AN INVESTIGATION OF MULTIPLE ROLES INFLUENCING THE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN A COLLEGE NURSING PROGRAM

by

Carol Theodora Avery

Dissertation Committee:

Professor L. Lee Knefelkamp, Sponsor
Professor Marie Theresa O'Toole

Approved by the Committee on the Degree of Doctor of Education

Date **SEP 1 1 1995**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education in
Teachers College, Columbia University

1995

© Copyright Carol Theodora Avery   1995

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF MULTIPLE ROLES

INFLUENCING THE PARTICIPATION OF

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN A COLLEGE

NURSING PROGRAM

Carol Theodora Avery

Primarily descriptive in nature, the goals of this study were three-fold. The first intent of this project was to describe the demographic characteristics of the typical undergraduate student enrolled in a four year baccalaureate nursing program at a state university. Typically, this student was Caucasian, female, over 27 years old, receiving some or no financial support from parents or guardians, and employed less than 30 hours per week.

The second intent was to identify the multiple roles of these student nurses and to determine whether the students' perceived role strain changed with the type and/or number of multiple roles assumed. Results of this investigation revealed that when the roles were defined in terms of the subjects demographic elements, only the roles of gender, college class level, marital status, level of financial support, and the students' work hours per week permitted statistical comparisons.

Results from demographic elements showed that female nursing students reported more role strain than did male students. Except for seniors, students who were all or partially responsible for their own debts exhibited

more strain than those who received full financial support. Finally, students who reported working more than 30 hours per week demonstrated a higher level of role strain than those who were not employed.

The third intent of the project was to measure the effect of the multiple roles on the perceived gratification of the nursing students. The finding of the research suggests that no single role, as identified by the demographics revealed any differences in perceived gratification. Similarly, no roles formed from the combination of two or more demographic elements revealed any differences in perceived gratification for these students.

Finally, in direct reference to the role of student within the nursing program, senior students reported that the demands of the nursing courses interfered with their ability to successfully deal with situations in their home and social lives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

iv

v

vi

Chapter V: Discussion

REFERENCES

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

viii

ix

CHAPTER I
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Phenomena of Interest

Nearly twenty years ago, when this investigator began teaching, there were attributes that a nursing instructor might expect to find in common among nursing students. The overwhelming majority of the students would have been in their late teens or very early twenties. Most would have been supported by their parents. It was rare, at that time, to find a student who was employed while attending school and even more rare to find one who was married.

In contrast, the present classes are examples of diversity. Many of these students are older with several into their sixties. Not only is part-time employment the general rule, but there is an increasing number who are the sole support of their families, both immediate and extended.

Changes in the make-up of the student body came slowly and were not really observable until this researcher realized that conversations with students were centering on subjects that were quite different than in previous years. Much of the "small talk" is now with students who talk about their problems as parents and caregivers. They reveal the difficulties they have trying to find time to study and attend classes while, at the same time they concern themselves with day care, meal preparation, and such routine matters as getting a repairman to the apartment. This, indeed, is a far cry from the student this investigator faced at the start of the teaching career.

Justification for the Study

Over the years, there have been discussion regarding the significant changes in the demographic profile of nursing students. There are also indications that nursing students today are more involved with role multiplicity than their counterparts of years ago. It is necessary to determine whether either or both of these statements are true. If the profile is a changed profile, perhaps the changes are significant enough to suggest some investigation into possible restructuring of nursing programs and scheduling.

The culture of a society provides the framework within which its members operate and the standards to which they conform. Values, ideology, and images form much of the context in which the socialization process shapes lives. "Use to be" and stereotypes must be recognized and replaced with the reality of today (Dowling, 1981). Understanding the roles of the nursing students can lead to an understanding of the program that these students need.

Definitions

This investigation uses several terms that might be confusing to the reader. To avoid any misunderstanding, the following definitions are offered:

<u>Nursing student</u>: a student enrolled in an accredited four-year nursing program taking six or more credits in the nursing program.

<u>Non-traditional student</u>: a student who is twenty-five years or older.

<u>Role</u>: the function of the person within the family, work, academic, or social communities of which he/she is a part.

Role Strain: The difficulty of performing multiple roles; time constraints that require honoring some roles over others. Operationally, it is defined in this study as the subject's score on the 12 items comprising the role strain section of J. Gerson's measures of role gratification and role strain.

Role Gratification: This is operationally defined by the score the subject receives on the 12 items comprising the role gratification section of J. Gerson's measures of role gratification and role strain.

Multiple Roles: This is operationally defined as the subject's responses to the demographic survey.

Background

Multiple Roles

Research into conflicting roles and their effects upon student success offer some intriguing and sometimes conflicting results. Studies generally agree that older students experiences a higher level of multiplicity and more role conflicts than the younger student (Campaniello, 1988; Edwards, 1993; Gerson, 1985; Goode, 1960; Marks, 1977; Meleis, Hall, & Stevens, 1994; Zatlin, Storandt, & Botwinick, 1973). Such role conflicts include the student's role as son or daughter, the role as parent, the role of caregiver, the role of financial provider, and other roles that are created because of the student's place in the immediate and extended family (Hirschorn, 1988). Although there is some investigation related to women's roles and age, there is relatively little reported that investigates the relationship of multiple roles

and conflicts as they are relevant to the age, ethnicity, and gender of university nursing school students.

Role Strain

Studies as far back as the 1940's and to the present day recognize role multiplicity and the stressors that are the direct result of these roles and their conflicts with one another. There is little agreement, however, whether these stressors are a positive or negative influence (Bardwick, 1971; Barnett, Marshall & Pleck, 1992; Goode, 1960; Gough, 1948; Gove, 1972; Hall & Gordon, 1973; Marks, 1977; Mason & Bumpass, 1975; Sieber, 1974; Thoits, 1983; Toby, 1952).

There are even those who cite role conflicts as neither positive nor negative. Instead, on one hand there is the "Scarcity Approach" that discusses the possibilities that some multi-role combinations may be drainers of energies, there is, on the other hand the "Expansion Approach", an energy theory that promotes the notion that role multiplicity can be energizing (Marks, 1977).

The literature tells of students returning to school who, because they are older, bring with them a bundle of roles that must be juggled in order to assume the new role of student. Accordingly, stressors are created when students do not forego any roles and seek alternate roads to success. For example, students interested in a university nursing degree may opt to attend a local community college nursing program simply because the community college is more convenient (Rawlins, et al., 1991).

Not only is there role strain as a result of age, but there is gender to consider as well. Many of the stressors stemming from role multiplicity are related to sex differences. For example, females who coupled the role of parenting with a role of worker often were negatively affected by this often conflicting situation. Males, on the other hand, were usually not affected in this way. (Barnett, Marshall, & Pleck, 1992).

Non-traditional Students

In the post-war period there has been a slow but definite change in the student profile. With the changes from industry to technology a need was created to return to school to understand and be a part of the change. Students enrolled in universities because of economic shifts that left many unemployed with little chance of job procurement in a same or similar position. These students, then, tended to be older. Most had experience in the work world and were focused on the university programs as a way to shift economic gears in a changing economy (Hirschorn, 1988).

These students, in addition to being older, were also involved with a multiplicity of roles. Some of these roles --- not addressed by universities --- required that changes in the structure, scheduling, and curriculum be made. Such would be the case when considering child care, off-time classes, and credit of work experiences (Hirschorn, 1988).

The actual definition of the non-traditional nursing student varies, but the most accepted definition is that of Seidl and Sauter (1990):

1. The registered nurse who is returning to school to seek a baccalaureate degree and tends to be middle aged, married, and works part-time;

2. The minority or student who can be considered
    "educationally disadvantaged";

3. The adult student who is most often highly motivated
    and has wide range of related or unrelated work
    experience: often men changing careers and/or
    newly liberated women.

Perhaps all is best summarized by Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989, p.8) who said, "The needs of adults and the character of colleges diverge: Adults want to feel central, not marginal; ... independent not dependent; colleges and universities rely on rigid rules, regulations, and policies. As a consequence, adults and educational institutions are out of sync."

Research Questions

Following are questions that will be used to guide and focus this investigation about role multiplicity with student nurses:

1. What are the multiple roles of students enrolled in an
    undergraduate nursing program?

2. Do undergraduate nursing students report role gratification from
    their multiple roles?

3. Do undergraduate nursing students report role strain from their
    multiple roles?

Assumptions

The following assumptions underlie this investigation:

1. Students are able to recognize their multiple roles.

2. Students are able to recognize role conflicts within their own personal lives.

3. Students are willing to reveal areas of role conflict.

4. Students report information accurately.

Demographics

Although the specifics of demographics and the student sample used in this investigation will be presented later in this paper, it is important within the scope of the other generalities of this chapter to view the overall demographics of the student body from which the sample was selected. The table that follows shows sophomore, junior, and senior nursing program students classified by sex, age, and ethnicity. Freshmen are not included on this demographic presentation simply because this university requires that students be at a sophomore level before being considered a part of the nursing program. Table 2 shows the classification of students according to age and ethnicity separately for males and females at the sophomore, junior, and senior levels.

Table 1

Demographics: Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Year Students Enrolled in a School of Nursing at a Connecticut State University

Male	Female	Age 18-24	Age 25-35+	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Sophomore class:							
7	43	27	23	41	5	1	3
Junior class:							
4	32	21	14	29	3	2	2
Senior class:							
4	44	26	22	40	3	4	1

Table 2

Auxiliary Information, Minority Students

	Number	Ages	Ethnicity
Sohomore class males:			
	7	5 (18 - 24 years) 2 (25 - 35+ years)	5 White 1 Black 0 Asian 1 Hispanic
Sophomore class females:			
	7	5 (18 - 24 years) 2 (25 - 35+ years)	4 Black 1 Asian 2 Hispanic
Junior class males:			
	4	1 (18 - 24 years) 3 (25 - 35+ years)	4 White 0 Black 0 Asian 0 Hispanic
Junior class females:			
	7	6 (18 - 24 years) 1 (25 - 35+ years)	3 Black 2 Asian 2 Hispanic
Senior class males:			
	4	0 (18-24 years) 4 (25-35+years)	2 White 0 Black 0 Asian 2 Hispanic
Senior class females:			
	6	4 (18 - 24 years) 2 (25 - 35+ years)	3 Black 3 Asian 0 Hispanic

It is projected that by the year 2000 more than fifty percent of the full time university students will be twenty-five years or older (Levine, 1989). This demographic shift from younger to older has been ongoing for at least the past fifteen years and represents one of the more significant changes faced by higher education. This new campus demography impacts many aspects of higher education (Brazziel, 1992). With a change in student age, there is no reason not to infer that role changes are also occurring. Perhaps these role changes are age-related; perhaps they are not.

Significance to
Nursing Education

Nursing is one of the keys to modern health care, and the effective nurse is, of course, at the center of the nursing process. Not only is there a myriad of changes within the field of health, but there is, as well, a change in the type of student entering the field of nursing: a different student profile. In order for nursing programs to harvest successful achievement from its enrolled candidates, the nurse educators, the administrators, and the program evaluators must recognize the non -traditional, non-stereotypical student. This is not only revealed by changing demographics, but it includes, also, the multiple roles and role conflicts that the students carry with them. Perhaps the findings of this investigation will be helpful for setting directions in program changes in nursing schools.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter I, this investigation is concerned with multiplicity as it relates to student nurses, specifically student perceptions of these roles and the impact that role multiplicity has upon student success. This chapter also presents a discussion of the study's theoretical framework as well as a review of the literature dealing with roles, multiplicity, and the resulting impact of the role conflicts.

Much of the literature related to roles and role multiplicity recognizes and affirms that conflict is the direct or indirect result of multiple roles. There is some literature that indicates a positive outcome from conflicting multiple roles and there is yet other literature that promotes negative outcome. Judith Gerson, from the results of her 1985 study promotes the concept that conflicts resulting from role accumulation can produce both positive *and* negative outcomes. This concept of dual results from role conflict will serve as a framework to guide this investigation.

Historical Review
Negative Outcomes of Multiple Role Conflicts

Studies and investigations related to multiplicity of roles and the

conflicts that are the results of multi-role interplay often point solely to the negative outcomes of these conflicts. Over forty years ago, Toby (1952) studied social roles and the "institutionally" proper ways that a person would function within society. The failure of society to allow or recognize alternate functioning brings about conflict. In other words, negative outcomes are produced when an individual is unable to function within his given society or community according to the set of role standards set down by that society.

One aspect of the Jackson Toby investigation studies the responses of Harvard students who were asked to make behavioral choices related to situations that pitted their role as student against their role as family member. In each of these situations, a negative conflict was the result of the choice made and the conflict assuaged only by a societally acceptable excuse.

In some instances, says Toby, individuals caught in the web of conflicting roles may find themselves so negatively affected that they choose to resolve this conflict by removing themselves from one or more of these roles. For example, the role of friendship and the role of boss might prove to be so negatively conflicting that the position of boss is resigned to preserve the role of friend.

It is important to note here that the conflicts that are highlighted in the Toby study are the results of role conflict where there is no accepted solution to this conflict. In other areas where there are societally accepted conflict solutions, these conflicts do not present themselves as negatively. For example, no one would expect a personnel director to hire a friend who lacked all the needed credentials for a position and, so, there would be no negative conflict. On the other hand, there would be conflict created if the

friend did indeed hold all the necessary credentials and all who were involved knew the applicant was a friend of the personnel director.

In "A Theory of Role Strain", William Goode (1960) introduces the idea that role strain is the result of attempts to fulfill one's obligations within the scope of role multiplicity. According to Goode, an individual is beset with increasing role strain as the number of roles increase. And, he goes on, the rewards that are the results of role variety do not increase proportionally. The results of role multiplicity, therefore, is negative because the number or intensity of stress will, as the roles increase, outnumber or outweigh the rewards.

Attempts at reducing the strain from multiple roles rest with the individuals ability to manipulate the roles. There comes a time, says Goode, when the number of roles surpasses the individual's ability to manipulate these roles in order to function within them. The rewards, then, have not been able to match the strain created. The strain according to Goode results from these following:

1. role demands that intrude on one's personal freedom;
2. conflicting roles that require the use of personal time;
3. conflicting roles that include similar, competing pressures;
4. multiple roles that bring conflict as a result of demands for resources.

In her study of bio-cultural conflicts, Judith Bardwick (1971) discusses conflicts that are the result of values which are different for men and women. The conflicts that women face, she says, are the results of values that have been internalized by both men and women in our culture. Although not the main idea of her study, Bardwick talks about men and women in their roles as workers. In this competitive world, men have the distinct advantage because

their personality traits of independence and aggression give them this advantage. Conflict is caused, on the other hand, because the accepted traits of women are the empathy for others, sensitivity, and non-competitive nurturance. In one respect workers are rewarded for their forcefulness and independence while in other respects not projecting the commonly accepted female traits leads women to the risk of being failures as women.

There are other studies, as well, that center about conflicts and career choices and multiple roles. It was discovered in one investigation (Hall & Gordon, 1973) that although women preferred part-time work over full-time or not working, it is precisely these part-time workers who suffered the most negative stress from role conflict. Perhaps, it was suggested in the investigation, women who selected part-time work were less successful in developing strategies for dealing with role conflicts. Perhaps the lack of job satisfaction with part-time positions led to negative conflicts. Lastly, the fact that part-time workers were more apt to undertake more roles than either housewives or full-time workers might prove a logical reason for the development of role conflict. In summary, Hall and Gordon found that married women, who held either full or part-time jobs experienced more conflict due to role multiplicity than did those women who were housewives.

Earlier studies referred to the "nurturance" of women being involved with stress, conflict, and multiple roles. In some contrast to Hall and Gordon (1973), McLaughlin, Cormier, and Cormier (1988) discussed the role-stressors of multiple role women who were part-time employed. Perhaps, says this investigation, these women experience such demands for nurturance that when it comes time to devote nurturance to themselves they view this as just another demand or burden. It would seem, says this study, that because the women tend to give themselves the least focus, they become less

important. In addition, the women feel that there is little time to develop successful coping strategies or even to use those strategies that had been previously learned.

The reader can see from the research cited thus far, that role multiplicity and conflict is intertwined with gender. Whereas earlier studies used part-time working women as subjects of studies, Bolger, et al. (1989) contrasts men and women as workers. They cite that the number of working couples has grown. As a result, the home and parenting responsibilities and multi-roles are being shared by both partners. Because of this, the conflicts stemming from multiple role responsibilities are being felt by both the men and the women.

One of the conclusions of this study is that conflict is reflected differently by each partner. While women take on most of the household responsibility, they do not tend to show the resulting stress of this in the workplace. On the other hand, men are more apt to take home-stress into the workplace. As a side-note, it is interesting that there seems to be some proof that wives who work outside the home have a negative effect upon the mental health of their husbands (Kessler & McRae 1982, 1984).

Finally, this survey of the history of negative outcomes of multiple role conflicts would not be complete without a statement that had not been supported before. In her study of non-traditional college students, Chartrand (1990) discovered a connection between her subjects, role multiplicity, and conflict. According to this investigation, students with heavy demands from other roles may find increased personal negative conflict as their commitment to their role of student increases.

Positive Outcomes of Multiple Role Conflicts

In contrast to the studies cited above, where role conflict brought about negative outcomes, there are numerous investigatory studies that point to positive outcomes as the result of multiplicity. In these cases, to some extent, the conflict that exists because of role strain and/or multiple roles brings about some degree of positive end results that are somehow beneficial to one's well-being.

Walter Gove (1972) discusses the levels of mental illness among men and women as they are related to role strain. What is important from his study is the conclusion that women, at least in this particular investigation, seem to suffer more strain from role multiplicity than do men. What is not determined in the study, however, is whether women experience more role multiplicity than do men. This, perhaps, would account for reasons why the investigation found greater strain among women. The conclusion that is most significant is that role strain and role multiplicity are basically beneficial to mental health.

In his article "Toward a Theory of Role Accumulation" (1974), Sam Sieber talks about many of the role stressors that others before him had discussed. What makes this particular study different and significant is that Sieber suggests that the end result of multiple roles and the conflict between them is positive. In his investigation, Sieber talks about the rewards that are produced by role multiplicity. These rewards are long-term positive in spite

of the fact that there may be some short term, negative outcomes as a result.

It is very important that the reader know that Sieber cites the desire for both blacks and females to undertake the positions of role multiplicity. It is within this structure, he says, that the following positive outcomes of role multiplicity occur:

1. Role privileges
2. Status
3. Resources for status enhancement and role performance
4. Enrichment of ego gratification

What minorities and women are seeking, then, is not the role accumulation for its own sake. The search, instead, is for the outcomes of the role multiplicity: the positive enhancers.

To quote Sieber (1974, p.577), "The demand for equality seems to include a desire for access to the profits and pleasures of role accumulation."

In his "expansion" theory, Marks (1977) looks at the possibility of some role multiplicity as energy givers (positive) rather than as energy drainers (negative). For example, says Marks, family activity may very well provide no energy loss but, instead, may actually be an energy provider. And this energy, then, can be used within that role or in the realm of other roles. Negative outcome from role strain, he concludes, is not something that can be automatically assumed.

In 1980, Denise Skinner talked about the conflicts that are relevant and inherent to dual-career families. At first Skinner relates that the number of dual-career families is increasing. She then discusses the conflicts that may very well result from this situation. The need for family day care, the need for flexibility of hours, and maternity and paternity leaves are some of the changes that Skinner cites as reducers of conflict strain. To lessen the

negative conflicts from dual-career choice, she says, institutional changes must occur that puts society into an advocacy role to promote those changes. Important to understanding of the Skinner report is the finding that although dual-career participants experienced degrees of conflict related to this situation, these participants defined their life style as positive. In other words, multiple roles experienced by dual-career participants bring about more positive outcomes than they do negative ones.

In yet another investigation of multiple roles, Barnett (1982) studied working mothers who had preschool children. Involvement in a number of roles, according to this study, does not mean that negative outcomes will result. Quite the contrary, Barnett found that involvement in role multiplicity does not negatively affect well-being. She discovered that work commitment was an important factor. Where the women's commitment to work was strong, their sense of well-being was high. [It must be noted here, that the subjects of this particular investigation were white, middle class women in the Northeast. There were no minority or non-traditional subjects used.]

Role accumulation brings with it psychological well-being. In explanation, Peggy Thoits (1983) states that this well being is the direct result of taking on more roles rather than taking on fewer. A failure to have multiple roles *or* loss of multiple roles has psychological consequences. Multiple roles serve as a psychological enhancer.

In a study of professional nurses returning to school, Jean Campaniello (1988) writes about the changing roles of women and about the role multiplicity in which they are involved. This, of course, includes not only their levels of roles related to the family, but also it concerned the women's roles as they relate to work. Conclusions of this study support the expansion

theory which, in part, supports the notion that role accumulation leads to gratification, stimulation and other positive outcomes.

It is Campaniello's contention that multiplicity of role involvement does not bring about perceived negative conflict. In regard to this, the investigation also proposes that a student's social supports are important in less perceived role conflict. In addition, Campaniello agrees with the idea that self-esteem is directly related to the length of time a woman has been a student. Self-esteem increases with time as a student.

Campaniello's investigation centered around three broad questions:

1. Do multiple roles increase perceived conflict?
2. Does social support affect perceived conflict?
3. Do perceived role conflicts bring decreased well-being?

Related to these questions, Campaniello found that it is not the number of roles that affect the perception of conflict. It is, rather, the participation in particular roles. Parenting, for example, was found to be one of the most recognized roles that produces conflict. The actual participation in multiple roles enhanced the perception of well-being. Finally, the study determined that it is not the number of roles occupied that causes a lack of well-being; rather, it is the degree of conflict within given roles that produces this result.

In addition, Campaniello found that women who were supported emotionally in their return to school and those who received help with child care and household tasks and those who were allowed flexibility in work hours exhibited less negative conflict.

Barnett, Marshall, and Pleck (1992) studied men's multiple roles and the effect of these roles on the men's psychological distress. In this study, the family role is examined as it affects men's role as worker. It was discovered that although men are not as affected by family or parental roles as women,

there are, indeed, times when the role as worker is influenced by the positive or negative support in the family and marriage role multiplicity.

Being a parent, says Barnett et al., does not usually affect the man's sense of job concern. If, however, the man has poor experiences on his job, this is buffered by the quality of the man's parental and marital roles. Thus, support quality is vital to protecting him from conflict caused by poor job related experiences. It produces the sense of well-being. On the other hand, if the role supports were poor and the job experiences were poor, the resulting conflicts produced high distress for the men.

Finally, in an investigation of working women and their multiplicity of roles, Marianne Maynard (1993) studied a variety of professional women in the health field. As a result Maynard discovered that it is not the roles within the scope of the job that produces any sense of well-being. Instead, an increase in the number of family related roles leads to life satisfaction. Even though there was an increase of role multiplicity, the fact that these roles were related to family rather than to work produced a positive effect.

<div style="text-align: center">

Positive and Negative Outcomes

The Conceptual Framework

</div>

Through the history of the literature that examines multiple roles and the conflicts that are the result of this multiplicity, major emphasis has been on either the positive or the negative outcomes of such conflicts. There is, however, a theoretical framework that maintains that multiple roles naturally produce both conflict *and* enhancement. That is, role multiplicity can bring

about both positive as well as negative outcomes. This researcher's investigation uses this theoretical framework as a research guide.

Judith Gerson (1985) compared housewives with mid-life women returning to school. Specifically, the middle aged women who had returned to school were compared to their housewife neighbors who were not returning to school. The findings of this study indicate that the students experienced more positive outcomes from their role multiplicity than did the housewives. On the other hand, the students also reported a greater amount of negative conflict as a result of the multiple roles. Although the net positive outcome was on the side of the students, the results were only marginal and require additional investigations.

In her study, Gerson reflects on the conclusions of earlier studies that assumed that role multiplicity would necessarily develop negative stress. These studies, she says, because of their assumption, overlooked the possibility of positive outcomes from multiple roles. The findings from the Gerson investigation are, in effect, a response to the conclusions based upon the assumption of negative stress outcomes.

A 1988 investigation by Jean Campaniello centered on a group of professional nurses who had returned to school. Data from this study suggests that for these nurses, the occupancy of multiple roles did not seem to increase the perception of negative conflict. Quite the opposite, nurses who had more roles to fill expressed a higher degree of well-being and satisfaction.

This Campaniello study used the "expansion hypothesis" of Sieber (1974) and Marks (1977) as the basis of the research. In effect, this hypothesis puts focus upon the gratification rather than upon the negative conflicts resulting from multiple roles. Role multiplicity, says Campaniello,

cannot assume conflict. The interaction of multiple roles can, in fact, bring about positive outcomes.

An interesting side light to Campaniello's investigation seems to show that the role of parent yields the most conflict when in a multi-role situation. It is not, she says, the number of roles that leads to conflicts but, rather, the nature of particular roles such as parenting. One of the reasons that conflict is so prevalent within the scope of the parenting role is that women, at this point, are taking on positions that may be termed "non-traditional". At the same time, the women are expected to fulfill roles that reflect traditional responsibilities. In order to alleviate some of the role stress that is created by this dilemma, it is necessary to provide the social service network that gives support. An example cited would be the offering of campus day care for women who are returning to school and must deal with the role of parent as well as with the role of student.

The most important aspect of this study shows that role multiplicity enhances the perception of well-being. Any measurable stress occurring from multiple roles is off-balanced by the benefits that result from the interaction of roles.

The idea of dual outcomes from role multiplicity is also discussed in a study by Linda Tiedje et al. (1990). This study focused on women who combined the roles of mother, spouse, and professional and how the women perceived themselves within this multiplicity. According to Tiedje, perceived role conflict and perceived role enhancement can occur at the same time. The investigations indicated that contrary to role conflict theory, negative conflict is not the necessary result of the three-role situation. On the other hand, a perception of enhancement is not a necessary outcome of balancing multiple roles as the enhancement theory proposes.

Multiple Roles

The idea of multiple roles is certainly not a new concept. What is of newer importance, however, is the social trends that are reflected by the multiple roles and those who are involved with them. Also important is the notion that somehow the study of role multiplicity will give focus to the needs of students, especially the non-traditional students whose ranks are the fastest growing on college campuses (Brazziel, 1992; Hawkins, 1994; Hirschorn, 1988).

It must be noted here that this researcher understands that everyone is involved in multiple roles from the day of birth. This is a given. Multiple roles here touch upon both the public and private spheres. The former includes such areas as education and work, while the latter includes more roles related to the home and to child rearing. This private sphere, traditionally, was thought to be in the nature of women, with less authority, and more informal structure (Edwards, 1993).

What must be understood by the reader is the issue of multiple roles. What is implicit is that multiple roles refer to overlapping demands on one's time and/or responsibilities (Sieber, 1974). It must also be understood that these various demands differ not only from group to group but from individual to individual as well. Professional women, for example, see themselves differently than do other female workers (Gaddy, et al., 1983). The

professional woman views her career as a primary role which must be shared with other demands that might include such roles as spouse, parent, or caregiver. In nursing, there is an acute need for academic scholarship as it relates to community health. This needed scholarship, however, is too often eclipsed by the diversity of roles that are both work related and home centered (Meleis, et al., 1994).

Role Strain

Role strain has been examined in the literature and has been related to gender, career, and culture. It is generally agreed that role strain is the result of the difficulties caused by attempting to fulfill a variety of role demands (Goode, 1960). Says Gerson (1985), role conflict results when self-expectations and role expectations clash or when one is put into situations where there is no compatible expectation.

Stephen Marks (1977) discusses the fact that both time and energy become viewed as scarce when one becomes over committed to some activities and under committed to others. In a study of the relationship of family life and work, strain, he says, seems to be greatest for those who are most committed to their work. As a sociologist, Marks wonders if those in his field who make a study of roles and role conflicts become immune to their personal realities. Those sociologists who are involved with the profession are, themselves, just as part of the role conflict intrigue as professionals in other fields.

In a study on dual-career families, Gaddy, et al. (1983) concludes that couples who work and have children will probably experience problems

related to role multiplicity if they attempt to pursue all of their interests or if they attempt to perform all of their roles perfectly. Even though professional dual-career couples tend to see themselves as having limitless time and energy, they often must call upon therapists or counselors to help change those perfectionist standards that cause the stress that, in turn, interferes with family satisfaction.

In another study of dual-career families, Denise Skinner (1980) noted an interesting dichotomy. The dual-career couples, on one hand, acknowledged the stress that results from participation in two careers. On the other hand, these same couples revealed that despite the stressful situations that are a part of the dual careers, they see their personal and their family life as positive. This, in part, was related to the couples desire for a higher standard of family living.

There are some dual-career couples, reports Skinner, who must cope with the stress by using the strategy of compromise. In more cases than not, it is the woman in the dual-career couple who, because of role demands, compromise their job-related goals in order to make the family lifestyle more manageable and less stressful. Men, however, also find it necessary at times to sacrifice career related goals in order to satisfy the needs of the family or the needs of their working spouse. In either case, it is the act of compromise that often helps with the restructuring of family-related roles and career-related goals to bring about a sense of harmony.

Related to men and their multiple roles, Rosalind Barnett and others (1992) discusses how family roles are important to the men's well-being. The home, says Barnett, is the place where the man returns to heal the wounds that were suffered on the job. It is even suggested that the men's marital and family roles are more important to him than are the roles related to his career.

The most interesting portion of the entire investigation, says Barnett, is the fact that men's attitude toward work has been so misunderstood for so many years of study. Stress that results from the conflict of work roles with family roles will almost always be resolved on the side of family.

Related to nursing education, there exists the contrast that causes role strain. On the one hand there is the underlying assumption of service to others. On the other hand there is the need to develop independence and self-direction with the educational program. This contrast is brought to the foreground with R.N.'s who return to a university setting to earn a bachelor's degree. Their earlier education (perhaps a two or a three year program) stressed that they were there for the service to others. Then, in the university program, focus was directed toward independence, assertiveness, personal fulfillment, and leadership. It is the contrast between the two nursing education programs, old beliefs versus new beliefs, that brings about a decreased sense of well being (Campaniello, 1988).

Not only does the literature discuss role strain as it relates to women returning to school, but it talks, as well, about women returning to the workplace after the birth of their first child. The role stress in this situation is the result of combinations of situations that include simple fatigue on one hand and a multitude of family responsibilities on the other. Strain can be heightened by job expectations, further need for household task distribution, and even the need for such basics as child care during work hours and the difficulty of dealing with the guilt of returning to work so soon after the birth of the child (Collins & Tiedje, 1988).

Sometimes it seems that a failure to recognize unrealistic expectations can be the cause of role conflict among women. According to one investigation (McLaughlin, et al., 1988) role strain can be the result of

attempts to be the "superwoman". This conflict seems less when women allowed themselves to accept a lower standard of expectation. That is, there seemed to be less strain when the woman allowed herself to be less a perfect housekeeper and mother and allowed for some time for herself.

The Douglas Hall conclusions are similar. In his 1972 study, Hall found that role expectations are a direct creator of role stress. He concludes that the role conflict can be lessened when women are able to examine their roles, recognize what is priority and what is not, and deal only with the important. For example, a sick child would be a priority in the scheme of multiple roles, but the need to dust furniture would not. Although there is no real way to eliminate role conflict, says Hall, the development of successful strategies to cope with the conflict can lessen the impact. Important is not ways that women coped with conflicts of role multiplicity but, instead, merely the fact that the women developed coping mechanisms. In other words, the act of coping rather than non-coping is what is important.

Even twelve years prior, Goode (1960) introduced the idea that role strain cannot be eliminated given the existence of multiple roles. No matter how pleasurable each of the roles may be, others who are part of the multiplicity network will feel that insufficient time or quality of time was afforded them. Thus the creation of role strain. The role stain, according to Goode, is a normal outcome of multiple roles.

In a biocultural study, Judith Bardwick (1971) related role strain to the roles and personality traits of men and women. Role conflicts that women face are the result of different values that society accepts for both men and women. These values are internalized by both men and women in our culture. Men, the study concludes, have a distinct advantage because they are rewarded for achievement within their inherent personality traits especially in

the workplace. Women, on the other hand, are often judged by the same male-oriented traits of aggression and independence used to judge men rather than by other more feminine traits that foster nurturance and sensitivity found most often in non-competitive areas of achievement where women seem to outperform their male colleagues. One conclusion of this investigation is that "the greatest esteem is awarded to women who distinguish themselves professionally, yet simultaneously these women run the risk of alienation, of the suspicion of being failures as women" (Bardwick, 1960, p.4).

Some first quantitative evidence of work-home stress is offered in a 1989 study that investigates the conflict and coping associated with role stress from home to work and from work to home for both men and women (Bolger, et al. 1989). This study concludes, among other things, that home to work stress is more common with men than it is with women. Perhaps, suggests the study, women are more adept at managing role multiplicity than are men. In role stress cases for both men and women there exists a stress compensation mechanism at home for dealing with role conflict. There seemed, however, to be no comparable coping mechanism in the workplace for either men or women. This is due primarily because both men and women have greater control over their role involvements in the home than in the workplace. In the home, partners of people who had difficult workdays would increase their involvement in home roles to compensate for their partners' decreased role involvement.

A somewhat different view of role strain is contributed by Cynthia Epstein (1986). She maintains that it is the combination of roles that causes conflict rather than the number of roles. Whether or not a person receives help to meet role obligations is also a factor in predicting role strain. Role strain, for example, often results when people assume roles that others view

as unsuitable. Such is the case with occupational choice. Most "good" jobs are set aside for white middle-class men and kept away from persons viewed as the wrong color, sex, or age. Such would be the case with black doctors, women engineers, or older students. Role stress results in these situations primarily because their patients, clients, or teachers were not sure how to treat them. In other words, those in the non-traditional roles were holding unsuitable or unacceptable positions.

There is evidence, continues the study, that society itself supports some groups of people more than it supports other groups. Simply because women in the study had less support than did men in the same position, their perception of role strain was greater. As might be expected, both power and social prominence were instrumental in providing support needed for strain reduction. That is, the more of each that a person has, the easier it is to function within the roles.

Epstein introduces the notion of "gatekeepers", those who help people or groups of people to manage their roles and thereby role conflict. It is the gatekeepers who tell women to use restraint in roles that concern work because it is too difficult to manage the roles of wives and mothers in addition to work roles. All is wrapped in concern for women. Then, if women heed the advice of the gatekeepers and curtail their work-related roles they experience the strain that comes from not being able to fulfill their work potential. On the other hand, if they ignore the advice of the gatekeepers, the women face the stress from participating in work roles with an enthusiasm viewed as inappropriate. Thirdly, there is stress caused by the notion, perceived or real, that women must be better and must work harder to succeed in positions considered male domain.

Epstein found another aspect of role conflict. Women who were more successful in their positions seemed to have less perception of difficulty from role strain than might first be expected. When questioned, the successful women did not deny that role strain problems existed, but, rather, that role strain problems were nothing that they were unable to handle. These women who successfully dealt with role conflict problems were those who were problem solvers who were as skillful in dealing with role problems as they were with work-related problems. Those who seemed the most affected by the problems from role multiplicity were those who viewed their existence as being on "overload", those who had to enter the workplace even though they didn't want to be there, and/or those who were given little flexibility or decision making in their work environment.

In one of her recent articles, Peggy Thoits (1992) enhances this notion of role stress and coping with it. According to Thoits, it is not the number of roles that is the producer of conflict. It is, rather, the type of roles that are held, the combination of the roles that are held, and the gender of those that hold these roles. As related to role stress, the suggestion exists that there needs to be investigation of such roles as friend, relative, churchgoer and athlete in the conflict quelling process.

The idea of multiple roles and role stress has reached the pages of the daily newspaper. In a November 17, 1994 New York Times article, Pepper Schwartz discusses work and family roles and relates how, contrary to much popular belief, role multiplicity actually enhances individual self esteem. This is especially true, she says, if the work role is positive and the family roles satisfying. There seems to be no obvious gender difference. Even when there are children involved, the higher self-esteem of the working parents not

only improves the parenting, but also allows the children time to grow their own relationships and to develop their own responsibilities.

On the other hand, reports Schwartz, there is a possible downside to multiple roles. If the working parents (one or both) are "workaholics" or work longer than a forty hour workweek, there are indications that children in these families tend to exhibit lower reading and math skills. Generally speaking, most academic skills were showing slower development. Where parents worked regular workweeks, children tended to do well in school and at home.

Role multiplicity work well together only when the job is pleasant and the remuneration adequate. If it is not then the result is more of everything bad. There must also be room in the multiple role complex for emergencies. When people push themselves too far, the result is often disaster when an emergency like a sick child or a ruined relationship is added to the complexity of role overload.

The Non-traditional Student

There is no absolutely accepted definition of "non-traditional student" in the literature, nor does there seem to be a definition proposed for universal acceptance. In place of arguments over accepted definitions, the literature seems to offer slightly differing definitions but all with a vague commonality about them. Most of the authors seem to promote the idea that the non-traditional possess characteristics that separate them from what historically was the student who entered the college setting directly or very soon after

high school graduation. Thus, these traditional students would range from eighteen to twenty years old. Most would be parent supported, and few would have held significant employment. It would be rare for this traditional student to be married or to have children or head-of-household responsibilities. Equally rare would be the student who was responsible for the care of older parents or family members.

"The New Non-Traditional Student in Nursing" (Seidl, & Sauter, 1990) reviews what these authors have found to be non-traditional. These students are often registered nurses who are returning to school at a later age to obtain a baccalaureate degree. These students have been found to be very motivated and, for the most part, tend to be excellent risks for admission to the university program. They tend to have higher grades and seem, also, more capable of making professional judgements. Perhaps, suggests the investigation, these students have both the maturity and the experience to facilitate their skill in making judgements.

Carole Zatlin, Martha Storandt, and Jack Botwinick (1973) showed that even twenty years ago there was focus put upon the older student. In this study the older student subjects were in the thirty-five to fifty year old group. Conclusions from their study seemed to support the notion that older students returning to school were not as motivated by social values as were younger more traditional students. In addition, the investigation found that the older female student was less in agreement with the women's movement than were their younger counterparts. Finally, says the study, older students tended to be much more dominant than the more submissive traditional students with whom they attended classes.

Characteristics of the non-traditional students, their expectations, and their views of their relationship with their college is well defined by Arthur

Levine in a editorial "Student Expectations of College" (1993). Non-traditional students, says Levine, are making up a greater percentage of our student population each year. Not only are these students older with more life experience, but their expectations of just what their college should be is quite different than the expectations held by traditional students of years back. These new students do not expect that the university should spend its efforts on the "extras". They are beginning to look at the college very much the way that they look at their bank. The non-traditional student does not expect the college to form baseball games and picnics. They do not expect the colleges to institute religious ceremonies, and they don't expect them to arrange for mental health clinics either. Instead, says Levine, these non-traditional students want their education to be nearby. They want the personnel to be polite and efficient. They want their educational experience to be of high quality. But, he says, they want all of this at a lower cost. The college, then, is being examined with the same lens that examines the local supermarket. More than in the past, students are ready to comparison shop to find the best situation for themselves. And if they find free parking as well, so much the better. It is these students, says Levine, that will determine the future direction of higher education.

Changes at the university level are needed and in many ongoing to accommodate the growing percent of non-traditional students (Hawkins, 1994). On some campuses administrators as well as professors are finding it difficult to deal with the growing number of older students. At odds are the generation that expects to be teaching teenagers and the reality that the student population is more and more comprised of adults needing advanced training or who are making career changes. Adult education, says Hawkins, is becoming mainstream.

Statements made by professional nursing organizations promote the recruitment of non-traditional students into college nursing programs (Rawlins, et al., 1991). Trends toward career changes and the acceptance of life-experience learning make the non-traditional student excellent candidates. Having the adult learner as an important percentage of the nursing student population will influence the direction of the curriculum (Knollmueller, 1994). Because of their age and past experiences, these students are ready and are adept at dealing with the education changes promoted by Secretary of Labor Reich (1991) who proposes that curriculum must now focus not on information, but, instead, on judgements and interpretation.

Student Support:
Mentoring, Peer Groups, Collaboration

A review of the literature pertaining to an investigation of student multiple roles and the accompanying strain or gratification would be well served by a brief discussion of literature focusing on aspects of student affairs related to elements of this study. Astin (1993), for example, studied more than 25, 000 students who entered college as freshmen in 1985. The study followed up four years later and discovered that any involvement in college experiences or activities was beneficial to both learning and to student development. One of the most powerful influences on student academic and personal development is the peer group. In other words, the amount of group interaction has enormous effects on almost every area of learning and development.

This longitudinal investigation touched upon some issues related to gender as well. It was found, for example, that through the undergraduate

years, women experienced more role related strain than did the men. In addition, the study also found that women were more likely to affiliate with other women while men tended to affiliate with other men. Therefore, reports Astin, female subjects were more apt to be influenced by the behaviors, attitudes, and outlooks of other women while men, on the other hand, were more apt to be influenced by the values of other men.

In addition to peer group influences, the study reported the importance of student-faculty interactions as related to students' undergraduate development. The investigation discovered that the amount of time and interaction between faculty and individual students greatly influences student development. This notion of faculty-student interaction includes a variety of relationships such as working on a professor's research project, being a guest in a professor's home, helping a professor teach a class, or simply talking to a professor outside of class. These types of interactions positively affect intellectual and personal growth and produce a greater identification with the professors as mentors.

A study by Tinto, Goodsell-Love, and Russo (1993) investigated the influence of collaborative learning on students academic and social involvement. Two colleges were studied. One was a residential college serving a traditional student body, and the other a non-residential college serving a very diverse population made up of students who were from a wide age range. of varying ethnicity, and involved in employment while attending college. The study found that although the student populations were quite different, the students from both groups found it difficult to make social and academic connections.

The report cited that collaborative learning groups served the students in three ways. Firstly, the group often developed into a support group for

both personal and academic issues. Secondly, the group served as the core of a social group. Finally, the collaborative learning group encouraged regular attendance and participation in class related activities.

Astin (1992) found that state colleges that once served the eighteen to twenty-two year olds are becoming increasingly diverse. Student populations are including older students, more students who are married, and more students who must hold full-time employment in order to attend college. In short, the student population is more reflective of the general population of the area being served by the college. With the addition of more roles to the role of student, it becomes more difficult to form peer groups wherein members can bond with one another. Since friendships and social life are usually age based, the diversity of student population increases the difficulty of forming social ties outside the classroom. The fact that many students are commuters only adds to the difficulty.

The study, however, does point to ways that strong peer groups can be organized. One way is to keep programs within the college small so that students enrolled in each of these programs share a common ground such as career goals. Another way to develop strong peer support groups is to encourage schedules that allow for evening or weekend programs to accommodate students with families or working students. It is necessary, says the study, to have such off-time programs consist of small classes taught by full-time, regular faculty who also take some part in student advising and mentoring programs.

Review of the Literature Summary

Historically, examination of roles and role strain focused on the anticipated negative outcomes of role multiplicity, i.e. negative conflict. Most of the conclusions in the earlier studies are directly related to the number of roles in which the subjects are involved. They place a great deal of emphasis on the roles as they usurp time, freedom of choices, and resources thereby yielding negative stressors.

Somewhat later, in contrast, parallel investigations began to report the possibility of positive outcomes from role multiplicity. Well-being from multiple roles for working women supported the notion of the expansion theory which promoted the idea that role accumulation can lead to positive gratification.

As research in the area of multiple roles became more sophisticated, investigations seemed to show that possibly neither of the previously held conclusions were really accurate. Perhaps, said these newer views, the outcome of multiple roles (i.e. stress or well-being) is not the product of the number of roles held. Neither is it the result of gender. Role multiplicity results not in positive or negative outcomes but, rather, in dual outcomes that is based not on the number of roles held but, instead, on the combinations of roles held. When the combination is a good one, the results are positive. Negative results occur, it seems, when the roles (or combination of roles) are not satisfying or when there is not enough flexibility to allow for such things as family emergencies.

Finally, the literature discusses non-traditional students. These are students who tend to be older and involved to varying degrees with family and/or work responsibilities. Unlike their more traditional classmates, they

are not supported by parents and have not entered the college setting soon after graduating from high school. Many, in fact are in the process of career change education.

While they have shown themselves to be good academic candidates, these students differ from their traditional counterparts in their expectations of the college. Many experts agree that these students are looking for an efficiently operated, high quality educational institution at the lowest possible cost. And, suggests studies of these students, curriculum and program changes must reflect their expectations as well as the maturity and life experiences that they bring to the college setting. Furthermore, studies seem to suggest the need to organize college programs to accommodate a more diverse student population. Such oganization might include collaborative learning groups, evening and weekend schedules, and mentoring programs.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

As directed by the research questions and the demographic survey, the goals of this investigation were twofold. The first goal was directed toward describing the characteristics of the undergraduate nursing student. The second was aimed at describing the undergraduate nursing student in terms of multiple roles, role gratification, and role strain. These descriptions were made with the intent of then identifying whether the outcomes of role gratification or strain suggested direction for needed changes in the realms of nursing curriculum or program structure.

To achieve these goals, the undergraduate nursing students were asked to provide responses to a two-part questionnaire: a demographic survey and Gerson's measures of role gratification and role strain. In addition, a focus group was formed to augment the quantitative research results from the survey and from Gerson's instrument.

Population and Sample

The subjects participating in this research project were enrolled in a four-year baccalaureate nursing program at one of the northeastern state

universities. These participants did not include freshmen simply because this university requires that students be at the sophomore level prior to being admitted into the nursing program. Consequently, the population for this study consisted of sophomore, junior, and senior nursing students who were enrolled in at least six nursing program credits. This group, as shown by the enrollment records provided by the Registrar, consisted of 133 undergraduate nursing students.

The study was directed at describing the number of multiple roles, role strain, and role gratification of undergraduate nursing students. Overall, this population included 74 traditional students between the ages of 18 and 24, and 59 non-traditional students above the age of 25. Furthermore, these students were characterized in terms of ethnicity and gender. The traditional population included 18 students who were identified as Black, Hispanic, or Asian. This minority group also consisted of 2 males and 16 females. On the other hand, the non-traditional population included 7 minority students also identified as Black, Hispanic, or Asian, 2 of whom were male and 5 female.

Instruments

This study describes, compares, and contrasts the multiple roles, role gratification, and the role strain of undergraduate nursing students. It includes responses to two types of closed-ended questionnaires:

1. a researcher-developed demographic survey;

2. Gerson's Measures of Role Gratification and Role Strain.

After a study of these two questionnaires, a focus group of volunteer students was formed to further describe the qualitative results of the questionnaires.

Demographic Survey

A demographic survey was given to each of the subjects. This survey elicited responses to questions that yielded information to be used later when analyzing role accumulation among the variety of undergraduate nursing students and student groups. Such information determined the subject's age, ethnicity, marital status, and number of dependent children. In addition, the survey allowed this researcher to see the subject in terms of employment status as well as the subject's reliance on others for financial support. Finally the survey asked subjects to tell if they were the primary caretakers of older and/or ill relatives. Thus, this demographic survey determined the role multiplicity (role accumulation) of each of the participating subjects. (See Appendix D for a subject copy of the demographic survey.)

The second portion of the demographics, the addendum, targeted areas related to nursing education. Such areas included the amount of time that students must spend on nursing care plans prior to a day on the clinical site and if this time interferes with expected home and or child care roles. The addendum was also concerned with the relationship of the student to a spouse (or "significant other"). Specifically the questionnaire attempted to discover how the expectations and pressures of the nursing program affected the amount of support that a spouse was expected to give. Finally, this portion of the demographic survey focused on the amount of strain that the student felt because of the multiple roles assumed in addition to the role of nursing student. [See Appendix F for a copy of this portion of the demographic survey.]

Gerson's Measures of

Role Gratification and Role Strain

This instrument, developed by Judith Gerson (1985) yields two measures: role gratification and role strain. Each of these measures is evaluated by 12 items to which the subject responds on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (No or Never) to 4 (Always), yielding a possible range from 0 to 48 points, with higher scores reflecting more of the dimension being assessed. According to the Gerson measurement, the 12 items yielding a role gratification score assess the benefits enumerated by Sieber (1974) and reflect role privileges, overall status security, resources for status enhancement and role performance, and personality enrichment and ego gratification. Thus, the higher the total of these 12 items, the more the subject exhibits role gratification.

On the other hand, the 12 items producing a measure of role strain assess the negative outcomes of multiple roles operationalized by Goode's (1960) four dimensions of role strain - intrusion on personal freedom; competing demands of time, place, or resources; inconsistent norms; and competing pressures from role sets. Again, the higher the total score from these 12 items, the more the subject reflects role strain.

Gerson (1985) reports that the reliability of the role gratification items is .74 when evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. She also indicates that this measure of internal consistency yields a reliability index of .67 for the role strain items. At this point, it is unclear whether the subjects used in these estimates included only students or both students and housewives, the participants in Gerson's research project. (Modification may be necessary after information regarding this issue is provided by Gerson.)

[Appendix E shows a copy of the Gerson Measurement instrument.]

Focus Group

A focus group was organized after the students had completed the demographic survey and Gerson's measure of role gratification and strain. The focus group discussed role strain as perceived and exhibited by nursing students. Ultimately, the results of this focus group was used to complement data gathered from the surveys and questionnaire.

In order to form the focus group, I attempted to recruit students according to the results of both the demographic survey and Gerson's role strain measurement. It was my hope that some members of the group of seven students would have exhibited a high score in the area of role strain. I hoped, as well, that there would be others, in contrast, who had scored low in relation to role strain. Homogeneity in such a student group would have been determined solely by the high or low score on the role strain instruments. In actuality, however, the volunteer focus group was more of a reflection of the entire group of which it was a sample.

The focus session was coded for analysis. In order to elicit information that was pertinent to role strain, the group met in an environment that was both supportive and non-judgmental. It was made clear at the onset that there were no "right" or "wrong" responses to questions being discussed during the session.

Protection of Human Subjects

Approval to use members of the student body as subjects in a study was granted by the university department chair of Research and Development Committee. (See Appendix A and B.) This researcher attached to each packet of data-collecting instruments a letter (See Appendix C) to the students explaining:

a. the purpose of the study;

b. the fact that participation was voluntary;

c. participation in the study would not affect course grades;

d. the fact that information would remain anonymous but coded for consistency and reference (Judd, et al. 1991).

Procedure

Data Collection

The data for this investigation was collected over a four week period starting February 1995. In the initial period, this investigator met with colleagues who had volunteered to administer the data collecting instruments with their sophomore, junior, and senior classes. The purpose of the study was reviewed as well as the nature of each of the instruments. Discussion also included possible student questions related to the questionnaires and the appropriate answers to these questions. Finally, the colleagues were reminded that student participation in this study was voluntary.

Although no identifying information was requested of the participants, the data collection instruments were coded by the investigator to allow for

examination of related responses. Thus, the coding in no way revealed the identity of the subject, but allowed the researcher to compare and contrast information from the demographic profile with information revealed in the Gerson Measures of Role Gratification and Role Strain.

Plan for Data Analysis

As stated earlier, the goals of the investigation, as directed by the research questions, were twofold. The first of these goals focused on describing the characteristics of the undergraduate nursing student. The second was aimed at describing the nursing student in terms of multiple roles, role gratification, and role strain. Hence, the responses of all subjects to the two - part instrument were summarized using several descriptive statistical measures that were used to summarize the demographic data. On the basis of the demographic data, the multiple roles were identified. Using these multiple roles, groups were compared in terms of role strain, and role gratification scores using t tests for independent groups.

The focus group was used to support the two-fold purpose of this study. The first was to identify the demographic characteristics of the subjects, and the second to create a description of the multiple roles held by the focus group participants. All were noted on a large chalkboard.

A series of questions (See Appendix I) was then used as the basis for targeting the role strain or role gratification of the subjects' roles. The general procedure of the two hour session permitted student subjects to first identify the roles that they felt were important to their lives. Open ended questions were used by the researcher to elicit reponses from subjects that would target various role combinations as stressful or gratifying. Questions were asked by

the researcher to see if the perceptions of the subjects would varify the quantitative results of the investigation.

As the general discussion of strain and gratification continued, the researcher continued noting the roles that repeatedly surfaced as stressful or gratifying. In a sense, then, a pattern formed that could give some support to what had been discovered quantitatively. Not only could some verification be possible, but in some instances, emotional richness could be discerned and added to the findings about role stress and role gratification.

Setting

A single setting was deliberately selected in order to control for the effect that a university culture may have on the role strain of the undergraduate nursing student.

CHAPTER IV
THE RESULTS

Overview

Primarily descriptive in nature, the goals of this study were three-fold. The first intent of the research project was to describe the characteristics of the undergraduate nursing students enrolled in a four year baccalaureate nursing program at one northeastern state university. The second intent of this project was to identify the multiple roles assumed by these nursing students and to determine whether the student's perceived role strain changed with the number and/or type of multiple roles assumed by the individual student. Finally, the project was intended to measure the effect of multiple roles on the student's perceived gratification.

To accomplish these aims, the sophomore, junior, and senior undergraduate nursing students were asked to provide responses to a two-part questionnaire consisting of a two page demographic survey and Gerson's (1985) measures of role gratification and role strain. The students' responses to the demographic questions identified the roles assumed by these undergraduate nursing students. Then, using the multiple role information, the students' role strain and role gratification scores were compared. Finally, to supplement the conclusions drawn from these quantitative comparisons, a focus group consisting of volunteer nursing students was conducted. The results of this focus group provided qualitative data which supported the findings of the quantitative descriptive measures and also suggested directions for future research as well as identified limitations of the instruments used in this investigation.

Characteristics of the Participants

in this Investigation

At the time of this study, there were 133 students enrolled in one northeastern baccalaureate state university nursing program. As this particular program only admits students at the sophomore level, the demographic information presented here only pertains to students at or above the sophomore level.

The 108 students who completed the two-part questionnaire utilized in this study reflected an 81% return rate. As presented in Table 3, the demographic data was principally summarized using frequency counts. Where possible, corresponding percentage information has also been presented in the accompanying tables.

As shown in Table 3, the sample of 108 students included 95 females and 13 males and represented an average of 27.55 years of age, ranging from 19 to 52 years. Broken down by class, these 108 students included 44 sophomores, 30 juniors, and 34 seniors. When grouped by marital status, the 108 students consisted of 37 married participants, 5 divorced, and 66 single respondents, with married students representing approximately 34% of each of the classes. In terms of ethnic information, the 108 respondents included 81 Caucasians, 10 Blacks, 5 Asians, 5 Hispanics, and 1 respondent who checked "Other". There were six students who did not provide responses to this question.

Consideration of the financial and employment information provided by the respondents yielded additional information regarding the demographic profile of these 108 nursing students. Eighteen of these participants reported that they receive total support from either parent(s) or a relative. There were

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of 108 Participants

Variable	Categories	N	Percent
Gender	Males	13	12%
	Females	95	88%
Class	Sophomores	44	41%
	Juniors	30	28%
	Seniors	34	31%
Marital Status	Marrued	37	34%
	Divorced	5	5%
	Single	66	61%
Ethnicity*	Caucasian	81	75%
	Blacks	10	9%
	Asians	5	5%
	Hispanics	5	5%
	Other	1	1%
Level of Financial Support	Total Support	18	17%
	Some Funding	28	26%
	Self-Supporting	62	57%
Employment*	Not-working	14	13%
	Work < 30 hrs./week	73	68%
	Work > 30 hrs./week	19	18%

Note: * Several subjects did not provide this data.

28 individuals who indicated that they received partial financial support. The majority of 62 participants, however, reported that they were solely responsible for their own income and debts. In terms of employment, 104 respondents indicated that they were employed which, incidentally supports the demographic profile typical of students enrolled in programs at this northeastern university. Only 14 of the 108 respondents stated that they were not employed while they were attending college. A majority of 73 students stated that they worked fewer than 30 hours per week and 19 checked that they worked more than 30 hours per week. There were two respondents who did not provide employment information on the demographic portion of the survey.

Finally, when considering the demographic information regarding familial responsibilities (including providing financial and/or physical care as well as performing household tasks), the following picture emerged. Only 7 of the 108 students stated that they or their spouse was responsible for the physical care of an ailing child or relative. Likewise, only 11 of the 108 respondents stated that they or their spouse was responsible for providing some form of financial support to a relative other than their children.

Data from the household chores questions, however, provided only inconsistent information. While 36 of the 108 participants checked that their spouses helped with household tasks, the majority of the students reported that they were responsible for the majority of household chores. When this demographic information was cross-classified with marital status, inconsistencies emerged and hence will not be further addressed in this profile as the data suggests that the questions were, perhaps, perceived ambiguously by many of the student respondents in this study.

Respondent Role Strain Scores

For each subject, a total role strain score was computed by summing the subject's responses to the 12 items comprising Gerson's role strain instrument. As each item was evaluated on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 to 4, the possible range of role strain scores was 0 - 48. Gerson (1985) did not provide information regarding the average role strain scores of her normative sample. Hence, the role strain scores of these subjects are compared with respect to the average of this sample. As shown in Table 4, the subjects in this study reported role strain scores between 5 and 46 points producing a normal distribution characterized with an average score of 25.78 and a standard deviation of 7.35.

Given that 74.04% of the 108 respondents scored within one standard deviation of the average role strain score of 25.78, the role strain scores of 80 subjects comprising this sample of respondents ranged between 18.47 and 33.13 points. Eleven percent of the respondents had role strain scores between 1 and 2 standard deviations below the mean, thus producing 11 role strain scores within the range of 11.12 and 18.47 points. Only 2.7% of these participants had role strain scores lower than 2 standard deviations below the mean yielding three role strain values less than 11.12 points. Similar percentages of scores were observed above the mean. Again, only 11 students had role strain scores that were between 1 and 2 standard deviations above the mean, yielding values between 33.14 and 40.58 while the remaining three subjects had role strain scores in excess of 40.58.

Table 4

Role Strain Scores of 108 Participants
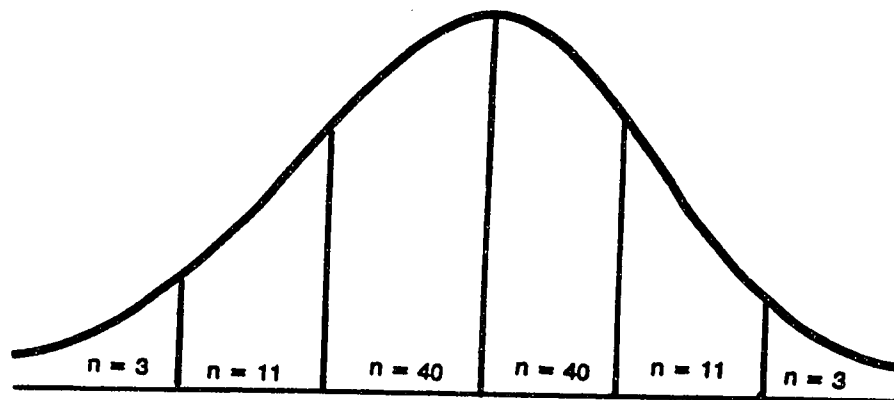
	-2SD	-1SD		1SD	2SD
Standard Deviation					

| | n = 3 | n = 11 | n = 40 | n = 40 | n = 11 | n = 3 |

| Strain Scores | 11.12 | 18.47 | 25.78 | 33.14 | 40.58 |

Role Data and Role Strain Differences

The role strain scores for these 108 participants were grouped and later compared and contrasted using multiple roles identified by the demographic information supplied by these subjects. First, the differences between groups formed by individual demographic elements were combined to determine the effect of multiple roles on perceived role strain.

When the role strain data from the 108 participants was compared by groups delineated in terms of the demographic variables, not all demographic variables permitted role strain comparisons. Only when the role strain data was classified according to the demographic information of gender, class, financial responsibility, marital status, and employment were statistical comparisons possible. The role strain scores for several demographic variables collected as part of this study were not examined as these demographic variables did not produce cell sizes sufficiently large to permit comparisons. The demographic variables of ethnicity, care giving, and household responsibilities represented examples of demographic information characterized by small (n < 5 subjects) cell sizes.

Role Strain Differences by Gender

Table 5 contains the role strain data grouped by the subject's gender. The average role strain score for the 95 females was 26.07 (SD = 7.64) while the average role strain score for the thirteen male respondents was 23.62 (SD=4.39). Because the female role strain data contained almost twice the

Table 5

Role Strain Differences by Gender

Gender groups	N	Mean	SD
Females	95	26.07	7.64
Males	13	23.62	4.39

amount of variability present in the data from the males, a separate variance rather than a pooled variance estimate was used in the independent groups t-test. The results of this statistical procedure revealed that the female respondents exhibited significantly more role strain than the male respondents, t' (24.49) = 1.70, p = .09.

Role Strain Differences by Class

Table 6 contains the role strain data for subjects grouped by class. When the role strain data was compared for the sophomores, juniors, and seniors who participated in this study, the variable of class did not reveal any significant differences in the reported average role strain score.

Role Strain Differences by Financial Support

While no role strain differences emerged when the data from the 108 subjects was grouped by class information, the role strain data exhibited significant differences when the subjects were grouped by the amount of reported financial support received. As presented in Table 7, the 18 students who received full financial support had an average role strain score of 22.5 (SD = 8.96) while the 28 students who reported receiving some financial support had an average role strain score of 28.46 (SD = 6.62) and those who were totally responsible for their own financial debts exhibited an average role strain score of 25.52 (SD = 6.82). Separate independent group t- tests

Table 6

Role Strain Differences by Class

Class groups	N	Mean	SD
Sophomores	44	24.80	7.58
Juniors	30	26.23	4.80
Seniors	34	26.65	8.82

Table 7

Role Strain Differences by Level of Financial Support from Parents or Guardians

Level of financial support	N	Mean	SD
Total support	18	22.5	8.96
Some support	28	28.46	6.62
Self-supporting	62	25.52	6.82

(with adjusted levels of alpha) showed that the role strain of students who were either partially or totally accountable for their financial debts was significantly higher than that of students who received full financial support from their parents or guardians.

Role Strain Differences by

Marital Status

Table 8 contains the role strain data from all respondents classified by marital status (married versus non-married). The average role strain score of the 37 married respondents was lower (M = 24.973; SD = 7.085) than the average role strain reported by the 71 non-married (single and divorced) participants (M = 26.197; SD = 7.502). A t-test for independent groups showed that this difference in average role strain score was not significant, t (106) = -.082, p > .05.

Table 8

Role Strain Scores by Marital Status

Marital status	N	Mean	SD
Married	37	24.97	7.09
Not-married (single/divorced)	71	26.20	7.50

Role Strain Differences
by Employment

As shown in Table 9, the role strain data from the 108 participants was also compared when the subjects were classified according to employment information. The average role strain scores of the 19 students who reported working 30 hours or more per week was 28.05 (SD = 6.01). The role strain scores for the 73 subjects who reported working less than 30 hours per week was 25.45 (SD = 7.26). Finally, the role strain scores for the 14 subjects who stated that they were not employed at the time of the study was 23.07 (SD = 8.55).

Statistical comparisons later showed that the only significant differences in role strain, which existed among these three groups of subjects, were between those who were employed 30 or more hours and those who were not employed, [t (31) = 1.97, p = .05]. Specifically, the analysis showed that the 19 students who reported working in excess of 30 hours per week demonstrated significantly higher (M = 28 .05; SD = 6.01) strain levels than the 14 subjects who indicated that they were not employed (M = 23.07; SD = 8.55).

Effects of Multiple Roles
on Role Strain

The effects of multiple roles on perceived role strain were assessed by combining two or more elements of demographic information. The results of these combinations identified several multiple roles which influenced perceived role strain among these nursing students.

Table 9

Role Strain Scores by Employment Information

Hours worked per week	N	Mean	SD
Don't work	14	23.07	8.55
Work < 30 hrs/week	73	25.45	7.26
Work > 30 hrs/week	19	28.05	6.01

Class and Marital Status Differences

When the role strain data was first separated by class and then compared for married and non-married participants, a different picture emerged. Inspection of this data revealed that differences between the married and non-married depended on the class standing of the student. As shown in Table 10 the 44 sophomores and the 30 juniors showed no significant differences in reported role strain as a function of their marital status. However, differences in role strain emerged for the 34 senior students when grouped according to marital status. Specifically, the 12 married senior class participants reported an average role strain score of 23 (SD = 9.44) while the 22 non-married senior class students exhibited an average role strain score of 28.65 (SD = 7.99). A t-test for independent groups showed that the reported role strain score for the married senior class subjects was significantly lower than that of the non-married students, t (32) = -1.84, p = .07.

Class and Financial Support Differences

The role strain data for the 108 subjects, when categorized by class (sophomores, juniors, and seniors) and financial support (total, some, none), is presented in Table 11. As tabulated there, role strain differences were observed in the sophomore and senior classes when the amount of financial support received by these subjects was considered.

Table 10

Role Strain Scores for the Multiple Roles Formed by the Combination of the
Demographic Elements of Class and Marital Status

Class	Marital status	N	Mean	SD
Sophomores	Married	15	26.47	6.31
	Not married	29	23.91	8.13
Juniors	Married	10	25.10	4.58
	Not married	20	26.80	4.93
Seniors	Married	12	23.00	9.44
	Not married	22	28.64	7.99

Table 11

Average Role Strain Scores for Undergraduate Nursing Students Grouped
According to the Muliple Roles of Class and Level of Financial Support

Class	Financial support	N	Mean	SD
Sophomores	Full support	10	20.20	7.61
	Some support	10	26.90	7.26
	No support	24	25.83	7.21
Juniors	Full support	2	25.50	6.36
	Some support	9	27.44	5.03
	No support	19	25.74	4.76
Seniors	Full support	6	25.33	11.69
	Some support	9	31.22	7.10
	No support	19	24.89	8.24

The 10 sophomores who received full financial support experienced less role strain (M = 20.20; SD = 7.26) than the 10 sophomores who received partial support (M = 26.90; SD = 7.21) and the 24 sophomores who reported that they were solely responsible for their finances (M = 25.83; SD 7.21)

While differences in role strain emerged for the sophomores, no differences in role strain were identified for juniors when grouped by the amount of financial support. As presented in the table, all three groups of junior nursing students reported experiencing nearly identical amounts of role strain.

Finally, when the data from the senior nursing students was considered, a picture different from the junior students emerged. The seniors receiving partial financial support exhibited the highest levels of role strain (M = 31.22; SD = 7.10) as compared to the seniors with total financial support (M = 25.33; SD = 11.69) and those receiving no financial support from parents or guardians (M = 24.89; SD = 8.24)

Other Multiple Role Combinations
and Role Strain

While the multiple roles produced by the combination of the demographic variables of class and marital status and class and amount of financial support yielded differences in role strain, the combinations of all other demographic elements either did not reveal any significant differences in role strain for the 108 college students who participated in the study or failed to produce cells of significant size to statistically compare.

Accordingly, comparisons of the role strain scores for these multiple role combinations are not presented here.

Respondent Role Gratification Scores

For each subject, a role gratification score was computed by summing the subject's responses to the 12 items comprising Gerson's (1985) role gratification instrument. As with the measure of role strain, each of the items comprising the role gratification instrument was evaluated on the same 5-point scale ranging from 0 to 4 points. Similarly, as with the role strain items, Gerson did not provide information regarding the average role gratification scores of her normative sample. Hence, the role gratification scores of the 108 subjects in this study are summarized with respect to the average of this sample and presented in Table 12.

Role Gratification Differences as a Result of Single
Roles Identified by Demographic Elements

As with the role strain scores, the role gratification scores of these 108 subjects were grouped, compared and contrasted in two ways. First, the role gratification scores were compared using single roles identified by individual demographic elements. Later, the role gratification scores were compared for the multiple roles formed by the combination of two or more elements of demographic information.

Table 12

Role Gratification Scores of 108 Participants

Role Gratification

| Standard | -2SD | -1SD | | 1SD | 2SD |

n = 2   n = 10   n = 49   n = 28   n = 17   n = 2

Standard
Deviation

Low
Gratification

High
Gratification
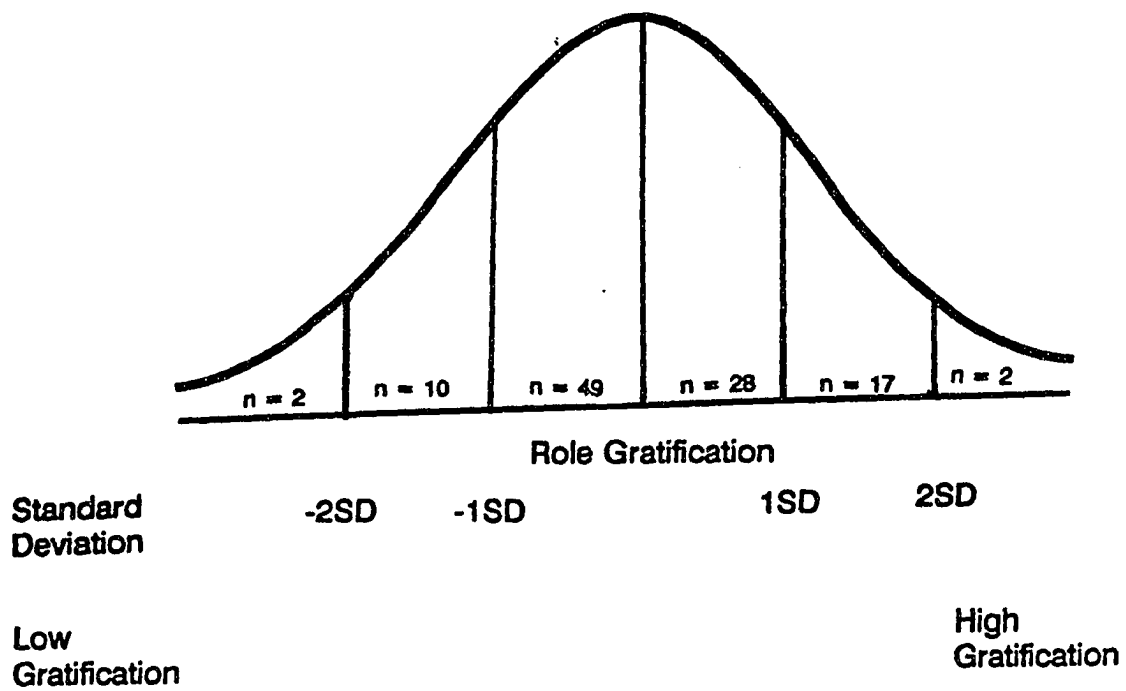
When the role gratification data from the 108 participants was compared for groups formed by individual demographic elements, not all demographic elements permitted statistical comparisons. Only when role gratification data was classified according to the individual demographic elements of gender, class, financial responsibility, marital status, and employment were statistical comparisons possible. The demographic elements of ethnicity, care giving, and household responsibilities produced cell sizes with fewer than 5 subjects and hence were not compared.

Role Gratification by Gender

Table 13 contains the role gratification data grouped by the gender of the 108 subjects. The average role gratification score for the 95 females was 26.88 (SD = 6.77) while the average gratification score for the 13 males was 28.23 (SD = 6.50). An independent group's t-test revealed that while the males were slightly more gratified than the females, the difference was not large enough to reach statistical significance, t (106) = -0.68, p > .05.

Role Gratification by Class

When the 108 role gratification scores were grouped by the respondent's class, the averages presented in Table 14 emerged. As presented there, the average role gratification scores of the sophomores (M = 27.39; SD = 7.17) and juniors (M = 27.43; SD = 5.10) were slightly, but not

Table 13

Role Gratification Scores Grouped by Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Females	95	26.88	6.77
Males	13	28.23	6.50

Table 14

Role Gratification Scores Grouped by Class

Class	N	Mean	SD
Sohomores	44	27.39	7.17
Juniors	30	27.43	5.10
Seniors	34	26.26	7.48

significantly, higher than the average role gratification score of the senior participants (M = 26.26; SD = 7.48) in this study.

Role Gratification by Level of
Financial Support

In addition to considering role gratification scores as grouped by the single roles formed from the demographic elements of gender and class, the role gratification scores were also compared by the level of financial support received from the participant's parents and/or guardians. As presented in Table 15, the average gratification scores of the 18 subjects who reported receiving total parent/guardian support was slightly higher (M = 28.67; SD = 7.17) than the 28 subjects who stated that they received partial support (M =27.46; SD = 6.95). Statistical comparisons showed that these differences in gratification scores were not large enough to reach significance at the .05 level, thus implying that receiving financial support did not differentiate the subjects in terms of gratification as measured by Gerson's instrument (1985).

Role Gratification by
Marital Status

When the role gratification scores were compared by marital status, two groups were formed. As presented in Table 16, the average role gratification score of the 37 married students was 27.03 (SD = 7.78) while

Table 15

Role Gratification Scores for the 108 Subjects When Grouped by the Level of
Financial Support Received from Parents or Guardians

Level of financial support	N	Mean	SD
Total support	18	28.67	7.17
Some support	28	27.46	5.91
Self-supporting	62	26.39	6.95

Table 16

Role Gratification Scores Grouped by Marital Status

Marital status	N	Mean	SD
Married	37	27.03	7.78
Not married	71	27.06	6.17

the average gratification score of the 71 single and/or divorced participants was 27.06 (SD = 6.17). As the variability in the gratification scores for the subjects in these two groups differed significantly, an adjusted independent groups t-test was used to compare the average gratification scores of these two groups. The results of this analysis showed that the married and not married participants did not differ significantly in terms of their gratification, t' (60.14) = -.02, p > .05.

Role Gratification by Employment

When the gratification data was finally sorted by employment information provided on the demographic survey, three groups of subjects were formed. As presented in Table 17, the 14 subjects who indicated that they did not work had an average role gratification score of 29.00 (SD = 7.61) which was higher, although not significantly, than the average role gratification score of subjects who reported that they worked during the academic year. Of the 92 subjects who indicated that they worked, the majority of subjects (N = 73) reported that they worked fewer than 30 hours per week and earned an average role gratification score of 27.34 (SD = 5.87). Only 19 of the 92 subjects who stated that they worked, were employed for more than 30 hours per week. The average role gratification score of these 19 subjects was 25.26 (SD = 8.36). A series of independent group t-tests, adjusted for the probability of making a Type I error, did not reveal any significant differences between these three groups of subjects.

Table 17

Role Gratification Scores by Employment Information

Hours worked per week	N	Mean	SD
Don't work	14	29.00	7.61
Work < 30 hrs/week	73	27.34	5.87
Work >30 hrs/week	19	25.26	8.36

Gratification Scores by

Multiple Roles

When the gratification scores were compared for the subjects grouped according to the multiple roles produced by the combination of two or more demographic elements, there were no significant differences in gratification for these 108 subjects.

Relationship Between Role Gratification

and Role Strain

Although no specific research questions addressed the relationship between role strain and role gratification for these subjects, the significant findings from the multiple roles of class and marital status on role strain and the lack of any significance for the gratification data for these same two demographic elements led the researcher to investigate the relationship between role strain and role gratification.

Tables 18 through 21 illustrate the correlation between role strain and role gratification for the 108 subjects in this study. Table 18 shows the plot of these two variables without taking into account the subject's class (Sophomore, Junior, or Senior) and/or the subject's marital status (married versus not married). As illustrated in this plot, there is a negative correlation between role strain and role gratification suggesting that subjects with high levels of role strain will have corresponding low levels of role gratification.

Table 18

The Correlation Between Role Strain and Role Gratification for the

108 Participants in the Study

```
  50.0+
       |*
       |*
  40.0+
       |                *   *   * *   * *    *  *
       |            *   * * * * * * * * *  **
     Y |            *        * * *   ** **
G 30.0+|            * *B **  *      ** **       *  *  *
R      |              B     C  *  *   ** ** D     *B
A      |    *     *       * ** *      CC C* B D*    B* *         *
T      |                     *            *             *
  20.0+|           **   ** *     *      * *    *
       |            *              *   * *  *          *
       |             *                *     *        *
  10.0+|                       *        *        *
       |
       |
   0.0+|                              *
       |+------+---------------+---------------+---------------+---------------+
        5      10              20              30              40              50
                                      STRAIN
```
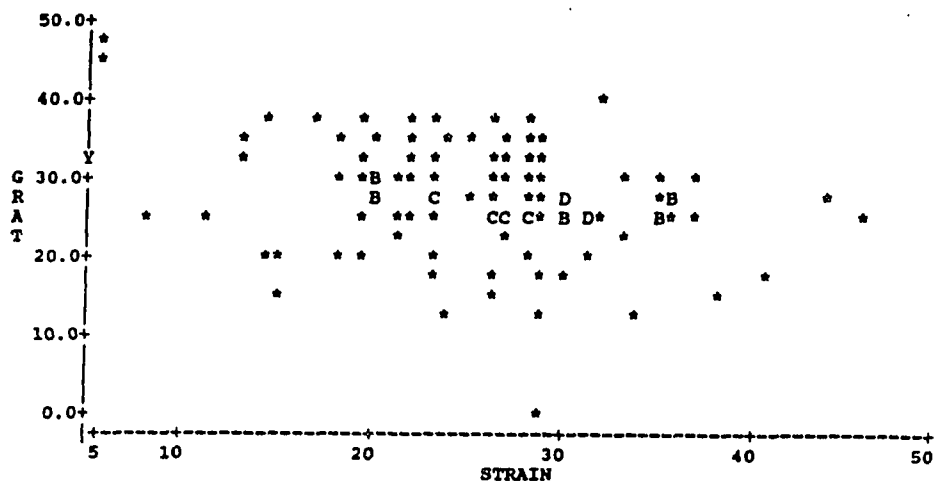
X Variable: STRAIN
Y Variable: GRAT

	GRAT	STRAIN
Mean:	27.046	25.778
Standard deviation:	6.725	7.351
Minimum:	0.000	5.000
Maximum:	46.000	46.000
N:		108
N Missing:		0

Std dev of Y given X:	6.444

Correlation and two- tailed P-value:	-0.3008 (P<0.0016)

On the other hand, those subjects with low levels of role strain will have relatively high levels of role gratification. Table 19 presents the plot of role strain and role gratification using the data for the sophomore class only. The top graph illustrates the relationship between these two variables for the 15 married students while the bottom graph presents the relationship between these two variables for the 29 single students. The married sophomores exhibited a negative correlation of $r = -0.46$ ($p = .09$) between role strain and role gratification, implying that subjects who reported high role strain tended to exhibit relatively low levels of role gratification. On the other hand, as presented in the bottom half of Table 19, the 29 single sophomore students exhibited a stronger, negative, and significant correlation between the variables of role strain and role gratification. For these subjects, the relationship between role strain and role gratification was -0.63 ($p < .0002$). As illustrated by these two graphs, the average strain and gratification scores for the married sophomores were identical (M strain = 26.47; M gratification = 26.47) while the average gratification score for the single sophomores (M = 27.86) was higher than the average strain score (M = 23.93) for these same subjects.

The significant and negative relationship between role strain and role gratification disappeared when the data from the junior class students and senior class students was examined. As presented in Table 20, the correlation between role strain and role gratification was nearly zero for both married and single nursing students in the Junior class. A correlation near zero implies no relationship between these two measures, as suggested by the scatter of dots on the two plots presented in Table 20.

Table 19

The Correlation Between Role Strain and Role Gratification for the Sophomore Nursing Students Separated Further by Marital Status

	GRAT	STRAIN
Mean:	26.467	26.467
Standard deviation:	8.758	6.312
Minimum:	0.000	14.000
Maximum:	37.000	35.000
N:		15
N Missing:		0
Std dev of Y given X:		8.074
Correlation and two-tailed P-value:		-0.4591
		(P<0.0852)

	GRAT	STRAIN
Mean:	27.862	23.931
Standard deviation:	6.317	8.133
Minimum:	15.000	5.000
Maximum:	43.000	41.000
N:		29
N Missing:		0
Std dev of Y given X:		4.978
Correlation and two-tailed P-value:		-0.6335
		(P<0.0002)
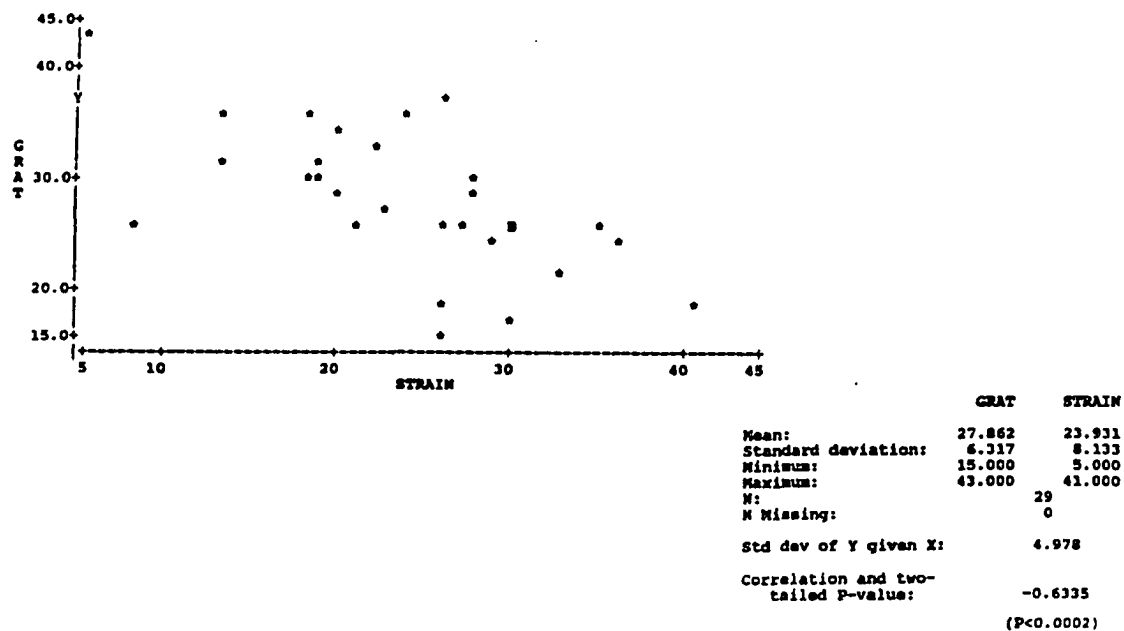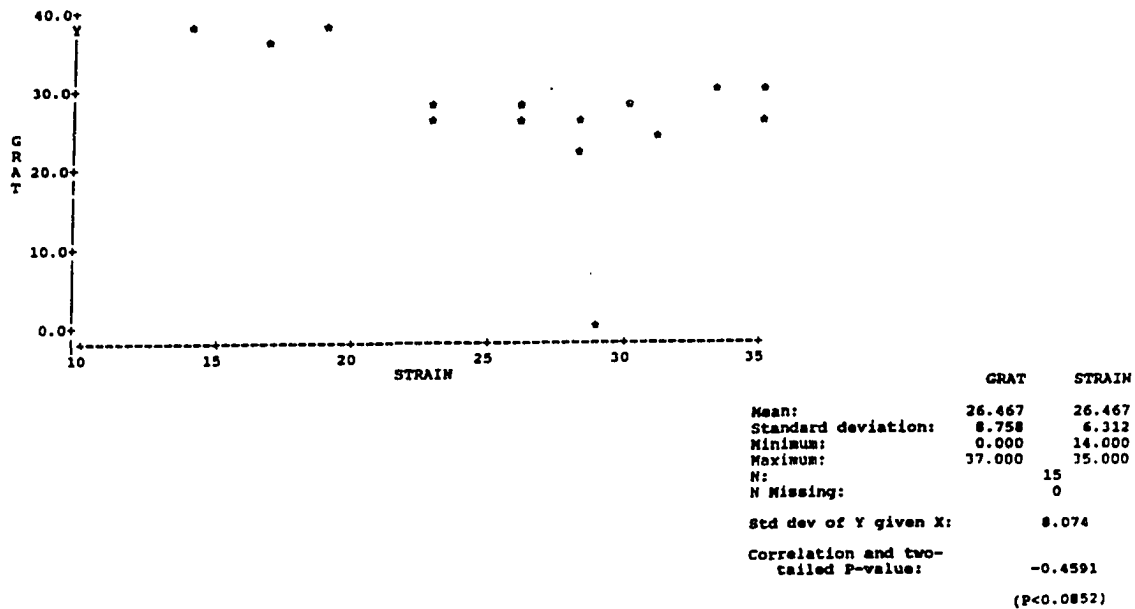
Table 20

The Correlation Between Role Strain and Role Gratification for the

Junior Nursing Students Separated Further by Marital Status

	GRAT	STRAIN
Mean:	28.000	25.100
Standard deviation:	4.397	4.581
Minimum:	20.000	18.000
Maximum:	38.000	30.000
N:	10	
N Missing:	0	

Std dev of Y given X: 4.650

Correlation and two-
tailed P-value: 0.0772 (P<0.8319)

	GRAT	STRAIN
Mean:	27.150	26.800
Standard deviation:	5.499	4.927
Minimum:	16.000	19.000
Maximum:	39.000	38.000
N:	20	
N Missing:	0	

Std dev of Y given X: 5.646

Correlation and two-
tailed P-value: -0.0357 (P<0.8810)
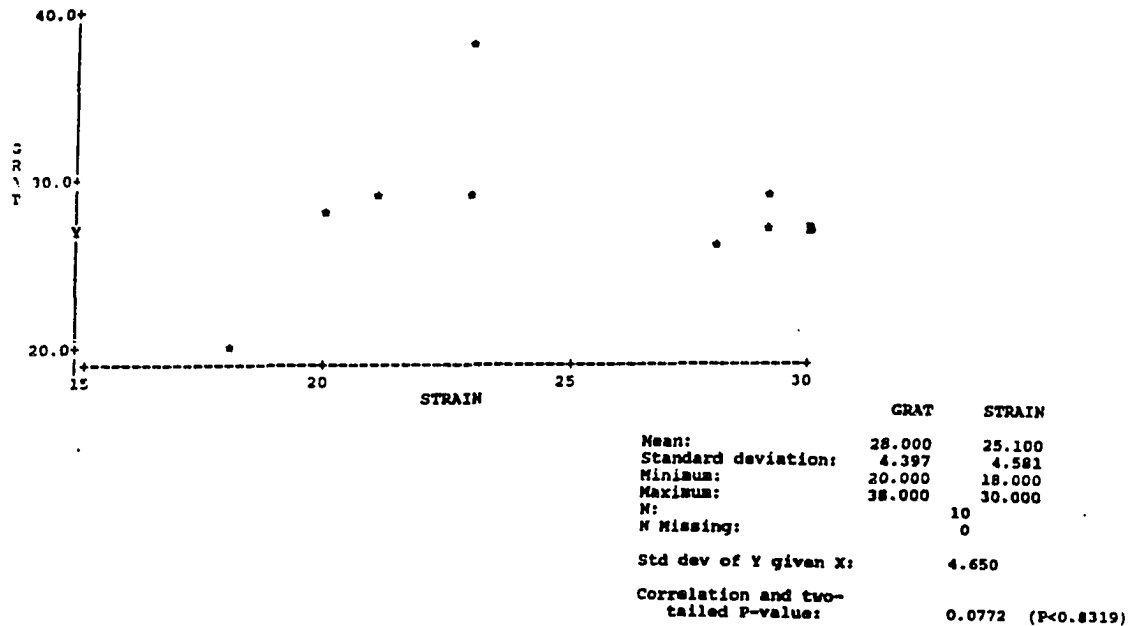
Table 21

The Correlation Between Role Strain and Role Gratification for the Senior Nursing Students Separated Further by Marital Status
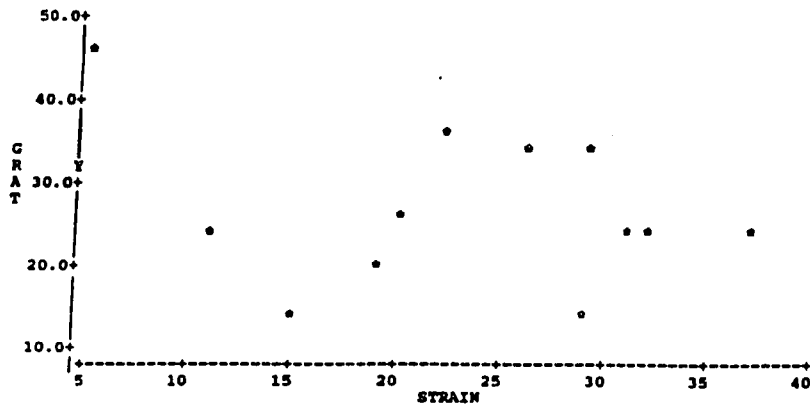
	GRAT	STRAIN
Mean:	26.917	23.000
Standard deviation:	9.120	9.439
Minimum:	14.000	5.000
Maximum:	46.000	37.000
N:		12
N Missing:		0

Std dev of Y given X: 9.122

Correlation and two-
    tailed P-value: -0.3010

(P<0.3416)
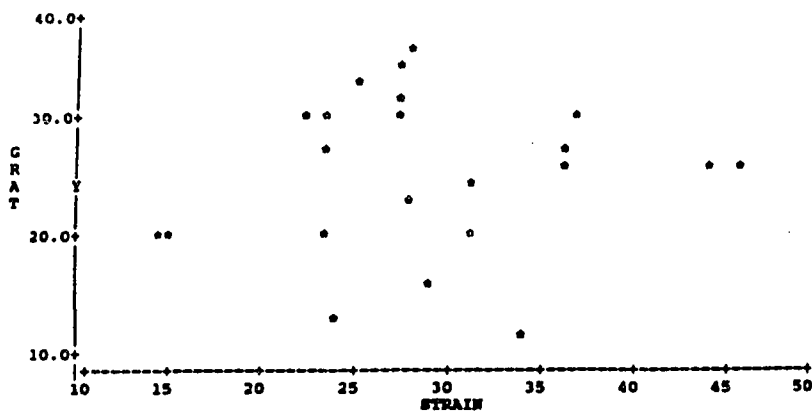
	GRAT	STRAIN
Mean:	25.909	28.636
Standard deviation:	6.625	7.985
Minimum:	12.000	14.000
Maximum:	37.000	46.000
N:		22
N Missing:		0

Std dev of Y given X: 6.769

Correlation and two-
    tailed P-value: 0.0777

(P<0.7312)

Finally, inspection of the plots presented in Table 21 from the Senior students also showed a negligible and non-significant relationship between role strain and role gratification for both the married and single students in this class.

As suggested by a comparison of the plots presented in Tables 18 - 21, the negative and significant relationship between role strain and role gratification appears to be totally due to the Sophomore class and, primarily, the single students. This relationship between role strain and role gratification is absent in both the Junior and Senior class nursing students, both married and single subjects.

Summary of the Addendum

Since students in the Sophomore class were not involved with clinical experiences at the time of data collection, only data from the Junior and Senior nursing students is summarized with respect to "The Addendum" and reported in Table 22. In responding to the 10 items contained in "The Addendum", the subjects were instructed to respond to each item by checking YES, NO, or N/A (not applicable to me). As inspection o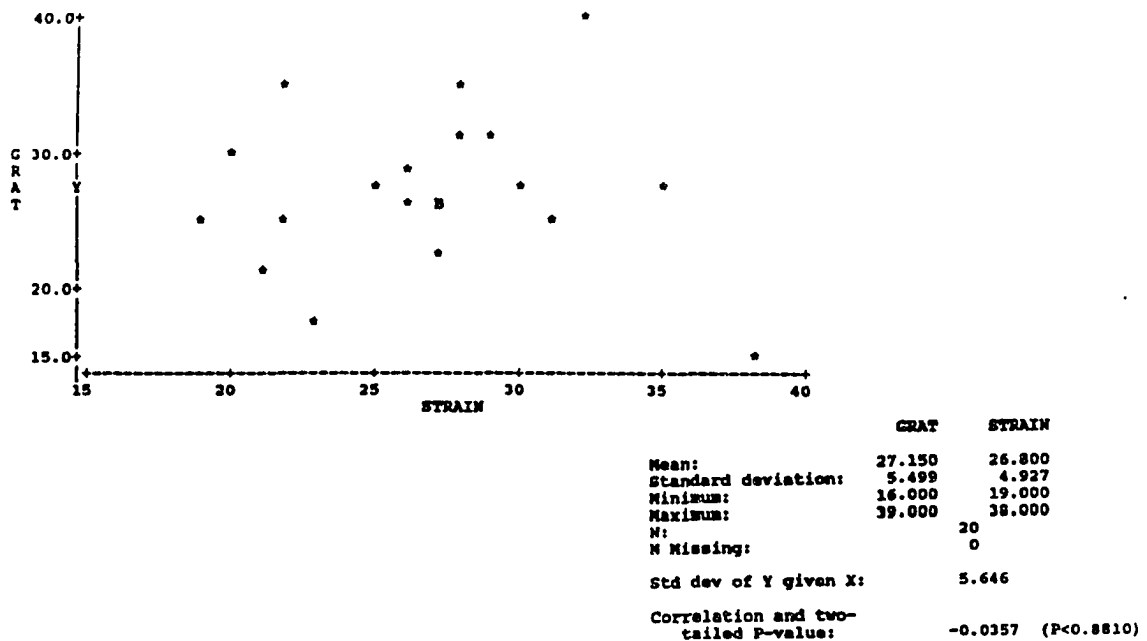f the frequency data for the Junior and Senior nursing students will support, only three questions (Items 1, 2, and 10) differentiated these two groups of students. In terms of Item 1, 86% (24 of 30) of the Juniors reported that they did *not* find it difficult to travel from site to site in order to participate in various clinical experiences. On the other hand, the Seniors were equally divided on this question, with 52% (17 of 33) of the students responding YES and 48% (16 of 33) checking NO.

Table 22

Junior and Senior Nursing Student Responses to Each of the 10 Items Included on "The Addendum"

Item	Class	Yes	No	N/A
1. Do you find it difficult to travel from site to site in order to participate in various clinical experiences?	Junior	4	24	2
	Senior	17	16	0
2. Do the demands of the nursing courses interfere with your ability to deal with situations in your home or social life?	Junior	19	11	0
	Senior	24	8	1
3. Do you find that clinical hours are often in conflict with daycare hours?	Junior	1	5	24
	Senior	1	10	21
4. Do your nursing care plans take so long to complete that you can not perform household responsibilities?	Junior	18	10	2
	Senior	19	11	3

			Yes	No	N/A
5.	Do you find it difficult to do your best on your clinical site because of demands placed on you by your children, spouse, or parent?	Junior	5	19	5
		Senior	8	23	2
6.	Do you feel conflict between the expectations of the nursing program and the expectations put upon you at your job?	Junior	10	20	0
		Senior	12	17	4
7.	Do you feel that you spend so much time of care plan preparation that your clinical performance suffers?	Junior	10	20	0
		Senior	8	21	4
8.	Do you feel that you need more help or support on the days you must prepare care plans?	Junior	18	11	1
		Senior	21	9	3

		Yes	No	N/A
9. Do you often feel overwhelmed on the clinical site because of the expectations and the technical knowledge and proficiency required?	Junior	14	16	0
	Senior	19	14	0
10. Do you often feel overwhelmed on the clinical site because it is difficult for you to prioritize?	Junior	5	24	1
	Senior	11	22	0

A smaller class difference was evident on Item 2, in which students were asked to indicate whether the demands of their nursing courses (their role as nursing student) interfered with their ability to deal with situations in their home or social life. Sixty-three percent (19 of 30) of the Juniors and 73% (24 of 33) of the Seniors responded YES to this item.

Finally, inspection of Item 10 revealed the final class difference. Approximately 17% (5 of 30) of the Juniors reported that they felt overwhelmed on the clinical site because it was difficult for them to prioritize. However, the majority of 80% (24 of 30) of the Junior nursing students reported that prioritizing as not a problem for them on the clinical site. The YES and NO responses to this item were more evenly divided in the Senior class. There, approximately 33% (11 of 33) of the Seniors reported that prioritizing on the clinical site was difficult for them whereas 66% (22 of 33) indicated that prioritizing was not a problem.

As reported in Table 22, all other items included on "The Addendum" did not reveal any class differences in frequency for the 108 participants in this study.

The Focus Group:
A Summary

Several weeks after data related to demographics, role strain, and role gratification were collected and studied, a focus group was formed to aid in the interpretation of the data and to bring detail to the findings. Although it would have been ideal to have a focus group that was exactly reflective of the student make-up or to have a focus group involving only the extremes of role

strain and role gratification, reality, and the need to keep the focus group voluntary, yielded a group of seven students that was both enthusiastic about their participation yet did not represent either of the desired membership patterns.

The group consisted of seven Caucasian students from the Junior class. Of the seven, there was one 27 year-old male who was self supporting and in the process of a divorce. A forty-nine year old female was married and was supported by her husband. Three of the other female students, ages 22 - 24, received some financial support and worked less than 30 hours per week. In addition, a sixth student, 23 years old, lived in an apartment and was totally supported by her parents or guardian. Finally, the seventh student, female, age 22, was totally responsible for her own financial support by working more than 30 hours per week. Each of these students was a volunteer who had given signed permission to participate in the focus group. (See Appendix H.)

The direction of the discussion was set by a group of closed and open-ended questions, answers to which would elaborate on the data that had been previously collected. (See Appendix I for a listing of these questions.) These questions were structured to elicit responses that would reveal the students' multiple roles, the roles that were found to be most stressful, and reasons for role stress. In addition, the questions afforded opportunities for the student subjects to discuss opinions related to role gratification and its sources. Finally, there was opportunity to talk about household roles, the struggle with household chores, and whether assistance with household duties helped to ease the stressors associated with clinical preparation.

The series of questions caused some vigorous discussion. Although each student was willing to voice an opinion on any of the subjects, there were some areas where there was little if any consensus. For the most part,

however, there was general agreement related to the majority of the areas of discussion.

First, almost all agreed that the role of nursing student was the most stressful of any other individual role. And, it was generally agreed that the stress of this role could either be increased or decreased in intensity by other roles that are held by the student. For example, the majority of the subjects agreed that the role of nursing student would be less stressful for students who were not required to work. All students agreed that worry related to finances added to nursing student role stress more than any other.

In the discussion of stress and gratification as related to marital status, there was considerable agreement among the students. As was found in the data related to Gerson's (1985) Measures of Role Strain and Role Gratification, subjects who reported that they were single also reported more role strain. The students offered reasons for this phenomena. Most agreed that role strain might be reduced with married students because students who were married probably received needed support with multiple roles, thereby bringing gratification rather than strain. On the other hand, role strain with single students might very well be the result of a lack of role support.

It was also generally agreed that perhaps unmarried students exhibited more strain than married students because dating adds strain to the student role. One student, in fact, stated that she broke off a relationship specifically because it interfered with her role as student and with the responsibilities that are associated with this role. It was too difficult, she stated, to cope with the role of dating while at the same time attempting to cope with the role of student nurse. The married student agreed. Strain, she said, was certainly reduced by the support from her spouse who helped her to prioritize roles, and offer support when roles conflicted.

When asked for the one specific role that interfered with preparation for clinical practicums, the overwhelming response dealt with being a care giver. This role did not surface during the initial collection of data because the initial questions assumed an ill or needy parent or relative. The problem, then, was a problem with the data collecting instrument. Focus should have been put upon the care of siblings and grandchildren, for it was this role that produced strain with many of the students.

Finally, regarding role strain, students tended to agree that role strain is often the result of too few roles rather than too many. They felt that a greater number of roles often results in less time to actually worry about the roles themselves and the strain that they might produce. As examples, it was agreed that married students may tend to exhibit less strain simply because of the number of multiple roles. Contrary, single students might exhibit greater strain simply because they have the time to do so. One of the focus group members agreed. She explained that she had more time than many of her friends since she neither worked, was a care giver, nor was married. Her lack of roles left her with more than enough time to dwell on her role as student nurse, the role with the most strain of all.

Summary of the Findings

Primarily descriptive in nature, the goals of this study were three-fold. The first intent of this project was to describe the demographic characteristics of the typical undergraduate nursing student enrolled in a four year baccalaureate program at one northeastern state university. With respect to this goal, the typical nursing student at this university was a single,

Caucasian, female averaging 27.55 years of age, receiving some or no financial support from her parents of guardians, and employed less than 30 hours per week.

The second intent of this project was to identify the multiple roles assumed by these nursing students and to determine whether the students perceived role strain changed with the number and/or type of multiple roles assumed by the individual. With respect to this goal, the results of this investigation revealed that when the participant's roles were defined in terms of the subject's demographic elements, only the roles of gender, marital status, class, level of financial support provided by the parents or guardian, and reported number of hours worked per week had sufficient cell sizes to permit statistical comparisons.

When considering each role separately, the following differences in perceived role strain were observed. These subjects could not be differentiated on role strain when considering only the respondent's class role or marital status. In other words, the sophomores, juniors, and seniors who participated in this study did not differ in perceived levels of role strain. Additionally, the married students did not have a significantly different level of role strain than the singles who included both divorced and single students.

While the respondents' perceived level of role strain were not differentiated in terms of their roles of class and marital status, these subjects differed significantly on role strain when compared for the roles of gender, financial support, and employment. Females reported more role strain than males. Subjects who were either totally or partially accountable for their financial debts reported significantly higher levels of role strain than students who received full financial assistance from parents or guardians. Finally, students who reported working in excess of 30 hours per week demonstrated

significantly higher strain levels than the students who indicated that they were not employed.

To evaluate the effects of multiple roles on perceived role strain, two or more demographic elements were combined. The multiple roles produced by the combination of the demographic elements of class and marital status revealed significant differences in role strain. For both the sophomore and junior nursing students, there was no difference in role strain as a function of the student's marital status. Thus, whether the student was married or not married, the role strain levels of these students did not differ significantly. However, differences in role strain emerged when the 34 senior students were grouped according to marital status. The married senior class participants showed significantly less role strain than the not-married seniors.

A second multiple role combination also evidenced significant differences in role strain. When the subjects were separated into groups based on both class and financial support received, role strain differences were observed for the sophomore and senior class students. Those sophomores who received full financial support experienced less role strain than those who were given partial or no financial support by their parents or guardians.

When the data from the junior class was separated by level of financial support, there were no significant differences in role strain. However, when the data from the senior nursing students was considered, a different picture emerged. In that class, the seniors who received either total or partial financial support exhibited higher levels of role strain than those students who were not supported.

The third goal of this project was to measure the effect of multiple roles on the perceived gratification of these nursing students. With respect to

this goal, the findings of this research project suggests that no single role, as identified by each demographic element revealed any differences in perceived gratification. Likewise, no multiple roles, formed from the combination of two or more demographic elements, revealed any differences in perceived gratification for these students.

While no specific research questions were directed toward describing the relationship between role strain and role gratification, the inconsistent findings in the effect of multiple roles separately on these two measures, motivated the researcher to examine the relationship between role strain and role gratification. Examination of that relationship for the multiple roles formed by the combination of the demographic elements of class and marital status revealed that for sophomores only, high levels of role strain were associated with low levels of role gratification and vice-versa. This relationship between role strain and role gratification was not evidenced in the data from the junior and the senior nursing students.

Additionally, the relationship between role strain and role gratification became even clearer when the subjects in each class were further separated according to their marital status. The negative correlation between role strain and role gratification was more pronounced in the single sophomore nursing students than in the married sophomore students. However, grouping the junior and the senior nursing students in terms of reported marital status had no effect on clarifying the relationship between role strain and role gratification.

Finally, differences between the junior and senior nursing students only surfaced on Items 1, 2, and 10 of "The Addendum" questions. While the majority of juniors reported that they did not find it difficult to travel from site to site for their clinical experiences, the seniors were about equally divided on

this issue. Second, a higher percentage of seniors reported that the demands of their nursing courses interfered with their ability to deal with situations in their homes or social lives. Lastly, while 17% of the juniors reported that prioritizing was viewed as a problem at the clinical site, this percentage almost doubled when considering the responses of the senior nursing students.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Summary

Designed primarily as a descriptive research project, this study was directed at answering three research questions. The first intent of the project was to provide a description of the typical undergraduate nursing student enrolled in a four year baccalaureate program at one northeastern state university. Attended primarily by commuters, the typical nursing student enrolled in this program was a single, Caucasian female of approximately 27.55 years of age. As seen in other undergraduate professional programs offered at this university, this student generally receives little financial aid from her parents and/or guardians and is employed for 30 or fewer hours per week.

The second intent of this project was to identify the multiple roles assumed by these nursing students and to determine whether the student's perceived role strain changed with the number and/or the types of multiple roles assumed by the individual. When the participant's roles were defined in terms of the subject's demographic information, only the elements of gender, marital status, class, level of financial support provided by parents or guardians, and reported weekly work time had sufficient observations to permit statistical comparisons.

When these demographic elements were evaluated individually, the following role strain differences were observed. First, two of these roles did not reveal anticipated role strain differences: class and marital status. In other words, the sophomores, juniors, and seniors did not differ in perceived levels

of role strain. Additionally, the married students did not have a significantly different level of role strain than the not-married (single and divorced) subjects in this study.

The lack of significant differences in role strain for the two demographic elements of class and marital status is probably most parsimoniously explained by comparing the size of the sample of this and previous investigations. Generally, prior investigations included between two to four times as many subjects as included in this study. In fact, such researchers as Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1994) have demonstrated that significance is directly influenced by the size of the sample. As the sample size increases, the standard error (or another measure of variability) decreases. As variability in the data is reduced, it is more likely that any differences in performance (in this case, the average role strain score of the group) will be significantly different as this difference is evaluated with respect to the variability contained in the data.

While the respondents' perceived level of role strain were not differentiated in terms of class and marital status, these subjects differed significantly on role strain when compared for the demographic elements of gender, financial support, and typical number of hours worked per week. Specifically, the following differences were observed. Females reported significantly more role strain than males. Subjects who were either totally or partially accountable for their financial debts reported significantly higher levels of role strain than students who received full financial support from parents or guardians. Finally, subjects who reported working in excess of 30 hours per week demonstrated significantly higher levels of role strain than subjects who indicated no employment. While these findings have intuitive appeal, some of these differences also have been reported by previous

investigators as well. For example, Chartrand (1990) noted that students with heavy demands from other roles may experience increasingly more personal negative conflict (and subsequent role strain) than those without such demands.

To evaluate the effects of multiple roles on perceived strain, two or more demographic elements were combined. The multiple roles produced by the combination of two demographic elements yielded significant differences: (1) class and marital status and (2) class and level of financial support.

The multiple roles produced by the combination of the demographic elements of class and marital status revealed significant differences in role strain. For both the sophomore and junior nursing students, there was no difference in role strain when the subjects' marital status was also taken into account. Thus, whether the sophomore or junior nursing student was married or not, these students did not differ significantly in terms of role strain from their not-married counterparts. However, differences in role strain emerged when the senior students were also separated according to their marital status. The married senior class participant showed significantly less role strain than the not-married seniors. This finding supports the work of several researchers, including Marks (1977), Thoits (1983), and Campaniello (1988) who noted that role multiplicity may actually be an energy provider or a psychological enhancer rather than a strain producer.

If role multiplicity is a positive rather than a negative agent, then married senior nursing students with more roles to juggle than their not-married counterparts appear to be aided by the additional role of spouse. However, it appears that the only time that the added spousal role is an enhancer is when that role is supportive. Additionally, the findings of this project suggest that the effects of multiple roles may be dependent upon the

demographic characteristics of the subjects. Hence, it may be inappropriate to assume that multiple roles will have the same effect on all participants in a study.

Further, the fact that significant differences between the married and the not-married students is class-dependent supports Campaniello's (1988) statement that it is not the number of roles that affect the perception of conflict but, rather, the particular combination. If conflict or strain merely resulted from the number of roles that one assumed, and not the particular combination, then, role strain should have developed every time two or more demographic elements were combined. This, however, was not the case.

There was a second multiple role combination which revealed significant differences in strain. When subjects were separated into groups based on both class and level of financial support received from parents or guardians, role strain differences were observed at some levels but not at others. Those sophomores who received full financial support experienced less role strain than those who were given partial or no support. However, at the junior level, the effects of financial support were lost. As supported by the means presented in Table 11, there were no differences in role strain for the three financial support groups of juniors. Finally, when the data from the senior level students was examined, role strain differences again emerged. In that class, the seniors who were *not* supported financially by parents or guardians exhibited lower role strain levels than those who received either partial or full financial support.

The fact that the combined demographic elements of class and level of financial support yielded significant differences in role strain suggests that the effects of multiple roles may be characterized by a developmental trend. At the sophomore level, the effect of the financial support is to reduce role strain

(stress), yet by the time the students reach the senior level, the effects of students having their debts the responsibility of others may actually serve to create more role strain or stress. Thus, while it may be beneficial for parents to be responsible for the finances of sophomore students who are in the entry stage of the nursing program, it may actually be non beneficial for parents to assume responsibility for senior students' debts and support.

The third goal of this project was to measure the effects of multiple roles on the perceived gratification of these nursing students. The results of this project were surprising with respect to this goal. While it was not anticipated that every demographic element which evidenced effects on role strain would similarly reveal differences on role gratification, the lack of any effects of the demographic elements on role gratification were initially puzzling. To offer a verifiable explanation, as opposed to an intuitive account, several additional comparisons were conducted. For both the role strain and the role gratification data, measures of internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) were calculated. These calculations offered some explanation. When the data from the 108 subjects was used in computing Cronbach's Alpha, these measurements showed that the internal consistency of the role strain instrument were similar to those originally reported by Gerson (1985). However, when the gratification data from these same subjects was used in calculating Cronbach's Alpha, the estimate of internal consistency for that portion of the instrument was considerably lower ($r =$ .55) than originally reported by Gerson (1985). Accordingly, it seems plausible that one reason for the lack of any significant effects of multiple roles on gratification may be that the instrument is no longer suitable for these subjects, and thereby incapable of evidencing consistent differences.

The fact that both individual as well as combined demographic elements influenced role strain but did not show any effects on role gratification can also be explained on an intuitive basis. Perhaps, role gratification may not be recognized until strain has occurred.

The gist of this argument can be summarized by the following analogy. A driver who has never been troubled by a poorly running automobile would probably not express gratification for this reliability that is taken for granted. However, a driver who has been plagued by an unreliable car would probably express great satisfaction and gratification when given the opportunity to own a reliable, dependable vehicle. Transposing the analogy to the role data collected in this investigation, the following scenario may best describe the point. Perhaps the students who were totally financially supported did not recognize how wonderful it was to have someone pay the bill until they were placed in a position where they had to pay some bills for themselves. So, getting full financial support may reduce role strain but may not produce recognized gratification at the same time. In fact, fully supported students would not recognize the benefits of financial support until this support was no longer available.

Limitations of the Study

The shortcomings of this investigations are primarily two-fold in nature: those directly related to sample of subjects and those which stem from the instrument employed in measuring role strain and role gratification. With respect to the sample used in this study, the following limitations are evident. As the subjects represented a convenience sample, it is unlikely that

the results of this study are applicable to other nursing programs without first verifying that the students enrolled in those programs resemble the typical undergraduate nursing student at this university. In technical terms, the results of this study probably lack external validity, in that the findings are not immediately generalizable to other undergraduate nursing students.

Additionally, the number of subjects included in this investigation is a drawback as the combination of many demographic elements yielded cell sizes well below the minimum value (5) typically considered safe for comparisons.

Shortcomings which stem from the instrument used to measure role strain and role gratification include the following. The coefficient alpha for the role strain data yielded a measure of internal consistency, quite similar to that reported by Gerson (1985). However, the coefficient alpha for the gratification data from these same subjects provided a much lower estimate of reliability. Thus, the lack of any significant differences for the individual or combined demographic elements may stem from the use of an unreliable instrument rather than from the fact that there are no differences between sub-groups of each of the categories represented. Lastly, the study is limited by the fact that the demographic survey itself (Appendix D) was not piloted before use in the investigation thus resulting in some ambiguous or inconsistent answers to one question dealing with household chores.

Implications

This investigation offers two implications related to students' perception of role strain and/or gratification. The first of these deals with

advisement. To parents and guardians of entering students, it might be suggested that the students who are entering the nursing program would certainly benefit from full parental financial support. At this level, financial support seems to reduce strain while the student struggles with the role of nursing student. However, it seems that this financial support should be reduced or withdrawn at the end of the junior year since data from this study suggests that students who are fully supported in the senior year experience higher role strain than those who were responsible for their own debts. In fact, financial support in the senior year may actually ill-prepare the student for adjusting to the additional role in the work force.

· Based on data from the study, married students seem to experience less role strain than the not-married peers. This, perhaps, is related to the effects that spousal support might have on role strain or gratification. Consequently, student mentors may provide support for the not-married students that is similar to the spousal support given to married students. Thus, it may be possible to reduce the level of strain for not-married students through the use of mentors or support groups. Perhaps these support groups might be organized in a similar fashion to a focus group wherein role strain and role gratification are discussed from both the viewpoint of the married student and then related to the situations of the not-married student. There is no indication whether these focus groups should be made up solely of students lead by a student leader, or if the group should somehow include faculty members as guiding mentors. The effectiveness of either of these methods of organization can only be determined by further investigation.

In addition, role strain might be limited or reduced by a change in some of the focus or procedures related to the nursing courses in which the students are enrolled. It is important to keep in mind that students are given time

parameters by their roles. The actual time that a student can spend on any single role is often contrary to the amount of time that the role actually demands. For example, the time that must be spent reading an assignment that includes hundreds of pages is often not completed simply because students are involved with so many roles within their lives that only a limited time can be spent on the assignment, no matter how good the intentions. The solution to this might well be to have reading assignments focus more exactly on the specific areas to be learned rather than assigning an overall host of pages that includes this specific area.

We have learned that student involvement in college activities (academic and social) is important to the areas of learning and development. One of the difficulties facing the colleges is the fact that more and more of their student population is made up of more diverse, older, non-resident commuters. Programs must be organized that include small groups of students who have such similar goals as career choice. In addition, colleges must address the need for small programs within the larger scope of the university. These programs, to be successful, probably need non-traditional meeting times (weekends or evenings) and should, as the literature suggests, be taught by full-time regular faculty rather than by part-time adjuncts. These full-time faculty members should be directly involved with student advisement and mentoring groups.

Furthermore, where possible, there should be some emphasis placed on collaborative learning within nursing courses. These collaborative learning groups will serve the student in the nursing program in several ways. Students who are in learning groups, especially on the clinical site, will have their group to serve as a reference for clinical procedures. The group might also serve as the core of a social group. In addition, this collaborative group

might be the element of support needed to cope with the strain produced by academic rigors and personal role multiplicity.

To summarize, then, nursing programs need to investigate the needs of the non-traditional student. Courses need to address class size, off-time scheduling, and faculty involvement within these programs. Colleges also need to study the usefullness and success rate of collaborative learning groups as facilitators that might reduce the strain associated with student multiple roles.

REFERENCES

Astin, A. W. (1992 - 3, Winter). Forging the ties that bind: The dilemma of the modern university. The College Board Review, (165), 12 - 15, 26 - 27.

Astin, A. W. (1993, Fall). What matters in college. Liberal Education, 79, (4), 4 -15.

Bardwick, J.M. (1971). Psychology of Women. New York: Harper & Row.

Barnett, R.C., Marshall, N.L., & Pleck, J.H. (1992). Men's multiple roles and their relationship to men's psychological distress. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 54, 358-367.

Barnett, R.C. (1982). Multiple roles and well-being: A study of mothers of preschool age children. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 72, (2), 175-178.

Bolger, N., De Longis, A., Kessler, R.C., & Wethington, E. (1989). The contagion of stress across multiple roles. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 175-183.

Brazziel, W.F. (1992). Older students and doctorate production. The Review of Higher Education, 15, (4), 449-462.

Campaniello, J.A. (1988). When professional nurses return to school: A study of role conflict and well-being in multiple-role women. Journal of Professional Nursing, 4, (2), 136-140.

Chartrand, J.M. (1990). A causal analysis to predict the personal and academic adjustment of nontraditional students. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 37, (1), 65-73.

Collins, C. & Tiedje, L.B., (1988). A program for women returning to work after childbirth. Journal of Obstetrical, Gynecological & Neonatal Nursing, 246-253.

Dowling, C. (1981). The Cinderella Complex. New York: Summit Books.

Edwards, R. (1993). Mature Women Students. London: Taylor & Francis.

Epstein, C.F. (1986). Family and career: Why women can "Have It All".
In Travis, C. (Eds.), EveryWoman's Emotional Well-Being. (pp.90-108). New York: Doubleday & Company.

Gaddy, C.D., Glass, C.R. & Arnkoff, D.B. (1983). Career involvement of women in dual-career families: The influence of sex role identity. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 30, (30), 388-394.

Gerson, J. M. (1985). Women returning to school: The consequences of multiple roles. Sex Roles, 13, (1/2), 77-92.

Goode, W.J. (1960). A theory of role strain. American Sociological Review, 25, 483-496.

Gough, H.G. (1948). A sociological theory of psychopathy. American Journal of Sociology, 53, 359-366.

Gove, W.B. (1972). The relationship between sex roles, marital status, and mental illness. Social Forces, 51, 31-44.

Hall, D.T. (1972). A model of coping with role conflict: The role behavior of college educated women. Administrative Science Quarterly, 17, 471-486.

Hall, D.T. & Gordon, F.E. (1973). Career choices of married women: Effects on conflict, role behavior, and satisfaction. Journal of Applied Psychology, 58, (1), 42-48.

Hawkins, D. (1994, September 26). Older students make their mark. U.S. News & World Report, 112-113.

Hinkle, D. E., Wiersma, W. & Jurs, S. G. (1994). Applied Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Hirschorn, M.W. (1988, March 30). Students over 25 found to make up 45 percent of campus enrollments. The Chronicle of Higher Education, p. A35.

Judd, C.M., Smith, & Kidder, L. (1991). Research Methods in Social Relations. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Kessler, R.C. & Mc Rae, J.A. (1984). A note on the relationships of sex and marital states to psychological distress. pp. 109-130 in James Greenley (ed). Research in Community and Mental Health, (4), New York: JAI Press.

Kessler, R.C., & Mc Rae, J.A. (1982). The effect of wives' employment on the mental health of married men and women. American Sociological Review, 47, 216-227.

Knollmueller, R.N. (1994). Thinking about tomorrow for nursing: Changes and challenges. The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing, 25, (5), 196-201.

Levine, A. (1989). Shaping Higher Education's Future. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Levine, A. (1993). Student expectations of college. Change, 25, (4), 4.

Marks, S.R. (1977). Multiple roles and role strain: Some notes on human energy, time and commitment. American Sociological Review, 42, 921-936.

Mason, K.O. & Bumpass, L.L. (1975). U.S. women's sex-role ideology, 1970. American Journal of Sociology, 80, (5), 1212-1219.

Maynard, M. (1993). A comparison of female professionals' role profiles with occupational adjustment and life satisfaction. Journal of Employment Counseling, 30, 133-142.

Mc Laughlin, M., Cormier, L.S., & Cormier, W.H. (1988). Relation between coping strategies and distress, stress, and marital adjustment of multiple-role women. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 35, 187-193.

Meleis, A.I., Hall, J.M., & Stevens, P.E. (1994). Scholarly caring in doctoral nursing education: Promoting diversity and collaborative mentorship. Image Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 26, (3), 177-180.

Rawlins, T., Riordan, J., Delamaide, G. & Kilian, G. (1991). Student nurse recruitment: Determinants for choosing a nursing program. Journal of Nursing Education, 30, 197-201.

Reich, R. (1991). The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism. New York: Knopf.

Schlossberg, N.K., Lynch, A.Q., & Chickering, A.W. (1989). Improving Higher Education Environments for Adults. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schwartz, P. (1994, November 17). Me stressed? No, blessed. New York Times, pp.C1, C 10.

Seidl, A.H. & Sauter, D. (1990). The new non-traditional student in nursing. Journal of Nursing Education, 29, (1), 13-19.

Sieber, S.D. (1974). Toward a theory of role accumulation. American Sociological Review, 39, 567-578.

Skinner, D.A. (1980). Dual-career family stress and coping: A literature review. Family Relations, 29, 473-480.

Thoits, P.A. (1992). Identity structures and psychological well-being: Gender and marital status comparisons. Social Psychology Quarterly. 55, (3), 236-256.

Thoits, P.A. (1983). Multiple identities and psychological well-being. American Sociological Review, 48, 174-187.

Tiedje, L.B., Wortman, C.B., Downey, G., Emmons, C., Biernat, M., & Lang, E., (1990). Women with multiple roles: Role-compatibility perceptions, satisfaction, and mental health. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 52, 63-72.

Tinto, V., Goodsell-Love, A. & Russo, P. (1993, Fall). Building community. Liberal Education, 79, (4), 16-21.

Toby, J., (1952). Some variables in role conflict analysis. Social Forces, 30, 323-337.

Zatlin, C.E., Storandt, M., & Botwinick, J. (1973). Personality and values of women continuing their education after thirty-five years of age. Journal of Gerontology, 28, 216-221.

Appendix A

Letter to Research/Grants Department

Mrs. Ruth Corbett, Director
Research and Grants
Western Connecticut State University
181 White Street
Danbury, CT 06810

October 18, 1994

Dear Mrs. Corbett:

Thank you for your prompt response to Dr. Harriett Tax's inquiry regarding my research project.

I am a full-time member of the teaching faculty of Western Connecticut's Nursing Department and am, at this time involved with my doctoral dissertation. The title: An Investigation of Multiple Roles Influencing the Participation of Students Enrolled in aCollege Nursing Program.
This study will investigate the variety of roles that student nurses occupy and whether these roles produce either role strain or gratification.

I plan to use a paper-pencil questionnaire to collect data. All subjects will remain anonymous. There will be no harm to subjects who will be from the sophomore, junior, and senior classes in the nursing department. Students, of course, will be informed that participation is voluntary and will have no effect on their program of study. All materials will be coded and scored blindly to insure subject anonymity.

I expect to be able to begin data collection in the timeframe of January / February 1995.

Enclosed please find the application form that you requested.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Carol T. Avery,
Associate Professor
Nursing Department

Appendix B

Use of Human Subjects Form

USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS APPLICATION FORM

Principal Investigator or Course Instructor ___Carol T. Avery_____

Department___Nursing_____ Telephone _ |_____

Research Project: Course Number _____ Proposed Dates__Start ' Jan/Feb 1995__

Funded Research _____ Nonfunded Research _X_____
                                    (Agency)

New Research Project _X____ Continuation _____ Modification _____ Teaching _____

PLEASE COMPLETE FORM AND ATTACH SAMPLE INFORMED CONSENT

CLAIM FOR EXEMPTION UNDER CATEGORIES (45 CFR 46.101(b) (See Page 2)		CLAIM FOR EXPEDITED REVIEW (45 CFR 46.110) (See Page 2)	
Normal educational practices (comparison of instructional techniques)	___ (1)	Collection of hair, nail clippings	___ (1)
Educational tests (aptitude, achievement)	___ (2)	Collection of excreta, including external secretions	___ (2)
Survey of Interview procedures (questionnaires with no identifying information requested)	_X_ (3)	Record collection using routine procedures	___ (3)
Observation of public behavior	___ (4)	Collection of blood samples	___ (4)
Collection of existing data (records, pathological specimens	___ (5)	Collection of dental plaque and calculus	___ (5)
		Voice Recordings	___ (6)

COMMITTEE ACTION

_1994-9_ Approved through exempt review
(number)

_____Approved through expedited review
(number)

_____Approved by full committee

_____Not approved; clarification or
        modification requested

Moderate Exercise	___ (7)
Existing documents or	___ (8)
Research on unmanipulated individual or group behavior	___ (9)
Drugs or devices for which investigational new drug not required	___ (10)

_____
Chairperson, Research and Development Committee

Oct 24, 1994
Date

_____
Director, Research and Grants

Oct 25, 1994
Date

144

Appendix C

Letter to Subjects/ Volunteer Form

To: Nursing Students taking 6 or more credits
From: Carol T. Avery, Associate Professor, School of Nursing
Re: Participation in a doctoral study
Date: February 1, 1995

I am presently a doctoral student at Teachers College, Columbia University in the Department of Higher and Adult Education. My dissertation involves the study of the multiple roles held by many nursing students and the result of this multiplicity.

You have selected to participate in this study because of your status as a nursing student who is taking a **minimum of six credits.** Results that you provide will help educators understand the multiple roles of students and how these roles affect a variety of factors related to nursing education.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. All questionnaires and data collecting instruments are anonymous and are coded only for the researchers need to correlate materials. Neither participation nor refusal will affect your status or grade in any way.

An envelope is provided for you to return your completed material. This may be put directly into the designated box in the nursing department office.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

===

I have read the above letter and wish to participate in the research project being conducted by Mrs. Avery.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____ *Date* _____

Appendix D
Demographic Survey

Please supply the requested information as accurately as possible. This information is to be furnished anonymously and will be used to interpret additional information that you supply on subsequent questionnaires.

In the **Nursing Department** I am a (Circle) **Sophomore, Junior, Senior**
Age: ___ Ethnicity: [Circle one] White Black Asian Hispanic Other
Gender: ___ Female ___ Male
Marital status: [check one] ___ Married ___ Divorced ___ Single

Number of children living with you: [if none write 0] ____ Ages ? _____
Employment: [check one] ___ I work 30 hours a week or more.
  ___ I work less than thirty hours a week.
  ___ I am not working at this time.
Financial Support: [Put a check before any statement that applies to you.]
  ___ Most of my financial support comes from my parents (guardians).
  ___ I am responsible for a major portion of my financial support,
  but I receive some support from a parent (guardian) or relative.
  ___ I (or my spouse and I) am totally responsible for my (our)
  financial support.
Caregiving: [Check only those that apply.]
  ___ I (or my spouse and I) am responsible for giving some
  financial support to a relative other than my (our) children,
  e.g. parent, grandparent, uncle, aunt, etc.
  ___ I (or my spouse and I) am responsible for the physical
  care of an ailing relative or child.
Miscellaneous: [Check those that apply.]
  ___ I entered the university within a year after high school graduation.
  ___ I entered the university so that I could change careers.
  ___ I entered the university because situations earlier in my
  life prevented me from starting or finishing college.
  ___ I live in college housing. ___ I commute to the college.
  On average, it takes me _____ minutes to commute to school.
  ___ I am a college graduate.
  ___ I need daycare available for me to attend college.
Household responsibilities: [Check those that apply.]
  ___ My spouse helps with household chores.
  ___ I am responsible for the majority of household tasks.

Appendix E

Measures of Role Gratification & Strain

Respond to each of the statements using
    0 = No or Never
    1 = Rarely
    2 = Sometimes
    3 = Often
    4 = Always

Role Gratification:

Since I have entered the nursing program at the university ...

1. I have more respect for myself.   1. _____
2. Others have more respect for me.   2. _____
3. I have more freedom.   3. _____
4. I spend more time doing things for myself.   4. _____
5. I get less upset over minor annoyances at home.   5. _____
6. My life is more diversified.   6. _____
7. I rely more upon myself.   7. _____
8. I am less bored.   8. _____
9. I have more energy.   9. _____
10. My life has more meaning.   10. _____
11. I have developed skills in new areas.   11. _____
12. Others permit me to do things I did not do
    in the past.   12. _____

Role Strain: Since I have entered the nursing program at the university ...

1. I do not have time to do other things.   1. _____
2. I have contradictory demands placed on me.   2. _____
3. I spend time wondering who I am.   3. _____
4. People expect too much of me.   4. _____
5. I am tired a lot of the time.   5. _____
6. I am often tense.   6. _____
7. My life has become more disordered.   7. _____
8. My commitments to others are spread too thin.   8. _____
9. My priorities are not clear.   9. _____
10. I have become too self-centered.   10. _____
11. I am more aware of my shortcomings.   11. _____
12. I feel guilty.   12. _____

Appendix F
The Addendum

Answer each of the following questions by responding **YES**, **NO**, *or* **N/A**.

1. Do you find it difficult to travel from site to site
    in order to participate in various clinical experiences?   1.   _____

2. Do the demands of the nursing courses interfere
    with your ability to deal with situations in your home
    or social life?   2.   _____

3. Do you find that clinical hours are often in conflict
    with daycare hours? (Children or older parent)   3.   _____

4. Do your nursing care plans take so long to complete
    that you cannot perform household responsibilities?   4.   _____

5. Do you find it difficult to do your best on the clinical
    site because of demands placed on you by your
    children, spouse, or parent?   5.   _____

6. Do you feel conflict between the expectations of the
    nursing program and the expectations put upon you
    at your job?   6.   _____

7. Do you feel that you spend so much time on care
    plan preparation that your clinical performance
    suffers?   7.   _____

8. Do you feel that you need more help or support on
    the days you must prepare care plans?   8.   _____

9. Do you often feel overwhelmed on the clinical site
    because of the expectations and the technical
    knowledge and proficiency required?   9.   _____

10. Do you often feel overwhelmed on the clinical site
    because it is difficult for you to prioritize?   10.   _____

Appendix G

Permission to Use Instrument: Gerson

Carol T. Avery

November 18, 1994

Dear Ms. Avery:

Please accept this letter as formal permission to use my data-collecting tool entitled "Measures of Role Gratification and Strain"

It is my understanding that you will be using this tool to gather data pertinent to your doctoral dissertation. I also understand that as a courtesy you will acknowledge my contribution to your efforts.

Sincerely

Dr. Judith M. Gerson
Sociology Department
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ 08903-5072

Appendix H

Focus Group: Form to Volunteer

March 8, 1995

The undersigned recognize their participation in a focus group related to an investigation of multiple roles conducted by Carol Avery. It is part of an instrument to gather data related to this investigation. It is understood that the participants and their contributions will remain confidential and anonymous and will not influence their grade in any university course.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Appendix I

Focus Group Discussion Questions

Focus Groups:

1.   What are some roles that you have as part of your everyday
     living?

2.   Do you think that your multiple roles make your life more
     gratifying or do you think that your multiple roles make your life
     more stressful? What causes this gratification or strain?

3.   Do you know another student who has many of the roles
     that you have but shows more strain (or gratification) than you
     experience? Why do they show strain (or gratification) when
     you do not?

4.   My investigation seems to show that unmarried students exhibit
     more role strain than married students? Why do you think
     this is true?

5.   If you could change or eliminate ONE of your roles in order
     to make your student life easier, which one would it be? Why?

6.   What household role(s) make it difficult for you to prepare for
     clinical or complete care plans?
                            or
     Does help with household duties help you prepare for clinical?
     What kind of help really helps you?

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~NOTES~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~