctoral CES students who are mothers might experience the same personal concerns.

Regarding physical, mental, or emotional impairment, CES students are ethically

responsible for monitoring themselves and notifying faculty and supervisors when such

problems affect professional behavior (ACA, 2014, standard F.5.b.). Only students who

demonstrate self-awareness and emotional stability are suitable for a CACREP doctoral

CES program (CACREP, 2015). Although doctoral CES applicants may meet these

criteria upon admission, the personal concern of role strain for graduate student-parents

may render some students impaired or emotionally unstable during their enrollment. For

this reason, research was needed to explore the meaning that role strain held for parents

with varying intersectional identities within a doctoral CES program. Only when this

experience is better understood can CES students and faculty sensitively and ethically

intervene.

Chapter Summary

A summary of the literature on role strain, parenthood, and doctoral CES students

described a problem within the counseling profession that warranted further

investigation. Research regarding role strain and work-family conflict was characterized

by two hypotheses substantiated in the literature: the depletion hypothesis, which

explores the consequences of role strain, and the enrichment hypothesis, which explores

the benefits of role strain. Although several benefits of role strain have been identified

(e.g., buffer against stress, increased feelings of well-being, positive psychological health,

and increased social networks), many coinciding negative consequences of role strain

have also been found (e.g., psychological distress, job burden, job interruptions, job

distress, decreased engagement and productivity, family distress, and interpersonal

conflict). These negative consequences could create personal concerns for individuals

that may render them impaired or emotionally unstable.

As they relate to doctoral CES students, the ACA (2014) code of ethics and the

CACREP (2015) standards stipulate that counselor-educators must help students address

personal concerns that may affect professional competency. To date, no literature within

the counseling profession has specifically addressed role strain for doctoral CES student-

parents. Researchers should explore the meaning of role strain for doctoral CES students

(a) to ensure students' unique voices are heard and understood, (b) to increase students'

well-being and decrease their strain, and (c) to encourage gatekeepers to intervene with

effective interventions.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to explore the meaning of role strain for parents in CACREP-accredited doctoral CES programs. Defined by Goode (1960), role strain is the "felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations" (p. 483). Consistent with Goode's theory of role strain, role-strain experiences stem from conflicts occurring within the mind, body, and spirit when negotiating and balancing role obligations. Compounding work and family roles, such as the combination of parent, spouse, employee, and student roles, can exacerbate role strain (Newman & Newman, 2018).

Regarding doctoral CES student-parents, role-strain experiences may be especially prevalent because of additional academic roles (student, intern, graduate assistant) and the multitude of professional roles that comprise the occupation (counselor, educator, supervisor, researcher/scholar, and leader). Under these circumstances, doctoral CES students can experience both positive (the enrichment hypothesis) and negative (the depletion hypothesis) side effects of role strain. According to the enrichment hypothesis, power, social connectedness, well-being, and role gratification are possible (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; Thoits, 1983); in contrast, the depletion hypothesis proposes that an increase in roles leads to inadequate performance, psychological distress, and burnout (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Cohen & Janicki-Deverts, 2012; Home, 1998; Rothbard, 2001; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; Tiedje et al., 1990). Consequently, the depletion hypothesis presents role strain as a significant personal concern for doctoral CES student-parents, warranting increased awareness and potential intervention from counselor-educators (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2015).

An interpretive phenomenological research approach best answered the central

research question, "As a parent, what does it mean to experience role strain in a doctoral

CES program?" and the two subquestions: (a) "How is role strain experienced in relation

to intersectional aspects of identity?" and (b) "In what ways, if any, do historical,

political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures contribute to role strain?"

The title of this dissertation, *The Meaning of Role Strain: Voices of Parents in Doctoral*

Counselor Education and Supervision Programs, reflects the study's methodology

described in this chapter. First, the chapter situates the four philosophical assumptions of

qualitative research within a social constructivist interpretive framework. Second, the

rationale for the research design appears, followed by identification of and justification

for the study participants. Next, the chapter describes data collection and analysis

methods, followed by a discussion of the measures for ensuring trustworthiness. Finally,

the chapter presents the delimitations of the research design.

The Rationale for the Research Design

Distinctly different from quantitative researchers who seek to test, verify, control,

predict, and quantify data, qualitative researchers seek to study people in their natural

settings to understand or interpret social situations and interactions and the meanings

people assign to them (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The primary goal of qualitative

research is to achieve understanding, and the primary instrument for data collection and

analysis is the researcher (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). In qualitative inquiry, the

researcher becomes immersed in the worlds of others to achieve a complete, multifaceted,

and intersubjective understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Bloomberg &

Volpe, 2019). Intersubjectivity refers to the overlapping subjective lenses that the

researcher and participants bring to a qualitative study together (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). With this in mind, the only way to achieve a real context of a phenomenon is to engage interactively in an emergent and flexible research process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Qualitative research methodologies, genres, or traditions include case studies, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, action research, critical genres, and phenomenology (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Each methodological approach to qualitative inquiry has unique philosophical underpinnings, theoretical principles, and implementations of the research design and methods (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The thread that connects the philosophy, methodology, and the application of methods is the researcher's position (Mills & Birks, 2014). The initial step toward formulating the study is assessing the knowledge claims the researcher brings to the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Knowledge Claims and Philosophical Assumptions

A knowledge claim is an assumption about what and how the researcher will learn during the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Knowledge claims are also referred to as research paradigms, worldviews (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019), or philosophical assumptions. The four philosophical assumptions of qualitative research include ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology (Creswell, 2017). These philosophical assumptions guide research action, thereby informing and shaping the conceptualization, practice, and nature of research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Ontology relates to the nature of reality and its characteristics (Creswell, 2017), in which researchers claim to know the essence of knowledge (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Qualitative researchers believe that knowledge stems from multiple realities, including

the varying realities of researchers and research participants (Creswell, 2017).

Epistemology, in contrast, focuses on how knowledge is known (Creswell, 2017). The

epistemological researcher tries to get as close as possible to the research participants,

obtains subjective evidence from participants, attempts to lessen the distance between

themselves and the subjects of research, and relies heavily on participants' quotes and

fieldwork to "know what they know" (Creswell, 2017, p. 20).

Axiology refers to the role of values within research (Creswell, 2017). All

researchers bring personal values to a study; however, qualitative researchers disclose

their personal beliefs, biases, and values in relation to information gathered from the field

(Creswell, 2017). Finally, qualitative research methodology is inductive, emerging, and

shaped by the researcher's experience of collecting and analyzing data (Creswell, 2017).

The inductive nature of qualitative methodology fosters a degree of flexibility and

modification as the study unfolds (Creswell, 2017). These philosophical assumptions help

establish the direction of research goals and outcomes, develop evaluative criteria for

research-related decisions, and serve as the building blocks underpinning a researcher's

interpretive qualitative research framework (Creswell, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Social Constructivist Interpretive Framework

Interpretive frameworks are "paradigms, or beliefs that the researcher brings to

the process of research, or they may be theories or theoretical orientations that guide the

practice of research" (Creswell, 2017, p. 22). Interpretative frameworks guide the

researcher with connected and appropriate methods for the research paradigm, and they

may help readers understand the researcher's process (Creswell, 2017). Although new

interpretive frameworks may emerge with research over time, existing interpretive

frameworks include postpositivism, social constructivism, transformative/postmodern

approaches, pragmatism, and critical race, feminist, queer, or disability approaches

(Creswell, 2017).

In the current study, a social constructivist interpretative framework guided my

ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological beliefs. Consistent with the

social constructivist interpretative framework, ontology (reality) explores participants'

multiple lived experiences and their interactions with others (Creswell, 2017). Further,

reality was "co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and shaped by

individual experience" (epistemology; Creswell, 2017, p. 35). To understand participants'

phenomenological experience, I honored each participant's values (axiology) through an

inductive research methodology (Creswell, 2017). Participants' realities emerged through

interviewing, photovoice data collection and analysis, and thematic analysis of all

transcribed data (Creswell, 2017).

Social Constructivist Interpretive Framework and Phenomenology

This study's research question and the social constructivism interpretive

framework were well suited for a phenomenological methodology based on Heideggerian

interpretive phenomenology principles. Phenomenology is the preferred study method for

research aimed at assessing how individuals seek to understand the worlds in which they

live and work (Creswell, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2015). Regarding

phenomenology, Creswell (2017) explained that individuals develop subjective meanings

of their experiences, meanings that gear toward particular objects or things. Because

meanings are often varied and multiple, the researcher must look for complexity in the

participants' views rather than narrowing down the meanings into a few categories, ideas, or themes (Creswell, 2017). In agreement with social constructivism principles, the phenomenological researcher relies on the participants' views of the situation being studied, views informed by interactions with others within a social, cultural, and historical context (Creswell, 2017).

Aligning with a social constructivist interpretive framework, the central research question and related subquestions were designed to be broad and general so that research participants could construct personal meaning from a situation, "a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons" (Creswell, 2017, p. 24). I sought to understand the specific contexts in which participants lived and worked, including the social, cultural, and historical influences of these settings on the participants (Creswell, 2017). Additionally, I recognized social, cultural, and historical influences on participants' lives and the impacts on participants' interpretations of their experiences (Creswell, 2017). To account for personal social, cultural, and historical influences, I "positioned" myself by acknowledging and making my biases known (Creswell, 2017).

Interpretive Phenomenology

Heideggerian interpretive phenomenology is not only a research method but also a way of being in the world (Munhall, 2013). In order to conduct interpretive phenomenological research, one must become phenomenological in a personal way of being. Becoming phenomenological means embracing interpretive phenomenology's philosophical tenets, becoming "unknowing" (p. 153) and listening with the "third ear" (p. 153) to hear new and varying interpretations of reality, searching for meaning in experience for self and others, and becoming increasingly understanding, empathetic,

authentic, and compassionate (Munhall, 2013). These characteristics, which are also

essential qualities of counselors and counselor researchers, are necessary for attuning to

and hearing others' language through their distinctive voices and unique narratives

(Munhall, 2013).

According to Munhall (2013), the findings of interpretive phenomenology

research contribute to a greater understanding of the meaning of experience for self and

others, legitimizing differences among people, ridding individuals of assumptions,

preconceptions, and myths, and freeing society from outdated beliefs or stereotypes that

often oppress people and cultures. By discovering individuals' voices not yet heard,

interpretive phenomenological research promotes individualized care, understanding, and

meaning (Munhall, 2013). However, to achieve these objectives, there must be an

understanding of intersubjectivity—the intersection of two subjective perspectives in a

phenomenological study: the researcher's perspective and the participant's perspective

(Munhall, 2013). Munhall (2013) visualized intersubjectivity as two circles, one

containing the researcher's worldview and the other containing the participant's

worldview. During data collection and analysis, these two circles overlap as the circles

merge partway, forming an intersubjective space wherein the researcher and participant

can agree, disagree, compromise, or form new meaning together (Munhall, 2013).

Understanding Meaning in Interpretive Phenomenology

Understanding meaning for participants is the cornerstone of interpretive

phenomenology (Munhall, 2013). Munhall's (2012, 2013) approach to interpretive

phenomenology emphasized the importance of hearing and understanding the meaning of

something. Munhall (2012, 2013) designed an approach with the nursing profession in

mind; nursing is a profession wherein it is easy to become the "expert" of others'

experiences through highly prescribed diagnosis and treatment methods (assessments,

evaluations, protocols) but with little thought given to understanding patients' unique

experiences.

In terms of the current study, doctoral CES students receive education, training,

and support from faculty through CACREP-accredited programs that are standardized,

structured, rigorous, and laden with assessments, evaluations, and policies and

procedures. Munhall (2013) cautioned against making interventions based on aggregate

knowledge and a one-size-fits-all approach—blind acceptance of procedure manuals,

prescriptive theory, and stereotyping of care can be detrimental (Munhall, 2013). In

opposition to research approaches that are overly mechanistic and inflexible, Munhall

(2013) aligned with interpretive phenomenology, which allows the researcher to enter

into participants' "life-worlds" (p. 149, 150). Participants' life-worlds include their

unique differences, beliefs, attitudes, and varying understandings of meanings based on

their history, embodiment, and subjective interpretation of meaning in an experience.

Munhall (2013) asserted that understanding the various meanings of individuals'

experiences enables care providers to develop a repertoire of directions and possible ways

to guide practice and policy (Morse, 1996; Munhall, 2013). Thus, professionals could

deliver the best care to people through a deep understanding of others' lived experiences

(Munhall, 2013).

Philosophical Underpinnings of Interpretive Phenomenology

Interpretive phenomenology, also referred to as *hermeneutics* or the Heideggerian

approach to phenomenology (Munhall, 2013), has several philosophical concepts that

ground the methodology, including the interplay of life-worlds; a focus on the

backgrounds and "thrownness" of individuals; an emphasis on language, narratives, and

construction of meaning; and the process of de-centering or unknowing (Munhall, 2013).

All phenomenology researchers study individuals' lived experiences; however,

interpretive phenomenology highlights participants' lived experiences through an in-

depth analysis of their language (Munhall, 2013). During data collection, research

participants narrate the meaning of their experience through contingencies of their "life-

worlds," including temporality, spatiality, embodiment, and relational (Munhall, 2013,

p. 149, 150). Munhall (2013) explained the interrelatedness of individuals' life-worlds

and "thrownness":

> We are "thrown" or born into this world during a specific time of history, into a
>
> specific location, culture, economic status, in a body which may be healthy or not,
>
> male, female and further "thrown" or born into a country, nationality, family
>
> intact or not intact, we may or may not have siblings, friends, support and/or
>
> colleagues. These then are the life-worlds of temporality, spatiality, embodiment
>
> and relational; our "being-in-the-world." (p. 149)

Through the concepts of life-world and thrownness, the researcher comes to understand

that participants have unique, situated contexts that influence their subjective experiences

of what it means to be in the world (Munhall, 2013). Consequently, interpretation and

self-understanding pass down through individuals' "backgrounds" (Munhall, 2013,

pp. 150, 156). Similar to the life-world, background provides conditions for human

actions and perceptions (Munhall, 2013). Background is where individuals are situated,

including their past, present, and view of what can be (Munhall, 2013).

In terms of the construction of meaning, Munhall (2013) relied on participants interpreting their own words as they described the meaning of their personal experiences through their historically, culturally, and socially influenced languages. In terms of this study, interpretation occurred at two levels: the participants' interpretation of the meaning of their experiences (Munhall, 2013) and my interpretation of what the participants' interpretations might mean to the counseling profession or society (Munhall, 2013).

During the interviews, a meaningful construction of experience was achieved through prompts and encouragement such as, "I am not sure what you mean by that" (Munhall, 2013, p. 152), or "Please, go on, I am not sure I understand" (Munhall, 2013, p. 153). If there was silence during an interview, I asked questioned similar to "What are you thinking?" (Munhall, 2013, p. 152). Regardless of the statement or question used during the interview or dialogue with the participant, I remained neutral and did not lead the participant (Munhall, 2013). In addition, meaning was discovered by noticing participants' affective domains, including facial expressions, demeanor, and emotions (Munhall, 2013).

To remain neutral and unknowing, I disregarded personal mental chatter that may have interfered with the process by listening with "the third ear" (Munhall, 2013, p. 153). According to Munhall, listening with the third ear is possible after the researcher engages in de-centering. De-centering, or the process of unknowing, includes acknowledging personal biases, preconceptions, assumptions, intuitions, motives, theories, previously learned knowledge, and ideas that might guide understanding the participant's experiences (Munhall, 2013). De-centering includes "getting out of your way" (Munhall, 2013, p. 153) by attempting research as a blank slate. After de-centering, I heard the

individual's language with openness and receptivity, without internal noise (Munhall, 2013).

Munhall's Approach to Interpretive Phenomenological Inquiry

In this study, I used Munhall's (2012, 2013) approach to interpretive phenomenological inquiry to answer the central research question, "As a parent, what does it mean to experience role strain in a doctoral CES program?" Munhall (2013) organized a research process approach into seven categories encompassing the complete research picture from introduction to recommendations. Section 1 starts with the phenomenological aim of the inquiry, aligned with the introduction and literature review phase of research (Munhall, 2013). Consistent with Munhall's (2013) Section 1, I have articulated the study's aim in the form of a phenomenological question, distinguished the experience to be studied, and explained my process of de-centering or coming to "unknow" (Munhall, 2013). Section 2, the review of philosophical literature (immersion; Munhall, 2013), aligns with the study's rationale. Consistent with Munhall's (2013) Section 2, I have described in detail the philosophical underpinnings of interpretive phenomenology and articulated philosophical perspectives and assumptions that influenced the phenomenological project.

Section 3, the phenomenological inquiry, aligns with the research's data collection phase (Munhall, 2013). According to Munhall, interpretive inquiry includes existential investigation of literature on the experience (post-interviewing) and artistic expressions found in art, film, photography, and the like. Consistent with Munhall's Section 3, I interviewed participants within the intersubjectivity framework, assumed a position of "unknowing," and integrated each participant's contingencies or life-world.

During data collection, participants described and interpreted the meanings they gave to their role-strain experiences.

Section 4, the analysis of interpretive information, aligns with the research's data analysis phase (Munhall, 2013). Consistent with Munhall's Section 4, I integrated existential investigation within the phenomenological context during data analysis, including participants' situated context, expressions, feelings, metaphors, appearances, and concealments. Follow-up interviews with willing participants were conducted to ensure that the individual's narratives captured the meaning of their experiences (Munhall, 2013).

Section 5, writing the interpretive phenomenological narrative for each subject (the meaning of the experience), aligns with the research results (Munhall, 2013). Chapter 4 of this dissertation includes all of the study's meanings—the "general" and the "particular" (Munhall, 2013, p. 158). Consistent with Munhall's approach, I included the participants' interpretations of meaning within their situated contexts and life-world contingencies.

Section 6, writing a narrative on the study's meaning, aligns with the research study's findings and implications (Chapter 5 of this dissertation; Munhall, 2013). This content area explores what the study's interpretation meant to individuals, to practitioners, and to the profession for which the research was intended (Munhall, 2013). Finally, Section 7 aligns with the recommendation's component of the research study (also in Chapter 5). Section 7 includes a critique of the study's interpretation with implications and recommendations for political, social, cultural, healthcare, family, and other social systems (Munhall, 2013). The first level of interpretation occurred as the

participants interpreted their own words, showing what they meant in their descriptions of their experiences (Munhall, 2013). The second level of interpretation came from me. Through studying intersubjectivity and participants' meaning, I gleaned new knowledge for practice, policy, change, and future research directions (Munhall, 2013).

Research Sample

The Research Sample section identifies and describes the research methods used to select the research participants, site, sample size; in addition, I identify ethical considerations. In the current study, full- and part-time doctoral student-parents and actively earning course credit from a CACREP-accredited CES program were invited to participate. For the phenomenological study, these participants committed to discussing their role-strain experiences within this setting (Munhall, 2012).

Sampling

At the time of the research, no specific database existed to identify full- and part-time doctoral student-parents and actively earning course credit from a CACREP-accredited CES program. For this reason, and because qualitative research sample selection is purposeful by nature (Creswell, 2017; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Patton, 2015), a purposeful sampling method was used to recruit the necessary sample for this study. Purposeful sampling was uniquely suited for phenomenological investigation because this method involves "selecting information-rich cases, with the objective of yielding insight and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 186). Further, a phenomenological researcher seeks participants who have experienced a specific phenomenon; thus, researchers have explicit reasons (purposes) for selecting the sample (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Among the many variations of purposeful sampling (typical, critical, snowball, homogeneous, theoretical), applying criterion sampling ensures that participants meet the criteria of the phenomenon being studied (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell, 2017; Peoples, 2021). Using criterion sampling, the participants self-selected and self-identified as a full- or part-time doctoral student who was a parent and actively earning course credit from a CACREP-accredited CES program. The Counselor Education and Supervision NETwork – Listserv (CESNET-L) was used for recruitment (see Appendix A for Permission to Recruit through CESNET-L letter from Dr. Jencius).

Participants were invited to participate in the research study through the CESNET-L listserv (see Appendix B for CESNET-L Recruitment Post). The invitation included my name, credentials, and contact information; my advisor's name and contact information; the institutional affiliation; indication that the study passed through the University of the Cumberlands' institutional review board (IRB); the purpose of the study; the reason for the study (degree fulfillment); how the study would be used; a description of what the study involved; the voluntary nature of participation; and a link to the demographic survey and informed-consent letter completed through Qualtrics (see Appendix C for sample information).

The demographic survey ensured that individuals met the study's criteria. The demographic questionnaire included educational variables (i.e., CACREP-accredited doctoral CES program, earned course credit, region of the program), parenting status (parent or no children, age[s] of child[ren]), and other standard demographic information (relationship status, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, geographic location, age).

In addition, a snowball sampling method was used to ensure an appropriate sample size. Snowball sampling is a recruiting method that relies on appropriate participants to identify and refer others known to be part of the same phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell, 2017; Peoples, 2021). One participant was recruited through the snowball sampling method. Finally, maximum variation sampling was used to eliminate one participant following data saturation. Maximum variation sampling involves selecting participants because they represent the broadest possible range of the characteristics or dimensions studied (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell, 2017). This sampling approach ensured that findings reflected the greatest variety in characteristics and perspectives, ideal for qualitative research. This sampling method aligned with a social constructivist interpretative framework, consistent with interpretive phenomenology philosophy, and addressed the limitations found in other related studies wherein samples did not represent a diverse population (Holm et al., 2015; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014).

Sample Size

For a phenomenological study, sample sizes are chosen to ensure that the sample accurately represents the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2017). According to Creswell (2017), phenomenological sample sizes have ranged from one (Padilla, 2003) to up to 325 participants (Polkinghorne, 1989). For a phenomenological study, Dukes (1984) recommended a sample size between three and 10 participants, Morse (1994) recommended a sample size of six participants, Peoples (2021) suggested a sample size between eight and 15 participants, and Creswell (2017) suggested a sample size between five and 25 participants. For photovoice methodology

specifically (discussed in the data collection methods section of this chapter), Wang

(1999) and Wang and Burris (1997) recommended a sample of six to 10 participants.

In accordance with these recommendations, a sample size between five and 10

participants was chosen for this study. Although the sample size was an important

consideration, phenomenological experts consider saturation (the point at which no more

new data are being obtained from participants) as the critical focus regarding sample size

(Cohen et al., 2000; Peoples, 2021). According to Peoples (2021), data saturation is the

goal, even though choosing a sample size is suggested.

Ethical Considerations

Researchers are morally bound to conduct their studies in ways that minimize

harm to those involved (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). In that regard, an ethical research

design is equally important as an intellectually coherent and compelling research design

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Although ethical issues can arise in all phases of the

research process, ethical issues primarily focus on safeguarding participants' rights,

including informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and protecting participants from

harm (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The University of the Cumberlands' IRB reviewed

this study's research proposal and assessed the research design for ethical issues. IRB

approval was granted on January 26, 2021 (Appendix D).

Informed Consent

According to guidelines set forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services, Office for Human Research Protections (2016), research participants can only

enter into the data collection phase of research after completing and signing the informed

consent form. Following approval from the IRB, the research participants signed the

informed consent document through Qualtrics. A Word document copy of the informed

consent and demographic survey appears in Appendix C. The participants were able to

proceed to the demographic survey only after providing consent for the study. Further, I

was able to capture the participants' names and contact information only after consent

was provided and after participants willingly completed the demographic survey in its

entirety. The informed consent document included a statement about the nature of

research; the purpose of the research; the expected duration of the participant's time

involved; the procedures to be followed; a statement that denied any reasonably

foreseeable risks from participation in the study; a description of the foreseeable benefits

expected from the research; a statement describing the extents taken to maintain the

confidentiality of records; the participant's research rights; and a statement that

participation in the study was voluntary and the participant could discontinue at any time

without penalty (OHRP, 2016).

Ensuring Confidentiality

As previously stated, the informed consent and demographic data survey were

collected using Qualtrics, a secure web-based system for conducting research surveys.

Qualtrics treats all data as confidential and guarantees that data are kept safe from

unauthorized users through ISO 27001 certification, the Federal Risk and Authorization

Management Program (FedRAMP), Health Information Trust Alliance (HITRUST)

certification, and SOC2 Type 2 certification (Qualtrics, 2020b). ISO 27001 certification

is a recognized proactive risk management standard that ensures information security best

practices in asset management, access control, cryptography, and network security

(Qualtrics, 2020b). FedRAMP is the "gold standard" of U.S. federal security compliance

(Qualtrics, 2020b, para. 3). FedRAMP is a government-wide initiative encompassing

more than 300 policies and procedures to protect sensitive data stored in cloud-based

software (Qualtrics, 2020c). HITRUST is the health industry standard for the Health

Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) security requirements (Qualtrics,

2020b). Finally, SOC2 Type 2 certification, a recognized standard for a comprehensive

security program, ensures that data are protected with the latest technology and best

controls (Qualtrics, 2020b).

Participants' personally identifiable information (PII) and personal health

information (PHI) were stored with a password-protected login for Qualtrics. Data were

kept secure by Qualtrics's multifactor authentication log-on (Qualtrics, 2020b). The

participants' PII and PHI were not disclosed or published in the research study results.

All qualitative interviews were conducted using Zoom. Zoom sessions were

recorded and stored in my password-protected laptop's hard drive. The interviews were

transcribed into digital word files using software called Rev. Rev follows best practices

for handling personally identifiable information (PII) with guidance from the published

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR; Rev, 2020). Rev has trained its employees

on best practices for security and privacy; in addition, its transcribers sign nondisclosure

agreements (NDAs) and strict confidentiality agreements (Rev, 2020). Rev has a detailed

privacy and security program and allows customers to request that Rev purge video,

audio, and document data from its system.

All research materials (written, photographed, and recorded) were stored on the

hard drive of my password-protected laptop and backed up on a password-protected

external hard drive, encrypted using BitLocker. All research-related materials will be

kept for no more than six years following the study's completion. At that time, data will be destroyed by deleting these files from the laptop's hard drive, the external hard drive, email, and Qualtrics. Printed or hard copies of data do not exist.

Despite all efforts to delete research data following the six-year period, data may exist on backups and server logs beyond this research project's timeframe. Participants were informed of such confidentiality risks in the informed consent for research participation. Although total privacy could not be guaranteed, several precautions were taken to protect participants' PII and PHI. All participants chose aliases for the study to avoid making links between individual responses and participants' identities (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell, 2017). In addition, all interview sessions were conducted individually; thus, only I, the sole researcher, knew the identities of the participants. Finally, all visible faces in the photographs were blurred to protect subjects' identities. It is important to note that even though faces are blurred in an attempt to conceal identities, consumers who view this study's publication or related presentations may still recognize images of people in the pictures. Participants were informed of this risk in the informed consent.

Protecting Participants from Harm

Counselor researchers have an ethical obligation to uphold nonmaleficence; that is, to avoid actions that cause harm to research participants (ACA, 2014). To ensure research participants' safety and to align with professional responsibilities, counselors who conduct research and seek publication should review and uphold Section G of the *2014 ACA Code of Ethics* (ACA, 2014). Section G of the *2014 ACA Code of Ethics* addresses research and publication within five major components: (a) research

responsibilities, (b) rights of research participants, (c) managing and maintaining boundaries, (d) reporting results, and (e) publications and presentations. Within these five sections are 31 ethical standards that counselor researchers must use to contribute ethically and responsibly to the profession (ACA, 2014).

The ACA (2014) ethical standards align with Bloomberg and Volpe's (2019) ethical focus on safeguarding participants' rights, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and protecting participants from harm. Several ACA (2014) ethical standards overlap with the OHRP (2016) informed consent requirements. Therefore, by upholding both the ACA (2014) code of ethics and the research regulations set forth by OHRP, counselor researchers advance the counseling profession, promote human dignity and diversity, and enhance the quality of life in society (ACA, 2014).

Data Collection Methods

For qualitative research, extensive engagement with participants within their social world is required for accurate understanding of their subjective meanings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher's techniques, procedures, and tools used to generate and collect participant information are a part of the data collection methods (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The systematic implementation of data collection methods must demonstrate methodological congruence or alignment with the study's research questions and overall design (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Richards & Morse, 2013). In most cases, researchers use various methods to investigate a research problem so that a deeper understanding of the phenomenological experience can emerge (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

In this study, a triangulation of methods was used to enhance data quality through multiple sources and in multiple ways (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Further, triangulation methods provided an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon by highlighting various facets of participants' situations and experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The three qualitative data collection methods used for the study were observation, interviews, and document review through photovoice. Observation, interviews, and document review through photovoice aligned with the social constructivist interpretive framework and interpretive phenomenological approaches, as well as with the interview method influenced by Munhall (2012, 2013).

Observation

In qualitative research, researchers use observation, including participant-observation, to discover and explain complex interactions in natural social settings (Bloomberg & Volpe (2019). Participant-observation occurs when the researcher is both a participant and observer of the phenomenon through immersion in the setting, experiencing reality as the research participants do (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). This data collection method reflects the notion of "positionality" within research, showing how qualitative researchers disclose their beliefs, biases, and values related to the information gathered from the field (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell, 2017).

Unlike interviews, observations represent a firsthand account of the phenomenon of interest rather than relying on another's interpretation of experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). My experience of becoming a new mother while enrolled in the program led to my interest in the research subject; therefore, I was naturally both a participant and an observer of the phenomenon through immersion. For these reasons, I implemented the

interpretive phenomenological tradition of fixing or inscribing observations in field notes (journaling) to aid the process of de-centering (observing biases and making them explicit; Creswell, 2017; Munhall, 2017; Peoples, 2021).

Through journaling, my previous understandings about the phenomenon emerged before starting data analysis (Peoples, 2021). Journaling helped me concentrate on the data by removing distractions (internal noise; Munhall, 2013; Peoples, 2021). Journaling allowed revisions in my thinking as I replaced previous conceptions of the phenomenon with more fitting ones through the process of reflection (Gadamer, 1975; Munhall, 2012; Peoples, 2021). Further, journaling allowed my personal biases and preconceptions to develop into a new projection of meaning (Gadamer, 1975; Munhall, 2012; Peoples, 2021).

Interpretive observational journaling served several additional purposes in the process of qualitative inquiry. Journaling enabled me to record aspects of the settings and interviews that I could not discern from Zoom recordings or transcriptions (Cohen et al., 2000). Examples of this included the physical environments or settings of participants; their body language, tone of voice, demeanor, and dress; environmental distractions present during the interview; and special symbols that were visible during the interview process (Cohen et al., 2000; Munhall, 2012). By journaling these observations, I was able to provide detailed profile descriptions of participants in Chapter 4 to enhance understanding and meaning (Cohen et al., 2000).

The process of interpretive observational journaling allowed me to reflect and self-evaluate (Cohen et al., 2000; Munhall, 2012). Reflection and self-evaluation helped me assess my relationships with participants. During the process, I consciously and

deliberately adjusted my interview techniques to best effect (Cohen et al., 2000). Finally, observational journaling recorded my hunches, ideas, insights, early impressions, instances of confusion, information that was challenging to understand (Cohen et al., 2000), frustrations, surprises, life-world observations, and situatedness (Munhall, 2012). By journaling, I refined observations as the study unfolded and recorded my related experience, including my own constructions of meaning (Cohen et al., 2000; Munhall, 2012). A sample of my research journal appears in Appendix E.

Interviews

Intensive interviewing has become the most common data collection method for qualitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Charmaz, 2015). Qualitative interviews can capture participants' narratives with rich descriptions, thus allowing researchers to clarify information and probe for deeper understanding of experiences of a phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Through interviews, researchers attempt to elicit participants' views of a phenomenon through their narratives, experiences, perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and social worlds (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

For a phenomenological study, researchers select a structured, unstructured, or semistructured interview protocol (Peoples, 2021). Structured interviews use specific, predetermined questions that elicit participant information regarding various facets of the research question (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Peoples, 2021). Structured interviews limit the researcher's ability to deviate from the predetermined line of questioning, thus restricting the participants' ability to share spontaneous information that may be relevant to the phenomenon being studied (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Peoples, 2021). Contrarily, unstructured interviews occur in a conversational style (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019),

fostering flexibility and an organic, familiar feel. Semistructured interviews fall in the middle; they use an interview guide to facilitate a focused exploration of a specific phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019) while allowing participants to present other information that may become relevant to the study (Peoples, 2021). For doctoral students conducting a phenomenological study for their dissertation, Peoples recommended the semistructured interview protocol to balance focused questioning and disciplined naturalness.

Interpretive phenomenologists have sought a balance between focused questioning and conversational naturalness (Cohen et al., 2000; Munhall, 2012). Interpretive researchers believe that participants have already interpreted the meaning of their lives through the process of turning their experiences into stories or narratives (Cohen et al., 2000). Further, the narratives of participants' lives are always autobiographical and meaningful; therefore, interview questions should aim to explore the meaning of human experience (Cohen et al., 2000). An interviewer might begin the interview with a question that turns the participant to the experience and asks them to talk about it casually and conversationally, for example, "What does [this experience] mean to you?" or "What is it like to have [this experience]?" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 63). The initial questions can then be probed in an unstructured, casual, and conversational way to help the participant describe a detailed experience (Cohen et al., 2000; Ray, 1994).

For the current study, the central research question presented in Chapter 1 was used to begin the semistructured interview in a focused way: "As a parent, what does it mean to experience role strain in a doctoral CES program?" This research question aligned with Cohen et al.'s (2000) recommendation for a casual but focused introduction.

Munhall's (2012) interpretive interview procedures (outlined later) were used to deepen conversational naturalness and the expression of meaning through participants' narratives. When participants exhausted the focus question, the two research subquestions were used to advance the dialogue: "How is role strain experienced in relation to intersectional aspects of identity? In what ways, if any, do historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures contribute to role strain?"

Finally, Cohen et al. (2000) and Munhall (2012) believed that participants often reflect on their interview and phenomenological experiences after their first interviews. Therefore, interpretive researchers should conduct at least two interviews with participants to reduce researcher bias and expand upon the participant narratives with more description and meaning (Cohen et al., 2000; Munhall, 2012). In the current study, I completed only one semistructured and structured interview per each participant; however, I met with participants for an orientation session (required), a member-checking session (at will), and overall, had prolonged engagement with participants across two academic semesters.

Munhall's Interpretive Interview Procedures

Although some have argued that phenomenology is a process and not a method, Munhall (2012) contended that students and researchers who want to engage in a phenomenological study should present a proposal that delineates a method. This method must be clearly articulated in order to pass through the IRB and lead to data collection (Munhall, 2012). After years of personal research and assisting masters and doctoral students with their theses and dissertations, Munhall (2012) refined a holistic, flexible, and semistructured interpretive phenomenological approach. To ensure the practicality of

the data collection methods for the current study's interviews, I replicated Munhall's

(2012) process for existential inquiry, as outlined in the following paragraphs.

To begin, Munhall's (2012) existential inquiry involves attentiveness,

intuitiveness, constant reflection, de-centering, active listening, conversations, clarifying,

synthesizing, writing, and other creative interventions such as creating verses or taking

photographs (to be discussed further in the document review component of data

collection). Munhall recommended researchers carry a small notebook to write down

insights during spontaneous interview moments. By capturing spontaneous material that

is spoken before it is read, researchers can "dwell" on or contemplate the meaning that

the participant was attempting to convey during the early data collection phase (Munhall,

2012).

At the onset of interviewing, the researcher must reinforce that participants'

stories are their own and that there is no correct way to respond to prompts (Munhall,

2012). The researcher should assure the participants that their willingness to share

personal and sometimes painful experiences would enhance the meaning of their

narrative and support the study's authenticity (Munhall, 2012). The researcher must

clarify that what participants want to share is essential to be heard; the researcher values

their exploration in their language and meaning of experience (Munhall, 2012). With this

in mind, participants who "wander" or stray from talking about the phenomenon must be

handled without judgment (Munhall, 2012). The researcher must refrain, as much as

possible, from refocusing the participant—in fact, wandering provides the researcher with

latent meaning (Munhall, 2012). Wandering may indicate that the participant does not

wish to discuss the subject further, or wandering may present additional data that become

clearer and significant during interpretation and analysis (Munhall, 2012). Through

conversational probing, the researcher can offer questions such as "Please go on, what are

you thinking?" (Munhall, 2012, p. 147) to move participants to seek meaning.

Regarding the verbal exchange between researcher and participant, interactive

dialogue (a conversation) is the preferred method for questioning (Cohen et al., 2000;

Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Morse, 1991; Munhall, 2012). Interactive dialoging includes

exchanging information between participant and researcher in both directions, but

emphasizing that the researcher listens to whatever the participant says (Cohen et al.,

2000). Lines of questioning must remain neutral, avoid structuring or leading a person's

story, and avoid seeking to validate the researcher's personal beliefs (Munhall, 2012).

Munhall suggested the following question lead-ins to help facilitate participants'

narratives: "Could you give me an example of that?" "Do you remember how that made

you feel?" "What did that do for you?" "Go on . . . could you elaborate more on that?"

and "Can you tell me what you are thinking about?" (p. 150). Pauses and silence during

the interviews should be allowed, because pauses yield additional reflection and

opportunity for deeper probing (Munhall, 2012). Finally, the researcher must attempt to

capture clinical aspects of participants' experiences (physical, psychological, or

psychosomatic illness), emotional responses (mood, feelings), and other descriptions of

their way of being (body, posture, intonation; Munhall, 2012).

In this study, I offered questions and discussion prompts based on Munhall's

(2012) suggested lead-ins during both the semistructured and structured (photovoice)

interviews as needed to facilitate participants' narratives and to clarify meaning.

Examples of my lead-ins: "Can you tell me a little bit more about . . . ?" "Could you say

more about what [identified experience] looked like or felt like?" "What are they really saying?" "I'm curious about [identified experience] from your perspective, your experience . . ." "I know you said [participant statement]. Can you help me to understand that a little bit more?" "What do they [people in the photographs] want me to know or hear?" "I'm struck by [detail in the photograph] . . ." In addition, I used paraphrasing and reflecting with participants to ensure that I was hearing and capturing their narratives accurately. Examples of paraphrasing and reflecting lead-ins included "It sounds like . . ." or "What I'm hearing is . . ." This process enabled participants to correct my interpretations of their experience.

As suggested by Munhall (2012), I did not automatically stop interviews if participants experienced a somatic or emotional struggle; however, I used good judgment, offered opportunities to take breaks or end at participants' will, recognized participants' needs for relief or relaxation, and shifted direction as needed. If the participant demonstrated signs of distress, casual chitchat or lighthearted banter was used as an intervention for comforting and building rapport and trust (Munhall, 2012). Participants were also provided with a Support for Discomfort handout (Appendix F) as needed.

Document Review

Art can reveal deeper layers of meaning (Munhall, 2012), including latent meaning brought into consciousness through symbolism and the process of reflection. Munhall's (2012) method for conducting phenomenological inquiry encouraged participants to share stories, anecdotes, pictures, and writings that could enrich the study and fill the void of "epistemological silence" (van Manen, 1990, p. 113). Epistemological

silence is an incomplete understanding of a participant's experience stemming from

spoken language limitations (van Manen, 1990). Art and literature that offers the

researcher a greater understanding of the phenomenon can be kept as part of the research

record, including documentation in the researcher's journal. For example, Munhall

(2012) encouraged researchers to use creative writing, photographs, or painting to

process participant narratives or the researcher's "own soul and spirit" (p. 155). An

example of this approach appears in the sample of the researcher's journal in

Appendix E.

Photovoice

For this study, photovoice was used as a data collection and analysis method to

elicit deeper meaning in participants' and researcher's phenomenological experience

through photography. Photovoice was initially developed as a participatory research-

action method (Wang & Burris, 1997); however, it has been used as a phenomenological

data collection method to uncover an enriched understanding of experience through

visual and narrative data (Berinstein & Magalhaes, 2009; Lundy et al., 2009; Plunkett et

al., 2013). The purpose of photovoice is to access other people's world, where the

participants' worlds are portrayed by themselves using their own photographs (Fernandes

et al., 2019). The goals of photovoice are (a) to enable people to record and reflect on

their community's strengths and concerns, (b) to promote dialogue and knowledge

regarding important issues through discussion of photographs, and (c) to reach

policymakers and influence policy change (Wang & Burris, 1997).

Photovoice creates space and opportunity for vulnerable or marginalized people to

express and reflect on their experiences (Wang & Burris, 1997). These experiences have

personal meaning to the participants, and with the aid of photographs, participants' voices

can influence change at both the community and policy levels (Plunkett et al., 2013;

Shumba & Moodley, 2018; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). With

a clear activist and political focus (Plunkett et al., 2013), photovoice aligns closely with

Munhall's (2012, 2013) final step of interpretive phenomenology: to critique the

interpretations gleaned from data analysis with implications and recommendations for

political, social, cultural, healthcare, family, and other social systems.

The original photovoice method included a group discussion (Wang & Burris,

1997); however, in the current study, I replaced group discussion with individual

interviews. The individual interviews ensured participants' confidentiality, provided an

opportunity for participants to narrate their varying and diverse experiences, and created

an environment for participants to express themselves freely without influence from

others (Jurkowski, 2008; Shumba & Moodley, 2018). Further, individual interviews

provided a personal and private setting to facilitate more profound thoughts and richer

interview data (Newman, 2010; Shumba & Moodley, 2018).

The data collection process began with an orientation session to discuss aspects of

the study, including the purpose of the study, the photovoice process, the informed

consent to participate, camera use directions, ethical considerations of camera use

(Plunkett et al., 2013; Shumba & Moodley, 2018), use of a logbook (Plunkett et al.,

2013), and directions on how to return the data. In addition, the orientation session served

as an introductory meet-and-greet to build rapport (Plunkett et al., 2013). If participants

had a smartphone with a camera, they were asked to use their camera phone to document

their role-strain experiences in their CES programs. Smartphone photos and the photo

consent forms were returned by email. A sample of the photo consent form appears in

Appendix G. All participants had smartphones with smartphone cameras; therefore, I did

not have to provide materials for camera use, such as disposable cameras and prepaid

return envelopes to mail the cameras back after use.

The participants had two weeks to photo-document their role-strain experiences. I

encouraged them to use a logbook (notebook) or the notebook feature on their

smartphone to assist with documenting their experiences and perspectives in the moment

(Leipert et al., 2011; Plunkett et al., 2013). Midway through the two weeks, I contacted

each participant to provide encouragement and support, assess progress (Plunkett et al.,

2013; Shumba & Moodley, 2018), and build researcher–participant rapport. After the

allotted two-week photo-documenting period, I asked the participants to select a

minimum of six and a maximum of 10 photographs that were most representative of their

realities (Shumba & Moodley, 2018). Next, I asked them to group the photos with similar

meanings and to identify themes (Shumba & Moodley, 2018), to create a title for each of

the photographs in advance of the individual interview, to transcribe their logbook data

specific to the chosen photographs, and to return all information via email (Plunkett et al.,

2013). Participants found it most helpful to return the photographs and related logbook

data in a PowerPoint presentation. Upon receiving participants' PowerPoint

presentations, I reviewed the photographs and logbook data and documented initial

thoughts and interpretations in my researcher journal (Plunkett et al., 2013).

The in-depth interviews consisted of two components: (a) open sharing of the

participants' experiences of the phenomenon according to Munhall's (2012, 2013)

interview protocol, and (b) an interpretive dialogue of each of the photographs selected

using the acronym SHOWeD (Wang, 1999). In alignment with SHOWeD, I asked the

following questions: (a) What do you *See* here? (b) What's really *Happening* here?

(c) How does this relate to *Our* lives? and (d) Why does this problem or strength exist?

What can we *Do* about this? (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 1999). I added two questions

to this series: (e) What else should be said about this picture to describe the *Meaning* of

it? and (f) Is there anything *Else* to say about this picture?

These additional questions added ME to the previous acronym SHOWeD to

produce a new acronym, SHOWeD ME. These questions elicited specific data for each

photograph (Plunkett et al., 2013), promoted reflection and interpretive dialogue between

researcher and participant (Plunkett et al., 2013), and served as both data collection and

analysis approaches within photovoice (Fernandez et al., 2019; Wang et al., 1998). The

participants engaged in data analysis during the selection of the most meaningful

photographs, during the titling of these photographs, and during their efforts to organize

the chosen photographs into themes.

Ethical Considerations of Photovoice. Ethical issues related to taking and using

pictures were discussed; participants were trained on camera use and obtaining consent

from subjects to be photographed (Fernandez et al., 2019; Shumba & Moodley, 2018). In

addition, for research and publication purposes, participants were trained on eliciting

consent from subjects regarding having photographs used in research, conferences,

seminars, journals, or books (Fernandez et al., 2019; Shumba & Moodley, 2018).

Regarding photographs that depicted people, participants were trained to protect the

identities of each person involved (Fernandez et al., 2019). A sample of the photograph

consent form appears in Appendix G. Orientation PowerPoint slides used to facilitate training appear in Appendix H.

Data Analysis Methods

Interpretive phenomenological analysis aims to capture participants' rich descriptions of the meaning of the lived experiences being studied (Cohen et al., 2000). A rich description captures and communicates participants' perspectives in the most whole and intricate complexity (Cohen et al., 2000). Through an emergent process, participants' experiences are translated by comparing and contrasting their accounts with the accounts of other participants experiencing the same phenomenon (Peoples, 2021). This emergent process is achieved through the hermeneutic circle, which modifies the nature of understanding by a constant process of renewed understanding of the phenomenon (Peoples, 2021).

The Hermeneutic Circle

Phenomenological researchers seek to understand a phenomenon as a whole; however, the term *data analysis* means to "break into parts" (Peoples, 2021, p. 57). Consequently, phenomenological data analysis engages the researcher in a dialectical process of breaking meaning down into small data units to increase understanding of the whole meaning of data (Cohen et al., 2000). The relationship between the parts and the whole of research constitutes the hermeneutic circle; the parts inform the whole, which informs the parts (Cohen et al., 2000; Peoples, 2021). The hermeneutic circle guides the process of interpretive analysis; thus, parts of a participant's text are understood in relation to all of the participant's text and vice versa (Cohen et al., 2000). One participant's narrative is then understood in relation to all participants' narratives and

vice versa (Cohen et al., 2000). Finally, through observation, journaling, data collection, and analysis procedures, researchers examine parts of their initial vague and tentative meanings of the experience to clarify the meaning of the whole experience (Cohen et al., 2000).

For this study, I considered observations, researcher journal entries, individual interviews, and other documents individually and in relationship to the whole of the data (Cohen et al., 2000). Participant statements were understood in the broadest historical, political, cultural, and social contexts, including smaller statements that might seem insignificant or trivial (Cohen et al., 2000). Further, smaller contexts among the broader contexts were considered, for example, among the contexts of person, family, and community (Cohen et al., 2000). As I continuously examined the parts and the whole of the dataset, I experienced a more profound understanding that continued to drive analysis (Cohen et al., 2000).

Combined Interpretive Phenomenological and Photovoice Data Analysis

Plunkett et al. (2013) explained, "In a combined phenomenological and photovoice study, data analysis begins at the onset of data collection and continues for the duration of the research" (p. 6). This study's data analysis approach integrated photovoice's data collection and analysis method with Munhall's (2012, 2013) two-step interpretive phenomenological data analysis. Similarly, Braun and Clarke's (2006) and Nowell et al.'s (2017) six phases of thematic analysis aligned with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) measures of trustworthiness.

The photovoice process of photo selection, titling, participant thematizing, and SHOWeD questioning included both data collection and analysis; however, this process

alone did not assist with analyzing the photovoice documents, which comprised

participants' logbooks, spontaneous verbalizations, the semistructured participant

interviews, and my researcher journal. To complete analysis of all data forms, I employed

Munhall's (2012, 2013) interpretive phenomenological analysis and Braun and Clarke's

(2006) and Nowell et al.'s (2017) six phases of thematic analysis to generate a pragmatic

and systematic data analysis process that could be transparently communicated to other

researchers (Malterud, 2001; Nowell et al., 2017; Sandelowski, 1995) and that could be

replicated in future studies. Through this integrated approach, the data analysis approach

aligned with the study's epistemological and ontological underpinnings, illustrating the

process of conducting a trustworthy thematic analysis within a social constructivist and

interpretive framework.

Munhall's Approach to Data Analysis

Munhall's (2012, 2013) data analysis comprised two primary steps. The first step

was to integrate existential investigation with phenomenological contextual processing

(Munhall, 2012, 2013). Contextual processing explores participants' situated context,

including their historical, political, cultural, and social worlds (Munhall, 2013). Munhall

(2013) assumed that participants bring to the research a personal biography and an

already formed interpretive system of interacting with the world that gives voice to their

experiences. Therefore, the analysis and interpretation of participants' situated contexts

enabled me to arrive at a meaningful, holistic, and simultaneous interpretation of

experience (Munhall, 2013).

An analysis of participants' situated contexts includes describing participants'

expressions (thoughts, statements, motives, behaviors), feelings, metaphors, appearances,

concealments, and voiced and nonvoiced language (Munhall, 2012, 2013). The situated

context analysis gives participants' expressions, feelings, metaphors, and body language

a "horizon, a context, knowledge, and a biography" (Munhall, 2013, p. 163). Effectively,

participants' situated context analysis creates a "thick web" (Munhall, 2013, p. 163) or

background of relational interactional processes that contribute to participants' being-in-

the-world. Meaning is then captured through the process of interpretive interactionism, or

examining the relationship between participants' situated contexts and expressions of

meaning (Munhall, 2013). To discover accurate and trustworthy meaning, participants

and I engaged in data analysis together (Munhall, 2012).

        The second step of Munhall's data analysis was to return to the participants for a

follow-up interview to ensure each individuals' narrative captured their meaning of

experience (Munhall, 2012; Peoples, 2021). This data analysis step, often referred to as

member checking, helps ensure the study's trustworthiness (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019,

Cohen et al., 2000; Peoples, 2021). All participants were offered an opportunity to

participate in member checking. Depending on their availability, participants chose to

engage in member checking either through a follow-up Zoom session or by reviewing

their participant profile and summarized findings of the study by email. Participants were

encouraged to respond to the findings, providing thoughts, feedback, comments,

reflections, and adjustments as needed.

        Munhall's (1994, 2012, 2013) interpretive phenomenological data analysis caveat

was that the approach does not detail a systematic process to discovering meaning within

participants' narratives. Instead, Munhall (1994) relied on an "unrestricted and creative"

process informed by intuition, many years of clinical practice as a nurse psychoanalyst,

psychological processes such as transference and projection, detailed notes, and a highly

individualized approach to co-construction of meaning (p. 92). Munhall (2013) avoided

data analysis processes that culled participants' meaning into aggregates, categories,

themes, or essences; however, Munhall (1994) recognized that students and novice

researchers might need to work in a more formula-based way to go about finding

meaning. For students and novice researchers, Munhall (1994) recommended thematic

analysis. Thematic analysis aligns with both interpretive phenomenological concepts and

a social constructivist interpretive framework.

Thematic Analysis

From a social constructivist perspective, knowledge and therefore meaning are

achieved through individuals' social engagement within a social context (Berger &

Luckmann, 1966; Crotty, 1998; Tuckett, 2005). Social constructivists accept that multiple

constructions of meaning are possible based on the unique and varying constructions of

those engaged in social interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Crotty, 1998; Tuckett,

2005). As a data analysis method, thematic analysis helps the researcher examine

different research participants' perspectives, highlighting their similarities and

differences and generating new insights and meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King,

2004; Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis captures constructions of meaning through

varying data sources in an iterative back-and-forth process using the researcher as the

primary data analysis instrument (Nowell et al., 2017; Tuckett, 2005).

Like interpretive phenomenologists, thematic analysts have asserted that the

researcher's previous knowledge and experiences help clarify meaning and build a new

understanding of the phenomenon (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013; Vaismoradi &

Snelgove, 2019). The researcher uses personal knowledge and experience, including

initial analytic interests or thoughts, with data immersion to make judgments about

"identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data

set" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2). Themes—patterns among data—are the final products of

thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes are considered latent content and the

most abstract result of data analysis, including participants' subjective meaning and

cultural contextual messages of data (Vaismoradi et al., 2016; Vaismoradi & Snelgove,

2019). Themes bring meaning and identity to a recurrent experience (DeSantis &

Ugarriza, 2000) by bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences

that might otherwise seem meaningless (Aronson, 1995). Once identified, themes link

significant portions of data together, capturing something important to the overall

research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006; DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000; Nowell et al.,

2017).

In the current study, interpretive phenomenological themes emerged through

Nowell et al.'s (2017) six phases of thematic analysis, which align with Braun and

Clarke's (2006) use of thematic analysis in psychology and Lincoln and Guba's (1985)

measures of trustworthiness (Appendix I), as follows:

1. Familiarizing oneself with the data

2. Generating initial codes

3. Searching for themes

4. Reviewing themes

5. Defining and naming themes

6. Producing the report

For the current study, Nowell et al.'s six analysis phases were adjusted for a solo researcher. The six phases are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Phase 1: Familiarizing Oneself With the Data. In the current study, I gathered data from three main sources: (a) my researcher journal, which contained field notes, participant observations, reflexive journal entries, stories, and narratives (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Munhall, 2012, 2013; Nowell et al., 2017; (b) recorded and transcribed participant interviews and logbooks (multimedia, documents, text; Nowell et al., 2017); and (c) participants' photographs (Wang, 1999; Wang et al., 1998). Thematic analysis began with my prior knowledge, including initial analytic interests, thoughts, interpretations, and questions documented in my researcher journal (Nowell et al., 2017; Tuckett, 2005). Once all data were collected, I began familiarizing myself with the depth and breadth of their content through immersion (Braun & Clarke, 2007; Nowell et al., 2017).

Data immersion includes reading through the entire data set at least once before searching for meanings and patterns and beginning the coding processes (Braun & Clarke, 2007; Nowell et al., 2017). After data immersion, I repeatedly and actively reviewed the data, remaining aware of my perspectives, preexisting thoughts and beliefs, developing theories, reflective thoughts, values, interests, and growing insights (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017; Sandelowski, 1995; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). I documented all of these aspects honestly in my researcher journal, including coding ideas to be addressed in the subsequent step (Nowell et al., 2017).

Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes. In the second phase, I began the production of codes, or important sections of text with an attached label (King, 2004), through an in

vivo process (Saldaña, 2016) and by making remarks ("marginal remarks"; Miles &

Huberman, 1994, p. 66) and memos (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2016; Singh &

Richards, 2003; Tuckett, 2005) directly on the transcript. In vivo codes are words or short

phrases pulled directly from participants' actual language, found in the qualitative data

record (Saldaña, 2016). In vivo coding highlights participants' "folk" or "indigenous"

terms, which are participant-generated words resulting from membership to a particular

culture, subculture, or microculture (Saldaña, 2016). I used in vivo coding for two

primary reasons: (a) In vivo coding is appropriate for beginning qualitative researchers

who are learning how to code data; and (b) in vivo coding aligns with interpretive

phenomenology studies that prioritize and honor the situated context, cultural traditions,

language, and distinct voices of participants (Munhall, 2013; Saldaña, 2016).

In vivo codes can appear in every line of data or every three to five sentences of

data. In the current study, in vivo codes were documented in the marginal remarks on the

left side of the transcript page, and memos (corresponding behaviors of participants,

remarks, theorizing ideas, instructions, and references to other data with the same or

another's transcript) were documented on the right side of the transcript page (Tuckett,

2005). A color-coding system was used to highlight areas of transcripts that revealed in

vivo codes (yellow), role identities (green), participants' life-worlds and backgrounds

(blue), photovoice prompts (pink), and emerging themes (orange). Appendix J shows a

sample of this process.

In terms of what to code in a transcript, I focused on "words and phrases that

seem to call for bolding, underlining, italicizing, highlighting, or vocal emphasis if

spoken aloud" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 107). In addition, I attuned myself to participants'

expressions, feelings, metaphors, appearances, and concealments (Munhall, 2012, 2013), as well as to repetitive words or phrases, evocative vocabulary, similes, puns, and witty or ironic phrases (Saldaña, 2016). Finally, I trusted my instincts with in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016), which were likely influenced by my previous knowledge and experience with the phenomenon.

In preparation for thematizing, I listed codes on a separate text-editing page and then culled them into an outline of clusters that suggested categories of belonging or an order (Appendix K; Saldaña, 2016). To condense and synthesize the number of in vivo codes, I engaged in an iterative back-and-forth process of reflection by returning to analytic memos, the triangulation of data as a whole, writing, and then attempting the second cycle of coding (Saldaña, 2016). This process aligned with the hermeneutic circle, whereby participants' texts were explored in the context of the complete data set and vice versa (Cohen et al., 2000). Peer debriefing and reflexive writing about the coding process strengthened the audit trail and helped me examine how my thoughts and ideas evolved and related more deeply to the data (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999; Nowell et al., 2017). After the process of breaking meaning down into small data units to increase understanding of the whole meaning (Cohen et al., 2000), the search for themes began.

Phase 3: Searching for Themes. According to Nowell et al. (2017), the third phase of thematic analysis begins when all data have been initially coded, collated, and outlined into belonging/order categories. In short, the third phase involves sorting and organizing all relevant coded categories into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). In this study, themes were generated inductively from the raw data, not deductively from theory and prior research (Boyatzis, 1998; Nowell et al., 2017).

Although philosophical and theoretical concepts assisted with organizing data, the inductive approach aligned with social constructivist and interpretive phenomenological processes by accounting for multiple, diverse, unique participant experiences. Because of this process, themes emerged directly from the data and did not necessarily represent responses to the specific questions I asked the participants (Nowell et al., 2017).

As the initial codes from Phase 2 began to form themes or subthemes, I organized the data into a matrix, useful for displaying the relationships between patterned codes and final themes (Appendix L; Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Nowell et al., 2017). Codes that did not seem to belong anywhere were placed under a *miscellaneous* category (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During the code category sorting process, I analyzed the relationships among codes and emerging themes and noticed that certain code categories seemed to reflect factors that directly influenced participants' experiences. For example, as the theme *duality of experiences* began to emerge, I discovered a relationship between the coded category of COVID-19 and the duality of experiences theme, noticing that COVID-19 seemed to influence participants' role strain in adverse and beneficial ways (the duality of experiences). It was also clear in the narrative of participants that COVID-19 influenced participants' interpersonal relationships and intrapersonal care in both adverse and beneficial ways. Through analysis, it was evident that the code category of COVID-19 was woven throughout participants' narratives, directly affecting many aspects of role strain. As such, it was challenging to separate COVID-19 from other emerging themes and subthemes.

After wrestling with code category relationships and definitions of themes and subthemes, I consulted with my Chair and peer-debriefer. With consultation, I made the

methodological decision to introduce an element I called *contextualizing lifestyle factors*. Like themes and subthemes, contextualizing lifestyle factors emerged from code categories. Contextualizing lifestyle factors, however, were the prominent inescapable aspects of participants' lives that directly influenced participants' role-strain experiences defined by themes and subthemes. The iterative process of the hermeneutic circle informed my decision to identify contextualizing factors for two themes: duality of experiences and interpersonal and intrapersonal care. Finally, I detailed all thematic decision making and included the notes in the study's audit trail to establish confirmability (discussed further in the Measures of Trustworthiness section).

Phase 4: Reviewing Themes. Phase 4 included refining Phase 3's themes to form a more manageable set of meaningful themes that succinctly summarized the text (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Nowell et al., 2017). During this fourth phase, coded data were reviewed alongside their corresponding themes to ensure evidence of coherent patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). Further, themes were reviewed to reflect the meanings evident in the complete data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). As I reviewed the themes, I discarded some codes after finding no use for them (King, 2004). Some themes were distilled into subthemes, and some themes merged when they substantially overlapped (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004; Nowell et al., 2017). In completing this phase, I had a strong sense of the final themes, including how they fit together, and how they shaped the overall story about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). The credibility of these themes was tested by returning to the raw data once again and comparing them to the developed themes to ensure that all conclusions were firmly grounded (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017).

Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes. During the fifth phase of thematic analysis, I conducted a detailed analysis of each theme, identifying the data it captured, the story behind it, and why it was interesting (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). In addition, I considered how each theme fit into the entire data set's overall story related to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Peer debriefing helped determine if the themes were sufficiently and comprehensively clear and if any research areas were unspoken or overlooked (King, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). Peer debriefing sessions occurred 13 times between March 1, 2021, and August 18, 2021. The record of these peer-debriefing sessions strengthened the study's audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). At the end of this phase, I had a complete set of clearly defined themes that described the scope and content of the study, and I was ready to complete the sixth and final phase of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017).

Phase 6: Producing the Report. The final step in thematic analysis was to write the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). This report, which forms Chapters 4 and 5 of the dissertation, provides a "concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the data within and across the themes" (Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 10–11). In this report, I aimed to articulate the meaning of each theme, including its underpinning implications and assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). I described the logical processes that led me to the study's findings so that the processes were accessible, believable, and credible (Nowell et al., 2017; Thorne, 2000).

The final report includes participants' direct quotes, which encourage readers to move beyond the descriptions of data to enhance understanding, demonstrate the prevalence of themes, and illustrate the phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004; Nowell et al., 2017). Participant quotes help convince readers of the validity and merit of the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). To build a valid argument for choosing themes, in this report, I refer back to the literature and weave the literature into the findings (Aronson, 1995). Referring back to the literature provides opportunities to propose plausible and new theoretical interpretations, challenge existing literature, and add new meaning to the phenomenon under investigation (Côté & Turgeon, 2005; Nowell et al., 2017; Tuckett, 2005).

As previously discussed, the final step of thematic analysis, consistent with Munhall's (2012, 2013) second step of data analysis, was to return to participants for their feedback on the analyses (Côté & Turgeon, 2005; Nowell et al., 2017). Returning to participants for their feedback ensured agreement between their views and my representations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These follow-up interviews, or member-checking sessions, ensured that individuals' narratives captured the meaning of their experiences (Munhall, 2012; Peoples, 2021). This final step in data analysis helped solidify the study's trustworthiness (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, Cohen et al., 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2021).

Measures for Ensuring Trustworthiness

For qualitative research, a study's credibility, significance, and values are explored in terms of its trustworthiness (Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness is determined by how well researchers provide evidence

that their descriptions and analysis represent the reality of the situations and persons

studied (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Trustworthiness is evaluated through four criteria:

credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019;

Creswell, 2017).

Credibility

Credibility, or the validity of a qualitative study, refers to whether the

participants' perceptions aligned with the researcher's interpretation of them (Bloomberg

& Volpe, 2019). As detailed by Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), credibility addresses the

researcher's ability to consider and explain the complexities present within the study and

address patterns, themes, and issues that might be challenging to understand. This study

used the following research strategies to ensure credibility: prolonged field engagement,

member checking, journaling/reflexivity, triangulation, thick descriptions, peer

debriefing, and member checking.

Prolonged field engagement occurred through my personal experience with the

phenomenon being studied. I was immersed in the field by achieving the dissertation

phase of my doctorate in CES from a CACREP-accredited institution while parenting a

young child. Prolonged field engagement was also achieved by working with participants

over two academic semesters. I had multiple formal and informal contacts with

participants, including the initial contact, scheduling, orientation, photography check-ins,

interviews, and member checking.

My researcher journal documented field notes, clarified biases, and created an

honest and open attitude toward the research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Reflexivity, or

taking a position with the research, was embedded within my journal. Creswell (2017)

identified two parts to reflexivity: (a) researchers discuss their experiences with the

phenomenon being explored; and (b) researchers disclose past experiences with the

phenomenon from work, schooling, family dynamics, and the like. To fulfill this measure

of trustworthiness, I identified my position as a mother and Ph.D. candidate in a

CACREP-accredited CES program. With this understanding, readers can make

conclusions regarding reflexivity to evaluate the validity of the phenomenological study.

A triangulation of data sources was utilized, consisting of observation (researcher

journal), interviews, and photovoice. I compared the information collected from these

data sources to ensure that interpretations were realistic (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Thick descriptions of participants' experiences were incorporated into the study,

consistent with Munhall's (2012, 2013) data analysis method. Thick descriptions are a

core characteristic of qualitative research that detail the study's setting, research

participants, and related experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Thick descriptions

ensure that the research report contains enough detail so that readers can adequately

understand the research process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The aim of a thick

descriptions, is to "draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts, to

support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life"

(Geertz, 1973, p. 322). These descriptions produce findings and interpretations that allow

readers to picture the setting in their minds, develop contextualized meaning, and form

opinions about the quality of the research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Geertz, 1973;

Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

To ensure the data analysis findings were clear and accurate, I used peer

debriefing during several phases of thematic analysis to examine personal assumptions,

consider alternative ways of viewing data, to ensure that portions of data were not

overlooked, and to assess the meaningfulness of emerging themes (Bloomberg & Volpe,

2019; Nowell et al., 2017). Peer debriefing was completed privately and confidentially

with a trusted mentor, a Doctor of Education in Counseling Psychology with a

specialization in CES. This peer-debriefer had over 20 years of counseling, education,

and supervision experience. Peer debriefing occurred during 13 one-to-one

teleconferencing sessions. During peer debriefing sessions, I provided verbal narrative

summaries of participants, reviewed participants' photo documents, explored my

personal relationship to the data, and reviewed coding and thematizing progress and

strategies. During peer debriefing sessions, participants' anonymity was maintained, as

described in the Ethical Considerations section of Chapter 3.

Further, member checking was used within the final data analysis phase to ensure

that my own biases did not influence how participants' perspectives were interpreted

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell, 2017). Instead of providing complete

transcriptions to participants, I reviewed participant profiles with each willing participant

and discussed the final themes and findings achieved through thematic analysis. Of the

study's nine participants, seven expressed willingness to engage in member checking;

however, only six participants followed through. One participant completed a second

virtual interview, and five participants provided member checking through review of

email documents. All participants who checked their findings were satisfied with their

narratives; no inaccuracies, new insights, or suggested changes were presented.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability and consistency of data collected over time, including the data's alignment with the research questions and the research process's overall direction and traceability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Recommended research strategies to ensure dependability include triangulating the data and creating an audit trail (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Regarding triangulation, the sequencing of observation, interview, and photovoice data collection methods represented a viable research design and data collection plan that aligned with the research questions. An audit trail was created by thoroughly detailing the data collection and analysis process and by maintaining a clear record of the transcripts and field notes in my researcher's journal (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Confirmability

Confirmability ensures that the researcher's interpretations and conclusions are derived from the data, uninfluenced by biases and subjectivity (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Confirmability requires the researcher to explore how biases and prejudices can affect interpretations of data; such exploration involves applying reflexivity to demonstrate how conclusions were reached throughout the research process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). In terms of an interpretive phenomenological study specifically, the notion of confirmability rejects an epistemology that assumes the existence of facts and objective reality (Cohen et al., 2000). Further, part of the interpretation process occurs within the researcher's perspective and historical context, not separate from it (Cohen et al., 2000; Koch, 1994). Within this approach, interpretation accuracy is considered "contingent and somewhat tentative" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 86).

Suggested research strategies to address confirmability include the use of an audit trail, triangulation, and reflexive journaling (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). As described in the section on dependability, the audit trail and triangulation justify all methodological, theoretical, and analytic choices and help readers trace data back to their origins (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Although the interpretive phenomenological approach accounts for intersubjectivity—the place at which the subjective worlds of the researcher and the participant meet—I took actions to reduce researcher bias. I used journaling and reflexivity to understand the meaning of my own phenomenological experience (Peoples, 2021). I removed internal distractions (Munhall, 2013; Peoples, 2021). I sought to become unknowing (Munhall, 2012, 2013). I listened openly to the meaning of the experiences of others by using the third ear (Munhall, 2012, 2013). Finally, I developed new projections of meaning (Gadamer, 1975; Munhall, 2012; Peoples, 2021). The ongoing critical analysis and reflexivity throughout my research journal offer readers an opportunity to assess confirmability and, therefore, the trustworthiness of the study's findings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Cohen et al., 2000).

Transferability

Transferability relates to the qualitative goal of developing descriptive context-relevant findings applied to a broader population while still maintaining content-specific richness (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Although qualitative researchers are not seeking generalizability of the data to all settings, they believe that one setting's findings might be helpful to others (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Transferability concerns how well the study has made it possible for readers to decide if similar study processes apply to their settings and communities (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Purposeful sampling and thick

description research strategies provide the depth of detail needed for readers to make this

decision (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Geertz, 1973).

Purposeful sampling methods provide detail regarding participants'

characteristics, experiences, and cultures, as well as illuminate the context of the study,

all of which allow readers to assess the quality of the study, the meaning of the findings,

and the authenticity of the researcher's interpretations (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019;

Graneheim & Lundman, 2003). The detail and depth of thick descriptions grant readers a

shared or vicarious experience with the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Geertz,

1973). Further, the level of detail provided in purposeful sampling and thick descriptions

allows the reader to transfer information to other settings by considering and

acknowledging varying contextual factors and shared characteristics (Bloomberg &

Volpe, 2019; Creswell, 2017; Erlandson et al., 1993; Geertz, 1973).

Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter provided a detailed overview of this study's research

methodology. Qualitative interpretive phenomenology was employed to describe the

meaning of role strain among doctoral CES student-parents. Consistent with the

recommendations of Creswell (2017), Dukes (1984), Morse (1994), Peoples (2021),

Wang (1999), and Wang and Burris (1997), a sample size between five and 10

participants was used for this study. A triangulation of data collection methods included

observation through journaling, interviews, and photovoice. Data were analyzed using

Wang and Burris's (1999) SHOWeD dialogue questioning for the photovoice data

collection, Munhall's (2012, 2013) two-step process, and Nowell et al.'s (2017) thematic

analysis using in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016). Finally, measures of trustworthiness were

enhanced through various research strategies, including purposeful sampling, prolonged

field engagement, triangulation of methods, reflexive journaling, thick descriptions, peer

debriefing, member checking, and audit trail.

CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the meaning of role strain for parents enrolled in a CACREP-accredited doctoral CES program. I applied Munhall's (2012, 2013) interpretive phenomenological interview method and Wang's (1999) and Wang and Burris's (1997) photovoice data collection and analysis methods to collect CES students' personal experiences simultaneously navigating parenthood and doctoral studies. At the time of the research, all participants were enrolled in a CACREP-accredited doctoral CES program. This chapter presents the research findings reached through interpretive phenomenology, providing a voice for participants with diverse, intersectional identities.

Nine participants' verbatim transcripts were coded and analyzed to answer the study's central research question and two subquestions. Verbatim transcripts and corresponding photographs were reviewed several times to deepen my awareness of the participants' life-worlds, backgrounds, role identities, and emerging themes. Patterns within the data formed the themes, subthemes, and contextualizing lifestyle factors that answered the research questions. The matrix of patterned codes and final themes appears in Appendix L.

Individual profiles for all nine of the study's participants are provided next, highlighting participants' life-worlds, backgrounds, role identities, and diverse experiences. Pseudonyms are used to protect participants' identities within the research (Dibley et al., 2020; Shumba & Moodley, 2018). Participants chose pseudonyms to ensure that the names accurately represented their identities (Dibley et al., 2020). The discussion of participants' profiles is followed by the research question findings,

embedded within the themes, subthemes, and contextualizing lifestyle factors that influence themes. Themes, subthemes, and factors influencing themes are supported by direct quotes and photographs pulled from participants' interviews.

Participant Profiles

Nine participants were interviewed for this study. Participants ranged in age from 31 to 50 years, and the ages of participants' children ranged from 18 months to 29 years. Eight participants were married, and one identified as single; eight identified as heterosexual or heteronormative, and one participant declined to identify sexual orientation by writing "N/A." Seven participants identified as female, and two as male. Regarding ethnicity, seven participants identified as White, non-Hispanic, or Caucasian; one identified as White/Native American; and one identified as Black. Participants lived in nine different states across the U.S.

At the time of the research, all participants were parents and enrolled in a CACREP-accredited doctoral CES program. Participants attended eight different doctoral programs representative of the Southern, North Atlantic, and North Central Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) regions. Participants were at various stages in their doctoral programs, ranging from six to 93 credits earned. Table 1 shows a detailed breakdown of participant information.

Table 1

Participants' Demographic Data

Participant ID	Pseudonym	Age	Age of Child(ren) (years)	Relationship Status	Sexual Orientation	Gender	Ethnicity	ACES Region of Program	Credits Earned
P1	Bridgett	38	6, 15	Married	Heterosexual	Female	Black	Southern	6
P2	Dr. T	31	18 months, 2	Married	Heterosexual	Female	White	Southern	93
P3	Katie	45	14, 19	Married	Heterosexual	Female	Caucasian	Southern	57
P4	Nic	36	4, 11	Married	Heteronormative	Female	White/Native American	North Central	42
P5	Pam	38	1, 6	Married	Heterosexual	Female	Non-Hispanic	North Atlantic	48
P6	Harper	32	2	Married	Heterosexual	Female	White	North Central	67
P7	Elliot	50	28, 29	Single	N/A	Male	Caucasian	North Central	31
P8	Ali	32	2	Married	Heterosexual	Female	White	Southern	42
P9	Ivan	44	11, 13	Married	Heterosexual	Male	White	North Atlantic	52

Bridgett

At the time of this study, Bridgett was a 38-year-old Black female who lived in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. She identified as heterosexual. She was married with two children, ages 6 and 15. Bridgett attended a CACREP-accredited CES program within the ACES Southern region. Bridgett attended an online program with an in-person residency requirement. At the time of the research, Bridgett had earned six credits within her program of study.

Regarding her life-world and background, Bridgett was a wife, mother, daughter, granddaughter, friend, Christian, counselor, employee, student, teacher, volunteer, leader, and advocate. Bridgett worked at a full-time job and a part-time job and attended to the "affairs of the home," including keeping the house clean, ensuring the laundry was done, managing her family members, supporting her children's home schooling during COVID-19, and cooking throughout the week. For Bridgett, the kitchen was the "heart of the home," and she highly valued family meals together. Bridgett described herself as "very family-oriented" and intentionally included photographs of everyone within her nuclear family for the photovoice component of the study. Despite frequently expressing her admiration, connection, and closeness with her family, Bridgett reported experiencing two significant relationship connection barriers: her various role obligations and COVID-19 restrictions.

As a member of the Baptist faith, Bridgett noted her spirituality was a grounding force in her life. She described a strong belief system that guided her values and sense of morality, and she expressed responsibility for instilling these values in her children. Bridgett described experiencing conflicts between her spiritual upbringing and popular-

culture movements such as "cancel culture," which called for the mass withdrawal of support for those who had done or said socially unacceptable things. Instead of canceling others, which she believed she was socially "expected" to do, Bridgett led with grace (in a biblical sense), understanding, compassion, and forgiveness. Bridgett sought to find meaning in many of life's tribulations.

As a person of color within a predominantly White female CES program, Bridgett used grace and understanding to ground and guide her through experiences of microaggressions in her program. She viewed the behavior of others through a Christian lens; instead of "exposing" and "getting rid" of others, she sought to understand racial insensitivities and ignorance, including their impacts on her sense of self and well-being. Bridgett relied on program faculty and her faith to feel supported through these experiences of social injustice. Bridgett trusted that God would show others the way, stating, "He will touch them. He will convict them." Bridgett's images provided for the interview appear in Appendix M.

Katie

At the time of this study, Katie was a 45-year-old Caucasian female who lived in the Southeastern region of the U.S. She identified as heterosexual. She was married with two children, ages 14 and 19. Katie attended a CACREP-accredited CES program in the ACES Southern region. The program that Katie attended was an online program with a residency. At the time of the research, Katie had earned 57 credits within her program of study.

Regarding her life-world and background, Katie was a wife, mother, future mother-in-law, pet parent, daughter, sister, Christian, Republican, employee, school

counselor, supervisor, educator, and student. Katie described her Christianity as "one of [her] most important identities." Katie was the spiritual leader within her home; she had a second master's degree from seminary and believed that teaching her children about their savior was one of her most significant motherhood role obligations. For Katie, it was essential to model the beliefs, values, and behavior that she wanted her children to have. She felt responsible for raising good, moral, ethical, and helpful children who would contribute to society in competent and meaningful ways.

Although she was not a Christian Counselor, Katie integrated her Christian beliefs into her school counselor role when possible and appropriate. Katie described times when she created boundaries to separate her Christian and political identities and her work identities, because her voice had power within her community and she did not want her voice to become a barrier to others' treatment. Outside of her Christian identity, Katie highly valued and prioritized her marriage. Katie explained, "Your marital relationship is the emotional environment that your children live in." She believed that her ability to parent her children effectively relied on the strength of her marriage. Katie described her marriage as a partnership, a give-and-take that she consciously focused on and tended. Katie's husband and children assisted Katie with household responsibilities such as cooking, doing laundry, doing dishes, and cutting the grass. Having a supportive family helped to reduce Katie's role strain within the home.

Alongside her husband and children, Katie described being a pet parent as part of her family obligations. Katie was the "mom of three dogs" who brought her immense joy. She kept photos of her dogs in her office alongside images of her other family members, and she captured images of her beloved pets in the photos for this study. Tending to the

family had been "ingrained" in Katie since she was a small child. Being "raised to do the thing," a motto that Katie lived by, meant that Katie supported her family first above all other roles. Katie refused to let her student role come before her marriage or children.

However, Katie's student role came before her school counselor role as she progressed through her dissertation. In order to complete her dissertation during the summer 2021 academic semester, Katie took an unpaid leave of absence from work during the spring 2021 academic semester. This role-strain sacrifice was partly induced by her dissertation Chair's resignation from her program of study. In response to several of her role-strain experiences, Katie described experiencing various kinds of guilt such as "mom-guilt" and guilt associated with leaving her work team a person down. Katie's images provided for the interview appear in Appendix N.

Dr. T

Dr. T was a 31-year-old White female who lived in the Southeastern region of the U.S. She identified as heterosexual and was married with two children: an 18-month-old and a 2-year-old. Dr. T attended a CACREP-accredited CES program in the ACES Southern region. The program that Dr. T attended was a traditional brick-and-mortar program. At the time of the research, Dr. T had earned 93 credits within her program of study and was preparing for her dissertation defense.

Regarding her life-world and background, Dr. T was a wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, employee, supervisor, clinician, educator, student, advocate, and budding politician. Most important, Dr. T was her own person, a person who was continually working to rediscover herself after feeling "lost" for "the first couple of years of being a mother." Dr. T described her road to motherhood as challenging. As a female-identifying

disabled woman, she struggled with infertility for several years. Dr. T and her husband,

also a White male, adopted their Black daughter and became pregnant with another girl

soon after. During her interview, Dr. T explored the meaning of becoming a transracial

family within a larger family system that struggled with White fragility. Dr. T merged her

parent and advocate roles to set boundaries with her extended family, who did not hold

beliefs and values that supported their transracial family identity. In addition, Dr. T

merged her parent and clinical roles in understanding attachment and adoption trauma,

and she remained vigilant in seeking ways to mitigate trauma for all within her nuclear

family.

Throughout her interview, Dr. T explored hardships associated with working and

studying while juggling two small children under 2 with a physical disability and

postpartum depression and anxiety. Dr. T articulated the influence of society on the

various ways motherhood is perceived, the impact of motherhood perceptions on her own

"mom-guilt," and how she advocated for parents through her social media platforms. Dr.

T recognized a need for change regarding how working and studying parents are viewed

and supported within the community. Dr. T specifically wanted to see higher education

increase its support for student-parents, which sparked her motivation for joining the

study.

Within her nuclear family system, Dr. T suspected that her husband and their

spousal relationship had been neglected because of her role strain. Despite this suspicion,

Dr. T felt strongly supported and grounded by her husband, and she experienced

overwhelming joy and love for her children. She reveled in the family she once believed

was impossible. Dr. T's images provided for the interview appear in Appendix O.

Nic

Nic was a 36-year-old White/Native American female who lived in the South

Central region of the U.S. She identified as heteronormative and was married with two

children, ages 4 and 11. Nic attended a CACREP-accredited CES program in the ACES

North Central region. The program that Nic attended was an online program with summer

residencies. At the time of the research, Nic had earned 42 credits within her program of

study.

Regarding her life-world and background, Nic was a wife, mother, pet parent,

employee, educator, leader, and student. She lived within a Southern religious

community and found this culture unsupportive of her higher education and career roles

alongside her motherhood role. Nic struggled to receive support from her extended

family regarding her career goals, stemming primarily from their lack of understanding.

Nic's father believed that nonmedical individuals who carried Ph.D. credentials were not

"real doctors." Despite her struggles to receive adequate support from her community and

extended family, Nic felt supported and grounded in her relationship with her husband.

Nic stated, "My husband is wonderful. Um, but I married him because he was different."

Nic explained that she and her husband shared parent role obligations, ensuring that their

children's education and extracurricular activities were met. After days filled with

juggling work, school, and activities, Nic's family (including pets) often crashed on the

couch together, reinforcing their love and connection through physical closeness.

In terms of her program of study, Nic struggled to see her professors be open or

transparent about their family lives, leading her to believe that they either did not have

families or did not prioritize them over their academic roles. In response, Nic felt she

needed to hide her own family or "pretend like it's not as important." Although Nic did

not receive direct support from her program of study regarding her parenthood role, she

expressed feeling thankful that her program was an online format. Nic believed that her

pursuit of a Ph.D. in CES was made possible by nontraditional course offerings.

In direct response to her academic and parenthood role strain, Nic insisted on

normalizing parenthood in her role as a counselor-educator. Nic was candid with her

students about her parenthood experiences, including discussing her youth-inspired

clothing or the times when she ran straight from her child's ball game to the classroom.

Nic wanted her student-parents to know that they had an "ally," someone who

"understands what they're going through." Nic's images provided for the interview

appear in Appendix P.

Pam

Pam was a 38-year-old non-Hispanic female who lived in the Mid-Atlantic region

in the northeast of the U.S. She was a heterosexual married female with two children,

ages 1 and 6. Pam attended a CACREP-accredited CES program in the ACES North

Atlantic region. The program that Pam attended was a traditional full-time program. At

the time of the research, Pam had earned 48 credits within her program of study.

Regarding her life-world and background, Pam was a wife, mother, pet parent,

employee, counselor, student, and advocate. She lived in an upper-middle-class suburban

neighborhood, within 10 minutes of where she grew up as a child. Pam's experience of

her community was that there were many stay-at-home mothers who prioritized their

children. Pam stated, "There's this other concept of, like, new-momism, where it's like,

you're not a good mom unless you're devoting everything to your kids, and that's very prevalent where I live."

Although Pam supported the stay-at-home mom lifestyle, she felt that her community's culture added to her role strain and "mom-guilt" experience. Pam's priorities shifted among motherhood, work, and her studies. As a result, Pam described struggling to separate roles or falling short of her role obligations. In her mom role, Pam described when she prepared her daughter for the first day of school; however, it was not the first day. She said, "We're at the bus stop, pictures, the whole bit. And I'm like, 'Where is your bus?' So, I'm like calling, and they're like, 'School starts tomorrow' . . . Like, my daughter's like, 'Mom!' I'm like, 'I'm so- I'm sorry, honey' [laughing]." In addition, Pam described a time when she was at work in her counselor role, and one of her baby's washcloths fell out of her sleeve. In an attempt to dispel the myths of perfect motherhood, she used humor and said, "At least it wasn't underpants."

Pam's role strain within her motherhood role was exacerbated by her student role strain when she faced stigmatizing attitudes and beliefs from a program professor. Regarding motherhood in academia, her professor said, "[Pam], you, you need to hire someone to watch your kid so that you can focus on school." When the professor made this statement, Pam's daughter was already in full-time daycare, leading Pam to question how to manage both parent and student roles.

With the support of her husband, Pam persevered despite "bucket loads of maternal guilt." To help mitigate Pam's role strain, Pam's husband solely cared for their children on designated weekends so that Pam could seclude herself in a woodsy cabin to focus on dissertation writing. Pam found this role separation exceedingly helpful in

minimizing her high anxiety, high energy, and focus challenges. Pam's images provided

for the interview appear in Appendix Q.

Harper

Harper was a 32-year-old White female who lived in the Midwest region of the

U.S. She identified as heterosexual and was married with one 2-year-old child. Harper

attended a CACREP-accredited CES program in the ACES North Central region. The

program that Harper attended was a traditional brick-and-mortar program with some

opportunities for online classes. At the time of the research, Harper had earned 67 credits

within her program of study.

Regarding her life-world and background, Harper was a female, wife, mother,

aunt, student, and educator. Within her home, Harper assumed many female-socialized

gender norms and stereotypical gender roles. She bore the "emotional labor" of the

household, including ensuring all household tasks were completed or appropriately

assigned, providing dinner, organizing childcare, and managing the family's social

calendar. Because of the labor involved in her full-time mother and student roles, Harper

and her partner agreed she would drop her employment professional role. Although

dropping this role decreased some of her role strain, it left Harper feeling as though she

was inadequately providing for her family finances.

Regarding her family, Harper courageously explored a profoundly personal role-

strain experience that coincided with the research study. During the orientation phase of

the research, Harper experienced a miscarriage. In addition to the emotional and physical

pain of miscarriage, Harper's loss required multiple medical appointments and time for

recovery. Harper explained, "I felt like I was dealing with these just weird emotions all

over the place. Um, and at the same time, I, I didn't, I couldn't pause anything in my doc world." In speaking about her miscarriage and other health struggles during her studies, Harper explored the meaning of students experiencing private health and familial issues unbeknownst to faculty and peers. Harper believed that faculty could not holistically understand students unless they engaged students in an open dialog about their total wellness.

Within her academic program, Harper felt marginalized as a student and a parent. Harper explained that the streamlined educational experience was not considerate of or conducive to her role as a parent. In her experience of having a child while registered as a doctoral student, Harper struggled to navigate taking maternity leave and fulfilling other mother-related role obligations such as breastfeeding while being in class or teaching a class. The alternative side of this student-parent role strain was that Harper experienced personal strength and resiliency as she triumphed over challenging times. When Harper hit milestones in either student or parent role, her accomplishments felt more "significant," and her feelings of success were heightened.

Further, Harper's parent role served as a strong motivation for her success in her student role. When Harper was "plugging away" on her dissertation at 5:00 a.m., she looked to her coffee mug adorned with a picture of herself and her daughter and thought, "Oh, this, this is it. Like, this is, this is who I am, and this is who I'm, you know, a part of this is for her. And, and she is watching me do this. And I like to make her proud." In thinking about how her daughter motivated her own progress as a student, Harper encouraged academic programs to foster an open culture regarding students' family lives

so that all students might benefit from this source of strength. Harper's images provided

for the interview appear in Appendix R.

Elliot

Elliot was a 50-year-old single Caucasian male who did not disclose his sexual

identity. Elliot lived in the South Central region of the U.S., and he had two adult

children, ages 28 and 29. Elliot attended a CACREP-accredited CES program in the

ACES North Central region. The program that Elliot attended was an online program

with a residency. At the time of the research, Elliot had earned 31 credits within his

program of study.

Regarding his life-world and background, Elliot was a father, pet parent, son,

brother, partner (romantic), business owner, colleague, counselor, education, supervisor,

leader, advocate, and volunteer. Elliot described himself as a no-nonsense person who

had challenged authority since childhood. During his youth, Elliot struggled with a severe

visual impairment that prevented him from reading or writing until middle school.

Elliot's early childhood disability led his family to believe that he was "dumber than a

box of rocks"; therefore, little value was placed on Elliot's formal education.

Elliot did not graduate high school, and he was 26-years-old before he received

his GED. Because of his ongoing pursuit of higher education, Elliot was ostracized by his

family, who placed more value on "hard work" than they did on education. Although his

family mocked his education, Elliot's professional development and self-made financial

stability enabled him to care for his siblings during their times of crisis. All eight of

Elliot's siblings struggled with mental health, substance, relational, legal, and

occupational concerns. In his pursuit of a second and tertiary degree, Elliot established

firmer boundaries with his family. Elliot allowed his professional life to detract from his

family life, stating, "I don't want to deal with my family situations. Um, I've got a lot of

stuff I can't fix. I can't be a part of."

Both of Elliot's children were working professionals who lived out of state. Elliot

described his children as "career-driven," like himself. Elliot's contact with his children

was limited because of a combination of physical distance, his children's availability, and

his role strain. Elliot's main portal for connecting with his children was through his

computer or cell phone. In describing his ability to connect with his children, Elliot

stated, "When I have time, they don't have time, so it's very rushed, and, so, uh, it's kind

of I would say a little, um, not depressing, but well . . . maybe it is depressing."

Also related to parenting, Elliot described the meaning of being a pet parent in his

relationship with Belle [pseudonym]. Belle was Elliot's gold standard poodle, a show dog

who "grand championed out." She was also a therapy dog whom Elliot shared with his

clients. Belle was a support for Elliot when his children moved away. In describing his

relationship with Belle, Elliot stated,

> She- she's like a, a kid . . . It's just everything that a, that a family is, kind of. Um,
>
> I- I truly see why people, uh, can love their pets more than children sometimes. I
>
> can definitely see that. Or not more, but equally is what I meant to say.

Unfortunately, during his 2019 doctoral residency Belle fell ill and was rushed to the vet.

Elliot was faced with staying at residency or leaving to care for Belle, a high-stress role

conflict situation. Elliot remained at residency; however, Belle passed away shortly after

his return home. Belle was one of many significant personal and professional losses that

Elliot experienced over the years. Elliot lost several counseling clients, including one

several months before beginning the research study. Elliot also lost his brother to suicide

in 1996, the catalyst for his career in mental health counseling.

Before becoming a mental health counselor, Elliot was a lawyer. In his roles of

lawyer and brother, Elliot witnessed many barriers to treatment that ended in tragedy.

Although Elliot gave up law to become a mental health counselor, these life experiences,

tragedies, and challenges shaped how Elliot practiced and engaged within the

community. Elliot used his political position within his community and knowledge of the

law to advance his mental health counselor, educator, supervisor, leader, and advocate

roles. Elliot's role strain was deeply embedded in his efforts to combat social justice

issues, authority ("the system"), and policies and procedures that seemed inequitable.

Elliot's images provided for the interview appear in Appendix S.

Ali

Ali was a 32-year-old White female who lived in the Midwest region of the U.S.

She identified as heterosexual and was married with one 2-year-old child. Ali attended a

CACREP-accredited CES program in the ACES Southern region. The program that Ali

attended was an online program with a residency. At the time of the research, Ali had

earned 42 credits within her program of study.

Regarding her life-world and background, Ali was a wife, mother, daughter,

granddaughter, sister, aunt, pet parent, counselor, student, teaching assistant, leader, and

advocate. She lived in the Bible Belt in a Southern, hard-working, blue-collar, family-

oriented community with strong Christian values and little diversity. Ali's grandparents

and parents ensured that Southern traditions, values, and beliefs were passed down

through generations. According to Ali, if someone like a grandparent needed something,

"you step up, and you help them do it. . . . Family comes first, regardless of what's going on."

Ali's father "worked all the time" during her upbringing, while her mother and grandmother provided childcare and ensured all family needs were met. It was essential to Ali's mother that her children looked presentable because how she appeared to others was "a reflection on the family." As such, Ali's mother took extra steps to create a strong family image, including ironing all of her children's clothes, everything from blue jeans to t-shirts.

Ali's role within her nuclear family was influenced by observing her mother, grandmother, and traditional societal gendered roles. As a woman, wife, and mother, Ali felt responsible for childcare, ensuring meals on the table, and managing the household (cleanliness and laundry at minimum). Regarding balancing family, education, and employment roles, it is noteworthy that Ali was a first-generation college student and the only female within her extended family to earn a college degree. During her interview, Ali found meaning in not having a model for managing the role strain associated with balancing multiple familial, educational, and employment roles.

The generational value of "family comes first" seemed central to Ali's role-strain experience. Ali attempted to prioritize family traditions over school or work obligations. Examples of family traditions included weekend coffee dates with her son, snow days, and evening walks with her husband and son. Despite her best efforts, there were times when Ali fell short of prioritizing her family because of her role strain. In her interview, Ali described when she needed to attend class virtually while on vacation, causing her to sacrifice time with her family. Another time, Ali needed to care for her son and teach a

class simultaneously. While teaching, Ali texted her mother-in-law to assist with

emergency childcare. On more than one occasion during her interview, Ali reflected on

understanding role boundaries and realizing that "you can't do it all." She reinforced the

importance of a support system that will "share responsibility for the safety and well-

being of your child." Ali's images provided for the interview appear in Appendix T.

Ivan

Ivan was a 44-year-old White male who lived in the Northeastern region of the

U.S. He identified as heterosexual and was married with two children, ages 11 and 13.

Ivan attended a CACREP-accredited CES program in the ACES North Atlantic region.

The program that Ivan attended was a traditional brick-and-mortar program. At the time

of the research, Ivan had earned 52 credits within his program of study.

Regarding his life-world and background, Ivan was a husband, father, son, son-in-

law, counselor, and student. When Ivan began his doctoral studies, his children were 2

and 4. Ivan's doctoral program was a 1-hour and 15-minute drive from his house, and his

classes were mainly in the afternoons and evenings. In reminiscing on his role-strain

experience, Ivan stated,

> There was a lot of, like, handing off to, handing off children [laughs] to our sitter,
>
> or my wife, or to whoever. You know? Um, gosh, so at that time that strain was
>
> tremendous, um, because it was, a- a- I just didn't stop. . . . I still have voicemails
>
> on my, on my phone that I just never deleted from the kids calling before they
>
> went to sleep. Um, and that was, you know, that was hard, um, to miss.

Ivan lived far from his extended family, so he felt isolated from receiving additional

childcare support. Ivan and his wife often discussed how their parent role strain might

lessen if they lived closer to their children's grandparents. Ivan stated, "Not having family nearby has created a lot of, or did create, still from time to time, but certainly earlier, created a lot of stress. Um, 'cause we were the only two people really that could care for our kids."

In his student role, Ivan was also a graduate assistant. Because of his parent and academic role strain, Ivan could not fulfill a paid employment position. In response to being unable to support his family financially, Ivan felt he was not meeting cultural, familial, or personal expectations of contributing to his family. Although Ivan's extended family expected males to fulfill traditional male roles, Ivan described his relationship with his wife as egalitarian.

Once Ivan completed his coursework, he was able to resume paid employment. After he started working, however, he struggled to manage both employee and student roles, stating, "I, like, started and stopped my dissertation three times and never really committed in those three times." He attributed his ability to resume his dissertation to COVID-19 and "the world pausing." Ivan also attributed recent success with his dissertation to prioritizing time and roles. Ivan had become intentional in setting aside time for working, studying, family, and self-care. One of Ivan's most significant ways of caring for himself and his family was prioritizing cooking pizza on Friday nights. This simple act of providing for his family brought Ivan immense joy:

> This is the time when I get to, like, when I feel most relaxed and use my hands, and I'm caring for other people. So, I hope that everybody has some way to do that. To do something where they feel relaxed and unselfish.

Ivan's images provided for the interview appear in Appendix U.

Findings

The findings of the research show how the study addressed the central research question and two subquestions. The central research question was, "As a parent, what does it mean to experience role strain in a doctoral CES program?" The two subquestions were "How is role strain experienced in relation to intersectional aspects of identity?" and "In what ways, if any, do historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures contribute to role strain?" Phenomenological interviewing, photovoice data collection and analysis methods, and in vivo and patterned coding of verbatim interview transcripts revealed the following three themes: (a) duality of experiences, (b) culture and society, and (c) interpersonal and intrapersonal care.

Two subthemes emerged within the duality of experiences theme: depletion experiences and enrichment experiences. Three main contextualizing lifestyle factors influenced how participants experienced the duality of their role strain: role management, parenting, and COVID-19. Within the culture and society theme, three subthemes developed: life-world and background influences, exclusion, and advocacy. Finally, three subthemes emerged within the interpersonal and intrapersonal care theme: interpersonal relationships, support, and self-care. The main contextualizing lifestyle factor affecting how participants experienced interpersonal and intrapersonal care was COVID-19. Table 2 shows a summary of themes, subthemes, and contextualizing lifestyle factors.

Table 2

Summary of Themes, Subthemes, and Contextualizing Lifestyle Factors

Themes	Subthemes	Contextualizing Lifestyle Factors
(1) Duality of experiences	• Depletion experiences • Enrichment experiences	• Role management • Parenting • COVID-19
(2) Culture and society	• Life-world (temporality, spatiality, embodiment, relational thrownness) and background influences • Exclusion • Advocacy	
(3) Interpersonal and intrapersonal care	• Interpersonal relationships • Support • Self-care	• COVID-19

Theme 1: Duality of Experiences

The theme of duality of experiences reveals how role strain negatively affected

participants (depletion experiences) and positively affected participants (enrichment

experiences). This theme supports previous findings regarding the role-strain depletion

hypothesis (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Cohen & Janicki-Deverts, 2012; Home, 1998;

Rothbard, 2001; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; Tiedje et al., 1990), as well as findings

regarding the role-strain enrichment hypothesis (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Marks, 1977;

Sieber, 1974; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; Thoits, 1983).

Depletion Experiences

Depletion experiences capture the meaning of role-strain adversity. Role-strain

adversity includes the emotional, mental, and physical burden of role strain, pertaining to

the aspects of participants' lives they felt they needed to hide and for which they

sacrificed experiences. Participants' emotional, mental, and physical burden included

mood and stress-related changes, somatic complaints, questioning or self-doubt, and

feeling undue pressure to produce (research, conference presentations) within their

academic programs.

Excerpts of participants' emotional, mental, and physical burden in response to

role strain are pulled from their narratives and exemplified in the following paragraphs:

Dr. T. If you're not producing as much as your peers, then you're not gonna be

valued e- either. And so, then it's just like you drown even more. And, and that's

how I've felt a lot, that like, I am not a producing student like some of my peers in

my cohort. And so, therefore, I am not as valuable, and nobody has felt the need

to pour any extra energy into me. Um, which has been very frustrating.

Pam. So, experiencing it, I would say, generally has been overwhelming, very

overwhelming . . . It's, it's a, it's a wave. Like it's a very big wave . . . and I can

swim. Like, I'm a decent swimmer, not a strong swimmer. . . . But, like, when,

when a wave hits me, I go down and, it's really hard for me to get back up. And

so that's how all of this has felt. And, you know, then I feel like I'm swimming,

right? And I've got like my kid that I'm towing behind me. So, it's not just me; I

have to worry about staying afloat. I have to worry about the two of them too.

Ali. Um, but I think even too like looking back of, I think a lot of times, um, I feel

like going to school and having a career and different things like that can be

selfish, um, and not giving family exactly what they need or want or whatever.

Um, but looking through, it's like, okay, I am giving up something, um, you

know, type thing. So, I think that's that hard balance there, but that theme comes out of, you know, am I doing the right thing? Um, or am I making sure that the values are, are where they need to be?

Examples of role strain's emotional and mental burden were also evident in participants' photovoice imagery.

Figure 2 shows a photograph of Katie's lunch, eaten as she worked on her dissertation while on her lunch break at work. Katie explained,

I think it's really just a sign of how fast-paced my life is right now and how full it is. Um, I'm not eating well, even though there's a smoothie on my desk and I'm eating a salad. Um, I eat my feelings. Um, and so, um, you know, even though I'm eating lunch, there's probably chocolate in the desk drawer, um, that I will eat as soon as the salad is out the way [laughs]. Um, I lost 30 pounds on purpose when we were out for COVID. I used Weight Watchers, which I've used before with great success. Um, I did a little bit of exercising, you know, between, uh, March and August when we went back to school in September. But the minute we went back to school, it was like just emotional and literal chaos. And there was just there's, there's no time. And even if I could, even if I wanted to devote time to myself, I, I'm just, I'm too stressed out to . . . I would rather sleep than do that.

Figure 2

Working Lunch
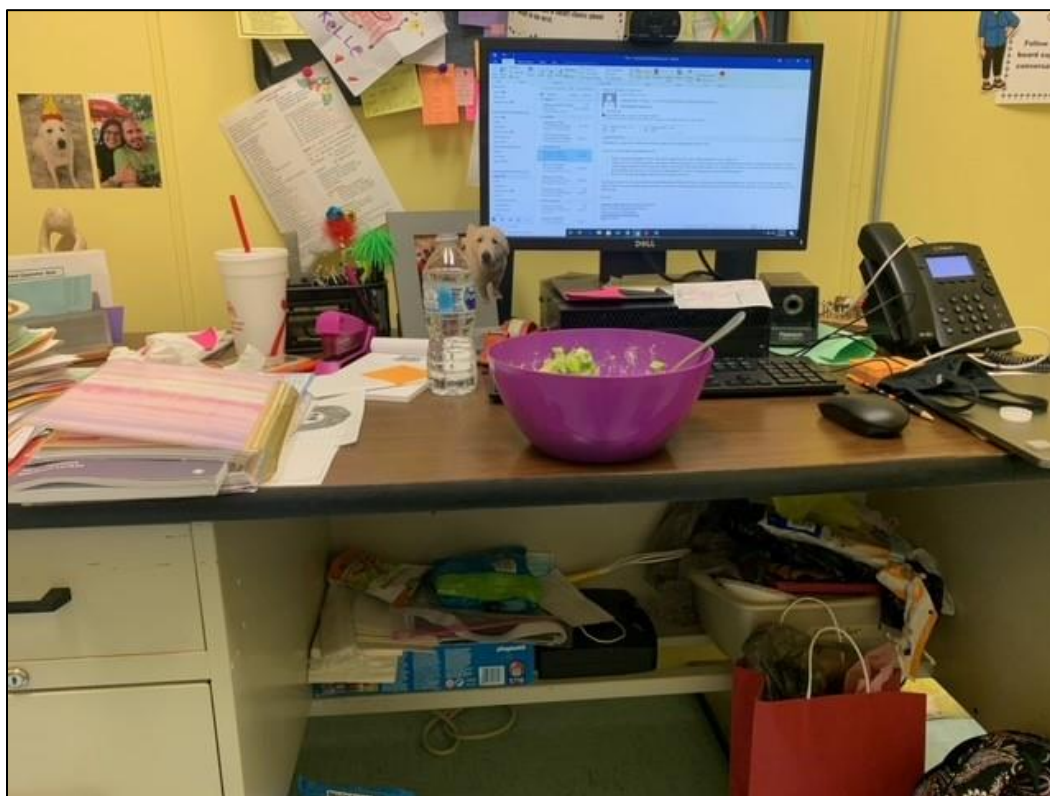
Note. Salad and smoothie (lunch) at work desk [Photograph], by Katie (2021).

Figure 3 shows as dead leaf hanging from a tree branch. In describing Figure 3, Ivan said,

> Um, uh, I see a dead leaf that, um, that was, uh, really seemed like it was just hanging to the end of its life. Um, um, I think this was like the day we talked or the day after we talked, and, you know, it was the first thing that caught my eye. It's like, oh yeah, that- that's- that has some representation that reflects me in some way. . . . Um, uh, so there's a bit of, like, my goodness, I'm just barely hanging on right now, and feeling that the stress and strain of all the different

things that I have going on. Um, and then I think- I think I said, like, the weight

that I carried, like, both literally and figuratively, I think was, you know, like I- I

maybe in the last few weeks have put on a little bit of weight. Um, so I was just

referencing that as well . . . feeling, feeling some sense of, like, am I going to, am

I going to be able to make it through the next couple weeks? That was really, that

was how I felt. Like, I'm really on the edge. I'm on the verge of- of falling, of

falling off the tree. Um, and not in a, an acorn and about to grow a new tree type

of way. But, like, I'm at the end of my rope here. So, that's how it felt.

Figure 3

Hanging On

Note. Dead leaf hanging from a tree branch [Photograph], by Ivan (2021).

In addition to the emotional, mental, and physical burden of role strain, participants described times when they felt they needed to hide aspects of their family life from their program and peers. Further, participants felt they needed to hide aspects of their doctoral student experiences from their families. The notion of "hiding" was evident in multiple participants' narratives and photovoice imagery.

In Figure 4, Dr. T's daughter sits on her lap while she sends "one quick email" to a dissertation research participant.

Figure 4

One Quick Email

Note. Daughter sitting on mother's lap while she works [Photograph], by Dr. T (2021).

In discussing this image, Dr. T stated,

I think as a parent and student and, you know, someone juggling the work from

home life, that so many of us are that it, um, it highlights how it can look of like,

looks like two pretty happy beings. Um, whereas we were both pretty frustrated

moments after this and, uh, she was really bored, and I felt really stressed and

anxious and just wanted to get this done. This email sent so that I could get

finished with my dissertation so that, you know, to meet deadlines and all those

things. . . . We try to put on a big, big, strong face for our kids and as well as our

family so that they think that we're okay. Um, but really, we're, we're struggling,

we're stressed, we're anxious, we're scared. Um, but trying to show up still.

In Figure 5, Nic is quarantined in her bedroom after being diagnosed with

COVID-19. Although she was sick, she was the president of her institution's Chi Sigma

Iota chapter, and she felt obligated to initiate the new honors society members. Regarding

this image, Nic explained,

And so, it was just funny to me that like if you were looking at me, you know, I

look good on the camera because I have the good clean wall and stuff. But

looking at it, I've got a laptop on an ironing board. So [laughs], you know, in my

bedroom. . . . I'm pretending, I guess. I'm trying to make something look not, not

what it is. It's not realistic. So, it's just kind of a façade, a little bit of um, hiding

from my children, and my family, and my real life in my bedroom trying to make

it look like something it's not. . . . I think that's what I do often, honestly. Um,

because I feel like um, especially in my program, and stuff, um, a lot of the

professors don't have a family life, or if they do, it's not prioritized above their

academic life. Um, and so it's almost like I have to hide that part or pretend like it's not as important. And so that, that's what I, I mean that's what's going on is I'm, I'm kind of hiding that piece the best that I can in the situation that I'm in at that point. I'm even hiding illness at this point.

Figure 5

Madame President
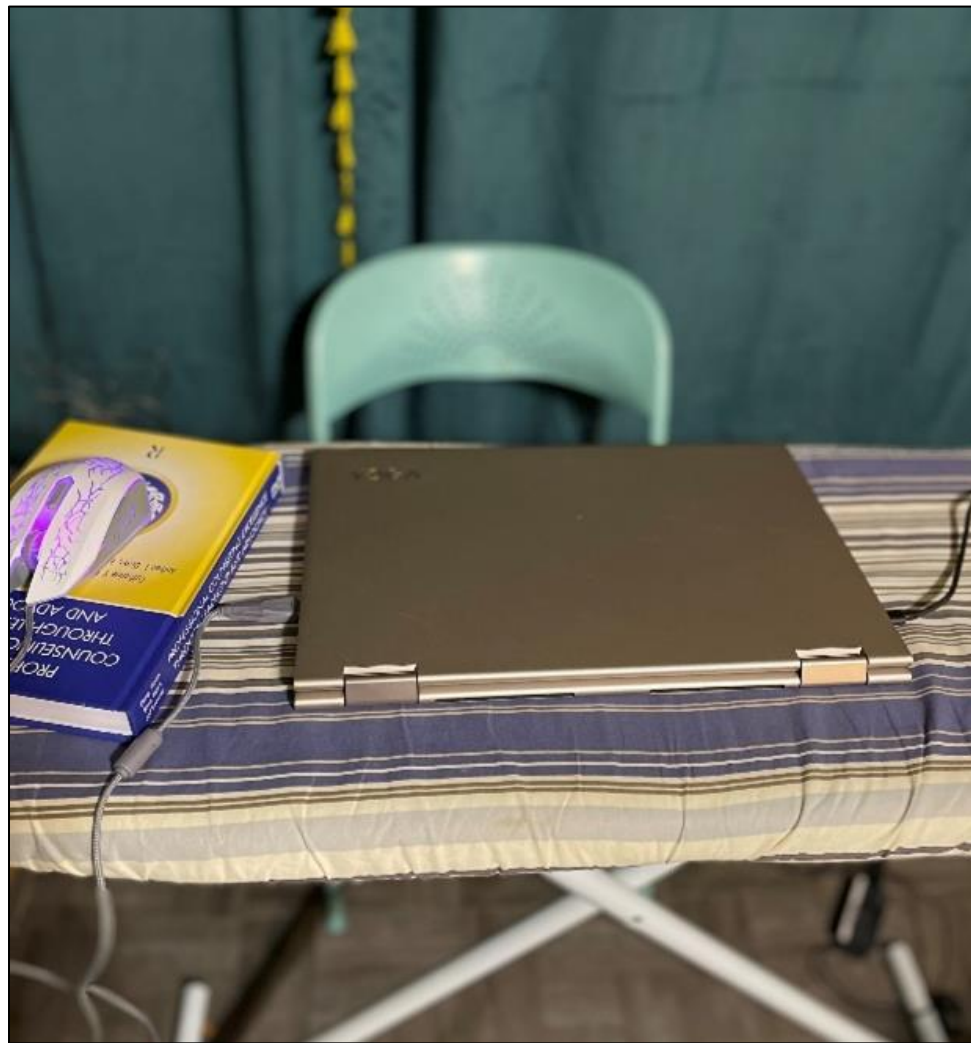
Note. Ironing board being used as a laptop desk [Photograph], by Nic (2021).

Figure 6 captures the lab where Harper had her blood drawn following a miscarriage. According to Harper, this image was captured 30 minutes after participating in this study's orientation meeting.

Figure 6

Role Strain: Compartmentalization

Note. A medical facility [Photograph], by Harper (2021).

In processing the meaning of this image and role-strain experience, Harper stated,

So, the meaning that I had here was like, there's stuff that's happening that we don't talk about, but it's still happening, and it doesn't negate the effect of it. And then also, those things that do happen, north- nothing is taken off our plates

because of these moments. So that seems to be significant for me. . . . I go back to

this first picture of, you know, this miscarriage of people maybe not knowing

what's going, you know, what's going on in all aspects of somebody's life

holistically. Um, I don't think anybody, I mean, of course, this, this picture

occurred during COVID. So, we, we didn't see each other often, but I don't think

anybody in my program knew that I had experienced this for at least a couple of

weeks.

In Figure 7, Ali is shown preparing for annual family pictures, a tradition

maintained by her mother since she was a child. To prepare, Ali made sure that the

photographer had a copy of the color scheme and props and that everyone was color

coordinated. Reflecting on this image as a metaphor for her role strain, Ali talked about

the hidden chaos of her experience.

Ali stated,

I think maybe from a counselor standpoint is, you know, you're getting like half a

picture, but you're not seeing the entire picture. So, I think a lot of times just

taking that step back, and even though this looks somewhat structured and put

together, um, there's a lot more underneath and around that we don't always see.

So, I think having to, to remember that it's okay for all that- that there to be

around it and just kind of embracing, um, embracing the chaos.

Figure 7

Family Pictures
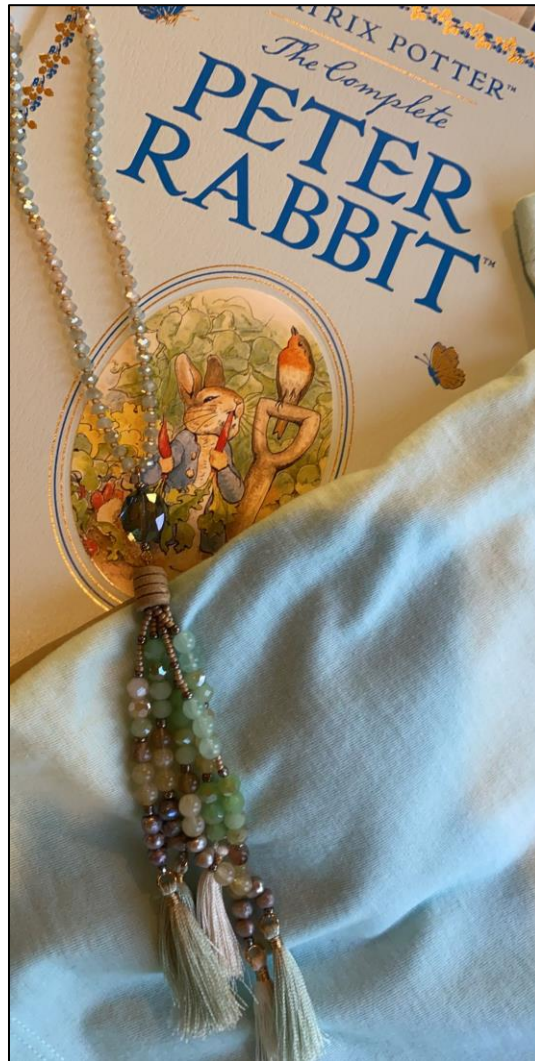
Note. Planning for family pictures [Photograph], by Ali (2021).

Finally, several participants felt that being a parent and a doctoral student meant that they needed to make sacrifices. Because of their role-strain burden, some participants sacrificed or were considering sacrificing employment roles, as explained in the following excerpts:

Bridgett. Do I wanna limit my work? It would make things a lot easier if I worked part-time or something like that. So, um, but I would no longer be a, um, um, like, I would lose . . . if I were to work part-time, I would have to leave my job completely, like my full-time job. And I'm, I'm the Assistant Director at our college's Wellness Center, which is, you know, it's a nice area with access to a lot of things and, um, it's nice. So, I would have to give all that up if I were to . . . But it might be worth it. I don't know. I'm still thinking about that.

Harper. And so, as a parent, I feel like I also have to provide, but then I'm a student and a Ph.D. student, and that feels like a full-time job as well. And we know that, you know, parenthood feels very much like a full-time job. And so, then there's this whole other sphere of professionally, what am I doing in my household to kind of contribute? And so, when I was thinking of role overload and role strain, for me personally, in my household, I, we had to make the decision, um, when we found out we were pregnant, um, to drop one of those roles and the role that we chose to drop was, um, was me being a professional or, um, having a job. So that has absolutely influenced those other two roles because we took a pay cut. And so, it's, it's this urgency on the doc side of get this done because you have to put food on the table. Um, and this may be inadequacy on the parenthood side of, I could be providing so much more, but I'm choosing to do this doc thing. Um, so there's a lot of feelings associated with that. So that like role overload concept that you talked about really resonated with me because for our, at least for our, um, family, one of those roles kind of had to be dropped and, and I feel the effects of that daily.

Figure 8 depicts Katie preparing to mail in her request for leave without pay for the month of May. Katie requested to take May off from work to have three consecutive months to complete her dissertation. In describing Figure 8, Katie stated,

> I took a leave without pay for the month of May because I've just, I've got to interview, and I've got to write it up. Um, my dissertation Chair is, um, I know this is confidential, but she's leaving [institution name], um, as of August. And so, I've got to be finished, or I'll have to change chairs. And so, like, I have now this added pressure.

Figure 8

Leaving So Soon?
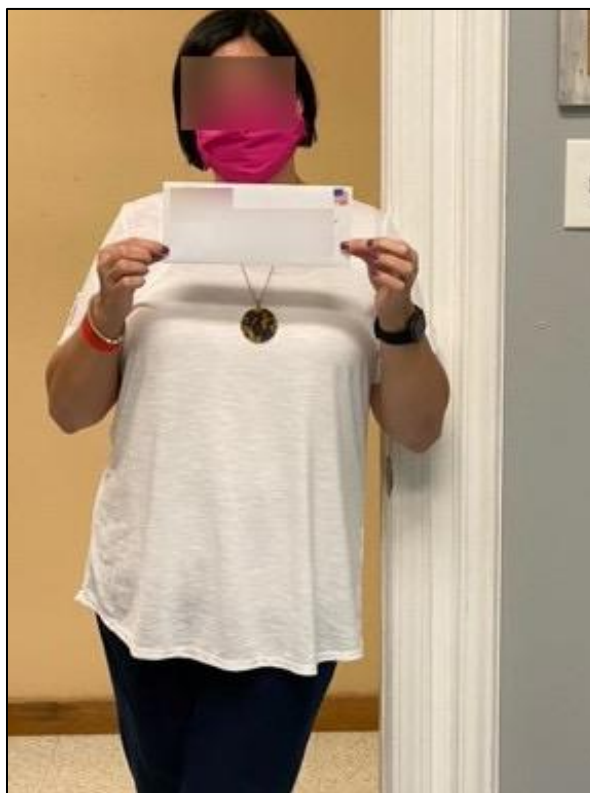
Note. Mailing in a request for leave without pay [Photograph], by Katie (2021).

In addition to sacrificing an employment role, one participant felt pressure from program and faculty to make sacrifices:

> **Dr. T.** And so, they [faculty] have sacrificed in other areas of their life. And I think that some of them have assumptions that you, if you want to do this life, this academic life, then you would sacrifice other things. That's like, "Hmm. I don't think so. Sorry that you did that. I don't wanna do that."

Other participants sacrificed their time and connection with loved ones.

Figure 9 shows a text from Nic with her husband about the status of their son's playoff basketball game. Nic was missing this game for several reasons: COVID-19 allowed limited spectators, her daughter had a swim lesson, and she had an online doctoral class she must attend while simultaneously bathing her daughter after the swim lesson. In discussing this image, Nic stated,

> So, for me, I have really defined times, um, that I can be a doctoral student during the day whenever both of my children are at school. But outside of that, I have a class in the evenings and have to work on things, and they have their activities, and so for me, it's kind of where those things collide a little bit in having to, uh, make sacrifices in one place, or the other, and what that's going to mean you know for parenting, or for the doctoral program.

Figure 9

The Big Game
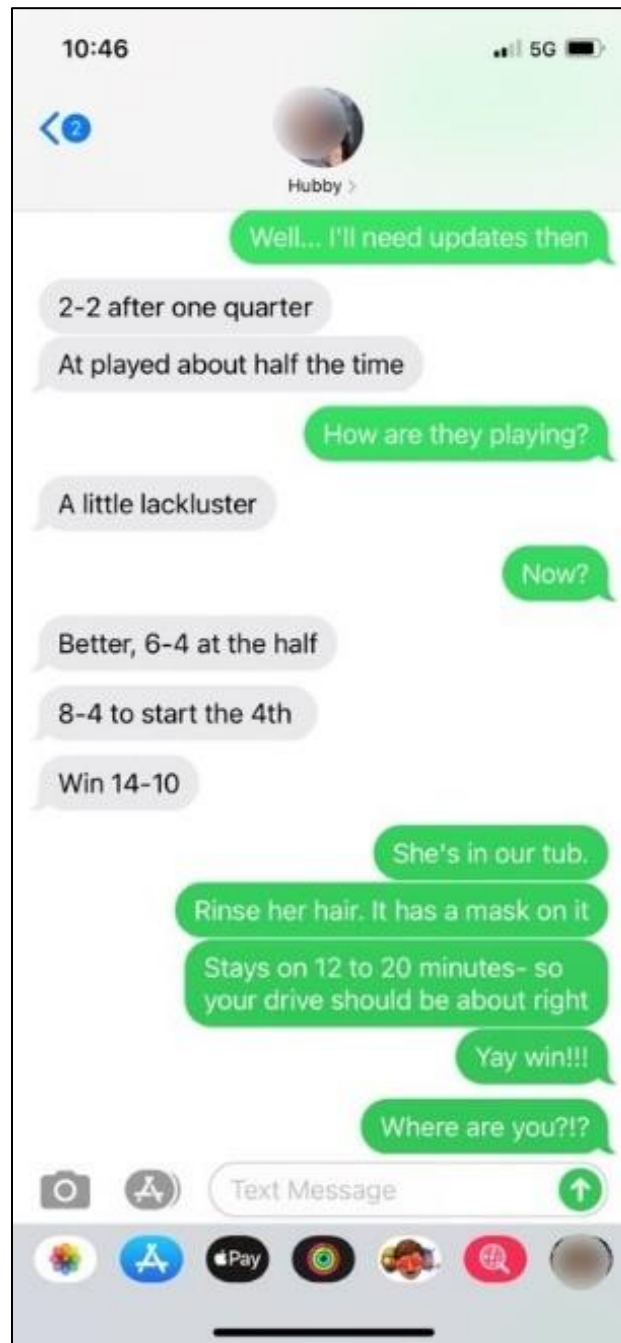
Note. Mother texting with her husband about their son's playoff basketball game

[Photograph], by Nic (2021).

Figure 10 shows Elliot's computer keyboard at work. Elliot's keyboard was a way to accomplish his work; however, it was also a primary means of communicating with his family. As it related to sacrifice, Elliot stated,

> I wanna say I feel like my personal relationships are sacrificed and suffer for my professional ones, and, um, I'm just at a point, um, in the process of what I do it's like, you know, we have to sacrifice certain things. And, yeah . . . I would say probably the strain is less in my professional life and much more strained in my personal life in all of those areas . . . um yeah. And then I kind of think of things like there will be a time later when I slow down type of thing . . . and that's where I talk about missing out on things, sacrificing, and, and yeah, that's, that's the most troubling part of all that I do.

Figure 10

The Sacrifice: What Am I Giving Up With Family And Friends?
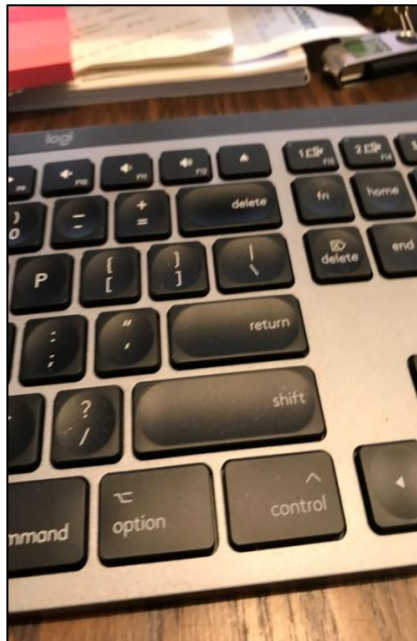
Note. Computer keyboard on work desk [Photograph], by Elliot (2021).

Despite the emotional, mental, and physical burden of role strain and the aspects of participants' lives they felt they needed to hide or sacrifice, participants reported finding meaning and enrichment in their role-strain experiencing. In the following section, participants' statements and imagery support the subtheme of enrichment experiences.

Enrichment Experiences

Enrichment experiences capture how participants benefited from role strain. Participants found meaning or a "silver lining" to their role-strain burden, including feelings of accomplishment, achievement, gratification, and motivation to progress through challenging times.

Excerpts of participants' role-strain enrichment are drawn from the narratives and imagery:

Bridgett. And, um, but then there's also just the strength in how if that's my process, and that's what, you know, makes me feel accomplished and, and like, making an impact and bringing other people along with me, then it's, it's, it's, that desire is in there for a reason.

Dr. T. I'm doing meaningful work, that, um, uh, I don't want to say successful, but, um, meaningful, important, purposeful work that I know someday will, um, serve me in the way that I want my life to look in the future.

Figure 11 is a photograph of Harper's coffee mug, which shows her daughter and her on the side. Harper was drinking this coffee as she worked on her dissertation at 5:00 a.m. Working during this "ungodly hour" helped Harper progress with her writing because her family was sleeping.

Figure 11

Role Contagion: Avoiding the Rush

Note. Mug with mother and daughter's photograph [Photograph], by Harper (2021).

Although she was strained, Harper stated,

For me, this is relating to that intersection of, of parenthood and, and studenthood

[laughs], um, because I have this mug and I'm sitting there in the quiet, in the

dark of night writing, and I can look over and, you know, see this picture on my

mug of, y- you know, why I'm doing this and just remember h- why it's

significant. So, um, although this is kind of a s- a strain, this is also a point where

I felt like that resiliency is coming through, and it's something that I can hold on

to while I'm drinking my coffee, which, like, is my lifeblood at this

point . . . 'cause it's so early, I can still look at this picture and say, like, "Oh, this,

this is it. Like, this is, this is who I am, and this is who I'm, you know, a part of

this is for her. And, and she is watching me do this. And I like to make her proud." So, it's, it's strain, but it's also just these two roles, intersecting and diffusing in a way that helps me.

Figure 12 depicts a lone daffodil in Elliot's yard. Elliot described the image as a metaphor for the growth and resiliency that he experienced from his role strain. He stated,

It's just that the strength is its life. We come back; we keep going, we, we evolve, we . . . it's why- it's why we exist. Life just keeps going, so whether it's through us or through our offspring or whatever. . . . It's, um, growth. It's just a new day; literally, that's where I, kind of, am. It's been so- There's a dark cloud over the last year or whatever, and it's like, that's why I did that. It was pretty cool.

Figure 12

Out of Darkness: Is This Into The Light?

Note. Edited image of a daffodil [Photograph], by Elliot (2021).

In Figure 13, Ivan is engaged in two simultaneous online chats, one with his son and one with a coworker. At the same time, a student walked into his office, which increased his role strain. In discussing this photograph, Ivan explored the "silver lining" of his role-strain experience. He stated,

It's odd, though. Like, I, you know, like, once I got both of these things done, I was like, cool, I just multitasked and got these things figured out. You know? And now I can move on. So, there is a feeling of like- like, I dig into it sometimes, you know? Like I- I le- I lean in when the- when it presents itself because if I can chat with two people at the same time and get two things taken care of . . . then I just saved myself some time.

Figure 13

Role Confusion
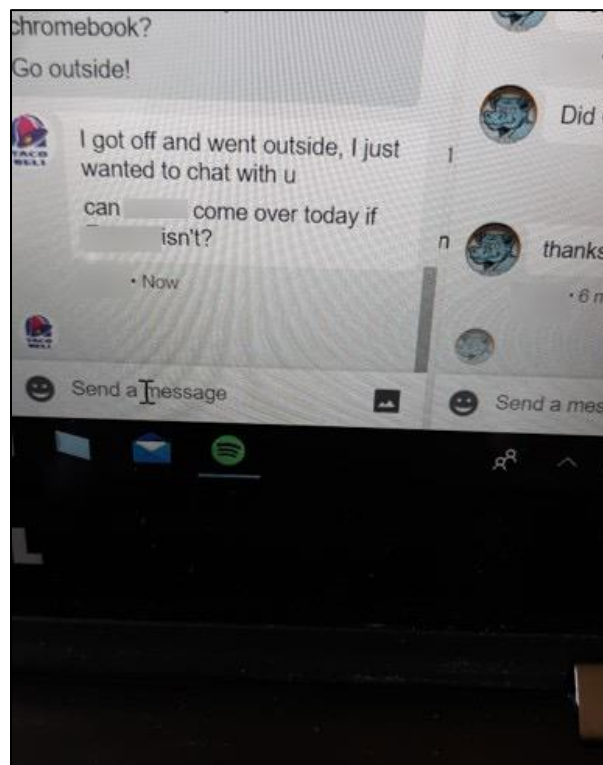
Note. Two online chat conversations co-occurring [Photograph], by Ivan (2021).

Contextualizing Lifestyle Factors Influencing Role-Strain Experiences

As discussed in Chapter 3, contextualizing lifestyle factors were the prominent inescapable aspects of participants' lives that directly influenced participants' role strain experiences. In Figure 13, Ivan introduced one of these contextualizing lifestyle factors—role management. Role management included how participants attempted to manage their role strain by engaging in activities such as juggling roles, multitasking, prioritizing, being intentional, diffusing (overlapping) roles, and differentiating roles or creating role boundaries. The struggle, success, or ability of participants to acknowledge strengths in their role management seemed to affect their experiences of role strain as either adverse or beneficial, as evidenced from the following excerpts.

> **Adverse example—Nic.** I'm not being 100% mom and not being 100% student. So, we're just kind of meeting somewhere in the middle to survive.
>
> **Beneficial example—Katie.** I've really tried to keep things in a perspective and not, um, not let, not let the Ph.D. be all-consuming, you know. Um, and so, I've tried to find a good work–life balance, work–life–school– [laughs]–church balance, you know.

Parenting was a second contextualizing lifestyle factor that affected participants' role-strain experience. Several participants explored the ages of their children as either helping or hindering their role strain. The ages of participants' children influenced the children's emotional, mental, and physical dependency, including the emotional sensitivity of children and the degree of parental involvement needed for feeding, supervision of play, tying shoes, bathing, homework or home instruction, extracurricular involvement, and college and career planning. An example of how children's age can

affect role strain was found in an example provided by Dr. T, who acknowledged both the adverse and beneficial aspects of having infants while in a doctoral program.

> **Mixed (Adverse and Beneficial) Example—Dr. T.** I thought a lot about that, of like, how would this be different if I had school-age children versus, you know, I had . . . Like I said, [first daughter's name] was born fall of my second year, and then [second daughter's name] was born in the summer of, uh, going into my third year. Um, and so like, I was able to, you know, like, strap them to my chest and write and grade and do different things. And, and so I think their ages made some things easier and some things a lot more difficult. Because, you know, when they were awake or upset or fussing, like I couldn't, um, explain to them, you know, like the email. Like a two-year-old doesn't understand Mommy's got to . . . "I need 10 minutes to write this email; can you go sit and watch your movie or whatever?" Um, she wanted my attention in that moment, and it was like too bad, so sad, mom, you haven't . . . You know. Whereas I think if it was a six-or-seven-year-old, I could explain- . . . you know, "if you give me 10 minutes then, then we can play whatever game you wanna play." Um, and so . . . And I've thought about that too. Yeah. Just, you know, also if they were older, there would be . . . well, maybe not right now cause of COVID. But there would be activities or, um, you know, sports or extracurriculars that I would have been missing out on during this time- . . . which would have been really heartbreaking for me. Um, yeah. So, I, I think it was both a pro and a con to have- . . . infants and all that.

An unanticipated parenting factor that arose in several participant interviews was the role of being a pet parent. Several participants included photographs of their pets in

the interview and discussed how the pet-parent role hindered and helped their role-strain experience.

Adverse Examples—Pam and Elliot. Pam's pet-parent role was highlighted during her interview as she paused several times to address her dog. On one occasion, Pam turned to her dog and said, "Okay, so talk, can we talk about dog-mom responsibility and role here because you're a needy little thing, aren't you?" Elliot's pet-parent role was highlighted in his interview and photograph (Figure 14) when he described being faced with either staying at his first doctoral residency or leaving to care for his dog, who fell ill while he was away.

Figure 14

Missing [Belle]: Is It Time To Add A New Puppy To The Family?

Note. Pet poodle, [Photograph], by Elliot (2021).

Elliot stated,

I was in my, the- the, uh, first day of that residency, and the lady called us that she

was with, and just said that she was paralyzed. And, and she couldn't, and she

weighed 65 pounds, and she was, she was huge. She was a big dog. Um, beautiful

dog. And, um, it was a, what do, what do, what do I do? I mean, I was just, how

do I get home? What do I do? . . . So, we- I ended up staying, just constantly in

contact with them or whatever.

Beneficial Example—Katie. Finally, Katie referred to her dogs as her "other

children" or her "furry children." She captured her dogs in photographs (Figure 15) and

referenced them several times during her interview by reflecting on the meaning they

brought into her life. Katie stated, "I do try to put things in my life that have joy and, and

that is- my dogs are one of them."

Figure 15

Renovation Obligations

Note. Home life: Renovations and pets [Photograph], by Katie (2021).

The third contextualizing lifestyle factor affecting participants' role strain was COVID-19. COVID-19 affected participants' role strain in both adverse and beneficial ways. From the perspective of adversity, COVID-19 limited participants' access to resources, including childcare both outside and within the home. Role-strain burden was increased by simultaneously working, studying, providing childcare, and assisting with home instruction during lockdown or quarantine. From a benefits perspective, participants valued being able to "slow down," "pause," "pace" themselves, and be more present in their children's lives. For some participants, the COVID-19 lockdown increased their doctoral study productivity.

Adverse Example. An example of the adverse impact of COVID-19 on participants' role strain is exemplified in Dr. T's narrative and photograph (Figure 16).

Figure 16

Desperate Times

Note. Working while supervising daughters' play [Photograph], by Dr. T (2021).

Dr. T reflected,

I think that a lot of parents are feeling this right now, just this desperation of how

do I safely entertain my children, um, because of the . . . I think this has a lot of

pandemic-related issues. I mean, we are generally comfortable financially, so we

could hire a babysitter or nannies, but we didn't, we don't want to bring them into

our house because of COVID, and we're already exposed enough by the girls

going to daycare. . . . I think a whole other role or pressure or strain that, you

know, us parents are feeling presently because of COVID of like, okay, I could

have help, but I don't have help because it's not safe to have help. Um, and so it's

just chaos, just chaos.

Beneficial Example. An example of the beneficial impact of COVID-19 on

participants' role strain is exemplified in Bridgett's narrative:

And I'm also very grateful that the circumstances with, um, having, um, you

know, uh, it's not quarantine but limitations. You know, I can't see my, like, be in

office and so working from home, that's made it so, so much easier because I'm

not driving back and forth. I'm not, you know it's easy to, to know what I'm

gonna make for dinner. It's easy to keep up with the affairs of the, of the home,

like the things that I, my responsibilities for the home. Um, so it's like imagining

if this were, um, if we weren't, if I weren't working from home, it would be even

crazier. Like I would, I would probably look like a crazy person doing, you know,

classes in my car and picking up dinner at night and [sighs] so it's, it's a, it's, it's

hard to even complain because it's like the only reason I have this nice,

comfortable pace, even though it's a lot, is because of this circumstance we're in.

The duality of experiences theme was evident in the participants' descriptions of their role strain and the meaning they assigned to the experience. The participants' narratives and images further articulated how intersectional aspects of identity contributed to role strain and how contextualizing lifestyle factors such as role management, parenting, and COVID-19 influenced role overload, role conflict, and role contagion.

In addition, participants' experienced role strain in the context of their life-worlds, backgrounds, and instances of exclusion. Participants' life-worlds, backgrounds, instances of exclusion, along with a need for advocacy, aligned with the theme of culture and society. The following section on the theme of culture and society provides narrative and photographic evidence of historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs, as well as ideologies and pressures contributing to participants' role-strain experiences.

Theme 2: Culture and Society

The culture and society theme reveals how role strain was experienced in relation to historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures. This theme emerged from participants' narrative and photographic depictions of their life-worlds and backgrounds, instances of exclusion, and the need for advocacy to improve conditions for studying and working parents.

Life-World and Background Influences

Participants' backgrounds are the conditions that contribute to their actions and perceptions (Munhall, 2013). Life-worlds are participants' unique differences, beliefs, attitudes, and varying understandings of meanings based on four components: (a) temporality (time); (b) spatiality (location, culture, and economic status);

(c) embodiment (in body experience); and (d) relational thrownness (country, nationality, family relationships, friends, support, colleagues, and other interpersonal relationships; Munhall, 2013). The components of relational thrownness discussed within the subtheme of life-world and background are country and nationality. Family relationships, friends, support, colleagues, and other interpersonal relationships are discussed later as a subtheme of interpersonal and intrapersonal care.

Temporality. Regarding temporality, participants' role strain was influenced by current events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, presidential and governmental administrations, and the cultural phenomena of social media and cancel culture. Nic described a time when she felt alone, misunderstood, and unsupported by her family in her doctoral student role because of the influence of presidential and governmental administrations on her family's belief system regarding health and education. Nic explained,

> Yeah, they just don't get it . . . I didn't realize just how much they didn't get it
> until recently they were, my dad was watching Fox News, and so that should
> probably build a lot of background for you. And um, one of the, I think it was
> Hannity maybe, it might have been Tucker Carlson, one of those guys that have
> the show, and all that. And they were talking about, um, Joe Biden's wife, Dr.
> Biden. She's Dr. Biden. She has a Ph.D. in education. And they were saying that
> she wasn't a real doctor, and she shouldn't give people advice about mask-
> wearing, um, because she's not a real doctor. And I was, and I made the comment.
> I was like, "Well, she is. She has a Ph.D. in education. She's genuinely Dr.
> Biden." And my dad said something, you know, to the effect of, "Those aren't

real doctors. I would never call anybody like that a doctor." And I was like, "You

realize that's what I'm doing, right? Like in a year from now, my students will

call me Dr. [Last Name] because I have a Ph.D. in counselor education. I'm

considered an expert in that area." And um, I think that's when it kind of hit me

that they just have no idea what I'm doing.

Nic further described experiencing conflicts of interest within different social circles

(social, familial, educational), expressing that the people around her disagreed with how

she lived, balancing many roles. In navigating her role strain, Nic stated,

It's just kind of been interesting the last few years to navigate that, and um, just

kind of how people have felt, and the attitudes given towards me about kind of

what I'm doing, and what I want to do.

Elliot experienced role strain when his professional, personal, and political roles

conflicted with his social media presence. Because of his professional, personal, and

political roles and beliefs, Elliot refrained from making public social media comments on

current events regarding transgender athletes. Elliot explained,

You know I work with a lotta transgender, uh, I have a, I have a huge LGBTQ

population, uh, that I work with, and, um, I'm, kind of been attacked on, on social

media not for what I say, but what I'm not saying. And I can't . . . I can't get

behind it.

Finally, after experiencing a racial microaggression within her academic program,

Bridgett experienced role strain when her student, counselor, advocate, and Christian

roles conflicted. Bridgett stated,

So, here's the challenge, though. That I don't view, um, although I, I recognize and I use the term microaggression, I see, still see this behavior through the lens as a Christian. And, and not to say that I'm jumping forward to forgiveness and, you know, just God heals all and we'll just sing Kumbaya in the end, but it's like, okay, well what is, what, what do I do with this? And, um, especially versus what the world tells me I should do because what the world tells me I should do is expose them and get rid of them, and that is not the way either And so, I have to do things in a way that's not necessarily what, you know, the cultural standards might be.

Spatiality. Concerning spatiality, participants described the impacts of their geographic locations, cultures, and privilege statuses on their role-strain experience. The impacts of a geographic location and culture were evident in Ali's narrative and photo imagery (Figure 17), and the influence of privilege on role strain was described in the narrative and photo imagery of Dr. T (Figure 18).

Ali's photograph in Figure 17 depicts an evening walk on family land. As described in Ali's profile, Ali lived in a rural, Southern, Bible Belt State that she described as blue collar and family oriented with strong Christian values and little diversity. Southern traditions, values, and beliefs within her family, including perceptions about role obligations, were passed down through generations. As it related to the culture of her community and social expectations, Ali felt pressure as a mother "to be the one that takes care of the child and make sure that there's meals on the table, cooked or drive through or whatever, um, house clean, laundry, all of that." She said that the consequence of not meeting these expectations was "feeling like you're a failure."

Figure 17

Across the Railroad Tracks

Note. Father and son walking across the farm to the lake [Photograph], by Ali (2021).

In her work as a counselor, Ali felt she had to "keep it all together" while supporting others and caring for herself. Finally, being part of a Southern family meant "family comes first . . . regardless of what's going on." In managing these three role identities alone, Ali described experiencing role-strain burden. Further, Ali was the first woman within her family to receive a college degree and the first to pursue a tertiary degree. In reflecting on this experience, Ali stated,

> I've got a good path there, but I think this idea of nobody in the family, um, no
>
> female in the family has, um, a college education. So, it's like, that was never

modeled. So, like how, how do you do that? So, it's kind of just flying by the seat

of my pants type thing . . . Um, so I guess those values, those traditions, um, it's

almost questioning them of like, is this normal, you know? Um, because it's not

been modeled, so you don't know exactly what that looks like.

Figure 18

Always Waving Goodbye

Note. Mother waving goodbye to her daughters as they leave for daycare [Photograph],

by Dr. T (2021).

Figure 18 shows Dr. T waving goodbye to her girls as they went to daycare, an all

too regular occurrence, so that she could accomplish work or study. Although this image

depicted a source of maternal guilt and feelings of selfishness for Dr. T, she reflected on her socioeconomic privilege affording her access to resources such as daycare. In her interview Dr. T, stated,

> One thing that's kind of popping up for me right now is the, um, thinking about the privilege that I have of having the extra space, the privilege of having, um, you know, the time for my time and money for my girls to be able to go to daycare, to be able to do these things, to have a supportive family, supportive partner, and to be able to, uh . . . Yeah, just the privilege of my status should be acknowledged.

Several other participants acknowledged how their privilege mitigated role-strain burden. Participants' privilege afforded them resources such as help within the home (babysitters, tutors, housecleaners), cars and gas money to commute to work and school, and the ability to take vacations for self-care.

Embodiment. Embodiment is the body type one is born into (Munhall, 2013). Examples of embodiment include one's disability status, health and wellness, and gender. Multiple participants discussed the ways that embodiment affected their role strain and vice versa. Participants explored experiences of physical disability, somatic complaints (also discussed in the depletion experiences subtheme), and gender norm expectations. Role strain associated with a physical disability was exemplified in Dr. T's narrative and photo imagery (Figure 19). The cyclical relationship between role strain and somatic complaints is highlighted in Bridgett's narrative, Elliot's narrative, Pam's narrative and photo imagery (Figure 20), and Harper's narrative and photo imagery (Figure 21). The

impact of gender norm expectations on role strain is evident in Ivan's narrative and photo

imagery (Figure 22).

Figure 19 depicts Dr. T working from home on her dissertation. Dr. T's husband

was also working from home; therefore, they separated into different house areas to avoid

disturbing one another. Dr. T chose to work from her children's playroom because "it has

the most comfortable chair"; however, in this moment, the chair was being used as a

work desk.

Figure 19

Work-From-Home Life

Note. Student-mother with a physical disability working on a dissertation in child's

playroom [Photograph], by Dr. T (2021).

Figure 19 captured several identities for Dr. T: wife, mother, student, and woman with a disability. Regarding her disability, Dr. T described times when she as physically in pain, uncomfortable, and limited in what her body could do, complicating her ability to fulfill various role obligations. Dr. T relied on the support of others to help accomplish activities, stating, "As a woman with a physical disability, it's a little difficult to juggle two, uh, toddlers at once. So, my mom's often around helping me."

In her narrative and photo imagery, Dr. T described what it meant to have a physical disability as a parent and student. Dr. T further described the impact of role strain on her somatic experiences and vice versa. Additional examples of somatic complaints resulting from role strain, and the reciprocal effect, are evident in the cases of Bridgett and Pam.

Reflecting on her role-strain experience, Bridgett explored struggling with somatic complaints. She stated,

> I was so, um, like sleep-deprived one week that, um, and over-caffeinated, that I was like developing these, um, this like tic. Like, uh, not a tic but a muscle spasm under my eye, and it wouldn't go away. And then I got a mi- . . . I think it was like the closest I've ever experienced to a migraine. And I had to, um, miss work for a day and a half and, and then a client got upset.

Struggling with role strain within his student and employment roles, Elliot described gaining significant weight. Elliot stated,

> I, literally, have gained over 100 pounds in the last three years. And, um, I don't feel as good as I'd like to, of course. I don't work out, I don't do anything anymore, because I'm, I'm not joking, I'm here from 8:00 to 8:00, Monday

through Thursday, then 'til 5:00 on Fridays. And then I'm usually always here on

Saturdays and Sundays. I'm doing groups; I'm doing, um, homework up 'til, go

home at 8:00, eat, stay up until midnight, 1:00 doing homework, um, so that

weight . . . and then sitting all day with clients, and everything I do is sitting. So,

um, and I used to be very active, and so anyway, I couldn't control the weight.

Pam described her physical and emotional exhaustion related to role strain in

Figure 20. Although Figure 20 is not a photograph, Pam stumbled across this image of a

poem by Rachel Marie Martin on a Facebook group for moms, and she found it pertinent

to her photovoice imagery series.

Figure 20

So Tired
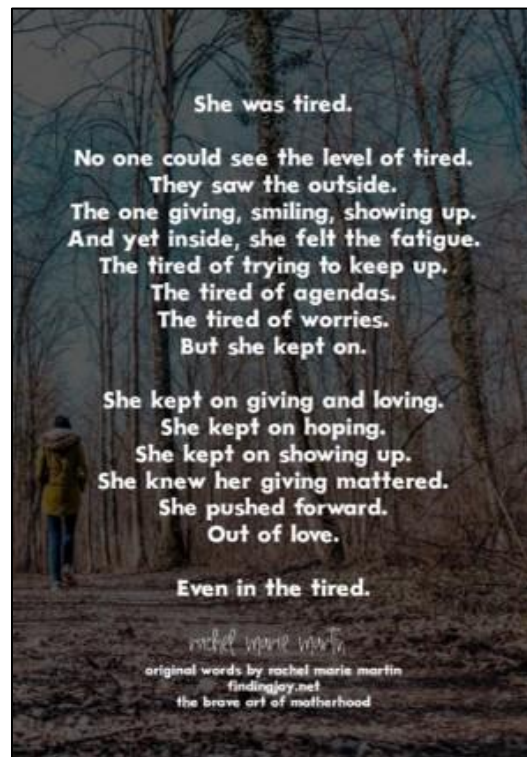
Note. A poem [Image posted on Facebook], by Rachel Marie Martin, n.d.

https://www.findingjoy.net.

Rachel Marie Martin is the creator of the website www.findingjoy.net and the author of *The Brave Art of Motherhood*. The poem reads:

She was tired. No one could see the level of tired. They saw the outside. The one giving, smiling, showing up. And yet inside, she felt the fatigue. The tired of trying to keep up. The tired of agendas. The tired of worries. But she kept on. She kept on giving and loving. She kept on hoping. She kept on showing up. She knew that her giving mattered. She pushed forward. Out of love. Even in the tired.

In processing this image, Pam explained that the poem described how she felt most days. Pam stated,

[Sigh] The struggle of motherhood. Um, yeah, this is, this, this is very, I think significant as, um, I think it really, like, for me it expresses a lot of what I feel . . . this week, in particular, I'm exhausted. But, um, so almost like when I see whether it's little poems or whatever about this, it's like breaking the, the facade of being a perfect mom or being that mom that like other moms think I am . . . Um, I f- I feel like, for some moms, this is what we battle. Um, you know, no one could see the level of tired because there's this pressure to not show it. Um, the pressure to still just show up with a smile on your face, and I'm kind of over here going, "Well, why can't you show up without a smile?" Like, "Why can't you show up and be like, yeah, this is really effing hard actually [laughs]. You know, like, I'm n- What's the point of faking it?

When Harper broke her ankle (Figure 21), it relieved her of some of her role obligations in her parent, homemaker, and wife roles, which enabled her to focus more on her student role.

Figure 21

Role Overload: Acute Transverse Nondisplaced Fracture
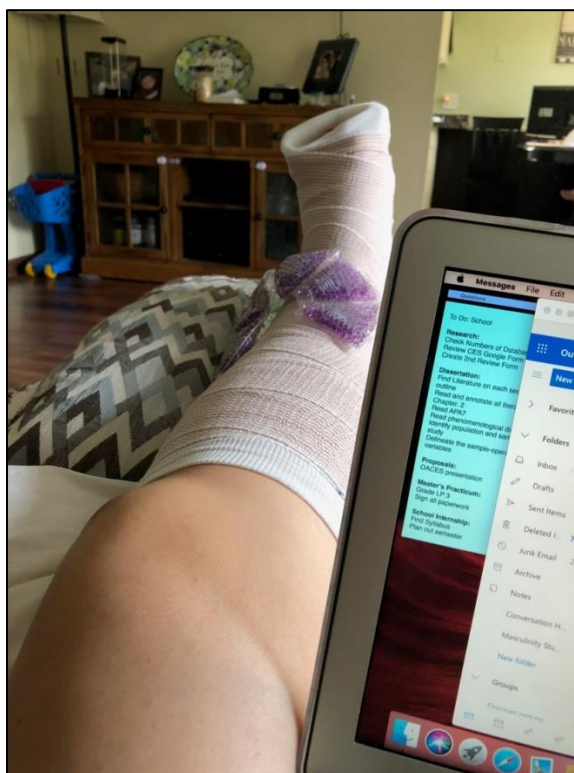
Note. Working on a computer while elevating a broken ankle [Photograph], by Harper

(2021).

Harper reflected on being disturbed by the feeling of relief she experienced after

breaking her ankle. Harper questioned her reaction, stating,

I'm not sure that it's healthy for me to like look at a broken limb and think, great,

now I can get some work done. So, for me, it was like, I'm not sure that's a

normal, healthy reaction. And, and that certainly wasn't the only reaction that I

had. Um, but it was definitely one of the reactions that I had was I can get work

done now. Um, and that was significant to me, 'cause it just, it seemed to embody

that role strain, that overload, um, in a really [laughs] impactful way. . . . Why do

I have to break my ankle to be able to say, I need to not do anyth- I need to sit in

the office or do whatever and not be interrupted for, you know, a period of time so

that I can get this done?

Ivan. Every Friday night, Ivan made pizza for his family (Figure 22). In his

interview, Ivan explained, "It's one of the few times during the week when I feel no

stress. I am providing for my family and focused only on that." "Providing" for one's

family was a role obligation that Ivan assigned to his male, husband, and father identities.

Figure 22

Friday Night, No Strain

Note. A pizza made by Ivan [Photograph], by Ivan (2021).

While he was a doctoral student, Ivan was unable to remain employed because of his role strain. Ivan explained,

> Um, I definitely, like, I was not providing for my family in my three years of my doc program. Um, you know, I had an assistantship, but that was not, that didn't do much. Um, and certainly, whatever ex- I don't know where the, you know, cultural expectations, family expectations, like, you know, um, I don't feel that I met the expectations that I had for myself for being able to contribute to my family.

Although Ivan resumed employment after his coursework, he found joy in providing for his family in other ways (nutritionally, emotionally, and through physical presence). Ivan found support from his wife regarding gender and role obligations, stating,

> My wife and I love each other and are married because we both were happy to, uh, shed any preconceived ideas of what the male or female is supposed to do in a relationship . . . there's not, there's not one of us who's more of a caregiver and one more of a provider . . . I cook most of our meals. . . . Our gender norms are all, we're all- all sorts of, um, gender un-normed.

Relational Thrownness. Relational thrownness is the specific relational context that people are born into, including their countries, nationalities, having an intact or not intact family, siblings, friends, support, colleagues, and other factors (Munhall, 2013). Under the theme of culture and society, Pam's narrative and photo imagery explored the cultural context of country and nationality (Figure 23). The other aspects of participants' relational life-world (family, friends, support, colleagues, and others) were accounted for under the theme of interpersonal and intrapersonal care.

Similar to other participants (seven out of nine), Pam believed that her role strain was influenced by culture and society. In her interview, Pam detailed the impact of the United States "pressure-cooker culture" on her experience of juggling multiple role identities (wife, mother, pet parent, employee, counselor, student, and advocate). Pam's role strain inspired her dissertation topic, and she was able to share how some of that research applied to her life-world. Pam recounted,

I read a study. . . . So, the, um, author as a researcher, looked at four different industrialized countries . . . Um, so she wanted to see if maternal guilt, um, existed in other countries. So, she looked at the U.S. and then three other countries. I can't remember which countries. But, you know, she found that like, in fact, maternal guilt does exist in other countries, but what's different is . . . So, three out of the four countries looked at it as, um, something that's more positive, which it's like, okay, when you're feeling like, oh, should I be doing this? Like, Should I go back to work? Should I go to school? That's more of a, yes, you're, this makes you a good mom. You're doing these things, and you're worrying. But here, it's viewed as this, like harpoon to the heart. And I was just like, well, if this isn't exactly what's happening. Um, so I definitely have huge like bucket loads of maternal guilt that get dumped, not get dumped on me as if like there's some person hiding behind, you know, the corner doing it: But when I make certain choices, I feel it.

Pam continued to reflect on societal pressure within the U.S. as she viewed a magnet her client gave her (Figure 23) that says "stop shoulding yourself."

Figure 23

Should Have, Would Have, Could Have

Note. "Stop Shoulding Yourself" magnet [Photograph], by Pam (2021).

When asked the photovoice prompt, "Why does this problem or strength exist?" Pam responded,

> Internal pressure, expectations, exo- societal, you know, the, the, this invisible bar
> I think I, I try to hit to reach and then it moves again and I, I didn't even know
> where it was in the first place. So, um, you know, again, like speaking from like a
> society standpoint or a cultural standpoint, it's, it's, uh, it's a very difficult place
> to maneuver in terms of like freeing yourself from the word should I guess,

because then there's stigma attached to that. You know, you, then you don't care

about anything, and it's like, oh my Lord. Yes, yes I do. Um, and I feel like I, I

kind of swim towards that. Sometimes it's like, whatever. Like free spirit,

whatever. And then, I like yank myself back into Uber, like control mode.

So . . . um, like I want to just blame it on the country. That's, I'm just gonna

blame it on the United States. Um, truly, um, yeah, I think a lot of it is what we

talked about before. There's just so many things embedded in our culture that

make it hard not to should yourself.

Exclusion

The subtheme of exclusion encompassed participants' experiences of stigma,

oppression, and marginalization. Some experiences of exclusion related to being a

doctoral student and parent. Others related to participants' additional intersectional

aspects of identity, such as race or gender. The experience of exclusion was noteworthy

in all cases for the way it added to the participants' role-strain burden. For some

participants, role identities conflicted when addressing a situation, and for others,

exclusion contributed to disadvantage, inadequate support, and feelings of frustration,

anger, fear, and within their roles. Out of nine participants, five revealed their concerns,

as evidenced in the narrative excerpts in the following paragraphs:

Bridgett. The program I'm in is, um, there, there, it's like predominantly white,

White female . . . And so, but what I've noticed, especially this semester with

working in group projects, is, um, there, that microaggressions are, they're real.

I'm experiencing them. And, and, and for the first time, in a way, that's, that got

to me. That bothered me.

Related to her role strain, Bridgett's student, counselor, Christian, and advocate roles came into conflict when addressing the experience of microaggressions within her academic program. Bridgett questioned how to respond to the microaggressions in a way that satisfied her multiple roles (detailed in her participant profile and the temporality section of the life-world subtheme).

> **Dr. T.** Yeah, just feeling zero support as a student and parent, you know, I think is why this problem [role-strain burden] exists . . . 'cause I'm so frustrated and angry by it all right now. Um, but I think advocating which, um, I plan on doing at some point. But, you know, there's some fear too, as a student, that if I make too much noise, then people will make my life a living hell or make it difficult. Um, so while I would like to be loud and obnoxious and demand for change, I also have to be careful. And I also have to be careful because, um, I'm not leaving my area, which means that I probably will want to seek employment at the program that I'm at, at some point, which means that I can't make enemies. Um, which is sad to think that asking for more support as a student and a parent could make me enemies, but it could. Um, very much could . . . I'm in a Southern region too, where there's a lot of White men in charge at, at the university still. And I don't know that they value a woman trying to do it all.

In this narrative excerpt, Dr. T reflected on the lack of institutional support she received as a doctoral student and a parent, which was angering and frustrating. She wanted to speak out and call for change; however, she was afraid of the professional repercussions of doing so. Similar to Bridgett's example, conflict was evident in Dr. T's student, professional (counselor, educator), and advocate roles.

Nic. In discussing why she felt it necessary to hide her family or illness from her peers and professors (Figure 5), Nic revealed she believed that mothers in academia were disadvantaged. Nic stated,

> I think it just exists, in general; I think it exists more for women, um, that we don't respect, or allow for mothering. It's like, it's, um, a disadvantage. You can't go as high because you have to parent. You can't move up in the ranks as much because you might actually put something before career. You know?

Pam. In her interview, Pam recounted a firsthand experience of marginalization from a professor within her program:

> Well, if I think about when I first started [the program], maintain full-time employment, and had a kid. Um, it was s- I mean, said to me from a professor . . . you know, "[Pam], you, you need to hire someone to watch your kid so that you can focus on school." And at that point, my daughter was already in daycare full-time because I was working full time. . . . So it's, it's just hard. And I think sometimes that, like that anger, that frustration keeps me going forward 'cause it's like, well, I'm not going to let this system knock me down. But like, you know, when I say like squeezing through, it's like squeezing through the tiny margin that's available for us . . . because it feels so small.

Harper. For Harper, her experience of exclusion stemmed from being one of few student-parents within her doctoral program. Harper stated,

> Um, so I would also say there is this feeling of, um, marginalization, um, because in the world that I am operating in and the academic space, and then also as my, one of my roles as a student, um, I, I am as a parent, I think, in the minority when

it comes to holding that identity. Um, and therefore I do not feel that the

streamlined experience is always conducive to my role as a parent. So, I would

say another experience or meaning that I attribute is just maybe this experience of

marginalization a little bit.

Advocacy

Because of the cumulative consequences of role strain for student-parents,

participants called for advocacy (a subtheme of culture and society) and change in the

perception of and support for student-parents. In fact, several participants were motivated

to join the study to have their voices heard and their experiences understood. Some

participants expressed the need for change within their academic programs, and others

expressed the need for change on a cultural and societal level. Excerpts from participants'

narratives that support the need for advocacy and change appear next.

Dr. T. Dr. T called for change at a cultural and societal level. Dr. T wanted to see

more social support for working and studying parents and more support for parents

generally. In responding to the photovoice prompt, "What can we do about this [role

strain]?" Dr. T stated,

I think advocate, advocate, advocate, advocate, to, you know, be honest. Um, I

think that's kind of, uh, at least the, the curated social media presence that I have

created for myself and, and community, um, of being honest of like, nope, we

can't do this ourselves. And, nope, it's way too freaking hard . . . Um, but I think

just being honest and saying, like, "No, this isn't real. No, this is not, this is not

possible, it's not feasible" . . . Um, and also, I think normalize the importance of

daycare. 'Cause I, I feel like there's like a negative, slightly negative air about

daycare of like, "Oh, your babies go to daycare." . . . So, I think somehow

dispelling the myth that, like, parents who send their kids to daycare are bad

parents. I, I don't know if that's maybe just the belief I have. Um, but, yeah, kids

need to go to daycare for developmental and social reasons, not just because their

parents are working.

Pam. Similar to Dr. T, Pam wanted to see social and cultural changes in the

perception of motherhood. Pam stated, "And even for people like you and I, who are, you

know, breaking the mold of how far women go, it's still not enough." She believed there

was a need to

keep talking about it, keep posting this stuff, keep . . . you know, m- m- I guess

dispelling the myths of perfect motherhood. . . . Keep talking about it . . . I think

there's this responsibility that we do something with it. Like we do something

about it.

As a future counselor-educator, Pam hoped to change the culture of parenthood for her

students. She stated,

I want to make sure that if, if I end up getting hired somewhere to teach that, like,

this has to be a part of, there has to either be opportunity for me to help other

student-mothers, um, student or student-parents in the program. So even if they

don't have anything in place, I want to help create something.

Harper. Harper shared the impact of her own role-strain experience leading her

to see a need for change:

The negative experiences that I've had in the past with having multiple roles and

messages that I have had of that not being okay or allowed or appropriate. Um, I

wanted to make sure that those types of messages would not kind of pervade in

future, in the future, um, language, academic language of what this could look

like. So that was important to me too. It's just like those kinds of messages,

making sure that we're changing the narrative of what we're talking about and

how we're talking about it.

Harper reflected on her experience of role enrichment and suggested programs tap

student-parents' families as a source of motivation:

What I think we could do about this is, is make our doctoral programs more open

with other components of our lives. I think that would help people find these

types of motivations a lot more easily. Um, and whether that means, you know,

making it okay for you to bring your baby to a meeting or, you know, asking

about your child, you know, those small things. I think fostering that open culture

in a pro- in a doc program, um, would help this kind of just develop naturally.

In sum, the theme of culture and society was supported by participants' narrative

and photographic descriptions of their life-worlds, backgrounds, and experiences of

exclusion. Historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures

evidently influenced these narrative and photographic depictions. Further, participants'

role strain was influenced by multiple diffusing and intersecting role identities. As a

result of participants' cultural and social role-strain burdens, participants identified a need

for advocacy to improve conditions for studying and working parents.

As discussed in the introduction of culture and society, aspects of participants'

relational thrownness were not discussed under the subtheme of life-world and

background influences (family, friends, support, colleagues, and others). The following

theme of interpersonal and intrapersonal care addresses these aspects of relational thrownness, in addition to the significance of support and self-care on participants' role-strain experiences.

Theme 3: Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Care

The interpersonal and intrapersonal care theme reveals the influence of role strain on relationships, support, self-care, and vice versa. Participants' narrative and photographic portrayals of connection and closeness with others, varying levels of encouragement, and success and struggles with self-care highlight the importance of interpersonal and intrapersonal care for individuals experiencing role strain.

Interpersonal Relationships

All nine participants in this study discussed the impact of role strain on interpersonal relationships. This subtheme captures the meaning of connection and closeness with family, friends, and others, and describes how relationships were affected by role strain. In some cases, role strain negatively affected participants' relationships, and in others, the strength of participants' relationships mitigated their role-strain burdens.

Ali. When Ali was on vacation with her family, her first vacation after COVID-19 restrictions lifted, she experienced her doctoral student role as a barrier to connecting with her family. In Figure 24, Ali photographed her experience of joining her online class by sitting outside on the hotel balcony while her family spent time together at the pool before returning to the room to get ready for dinner.

Figure 24

Vacation
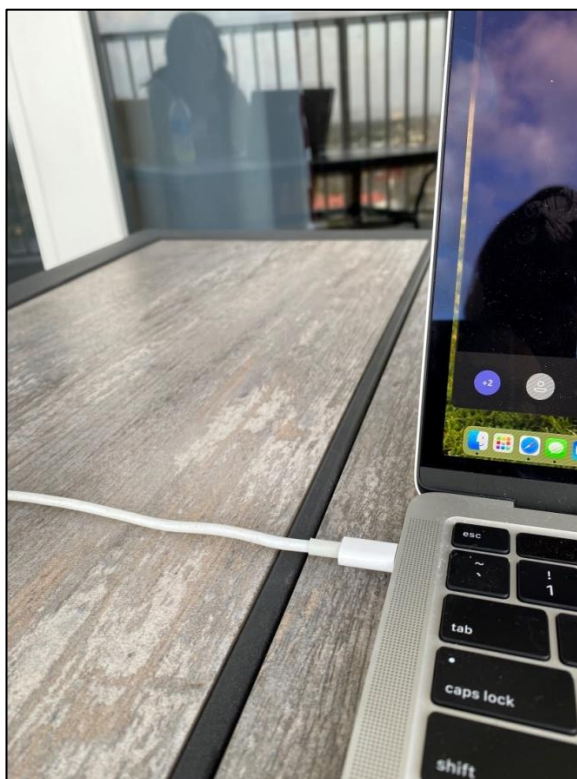
Note. Student logging in for an online class while on vacation [Photograph], by Ali
(2021).

Not pictured was Ali's son, who was looking out the window at Ali and waiting
for her to join them. In processing school as a barrier to connection, Ali stated,

> The only other thing . . . is the, the rails behind me. And it keeps like, it's like a
>
> barrier, that's why it kind of keeps coming up. And it's like, there's a barrier
>
> there, like what's going on? And obviously, it's school. Like I have to, I have to
>
> get through school and have to, to finish that process before things are gonna
>
> lighten a little bit on that.

Bridgett. In Bridgett's narrative and photo imagery (Figures 25, 26, and 27), she explored how role strain negatively affected her relationship with her husband and showed how the strength, value, and connection in her family relationships propelled her forward through challenging times.

Figure 25

We Still Exist!

Note. A photo frame depicting images of husband and wife [Photograph], by Bridgett (2021).

Figure 25 depicts a photo frame with three pictures of Bridgett and her husband at chronological stages of their relationship. The far-left photo is of Bridgett and her husband dating; the center photo is from their engagement, and the far-right photo is of their wedding day. In her notes about this image, Bridgett wrote,

My husband and I both work a lot and seldom spend time together alone these days. I would love to do more with him, but school takes up so much time. Although he is understanding and patient, I don't want him to think that I take him for granted.

In responding to the photovoice prompt, "Why does this problem or strength exist?" Bridgett explained,

The problem exists because there- there are all these roles, as- as we all know [laughs]. There're so many roles. And it's . . . I think because it's, like, oh, well, you're my . . . you're my life partner, you're my husband, you're gonna be there forever. It's easy to be like, okay, well, then I can push you away for a little bit. Um, 'cause I know that after a couple years, I'll be back, and it'll be all good again.

Bridgett took a photograph of a drawing her son made for her (Figure 26). In her notes about this image, Bridgett wrote that the image was

a constant reminder, thanks to my 6-year-old son, that I am loved. He normally writes letters to his father, so I thought it was interesting that he finally wrote a letter to me the week I started my Ph.D. program.

In processing this image, Bridgett said,

What it says is that he really took his time and . . . really wanted to, like . . . I think it was like, to cheer me up. It was before I started the program, so it was like, wanting to say, "Wow, you're working hard!" And it's like, well . . . Um, it just kind of reminds me, I think, of who I do it for, and who I think about as I'm doing this. It just, it's kind of grounding.

Figure 26

I Love You Mom
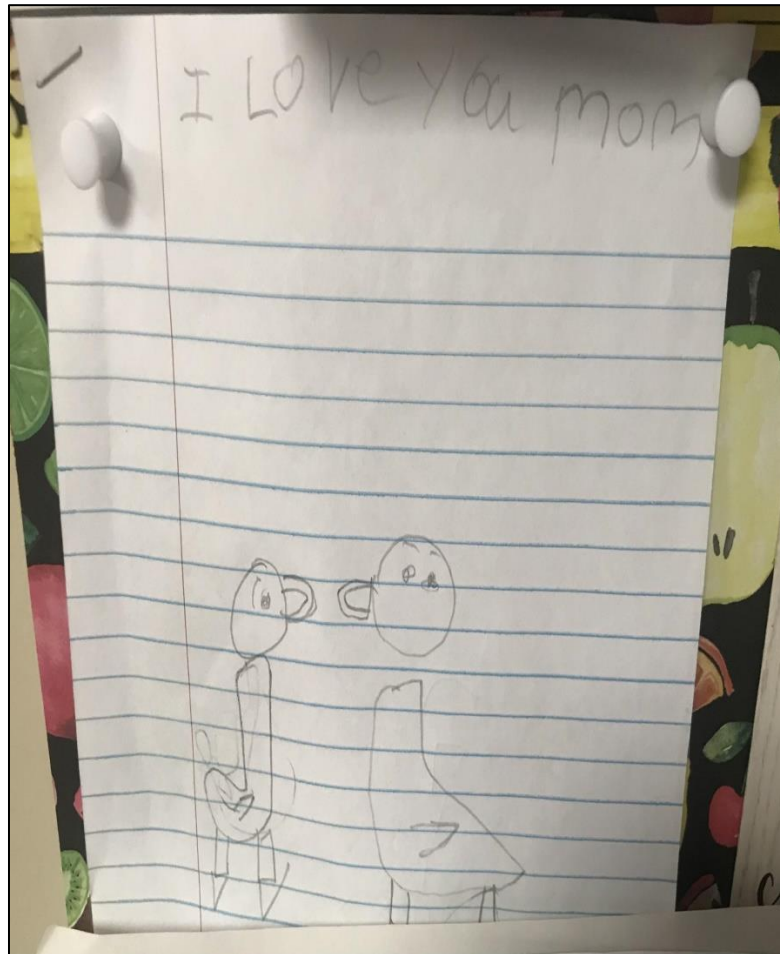
Note. A drawing by son for his mother [Photograph], by Bridgett (2021).

Figure 27 depicts imagery of Bridgett's connection and closeness with her children. These photographs adorned Bridgett's workspace, and she looked to them for motivation as she worked. In her notes about Figure 27, Bridgett wrote,

These are two younger pictures of my children. They give me joy- a sense of awe, wonder, and purpose. I keep this picture at visual center of my workspace to lift me up. I often imagine traveling the world with them when I finish this program!

Figure 27

Focal Point

Note. Two photographs of a mother with her children [Photograph], by Bridgett (2021).

Dr. T. During her interview, Dr. T reflected on the meaning and importance of her parent role and discussed how she prioritized times within her day to nurture her relationships with her children (Figure 28).

Figure 28 depicts the hour before her girls' bedtime that Dr. T devoted to her parent role. In her notes about this image, Dr. T wrote, "I worked hard to make sure that I am available for this time. It is so important for me to have these uninterrupted moments with my girls."

Figure 28

Bedtime Snuggles

Note. Mother and her daughters cuddling before bedtime [Photograph], by Dr. T (2021).

In discussing this image, Dr. T stated,

I see one of my favorite moments happening. Yeah. Yeah, a minute, a moment

where I get to really connect with my girls and have, um, you know, have what I,

I really wanted for a long time, um, 'cause we struggled with infertility for several

years before becoming parents. And so, um, I think those opportunities to just be

a mom are really lovely. . . . I think that it looks like a really simple minute of

time, but it's, it's really, um, an example of a bigger thing of the bond that I have

with my girls and that they have with each other . . . and how significant it is to

have the opportunity to have two children who I get to love and raise and parent,

um, when there were a few years where I didn't think that was gonna be a thing.

Nic. Regarding relationships and connection, Nic described sharing a moment of

physical closeness with her family once she finished all of her other role obligations for

the day (Figure 29). In moments such as the one captured in Figure 29, Nic noticed how

much her family missed her. Although she may have felt "all touched out," Nic enjoyed

being surrounded by those who loved her. Nic stated,

So, when I finally get done with all of the things that I do, which is, you know,

cleaning, cooking, cleaning up after dinner. Even when I have help, it's still, you

know, you have to do all those chores and things. And in the evenings, I usually

do one last pass at emails and things. I have, um, three sections that I'm teaching

right now. And so that's a lot. That's a lot of sections, that's a lot of

students . . . So, I make sure that I don't have any emails, or anything like that.

And then, this is when I finally come sit on the couch. And it is hilarious because

it always happens. Um, as soon as I sit on the couch, they all get on me. . . . if I

ever have a moment where I'm, like, I wonder if they even love me? Obviously,

they do because the moment I sit down and give them a moment, they all swarm

and stuff. And so, um, I think for me that's kind of what it represents is that my

favorite people, and favorite you know, animals and all really do want to spend

time with me.

Figure 29

All Touched Out

Note. Mother resting on the couch with children, husband, and pets [Photograph], by Nic

(2021).

Pam. Pam reflected on relationship connections both within and outside of her

doctoral program. Pam struggled to connect with professors, colleagues, and peers;

however, she had a strong bond and connection with her family that kept her feeling

"grounded" (Figure 30).

Figure 30

Connection

Note. Mother and son holding hands [Photograph], by Pam (2021).

Regarding Figure 30, Pam stated,

And so, it's, you know, he, like his hand on my hand, he does that a lot. And it's

like reassuring, you know? 'Cause sometimes I get lost in my own head and I

kind of float away and think about things, and sometimes there he is like he,

whether it's touching my face or poking me in the eye or [laughs], which he does

a lot, whatever. It's like, oh, okay. It's almost like grounding, in a way. So, it's

like this picture. It's like, you know, a reminder, I suppose, like, okay, school's

hard, and it sucks. And you've got little people that need you to, you know, not be

so bogged down in your head all the time. . . . I think the connection piece is what

I'm, what I've been struggling to find like in life. And especially in a doc

program, constantly feeling like, you know, I don't have a strong enough

relationship with my chair, or I'm, you know, all of those things. It's like a lack of

connection or like a weak connection. There's- . . . connection, but it's not strong.

And, um, yeah, I think that's, th- but I ha- you know, I have it like with my

immediate family for sure.

Ivan. Ivan reflected on the importance of prioritizing connection and relationships

in the context of being distracted (computers, cell phones, television, various role

obligations, etc.). In Figure 31, Ivan's photo shows how he prioritized his parent role. He

reflected the following:

Um, so this was just like the, it was just perfect. So, I see, I see his joy and mine

in this picture. Uh, yeah. Connection, happiness, um, you know, not having

anything else to focus on in this moment. Um, you know, wanting to tell him that

I love him and him embracing it. It's good stuff . . . um, but I- I think it's not just

prioritizing, like, wants, but, like, prioritize connection. You know, and, uh,

making moments to connect with people- more than ever now. You know, there's

lots of ways to disconnect and, um, separate people. So, feels good to make time

to connect.

Figure 31

Father And Son
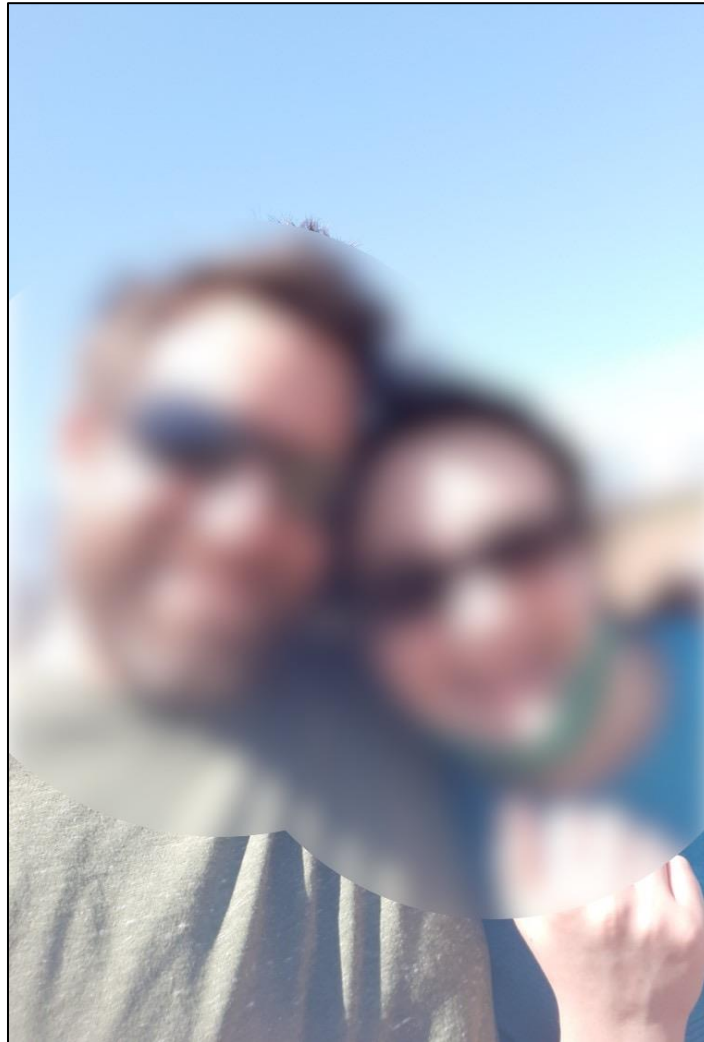
Note. Father and son [Photograph], by Ivan (2021).

Support

        Related to the theme of interpersonal and intrapersonal care, all participants

referenced support in their narratives or photovoice imagery. In some cases, participants

described receiving inadequate support for their doctoral student-parent role strain, and in

other cases, participants' support systems alleviated their role-strain burdens. In addition,

participants discussed the supportive roles they played in other people's lives. Consistent with the theme of duality of experiences, providing support for others had both role enriching and depleting responses. The excerpts in the next section highlight support as a meaningful role-strain experience for doctoral CES student-parents.

Harper. During her interview, Harper reflected on her struggle to receive adequate support in her counselor-educator role when she experienced a miscarriage (Figure 6). In detailing her experience of inadequate role-strain support, Harper conveyed,

> And, um, you know, I, I told my, um, my supervisors that I would not be able to have class. And I said there was a, this medical reason and, and I even divulged the reason to one person. And, um, there was a lot of sympathy, but there was no thought of, you know what? I'll cover your class, or we can take that week's lesson out of the need for your students. And not necessarily that I felt that there should be, but it just occurred to me that I wasn't able to have things taken off my plate. I could just pause them, and then I'd have an overloaded week the next week trying to play catch up. And that was significant to me. . . . Short term relief doesn't necessarily equate to supporting me or meeting my needs in that moment, um, because it's not something that, um, I'm not able to drop it. It's just been paused, and, um, that makes it that much more overwhelming when I unpause when all of that stuff is waiting for me.

Katie. The theme of support arose in Katie's interview in many ways. When exploring her role-strain experience, Katie discussed having a supportive family, including her husband and sons. Katie's husband was emotionally, physically, and

financially supportive, which kept her grounded and helped her to afford to take an

unpaid leave of absence from work to complete her dissertation. Katie's husband and

sons helped Katie around the house with chores; therefore, she felt relief in her

homemaker role when they contributed to the household. Regarding her husband, Katie

stated,

> I do find that people ask me all the time, "how do you do this?" . . . And, uh, my
>
> answer is always, "I have a great support staff." You know, my husband is, uh, I
>
> mean his, his, his, his dad game is really strong.

Regarding her work role, Katie discussed having a supportive team in her student

counselor role. Although supportive colleagues were an important role-strain mitigation,

Katie experienced tremendous guilt for not being available to her team when she took the

leave of absence from work to advance her student role. Katie stated,

> You know, I'm human too. And in a way, I kinda see it as a sign of weakness that
>
> I have to drop one of the balls, you know, in order to keep the other ones in the
>
> air. Um, but yet I have the support of people around me. And just because
>
> something is important to me doesn't mean that it's not important to other people,
>
> even though my decisions will possibly negatively impact them, you know. And
>
> that, that I'm a strong enough coworker and, and important enough to them as
>
> their coworker that they want what's important for me also, even though they
>
> know that it means I will leave them at some point permanently [laughs], you
>
> know, but they're still supporting me, even though it does mean all those things.
>
> In addition to receiving support from multiple sources, Katie described fulfilling a

supportive role for others (Figure 32). In Figure 32, Katie was supporting her son by

accompanying him to his tennis match. Katie acknowledged the role conflict of pulling

herself away from her doctoral student role to be present in her parent role; in fact, she

often brought her laptop to the matches despite rarely opening it. In supporting her son,

Katie stated,

> Um, that there really isn't anything that will keep me from supporting them. Um,
> not the cold, which clearly it is in this picture. Um, not the dissertation, uh, not the
> hour that we had to be there. Um, you know, not even how far it is . . . Um, it
> doesn't matter.

Figure 32

Taking Time For Tennis

Note. Mother attending son's tennis match [Photograph], by Katie (2021).

Elliot. Similar to Katie, Elliot spoke about support in several different ways during his interview. Elliot referenced receiving inadequate support from his family for his student role; however, this support was supplemented by his companion and therapy dog Belle (Figure 14). Elliot also describing the importance of seeking and accepting help at various times, stating, "We can get past stuff, we can do what we wanna do, we just got to have help. We got to have support. Um, even when we don't like to ask for it, we just got to get" and "Get help, get support, have community, make change, um, listen to our emotions in ourselves, for sure."

The subtheme of support was poignantly present in Elliot's depiction and description of his nutrition supplements (Figure 33). In Figure 33, Elliot shows a time when his personal, student, and professional roles diffused.

In his personal and student roles, Elliot gained over 100 pounds since beginning his doctoral studies. At the same time Elliot was gaining weight, he counseled a client (professional role) who struggled with obesity and depression. According to Elliot, his weight gain was visually evident; therefore, he self-disclosed his problems with weight gain to his client during a session. Unfortunately, Elliot's client passed away several months before this study, most likely because of health complications associated with obesity. Although grieving, the death of Elliot's client motivated him to take better care of himself, and he contacted a nutritionist for health support.

Figure 33

Support: What Do I Have To Lose?

Note. Nutrition and weight loss supplements [Photograph], by Elliot (2021).

Elliot stated,

I was so torn. You know, I couldn't help him. But it clicked in my head right

then- I never realized I couldn't do it because I can't do it alone. I needed help.

This particular client also realized he needed help. I thought I was help, so I

stayed in connection, but he didn't really want help with the, the weight stuff. It, it

was a big factor, but he had mental, he needed help there, and those are . . . See,

see what I'm saying? So, it clicked, and I thought, "Oh my God, that- that's it,

that's why I can't do this for myself. I need help. And I, I don't have the support."

By the time of the interview, Elliot had lost 57 pounds with the support of his nutritionist. With adequate support, Elliot was successful in relieving the embodiment of his role strain, stating, "I can breathe again finally. . . . I've probably never been- felt as good in my entire life as I do today, from, from the nutrition and stuff." Elliot's narrative and photographic excerpts on the subtheme of support introduce the final subtheme for interpersonal and intrapersonal care: self-care.

Self-Care

The subtheme of self-care represents the relationship between self-care and role strain. For some participants, role strain interfered with self-care; others prioritized their self-care to cope with the role-strain burden. Content related to self-care was evident in eight out of nine participants' narratives and photovoice imagery. The interview excerpts and photovoice imagery shown next highlight self-care as a meaningful role-strain experience for doctoral CES student-parents.

Bridgett. In Figure 34, Bridgett explores both her attempts at self-care and her struggles with self-care.

Bridgett had a wellness plan that included God, sleep, exercise, family, and nutrition. Because of her dietary restrictions, nutrition was essential for Bridgett; she explained, "The wrong meal could cost time and overall wellness." To care for herself, Bridgett prepared jars of kimchi for days and nights when she was absorbed in projects that kept her at her desk through meal times.

Figure 34

Kimchi: My Staple

Note. Black and white image of kimchi in the foreground and a computer in the

background [Photograph], by Bridgett (2021).

Despite her efforts to care for herself, Bridgett's role strain interfered with her

self-care. When Bridgett took this photograph, she was working on an eight-week project

that involved teaching Peruvian pastors and counselors about trauma awareness and

showing how to use basic counseling skills. Bridgett's kimchi is in the foreground of the

image, and her computer is in the background. Bridgett explained,

What's really happening is, um, my food is waiting on me. And [laughs]- but it's like I'm, I'm eating I'm having to have to eat, as usual, eat and do other things while I'm eating. It's not like you can just enjoy the meal. You got to rush it in; I had to rush to get it- . . . um, rush to eat it. Rush while I was eating it . . . Um, and I just wanted- I think I just wanted to slow this moment down.

Harper. Similar to Bridgett, Harper identified both strengths and struggles in terms of self-care and role strain. In Figure 35, Harper shows her attempt to eat lunch while juggling student, motherhood, and homemaker roles.

Harper recounted,

This coffee had been sitting on the kitchen counter for five hours, the lunch is sitting on a cutting board half-eaten, the computer reflects the work that I am doing, and my daughter is in the living room watching TV. I am standing while working at this table, and I keep walking away from it to attend to her, or our house needs (washing dishes, prepare dinner, etc.).

Harper saw this image as representative of both a problem and a strength. The problem was her struggle to take care of her own needs because of being "inundated with other role responsibilities." The strength was that Harper saw growth in her approach to self-care. A year or two ago, when Harper's was a new parent and student, she "just didn't eat." Over time, Harper progressed from not eating to consuming ready-made foods like granola bars. Now she found the time to make a balanced meal.

Figure 35

Role Overload: Did I Eat Today?
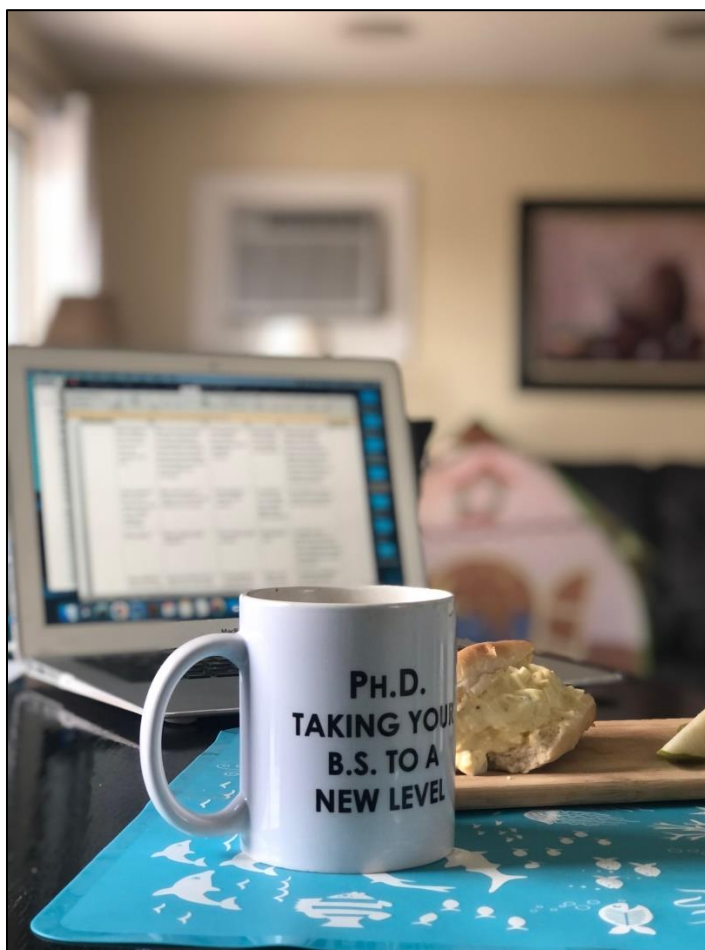
Note. Lunch, work, and childcare [Photograph], by Harper (2021).

Reflecting on her role-strain imagery and responding to the photovoice prompt "What can we do about this?" Harper stated,

> Um, I think just the importance of self-care here. In the end, just the, yeah, I th- I
>
> think for, for us just being able to talk about self-care and, and not just be- think
>
> that's the first thing to go because that's the least important. Um, just having an
>
> understanding that it's pretty much the most important, because it's gonna fuel

everything else you do in every other role that you have. So, um, for me, like what we can do here is just recognize the importance of self-care.

Ali. Ali spent Saturday mornings with her son while her husband was working. Although Ali had "a million and one things to do at the house and then for school," she honored the weekend tradition of taking her son to get a smoothie while she got a coffee for herself. Although this "coffee run" (Figure 36) meant being less productive in her homemaker and student roles, Ali found the experience enriching in her parent role.

Figure 36

Coffee Run

Note. Mother and son on the way home from a coffee date [Photograph], by Ali (2021).

Ali considered Saturday morning coffee runs as part of her self-care. She stated,

I think it's; it's nice sometimes even though you're like, oh, I've got to get this

paper done or whatever, just to hop in the car and go down to the coffee

shop. . . . So just kind of those take a breather. Um, and even though it's kinda

crazy, it is part of self-care for me.

Contextualizing Lifestyle Factors Influencing Role-Strain Experiences

COVID-19. Similar to the results seen for the duality of experiences theme,

COVID-19 seemed to have had significant effects on participants' relationships, support

systems, and self-care plans. For many participants, COVID-19 restrictions interfered

with their access to loved ones, restricted social supports, and limited traditional ways

that participants practiced self-care (attending church, salon services, gyms, preventative

healthcare, dining out, socializing). In the cases where COVID-19 interfered with

experiences of role strain, participants' role-strain burdens reportedly increased, as

evidenced by the following narrative excerpts and photovoice imagery.

Bridgett. Bridgett described being unable to connect with her parents and

grandmother during COVID-19 times. This barrier to relationship connection increased

her strain because of her inability to fulfill her perceived family role obligations. Bridgett

stated,

As someone who's very family-oriented, you know, I haven't been able to

connect with, um, like see my, my parents. Um, my grandmother's in the hospital

and has been in the hospital for months now, and no one can see her. . . . And um,

we're already kind of spread out anyway, so it's, it's disappointing.

Katie. Regarding her work role, Katie described the impact of COVID-19 on her administrative team's ability to support each other:

It's, it's a rough year. Um, I miss the years when, so I'm considered to be part of the administrative team, which is a four, four, four-woman team. Um, which includes my principal, my assistant principal, the TRT, which, um, is kinda like a teacher-leader, and myself. And, I mean, we used to eat lunch together. You know, now we're not supposed to do that 'cause we were social distancing, you know . . . everything's just so different and, and it's, it's not fun different. It's uncomfortably different.

Ali. Ali traveled two hours to get her first COVID-19 vaccine shot (Figure 37). Although Ali was somewhat apprehensive about getting the vaccine, she trusted that her decision was in the best interest of her family and work roles. Ali's decision to get the COVID-19 vaccine meant that she could resume relational and physical connection with her family, socially, and for self-care (vacation) purposes. Ali stated,

I think it's just that common theme of you, you, you take what you can and do what you need to do to, to keep moving forward 'cause I could have said, "Oh no, I'm not gonna get it." Um, but then that would mean staying away from family. Um, not going back into the schools, um, not being able to take that Florida vacation that I was able to.

Figure 37

COVID

Note. First COVID-19 vaccination shot [Photograph], by Ali (2021).

Although COVID-19 interfered with participants' access to loved ones, restricted

social supports, and limited traditional ways that participants practiced self-care, there

were several reported instances where COVID-19 decreased role-strain burden and

provided opportunities for participants to focus on their nuclear family relationships.

Examples of COVID-19 role strain enrichment were evident in the cases of Ivan and

Harper.

Ivan. Because of COVID-19, Ivan was directed to work from home, and his

children were mandated to attend school from home. Working from home while his

children were home-schooled meant that Ivan's work and parent roles overlapped,

increasing his physical and relational closeness and connection with his family. Ivan

explained,

> I mean, to be totally honest with you, like, I have not, I've, I've only seen that as a
>
> positive, you know? . . . But, um, like, I was talking earlier about the time I didn't
>
> have, you know, and I'm- the last year has been great as far as spending time with
>
> my family. So, I have really no complaints about that. And the days that I'm
>
> home, like, they're stressful, yeah, but, like, it's cool. I get to be home with my
>
> kids.

Harper. Related to her work and student roles, Harper began interviewing for

counselor-educator positions once she completed her doctoral coursework (Figure 38).

Figure 38 shows Harper saying goodbye to her daughter before she traveled for a job

interview. Harper explored the role-strain burden of interviewing for faculty positions on

her work, student, and parent roles. She explained that COVID-19 decreased this strain

by imposing travel restrictions. In response to COVID-19, several of Harper's interviews

occurred through virtual means, alleviating role conflict and feelings of guilt associated

with leaving her daughter. Harper stated,

> I think COVID actually helped this particular issue a lot because my experience
>
> on the job search was that so much more was held virtually than what my cohorts'

experiences were or have been. So, I don't know, a practical, something, a

practical strategy here would be, you know, perhaps not having the rigidity of in-

person face-to-face meetings when they're happening on a national scale. Um, I

think that could alleviate this particular role strain or conflict.

Figure 38

Role Conflict: You'll Be In My Heart

Note. Mother hugging her daughter goodbye [Photograph], by Harper (2021).

Chapter Summary

The findings of this study are intended to help readers clarify the meaning of role strain for parents enrolled in a CACREP-accredited doctoral CES program. Participants' narratives and photovoice imagery described how role strain was experienced in relation to intersectional aspects of identity and the impacts of historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures on role-strain experiences. Three predominant themes emerged across nine participants: duality of experiences, culture and society, and interpersonal and intrapersonal care.

Under the theme of duality of experiences, two subthemes described the meaning of role strain for participants: depletion experiences and enrichment experiences. Depletion experiences detailed participants' emotional, mental, physical role-strain burdens, whereas role enrichment experiences captured the ways that participants benefited from role strain. Three contextualizing lifestyle factors influenced participants' role-strain depletion and enrichment experiences: role management, parenting, and COVID-19 (discussed at the end of the summary). Role management detailed the ways participants attempted to manage their role strain, such as juggling roles, multitasking, prioritizing, being intentional with their time, diffusing (overlapping) roles, and differentiating roles or creating role boundaries. The participants' struggle, success, or ability to acknowledge strengths in their role management seemed to influence their experience of role strain as either adverse or beneficial. The factor of parenting described how aspects of participants' parent role affected role strain, including children's ages and the additional role obligations of being pet parents. Children's level of dependency, self-sufficiency, and ability to comprehend their parents' role strain were factors influencing

the levels of stress or benefit associated with children's ages and development. Regarding pet parenting, participants explored the emotional and self-care meaning of adding a pet parent role to their identities; however, participants also identified times when pets' needs conflicted with other role obligations, resulting in increased role burdens.

For the theme of culture and society, three subthemes—life-world and background influences, exclusion, and advocacy—described the meaning of role strain for participants, including the impact of historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures on role-strain experiences. Participants' backgrounds were the conditions that contributed to their role-strain actions and perceptions, and their life-worlds provided context for participants' unique differences, beliefs, attitudes, and varying understandings of role-strain meanings based on temporality (time), spatiality (location, culture, and economic status), embodiment (in body experience), and relational thrownness (country, nationality). Exclusion addressed how participants felt marginalized and oppressed by being a parent in a doctoral CES program. The experience of exclusion contributed to participants' role-strain, as role identities conflicted when seeking to address instances of exclusion, and the experience of exclusion contributed to feeling disadvantaged, receiving inadequate support, and feeling frustration, anger, and fear within one or more roles. As for the third subtheme, advocacy, participants called for advocacy and change in the perception of and support for student-parents because of the cumulative consequences of role strain for student-parents.

For the theme of interpersonal and intrapersonal care, three subthemes described the meaning of role strain for participants and their various intersectional aspects of identity: interpersonal relationships, support, and self-care. Interpersonal relationships

captured expressions of connection and closeness with family, friends, and others, as well as barriers to connection and closeness. In some cases, role strain negatively affected participants' relationships, and in others, the strength of participants' relationships mitigated their role-strain burdens. For the subtheme of support, several participants described receiving inadequate support for their doctoral student-parent role strain, while others' support systems alleviated their role-strain burdens. Participants also discussed their supportive roles in other people's lives, which had both role-enriching and role-depleting outcomes. Finally, the subtheme self-care completed the significant findings for the study. For some participants, role strain interfered with self-care; others prioritized their self-care to cope with the role-strain burden.

The findings of this study would not be complete without exploring the impact of COVID-19 on participants' role strain. COVID-19 was a contextualizing lifestyle factor that influenced participants' role-strain depletion and enrichment experiences (under the duality of experiences theme), as well interpersonal relationships, support, and self-care from the interpersonal and intrapersonal care theme. In summarizing the total impact of COVID-19 on participants' role strain, participants identified both adverse and beneficial outcomes.

From a benefits perspective, there were several reported instances in which COVID-19 decreased role-strain burdens by providing opportunities for participants to "slow down," "pause," "pace" themselves, and be more present and involved in their children's lives. Several participants described needing to fulfill fewer role obligations because of COVID-19, which allowed them to increase their doctoral study productivity. From the perspective of adversity, COVID-19 limited participants' access to resources,

including childcare both outside and within the home, social supports, and traditional ways that participants practiced self-care.

In summary, Chapter 4 provided readers with a deep exploration of the meaning of role strain for parents enrolled in a CACREP-accredited doctoral CES program. Participants' narratives and photovoice imagery showed how role strain was experienced in relation to intersectional aspects of identity and the impact of historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures on role-strain experiences. The final chapter for this study, Chapter 5, links these findings to current literature and identifies implications for the CES profession with recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

Chapter 5 begins with a review of the previous chapters' contributions to the study. Chapter 1 presented the study's introduction, highlighting role strain as a personal concern for CES student-parents. Gaps in the existing literature were identified to support the need for the study and clarify the study's purpose. The study's research questions, assumptions, delimitations, and essential terms were defined, and the researcher's positionality provided the lens through which the study was approached. Chapter 2 reviewed the literature on role strain related to parenthood and parenthood related to doctoral CES students. The literature review further described the problem of role strain, specifically for CES students, and outlined ethical and educational considerations for counselor-educators.

Chapter 3 detailed the study's methodology. The methodology for the study was situated within a social constructivist interpretive framework, using photovoice as a data collection and analysis method. The measures of trustworthiness used to ensure the study's credibility included purposeful sampling, prolonged field engagement, triangulation of methods, reflexive journaling, thick descriptions, peer debriefing, member checking, and audit trail. A sample size of five to 10 participants was chosen for the study, and nine participants were interviewed. At the time of the research, all participants were enrolled in a CACREP-accredited doctoral CES program. Participants ranged in age from 31 to 50 years, and the ages of participants' children ranged from 18 months to 29 years. Eight participants were married, and one identified as single; eight identified as heterosexual or heteronormative. One participant declined to disclose sexual orientation. Seven participants identified as female and two as male.

Regarding ethnicity, seven participants identified as White, non-Hispanic, or Caucasian; one identified as White/Native American, and one identified as Black. Participants lived in nine different states across the U.S. and attended eight different doctoral programs representative of the Southern, North Atlantic, and North Central Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) regions. Participants were at various stages of their doctoral degrees, ranging from six to 93 credits earned. All nine participants' verbatim transcripts were coded and analyzed to answer the study's central research question and two subquestions. Verbatim transcripts and corresponding photographs were reviewed several times to deepen awareness of the participants' life-worlds and backgrounds, role identities, and emerging themes.

Chapter 4 provided the research findings, revealing the meaning of role strain for parents enrolled in CACREP-accredited doctoral CES programs. Participants' narratives and photovoice imagery described how they experienced role strain in relation to intersectional aspects of identity and the impact of historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures on role-strain experiences. Three predominant themes emerged across nine participants: duality of experiences, culture and society, and interpersonal and intrapersonal care.

For the theme of duality of experiences, two subthemes described the meaning of role strain for participants: depletion experiences and enrichment experiences. Three contextualizing lifestyle factors influenced participants' role strain depletion and enrichment experiences: role management, parenting, and COVID-19. For the theme of culture and society, three subthemes described the meaning of role strain for participants: life-world and background influences, exclusion, and advocacy. For the theme of

interpersonal and intrapersonal, three subthemes described the meaning of role strain for

participants: interpersonal relationships, support, and self-care. As was seen for the

duality of experiences theme, COVID-19 influenced participants' interpersonal and

intrapersonal role-strain experience. In Chapter 5, I interpret these findings, provide

implications for the CES profession, discuss the limitations and delimitations of the

study, offer recommendations for future researchers, and share my personal reflection

related to the study.

Interpretation of Findings

An interpretation of research findings provides an overall discussion of how the

findings relate to the problem, purpose, and research questions of the study, while

comparing and contrasting these findings to the literature presented in the literature

review (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Cohen et al., 2000; Dibley et al., 2020; Peoples

2021). Specifically, I address how the study results confirm or contradict findings from

previous studies and assess whether the results were expected or surprising (Peoples,

2021). All results were analyzed in the context of Munhall's (2012, 2013) interpretive

phenomenological approach and Wang's (1999) and Wang and Burris' (1997) photovoice

data collection and analysis methods. After a review of the study's problem and purpose,

the three major themes resulting from the research form the structure of the remainder of

the Interpretation of Findings section. A discussion of each theme with corresponding

subthemes relates research findings to the study's problem, purpose, research questions,

theoretical framework, and existing literature.

Review of the Study's Problem and Purpose

Research resulting from a body of literature has described significant emotional, mental, physical, discriminatory, and programmatic consequences for parents enrolled in graduate studies (Andersson, 2019; Appel & Dahlgren, 2003; Carter et al., 2013; Gardner, 2008; Golde, 2005; Holm et al., 2015; Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009; Lovitts & Nelson, 2000; Lynch, 2008; McBain, 2019; Moyer et al., 1999; Nagy et al., 2019; NCES, 2007; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Rigler et al., 2017; Rindfuss et al., 1980; Schmidt & Hansson, 2018; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; Swords & Ellis, 2017; Trepal et al., 2014). The consequence examined in this study was the problem of role strain. Stress within roles (e.g., student, parent, other social roles), simultaneous incompatible demands of roles without adequate resources to meet expectations, and preoccupation with one role while performing another are characteristics of the role-strain experience (Creary & Gordon, 2016; Goode, 1960; Home 1997, 1998).

The experiences of parenthood during graduate education have been broadly explored (Andersson, 2019; Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009; Moyer et al., 1999). For example, researchers have studied parenthood experiences within the fields of medicine (Jarvie & Levy, 2019; Kin et al., 2018; Krause et al., 2017; Mwakyanjala et al., 2019; Stack et al., 2019; Westrick, 2016), science (Bascom-Slack, 2011; Stenzel, 2019), social work (Wladkowski & Mirick, 2020), mothers in the CES professional pipeline (Alexander-Albritton & Hill, 2015; Hermann et al., 2014; Neale-McFall et al., 2018; Stinchfield & Trepal, 2010; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012), and mothers navigating their CES doctoral studies (Bruce, 1995; Holm et al., 2015; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014; Solomon & Barden, 2016). Despite this wealth of research, no CES

publications have intentionally studied the parenthood experiences of fathers, single

parents, queer parents, minority graduate student-parents, disabled parents, or others. In

addition, no CES publications exist that intentionally study the role-strain experiences of

parents in doctoral CES programs.

Research that addresses role strain for parents in CACREP-accredited CES

doctoral programs was necessary—some researchers have advised against starting a

family while in graduate school (Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006; Lynch, 2008; Mason et

al., 2013; Morrison et al., 2011; Sallee, 2011; Wolfinger et al., 2008; 2009). Contrary

research has described problems for students who delay fertility or parenthood, including

lower overall fertility (Mason & Goulden, 2004; Trepal et al., 2014), missed

opportunities for conceiving (Kuperberg, 2009), personal regret (Williams, 2004), future

health risks for mother and child if pregnancy is achieved at a later age (Thompson, 2002;

Oakley et al., 2016), and missed opportunities for developing new skills and maturity,

changes in worldview, and the formation of broader social networks and connections

(Silva & Pugh, 2010).

The existing and contrary research on the impact of parenthood for graduate

students situated the need to understand the meaning of role strain for parents in doctoral

CACREP-accredited CES programs. This need was supported by statistics that posit that

one quarter of all doctoral students have dependent children (Mason, 2006, as cited in

Springer et al., 2009). The context for understanding the research problem underpins the

current study's purpose: to explore the meaning of role strain for parents enrolled in a

CACREP-accredited doctoral CES program. The central research question used to guide

interpretive phenomenological inquiry was "As a parent, what does it mean to experience

role strain in a doctoral CES program?" Two subquestions were used to explore

participants' worldviews: "How is role strain experienced in relation to intersectional

aspects of identity?" and "In what ways, if any, do historical, political, and sociocultural

beliefs; ideologies; and pressures contribute to role strain?"

Grounded in phenomenological interviewing (Munhall, 2012, 2013) and

photovoice data collection and analysis methods (Wang, 1999; Wang and Burris, 1997),

the research revealed three themes: Duality of experiences, culture and society, and

interpersonal and intrapersonal care. Each theme contains subthemes that highlight the

meaning of role strain for parents enrolled in CACREP-accredited doctoral CES

programs, including the ways that role strain was experienced in relation to intersectional

aspects of identity and the impacts of historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs;

ideologies; and pressures on role-strain experiences.

Theme 1: Duality of Experiences

The theme of duality of experiences reveals how role strain negatively affected

participants (depletion experiences) and positively affected participants (enrichment

experiences). Depletion experiences and enrichment experiences established the two

subthemes for this theme. Together these subthemes answered the central research

question: "As a parent, what does it mean to experience role strain in a doctoral CES

program?"

For participants, being a parent and doctoral student meant that role strain was

both adverse and beneficial. Role strain contributed to emotional distress, somatic

complaints, instances of self-doubt and questioning, programmatic pressure to prioritize

educational roles, experiences of hiding or concealing role strain, and a need to sacrifice

in order to achieve role obligations. However, role strain also increased feelings of accomplishment, achievement, gratification, and motivation to progress through challenging times. The duality of these experiences supports both the role-strain depletion hypothesis (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Cohen & Janicki-Deverts, 2012; Home, 1998; Rothbard, 2001; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; Tiedje et al., 1990) and the role-strain enrichment hypothesis (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; Thoits, 1983).

The following sections on the expected and unexpected findings of this theme will further show how the findings relate to the problem, purpose, and research questions of the study, while comparing and contrasting these findings to existing literature. The section begins with the expected findings of this theme, including the expected contextualizing lifestyle factors findings. The unexpected findings of this theme, including the unexpected contextualizing lifestyle factor findings, follow.

Expected Findings

All nine participants' reported depletion experiences that were expected and supported by a wealth of existing literature (Appel & Dahlgren, 2003; Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Barnett & Marshall, 1992; Carter et al., 2013; Coverman, 1989; Dickens et al., 2016; Drago et al., 2006; Harrison, 1980; Holm et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2013; Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006; Kulp, 2016; Lois, 2006; Lynch, 2008; McAlpine & Norton, 2006; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020; Moyer et al., 1999; Mwakyanjala et al., 2019; Nagy et al., 2019; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Schmidt & Hansson, 2018; Simon, 1995; Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Stenzel, 2019; Sutherland, 2010; Swords & Ellis, 2017; Trepal et al., 2014; Varpio et al., 2018; Wolfinger et al., 2008).

Excerpts from the cases of Ivan, Dr. T, and Nic support previous findings. For example, in his narrative and photovoice imagery titled *Hanging On* (Figure 3), Ivan described the mental, emotional, and physical consequences of his role strain as evidenced by statements such as "I'm just barely hanging on right now, and feeling that the stress and strain of all the different things that I have going on"; "the weight that I carried, like, both literally and figuratively"; and "Like, I'm really on the edge. . . . I'm at the end of my rope here." Ivan's mental, emotional, and physical distress associated with being a parent and a doctoral student was consistent with the research of Holm et al. (2015), Moyer et al. (1999), Pierce & Herlihy (2013), and Trepal et al. (2014). Although previous research was based on female participants, the researchers cited depressed feelings (Holm et al., 2015; Moyer et al., 1999), anxiety (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014), and weight gain (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013) as consequences for fulfilling both parent and student roles simultaneously.

Dr. T identified experiencing pressure to be a "good-enough" student in her program when she stated, "If you're not producing as much as your peers, then you're not gonna be valued e- either. And so, then it's just like you drown even more." The idea that student-parents have to meet the expectations of being "good-enough" or ideal graduate students (eager, committed to the field of study, available at any time without notice, prioritizes their education) is consistent with the research of Holm et al. (2015), Kulp (2016), and Moyer et al. (1999). Good-enough graduate students engage in opportunities to assist the faculty through teaching assistant positions, research collaboration, and departmental activities and complete their degrees within the time limits set forth by the program (Holm et al., 2015). In the case of Dr. T, her role-strain experience included

conflicting expectations to be a "good-enough" student and a "good-enough" mother—

that is, a mother who sacrifices her own needs for her children (Espinoza, 2010; Estes,

2011; Kulp, 2016; Lynch, 2008).

As exemplified in Dr. T's narrative and supported by the literature, student-

parents can receive penalties if they are perceived by faculty as less committed or less

productive because of caregiving responsibilities (Drago et al., 2006; Mirick &

Wladkowski, 2020). Graduate student-parents are less likely to become socialized into

academic departments (Kulp, 2016), and they may be less likely to obtain essential

career-related resources such as coauthorship of papers (Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006).

In addition, the literature on academic culture has shown a lack of support for open

discussions of parenting within academic institutions (Drago et al., 2006; Mirick &

Wladkowski, 2020). Lack of transparency, or feeling the need to hide or conceal student-

parent role-strain experiences, was exemplified in a narrative excerpt from Nic, who felt

the need to hide her family roles and illness from her academic and leadership roles.

Regarding Figure 5, titled *Madame President*, Nic explained, "I'm pretending . . . I'm

trying to make something look not what it is. . . . So, it's just kind of a façade . . . hiding

from my children, and my family, and my real life . . . trying to make it look like

something it's not."

Participants' experiences of role enrichment were supported by the role-strain

enrichment hypothesis, also known as the role enhancement, accumulation, or expansion

hypothesis (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015;

Thoits, 1983). The role-strain enrichment hypothesis suggests that multiple-role

engagement "enhances an individual's resources, social connections, power, prestige, and

emotional gratification" (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015, p. 24). This hypothesis further

suggests that balancing multiple roles can buffer against stress (Rothbard, 2001), increase

feelings of well-being (Barn, 2008; Rothbard, 2001; Verbrugge, 1989), and positively

affect psychological health (Martire et al., 2000; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). Seven out of

nine participants reported enrichment experiences, with their narratives and photo

imagery revealing feelings of accomplishment, achievement, gratification, and

motivation to progress through challenging times. In addition, participants found their

children to be a source of inspiration, evidenced by statements similar to "I'm doing this

for them."

Examples of role enrichment supported by the literature appear in the cases of

Bridgett and Harper. In reflecting on the meaning of her role-strain experience, Bridgett

stated,

> Then there's also just the strength in how if that's my process, and that's what,
>
> you know, makes me feel accomplished and, and like, making an impact and
>
> bringing other people along with me, then it's, it's, it's, that desire is in there for a
>
> reason.

Bridgett identified experiencing psychological health and emotional gratification

("strength," "accomplishment"; Martire et al., 2000; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015), as well as

power ("making an impact"; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015) and social connectedness

("bringing other people along with me"; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015).

Harper identified strength, "resiliency," and pride (psychological health and

emotional gratification; Martire et al., 2000; Sumra & Schillaci) in her narrative response

to Figure 11, *Role Contagion: Avoiding the Rush*. As she viewed an image of her

daughter on her coffee mug in the early morning of a work day, Harper stated, "This is

also a point where I felt like that resiliency is coming through." Harper's parent role

motivated her to push forward when she experienced role contagion. As she reflected on

the image of her daughter, Harper expressed, "A part of this is for her. And, and she is

watching me do this. And I like to make her proud."

Regarding the contextualizing lifestyle factors that influenced role-strain

experiences (role management, parenting, and COVID-19), I anticipated that role

management and parenting would affect the experience of role strain for student-parents

in CACREP-accredited CES programs. This outcome was supported by the literature of

Allen (2001), Burden (1986), Cowan and Cowan (1988), Home (1997), Kelly and

Voydanoff (1985), Newman (2000), Newman and Newman (2018), and Voydanoff

(2005), all of whom asserted that parent roles frequently result in a recurring theme of

role strain. Newman and Newman (2018) specifically explained that the parent role is

highly time-consuming, more time-consuming than any other social role, with first-time

parents often underestimating the time demands of infants and toddlers.

Eight out of nine participants discussed the impact of their children's ages on their

role-strain experiences, including how they managed that strain. Participants reflected on

the implications on their role strain of having infants, school-aged, and adult children,

often finding both stressors and benefits associated with the ages of their children.

Children's level of dependency, self-sufficiency, and ability to comprehend their parents'

role strain were factors affecting the levels of stress or benefit associated with children's

ages and development. Participants Dr. T, Pam, Harper, and Ali commented on the

experiences of being a student while having an infant or toddler at various points

throughout their interviews. For example, Dr. T expressed, "Like a two-year-old doesn't understand mommy's got to . . . 'I need 10 minutes to write this email, can you go sit and watch your movie or whatever?'" and Pam explained, "It's hard having a toddler. They're really hard little people. They're really difficult . . . if he doesn't want something, he just makes it known,"

Findings regarding parents' experiences of juggling and multitasking many roles and role obligations are prevalent within the literature (Canfield, 1996; Chira, 1998; Forste et al., 2009; Glenn, 1994; Hays, 1996; Hochschild & Machung 1989; Kimmel, 1997; Lynch, 2008; Marsiglio et al., 2000 McDowell & Day, 1991; McMahon 1995; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Phillips, 1992; Richardson, 1993; Silverstein et al., 2002; Tam, 2019; Waller, 2002; Yeung et al., 2001). Consistent specifically with the literature of Newman and Newman (2018), participants' role-strain burdens increased as they attempted to fulfill their children's needs while juggling multiple roles and role obligations. Participants said their children, especially infants and toddlers, were highly dependent on them and required much involvement in all of their behaviors.

Finally, the findings regarding the impact of COVID-19 on CES student-parents' role-strain experience were expected, according to the emerging literature on COVID-19 and parenting. Consistent with the research, participants struggled to balance work, education, and family roles under stay-at-home, quarantine, and restriction orders resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic (Atabakhsh, 2020; Chirumbolo et al., 2020; Cluver et al., 2020; Harvey, 2020). Businesses, schools, and daycare facilities closed their doors to in-person services, leaving participants as the sole providers of childcare and homeschooling responsibilities while simultaneously working and studying from home.

In addition, participants' children were restricted from social activities, forcing parents to add "playmate" to their role quantity. Examples of these challenges are supported in the following participants' narrative excerpts:

> *Nic.* I mean, if you were doing online, all the kids are at home right now. Um, you know, there's not school for a lot of people. Um, which was unexpected, and so you could have been in the doctoral program when the pandemic hit, and now your kids are at home all the time. So, you don't have the time to do those sorts of things.

> *Bridgett.* My son is home, is doing school from home, so I can't technically call it home school, but I support his teacher with his learning, which is crazy. But I, [laughs]. It's like, I don't know, it's just really like all of this makes you think like, like, I'm facilitating, like I'm his teacher's aide in a way. Like, I should be the teacher. I'm the teacher.

> *Dr. T.* I think that this is kind of like just a COVID reality for all of us right now, right? That I think probably maybe doctoral students before COVID went to offices or went to the library or Starbucks or wherever you can go, I don't know, um, to do this work versus being trapped at home. Or if I was home that my husband would have been in the office, and so I would have had more- . . . quiet peacefulness at home. Um, and so I th- I think this is a really like 2020 COVID pandemic reality of, like, couples not only trying to figure out how to, like, parent together, but also now work from home together and, uh, juggle sharing that space.

Unexpected Findings

Although some literature has focused on contrasting role-strain hypotheses, I anticipated that role-strain depletion experiences would have more meaning for parents in doctoral CES programs than would role-strain enrichment experiences. This assumption relied on a saturation of literature describing the struggles, challenges, and detrimental effects of juggling multiple roles on people's psyches, behaviors, and overall well-being (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Appel & Dahlgren, 2003; Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Barnett & Marshall, 1992; Cart r et al., 2013; Cohen & Janicki-Deverts, 2012; Coverman, 1989; Dickens et al., 2016; Drago et al., 2006; Harrison, 1980; Herlihy & Corey, 2016; Holm et al., 2015; Home, 1997, 1998; Jones et al., 2013; Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006; Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009; Lois, 2006; Lynch, 2008; Mason et al., 2013; McAlpine & Norton, 2006; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020; Moyer et al., 1999; Mwakyanjala et al., 2019; Nagy et al., 2019; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Rindfuss et al., 1980; Rothbard, 2001; Schmidt & Hansson, 2018; Simon, 1995; Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Springer et al., 2009; Stenzel, 2019; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; Sutherland, 2010; Swords & Ellis, 2017; Tiedje et al., 1990; Trepal et al., 2014; Varpio et al., 2018; Wolfinger et al., 2008), as compared to the literature available on role-strain enrichment (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; Thoits, 1983).

Further, as a noun, the word *strain* implies force, pressure, or strenuous effort. As a verb, the word *strain* involves creating tension or exertion to the point of injury. Therefore, it was assumed that participants' role-strain narratives and photo imagery would likely reflect adversities over achievements. It was unexpected that seven out of nine participants described role-enrichment experiences and included these experiences

in their photo imagery. The implications of this finding are further explored in the

Implications for the Profession section of this chapter.

Two noteworthy unexpected findings emerged from the contextualizing lifestyle

factors influencing the duality of experiences theme: pet parenting and COVID-19

enrichment experiences. In reviewing the literature on parenting and graduate education,

no studies have included the implications of being a pet parent on student-parent

experiences. In the current study, five out of nine participants included narratives and

photo imagery of their pet-parent role, revealing the significance of this additional role to

role-strain experiences. Regarding pet parenting, participants explored the emotional and

self-care meaning of adding a pet-parent role to their identities; however, participants

also identified times when pets' needs conflicted with other role obligations, resulting in

increased role burdens. Examples of the meaning of pet parenting for role strain appear in

the narratives of Katie, Pam, and Elliot.

Related to her role strain, Katie identified the meaning of being a pet parent on

several occasions throughout her interview. Katie discussed grieving lost pets,

experiencing the "craziness" of adding a new puppy to the family dynamics and role

strain, and comparing her pets compared to having additional children. Katie's pet-parent

identity was strong; she stated at different times, "I am the mom of three dogs," "my d-

my dogs are my other children," "one of my other children, one of my other furry

children," and "they all think I'm their mother."

Pam conversed with her dog throughout her interview and reflected on the

distraction and neediness of her pet. Excerpts from Pam's interview that support this

observation include the following,

[To the interviewer] Um, you're going to get my dog in here too. She's at the window [laughs]. She's looking for squirrels . . . I'm afraid she's going to start barking, and it's going to scare the crud out of me . . . [To her pet] "Huh? Yeah. Be a good girl." [To the interviewer] Yeah, so, [laughs] she's, she, oh . . . she's, she's a hugger, she's a hugger. [To her pet] "Yes, I know. Why are you crying? Can you come down, please? Come on . . . Can you lay down please 'cause you're kind of smacking me. Come on." [To the interviewer] She's, she's a smacker. So, she's like, "Come on, talk to me." [To her pet] "I know, I'm sorry." [To the interviewer] Um, like I said, the friendships . . . Oop, she's back. The friendships [laughs]. [To her pet] "Okay, so talk, can we talk about dog-mom responsibility and role here? Because you're a needy little thing, aren't you."

Elliot spoke about the companionship he had had with his dog Belle, who had passed away by the interview. Belle prevented Elliot from "empty nesting" when his children left home. In addition, she fulfilled a coworker role, accompanying Elliot as he provided pet therapy to his mental health clients. In his pet parent and student roles, Elliot experienced a distressing role conflict experience while attending his first doctoral residency. Elliot left Belle in the care of another while he traveled, and unfortunately, she became paralyzed during that stay. Elliot was faced with staying at residency in his student role or traveling home to be with Belle in his parent role. Regarding the circumstance, Elliot questioned his decision making and actions stating,

It was a, what do, what do, what do I do? I mean, I was just, how do I get home? What do I do? . . . My thoughts were, get her, take her right now. Get her

somewhere, get her to the hospital, or whatever. And so, she did . . . So, it was

like, there's nothing we can do, so I, you know, do I stay? What do I do?

Although no literature exists on the meaning of pet parenting for graduate

students, literature exists on pet bonding, grief, and bereavement (Brown et al., 1996;

Cordaro, 2012; Sharkin & Bahrick, 1990; Toray, 2004), pet-owner wellness, the owner-

pet relationship (Chandler et al., 2015; Noonan, 1998), the role of pets within the family

system (Walsh, 2009), and using pets as a counseling intervention (Flom, 2005; Parshall,

2003; Silcox et al., 2014). I found one article on the psychological effects of dog

ownership related to role strain, role enhancement, and depression (Cline, 2010). Cline

aimed to examine the links and effects among multiple roles and depression related to the

dog-owner role but found no main effects of dog ownership on depression; however, dog

ownership was more beneficial for single individuals and women versus for married

couples and men, with women placing greater value on their relationships with their

dogs. For married individuals, dog ownership increased role obligations that were

difficult to fulfill (Cline, 2010). Clines's research does not necessarily support

participants' experiences in this study—whether women or men, married or single,

participants placed a high value on their pet-parent role while also struggling to fulfill

pet-parent role obligations.

Research supporting participants' experiences of pet parenting includes Beck and

Katcher (1996), who asserted that dogs provide social support—in fact, many owners

treat them like people (such as in the case of Katie). Dogs provide nonjudgmental

affection, companionship, and a sense of security (such as in the case of Elliot; Archer

1997). Finally, dogs provide unconditional love, affection, happiness, security, and self-worth (such as Pam's hugging dog; Sable, 1995).

As previously identified, the second unexpected finding was the positive impact of COVID-19 on participants' role-strain experiences, enhancing role enrichment. This finding was unexpected because, at the time of the research, the literature available on COVID-19 identified only the detrimental aspects of the pandemic on families' lives. In the case of this study's participants, five out of nine identified role-strain benefits resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Related to participants' role strain, COVID-19 decreased roles and role obligations, enabling participants to "slow down," "pause," "pace" themselves, and be more present and involved in their children's lives. For several participants, COVID-19 restrictions created time and space for increased doctoral productivity. Examples of these benefits are evident in the narrative excerpts of Bridgett and Ivan. Bridgett explained,

> I'm also very grateful that the circumstances with, um, having, um, you know, uh, it's not quarantine but limitations. You know, I can't see my, like be in office and so working from home, that's made it so, so much easier because I'm not driving back and forth. I'm not, you know it's easy to, to know what I'm gonna make for dinner. It's easy to keep up with the affairs of the, of the home, like the things that I, my responsibilities for the home. Um, so it's like imagining if this were, um, if we weren't, if I weren't working from home, it would be even crazier. Like I would, I would probably look like a crazy person doing, you know, classes in my car and picking up dinner at night and [sigh] so it's, it's a, it's, it's hard to even

complain because it's like the only reason I have this nice, comfortable pace, even

though it's a lot, is because of this circumstance we're in.

In response to COVID-19 restrictions, Ivan was able to restart his dissertation.

Ivan had previously attempted his dissertation several times; however, he struggled to

progress because of his role strain. Ivan stated, "So, it's only in the last year that it's

picked up again and, um, that coincides with, like, the world pausing. And just being able

to be home when my kids were home."

I returned to the COVID-19 literature after generating the findings of this study

and found research supporting the positive aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic,

specifically as it related to families and work–life balance. The Pew Research Center

conducted a study of 9,220 U.S. adults, representing the U.S. adult population by gender,

race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education, and others (Van Kessel et al., 2021).

Respondents were asked to describe how COVID-19 had affected their lives for better or

worse. Of those surveyed, 84% responded to the survey, with 73% acknowledging at

least one unexpected upside to the pandemic (Van Kessel et al., 2021). Some of the Pew

Research Center's respondents (26%) agreed that life had slowed down, creating more

time to accomplish tasks, engage in hobbies, and relax in other ways not previously

possible prepandemic (Van Kessel et al., 2021). This outcome supports Bridgett's

description of experiencing a more comfortable "pace" during COVID-19, as well as

Ivan's description of finding more time to work on his dissertation. Specific to work–life

balance, 13% of the Pew Research Center's respondents cited benefits to working

remotely, such as greater productivity and the lack of a commute (Van Kessel et al.,

2021), a finding reflected in both Bridgett and Ivan's narratives. In addition, the positive

benefits of COVID-19 were supported in studies conducted by Cornell et al. (2020) in

Sydney, Australia, and at Leeds Trinity University in the United Kingdom (Clayton et al.,

2020). Cornell et al. (2020) found that 70% of participants experienced at least one

positive outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the cited positive aspects

included work from home, flexibility in working groups, and opportunities to spend more

time with family (Cornell et al., 2020).

Theme 2: Culture and Society

Under the theme of culture and society, three subthemes described the meaning of

role strain for participants: life-world and background influences, exclusion, and

advocacy. Participants' backgrounds were the conditions that contributed to their role-

strain actions and perceptions, and their life-worlds provided context for participants'

unique differences, beliefs, attitudes, and varying understandings of role-strain meaning

based on temporality (time), spatiality (location, culture, and economic status),

embodiment (in body experience), and relational thrownness (country, nationality).

Exclusion addressed how participants felt marginalized and oppressed by being a parent

in a doctoral CES program. Some participants' experiences of exclusion, both real and

perceived, described the stigma associated with their parent role; others' experiences of

exclusion related to their intersectional aspects of identity such as race or gender.

Because of the cumulative consequences of role strain for student-parents, participants

called for advocacy and change in the perception of and support for student-parents.

Together, these three subthemes described the impact of historical, political, and

sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures on participants' role-strain experiences.

Intersectional aspects of participants' identities were interwoven throughout the findings.

Expected Findings

All nine participants revealed various aspects of their life-worlds and backgrounds throughout their narratives and photo imagery. A summary of these findings includes participants' past and present experiences, such as the time and place they were born and raised, their current living arrangements (location, family composition), traditions, their experiences of current events, the cultures of their communities, politics, spiritual beliefs and religious affiliations, socioeconomic status, health, and gender. Further, participants revealed ideas about how their future selves and families might be affected by their role strain, as influenced by their present environments and embodiment. I expected to see these findings for three reasons. First, I embraced the philosophical underpinnings of interpretive phenomenology; such underpinnings highlight each participant's unique, situated context (life-world and thrownness) influencing what it means to be in the world (Munhall, 2013). Second, role theory suggests that as people move in and out of roles, they learn about the new role's expectations and modify their behavior to conform socially (Goode, 1973; Newman & Newman, 2018). Third, all existing literature on role strain and graduate student-parents has addressed the influence of individuals' backgrounds and life-worlds on role strain and parenthood.

According to Munhall's (2013) interpretive phenomenological approach, research participants narrate the meaning of their experiences through contingencies of their life-worlds. Munhall (2013) instructs interpretive phenomenological researchers to note participants' language describing their temporal, spatial, embodiment, and relational thrownness. These components of a participants' life-world were used to summarize and categorize related in vivo codes found within participants' narratives. By adhering to an

interpretive phenomenological approach to research and attempting to understand

participants' role-strain experiences through the context of their life-worlds and

backgrounds, I anticipated that these particular cultural and societal influences would

emerge.

In accordance with the basic tenets of role theory and the theory of role strain, I

expected that aspects of participants' life-worlds and backgrounds would emerge and

contribute to role-strain experiences according to Goode's (1973) assertions. According

to Goode, individuals bring a personal history and social philosophy based on norms and

values into each role they assume. This social philosophy affects the acceptance,

emotional commitment, conformity, behavior, ideals, perceived obligations, and values of

each role (Goode, 1973). Further, value commitment to a role varies according to social

position, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, occupation, geographic region, and

religion (Goode, 1973).

The influence of gender on parenting, graduate education, and role strain was

particularly strong within the current study, reflecting existing literature. Within the

current study, gender-related issues arose in discussions about participants' spatiality and

embodiment. For example, regarding spatiality, Ali reflected on the impact of her

geographic location on her gender and parental, familial, and educational role strain. Ali

described being influenced by Southern traditions, values, and beliefs, including

perceptions about role obligations. Because of the socialized expectations of her

community, Ali felt pressure as a mother "to be the one that takes care of the child and

make sure that there's meals on the table, cooked or drive through or whatever, um,

house clean, laundry, all of that." She stated that the consequence of not meeting these

expectations was "feeling like you're a failure." Being part of a Southern family also meant, "Family comes first . . . regardless of what's going on."

Further, Ali was the first woman within her family to receive a college degree and the first to pursue a tertiary degree. In her interview, she questioned how to navigate the expectations of both. Ali's conflict between meeting her community's cultural expectations to be a "good enough" mother and meeting the academic culture's expectations to be a "good enough" graduate student is supported in the literature of Kulp (2016), Holm et al. (2015), and Moyer et al. (1999).

Within the context of spatiality, Dr. T reflected on her socioeconomic privilege and its impact on her student-parent role strain. Dr. T stated,

> One thing that's kind of popping up for me right now is the, um, thinking about the privilege that I have of having the extra space, the privilege of having, um, you know, the time for my time and money for my girls to be able to go to daycare, to be able to do these things, to have a supportive family, supportive partner, and to be able to, uh. . . . Yeah, just the privilege of my status should be acknowledged.

Several other participants acknowledged how their privilege mitigated role-strain burden. Participants' privilege afforded them resources such as help within the home (babysitters, tutors, house cleaners), cars and gas money to commute to work and school, and the ability to take vacations for self-care. When comparing Dr. T's experience to the research of Moyer et al. (1999), it is evident that the financial wealth of doctoral student-parents can be either a cultural advantage or a cultural barrier.

In Moyer et al.'s (1999) study on challenges facing female doctoral students and recent graduates, financial concerns were reported by 38% of participants (*n* = 213). Moyer et al. found participants with children cited the need for a more generous financial budget to remain in their program while caring for children. Graduate student-parents acknowledged the need to maintain or seek employment while studying to "[make] ends meet" (Moyer et al., 1999, p. 614). Of course, maintaining employment while pursuing a doctoral degree places enormous pressure on the graduate student-parent, whose time is divided among multiple roles. Such was the case for Ivan, whose gender (embodiment) expectations to be a "provider" for his family affected his self-perception when he could not maintain employment as a doctoral student because of his role strain. Ivan expressed,

> I definitely, like, I was not providing for my family in my three years of my doc program. Um, you know, I had an assistantship, but that was not, that didn't do much. Um, and certainly, whatever ex- I don't know where the, you know, cultural expectations, family expectations, like, you know, um, I don't feel that I met the expectations that I had for myself for being able to contribute to my family.

Traditionally, employment is perceived as a part of the role fathers play to support their children (Garey, 1999; Lynch, 2008), as well as assuming a position of power and providing material resources for the family (Silverstein et al., 2002). Today's (modern) "good-enough" father is also involved and present with his children (Morman & Floyd, 2006; Yeung et al., 2001). In fact, today's fathers are expected to demonstrate love and affection, nurturing, and consistency with childrearing (Canfield, 1996; Forste et al., 2009; Kimmel, 1997; McDowell & Day, 1991; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Waller, 2002).

Although Ivan struggled to provide financially for his family during his doctoral studies, he fulfilled other "good enough" fathering expectations by providing for them in other ways—for example, nutritionally (Figure 22), emotionally, and through physical presence. Ivan's perceptions on gender, roles, and role obligations are expressed in the following narrative excerpt:

> My wife and I love each other and are married because we both were happy to, uh, shed any preconceived ideas of what the male or female is supposed to do in a relationship . . . there's not, there's not one of us who's more of a caregiver and one more of a provider . . . I- I cook most of our meals . . . our gender norms are all, we're all- all sorts of, um, gender un-normed.

Furthering the life-world context of embodiment, participants explored experiences of physical disability and somatic complaints. Role strain associated with a physical disability is exemplified in Dr. T's narrative and photo imagery (Figure 19). The cyclical relationship between role strain and somatic complaints was highlighted in Bridgett's narrative, Elliot's narrative, Pam's narrative and photo imagery (Figure 20), and Harper's narrative and photo imagery (Figure 21).

Because of her physical disability, Dr. T experienced physical pain, discomfort, and limits in what her body could do, complicating her ability to fulfill various role obligations. Dr. T described a reciprocal relationship between physical wellness and role strain, with the two variables negatively influencing each other at different times. Dr. T relied on the support of others to help accomplish her tasks, stating, "As a woman with a physical disability, it's a little difficult to juggle two, uh, toddlers at once. So, my mom's often around helping me." The reciprocal effects of role strain and somatic complaints are

also evident in the narrative excerpt of Bridgett, and the narratives of Elliot and Pam. Regarding role-strain somatization, Bridgett explained,

> I was so, um, like sleep-deprived one week that, um, and over-caffeinated, that I was like developing these, um, this like tic. Like, uh, not a tic but a muscle spasm under my eye, and it wouldn't go away. And then I got a mi- . . . I think it was like the closest I've ever experienced to a migraine. And I had to, um, miss work for a day and a half and, and then a client got upset.

Elliot described gaining a significant amount of weight (over 100 pounds) during his first three years of his doctoral program, and Pam reported struggling with extreme mental, emotional, and physical fatigue. Pierce and Herlihy (2013) found that physical health and wellness was the greatest sacrifice of graduate student-parents, more so than familial, social, financial, and time sacrifices. All of the somatic complaints reported by participants in the current study are supported in the literature, including lack of sleep and exhaustion (Holm et al., 2015), migraine headaches (Moyer et al., 1999), other somatic manifestations (e.g., rapid heart rate, muscle spasms, pain), and neglectful eating and exercising habits that contribute to weight gain (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013).

In addition to the life-world and background subtheme, the subthemes of exclusion and advocacy were expected findings based on existing literature (Gatta & Roos, 2014; Holm et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2013; Trepal et al., 2014). Five of the nine participants reported instances of real and perceived exclusion and the impact of exclusionary experiences on their role strain. For some participants, exclusion related to being a doctoral student and parent. For other participants, exclusion occurred because of intersectional aspects of identity such as race or gender. Instances of exclusion seemed to

increase participants' role-strain burden because of role-identity conflict regarding how to address the situation. In addition, instances of exclusion contributed to participants feeling disadvantaged, frustrated, angry, and fearful within roles. Concern regarding the disadvantage and potential exclusion that can occur as a student-parent was evident in Nic's case:

> I think it just exists; in general, I think it exists more for women, um, that we don't respect or allow for mothering. It's like it's, um, a disadvantage. You can't go as high because you have to parent. You can't move up in the ranks as much because you might actually put something before career. You know?

Nic's concerns were not unfounded; many researchers have documented gender and baby penalties for women in higher education (Drago et al., 2006; Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006; Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009; Mason et al., 2013; McMahon & Green, 2008; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020; Morrison et al., 2011; Wolfinger et al., 2008; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). Trepal et al.'s (2014) study of doctoral student-mothers in counselor education described missed opportunities to work with faculty, denial of maternity leaves, and faculty feedback exhorting them not to have children in order to be successful within the program (p. 41). The stigma of mothers not being taken seriously as students or professionals has occurred with such frequency that the stigma was termed "mommy-tracking" (Trepal et al., 2014, p. 31).

Although she did not use the term "mommy-tracking," Dr. T was particularly fearful of this phenomenon when advocating for increased support related to her student-parent roles. Dr. T stated,

> There's some fear too, as a student, that if I make too much noise, then people
> will make my life a living hell or make it difficult. Um, so while I would like to
> be loud and obnoxious and demand for change, I also have to be careful. And I
> also have to be careful because, um, I'm not leaving my area, which means that I
> probably will want to seek employment at the program that I'm at, at some point,
> which means that I can't make enemies. Um, which is sad to think that asking for
> more support as a student and a parent could make me enemies

Several participants described being motivated to join the study to have their voices heard
and their role-strain experiences understood. Perhaps my efforts to protect participants'
identities appealed to their desires for advocacy while diminishing fears of exclusion.

The subtheme of advocacy was the final expected finding. Because of the
cumulative consequences of role strain for student-parents, it is understandable that
participants expressed the need for change both within their academic programs and on a
societal level. Further, the photovoice interview question, "What can we do about this?"
prompted participants to explore how their lived experiences of role strain could be
changed, including how their burdens could be alleviated. An example of this can be
found in the case of Dr. T, who called for more social support for working and studying
parents when responding to the photovoice prompt, "What can we do about this?"

> I think advocate, advocate, advocate, advocate, to, you know, be honest. Um, I
> think that's kind of, uh, at least the, the curated social media presence that I have
> created for myself and, and community, um, of being honest of, like, nope, we
> can't do this ourselves and, nope, it's way too freaking hard. . . . Um, but I think
> just being honest and saying like, "No, this isn't real. No, this is not, this is not

possible, it's not feasible." . . . Um, and also, I think normalize the importance of

daycare. 'Cause I, I feel like there's like a negative, slightly negative air about

daycare of like, "Oh, your babies go to daycare." . . . So, I think somehow

dispelling the myth that, like, parents who send their kids to daycare are bad

parents. I, I don't know if that's maybe just the belief I have. Um, but, yeah, kids

need to go to daycare for developmental and social reasons, not just because their

parents are working.

The need for environmental change in the climate for working and studying

parents is well documented in existing literature, from both the perspectives of

researchers and their participants (Holm et al., 2015; Kuperberg, 2009; Lynch, 2008;

Mirick & Wladkowski, 2020; Moyer et al., 1999; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al.,

2014). Some institutions have begun to address critical issues raised in the literature of

studying parents—for example, Harvard University, Pennsylvania State University, and

Princeton University (Lynch, 2008). According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

(2007), as cited in Lynch (2008), these programs offer expanded benefits packages to

graduate students with children and sensitivity training for faculty. However, although

these institutions are breaking the mold of academic culture regarding parenthood, Lynch

(2008) noted that these institutions were elite or "Ivy League" (p. 603) and only served a

small percentage of the total population of graduate student-parents. Until these expanded

programs are implemented more consistently across the spectrum of the American

academe, graduate student-parents will likely continue to struggle (Lynch, 2008).

Theme 3: Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Care

The theme of interpersonal and intrapersonal care described the meaning of role strain for participants and their various intersectional aspects of identity through the subthemes of interpersonal relationships, support, and self-care. Interpersonal relationships captured expressions of connection and closeness but also revealed barriers to connection and closeness, with family, friends, and others. In some cases, participants' role strain negatively affected their relationships, and in others, the strength of participants' relationships mitigated their role-strain burdens. For the subtheme of support, several participants described receiving inadequate support for their doctoral student-parent role strain, while others' support systems alleviated their role-strain burdens.

Participants discussed their supportive roles in other people's lives, which had both role enriching and depleting outcomes. Finally, the subtheme of self-care completed the significant findings for the study. For some participants, role strain interfered with self-care; others prioritized self-care to cope with the role-strain burden. Cumulatively, participants identified multiple ways of engaging in self-care to relieve role-strain burden, including spending time with family and pets, vacationing, participating in spiritual and mindful practices, receiving salon services, exercising, partaking in preventative healthcare, cooking, baking, dining out, making coffee runs, socializing, and, for one participant, working.

As was seen in the duality of experiences theme, COVID-19 profoundly affected participants' experiences of role strain related to interpersonal and intrapersonal care. In summarizing the total impact of COVID-19 on participants' role strain and interpersonal

and intrapersonal care, participants identified both adverse and beneficial relational,

support, and self-care outcomes. In the next section, I relate the expected and unexpected

findings from interpersonal and intrapersonal care to the study's problem, purpose,

research questions, theoretical framework, and existing literature.

Expected Findings

The interpersonal and intrapersonal care subthemes were highly relevant for this

study, with nine out of nine participants exploring the meaning of interpersonal

relationships related to their student-parent role-strain experiences. All nine participants

discussed the meaning of support for their student-parent role strain, and eight of nine

participants discussed the relationship between role strain and self-care. As previously

stated, the interpersonal relationships subtheme captured participants' expressions of

finding both conduits and barriers to connection and closeness with family, friends, and

others. In some cases, participants described how their role strain negatively affected

their relationships, and in others, the strength of participants' relationships decreased

their role-strain burdens.

I expected that participants' student-parent role strain would negatively influence

other relationships—this concern was found in the research of Moyer et al. (1999),

Padula and Miller (1999), and Pierce & Herlihy (2013). Moyer et al.'s (1999) study

exploring the challenges of female doctoral students and recent graduates found that

student-parents' financial strain negatively affected participants' relationships with their

partners and other family members. Similarly, participants in this study reported

struggling to balance personal and professional activities, resulting in strained social

relationships (Moyer et al., 1999). For example, Bridgett's image *We Still Exist!*

(Figure 25) shows how her doctoral student and employment roles became a barrier to her relationship with her husband. In processing the imagery and school as a barrier to connection, Bridgett stated,

> My husband and I both work a lot and seldom spend time together alone these days. I would love to do more with him, but school takes up so much time. Although he is understanding and patient, I don't want him to think that I take him for granted.

Similarly, strained family relationships were an outcome of Padula and Miller's (1999) study of four married and parenting psychology doctoral students reentering their program and Pierce and Herlihy's (2013) study of CES doctoral student-mothers' wellness. However, Padula and Miller (1999) found that student roles increased peer and professional relationships. Further, Dickens et al. (2016) found counselor education doctoral students' experiences with multiple roles and relationships fostered positive effects of role strain on friendships and collegial relationships with professors.

This contrary research was not supported by the findings of the current study. For example, Pam struggled with relationship connection both within and outside of her doctoral program:

> Oh, yeah, I think the connection piece is what I'm, what I've been struggling to find like in life. And especially in a doc program, constantly feeling like, you know, I don't have a strong enough relationship with my chair, or I'm, you know, all of those things. It's like a lack of connection or like a weak connection. There's- . . . connection, but it's not strong.

Despite her struggle, Pam relied on connection (Figure 30) and closeness in her family

relationships to supplement this loss, stating, "I have it like with my immediate family for

sure." Pam found her family relationships "reassuring" and "grounding," an experience

shared by participants Bridgett (Figures 26 and 27) and Nic (Figure 29).

In addition to being reassuring and grounding, participants' relationships were a

source of support. All nine participants discussed the meaning of support for their

student-parent role strain. For many participants, their familial and social supports helped

alleviate role-strain burden. In addition, participants discussed their supportive roles in

other people's lives, which had both role enriching and depleting outcomes. Finally,

many participants described receiving inadequate support for their doctoral student-

parent role strain, an outcome supported by existing research on a peer level (Holm et al.,

2015), faculty level (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014), programmatic level

(Holm et al., 2015; Kuperberg, 2009; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013), and organizational level

(Holm et al., 2015; Kuperberg, 2009).

Receiving inadequate support on a colleague and programmatic level was evident

in the case of Harper, who struggled with the impact of her mother role on her counselor-

educator role after experiencing a miscarriage. Harper explained,

> I told my, um, my supervisors that I would not be able to have class. And I said
>
> there was a, this medical reason and, and I even divulged the reason to one
>
> person. And, um, there was a lot of sympathy, but there was no thought of, you
>
> know what? I'll cover your class, or we can take that week's lesson out of the
>
> need for your students. And not necessarily that I felt that there should be, but it
>
> just occurred to me that I wasn't able to have things taken off my plate. I could

just pause them, and then I'd have an overloaded week the next week trying to

play catch up. And that was significant to me. . . . Short term relief doesn't

necessarily equate to supporting me or meeting my needs in that moment, um,

because it's not something that, um, I'm not able to drop it. It's just been paused,

and, um, that makes it that much more overwhelming when I unpause when all of

that stuff is waiting for me.

Posited by Lightsey (1996), Pierce and Herlihy (2013), and Ulione (1996),

support systems are crucial to ensuring an individual's mental health. This assertion was

reflected in the case of Elliot when he described the importance of seeking and accepting

help as a way to mitigate role strain. Elliot proclaimed, "We can get past stuff, we can do

what we wanna do, we just got to have help. We got to have support. Um, even when we

don't like to ask for it, we just got to get."

In his interview and photovoice imagery, Elliot reflected on a time when not

having sufficient support negatively affected his well-being, a finding consistent with the

research of Pierce and Herlihy (2013). Elliot described gaining over 100 pounds since

beginning his doctoral studies (personal and student roles). At the same time Elliot was

gaining weight, he counseled a client (professional role) who struggled with obesity and

depression. Unfortunately, Elliot's client passed away several months before this study,

most likely because of health complications associated with obesity. Although grieving,

the death of Elliot's client motivated him to take better care of himself, and he contacted

a nutritionist for health support. Elliot explained,

I was so torn. You know, I couldn't help him. But it clicked in my head right

then- I never realized I couldn't do it because I can't do it alone. I needed help.

This particular client also realized he needed help. I thought I was help, so I

stayed in connection, but he didn't really want help with the, the weight stuff. It, it

was a big factor, but he had mental, he needed help there, and those are. . . . See,

see what I'm saying? So, it clicked, and I thought, oh my God, that- that's it,

that's why I can't do this for myself. I need help. And I, I don't have the support.

By the time of the interview, Elliot had lost 57 pounds with the support of his nutritionist.

With adequate support, Elliot was successful in relieving the embodiment of his role

strain, stating, "I can breathe again finally. . . . I've probably never been- felt as good in

my entire life as I do today, from, from the nutrition and stuff."

Elliot's example on the meaning of support for his role strain introduces the

findings for interpersonal and intrapersonal care's subtheme, self-care. Findings for the

self-care subtheme revealed that role strain interfered with self-care for some participants,

while others prioritized their self-care to cope with the role-strain burden. Self-care

content was evident in eight out of nine participants' narratives and photovoice imagery,

indicating the significance of its meaning for doctoral CES student-parents.

The finding that role strain interfered with participants' self-care was expected

and supported by Pierce and Herlihy's (2013) and Trepal et al.'s (2014) research. Women

socialized to perform most household and childcare duties often left very little time for

self-care when fulfilling educational and personal roles (Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal

et al., 2014). Although these authors were specifically researching the experiences of

doctoral student-mothers, the fathers in the current study also struggled with self-care.

For example, at the beginning of his doctoral studies, Ivan described his role-strain

experience as "toxic" to himself and others around him. Expanding on this, Ivan

explained that his role strain's "toxic" nature was attributable to his struggles to care for

himself and, consequently, others. Ivan explained,

> When I'm using the word toxic, I'm thinking both ab- in respect with, of, to other
>
> people and to myself. You know? That means I didn't do any self-care, really.
>
> Um, and I didn't really, I couldn't really fully give myself to the people who
>
> needed me or the things I needed to do. So, it was a tough few years [laughs]. It's
>
> not fun to think about it, actually.

Elliot discussed his self-care in two ways: First, he related self-care to his work, and

second, he described his self-care as nonexistent. Early in his interview, Elliot described

work as a form of self-care and a way to distract from his family troubles. Elliot

explained,

> I- I love to work. I love what I do. Um, it is a part of my self-care. I need, I need, I
>
> need probably additional self-care, for sure, I get it. But, um, work is my self-care.
>
> Uh, I love what I do. I, I like getting involved. Um, so on my aspect of it, self-care
>
> would be maybe, um, narrowing down my roles in certain areas so I can be more
>
> effective. But, um, I like vacations. I take them every now and then. I do things.
>
> But I'm always ready to, I enjoy it, but I'm ready to get back to what I'm doing.
>
> That's, that's where am I the most comfortable.

Later in his interview, when processing his 100 pounds weight gain and the photograph

titled, *Support: What Do I Have To Lose?* Elliot responded to the photovoice prompt,

"Why does this problem or strength exist?" by stating, "Uh, because I don't have self-

care, and the fact that I take care of myself [laughs]- I don't, uh, I'm overwhelmed, just

keep pushing for your life and neglecting myself." It seems as though Elliot came to

realize that his various work roles (counselor, educator, supervisor, leader, advocate, student) were perhaps contributing to role-strain burden, not to self-care.

Although Pierce and Herlihy (2013) suggested that women did most of the household duties and childcare, leaving little time for self-care, Elliot identified as a single male parent of adult children. Ivan described his relationship with his wife as "gender un-normed" because they shared responsibility for household and childcare duties. With Elliot being a single male parent and Ivan sharing equal household and childrearing responsibilities, perhaps they too had very little time for self-care in their student, parent, employee, and other social roles.

The findings of the interpersonal and intrapersonal care theme would not be complete without exploring the impact of the contextualizing lifestyle factor of COVID-19 on participants' role strain. COVID-19 influenced participants' interpersonal relationships, support, and self-care in both adverse and beneficial ways. The adverse outcomes were expected findings; however, the beneficial outcomes were unexpected findings.

For many participants, COVID-19 restrictions interfered with their access to loved ones, restricted social supports, and limited traditional practices of self-care (attending church, receiving salon services, visiting gyms, obtaining preventative healthcare, dining out, socializing). As a result of COVID-19, participants' role-strain burdens were increased by simultaneously working, studying, providing childcare, and assisting with home instruction during lockdown or quarantine, while simultaneously experiencing limits on relational and other self-care supports.

Bridgett described being unable to connect with her parents and grandmother during COVID-19 times:

> As someone who's very family-oriented, you know, I haven't been able to connect with, um, like see my, my parents. Um, my grandmother's in the hospital and has been in the hospital for months now, and no one can see her.

This barrier to relationship connection increased Bridgett's role strain; she could not fulfill her perceived family role obligations.

Katie described the impact of COVID-19 on her administrative team's ability to support each other. Katie stated,

> It's, it's a rough year. Um, I miss the years when, so I'm considered to be part of the administrative team, which is a four, four, four-woman team. Um, which includes my principal, my assistant principal, the TRT, which, um, is kinda like a teacher-leader, and myself. And, I mean, we used to eat lunch together. You know, now we're not supposed to do that 'cause we were social distancing, you know . . . everything's just so different and, and it's, it's not fun different. It's uncomfortably different.

Finally, Ali traveled two hours to get her first COVID-19 vaccine shot. Ali's COVID-19 vaccination meant that she could resume relational and physical connection with her family and friends for social support and self-care (vacation) purposes. Ali explained,

> You take what you can and do what you need to do to, to keep moving forward 'cause I could have said, "Oh no, I'm not gonna get it." Um, but then that would

mean staying away from family. Um, not going back into the schools, um, not

being able to take that Florida vacation that I was able to.

These findings were expected; existing research has documented the large-scale

consequences of COVID-19 on health, economic, and societal systems (Mofijur et al.,

2021; Orgera et al., 2021). Atabakhsh (2020), Chirumbolo (2020), Lebow (2020), and

Morrison and Morrison (2021) described the struggles of the work–family social domain

to maintain balance with so few available supports. Educational, relational, social, and

other means of support and self-care (gyms, places of worship, salons, restaurants) were

inaccessible because of stay-at-home orders and widespread business closures. The

ability for participants to maintain regular and dependable relational, support, and self-

care rituals despite restrictions was central to distinguishing "those who become

casualties from those who remain resilient through difficult times" (Lebow, 2020,

p. 310).

I returned to the literature after generating the findings and found research from

the Pew Research Center noting that 89% of its survey respondents had mentioned at

least one negative lifestyle change from COVID-19 (Van Kessel et al., 2021). Related to

the theme of interpersonal and intrapersonal care, Pew research participants identified

struggling with isolation from friends and family (41%), inability to engage in previously

enjoyable activities (32%), and [difficulty] caring for oneself (14%) with increases in

stress, depression, weight gain, and lack of exercise (Van Kessel et al., 2021).

Unexpected Findings

As previously stated, the unexpected finding from the theme of interpersonal and

intrapersonal care was the positive impact of COVID-19 on participants' role strain,

relationships, support, and self-care. This finding was unexpected because, at the time of

this study, the literature available on COVID-19 identified only the detrimental aspects of

the pandemic on families' lives. In the case of this study's participants, five out of nine

identified role-strain benefits resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Related to

participants' role strain, interpersonal, and intrapersonal care, COVID-19 decreased roles

and role obligations, enabling participants to be present and involved in their children's

lives. In addition, COVID-19 eliminated travel-for-work obligations that would otherwise

have required participants to separate from their families.

Examples of these benefits were evident in the cases of Ivan and Harper. Because

of COVID-19, Ivan was directed to work from home, and his children were mandated to

attend school from home. Working from home while his children were home-schooled

meant that Ivan's work and parent roles overlapped, increasing his physical and relational

closeness and connection with his family. Ivan explained,

> I mean, to be totally honest with you, like, I have not, I've, I've only seen that as a
>
> positive, you know? . . . The last year has been great as far as spending time with
>
> my family. So, I have really no complaints about that.

Related to her work and student roles, Harper began interviewing for counselor-

educator positions once she completed her doctoral coursework. Figure 38 shows Harper

hugging her daughter goodbye as she left to travel for a job interview. Harper explained

that COVID-19 decreased this role strain by imposing travel restrictions. Because of

COVID-19, several of Harper's interviews occurred through virtual means, alleviating

role conflict and feelings of guilt associated with leaving her daughter. Harper stated,

I think COVID actually helped this particular issue a lot because my experience

on the job search was that so much more was held virtually than what my cohorts'

experiences were or have been. So, I don't know, a practical, something, a

practical strategy here would be, you know, perhaps not having the rigidity of in-

person face-to-face meetings when they're happening on a national scale. Um, I

think that could alleviate this particular role strain or conflict.

Studies from the Pew Research Center (Van Kessel et al., 2021), the Leeds Trinity

University in the United Kingdom (Clayton et al., 2020), and Cornell et al. (2020) in

Sydney, Australia, support these unexpected findings on COVID-19's positive impact on

role strain, interpersonal, and intrapersonal care. All three studies found that life slowing

down brought families and friends closer (Clayton et al., 2020; Cornell et al., 2020; Van

Kessel et al., 2021). Restrictions on work and school allowed some people to spend more

time with spouses, children, or other family members, and increased use of video chats

helped individuals connect more often with distant family compared to connecting during

prepandemic times (Clayton et al., 2020; Cornell et al., 2020; Van Kessel et al., 2021).

All three studies found that the slower pace of COVID-19 life created new opportunities

for engaging in hobbies, house projects, or relaxation (Clayton et al., 2020; Cornell et al.,

2020; Van Kessel et al., 2021). Although only a small percentage (14%) of the American

population from the Pew Research Center's study reported improvements in physical and

mental well-being during COVID-19, many participants from the Leeds Trinity

University study (Clayton et al., 2020) and the Cornell et al. (2020) study reported

increased self-care activity (personal hygiene, exercise, home-cooking, dieting). The

implications of these unexpected findings are further explored in the Implications for the

Profession section of this chapter.

Limitations

No matter how well designed, every study has limitations (Bloomberg & Volpe,

2019). Simply stated, limitations are methodological weaknesses outside of the

researcher's control (Peoples, 2021). A study's limitations include the characteristics of

design or methodology that affect or influence the interpretation of the research findings

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Limitations are the research constraints that may negatively

affect the study's transferability, application to practice, or usefulness of the findings

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Limitations common for phenomenological dissertations

include small sample sizes, researcher bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Peoples, 2021),

time constraints (Peoples, 2021), availability of resources (Cohen et al., 2000), reliance

on specific techniques for gathering data, and participant reactivity (Bloomberg & Volpe,

2019).

Regarding the study's sample, participants self-selected to be a part of the study

understanding the prolonged engagement requirements. I presumed that only participants

whose role strain was manageable self-selected to join the study—after all, the additional

role of research participant increased their role quantity and role-strain burden. This

limitation was partly supported—six potential participants who completed the informed

consent for the study did not continue. Of these six prospective participants, one had a

dual relationship with me and was not recommended to continue for ethical and

trustworthiness reasons. Four female participants did not respond to my follow-up despite

multiple requests to join the study. One male participant voluntarily left the study.

Of note, the six participants who did not continue after completion of the informed or who left the study voluntarily had demographics not otherwise captured by the current sample, including identifying as Hispanic, pregnant, widowed, or divorced (the four females), or actively experiencing marital struggles (the one male). Previous researchers have asserted that single mothers who engage in multiple roles experience the highest perceived stress coupled with diminished life satisfaction (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). Further, populations who are underrepresented because of race, ethnicity, gender, or citizenship are at a higher risk of attrition from doctoral studies (McBain, 2019). Therefore, I postulate that underrepresented populations may have been less inclined to participate in the current study because of their role-strain burden limitations.

Although the current study's sample size captured some diversity among CES doctoral student-parents, it did not capture an extensively diverse sample. Holms et al. (2015), Pierce and Herlihy (2013), and Trepal et al. (2014) identified a need to study parenting experiences within CES doctoral programs from the perspectives of fathers, single parents, parents from minority populations, and queer parents. The current sample included two fathers, one single parent (of adult children not living at home), one Black participant, and one mixed-race participant (White/Native American). All participants identified as heterosexual or heteronormative; however, one participant declined to indicate sexual identity. No participants identified as part of the LGBTQIA+ population. For this reason, the current sample of CES doctoral student-parents was not representative of the entire populations' experiences, and results may not be generalizable.

This study used photovoice to collect and analyze data. Jurkowski (2008) and Shumba and Moodley (2018) claimed that photovoice is more time-consuming compared to traditional research methods because it requires developing relationships and trust with participants. To mitigate this limitation, consistent with the photovoice methods recommended by Wang (1999) and Wang and Burris (1997), I met with the participants on at least three occasions, first to orient participants to the study, then to conduct the initial interview, and finally, to complete the second interview for member-checking purposes. In addition, I contacted the participants midway through the time allowed for photography to provide support and encouragement, which extended participant contact over two academic semesters (spring 2021 through summer 2021). Although prolonged engagement with participants is required (Shumba & Moodley, 2018) and helps promote trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), prolonged engagement in this study may have produced a biased participant sample.

Further, literature has suggested that some participants may not respond favorably to the photovoice SHOWeD technique, explaining that the line of questioning used with the technique rigidly provided limited interpretation and exploration of their experiences (McIntyre, 2003; Shumba & Moodley, 2018). To account for this potential limitation, I allowed time for a semistructured interview before implementing the structured SHOWeD technique. During the semistructured interview, the participants freely explored and interpreted the meaning of their own phenomenological experiences in response to the central research question and two subquestions. In line with Munhall's (2012, 2013) interpretive phenomenological interviewing procedures, participants were minimally redirected and allowed to "wander" from the research questions. Wandering or

straying from the phenomenon allowed latent meaning or additional data to emerge that became clearer and significant during interpretation and analysis (Munhall, 2012).

Further, I added two questions to Wang's (1999) SHOWeD technique, creating a ME addition to the acronym SHOWeD (SHOWeD ME): "What else should be said about this picture to describe the *Meaning* of it?" and, "Is there anything *Else* to say about this picture?" Despite these adjustments, there were times when participants did not feel as though the photovoice voice prompts were appropriate or specific enough for exploring their experience, or they believed they answered the question already. Participants occasionally responded to photovoice prompts by saying, "I don't know if I know how to answer that for this question," "I wish it [the question] was a little bit more directed on some of that stuff," "Um, man, I wish those [questions] would narrow it down," or "I think maybe I did just answer that." As such, the photovoice data collection methods may have limited participants' expressions of meaning or confused participants in unintended ways.

In terms of accurately capturing meaning, efforts to protect participants' identity by blurring faces in photographs may limit readers' ability to understand participants' experiences fully. During their interviews and photograph processing, participants reflected on the facial expressions of either themselves or their loved ones and the meaning those facial expressions captured in describing their role strain. Although participants were able to discuss the meaning of facial expressions in their narratives, it is unfortunate that readers' experience of this study may be limited by not witnessing the exact details.

Finally, as a doctoral CES student-mother completing this study to fulfill the program's dissertation requirements, I was inherently immersed in the current research setting. Not only was I immersed in the setting, but I was living the phenomenological experience being studied (discussed in the Researcher's Positionality statement in Chapter 1 and in the Personal Reflection section in Chapter 5). As a CES doctoral student-parent myself, researcher bias was a limitation of the study. It was impossible to separate myself objectively from the data, which is why I chose Munhall's interpretive phenomenological approach as a research method, integrated into the conceptual framework (Figure 1), and why I employed several research strategies to ensure the study's trustworthiness. According to Munhall (2012, 2013), meaning is discovered through intersubjectivity, the point at which the participant's and researcher's worldviews, life-worlds (temporality, spatiality, embodiment, relational), and backgrounds overlap. This approach to the research allowed my biases to be known and meaningfully incorporated into the research methodology and conceptual framework. To ensure the study's trustworthiness, I used the following measures: reflexive journaling, prolonged field engagement, thick descriptions, triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, audit trail, and purposeful sampling.

Implications for the Profession

Implications for the profession highlight this study's importance for the counseling field, including its contribution to fill gaps in the current literature. In this section, I discuss the literature gaps not formerly uncovered or sufficiently explained and make recommendations for programmatic, institutional, and social change (Peoples,

2021). Finally, I present new findings, unexplained phenomenon, and study limitations to guide recommendations for future research (Peoples, 2021).

Doctoral students who balance parenting while pursuing graduate education add to the number of roles and the types of role identities they assume. Existing research across various professional disciplines has confirmed that balancing multiple roles can lead to role confusion, conflict, overload, contagion, and strain (Dickens et al., 2016; Herlihy & Corey, 2016; Home, 1997, 1998). Without adequate support, role strain frequently results in tension, stress, intrapersonal distress, and burnout (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Barnett & Marshall, 1992; Coverman, 1989; Dickens et al., 2016; Harrison, 1980; Home, 1997; Lois, 2006; Simon, 1995; Varpio et al., 2018).

In addition to these role-strain studies, a wealth of literature exists on the experiences of parenthood during graduate education (Andersson, 2019; Bascom-Slack, 2011; Jarvie & Levy, 2019; Kin et al., 2018; Krause et al., 2017; Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009; Moyer et al., 1999; Mwakyanjala et al., 2019; Stack et al., 2019; Stenzel, 2019; Westrick, 2016; Wladkowski & Mirick, 2020). Outcomes from previous studies have revealed many personal concerns for doctoral students parents, including delayed family planning (Andersson, 2019); gender and baby penalties (Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009); delayed onset of goal achievement (Holm et al., 2015; Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009; Moyer et al., 1999; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014); perceived stigma and discrimination; increased financial hardship; physical health issues; mental health concerns; time management struggles; overwhelming feelings of guilt; lack of programmatic support; lack of resources; and role overload (Holm et al., 2015; Moyer et al., 1999; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014).

Considering these personal concerns, researchers have advised against starting a family while in graduate school, suggesting a delay until a tenure position is secured (Kennelly & Spalter-Roth, 2006; Lynch, 2008; Mason et al., 2013; Morrison et al., 2011; Sallee, 2011; Wolfinger et al., 2008; 2009). However, biological and social factors affect childbearing and childrearing years, including women's fertility timeframe (Kuperberg, 2009). Delaying childbearing or childrearing, even for students whose partner carries the child, can lead to alternate personal concerns, such as lower overall fertility (Mason & Goulden, 2004; Trepal et al., 2014), missed opportunities for children (Kuperberg, 2009), personal regret (Williams, 2004), and health risks for mother and child if pregnancy is achieved (Oakley et al., 2016; Thompson, 2002). Further, a delay in childrearing creates missed opportunities for students, including developing new skills and maturity, changing worldviews, and forming broader social networks and connections (Silva & Pugh, 2010).

As previously mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, CES parenthood experiences have been studied only from the perspectives of professional-mothers navigating the academic pipeline (Alexander-Albritton & Hill, 2015; Hermann et al., 2014; Neale-McFall et al., 2018; Stinchfield & Trepal, 2010; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012), student-mothers navigating their doctoral studies (Holm et al., 2015; Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014), and in the context of the mentoring relationships between counselor-educator-mothers and student-mothers (Bruce, 1995; Solomon & Barden, 2016). No CES publications have intentionally studied the parenthood experiences of all parents, including fathers, single parents, queer parents, minority graduate student-parents, disabled parents, or others. Further, only one CES publication has addressed graduate students' experiences with multiple roles and relationships; however, this publication did

not specifically address the parent role on students' role-strain experiences. The absence
of CES literature on graduate student-parents' role strain has rendered an incomplete
understanding of experiences that may lead to impairment or attrition. Because it is an
ethical and educational responsibility of counselor-educators to address students'
personal concerns (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2015), counselor-educators must increase their
understanding of role strain for CES students attempting to balance parenthood with
doctoral studies.

This dissertation study revealed several problematic role-strain experiences for
CES doctoral student-parents, including emotional, mental, and physical consequences;
questioning and self-doubt; programmatic pressure; the need to hide aspects of their
identities; sacrifice; failure to meet personal and social expectations; real and perceived
exclusion; relationship struggles; inadequate support; and self-care struggles. The
COVID-19 pandemic was an influential sociocultural factor that further complicated role
strain for CES doctoral student-parents.

Two possible approaches to helping CES doctoral student-parents decrease their
role-strain burden include changing the culture of parenthood in academia and fostering
graduate student-parents' role-strain enrichment.

Recommendation 1: Change the Culture of Parenthood and Academia

Participants in the current study explored several programmatic and institutional
barriers that affected their student-parent role-strain experiences. Participants described
an unsupportive and marginalizing culture for parenthood in academia. They felt as
though the role of parent was taboo. They lacked modeling and transparency from faculty
on how they balanced work and family life. Opportunities were missed to engage in

professional development (presentations, research, scholarship). Lack of resources (time and space to conduct research) and fear of professional consequences for advocating for needs were concerns. As discussed in the Interpretation of Findings section in Chapter 5, researchers have noted many of these concerns in previous literature on parenthood and graduate education.

Participants from the current study, as well as those who have previously studied parenthood and graduate education, have advocated for change. Although literature has claimed improvements in support for graduate student-parents (Kuperberg, 2009; *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* 2007, as cited in Lynch, 2008; Mason et al., 2007), the participants from this study did not mention experiencing such improvements. Results from the study indicate a continued need for counselor-educators, administrators, and institution policymakers to understand the needs and experiences of graduate student-parents, adjust prejudices and sensitivities, and collectively work to increase support.

Considering existing literature and the narratives of this study's participants, support can be increased in several ways. Institutions, academic programs, and counselor-educators can create a welcoming culture for parents. Graham (2021) suggested creating family-friendly syllabi and classroom policies, establishing and increasing support services for student-parents, understanding that students have intersectional identities, and providing flexible course options, including virtual and asynchronous classes and varying opportunities to engage with classes (discussion boards, individual and group projects, electronic surveys). Institutions, academic programs, and counselor-educators can provide automatic extensions of deadlines when graduate students adopt or give birth (Springer et al., 2009). Extensions might cover everything from exams to assignments,

dissertation timelines, and time to completion of degrees (Spring et al. 2009). Finally,

Spring et al. (2009) recommended departmental activities that engage students, children,

partners, and spouses.

Institutions and programs can provide opportunities for financial, academic,

environmental, social-emotional, and childcare support, such as financial aid and

scholarships, priority enrollment, computer labs with extended hours, space to conduct

research, lactation rooms, mental health resources, child-care centers, accommodations

periods, and maternity and paternity leave policies (Graham, 2021; Kruvelis, 2017;

Kuperberg, 2009; Mason et al. 2007; Springer et al., 2009). Access to these types of

family support services can decrease student-parent stress and help build an on-campus

student-parent community (Graham, 2021). For example, Berea College (2021) is a

model family-friendly institution, offering student-parents a child development lab that

provides childcare and early education for young children of students, faculty, and staff.

In addition, Berea College (2021) offers dedicated lactation spaces on campus, a

nontraditional student center (complete with kitchen, full bathroom, living room, study

room, laundry amenities, playroom, and diaper-changing station), and an ecovillage that

provides family housing for single student-parents who have full-time custody of one or

more dependent children or married couples with or without children (Berea College,

2021). Further, Berea College (2021) provides an extensive list of community resources,

including medical and health services, social services, and recommended auto shops,

banks, schools, transportation, and entertainment services.

Additional models for financial, environmental, social-emotional, and childcare

support for student-parents can be found at The University of Minnesota, The University

of California Santa Barbara, and the University of Michigan. The University of

Minnesota's (2021) Student Parent Help Center provides information for on- and off-

campus family resources; best practices for educators on creating family-friendly,

pregnant, and parenting positive syllabi language and advisement; student-parent grants;

a support group; and family-friendly events and activities. The University of California

Santa Barbara's graduate student-parent resources and accommodations include family

student housing, two children's centers, a childcare reimbursement program, a graduate

student association childcare grant, dependent care flexible spending accounts for

academic student employees, a financial crisis response team, parenting leaves of

absence, expanded time-to-degree provisions, a lactation support program, support

groups, resource centers, and postpartum education for parents (The Regents of the

University of California, 2015). Finally, the University of Michigan's Center for the

Education of Women (n.d.) in collaboration with the Michigan Partners Project and the

Ford Foundation developed a three-year initiative (2013–2016) to help students with

children graduate. This initiative developed a resource for college administrators

outlining their model for a successful student-parent support program, including

academic and social supports, childcare services and subsidies, affordable housing, health

services, and insurance. The University of Michigan's (2021) Child Care Subsidy

program provides eligible student-parents with funds for licensed childcare in the

community.

Educators often provide the first orientation to an institution. To change the

culture of parenthood and academia, counselor-educators can increase their

understanding of role strain for CES student-parents through sensitivity training with the

aim of preventing or addressing students' personal concerns (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2015), including impairment that may result from role strain (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2007, as cited in Lynch, 2008). Faculty training can include a review of departmental and university policies that support student-parents (Spring et al., 2009) and identify ways that faculty can mentor graduate student-parents (Springer et al., 2009). With this training, educators can offer empathy, transparency, and open discussions about the impact of parenting on students' experiences (Graham, 2021).

Open discussions about family life and the impact of parenting on students' experiences can take place during proseminars (Springer et al., 2009), during residencies, at the onset of classes as a component of the syllabus review, during faculty-student meetings, and during advisement sessions. Holding open faculty discussions about family life can normalize help-seeking behavior by encouraging student-parents to ask questions, attend office hours, and request assistance as needed (Graham, 2021). Further, academic programs can promote mentoring and connection with faculty and peers, especially with those who are parenting (Bruce, 1995; Graham, 2021; Kruvelis, 2017; Solomon & Barden, 2016; Springer et al., 2009). In summarizing literature available on network connection resources designed to support graduate student-parents, Spring et al. (2009) suggested support groups, group counseling sessions, listservs, web spaces, bulletin boards, parent resource centers, and job market workshops for parents.

Recommendation 2: Foster Graduate Student-Parents' Role-Strain Enrichment

Another way for counselor-educators to increase support for CES doctoral student-parents is to capitalize on role-strain enrichment experiences. Role-strain enrichment was a significant finding for seven of nine participants. In response to

juggling multiple roles successfully, participants described feelings of accomplishment,

achievement, gratification, and motivation to progress through challenging times.

Participants identified their children as a leading source of motivation, adorning their

workspaces with family pictures and making statements similar to "I'm doing this for

them." In some cases, participants explained that being home with their children during

COVID-19 decreased role-strain burden and increased doctoral study productivity.

Slowing down and being present and involved in their children's lives was important for

participants on multiple levels: personal, familial, cultural, emotional, educational, and

professional.

Second, a noteworthy finding that emerged from this study was the impact of pet

parenting on student-parents' role strain. For participants, pet parenting had emotional

and self-care meaning; however, pets' needs sometimes conflicted with other role

obligations, resulting in increased role burden. The implications of this finding suggest

that pet parenting might both help and hinder CES doctoral student-parents' role strain.

Counselor-educators might use the benefits of pet parenting to assist students with coping

and self-care to alleviate role-strain burden. In addition, counselor-educators could

consider the significance of being a pet parent on students' role-strain burdens, despite

the need for more research on this finding.

Suggestions of how role enrichment can be incorporated into academic

interventions and students' plans for success include the following:

- Students, educators, and administrators can collaborate on student-parents'

    strengths and needs, forming personalized, holistic, and strengths-based

academic support programs and accommodations plans. Student-parents'

strengths can also be incorporated into remediation plans as appropriate.

- Educators can engage student-parents in discussions about using parenting

  roles to motivate and drive doctoral study progress.

- Educators can engage students in strengths-based and future-oriented

  academic and career interventions such as creating academic/professional

  vision boards. Vision boards are a culturally responsive creative intervention

  facilitating an opportunity to process intentions, motivations, priorities, goals,

  and aspirations visually and symbolically (Burton, 2016; Waalkes et al.,

  2019). Because imagery can motivate future behavior (Burton, 2016; Sheikh

  & Panagiotou, 1975), students can be encouraged to include photographs of

  family or other significant interpersonal relationships that inspire progress.

- Counselor-educators can encourage self-care plans (Carter & Barnett, 2014)

  that include self-compassion (Coaston, 2017), interpersonal relationship

  connection, and time with pets (Flom, 2005; Parshall, 2003; Silcox et al.,

  2014) with the aim of preventing or addressing students' personal concerns

  (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2015), including impairment that may result from

  role strain. Self-care plans can include recognition of achievements and

  positive affirmations such as "I am resilient" and "I am proud."

Recommendations for Future Research

An implication of this study is the need for further research regarding the role-

strain experiences of CES doctoral students, especially those who are parents. Although

this study successfully captured some diversity among participants, the sample size was

small and most representative of White, heterosexual/heteronormative, married females. Future qualitative research on the role-strain experiences of CES doctoral student-parents from an increasingly diverse sample would enhance the findings of this study and expand upon its professional implications. Specifically, more information is needed on the role-strain experiences of CES doctoral student-parents belonging to intersecting minority identities and varying marital statuses.

No known quantitative studies on doctoral CES student-parents' role strain existed at the time of this research. Quantitative research on this population could measure degrees of role-strain burden and benefit across a large and diverse sample of participants. This research might enable students, faculty, programs, administrators, and institutions to deepen their understanding of the impact of role strain on the identified population. Further, one of the strengths and limitations of this study was prolonged field engagement with participants. Because of this study's prolonged field engagement requirements, I presumed that participants had manageable role strain at the time of the research. Quantitative surveying typically requires less time commitment, compared to qualitative interviews; therefore, surveys might capture a broader range of experiences, including individuals at higher risk for burnout and attrition from role strain. In addition, the experiences of parenthood during graduate education have begun to be studied within the fields of medicine (Jarvie & Levy, 2019; Kin et al., 2018; Krause et al., 2017; Mwakyanjala et al., 2019; Stack et al., 2019; Westrick, 2016), science (Bascom-Slack, 2011; Stenzel, 2019), and social work (Wladkowski & Mirick, 2020). Thus, a quantitative study comparing the role strain of CES doctoral student-parents to the role strain experienced by student-parents from other fields might prove interesting.

Finally, because the stress of tertiary education negatively affects doctoral students' wellness (Appel & Dahlgren, 2003; Golde, 2005; Nagy et al., 2019; Schmidt & Hansson, 2018; Swords & Ellis, 2017), family planning (Andersson, 2019), and attrition (Gardner, 2008; Lovitts & Nelson, 2000; McBain, 2019; Pauley et al., 1999; Rigler et al., 2017; Schmidt & Hansson, 2018; Willis & Carmichael, 2011), educators, administrators, and institutions need to understand factors that contribute to students' strain and strengths. In the current study, role-strain enrichment was an unexpected, significant outcome of participants' experiences. In addition, this study discovered that pet parenting both helped and hindered participants' role strain. In terms of further research, these unexpected findings of this study have important implications for the profession. Future research is recommended to explore how role-strain enrichment experiences serve CES doctoral students. In addition, future research is recommended to explore how the role of pet parent helps and hinders CES doctoral students. Future studies on these unexpected findings will deepen understanding of contextualizing lifestyle factors contributing to doctoral student-parents' stress, coping, and self-care and provide answers on how students, counselor-educators, administrations, and policymakers can advocate for and collaborate on effective change.

Personal Reflection

My personal process with this dissertation began when I decided to enter into motherhood as a CES doctoral student. The decision to have a child did not come easily. I was filled with anxiety and fear that doing so would thwart my academic progress and create a barrier to achieving my professional goals. I questioned my ability to balance academic, work, and family roles, and I spent many days discussing these concerns with

my husband, clinical supervisor, and analyst. To deepen my understanding of my

feelings, thoughts, and concerns, I turned to the literature on motherhood and graduate

education and motherhood in CES. The literature was validating but not personally

encouraging—in fact, it was saturated with mothers facing barriers and adverse

outcomes; however, the recommendations of many researchers to continue exploring the

experience of parenting in graduate education inspired my dissertation study.

Before beginning my dissertation coursework, I began documenting my role-

strain experiences through photographs (Appendix V). These photographs and my

experiences (biases) as a researcher led me to the methodology for the study—

interpretive phenomenological inquiry with photovoice data collection and analysis

methods. Munhall's (2012, 2013) approach to interpretive phenomenology allowed me to

make my biases known, thereby incorporating my worldview into the conceptual

framework (Figure 1) and developing new meaning through intersubjectivity.

My preconceived knowledge about the experiences of role strain for CES doctoral

student-parents emerged from existing literature and my own experiences as part of the

phenomenon being studied. I used reflexive journaling as a measure of trustworthiness

(Creswell, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Munhall, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples,

2021) to document these pre-understandings and to help remove distractions (internal

noise; Munhall, 2013; Peoples, 2021). Through journaling and reflection, I was able to

revise my thinking by replacing preconceptions of the phenomenon with more fitting

ones (Gadamer, 1975; Munhall, 2012; Peoples, 2021). I journaled as I witnessed

participants' imagery, interviewed participants, reviewed transcriptions, coded, and

themed. This process allowed my understanding of the phenomenon to evolve through

constant reconsideration (the hermeneutic circle). An example of my researcher journal appears in Appendix E, showing my use of marginal remarks and memos to extract meaning from my own experience.

As it relates to insights and new meaning, my assumption on the prevalence of role strain's depletion hypothesis among participants was sustained; however, the prevalence of role strain's enrichment hypothesis was unexpected and enlightening. Although the literature on role strain revealed beneficial outcomes, I had not considered how I was growing and maturing through the process, experiencing feelings of accomplishment, achievement, gratification, and motivation to progress through challenging times. Similar to the experiences of the participants, my family served as a source of motivation to continue pushing forward.

I was astounded by participants' stories about their pets and what it meant to be a pet parent. Like the participants, I had captured images of my "fur-baby" among images of my role strain; however, I never stopped to consider how this additional role affected my role strain for better or worse. I had a similar experience with documenting the impact of COVID-19 on my role strain; I was cognizant of the ways the pandemic negatively influenced my strain and less mindful about the ways my family was brought together.

In summarizing my personal process related to the study, I feel I have grown personally, academically, and professionally. I have a clearer understanding of how to find and assimilate philosophical, theoretical, and conceptual concepts through research. I have challenged assumptions and gained insight. I have been validated and enriched by the narratives and images of my peers, and I have a new understanding of what role strain means for doctoral students in CACREP-accredited CES programs.

Conclusion

It is an ethical and educational responsibility of counselor-educators to address students' personal concerns regarding impairment, burnout, and attrition (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2015). Because student-parents' role strain may result in impairment, counselor-educators must increase their understanding of role strain for CES students attempting to balance parenthood with doctoral studies. Through this investigation, I provided a detailed analysis of the meaning of role strain for CES doctoral student-parents, conveyed through their worldviews. Munhall's (2012, 2013) interpretive phenomenological interviewing, and Wang's (1999) and Wang and Burris's (1997) photovoice data collection and analysis methods were used to answer the study's one central research question and two subquestions :

1. As a parent, what does it mean to experience role strain in a doctoral CES program?

   a. How is role strain experienced in relation to intersectional aspects of identity?

   b. In what ways, if any, do historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures contribute to role strain?

A sample of nine participants from eight various CACREP-accredited doctoral CES programs nationwide participated in the study. Participants' transcripts and corresponding photographs were reviewed several times to explore participants' role-strain experiences, life-worlds and backgrounds, role identities, and emerging themes. Patterns within the data formed the themes, which answered the research questions, and new meaning was deepened through intersubjectivity, the overlapping subjective lens that

the researcher and participants bring to a qualitative study together (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

This exploration of CES doctoral student-parents' role-strain experiences could help readers understand that role strain has both depleting (adverse) and enriching (beneficial) meaning. Juggling student and parent roles means student-parents could experience a range of emotional, mental, and physical burdens, including emotional distress, somatic complaints, instances of self-doubt and questioning, programmatic pressure to prioritize educational roles, experiences of hiding or concealing role strain, and a need to sacrifice in order to achieve role obligations. Despite these burdens, juggling student and parent roles means student-parents are capable of experiencing feelings of accomplishment, achievement, gratification, and motivation to progress through challenging times. In fact, the parent role may be seen as a source of strength and motivation for doctoral students.

In this study, I found that contextualizing lifestyle factors such as role management, parenting, and COVID-19 (discussed later) seemed to influence student-parents' role-strain experiences. For example, role management skills (i.e., the ability to juggle roles, multitasking, prioritize, be intentional with time, diffuse roles, and differentiate roles or create role boundaries), the ages of children, and additional parent roles such as pet parent seemed to affect role-strain depletion or enrichment. Further, children's and pets' levels of dependency and self-sufficiency, as well as children's ability to comprehend their parents' role strain, affected the level of stress or benefit associated with role strain. I conclude that both children and pets can provide student-

parents with valuable emotional and self-care meaning; however, dependents' needs can conflict with other role obligations, resulting in increased role burden.

Regarding role identities such as student, parent, and pet parent, it is imperative to note that participants in this study held a minimum of six intersecting identities, with several participants identifying 12 or more. Educators, administrators, and institutions must recognize the multitude of intersectional identities that student-parents hold, because each identity has a unique patterned characteristic of social behavior (Biddle, 1986) and set of role obligations. If student-parents are viewed simply as students and parents, their whole selves could be overlooked and the extent of their role strain could be misjudged and underestimated. When student-parents are viewed holistically in the context of their many educational, professional, familial, and social roles, the experience of role strain for doctoral student-parents could be more easily understood, validated, and accepted. With greater understanding of the multiple roles, role identities, and role strains that CES doctoral student-parents experience, counselor-educators, administrations, and institutions would be better equipped to help students struggling with role-strain impairment.

In addition, the meaning of multiple roles and role identities for CES student-parents must be considered in relation to students' unique experiences with historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures. In this study, participants' historical, political, and sociocultural beliefs; ideologies; and pressures were embedded within their backgrounds and life-worlds. Thus, participants' cultures, time period and birth locations, economic status, physical wellness, gender, family relationships, and other social supports directly affected how roles were experienced. Participants traced

many of their feelings, thoughts, and role behaviors back to generational family traditions and social influences, for better or worse.

From a role-strain enrichment perspective, student-parents' interpersonal relationships and social support systems could mitigate role strain. Student-parents who have strong connections with family, friends, program peers, and faculty might feel increased support and use these supports for self-care. In the current study, participants' role-strain burdens were reportedly decreased by the strength of their relationships, the support they received from others, and their ability to practice self-care. Conversely, relationship barriers, inadequate support, and ineffective self-care plans exacerbated role-strain burdens.

Although enriching opportunities to mitigate role strain through interpersonal and intrapersonal care exist, counselor-educators, administrators, and institution policyholders must remain vigilant to experiences of exclusion for student-parents. In the current study, several participants described experiencing real and perceived stigma related to their student-parent roles and other intersectional aspects of identity. Experiences of exclusion complicated role strain for student-parents because holding multiple role identities can produce conflict regarding how to navigate this sociocultural concern. This finding is not new: Exclusion exists as an outcome in several other studies on graduate student-parents (Gatta & Roos, 2014; Holm et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2013; Trepal et al., 2014); therefore, students, counselor-educators, administrators, and institution policyholders must collaborate on advocacy and change efforts to improve the studying and working conditions of student-parents.

Finally, the findings and conclusion of this study must be understood in the context of COVID-19's impact on student-parents' worldview and role strain. This dissertation began in September of 2020, roughly six months into the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. This pandemic has had catastrophic impacts on individuals' health and wellness, living conditions, basic needs (safety, healthcare, food), access to resources, social supports and self-care, academics, employment, and financial stability. As expected, COVID-19 restrictions have exacerbated student-parents' role strain because of working, studying, providing childcare, and assisting with home instruction while simultaneously having limited relational and other self-care supports.

In addition to these expected findings, COVID-19 influenced the role-strain experiences of CES doctoral student-parents in some unexpected and implicating ways. COVID-19 restrictions provided opportunities for participants to "slow down," "pause," "pace" themselves, and be present and involved in their children's lives, subsequently decreasing role-strain burden. Several participants described needing to fulfill fewer role obligations from COVID-19, which allowed them to increase their doctoral study productivity.

Before the current study, there was an absence of CES literature on the role strain experiences of parents in graduate education. Further, no CES publications had intentionally studied the parenthood experiences of a diverse parent sample, including fathers, single parents, queer parents, minority graduate student-parents, disabled parents, or others. Although this study successfully captured some diversity among participants, the sample size was small and not entirely representative. Additional research is needed to explore the role-strain experiences of CES doctoral student-parents from an

increasingly diverse sample, specifically student-parents belonging to intersecting

minority identities and varying marital statuses.

Further, the true extent of role strain for doctoral CES student-parents in

CACREP-accredited programs is unknown. A significant limitation of this study was that

it may have only captured the role-strain experiences of doctoral CES student-parents

who were managing their role strain well enough to participate. Doctoral CES student-

parents at the highest risk for burnout and attrition may not have been able to take on the

additional role of research participant. As such, quantitative research on this population

could measure degrees of role-strain burden and benefit across a large and diverse sample

of participants, enabling students, faculty, programs, administrators, and institutions to

further understand the impact of role strain on the identified population.

Implications from this study indicate several possible approaches to helping CES

doctoral student-parents decrease their role-strain burden, including changing the culture

of parenthood in academia and fostering graduate student-parents' role-strain enrichment.

Based on the study's results, support could be increased in several ways: Institutions,

academic programs, and counselor-educators could create a welcoming culture for

parents. Institutions and programs could initiate or improve maternity and paternity leave

policies (Kuperberg, 2009; Mason et al. 2007), provide opportunities for financial or

childcare support (Kuperberg, 2009; Mason et al. 2007), and offer other environmental

resources such as virtual classes, programs, meetings, and job interviews, space to

conduct research, and lactation rooms.

CACREP-accredited doctoral CES programs could promote mentoring and

connection with faculty and peers, especially those who are parenting (Bruce, 1995;

Solomon & Barden, 2016). Counselor-educators could increase their understanding of

role strain for CES student-parents through sensitivity training (*The Chronicle of Higher*

Education, 2007, as cited in Lynch, 2008), offer transparency and open discussions about

the impact of parenting on students' experiences, and engage student-parents in

discussions about using parenting roles to motivate and drive doctoral study progress. To

prevent or address students' role strain impairment, counselor-educators could encourage

self-care plans (Carter & Barnett, 2014) that include self-compassion (Coaston, 2017),

interpersonal relationship connection, time with pets (Flom, 2005; Parshall, 2003; Silcox

et al., 2014), recognition of achievements, and positive affirmations. In terms of

classroom interventions, CES faculty could engage students in strengths-based and

future-oriented academic and career interventions such as an academic/professional

vision boards. Together, students, educators, administrators, and policyholders could

collaborate on student-parents' strengths and needs in order to enhance academic success

and reduce attrition.

Attrition rates are high for doctoral students, especially for students in online

programs (Gardner, 2008; Lovitts & Nelson, 2000; McBain, 2019; Rigler et al., 2017;

Schmidt & Hansson, 2018) and for those from underrepresented populations (McBain,

2019). Student-mothers constitute the highest at-risk group for attrition in the American

academe (Lynch, 2008; NCES, 2007) because of the added strain of balancing parent and

student roles (Carter et al., 2013; Lynch, 2008; Rindfuss et al., 1980). Documented

personal concerns resulting from student-parent role strain that may lead to attrition

include gender and baby penalties; perceived stigma and discrimination; time-

management struggles; delayed onset of goal achievement; lack of programmatic support

and resources; physical, mental, and emotional concerns; and diminished life satisfaction

(Andersson, 2019; Holm et al., 2015; Kulp, 2016; Kuperberg, 2009; Moyer et al., 1999;

Pierce & Herlihy, 2013; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; Trepal et al., 2014). Findings from this

study support previous findings of student-parent emotional distress, somatic complaints,

self-doubt and questioning, programmatic pressure, experiences of hiding or concealing

role strain, sacrifice, exclusion, relationship struggles, and insufficient self-care. These

findings were significant for both doctoral student-mothers and student-fathers.

Compounding doctoral student-parent role-strain depletion, many negative

personal, academic, and social consequences can result if student-parents withdraw from

academic programs. Failure to complete academic programs of study could leave students

feeling depressed, devastated, and disrupted (Carter et al., 2013; Hinchey & Kimmel,

2000; Lovitts, 2001; Sternberg, 1981; Willis & Carmichael, 2011); drain institutional and

programmatic resources (Pauley et al., 1999; Willis & Carmichael, 2011), and diminish

availability of qualified counselors, educators, supervisors, leaders, researchers, and

scholars. Because society benefits from highly educated and skilled CES professionals,

CES students, faculty, administrators, and policymakers must collaborate on strategies to

reduce student-parent role strain depletion and increase student-parent role-strain

enrichment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Permission to Recruit Through CESNET-L

Appendix A is a letter from Dr. Marty Jencius, the listowner for CESNET-L,

providing permission to recruit through the CESNET-L listserv.

Re: Request to recruit research participants through CESNET

JENCIUS, MARTIN <mjencius@kent.edu>

Fri 12/4/2020 2:11 PM

To: Natashia Collins <ncollins2803@ucumberlands.edu>
Cc: Adrienne Baggs <adrienne.baggs@ucumberlands.edu>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Natasha,

I am glad that you looked at the guidelines for CESNET-L.

Thank you for taking the appropriate and ethical procedure to contact me and ask permission to post to the listserv. Please pass my gratitude on to your advisor.

Take a look at the recommendations at www.cesnet-l.net for ideas about doing research using CESNET-L. Make sure that your request contains all of the specified information. After that, feel free to proceed and post.

With best regards,

Dr. Marty Jencius
Associate Professor of Counseling
Kent State University
Counseling & Human Development Services
Rm 310 - White Hall Bldg
Kent, OH 44242
mjencius@kent.edu

Appendix B

CESNET-L Recruitment Post

Appendix B is a sample of the post used to recruit participants through the

CESNET-L listserv.

University of the Cumberlands
6178 College Station Drive
Williamsburg, KY 40769

CESNET-L PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT POST

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH STUDY!

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Natashia Collins, and I am seeking participants for my dissertation study, *The Meaning of Role Strain: Voices of Parents in Doctoral Counselor Education and Supervision Programs*. This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in counselor education and supervision (CES) at the University of the Cumberlands. The study will explore the role strain experiences of CACREP accredited CES students who identify as parents. Participation in this study will help uncover the meaning of role strain for parents in CACREP accredited CES programs. This study will also give a voice to a diverse group of student parents and increase counselor educator awareness of how CES student parents' role strain experiences may impact program performance.

The research study combines interpretive interviewing and photovoice to uncover meaning. Photovoice utilizes photography and storytelling to capture the participant's worldview, communicate what cannot be said in words, record and reflect community strengths and concerns, promote dialogue, and potentially influence policy change (Wang & Burris, 1997).

Participation in this study begins with a short demographic survey that should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Following the survey, you may be invited to participate in: (1) An orientation and training session that includes the study's goals, procedures, ethical considerations, and logistics of camera use; (2) Taking pictures of your daily life that shows your role strain experiences; (3) An in-depth individual interview to analyze your experience and photos; (4) A follow-up individual interview to ensure that the meaning of your experience was accurately captured.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you are interested in participating, you will be asked to sign an informed consent form. If you decide to participate, you may stop participation at any time. If you decide not to participate, there will not be any negative consequences.

If you would like to participate, please use the following link, which will bring you to the study's informed consent and demographic survey: http://bit.ly/themeaningofrolestrain

If you have questions about the study, please contact me at ncollins2803@ucumberlands.edu or (862) 571-3755. You can also contact my Advisor and Dissertation Chair, Dr. Adrienne Baggs, at adrienne.baggs@ucumberlands.edu or (850) 570-3395. This study has been approved by the University of the Cumberlands Institutional Review Board (#01-0121F). If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research project, you can contact the University of the Cumberlands IRB at irb@ucumberlands.edu. Dr. Marty Jencius provided permission to recruit through CESNET-L on 12/4/2020.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration,

Natashia Collins, MA, LPC, ATR-BC, ACS, ATCS
School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of the Cumberlands
ncollins2803@ucumberlands.edu
(862) 571-3755
Survey link: http://bit.ly/themeaningofrolestrain

Appendix C

Informed Consent and Demographic Survey

Appendix C is a sample of the informed consent and demographic survey

accessible to participants through Qualtrics.

University of the Cumberlands
6178 College Station Drive
Williamsburg, KY 40769

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Title:
The Meaning of Role Strain: Voices of Parents in Doctoral Counselor Education and Supervision
Programs

Investigator:
Natashia Collins, MA, LPC, ATR-BC, ACS, ATCS
PhD Candidate
School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of the Cumberlands
ncollins2803@ucumberlands.edu
(862) 571-3755

Advisor (Dissertation Chair):
Adrienne Baggs, PhD, LPC
Associate Professor
School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of the Cumberlands
adrienne.baggs@ucumberlands.edu
(850) 570-3395

Source of Support:
This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in
counselor education and supervision at the University of the Cumberlands.

Purpose:
You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to understand the role strain
experiences of CACREP accredited Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) students who identify as
parents. The research study combines interpretive phenomenological interviewing and photovoice to
uncover meaning. Photovoice utilizes photography and storytelling to capture the participant's
worldview, communicate what cannot be said in words, record and reflect community strengths and
concerns, promote dialogue, and potentially influence policy change.

After completion of a short demographic survey that should take you no longer than 10 minutes to
complete, you may be invited to participate in: (1) An orientation and training session that includes the
study's goals, procedures, ethical considerations, and logistics of camera use; (2) Taking photographs of
your daily life that shows your role strain experiences; (3) An in-depth individual interview to analyze
your experience and photos; (4) A follow-up individual interview to ensure that the meaning of your
experience was accurately captured.

The orientation session will last approximately 30 minutes, there will be a two-week timeframe for taking
photos of your lived experience, the in-depth interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes, and the
follow-up interview will last approximately 30 minutes. Photographs and the corresponding Permission
to Photograph | Photograph Release Forms will be collected by e-mail, and interviews will be recorded on
Zoom and transcribed. Photographs and transcribed interviews will only be used for education and
research, including publications, presentations, and exhibits.

Confidentiality:
While total privacy cannot be guaranteed, the researcher will take several precautions to protect all participants' personally identifiable information (PII) and personal health information (PHI). The informed consent and demographic data will be collected using Qualtrics, a secure web-based system for conducting research surveys. All other research materials (written, photographed, and recorded) will be stored in a password-protected laptop that only the researcher has access to. Research data will be backed up on a password protected and encrypted external hard drive. All participants will be assigned a number or alias, so links cannot be made between individual responses and participants' identities. As all sessions are conducted individually, no one will know you are participating in the study other than the researcher. Finally, the researcher will remove, blur, cover, or conceal all visible faces in photo imagery to protect the identities of those photographed, even when appropriate photo release consent forms are completed. All research-related records will be kept for no more than six years following the research's completion, at which point it will be disposed of in a manner that protects participants' confidentiality. Data may exist, however, on backups and server logs beyond this research project's timeframe.

Risks:
There are several risks to consider when deciding to participate in this study. One risk is the potential for emotional discomfort resulting from discussing your role strain experiences. Examples of emotional discomfort include feelings of sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, vulnerability, or helplessness. Regarding data stored in Qualtrics, your participation in this survey presents no greater risk than everyday use of the internet. Please also note that e-mail communication is neither private nor secure. Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology being used; however, the researcher cannot guarantee against interception of data sent via the internet by third parties. Although the researcher is taking precautions to protect your privacy, a third party could read information sent through e-mail or collected through Qualtrics. Lastly, any photographs shared with the researcher will become a part of the research data, and they will be used for educational and research purposes, including publications, presentations, and exhibits. The faces of individuals within the photographs will be blurred, removed, covered, or concealed so that the identity of those within the photographs is protected; however, someone who sees a publication or presentation may still recognize images of people in the pictures.

Benefits:
This study's possible benefits include the opportunity to participate in a research study that helps to uncover the meaning of role strain for parents in CACREP accredited CES programs. This study will also give a voice to diverse parents as students in CACREP accredited CES programs. Finally, participation in the study will increase counselor educator awareness of how CES student parents' role strain experiences may impact program performance.

Compensation:
There will be no compensation or payment for participation in this study.

Audio/Video Recording:
The orientation session, in-depth interview, and follow-up interview will be conducted via Zoom. All Zoom sessions will be recorded. The in-depth interview and follow-up interviews will be transcribed for data analysis.

Right to Withdraw:
Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, there will not be any negative consequences. Please know that if you decide to participate, you may stop participation at any time.

Voluntary Consent:
I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call: (1) The principal investigator (researcher), Natashia Collins at (862) 571-3755 or ncollins2803@ucumberlands.edu; (2) The dissertation chair, Dr. Adrienne Baggs at (850) 570-3395 or adrienne.baggs@ucumberlands.edu; (3) The University of the Cumberlands Institutional Review Board (IRB) at irb@ucumberlands.edu.

By clicking the "I consent" button below, I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am at least 18 years of age and willing to participate in this research project.

☐ I consent

☐ I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

1. Are you a doctoral student enrolled in a CACREP accredited counselor education and supervision program?

    ☐ Yes

    ☐ No

2. How many credits have you earned in the doctoral CES program?

3. In what region of the United States is your CES program located?

    ☐ North Central (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wisconsin)

    ☐ North Atlantic (Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont)

    ☐ Southern (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia)

    ☐ Rocky Mountain (Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming)

    ☐ Western (Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington)

4. Are you the parent of a biological, step-, or adopted child?

    ☐ Yes

    ☐ No

5. What are the ages of your children?

6. What is your present relationship status? (Check all that apply)

    ☐ Single

    ☐ Dating

    ☐ Married

    ☐ Divorced

    ☐ Separated

    ☐ Other

7. What gender do you identify as?

8. What is your sexual orientation?

9. What is your ethnicity?

10. In what U.S. State is your home located?

11. What is your age?

12. Please provide your name:

13. Please provide your contact information (phone, e-mail), and note the best way to contact you:

Appendix D

IRB Approval Letter

Appendix D is a sample of the informed consent and demographic survey accessible to participants through Qualtrics.

UNIVERSITY OF THE
CUMBERLANDS

IRB Approval Letter

Principal Investigator: **Natashia Collins**
From: Institutional Review Board
Subject: IRB Approved (#01-0121F)

Date: 01/26/2021

Thank you for submitting your materials to the IRB office. Your study was reviewed and approved under the full IRB rules since you are working directly with your participants and will be collecting video/photographic documentation. You have successfully addressed any concerns about the safety of study participants and you are working with an experienced faculty member. As always, it is imperative the participant privacy be maintained and all data handled with utmost security.

This review will **lapse one year from the approval date** and will require a continuation request with the IRB office. The IRB office will contact you for this paperwork prior to expiration. Please note that changes made to any protocol may impact the status of your project. Upon completion of your project, you will be asked to submit a final review to close the study.

Principal investigators are responsible for ensuring that studies are conducted according to university protocol. As a principal investigator, you have multiple responsibilities to the IRB, the research subjects and the faculty partner. If you have questions, please feel free to email me at Jessica.nichols@ucumberlands.edu

Congratulations and best to you as you continue your research.

Jessica H. Nichols

Jessica H. Nichols, PhD
IRB Chair
Graduate School, Director of Research and Ethics University of the Cumberlands

There are five conditions attached to all approval letters:
1. No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date.
2. All unanticipated or serious adverse events must be reported to the IRB within 5 days.
3. All protocol modifications must be IRB approved prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk. This includes any change of investigator or site address.
4. All protocol deviations must be reported to the IRB within 5 days.
5. All recruitment material and methods must be approved by the IRB prior to being used.

Appendix E

Sample of Researcher's Journal

Appendix E is a page from my researcher journal. In the left column, under marginal remarks, in vivo coding was used to pull significant information. In the right column, under memos, I documented the significance of these codes, reflected on my process, and noted questions, observations, theories, and concerns.

MARGINAL REMARKS	DATE	JOURNAL ENRTY/TRANSCRIPTION	MEMOS
"This person could benefit from what I've been through"		...you know, what's been going on but, when I read your description, I was like...ok this is, this is um...something. This person could benefit from what I've been through. You know, and what my experiences have been. And not that yours haven't also been stressful, but I have grown...I have bigger kids. A lot of times when we think about parenting, we think about oh, people who have just had a baby, people who have small children. But, it's equally difficult depending on what the issue is, you know what I mean?" Katie also wanted more guidance on picture taking. In her mind, Katie was thinking "what's my why?" "what are my daily struggles" "what are the things that I don't get done that bother me" "what are the things that keep me going." I provided Katie with validation that she was on the right track and encouraged Katie to take pictures of things that are meaningful for her; what accurately captures her own lived experiences. Katie also questioned	An expression of understanding. Symathy?
"I have bigger kids... it's equally difficult"			It's important for Katie to have a voice as it relates to parenting in CES, even though her children are older. Age and development might change her kind of struggle, but it's still a struggle. Katie reflects on her role strain experience and begins to revise her understanding of what it means.
"what's my why?" "what are my daily struggles?" "what are the things that I don't get done that bother me?"			
"this is how I typically look when I'm at home relaxing with my family" "she sipped her beverage out of a mug"		Katie finsihed by stating, "good luck, Natashia! I'm really excited for you." I really appreciated her enthusiasm. "Dr. T," was causally dressed for her orientation; sweat clothes and a "messy bun" with no make-up on. This is how I typically look when I'm at home relaxing with my family. Dr. T.'s disposition was warm and friendly; she smile frequently and expressed motivation for the study; providing non-verbal reinforcement frequently (head-nodding, smiling) as she sipped her beverage out of a mug (Coffee? Tea?). During the orientation when I provided the example of how a CES student might experience role strain, Dr. T. expressed that it sounded "very familiar," and she expressed sympathy when I reviewed my positionality and mentioned that I gave birth during COVID-19 stating, "Oh God!" Dr. T. mentioned that she was "fascinated and excited" about the study. She offered help with recruitment, stating that if she knew of any others who might be interested in the study she would send them my way.	In describng Dr.T.'s appearance and dress I'm reminded of myself, how I look and feel in my mum and familyr roles, as separate from professional roles As Dr. T. sipped her beverage during the interview, I 'm also reminded of how I attempt to care for myself during work and study hours. "Mirroring" comes to mind.
"facinated and excited"			I'm noticing that participants are quite motivated, ethusiastic, or happy to be a part of the study. Instrinsic motivation is evident.
"I'm fueling myself with orange juice and seltzer" "making sure my baby is sleeping tightly while I get a little more work done"		Before I finish up writing tonight, I want to share this picture that I took. This picture comes at the end of meeting with two participants, attending two faculty meetings, and teaching two classes. I'm fueling myself with orange juice and seltzer, and making sure my baby is sleeping tight while I get a little more work done.	Pictured was my work set-up for this afternoon/evening. I'm working from home, orienting research participants and trying to keep an eye on Lachie while he sleeps. I'm caring for myself by fixing a refreshing drink. It's noteworthy that Dr.T. was also caring for herself with her drink during orientation.
"children walked through the background"	2/12/21	Today I met with "Bridgett" for orientation. The best way that I can describe Bridgett during the interview was demure; reserved, modest, and shy, humble, calm, and composed. While orienting, one of Bridgett's children walked through the background	Brigett's son walking through the room seems indicative of role conflict.

Appendix F

Support for Discomfort Handout

Appendix F is a sample of the Support for Discomfort Survey distributed to

participants if they showed signs of distress during the interview.

University of the Cumberlands
6178 College Station Drive
Williamsburg, KY 40769

SUPPORT FOR DISCOMFORT

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your participation in my study, *The Meaning of Role Strain: Voices of Parents in Doctoral Counselor Education and Supervision Programs.* As explained in the informed consent, one potential risk for the study is emotional discomfort resulting from discussing your role strain experiences. Examples of emotional discomfort include feelings of sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, vulnerability, or helplessness. Examples of how emotional discomfort may be expressed include changes in affect, speech, or behavior such as silence, tearfulness, changes in tone or volume of voice, and use of expletives.

To offer participants support for emotional discomfort, I have included some resources in this follow-up document. COVID-19 has made seeking services a challenge for many individuals; however, there are many virtual support options. Options for support include state-specific warmlines (free and confidential peer counseling found through the NAMI National Warmline Directory) and telemental health services such as those offered by Amwell, BetterHelp, and Talkspace. Open Path also has a database for affordable, in-office, and online psychotherapy sessions between $30 and $60 per session.

If you have questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact me at ncollins2803@ucumberlands.edu or (862) 571-3755. You can also contact my Advisor and Dissertation Chair, Dr. Adrienne Baggs, at adrienne.baggs@ucumberlands.edu or (850) 570-3395.

This study has been approved by the University of the Cumberlands Institutional Review Board (#01-0121F). If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research project, you can contact the University of the Cumberlands IRB at irb@ucumberlands.edu.

Thank you very much for your time and for all that you have contributed to the study.

Warm regards,

Natashia Collins, MA, LPC, ATR-BC, ACS, ATCS
School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of the Cumberlands
ncollins2803@ucumberlands.edu
(862) 571-3755

Appendix G

Photograph Consent to Release Form Sample

Appendix G is a sample of the Photography Consent to Release Form that was distributed to participants.

University of the Cumberlands
6178 College Station Drive
Williamsburg, KY 40769

PERMISSION TO PHOTOGRAPH | PHOTOGRAPH RELEASE FORM

This form is to be completed anytime a photographer (research participant) takes a picture of a human subject for the purpose of participation in a research study.

Title:
The Meaning of Role Strain:
Voices of Parents in Doctoral Counselor Education and Supervision Programs

Project Investigator:
Natashia Collins, MA, LPC, ATR-BC, ACS, ATCS
PhD Candidate
School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of the Cumberlands
ncollins2803@ucumberlands.edu
(862) 571-3755

Advisor (Dissertation Chair):
Adrienne Baggs, PhD, LPC
Associate Professor
School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of the Cumberlands
adrienne.baggs@ucumberlands.edu
(850) 570-3395

Source of Support:
The principal investigator, Natashia Collins, is conducting this study as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in counselor education and supervision at the University of the Cumberlands.

Purpose:
I am asking that you give me your permission to take your picture.

I am taking pictures for a research study called "The Meaning of Role Strain: Voices of Parents in Doctoral Counselor Education and Supervision Programs." This study is being conducted to understand the role strain experiences of doctoral counselor education and supervision students who are parents. To help reach this goal, I have been equipped with a camera (cell phone or other) and asked to take photos of people, places, and things within my life and the community that will illustrate important role strain ideas.

(PAGE 1)

How Photos will be Used:
The photographs will be shared with the study's principal investigator, Natashia Collins, during an interview to facilitate discussion and to help explore the meaning of role strain. The photographs will become a part of the research data, and they will be used for educational and research purposes, including publications, presentations, and exhibits. Your face will be blurred, removed, or covered in photos to protect your identity, and your name will not be shared in publications; however, someone who sees a publication or presentation may still recognize images of people in the pictures.

Any photographs taken will become the personal property of the photographer. The photographer and principal investigator shall not owe any payment, royalties, or remuneration of any kind to the subject for usage of photographs. The photographer and principal investigator shall not owe any payment, royalties, or remuneration of any kind to the subject's parent/guardian for usage of photographs.

Benefits to Participation:
By allowing your photograph to be taken, you have a chance to help uncover the meaning of role strain for parents in CACREP accredited CES programs. You will also help give students who are parents in CACREP accredited CES programs a voice. You will also help increase counselor educator awareness of how CES student parents' role strain experiences may impact program performance.

Your Rights:
If you decide at a later date that you do not want your picture discussed or displayed anywhere, you may contact the principal research investigator whose contact information is listed above, and your picture(s) will be removed immediately from the collection, except in the case where they have already been published/presented/exhibited. Once a photo has been published/presented/exhibited, you may choose to withdraw your photograph release for possible future publications/presentations/exhibits. You do not need to give any reasons for withdrawing your consent, and withdrawing consent will not result in any consequences.

Questions or Concerns:
If you have any further questions or concerns about being photographed, please contact the principal investigator, Natashia Collins, at (862) 571-3755 or ncollins2803@ucumberlands.edu.

Voluntary Consent:
If you are willing to give your consent to having yours (and/or your child's) picture taken, please fill out page three (3) of this permission to photograph | photogram release form, sign the bottom of the form, and return page three (3) to me.

(PAGE 2)

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

If the subject photographed is under 18 years of age, the parent or legal guardian must sign below.

Having read pages two (2) and three (3) of the permission to photograph | photograph release form, I _____ (printed name), give permission to have my (and/or my child's) photograph taken for the educational and research purposes of the study "The Meaning of Role Strain: Voices of Parents in Doctoral Counselor Education and Supervision Programs." I give the principal investigator, Natashia Collins, unlimited permission to copyright and use the photographs that may include me (and/or my child) for educational and research purposes, such as publications, presentations, and exhibits. I have been told that I (and/or my child) will not be identified by name or by face. I waive any right that I (and/or my child) may have to inspect or approve the publication or use of the pictures.

Mailing address: _____

                         _____

                         _____

Email address: _____
Subject name: _____
Subject signature: _____   Date: _____

If the subject is a minor
Parent/guardian name: _____
Parent/guardian signature: _____   Date: _____

Photographer name: _____
Photographer signature: _____

(PAGE 3)

Appendix H

Orientation PowerPoint Slides

Appendix H includes the PowerPoint slides that were used to orient and train

participants.

9/1/2021

9/1/2021

9/1/2021

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9/1/2021

9/1/2021

Appendix I

Nowell et al.'s (2017) Six Phases of Thematic Analysis

As applied to the current study, Nowell et al.'s (2017) phases of thematic analysis

aligned with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) measures of trustworthiness.

Phases of Thematic Analysis	Means of Establishing Trustworthiness
Phase One: Familiarizing yourself with your data	Prolonged engagement with data
	Triangulate different data collection modes
	Document theoretical and reflective thoughts
	Document thoughts about potential codes/themes
	Store raw data in well-organized archives
	Keep records of all data field notes, transcripts, and reflexive journals
Phase Two: Generating initial codes	Peer debriefing
	Researcher triangulation
	Reflexive journaling
	Use of a coding framework
	Audit trail of code generation
Phase Three: Searching for themes	Researcher triangulation
	Diagramming to make sense of theme connections
	Keep detailed notes about development of hierarchies of concepts and themes
Phase Four: Reviewing themes	Researcher triangulation
	Test for referential adequacy by returning to raw data
Phase Five: Defining and naming themes	Researcher triangulation
	Peer debriefing
	Documentation of theme naming
Phase Six: Producing the report	Member-checking
	Peer debriefing
	Describing the process of coding and analysis in sufficient details
	Thick descriptions of context
	Description of audit trail
	Report on reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study

Appendix J

Thematic Analysis and In Vivo Coding Sample

Appendix J is a participant's transcription page demonstrating thematic analysis. In the left column, in vivo coding is listed under marginal remarks. The center column is the verbatim description. Memos are documented under the right column.

BRIDGETT

Yellow: In Vivo Codes: feelings, metaphors, appearances, and concealments, repetitive words or phrases, evocative vocabulary, similes, puns, witty or ironic phrases

Green: Roles and role identities

Background and Life-world: Where the individual is situated, including their past, present, and view of what can be. Backgrounds provide conditions for human actions and perceptions. Individuals' unique differences, beliefs, attitudes, and varying understandings of meanings based on temporality, spatiality, embodiment, and relational thrownness.

Pink: The photovoice prompts

Orange: Self-identified themes

MARGINAL REMARKS	TRANSCRIPTION	MEMOS
"It's challenging but, um, I'm, I'm at a pace"	Bridgett (00:01:55): Oh, okay. Okay. Um, it's, I mean it's, it's challenging but, um, I'm, I'm at a pace. Natashia (00:02:10): Yeah.	Consistent with the depletion hypothesis
"I'm also very grateful that the circumstances with um, having, um, you know, uh, it's not quarantine but limitations" "working from home, that's make it so much easier" "if I weren't working from home, it would be even crazier" "like a crazy person" "it's hard to even complain because it's like the only reason I have this nice, comfortable pace, even though it's a lot, is because of this circumstance we're in"	Bridgett (00:02:11): And I'm also very grateful that the circumstances with, um, having, um, you know, uh, it's not quarantine but limitations. You know, I can't see my, like be in office and so working from home, that's made it so, so much easier because I'm not driving back and forth. I'm not, you know it's easy to, to know what I'm gonna make for dinner. It's easy to keep up with the affairs of the, of the home, like the things that I, my responsibilities for the home. Bridgett (00:02:46): Um, so it's like imagining if this were, um, if we weren't, if I weren't working from home, it would be even crazier. Like I would, I would probably look like a crazy person doing, you know, classes in my car and picking up dinner at night and (sigh) so it's, it's a, it's, it's hard to even complain because it's like the only reason I have this nice, comfortable pace, even though it's a lot, is because of this circumstance we're in. Natashia (00:03:19): Hm. Hm. Tell me a little bit about, um, you mentioned your home responsibilities. Can you tell me a little bit more about those things that you feel like are your responsibilities? Bridgett (00:03:30): Mm-hmm (affirmative). Um, so I am, I keep the house clean and, you know the, the, the cleanliness of the house, like laundry and, you know, whoever's responsibility is what I make sure that they do it. Um, (laughs), um, and um, I make sure, I, I do dinner on weeknights. Um, let's see. And then, of course, my son is home, is doing school from home so I can't technically call it home school but I support his teacher.	Bridgett's experience of role strain is situated during covid (temporality) where she is at home (spatiality) more often. Bridgett sees this as a benefit, easing her role strain as it allows her roles (mother, homemaker, employee, student) to overlap more and she can be closer with her children (relational). Bridgett's circumstances are the COVID-19 pandemic. Homemaker: cleaner, dinner preparer, laundry-doer, task-assigner. Teacher's Aide (this is consistent with the research on how COVID has impacted parents' responsibilities.

Appendix K

Patterned Coding Sample

Appendix K is a sample of patterned coding for a participant. In the left column, in vivo codes are listed in the order they appear on the verbatim transcript using thematic analysis. The center column organizes in vivo codes by likeness. The patterned or categorized code appears in the right column.

Codes in the order they appear	Codes reordered by likeness	Second cycle: Pattern coding (categories)
It's challenging but, um, I'm, I'm at a pace	It's challenging but, um, I'm, I'm at a pace	
I'm also very grateful that the circumstances with um, having, um, you know, uh, it's not quarantine but limitations	I'm also very grateful that the circumstances with um, having, um, you know, uh, it's not quarantine but limitations	
working from home, that's make it so much easier	working from home, that's make it so much easier	
if I weren't working from home, it would be even crazier	if I weren't working from home, it would be even crazier	
I would probably look like a crazy person	I would probably look like a crazy person	
it's hard to even complain because it's like the only reason I have this nice, comfortable pace, even though it's a lot, is because of this circumstance we're in	it's hard to even complain because it's like the only reason I have this nice, comfortable pace, even though it's a lot, is because of this circumstance we're in	
I support his teacher. With his learning, which is crazy	whatever energy and investment in time I'm putting into my office and my job, I am now doing it here and I feel gratified	
I should be the teacher. I'm a teacher	I feel fulfilled, and I don't feel rushed and hurried and stressed. Uh, because I get to invest in my home now.	
I love doing it	I'm here with my kids and can talk to them more about our values	
whatever energy and investment in time I'm putting into my office and my job, I am now doing it here and I feel gratified	It's where it should be to me	
I feel fulfilled, and I don't feel rushed and hurried and stressed. Uh, because I get to invest in my home now.	there's just been a progression and growth...	COVID (enrichment)
a better prioritization of, into my, into my family	For me it's been awesome	
I'm here with my kids and can talk to them more about our values	It's not like it's like, forced pressured conversation	
	There's like, a, kind of a, a COVID story. Not COVID COVID, but, you know, just some observations from COVID. And every season ... So we've had Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter. And every season we've noticed something so brilliant with the trees. The bloo- the blooms, br- and, and I don't know if it was just because our, our focus was in on things more or something, but the, the blooms just seem to be so much more beautiful. Um, the br- in, in the Summer, the green, we were just paying attention to all these greens. And, and it must've just been either slowing down- Staying in the house, I don't know what it was, but the br- the leave- and this is something I think at least my daughter and I agreed, that the leaves seemed brighter too in the Fall. And for the first time ever in my life, I saw a whole forest covered in ice"	
It's where it should be to me	when you're not thinking about the next place, and to get to the next place and the next thing to do, it's like- You can kind of then focus on things that are slower and paced, and notice things a little bit more. Just notice beauty in nature a little bit more, and- Just slow down	
I don't wanna say it too loud		
I go deep...I never let anything just be like face value surface	I support his teacher. With his learning, which is crazy	
I watch while I'm typing my notes	I should be the teacher. I'm a teacher	
It's not like it's like, forced pressured conversation	I don't wanna say it too loud (child in the next room)	
It's kind of weird. It's weird... I just put up like with the way things were and never questioned it. Never like questioned that I spend... Like so many hours outside of my home.	Usually as a Christian you go to church. And, um, and so we haven't, we haven't been able to do that... you do the best you can at home	
I didn't see any other way	I haven't been able to connect with um, like see my, my parents. Um, my grandmother's in the hospital and has been in the hospital for months now and so no one can see her	COVID (depletion)
Usually as a Christian you go to church. And, um, and so we haven't, we haven't been able to do that... you do the best you can at home	And "and them", like, sat, and I was like, "Uh, am I telling my 13-year-old that I..." Like, I was like... And I had to apologize, 'cause I'm like, "I shouldn't be talking to you about this.	
there's just been a progression and growth...	I'm gonna blame the problem on- ...quarantine	
I'll stay connected with people in other ways.	the strength is, uh, you know, obviously that we have a pretty open... like, it... not- not like we're friends, but it's like, she can tell me, "Mom, yeah, that- that might just be for your friends to know	
For me it's been awesome	Making sure obviously that their needs and wants are addressed and um... Yeah and it'll probably be a little easier too when there's, you know um, like things open up I guess a little more	
I haven't been able to connect with um, like see my, my parents. Um, my grandmother's in the hospital and has been in the hospital for months now and so no one can see her	Busy	
I said I wasn't gonna be like those student that don't call their family	Oh, I'm too busy. I'm too busy	
I felt really guilty	Oh, my gosh. I- It's so busy. I- I- I didn't want it to be that way, but this was just a moment	
Oh, I'm too busy. I'm too busy	I watch while I'm typing my notes	
Gosh, I did it. I did exactly what I said I wouldn't do	I'm eating I'm having to have to eat as usual, eat and do other things while I'm eating. It's not like you can just- ...Enjoy the meal. You got to rush it in, I had to rush to get it- ...Um, rush to eat it. Rush while I was eating	
Is this changing the way I do therapy?... Am I changing my practice?	in our lives and this culture in particular, it's like we're just you know don't slow down and we think everything has to be multitasking and- ...Or everything has to be done you know, um, in a, in a ...like ...as a multitasking fashion	JUGGLING/MULTITASKING
I'll catch myself	I just wanted to slow this moment down	
I didn't want it to be like, "Oh I have to cancel one of my clients because this..."	As um, PhD students and what we con ...we conceive of is being a successful you know, CES. Doing all these things. I mean just, it's in ... it's like in, in the title, it's in the- ...The inherit... you're gonna be an advocate leader- ...Research, researcher scholar. Gatekeeper. Leader. You're gonna be doing somethings...two and three and four at one time	
I was so, um, sleep deprived	the problem exists because there- there are all these roles... There's so many roles.	

Appendix L

Matrix of Patterned Codes and Final Themes

Appendix L is a matrix that organized patterned codes into final themes. In the left columns, patterned codes are listed in order of frequency across participants. The center column organizes patterned codes by likeness. Final themes and their influencing factors summarize, merge, and synthesize patterned codes in the two right columns.

Patterned Codes (categories) From All Interviews	Number of Participants Category is Present	Categories Reorganized by Likeness	Final themes	Factors Influencing Themes
COVID (enrichment and depletion)	9	**COVID-19 – throughout**	**DUALITY OF EXPERIENCE**	
Juggling/multitasking	9	**Role strain depletion**	**Depletion experiences**: (emotional, mental, physical consequences, questioning and self-doubt, programmatic pressure to produce, hidden truths, sacrifice, giving things up) **Enrichment experiences**: (accomplishment, achievement)	**Role management** (juggling, multitasking, prioritizing, intentionality, role diffusion, differentiation, boundaries); **Parenting** (age of children, modeling, pet parenting); COVID
Connection/closeness	9	Mental, Emotional, Physical Consequences Role strain within the CES program Questioning, self-doubt Sacrificing, giving thing up Hidden truths Productivity		
Support/grounding	9	**Role strain enrichment**		
Prioritization	9	**Managing roles**	**CULTURE AND SOCIETY**	
Role strain depletion	9	Juggling, multitasking	**Life-world** and background (spirituality, tradition, privilege) **Exclusion** (social pressures, stigma, discrimination, oppression, marginalization) Advocacy	(N/A)
Self-Care	8	Prioritizing Role diffusion, differentiation, boundaries Intentionality Balance		
Age of Children	8			
Role overlap, diffusion, differentiation, boundaries	8	**Culture and society** Influence of society		
Influence of society	8	Stigma, discrimination, oppression, marginalization	**INTERPERSONAL AND INTRAPERSONAL CARE**	
Role strain within the CES program	7	Advocacy Spirituality Tradition Privilege	**Relationships**: (connection, closeness, relationship barriers, conflict) **Support**: (received and inadequate support) **Self-Care**	COVID
Questioning/self-doubt	7			
Role strain enrichment	7			
Sacrificing/giving things up	6	**Parenting** Age of children Pet parent Modeling		
Stigma, discrimination, oppression, marginalization	5			
Advocacy	5	**Ways to care for self and self-care struggles**		
Hidden truths	5	Connection, closeness		
Spirituality	4	Support/grounding Self-care		
Pet parent	3			
Intentionality	3			
Tradition	3	**Misc.**		
Privilege	3	Change		
Productivity	2			
Balance	2			
Modeling	2			
Change	1			

Appendix M

Bridgett's Photographs

9/1/2021

"I love You Mom"
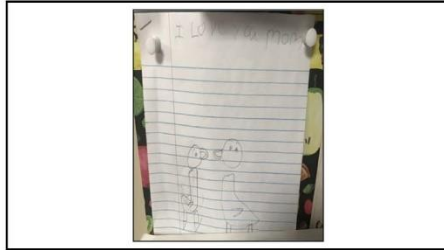
"We Still Exist!"

"Constant Companion"
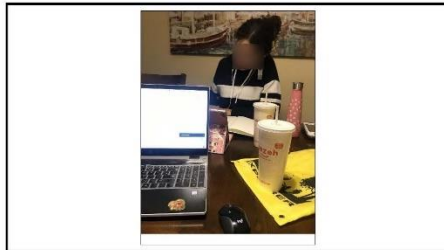
"Focal Point"

"Tied Shoes Solo"

"Kimchi: My Staple"

9/1/2021

"Beginner's Banana Bread"

"Winter Wonderland"

"Nothing Beats a Failure But A Try"
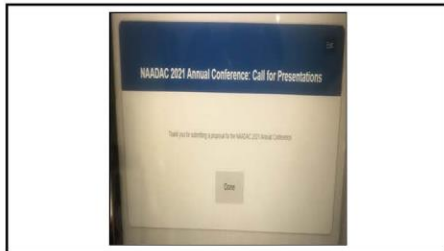
"To Do Lists Never End"

Appendix N

Katie's Photographs

9/2/2021

"Not So Itsy Bitsy Spider"

"Renovation Obligations"

"A Working Lunch"

"Take Time For Tennis"

"Other People's Classwork"

"Leaving So Soon?"

1
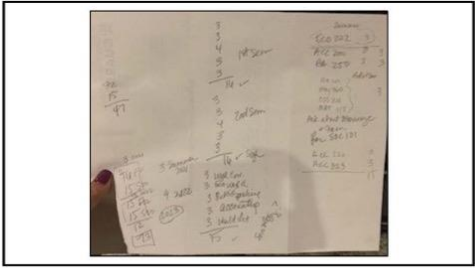
Appendix O

Dr. T's Photographs

9/2/2021

"Multitasking Amidst The Mess"   "Missing Out"
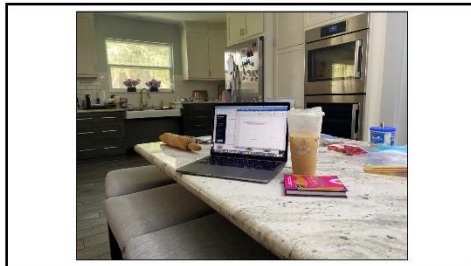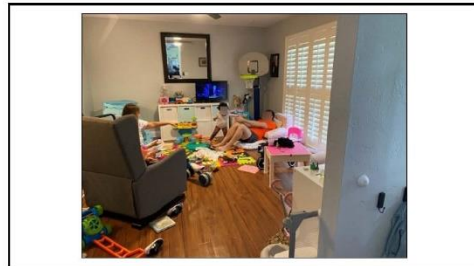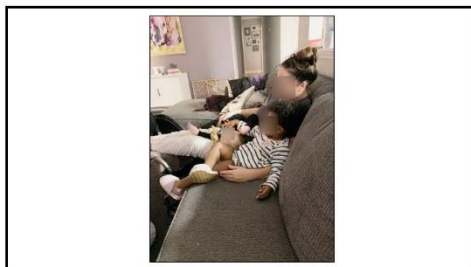
"Bedtime Snuggles"   "One Quick Email"
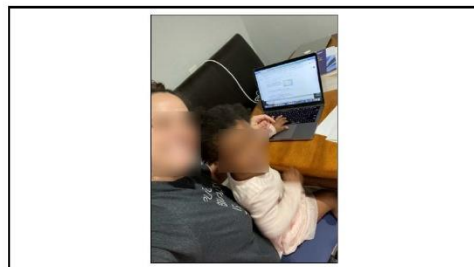
"Desperate Times"   "Screen Time And Popsicles"

1
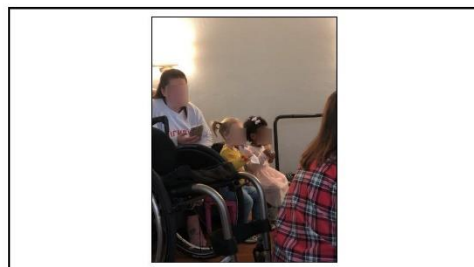
9/2/2021

"Soaking In The Moment"

"Always Waving Goodbye"

"Working From Home Life"

Appendix P

Nic's Photographs

9/2/2021

"Madame President"
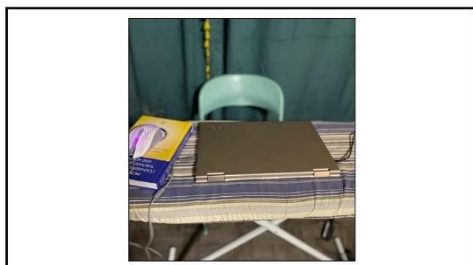
"Typical Sunday Night"
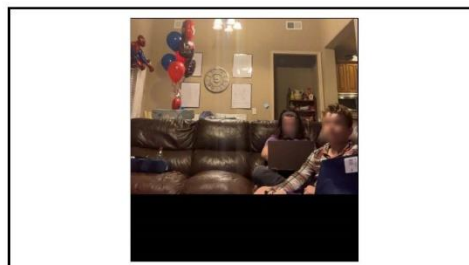
"The Big Game"
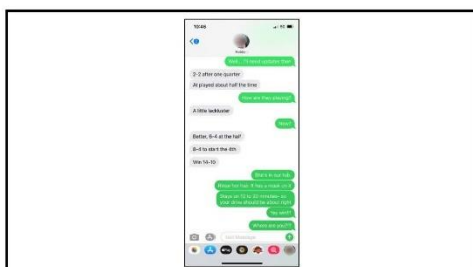
"Just A Swingin'"

"Deepen Focus: Don't Be A Creepy 3-Day
Old Helium Balloon"
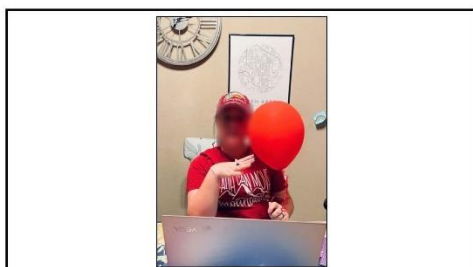
"What You See, And What You Don't"
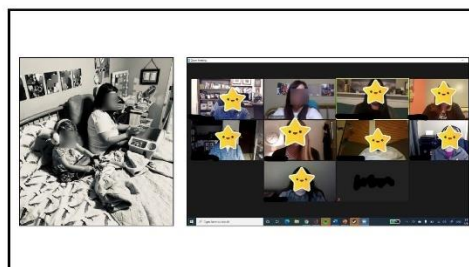
1

9/2/2021

"All Touched Out"

Appendix Q

Pam's Photographs

9/2/2021

"Crash Course"

"Connection"

"Should Have, Would Have, Could Have"

"The Set Up"

"So Tired"

"The Big Picture"
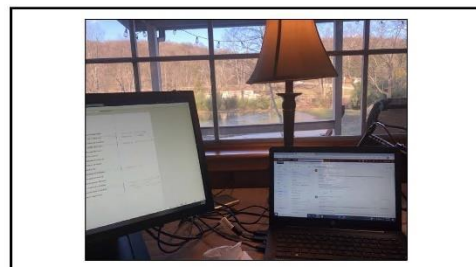
9/2/2021

"Wild Kingdom"

Appendix R

Harper's Photographs

9/2/2021

"Role Strain: Compartmentalization"

"Role Contagion: Avoiding The Rush"

"Role Overload: Acute Transverse
Nondisplaced Fracture"

"Role Conflict: You'll Be In My Heart"
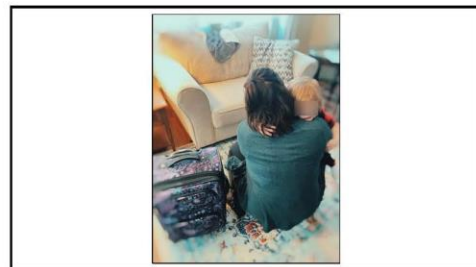
"Role Overload: Did I Eat Today?"
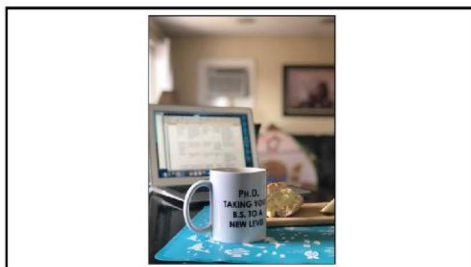
"Apologies: Role Overload"

Appendix S

Elliot' Photographs

9/2/2021

"2020: Is It Over Yet?"

"Moving On: Is There Life After?"

"Creek's Rising: Is The Good Lord Willing?"

"Dr. Seuss: Can We Cancel Cancel Culture?

"Missing Bella: Is It Time To Add A New Puppy To The Family?"

"The Sacrifice: What Am I Giving Up With Family And Friends?"
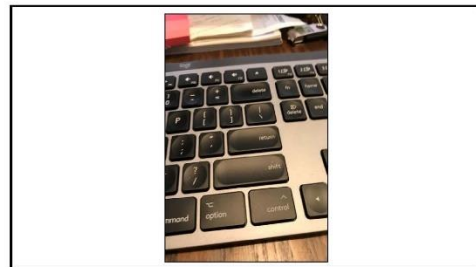
9/2/2021

"Support: What Do I Have To Lose?"

"Adventure: I Know Where I've Been, But Where Do I go?"

"Out of Darkness: Is This Into The Light?"

"I'm Here: Who, What, When, Where, And Why?"

Appendix T

Ali's Photographs

9/2/2021

"Coffee Run"
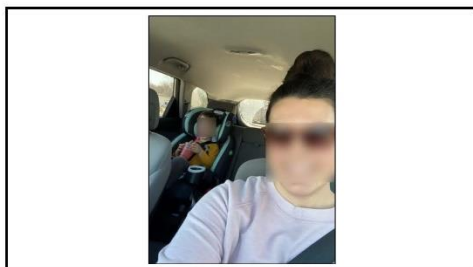
"Vacation"
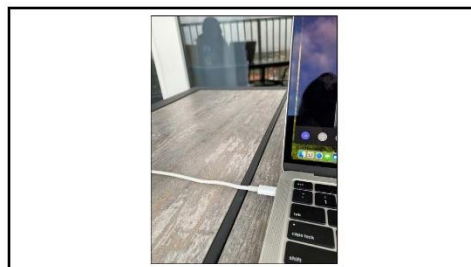
"Snow Day"

"School Counselor Week"

"Across The Railroad Tracks"

"Busy"

1

9/2/2021

"Family Pictures"
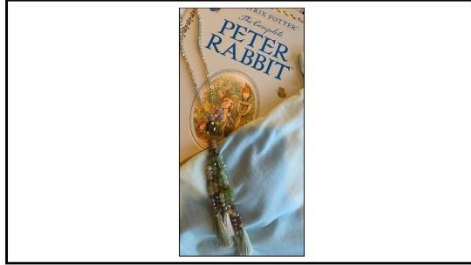
"Working Hard"

"COVID"
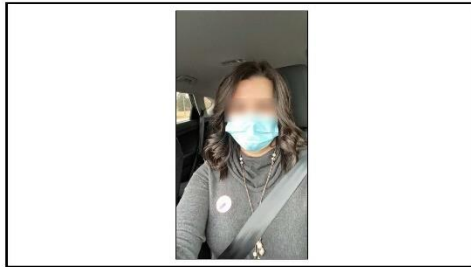
"School"

Appendix U

Ivan's Photographs

9/2/2021

"Hanging On"

"Role Confusion"
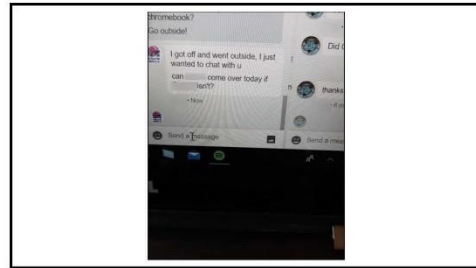
"Friday Night, No Strain"

"Tough Day"

"Home-work"

"Spring Break"
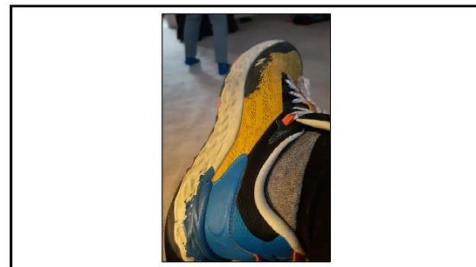
9/2/2021

"Father And Son"   "Last Day"

Appendix V

Researcher's Photographs

9/2/2021

"Growing"

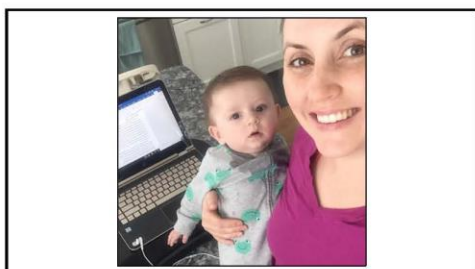

"Buckle Up!"
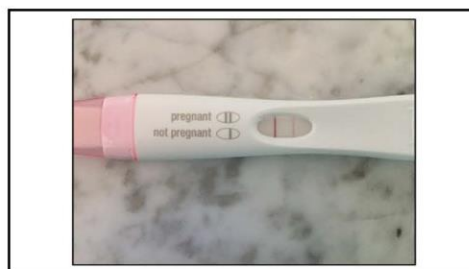
"Welcome, Little One"

"Study Buddy"
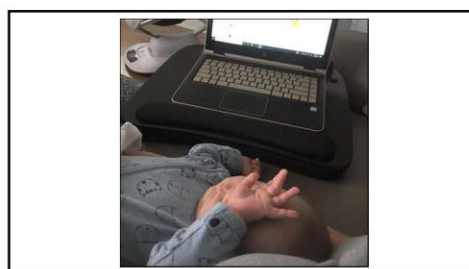
"Comprehensive Exams"

"Role Conflict"

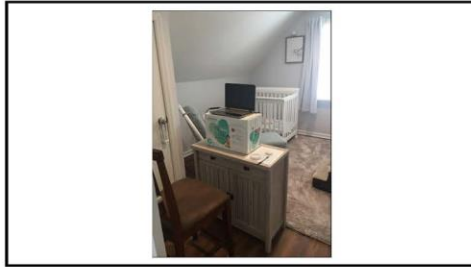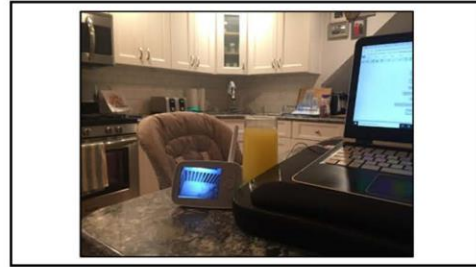9/2/2021

"COVID-19: Working From Home"

"Role Contagion"

"My Lifeline"

"Double Trouble"