

Balancing academics and motherhood: Exploring role navigation with new mothers in counselor

education doctoral programs

by

Emily Bethea Johnson

B.S. Southwest Baptist University 2011
M.S. Southern Methodist University 2017

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Special Education, Counseling, and Student Affairs
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2022

Abstract

This qualitative interview study seeks to examine the unique perspectives of mothers in counselor education programs through a feminist lens. In this stage of research, the study inspects the lived experiences of three female graduate students who have become biological mothers during their doctoral journeys and who are now actively enrolled in their last two years of their doctoral programs. In addition to examining this population, the study sought to explore these experiences through the lens of role theory (specifically how mothers experience and navigate these identity intersections) and also utilized feminist tenets as an attitudinal method and extension of the reflexive qualitative interviewing processes. This research studied the experiences of women in doctoral counselor education environments such as role navigation, academic motherhood, and the impact of supportive relationships with other participants, mentors, faculty, family, and community in these types of educational formats. Through In Vivo coding analysis of the data, themes of support, navigation, and pressures were identified. Select sub-themes include family, community, and academic supports, schedule flexibility, time usage, childcare, guilt, loss, stress, and loneliness.

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Approved by:

Major Professor
Dr Judy Hughey

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter briefly introduces the subject of this study, the design for research, relevant questions, data collection, and analysis. It frames the gap in research, discusses significance for the study and anticipated limitations, topic definitions, and summary.

The developmental, biological, physical, emotional, social, and psychological processes an individual encounters in the entry to motherhood is arguably one of the most intense experiences one can have. The intensity of this experience is complicated with the more mainline factors of the matrescence process (Moyer & Kinser, 2021). Additionally, the societal expectations surrounding roles put upon a new mother both by herself in socialized scripts and inner dialogue generate great levels of stress (Haynes et al., 2021).

Problem Statement

Women who are seeking to pursue the goal of doctoral education and later professorship often face the complex task of balancing motherhood, spousal duties, and unpaid physical and emotional labor in addition to a pressured scholastic calling (McCutcheon & Morrison, 2017). The rising cost of childcare and the fact that childminding labor often falls upon the woman is also notable. For women, academia can already be a world fraught with challenges related to power dynamics, the glass ceiling, lack of access to mentorship and community, competition, and familial obligations (Sapientiae, 2014). While these issues are ones to note in an examination of this process, the experiences of women in the academic sector who are also navigating new parenting are of particular interest due to the complexities of the developmental process that occurs in motherhood. The term for this complex transition from womanhood to new motherhood is termed matrescence (Moyer & Kinser, 2021). Some women are now deciding to embark on the path to motherhood while also engaged in doctoral work due to what is perceived to be ticking biological clocks and fears of fertility issues (Wolfinger et al., 2009). The rapid

increase in the number of female doctoral students who are actively choosing to become new mothers while pursuing doctoral work (Digest of Education Statistics, 2017) emphasized the need for this study. The intricacies of the processes of new parenthood can create additional webs of difficulty related to competency, identity development, and role overload. Graduate student mothers are reported to feel the pull between their families and work, creating a tightrope that can be lonely and isolating (Gardner, 2008). The lack of interaction with peers and faculty in a counseling program can also cause loneliness, increased stress, and isolation for the graduate student (Gardner, 2008). A concern is an anemic educational experience for the students seeking to pursue their graduate degrees in this stage of life and a less than preferred quality for a graduate experience. One of the ways that this issue may manifest is in the quality of community connections doctoral students possess with their cohorts and professors. Bryan and Guccione (2018) indicated perceptions of doctoral value by students within their programs by

integrating socially into their cohorts and departments was a prominent source of experienced value; however, in cases where social networks were not prevalent or less strong, graduates perceived that they derived low value, that they had “missed out” compared to others (p. 30).

The influence on relationships in these types of educational formats only intensify the longer students are in the program (Zahl, 2015). Specific to the field of counselor education and supervision, these elements can arise in combination with ones surrounding other roles that students fill, such as work as academics or researchers or often full or part time work as therapists or school counselors. The duties of teaching classes, administration, supervision of counseling interns, and client work can create unique opportunities for emotional burnout and even vicarious traumatization for the individual (Brown et al., 2018). These demands are often paired with commonly discussed issues surrounding role overload in motherhood. Many women in academia list the issue of multiple role navigation and role

overload as one that they struggle to balance and maintain in their lives (Stinchfield & Trepal, 2011). The phenomenon of role overload in combination with the demands of trauma containment in working with clients, students, and interns could also contribute to uniquely difficult and potentially traumatic outcomes related to stress and vicarious trauma (Brown et al., 2018) further compounding the unique struggles that may come with the life-path of mothers in the counselor education realm.

In understanding the specifics of women's counseling doctoral work, motherhood, and the role that community plays in their experiences, the researcher has turned to feminist theory as an overarching lens with which to examine these issues (Allen, 2022). This theory has been widely utilized to center knowledge about women's lives, analyze gender oppression, and provide input on how to transform society (Allen, 2022). Feminist qualitative research encompasses a plethora of both methods and methodologies and also contains many offshoots, but most share a common commitment to certain ethics and attitudes. Among these commitments is the adherence to understanding how researcher subjectivities must be understood as a part of the knowledge process as well as valuing the deeply reflexive components of the participants' lived experiences (Allen, 2022).

There is a need for research to explore the unique combination of factors inherent to mothers in counselor education programs, particularly research which can help illustrate how to best support mothers in their academic and motherhood journeys. More specifically, there is a need for research focused on female counseling doctoral student mothers in counselor education programs. Research such as this will aid current and future academic mothers in researching strategies and insight to persist and succeed in graduate programs. Literature on this topic will help counselor educators in better understanding and supporting the needs of this vulnerable yet resilient population, adding to retention and overall student satisfaction. A goal of this research was to make a contribution for an informed and more supportive community for women in counseling doctoral programs.

Purpose of the Study

The research examined the perceptions of three women in the final years in a doctoral-level counselor education program at a midwestern university who have become mothers while in their programs. Specifically, this research examined experiences of women in doctoral counselor education environments as it relates to how they navigate their various roles as a community member (related to connections outside of family and school), family member (related to connections with partner, spouse, parent, siblings) and as a member of the doctoral student academic community (related to connections with academic cohort) as they experience the process of matrescence (Moyer & Kinser, 2021). Roles are more clearly defined in the “Definition” section.

Research Questions

1. In what ways do the new mothers in in counselor education programs describe their experiences as it relates to role navigation as a community member?
2. In what ways do the new mothers in counselor education programs describe their experiences as it relates to role navigation as a family member?
3. In what ways do the new mothers in counselor education programs describe their experiences as it relates to role navigation as a doctoral student?

Theoretical Frameworks: Feminism and Role Theories

Feminism

This researcher will use feminism as a critical theoretical lens through which to evaluate the participant data obtained in this study. Feminism is an option to organically understand the experiences of doctoral student mothers as this framework can aid in critically examining the types of issues that can be better addressed through equitable work and practices in this arena. In this investigator’s approach to this work, one of the theoretical frameworks that heavily informed the research is feminism

as it relates to paid and unpaid labor and equitable practices at home and as mothers and wives (Bhattacharya, 2017). The work of feminism, as described by Offen (1988) related to three tenets: recognizing the validity of women's own interpretations of women's lived experiences and needs and acknowledging the values women espouse distinctly-as opposed to an aesthetic ideal of womanhood invented by men in assessing rank in society, exhibiting consciousness of anger over institutionalized injustices or inequities toward women, and advocating for elimination of those injustices by working to challenge power that upholds coercive elements of force or authority.

By adhering to aspects of the feminist theoretical lens, the researcher provided the space for individuals to explore topics that have been historically stigmatized, such as maternal guilt and shame and women in the workplace, and furthering broader feminist values. Offen (1988) described the basic goal of feminism as seeking to examine, challenge, and unravel any possible conditions of oppression for women. The researcher of the current study extended this examination to additional insight and liberation for individuals in the mothering, parenting, and academic realms.

This theoretical lens appealed to this investigator as a woman, wife, and new mother from a conservative background. She is aware of the steep burden of unpaid emotional and physical labor at home while seeking to navigate the work loads of career and education. The element of power structure (who has it and who does not) and how it interplays with academic motherhood appealed as particularly noteworthy and was highlighted repeatedly in research relevant to this subject and population. The researcher examined how these elements inform the participants' experiences as each interview and dialogue was conducted. The researcher anticipated co-constructing narratives with the participants in this study due to the interviewing style. The feminist interviewing approach (James, 2006) significantly informed this attitude. Reinharz and Davidman (2006) stated, "James sought to interview in a way that built connections and avoided alienation of the researcher from the researched" (p. 20). The closeness

and warmth of the interviewing style deeply appealed with the goal to seek to communicate these elements to the participants with whom this study centers.

Role Theory

An introductory understanding of Role Theory (Goode, 1960) includes the concepts of strain and overload and how they related to the complex issues facing doctoral mothers is imperative to this study's discussion. All societies consist of individuals acting in various roles, and individuals must uphold these roles in order for the society to continue to function. Goode (1960) described Role Theory as the interactions between expected roles, social obligations, and the compromises, behaviors, and choices one might engage in to keep a balance in work and home. Strain manifests when stress develops between the individual's social role demands and their ability to meet those demands. These societal expectations contribute to the role issues of overload, time conflicts, and inadequate support and resources that women often face as they navigate these two domains, particularly in situations where students may have little social or institutional support (Nickerson, 2021). Similarly, role overload is described as a work environment where individuals engaged in their roles perceive the expectations and responsibilities as overwhelming and beyond their time, energy, and capabilities (Eatough, 2011; Tang & Vandenberghe, 2021). While these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they refer to specific types of role issues and are therefore important to elucidate.

Methods

While there are various types of qualitative methods which can be employed in order to gain in-depth understanding of an issue or population, one of the most commonly utilized types is the interview (Creswell, 2007). This research was conducted as a feminist interview study, with multiple rounds of individual interviews, an additional focus group, and document collection.

Specifically, for all interviews the researcher elected to utilize an in-depth, semi-structured interview format with three participants with an emphasis on the attitudes consistent with feminist interviewing. The semi-structured interview has a combination of structured and unstructured elements and allows for increased flexibility in the qualitative feminist interview (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2014). The process consisted of three rounds of individual interviews with each participant as well as a final focus group with all participants present upon conclusion of individual interview rounds. This type of data collection utilizes prepared questions and allows space for clarifying probes based on participants' responses (Bhattacharya, 2017). In alignment with this type of inquiry, the researcher elicited more in-depth responses from the study's participants and had the flexibility to ask follow-up questions when needed. This format also aligned with the feminist interviewing tenets. Reinharz (1992) also reported that the method of interviewing allows for sharing of the authentic memories, thoughts, and ideas of interviewee rather than a version of the researcher's perspective. This is of particular importance for the study of women as it honors their direct perspectives.

In addition to the individual interviews, a focus group session utilizing a feminist approach was conducted as an additional aspect of the study. This was selected to allow for increased richness of data with participant perspectives due to the ability for participants to feel increased comfort to share perspectives (Wilkinson, 1994). This type of interview format also allowed for participants to add additional depth to the data through co-creating meaning (Morawski & Agronick, 1991). This co-construction of information would be less accessible without these types of organic group conversations (Morgan, 1988).

In the individual interviews and focus group, the researcher collected supplemental documents and artifacts from the participants to enhance the data. Bhattacharya (2017) described this process as a time-honored method to add to the researcher's qualitative data. These artifacts consisted of personal

photographs that represented stories and accounts of their role experiences that the participants chose to share with the researcher. To adhere to standards of ethicality the researcher engaged in practices to acknowledging positionality. The researcher also kept a journal throughout the process.

Following interview sessions, the researcher transcribed the conversations, supplemental content, designed to identify common dynamics in each of them. Using Saldana's (2017) approach to first and second cycle coding, together with the use of analytic memos, the researcher coded the major themes in each of these transcriptions to better understand the realities, dynamics, and themes of the participants, both individually and in aggregate. This process included several steps. First was a thorough analysis of the transcriptions and an effort at chunking them into smaller data categories, using multiple cycles, and utilizing feminist and role theories to guide those processes. After analysis of codes, categories, and other patterns across and within the data, larger themes were then labeled and ultimately represented through narrative descriptions. The researcher included a chart of the codes, categories, and salient themes identified in this research in the appendices section.

Subjectivity Statement

Roulston (2015) stressed the importance of researchers' recognition of their own attitudes and biases in conducting research and stressed the reality that there are definite implications for how the researcher characterizes the perspectives of their participants. Whether explicit or implicit, researcher subjectivity bias is present in aspects of every study (Peshkin, 1988). Researchers should be able to adequately understand and articulate positionality. It is also important to be transparent about subjectivities of a researcher to the meaning-making process. The researcher approached this study with curiosity as to both the positives and potential negatives of studying and interviewing a population for whom there is a close connection. Because the researcher is a mother it was important to be acutely aware of how these identities could impact, shape, or skew work and interpretation of findings. The

researcher did, however, feel that this positionality also created an enhanced empathetical understanding of the unique stressors, experiences, and journeys of the participants. The liminal status these roles can create for new mothers has been described as a lonely, unique space. The researcher felt this closeness and understanding could illuminate aspects of the study in ways that are both helpful and necessary. It was understood with this access came a potential lack of perspective, one that was acknowledged, and effort was made to maintain positionality throughout this process.

According to Moustakas (1994) a researcher's understanding and conceptualization of any issue is predicated on their own experiences and conceptions of it. This served to highlight the importance of intentional planning in addressing this intersubjectivity in each aspect of qualitative design. The researcher felt that utilizing this positionality would enhance the opportunity to access spaces and conversations. The consideration of these elements also directed the research for increased stringency to guard against allowing subjectivity to influence the trustworthiness of results. The adherence of the ethical standards allowed for maintenance of perspective and increased transparency in deployment of appropriate credibility techniques.

Throughout this work, the researcher kept a personal journal along with participants and regularly documented experiences as a method to navigate internal scripts, familial customs, and values-laden subjectivities. This practice allowed for increased space to capture thoughts and reactions as the researcher navigated the internal dialogue, stressors, and feelings involved in the work. The researcher also utilized the journal to process internal experiences in this learning and environment to frame statements on personal subjectivities and transparency. This journal was also a space to allow for the practice of analytic memoing, what Saldana (2017) describes as a practice in which qualitative researchers should engage to allow for reflection and recording of "coding processes and code choices; how the process of inquiry is taking shape; and the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories,

themes, and concepts in your data...possibly leading toward theory” (p. 44). Throughout the process of interviews and writing, participants were also offered the opportunity to review and contradict, add, or otherwise revise the written interviews and final results by a continual process of meaning-making, double checking, and open dialogue in the interviews.

Significance of the Study

Schmidt and Umans (2014) reported on the holistic experiences of female doctoral students focusing on how the combination and balance of academic endeavors and private life obligations combine in different ways to create unique challenges. Increasing numbers of female doctoral students are choosing to concurrently embark upon motherhood and academic careers. The cultural, role overload issues, and social conceptions of idealized motherhood in combination with doctoral work commitments create increasingly complex struggles (Brown, 2016; CohenMiller, 2014; Leviten-Reid, Parker, & Springer, 2008). Examining the broader experiences of women in academia and role navigation are vital first steps. These efforts serve to only sharpen the focus on the specifics of motherhood and academia, particularly within the realm of counselor education.

Definitions of Terms

Matrescence: This term is described by Moyer and Kinser (2021) as becoming a mother; the process of the transition from womanhood to motherhood. Vales-Lewis shared Auran’s conceptual framework created by Auran that includes the biological, psychological, social, political and spiritual domains of study and practice of matrescence (Auran, 2022; Moyer & Kinser, 2021).

Theory of Role Strain: All societies consist of individuals acting in various roles, and individuals must uphold these roles in order for the society to continue to function. Role strain describes the individual’s stress when they cannot meet the social role demands put upon them (Goode, 1960).

Intensive or Idealized Mothering: This concept describes the phenomenon of a woman being absolutely committed to her children's needs and demands, valuing them above her own. This approach to mothering is commonly observed in current society and can lead to internalized guilt, role strain, and burnout when combined with the stresses that academia places upon the individual (Forbes, 2020).

The Second Shift: Due to unequal societal expectations surrounding childcare tasks and unpaid domestic labor, many mothers complete a "second shift" (Hochschild, 2003) of work when they return home. This can result in women taking on unequal shares of childcare and household responsibilities and can also affect women's choices surrounding career decisions.

Male Clockwork Theory: Academic institutions have been historically shaped largely by male influences, and many still currently reflect these structures (CohenMiller, 2017). The concept of workplaces being historically structured in this manner is termed "male clockwork theory" also involves the observed influences of this history on the "normative" paths to work and academic success. This phenomenon assumes the worker has relative freedom from other types of responsibilities such as childcare and housework, tasks which overwhelmingly affect women and more specifically mothers (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2014).

The Motherhood Tax: After entering motherhood, women in academia are often viewed as less capable workers and offered fewer opportunities for work promotions and clinical training due to cultural norms and navigation of dual role conflicts (Cuddy et al., 2014). The high social expectations for mothering can be layered upon increased workplace discrimination, and the combination of these stressors can further complicate the mother's family-work balance. In combination, the myriad effects of this process, such as fewer advancement opportunities, lower salaries and bonuses, and fewer callbacks for employment, are referred to as the motherhood tax.

New Mothers: Counselor Education students who have become biological mothers during their graduate journeys and who are now actively enrolled in their last two years of their doctoral programs.

Community: This encompassed the individuals' relationships outside of direct school and family connections. Examples of these connections include support systems through work, living environment, church, service/volunteer organizations, friend groups, or other non-family, non-school connections.

Doctoral Student Community: These connections are ones tied directly to the participants' school including cohort, professional counseling organizations, professors, peers, and advisor-advisee relationships.

Family Community: This community is defined as biological, spouse, partner or other connections that participants identify as comprising their familial networks and relationships.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter the researcher has framed a research question, established the need for this work, and delineated the future benefits of this research. The chapter introduced the concepts of feminism, role theory, other prominent theoretical constructs, and discussed the choice of interviewing style. The researcher gave a brief description of each while explaining how this study sought to weave them into the work, both as aspirational attitudes as formats for research. The data analysis sequence was also introduced as an extension of the methodologies outlined in previous sections.

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature

Chapter 2 addresses the empirical literature related to academic issues of new mothers. It includes an initial review of the pertinent literature and themes related to work culture, academic study, and the matrescence process. Additionally, this literature narrows further to a review of the social and structural challenges specific to the concept of role navigation.

Background

While research noted that women in 2000 were entering the world of academia at higher rates than in previous times, it was also reported that women were achieving lower levels of doctoral graduation (Grenier & Burke, 2008). However, due to advocacy, culture shifts, and legislative changes significant progress has been made in the education achievements and career advancement of women in country. Pew Research Center (2021) reported women increasingly outpace men in college graduation and enrollment rates given that women accounted for approximately 60% of college students by the close of the 2020-2021 academic year. The U.S. Department of Labor (2020) reported that in 2019, 62.3 women participating in the labor force were mothers with children under the age of three, 66.4 percent were mothers with children under the age of six, and 72.3 percent were mothers with children under the age of eighteen.

Women have increased in all degree levels (bachelor's, master's, and doctorate). According to the National Science Foundation (NSF, 2020) data in the social sciences professions, women earned a majority of bachelor's (55.2%) and master's (57.0%), and earned approximately half (51%) of doctorates. The NSF (2021) reported females continued the recent pattern of surpassing males in earning doctoral degrees during the academic year of 2018-19 with 85,769 male and 101,799 female students earned a doctoral degree in the United States. Perhaps a factor in the issues addressed by new mothers pursuing graduate degrees is the statistic that the gender wage gap persists even with the

significant increase in women's attainment of graduate degrees (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Women are still underrepresented in high-paying jobs and executive-level positions, however perceived to be progressing up the executive levels due to the greater achievement degrees and experience. The highest-paid senior executive women earned 84.6 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts in 2019 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Although the academic and career trends indicate progress for women and is certainly cause for optimism the trends do not eliminate the challenges of being a new mother engaged in academic pursuits. Catalano (2021) phenomenological study of 10 doctoral students who were mothers in a counseling program reported the perception of incongruent expectations was a major theme. The participants expressed beliefs that different expectations were "placed on doctoral students who were mothers as compared to other mothers who were not doctoral students or women doctoral students who were not mothers" (p. 255). Trepal et al. (2016) reported mothers expressed feeling guilt for not attending to their children as they would like or others expected, children spending time with baby-sitters or daycare, and missing on quality family experiences. However, these student mothers also shared feeling guilty when they were enjoying family time for not attending to academic work. It was felt both of these situations led to a less than successful employee and student.

It can be extremely difficult to balance new motherhood and child-minding duties while also navigating the challenging world of academic demands (Lynch, 2008). Attempting to complete these challenging tasks while balancing social interactions and duties can create a veritable storm of problems related to many different types of issues, such as role strain, social and emotional challenges for the mother, other relational difficulties with partners and family members, and other concerns (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2014). While mothers are often expected to find the space and energy to "do it all," academic mothers face perceived unachievable expectations from both the mothering and

academic realms and are often urged to “do it all” without being given space for the “all” that they are holding by others involved in their home lives and career paths. These issues can be an exhausting recipe for eventual burnout. Ward and Wolf-Wendell (2012) stated “women may see themselves as bad mothers rather than good workers when they must place academic obligations before family and feel that they have to hide their mothering duties that might interfere with work” (p. 515).

Counselor education students are working with diverse populations and trauma creating a unique possibility of vicarious trauma (also termed compassion fatigue) on top of the stressors and strains their academic programs may cause (Lanier & Carney, 2019). Vicarious trauma or compassion fatigue is defined by the American Counseling Association as “the emotional residue of exposure that counselors have from working with people as they are hearing their trauma stories and become witnesses to the pain, fear, and terror that trauma survivors have endured” (2018, p. 10). Together with the stressors of academia and motherhood, the risk for vicarious trauma and burnout is extremely high, and the other contributing stressors in the mother’s life can serve to compound this risk (Trippany et al., 2004). There is also evidence of harmful epigenetic effects of vicarious trauma and stress on not only the mother, but also on the fetus in cases where the practitioner is pregnant (Brown et al., 2018). The unique complicating factors of mothering in counselor education combined with those of the “normal” matrescence process and rigors of academia can combine to create even more of a risk for role overload issues due to the multiple hats these women are wearing related to their mother, student, professor, and counselor duties (Moyer & Kinser, 2021). These interconnected identities create high levels of stress for the mothers in attempting to work within these conflicting roles (Haynes et al., 2012; Johnson et al., 2007; Wellington & Sikes, 2006). These factors can also decrease wellbeing and lower felt levels of academic self-efficacy (Green, 2015). These complex identities can potentially commingle to create a uniquely difficult and potentially lonely and traumatic situation for these individuals. The lack of

information and support is also reflected in the dearth of research completed on this unique population. This current research focused the lens on role navigation, experiences of mothers in counselor education, and what the participants identified as salient in balancing the roles in their academic-maternal journeys. In beginning to gather and understand these narratives, it was helpful to first examine research surrounding the broader matrescence process, narrow the focus to role navigation theory (Goode, 1960) with the application to academic motherhood.

Matrescence Transition Process

A woman's transition into new motherhood brings drastic developmental, psychological, social, and physical changes (Moyer & Kinser, 2021). This process entails so much change that it has been likened to adolescence in the way these changes bring gargantuan shifts in every part of the mother's identity, biology, and overall development. Due to these changes and the overall developmental journey the woman undertakes, the term "matrescence" described by Moyer (2021) as becoming a mother and complex process of change. Moyer (2021) reviewed the types of changes inherent in this process through the "Matrescence Conceptual Framework," and this research encompassed core domains such as biological, psychological, and emotional, social, and spiritual changes. The mother undergoes these complex changes while also learning her infant's needs, which are often all-encompassing and constant, enduring mental and physical exhaustion due to recent birth and infant sleep schedule, navigating the demands of home life, and possibly also navigating unique circumstances such as infant colic, sleep style, and personal characteristics and sensitivities. Athan (2020) referred to the process of matrescence as counter-cultural due to the various ways that it strongly differs from the messages the mother receives from society. When any additional stressors are involved in this process, the strain can affect the mother's mental and physical health in myriad ways. Epifiano et al. (2015) reported that personal, social, and familial tensions involved with this process and the lack of needed support and information

can lead to overall increased psychological distress for the mother. Postpartum depression and anxiety are common factors in this process which may affect anywhere from 15-20% of new mothers in Western countries and have been shown to have dire consequences not only on the mother involved, but also on the family unit (O'Hara & Wisner, 2014). Parental stressors such as relational conflict, lack of support, concurrent health issues, and job complications play a role in the mental and physical health of the mother. Anding et al. (2016) found that the perception of parental stress was the strongest predictor of anxiety and depressive symptoms at fourteen days past infant birth. Anding et al., (2016) reported without factoring in the additional load of work and duties, academic mothers may be rushing to return to work after giving birth, the toll of new motherhood is at times intense and filled with potential hardship.

It is reported (Liss et al., 2012) that mothers often feel compelled by social standards to be the primary caretaker for her offspring. This research also reported there is a perception that to be a good mother the woman must invest intensive resources into this process at all times; and, that her children are weighted far above any paid labor and are priceless entities (Liss et al., 2012). The expectations that come with a mother's quest to fulfill the "idealized mothering" role leads to guilt, eventual role strain, and total burnout when combined with the demands that academia places upon the individual (Keefe et al., 2018; Meeusen & Van Laar, 2018). In upholding these values, this approach to mothering also serves to disregard the individual intersections of race, social standing and class, and other important factors related to social justice (Hillier, 2021; Crosier et al., 2007). Individuals who are unable to practice this approach to mothering can face harsh censure by society and are often deemed "bad or inadequate mothers" (Friedman, 2013). Attempting to navigate the additional emotional labor of maternal shame or guilt is reported to create even more of a toll (Hillier, 2021; Rizzo et al., 2012). Additional stress may occur with the expectation for the mother to work a "second shift" (Hochschild,

2003) or even a third or a fourth shift when she arrives home in order to balance the domestic tasks she is under along with her work and academic responsibilities. The result for academic mothers may be learning to function and thrive in a challenging climate of evaluation, both in their home and family due to these perceived societal prescriptions.

Motherhood, Academia, Community, and Relationships

Culture and communities including academic institutions are attending diligently to matters of accessibility and adaptations needed to accommodate family and academic needs at a greater intensity than in past. However, there appears to still be questions if the progress is sufficient to ease the toll of multiple roles under which graduate mothers are functioning. Role navigation including role strain has been reported to have a much greater effect when the individual is navigating the family and educational realms (Nickerson, 2021). As explored by Shelton and Guyotte (2019) both women doctoral students and women in the broader academic realm struggle mightily to balance the workload of navigating multiple and contradictory roles in their programs and home environments. One of the many contributing reasons reported for this is how society views motherhood through the expectations of men and women's roles and the power dynamics and societal conceptions of the roles (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). These structures have historically prioritized the contributions and identities of this male population with these values still reflected in academic institutional structures (CohenMiller, 2017). Academia has been historically built by white, male voices, and therefore the "normative" paths to success in this field, such as the doctoral journey and tenure processes, often reflect these influences (CohenMiller, 2017).

Role Overload, Role Strain, and Role Expansion

Role theory has been described as a schema of cognitions and social behaviors demonstrated individually and collectively (Turner, 2002). Home and work expectations are organized in terms of

terms and responsibilities (Turner, 2002). Goode (1960) described the concept of role strain as the individual's stress when they cannot meet the social role demands put upon them. Role overload is described as a work environment where individuals engaged in their roles perceive the expectations and responsibilities as overwhelming and beyond their time, energy, and capabilities (Eatough, 2011; Tang & Vandenberghe, 2021). These roles can be wide-ranging and often require dual commitments. The negative consequences of role overload and role strain have been well documented and include psychological strain and stress (Glazer & Beehr, 2005), physical and mental health concerns, employment hiring, retention and turnover issues (Jensen et al., 2013), reduced organizational citizenship behaviors (Eatough et al., 2011), lack of organizational commitment (Fisher, 2014), and low work performance (Gilboa et al., 2008; Alfes et al., 2018; Tang & Vandenberghe, 2021).

Role Theory (Goode, 1960) included the stressors that arise from the various demands and expectations placed upon an employee that includes a mother due to her social role and the consequences when she is not or feels as if she is not meeting demands or expectations (Rajgariah et al., 2021). Stress felt by a new mother is a normal experience; however, it can increase exponentially when demands exceed perceived capabilities, energy, and resources. The mental and emotional effects resulting from the pressure and perceived lack of successful performance as a mother felt by the mother often results in negative outcomes (Rajgariah et al., 2021). When the incompatibility of multiple roles causes a reduction in performance in one or all of the roles, the individual may experience role strain as the time and effort required of her exceeds her resources.

While burnout due to role overload can be observed in multiple populations, there has also been observation of another phenomenon: identification of the experience of navigating multiple challenging roles as beneficial and enriching to the worker (Crosby, 1991). Waldron and Jacobs (1989) found that select individuals seemed to lack the role strain or conflict levels that were observed in the majority of

study participants. From this discovery Waldron and Jacobs (1989) developed the concept of role expansion that refers to the ability to possess higher levels of resources including energy, time, or other capacities enabling them to meet the demands of their roles to a greater degree of perceived success. The concept of role overload as it specifically applies to doctoral mothers has been recently explored in studies such as the one by Wu (2015). Wu found that there were certain similar strategies that aided in the processes of degree and family duty navigation including compartmentalization, delegation, role integration, leaving the student role, or taking a temporary leave of absence from the professional role. Together with themes related to the practical strategies inherent to the navigation of role demands, the overwhelming influences of community as experienced through work relationships with partners, fellow students, mentors, professors, and others were repeatedly emphasized as protective aspects of this navigation impacting resiliency and psychological health (Fisher, 2014).

Navigation of Roles and Relationships

The empirical literature available on motherhood and academia demonstrated the influence of relationships to positive community. Salient themes emerging from this literature include factors contributing to helping mothers feel supported and confident in navigating their roles and responsibilities in motherhood and academia. These themes were divided into several overlapping categories, including broad positive impact of community and relationships related to work, individual and structural aspects of community, and support in the institutions of school and home.

Wu (2015) and Moseley (2017) reported the strong positive effects of creating a strong academic and family support network. Both indicated how these relationships served as protective factors in the successful navigation of doctoral stressors. Long-Jacobs (2014) identified factors contributing to women's persistence in their doctoral programs and role navigation and discovered that the elements that contributed to female doctoral students' persistence included "perceived levels of

family, emotional, and financial support, and peer-to-peer relationships” (p. 168). The specific roles that faculty and mentor relationships seemed to play were consistent hallmarks of this felt support. Trepal et al. (2010) highlighted that support systems and mentoring in higher education provided opportunities for female doctoral students’ growth in different domains, not only professionally, but also in interpersonal areas including self-awareness and identity. Together with the roles of family, mentor, and professorial relationships, the positive aspects of peer groups in academia were also emphasized in this body of research (Trepal et al., 2010). The element of peer community in mothering and doctoral work was examined by Berry (2017), who discovered that several factors highly informed doctoral students’ sense of community and role balance navigation, including connection to cohort, class, peer, and study groups. Berry reported doctoral students who interacted frequently with members of each of these groups drew major emotional, social, and academic support from these interactions (2017). Foss-Kelley and Protivnak (2017) reported the experiences of support that counselor educator participants deemed most salient. Their interviewees identified themes such as positive academic environment, life role balance, sufficient peer support, and adequate mentoring and advising as monumental in positive navigation of their doctoral journeys. Shepherd and Bolliger (2019) also reported the perceptions of female graduate students towards their program communities as they navigated various life roles. The authors reported the themes that emerged focused on the elements of trust, connection, and affiliation. These findings explored the ways in which students identified their programs as aspects of their core identity and illustrated the importance of these components in the successful navigation of dual roles and associated stressors. Not only were the positive effects of individual relationships identified as major aspects of support in role navigation, but the aspects of institutional culture, policy, and structural supports also emerged as particularly salient for academic mothers across multiple research studies (Shepherd & Bolliger, 2019). These academic findings

suggested certain aids be implemented to provide additional support for academic mothers including transparent and established policies on childcare and maternity leave (CohenMiller, 2014; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012) and institutional culture that promoted actual utilization of these policies (Lundquist & Misra, 2015).

Several studies examined the costly negative effects that were felt by women who were without social support in their programs or were a part of special groups who had unmet support for needs in the community (Gardner, 2008; Rajgariah et al., 2021). These studies (Gardner, 2008) illustrated the disparate community experiences of women as compared to male students, part-time students, students with families, students of color, and non-traditional students. The studies raised additional aspects of potential needed academic policy and program change (2018). Bhat et al. studied women of color's perceptions of support in their doctoral programs and found that certain connections arose related to community and support, including an impetus to commence doctoral study, adjustment to doctoral study demands, positive and negative interactions with professors and peers, and impact of discrimination and prejudice on program navigation (2012). Shavers and Moore (2019) also reported on issues and the importance of positive community support in role navigation and program completion. Zahl on part-time doctoral students and community stated,

positive relationships with peers and faculty served as a source of encouragement and supported persistence, particularly during challenging semesters and later phases of the doctoral program. However, it was often difficult for the participants to develop and/or maintain relationships, due to limited proximity, limited access to faculty, and changing cohorts. Participants did not consider full-time doctoral students to be part of their community, due to perceived differences between part-time and full-time students. The

participants also perceived that faculty catered to full-time students and preferred to conduct research with them rather than part-time students. (2015, p. 301).

The Zahl (2015) findings indicated the major differences in levels of community as experienced by certain diverse populations, nontraditional students, and other groups and identities. They also illustrated that while some themes and identities may be more salient across experiences, the types of involvement and other factors may cause major differences in group identity and felt community between groups.

Nontraditional approaches to building support for navigation of role demands in doctoral women's networks, such as art-based interventions through social media, are on the rise reported according to CohenMiller (2016). These unorthodox approaches to increasing felt community and support through unique means were extremely helpful in considering future directions for research for doctoral students of all walks of life and all types of programs. Lederman (2018) reported this factor seemed especially important due to the increasing numbers of female graduate students accessing online, evening, or other formats of doctoral education programs.

Feminism

Researchers who desire to utilize the feminist approach must be prepared to understand the theoretical, methodological, and attitudinal aspects of this theory that make it distinctly what it is (Allen, 2022). The sheer number of feminist theories and their depths in the social science realm is beyond the scope of this researcher's discussion for this dissertation. For the explicit purpose of this research, a more general, working definition of feminism is needed with an explanation of its defining context and values. For the purposes of the current study's research, feminism is broadly described as practices and perspectives to affirm differences among women and globally promotes women's interests (Allen, 2022; Connell, 1995). It is a diverse and differentiated social and scholarly movement and

includes the aspiration to promote justice and the well-being of all women (DeVault & Gross, 2014). While feminist theory encompasses many types of approaches, most share a single commitment and understanding that knowledge is deeply subjective and the lived experiences of the qualitative interviewer and the interviewees are deeply important to the reflexive process of research (Hesse-Biber, 2013). When adopting a theoretical lens informed by this type of theoretical background, the researcher also understands that feminist theory conceptualizes gender as a socialized construct of history and culture (Connell, 1995). Many aspects of feminine practices are interlaced with patriarchal systems of power and control (Coulter & Grieg, 2008) and these systems are sometimes assumed to be the innate outcome of biology rather than being products of the social environment in which the individual functions (McIntosh & Butler, 1991; Connell, 1995). Researchers and scholars described and understood gender characteristics as having major social and societal ties (O'Reilly, 2019). This is foundational to the understanding of unfair assumptions concerning women's roles in work, home, and society (O'Reilly, 2019). This study's attention to societal expectations of gender roles was an extension of the feminist critical lens and was meant to highlight the socially constructed gender norms that are indeed shaped by history and are variable rather than natural or unchangeable factors brought about by the woman's ability to biologically reproduce. Certain gender roles and their performance were expected of women and of mothers give rise to the types of ideologies of intensive or idealized mothering. These mindsets and assumptions have the power to deeply shape the lives of all women and are incredibly important to mindfully examine, especially in combination with challenging roles such as a counseling doctoral student and new mother. By focusing on these research topics and concepts, the researcher contributed to the research lens to the inclusion of women and academic mothers' lived experiences (Hesse-Biber, 2013).

Chapter Summary

The chapter presented the unique and compelling needs of this population. The needs are supported by the empirical evidence-based literature review presented in the chapter. The salient gaps in research are apparent after examination of the multi-layered aspects of the role overload, navigation, and community of mothers in higher education seeking degrees in counselor education. This research study facilitated progress towards discovery and insight essential to understanding the complex background and overlapping role stressors of doctoral work and motherhood. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of this process towards understanding and conceptualizing the experiences of this unique academic community.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter presents the research study's purpose, research questions, methodology, and interview questions. The chapter also elucidates the qualitative interview methodology inherent to the study and concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations of the research through the lens of feminism.

Purpose of the Study

The research examined the in-depth perceptions of three women in the final years in a doctoral-level counselor education program at a midwestern university who have become new mothers while in their graduate programs. Specifically, this research explored experiences of women in doctoral counselor education environments as it related to how they navigated their roles as community members, family members and doctoral students as they experienced the transitional process of matrescence. Additionally explored was the role of relationships and community upon these experiences.

Research Questions

1. In what ways do the new mothers in in counselor education programs describe their experiences as it relates to role navigation as a community member?
2. In what ways do the new mothers in counselor education programs describe their experiences as it relates to role navigation as a family member?
3. In what ways do the new mothers in counselor education programs describe their experiences as it relates to role navigation as a doctoral student?

Qualitative Research: Foundations and Fundamentals

Before examining the specifics of this study's proposed qualitative design, included below is a brief description of the basics of qualitative research, relevant terms, and explanation of the rationale of

the researcher for selecting this method of inquiry. A detailed explanation of ethicality of the approach is also reviewed in the following section.

Qualitative inquiry is an approach to research that seeks to explore the issues of life (Moser, 2017). Instead of leaning heavily on numerical data sets or formulas, qualitative researchers seek to utilize their subjects' or participants' behavior, perceived and lived experiences, and their overall stories to illustrate certain issues, narratives, or themes (Busetto et al., 2020). As stated by Creswell (2018), "qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world" (Creswell, p. 238).

Qualitative research can be used to further illustrate or enhance the types of data that researchers derive from quantitative approaches and can be an excellent method to utilize in tandem with quantitative approaches or to employ alone to understand certain issues or individuals and the stories within them. Bhattacharya (2017) explained quantitative research as being a method that aids the researcher in discovering patterns, enabling them to predict beyond mere coincidence, and to expand to generalizability. Qualitative researchers approach this process from many different perspectives of methods, theoretical perspectives, epistemologies, and ontologies, and these differences allow for a rich and vast collection of data (Busetto et al., 2020). Having organized methods of approaching qualitative work allows researchers to study hard-to-quantify elements such as attitudes, perceptions, and experiences and to do this in an structured, ethical, and intentional manner. When considering how to analyze the data collected from these types of studies, the researcher was confronted with different options for identifying findings in their work and making meaning of the information gathered. As described by Creswell (2014), this method of inquiry allows for investigation into shared patterns of

behaviors, actions of an intact cultural group, and language norms in a natural setting, and this type of data collection involves interviews and observational reports.

Rather than being a task at the end of this process, the methods for data analysis were intentionally developed and managed throughout each step of the study. The researcher adhered to Roulston's (2010) standards for embarking on this type of qualitative work. One of the most common methods for this process is inductive data analysis, where the researcher synthesizes the small chunks of individual data rather than imposing any type of preestablished hypothesis about the findings. This method allowed for gradual linking of themes that the researcher analyzed for broader trends. It is also common for the researcher to utilize a journal in order to document any types of emotions, questions to note that may arise in the research process, and thoughts on ways that they are working to make sense of the data in context with frameworks of methodology and research purpose as a method to increase study rigor and understand positionality. In this study, the researcher utilized this approach to data analysis, as it seemed to fit best with the overall format of qualitative inquiry. During the initial stages of designing the study, the method of memoing was employed as a way to continually evaluate preconceptions, personal hypothesis related to potential findings, and own positionality. This process also involved development of a subjectivity statement and examination of established ethical best practices and personal application of these practices, to continue to adhere to Roulston's (2010) guidelines for research.

Ethical Considerations for Interviewing

In considering the interviews with this study's participants, several considerations emerged. Special attention was directed towards the emotional safety of processing these themes in the participants' lives by directing care and planning around mental health resources, interview structure and content, and other aspects of the study. Discussion of the matrescence process, mothering and

career workload often initiate strong emotions (Dunford & Granger, 2017). As per the IRB, resources were available and provided upon request.

Standards of Quality and Ethics

The researcher adhered to the Eight ‘Big-Tent’ Criteria for Excellent Qualitative (Tracy & Hindrichs, 2017) during this study. A review of these guidelines and how the researcher worked to adhere to these tenets are included in this section.

The first guideline Worthiness of Topic is described in Tracy and Hindrichs (2017) as demonstrating enough greater significance, relevance, and application to the larger scholarly community to be considered worthy. The researcher recognized the value in the research subject. The next concept, Rich Rigor refers to the origination and standards of the study. During this research, the researcher adhered and committed to a specific set of theoretical constructs and remaining structured and intentional about the data collection and analysis process that was utilized. Tracy and Hindrichs (2017) described Sincerity as reflexivity regarding the subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher as well as transparency about the chosen methods and their challenges. Throughout the study, the researcher sought to remain self-reflective, documenting the process and reactions. The researcher planned to process in a thoughtful, vulnerable way with the Principal Investigator and therapist if needed in order to stay honest and genuine. Additionally, the researcher addressed Credibility of the study by examining the experiences and findings as described and framed throughout the study. The choice of In Vivo coding was selected as the salient identified themes were based on participant quotes and content. The Resonance guideline is described as in-depth, situated analyses of contexts, rhetorical situations, and embodied experiences in such a to allow for transfer of findings (Tracy & Heinrichs, 2017). The process of studying literature, choosing methodologies and approaches, arranging interviews, and collecting results for this project was prompted from a genuine interest in the

subject and population rather than a preconceived understanding of findings. While considering the Significant Contribution elements of Tracy & Heinrichs (2017) standards, this researcher planned for a greater understanding and increased, empathetic understanding of the populations in this work, allowing the individual to engage in practices (such as advocacy, leadership, or program/profession structuring) that will better the lives of the types of participants studied herein.

There are four types of ethical adherence as described by Tracy & Heinrichs (2017). When considering the situational components of this adherence, the researcher sought to remain intentional and communicative about how and where the participants will be interviewed and recorded. These details will be included in the informed consent. Relationally, the researcher sought to understand and examine the impact of her own presence on study participants and planned for any emotional distress that participants experienced as a result of sharing their stories. This element is addressed in the informed consent, debriefing statement, and interview guide (Appendices A-C) and remained a constant factor in the manner in which the researcher engaged with the participants. The process of formulating a subjectivity statement, writing in a journal, and performing regular check-ins with committee members also aided the researcher in continually gauging these experiences. The study engaged in exiting practices that felt safe and non-harmful to participants, including sharing requested resources with them, check-ins after interviews, and ongoing care and tact with the information shared in interviews. The interview topics can be delicate for women and especially for new mothers. The researcher recognized the importance of emotional safety and continued emotional support of the participants. The researcher planned for provision of needed resources for those who requested them.

The researcher adhered to the Meaningful Adherence (Tracy & Heinrichs, 2017) described as data, stories, or findings needed to fit with the literature and research questions. Goals of the study were achieved in the analysis process and these goals included implications that align with the literature

review's content (2017). The researcher worked to align the data and narratives with the literature and initial research questions.

Theoretical Framework

Tenets of Feminism discussed previously in the literature review guided the research design of this study. As indicated in the research questions, this study focused on three key role contexts experienced by the counselor education PhD graduate student: 1) community member, 2) family member, and 3) doctoral student. While the data collection and analysis processes were designed as open ended it was anticipated that these specific components of role theories will guide the research design:

-Social Demands (Athan, 2020): academic mothers are a specialized group as they are facing a myriad of social demands both as students and as mothers and must navigate the society's often conflicting expectations and demands of them to be both "good" mothers and "good" students.

-Time conflicts (Nickerson, 2021; Rajgariah et al., 2021): for the mother, mental and emotional repercussions of time as a scarce resource (among other resources) can lead to increased negative mental and emotional outcomes.

-Balancing work and home (Shelton & Guyotte, 2019; Stinchfield & Trepal, 2011): many mothers who are seeking academic pursuits list navigation of home and work roles as an issue that they find difficult to balance and maintain.

Data Collection Interviewing Techniques

The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview format and planned to utilize interviewing attitude approaches to the interviewees that were informed by feminism. Rubin and Rubin (2012) described qualitative interviewing as "allowing us to see that which is not ordinarily on view and examine that which is looked at but rarely seen" (p. 555). They define qualitative interviewing as when

“researchers talk to those who have knowledge of or experience with the problem of interest” (p. 3). Together with the feminist movements of the 1970s and 1980s, the feminist method of interviewing was developed by scholars as a distinct way of approaching and conducting the qualitative interview that were uniquely informed by feminist tenets (DeVault & Gross, 2014). Feminist interviewing is recommended as a way to utilize participant data in nuanced and complex ways (DeVault & Gross, 2014). In discussing engaging in this type of interviewing, Hesse-Biber (2014) noted an interest is needed to ask questions and explore issues that are of particular concern to women and that these issues are often hidden and unarticulated in wider discussion.

In a desire to understand the complexities of academic motherhood, this researcher chose to employ this method as a way to understand and conceptualize the complex issues facing new mothers in doctoral programs in counselor education. As the subjects of motherhood and academic work are specialized, this choice of technique seemed fitting in its individualized approach to the subject. Bhattacharya (2017) recommended utilizing interviewing techniques together with other sources of data. For this study the researcher also utilized supplemental document collection such as pictures, objects of sentimentality, or other collected items of the participants.

In considering the process of applying recognized feminist interview techniques, the researcher applied the attitude of the feminist approach as promoted by Ettore (2019). The researcher has outlined these techniques and how they were applied in this study. The methodological specifics of the feminist tenets to the approaches of interviewing participants, data collection, and other aspects of the study in are also included in this section.

The process consisted of three rounds of individual interviews with each participant as well as a final focus group with all participants present upon conclusion of the individual interview rounds. All interviews were in-depth and employed open-ended questions that can be effective with both

individuals and groups (Strauss, 2008). They spanned a time frame from 30 minutes to more than an hour and were based on a research guide which presented the certain topics and questions which the interviewer explored with participants (Diccico, 2006). The interview guide format allowed the researcher to employ the interview time while still having the flexibility of the interview type, which allowed for more comprehensive collection of subject data (Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007) described the interview guide questions as being informed from the foundational research questions identified in the study. The researcher has adhered to these guidelines. The interview questions are included in the guide.

Participant Selection and Setting

Following approval of the committee and-successful IRB approval, the researcher embarked on the process of obtaining study participants. The researcher identified potential participants by their stated gender, involvement in their last two years in a counselor education doctoral program at the midwestern university, and participants who had given birth to least one child while in the program. As recommended by Englander (2012), criteria to provide sufficiently rich data for research inclusion were three participants. The researcher discussed with the participants the details of the research and gained their informed consent before continuing. The researcher arranged to meet the participants at a location mutually agreed upon and approved by the principal investigator or via online for the introductory and subsequent interviews for the purpose of creating a warm and inviting environment. Online venues are supported by qualitative researchers such as Creswell and Poth (2018) who reported they support web-based data collection methods as the method can allow for increased efficiency with time and reduced cost for researchers and participants. As this study's participants were mothers who were balancing the time and resource constraints inherent to their roles in doctoral study, this option created increased rates of availability and ease for all involved.

Interview Administration Protocols

On the initial day of interviews, the researcher scheduled a brief meeting with the interviewees via Zoom or in-person, reviewed the informed consent (Appendix D), interview questions and overall study protocols and purpose, and answered any questions or concerns the participants held. This also allowed for building the trust and rapport essential for the nature of the interview questions. This approach was in compliance with Englander's (2012) recommendations for descriptive scientific research, which reported that it is important to conduct introductory meetings with the interviewees prior to beginning actual interviews. The participants were notified of their completely voluntary involvement in the study and the option to withdraw at any time during the project. Participants were also be provided with the informed consent including the process for protecting the confidentiality of the data through coding and encryption. Participants were assured that their names would not be shared in the research study. In addition, all data was stored on the protected KSU OneDrive of the Principal Investigator (PI) and accessible only to the PI and graduate student researcher. All data will be thoroughly disposed after three years.

Focus Group

Focus group interviews use the "explicit use of the group interaction as research data" (Kitzinger, 1994, p. 103). Due to the focus on participant comfort and ethical care, the researcher conducted one focus group interview in combination with the individual interviews for this study. Arrangements for all participants were made to meet in a group setting with the researcher for the purpose of engaging in the focus group interview. The utilization of these types of groups compliments the individual interviews and is recommended as a method that is in alignment with the tenets of feminist research and the analysis goals of the qualitative approach (Hesse-Biber, 2007). The focus group in this study allowed for increased analysis of the participants' lived experiences, and data results served to extend and strengthen themes established from the individual interviews.

Document Storage

Participants were provided with the informed consent including the process for protecting the confidentiality of the data through coding, encryption, and storage. Participants were assured that their names would be coded and not shared in the dissertation or publications. In addition, all data were stored on the protected KSU OneDrive of the Principal Investigator (PI) and accessible only to the PI and graduate student researcher. All data will be thoroughly disposed after three years.

Data Analysis

Following the interviews, the researcher began this process by listening to each of the interview recordings. The researcher personally transcribed each recording to create an official interview transcript. The researcher then grouped the data according to the three interview subjects (academia, community, and family) and identified elemental codes in each interview utilizing In Vivo coding methods discussed with methodologist. As certain loose codes began to emerge, the researcher worked to analyze the categories to formulate tentative themes. The researcher engaged in memoing to document notes while engaged in the interviews and coding process as a method of continually examining subjectivities in this process. The participants had the opportunity to review the transcripts of the interviews to make corrections or omit content where desired. Following this process, the researcher discussed preliminary findings in the project with the participants. When approaching coding the stories and narratives in the interview transcripts, the researcher considered patterns and themes. She centered the participants' direct words rather than exerting control over the narrative with different titles for the codes and themes. The researcher coded participants' quotes to honor their narratives and direct ways of expressing their realities. In Saldana's Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers, this method of "pre-coding" is explained as "...Circling, highlighting, bolding, underlining, or coloring rich participant quotes or passages that intrigue you" (2017, p. 20). In this way,

the chosen qualitative theoretical approach also informed the method of coding. The researcher employed lumping for the two cycles of coding approaches in order to organize quote themes with expediency. This entailed using a descriptive participant word or phrase for every two or three to five sentences in the transcription (Saldana, 2021). Following in the vein of the feminist approach, the researcher created a subjectivity journal as a method to cover analytic memos in each round of interviews. The researcher implemented In Vivo coding processes as the most effective method to answer the research questions. This approach allowed for an openness that could gather structure as the project process moved forward in an iterative manner. This method also allowed for continual reflection and analysis on several key questions or subjects of the study in alignment with the research questions and goals.

Summary

The qualitative research methods employed in this study were intended to answer the following research questions:

1. In what ways do the new mothers in in counselor education programs describe their experiences as it relates to role navigation as a community member?
2. In what ways do the new mothers in counselor education programs describe their experiences as it relates to role navigation as a family member?
3. In what ways do the new mothers in counselor education programs describe their experiences as it relates to role navigation as a doctoral student?

This chapter addressed the context and climate necessary for a successful research project. Also included was a description of the research design, collection, and analysis. Attention to the informed consent, coding, confidentiality, and storage of data were emphasized.

Chapter 4 – Results

In this chapter the researcher began with a review of the research questions, methodology, data validation, and participant demographics. The researcher has included a section reporting the results, use of memos, and journaling as a way to continue to honor and acknowledge subjectivity results in the interviewing process. The chapter reported salient themes of the study's results in descriptive tables and describes the contributing In Vivo codes generated from participant quotes for each. It concludes with a summary of the overarching thematic aspects of the chapter represented in a coding chart generated from the cycles of data coded through NVivo software in the corresponding appendix.

Research Questions

This study was designed to understand the complex experiences of new mothers in counselor education programs. It focuses on the lived experiences of three female graduate students who have become biological mothers during their doctoral journeys and are participating in the final two years of their doctoral programs. In addition to examining this population, the study sought to explore these experiences through the lens of concepts related to role theory and also employed feminist tenets in the method and conceptualization of the mothers' experiences. While the data collection and analysis processes were designed as open ended, role theory guided the research design such as examination of social demands, time conflicts, and the navigation of work, community, and home responsibilities. To this end, the overarching research questions guiding this study were:

1. In what ways do the new mothers in in counselor education programs describe their experiences as it relates to role navigation as a community member?
2. In what ways do the new mothers in counselor education programs describe their experiences as it relates to role navigation as a family member?

3. In what ways do the new mothers in counselor education programs describe their experiences as it relates to role navigation as a doctoral student?

Methods of Data Collection, Validation, and Organization

Data for this study were collected using semi-structured interviews and a focus group with open-ended questions designed to elicit information from each of the participating mothers. Each of the interviews were conducted via online video conferencing software, which allowed for video and audio recordings, with the permission of the participant. The researcher conducted three one-on-one interviews with each participant together with a final focus group interview where all participants were present. These multiple formats allowed for participants to feel increased comfortability to express honest answers to the interview questions. The one-on-one and focus group interviews also allowed the interviewer to ask follow-up questions clarifying meaning. The interview guide and corresponding organizational table are found in the appendix. Following the interviews, the researcher utilized transcription to record each participants' responses to interviews, noting and recording her own subjectivities and memos. The data were organized using In Vivo lumping coding methods for all participant quotes, followed by organization into hierarchical data, as recommended by Saldana (2021). This process involved employing NVivo software to perform several rounds of coding analysis. The resulting major and minor themes and further details regarding this process are included in the sections below with corresponding In Vivo participant quotes.

Participant Demographics

Graduate students and mothers were selected from a CACREP accredited Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral program in a midwestern university. Participants were grouped according to their enrollment status and included doctoral students who were new mothers to one or two children and were in their final stage in the program and working on dissertation ($n=3$). They were all poised to

graduate in the spring semester of 2022. The participants ranged in age from 34 years old to 39 years. The average age of the graduate student mothers was 36 years old ($M=36$) and the average age at the time of birthing their first child was 30 years old ($M=30$). Two of the mothers were employed as school counselors at local schools and one of the mothers worked as an adjunct professor in addition to seeing private practice counseling clients. All of the women had their first child (ren) (one had a set of twins) while in graduate programs of study, and two women had an additional child while continuing their program of study. All of the participants were currently married. The women all identified as Caucasian.

Analytic Memos: Researcher Reflections

While outcomes of interviews and focus group are discussed in this chapter, the researcher feels that it is of equal importance to note results and continued presence of the journaling and memoing process, as it is a heavily emphasized aspect of feminist qualitative work and affects final themes of the study. Throughout the data collection process, this researcher sought to be an active participant in the work and to remain true to the methodology. Engaging in the process of recording memos and journaling aided in turning the critical lens upon herself and created increased rigor for the study surrounding power differentials and subjectivity. Following in the vein of the feminist approach, the researcher journaled these subjectivities as a way to address analytic memos in each round of interviews. The researcher utilized the NVivo software program features to note these thoughts as she coded participant quotes from the transcripts. The program allowed for recording these thoughts within the participant quotes and to organize them within the identified codes. This feature helped to organize these reflections and also allowed for revisiting the subjects to supplement with further information in cycle two based on cycle one information and coding. This also created increased focus on several important structural and methodological aspects of the study by reflection on the aspects of power and privilege, role navigation, women's roles, unspoken rules and relationships, and the influences of support in participants'

experiences. This also allowed for space to continually reflect on researcher's own subjectivities throughout the analysis process. As noted above, the bulk of these entries exist within the NVivo program. The researcher has included a sample in the appendices.

Salient Themes Overview

Results of the semi-structured interviews and final focus group on the experiences of graduate student mothers indicated that feelings of guilt, stress, loss, and loneliness were often felt as a result of navigating the pressures of their life roles. Experiences of this pressure and the emotions associated with it derived from three primary origins and were often also the result of increased self, academic and domestic demands. The primary origins of the pressure discussed in this chapter include: (1) maternal absence; (2) caregiving expectations; and (3) self and societal expectations. The terms “mom guilt” or “guilty” were extensively present in the interviews of the participants. Together with identification of these emotions, the mothers also described the combination of their roles in positive terms and seemed to feel that the combination enriched each role in some ways. The mothers identified certain supports as especially impactful to navigation of their roles as doctoral students and as mothers, and these are discussed in the sections below. They also repeatedly described how interconnected each aspect of their supports were, and how support in one arena was increased by involvement by the individuals in another. Additionally, the women identified specific aspects of their experiences that contributed heavily to successful role navigation, such as childcare accessibility, time usage skills, values and mindset, supportive connections, and the importance of flexibility within the work, home, and community structures.

Invariant, salient themes from the participant data are presented in this chapter as headings with corresponding In Vivo quotes. Identified subthemes are also grouped under each heading and are described in this chapter within the corresponding sections. Representative data are presented in the

following organizational tables along with more detailed descriptions and corresponding participant quotes in each of the sections following the tables.

Tables 1-3

Summary of Findings Organized by Research Question and Themes

Table 1 - Pressures

MAJOR THEME: PRESSURES			
<u>Subthemes:</u>	<u>RQ 1: Community Member Experiences</u>	<u>RQ 2: Family Member Experiences</u>	<u>RQ 3: Doctoral Student Experiences</u>
Guilt	-Guilt described by participants in perceived failure to engage in community relationships such as work and other connections -When these connections existed, guilt was described as present around reduced ability to engage in the relationships	-Described “mom guilt” due to perceived absence or reduced involvement in family role and connected tasks with childcare and housework -Guilt described as a result of partner’s increased workload when participants were required to be away due to academic or community role demands	-Guilt described as a result of navigating doctoral role demands such as teaching or dissertation work due to increased time and energy required for other roles -Guilt identified due to decreased involvement in cohort and faculty relationships as result of mothering role and associated tasks
Loss	-Participants described loss of relationships in community realm such as work and other social connections -Loss of time for civic and other types of community engagement -Increased guardedness towards forging relationships -Potential elements of vicarious trauma in descriptions of	-Descriptions of loss present when having to be away from children and family when engaged in tasks related to academics such as dissertation writing or teaching classes -Descriptions of “perfect mothering” internal and societal expectations creating loss of ability to feel fully present due to constant need to be	-Loss of academic relationships such as with cohort or supervisors due to rivaling time and energy needs at home and greater need to prioritize the home and mothering tasks, especially in relation to childcare duties -Potential elements of vicarious trauma due to academic roles as doctoral student counseling supervisors or

	counselor and supervisor roles	fully present in other roles	class instructors or teaching assistants
Stress	-Pressures of navigating work and other community roles in addition to mothering and academic identities -Pandemic stressors creating unique issues for community connections	-Feeling increased responsibility for children's negative behaviors when mother was required to be away from her normal parenting role - New motherhood process-differences between expectation and reality bringing about stress and dissatisfaction with the actualities of the mothering experience along with unattainable mothering expectations -Unending nature of domestic tasks such as laundry and childcare and described pressures of workload -Described pressures due to competitive nature of motherhood and experiences of "mean moms" -Described emotional labor of managing partner tensions when required to do less at home and more in other roles	-Increased stress due to self-described life-long perfectionism surrounding scholastics starting from young age -Described stress in awarded academic leadership roles and faculty relationship-sometimes creating stressful elements -Competition between cohort members creating unneeded relational stressors
Loneliness	-Time and energy requirements of other roles leaving little resources for outside community and social connections	-Competitive societal nature of mothering creating elements of isolation between moms	-Awarded roles such as teaching assistantships or other positions creating isolation due to "other status" rather than being seen as peers

	-Pandemic effects on community connections listed as contributing to isolation -Participants' descriptions of maternal tasks and childcare schedule leaving less free time for the mothers to socialize with others in community realm	-Needing to isolate themselves from family in order to complete academic tasks	-Descriptions of relationships with faculty creating competition and some occasional isolation from peers due to special status -Solitary nature of academic tasks sometimes creating loneliness from peers/others --Description of maternal tasks and childcare schedule leaving less free time for the mothers to socialize with others (cohort members, professors) in academic realm
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Table 2 - Support

MAJOR THEME: INTERCONNECTION AND INFLUENCE OF SUPPORT OR LACK THEREOF			
<u>Subthemes:</u>	<u>RQ 1: Community Member Experiences</u>	<u>RQ 2: Family Member Experiences</u>	<u>RQ 3: Doctoral Student Experiences</u>
Family	-Descriptions of how family and partner support allowed the mothers to navigate their community roles and tasks with greater ease-particularly in work realm -Description of hardships due to lack of support as result of lack of family involvement in navigating work and other conflicts	-Descriptions of partner and family support in navigating domestic tasks-particularly those related to childcare-great appreciation and recognition of the family member's contributions despite presence of guilt	-Identification of how partner and family involvement allowed participants to be more engaged in academic tasks and to span the gap when role tensions arose -Descriptions of the hardships of not having family supports to aid in navigation of scholastic role
Unconventional Supports (Role of	-Descriptions of technology aiding in	-Participants listing childcare tracking	- Mothers identified zoom and other

Technology in Increasing Support)	navigation of community role and aiding community support such as utilizing texting and zoom platforms for work connections	apps, texting, and zoom as regular supports in navigating family roles and relationships	technological platforms as supporting them in their scholastic roles as teaching assistants, supervisors, and doctoral students
Community	-Coworker and other community relationships (pediatrician) aided the mothers in navigating community tasks and providing support in the absence of supports in other realms	-Participants listed how community relationships such as work friends aided them in feeling emotionally and practically supported in their home and academic roles (emotional care, childcare)	-Community relationships (namely work connections) contributed to felt support in academic realm -Also reports of how identity as counselor created some complications in asking for support due to feeling increased elements of guardedness (also discussed in context of vicarious trauma in above sections)
Academic	-Academic connections were listed as aiding the mothers in feeling supported in their community roles and environments	-The mothers discussed how the family and partner supports they possessed allowed them to feel increased support by emotionally supporting them, aiding with childcare and other tasks, and contributing to uplifting them in other ways	- Reports of relationships with faculty and peers creating increased emotional and practical support for participants in their academic journeys and also giving them space to be less demanding of themselves, helping them to form more integrated academic/mother identities -Also descriptions of role of counselor education doctoral student creating decreased reliance on

			supports due to elements of identity related to counseling, supervision, and teaching
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Table 3 – Role Navigation

MAJOR THEME: NAVIGATION			
<u>Subthemes:</u>	<u>RQ 1: Community Member Experiences</u>	<u>RQ 2: Family Member Experiences</u>	<u>RQ 3: Doctoral Student Experiences</u>
Schedule Flexibility	-Being able to complete work tasks at home or flex their schedule was of particular importance to participants	-Participants listed ability to work on evenings and weekends as reality to navigating tasks related to home role	-All mothers spoke of great need for schedule flexibility in their academic roles and how when they were extended increased flexibility to navigate their roles by a professor or supervisor they were better able to function and complete what tasks most needed to be done
Time Usage Skills	-Time usage skills of delegation, prioritization, multitasking, and compartmentalization all were utilized by participants to navigate duties related to the realm of community membership were described by mothers in relation to completion of their work duties	-Delegation of childcare and other domestic tasks in order to navigate other roles -Multitasking of maternal parenting role along with academic and community tasks	-Mothers identified that when academic demands increased, so did the need for the identified time usage skills- multitasking in particular
Childcare	-Participants described navigational need for	-Participants described elements of family and partner involvement in care	-When allowed opportunity to integrate childcare and other domestic

	childcare in their community realm -Also descriptions of needing the ability to bring children to work with them and how the ability to do so positively impacted their experience -Descriptions of nannies, babysitters, afterschool programs, and daycare as paramount to childcare task navigation	as extremely impactful to successful role navigation -Accounts of completing childcare tasks while engaged in other roles abounded-mothers regularly wrote, taught, and supervised while caring for children, and reported the ability to do so as paramount	duties into academic realm (ex: being able to supervise over zoom while holding a sick child) the mothers felt they were able to experience increased navigation of roles
Supportive Connections	- Work connections such as supportive coworkers or bosses were listed as extremely important to navigation of roles	-Family or partner relationships and support existed as a salient aspect of positive navigation for the mothers	-Faculty acknowledgement and support for participants' multiple roles, and fostering ways to support them were both listed when participants were asked about navigation
Mindset	-Understanding tradeoffs of tackling multiple roles, and the reality of prioritizing mothering duties creating tradeoffs related to work - Identification of role enrichment related to community and work	-Identification of preestablished valuing system-children came first when roles were in conflict -Identification of role enrichment related to family membership and overlap	-Discussed and acknowledged real tradeoffs of putting mothering role first before academic role demands (particularly in valuing childcare duties above academics) - Combination of roles enriching life

Pressures (“It’s just been a lot, you know...you work really hard...”)

Within this study, one of the most prevalent themes was the part that certain emotions and stressors played in the motherhood experiences of the participants, leading to increased pressures felt by the mothers. Maternal guilt and feelings of inadequacy were frequently discussed as a result of both strong internal and societal expectations that the mothers felt. These expectations caused them to be harder on themselves despite acknowledging how they were often extremely productive in their daily lives and also demanded more of themselves both professionally and in their mothering roles.

All of the mothers described themselves in some capacity as being “perfectionists” in the roles that they undertook. They spoke about the high expectations they held for themselves surrounding scholastic achievement and explained that these standards about success were often communicated early on in life by those close to them and persisted throughout the new motherhood process. These standards for themselves seemed to become internalized at an early age and were identified as later factors in the mothers feeling that they often misconstrued perceptions of their own academic and mothering abilities and experienced increased stress as a result. In speaking about her academic history, Docmama 2 stated: “Yeah, not getting straight A’s wasn’t an option in our house . . . my first B was the second semester of my freshman year of college, and it honestly kind of spiraled me.” They felt these pressures despite acknowledging that they were cognitively aware of the socialized and internalized elements, and how unattainable they sometimes were. The unattainable nature of these goals was often a subject of discussion despite the participants feeling significant pressure from these expectations. Docmama 3 commented: “I think when you add all of this in . . . like you do really, really good at your job, or you’re a really good mom, or you can be a really good wife . . . or you can be a really good student, and you can probably 2 or 3 of those things really well, but one of those is going to topple. The last couple weeks especially like I felt like my mom role has been lagging, does that make sense? I mean . . . I’m gonna get better, I promise.” Noting this pressure to maintain the illusion of “perfect

mothering,” the mothers in this study reflected on their own early experiences of motherhood, particularly the emotional processes surrounding perceived absence from the mothering role. Academic tasks that required a period of maternal absence from children largely included writing a dissertation, reading literature, teaching in classes, engaging in networking or scholastic functions, and participating in conferences. Maternal guilt was markedly higher during times that the mothers would otherwise be engaged in familial activities but had to complete academic tasks instead. One of the student mothers (Docmama 2) noted how when she had to focus more on scholastics, her young children’s behaviors seemed to be a direct effect of her absence or faulty performance as a mother: “Like if I get a call from a teacher that they had a bad day at school, or like this morning at breakfast I gave them 45 directions and they didn’t get followed . . . like when they’re not behaving is when I think I felt the guiltiest because I felt like they’re not behaving because I’m not doing a good job.” She also noted how this pressure interfered with the experience of mothering, causing her to feel as though she was missing out even when she was present with her children, and added that “. . . when I feel like I’m not doing a good job, I’m not as present with them either.”

Two of the mothers described the difficulties in the new motherhood and doctoral processes, and how the reality of motherhood brought with it new realities that were vastly different than what they had been envisioning. These differences between expectation and reality brought some dissatisfaction with the actualities of the mothering experience along with the steep expectations of themselves as mothers. Though the mothers described making myriad sacrifices to stay present with their children and often worked late or long hours to be present with them, they all spoke of the ways that they felt that they were falling short in their roles as parent and students, and how these perceived failings caused stress, guilt, and tension even though they knew that these standards were impossible. As one mother (Docmama 2) stated, “Are we going do 10 loads of laundry this weekend? You know

it's just that something has to give because no matter what society or social media shows us . . . all these people's 'perfect life' right? . . . like you can bet I push that pile and clean clothes over to get this perfect picture of my child . . . but it's not like the reality. Or maybe it is that we have really clean houses and cooked meals every night, and may plan, you know, a structured activity or a structure of reading time for our kids every night, but like none of us are doing all of those things perfectly . . . but just the ways that it piles up sometimes are so intensely painful.”

While reflecting on both their early and current experiences of motherhood, the women in the study also reflected on the competitiveness of doctoral work and motherhood. They felt that within their cohorts a competitiveness existed amongst the student mothers, Docmama 2 stating that, “I feel like there was a lot of weird competitiveness in some of the people that were there and I'm just not a competitive person. . . . So that was really weird for me. Yeah. And that kind of goes into mean mom stuff, too, like you know we're all doing more than anybody else we know.” Several also identified how challenging this competition could be for building connections and support with others, stating that their relationships with faculty or special roles they were awarded such as teaching or supervising for courses caused comparison and potential jealousy, and sometimes resulted in them feeling isolated from the rest of their classmates: “A whole lot of my work was as a teaching assistant – it was for me to be expected to be the one that had the answers about a lot of things. . . . That was such a different dynamic, you know as the GTA . . . as the teacher. I was the one with the answers, so I wasn't having those ongoing conversations and relationships. . .”(Docmama 1). They also spoke of how this stage in their doctoral work was uniquely isolating due to certain factors such as COVID, lack of structured class interactions, and other factors. One mother (Docmama 1) spoke of this issue, saying: “It was the loss of the connection to my peers . . . being able to talk with you guys about kind of just normalizing it. That absence was tough . . . but still because of the pandemic. It felt very disconnected and because I

was already done with coursework as well.” Another factor of this isolation was the motherhood load itself with maternal tasks and childcare schedule leaving less free time for the mothers to socialize with others. One mother (Docmama 3) described this as: “I’m all about flexible schedule not rigid routine . . . but that meant a lot of times I didn’t leave my house at certain times because it was nap time and I was more interested in having a well-rested baby than community time.”

Interwoven themes of loneliness and absence were also present in their descriptions of being away from children and partners when needing to write or to complete other academic tasks. Docmama 2 commented: “You know the doctoral work, just the doctoral components are isolating. You’re doing a lot of it, you know by yourself and it’s very technical and you have to go away from your family sometimes away from everyone you know, to do it. . .” For the purposes of this research, maternal absence includes the experience of tending to academic tasks rather than those related to the participant’s domestic or childcare roles. It encompasses any instance where mothers were absent due to academic-related activities. The mothers all spent long hours during weekends, early mornings, or evenings in order to write or to complete their academic tasks – time that would have been otherwise spent relaxing and connecting with children or family. The deep feelings of loss concerning this absence were evident for all participants, and they spoke at length about how isolating these sacrifices felt at times, and how this time they were giving up was extremely precious to them. Docmama 2 described the tradeoffs in mothering role tasks she had to make and commented on this absence, saying of her doctoral role duties: “So that’s kind of pushed all of the work now to stuff that has to happen on the weekends, or in the evenings, which is also, you know, the only time that I have with my kids and so . . . that’s I think a big piece of what’s been hard for me . . . the absence, guilt and loss components of some of this . . . it’s really difficult.” Within this statement the reader can also hear the added pressure mothers felt due to navigating emotional labor to manage the feelings.

The other major aspect of maternal pressure presented when the mothers were interviewed about partner involvement. Many of them relied heavily on partners when they needed to be away due to scholastic tasks, and while the partner's negative emotions were not discussed in any way, the mothers all seemed to feel a certain amount of pressure related to this subject, which also contributed to the mothers' emotional labor in managing this stress. In situations where participants' academic obligations required their partners to contribute more to household tasks and childcare, they often reported a sense of guilt and stress. Interestingly, fathers' level of participation never seemed to impact the amount of domestic and childcare related work the mothers felt obligated to undertake, and many of them described how even when given the option to delegate, they struggled to do so: "I'm not the best at asking for help. My husband . . . that's been one of his concerns, is that I don't [ask for help], but I don't know if it's a complaint . . . he feels like he hasn't been given the skills . . . that I haven't provided him with what he needs to know in order to help me, because I just do it all. So if I am not available, he has no idea what to do, because I haven't ever walked him through it or explained why I do the things I do and how it's kind of like . . . you're setting me up for failure, I need you to rely on me a little bit more" (Docmama 1). When discussing this phenomenon, the participants also shared how this self-reliance cycle created stress and felt lonely at times. Docmama 3 described it: "But then, like, it falls on me to figure it out . . . and I don't expect it of him . . . he's also not arranging the schedule, he's not arranging for someone else . . . they're not making those sacrifices that the mom makes, and they're not solving any of the problems that the mom saw."

The Influence of Support ("We're all trying to get all this done, and it is messy sometimes")

One of the major aspects of interest was the experience of relying on others for help and support as a result of the increased pressures of role navigation. These experiences ran the gamut from emotional support and connection to practical navigation of childcare and home-related tasks. They

were identified evenly across the family, community, and academic realms. The multifaceted aspects and distribution of this support allowed the mothers to utilize it in the various arenas where needs existed.

As described in the sections above, mothers described their relationships with help and support in complicated ways. They spoke of the heavy and constant burden of coordinating some of this care (“he’s not coordinating the schedule for someone else”-Docmama 3) but also all relied on this care and support to function in their daily lives. These supports and their influences on the various realms of academics, motherhood, and community were extremely interconnected, and tightly interwoven as illustrated in the tables. Despite the presence of some feelings of guilt when taking advantage of them, the mothers all spoke of their various supports with extremely deep appreciation. Docmama 3 described the importance of her mother’s help with her family in this manner: “But I always say if my mom hadn’t been there to . . . pick up the pieces of the end of the day . . . one of us would have probably fallen off the track along the way.” Another (Docmama 2) described her experience of navigation with her family: “When you’re a mom, something is always going to be piled up, or . . . you have to give or let go on something, you know, even though I have a husband who is amazing . . . and you know I get frustrated with him sometimes of course, but like he does a lot, and sometimes it’s the small stuff but overall, like the amount of things that he does for us and our family . . . it matters so much.” All of them mentioned the vital roles that their partners, mothers, and other family members played in the daily navigation of academic, community, and home duties. Where members of their family were not able to provide support, they felt their absence strongly. One mother described the ways in which she spanned this family support gap in these words: “A good thing that did come out of our doctoral work was, you know, we talked a lot about resources. I feel like I understand how to use our systems that exist, better than a lot of people. . . When we moved here, we created a support system. We got

connected to a pediatrician that we love. And then we were able to rely on them for like the illness stuff that maybe you would use to rely on your mom or grandma” (Docmama 1).

Another aspect of identified support existed in the community realm. The mothers identified their work, church, and childcare as resources of both practical help and emotional care despite also indicating that for many of them, the support and connections in this realm had been lacking during the recent years due to COVID precautions, prioritization of academic and home tasks, and other issues. Docmama 3 described this support: “My work friends are an extremely important part of my community. I have another counselor and a social worker that are both females. My co-counselor, she has 3 daughters and they're older. My social worker has 2 sons and they're a little bit older . . . they're very good resources for me like on parenting stuff, and they're good people . . . they're very real humans and they're grounding for me and it's good to like come to work and enjoy being with them, and when we've had rough mornings they're good people to like bounce ideas off of, or just to say I'm really struggling with my kid or school . . . feeling like I have someone I can talk to without being judged, and things like that.” While these avenues were identified as major supports, the mothers also mentioned how they felt they had to be guarded or more disengaged due to aspects of their other roles as doctoral students and mental health counselors. One mother (Docmama 2) described how her role as a counselor caused her to be more guarded with social connections in these words: “I think a lot of people don't understand . . . I also think, because of the nature of our work . . . the other people you're talking to are counselors too, right? Maybe it'll be different in a different world, but I also think that because of the work we do, we're hyperaware of the people we let into our inner circle, if that makes sense . . . I guess this job kind of makes you . . . aware that everyone has stuff they struggle with and has – you know, I won't say a ‘dark side,’ but you know what I mean, like everybody's got stuff that isn't stuff they put out there for everyone, and I guess I feel, especially since having kids, like I have to

be even more protective of those people or of my kids, and like not letting just anyone into our lives.”

Another participant (Docmama 3) described how her roles as mother and doctoral student left little time to engage with other connections, especially amidst the pandemic, stating: “The absence is tough. It is hard . . . still because of the pandemic and everything. It feels very disconnected.”

Yet another avenue of identified support was the relationships that the mothers held with caring individuals in the academic realm. As discussed above, within these relationships existed some elements of competitiveness and pressure, but the participants also spoke very highly of the mentors, professors, and certain peers that they had connected with throughout their programs. Docmama 3 described her experiences with a supportive faculty member in this manner: “Just having somebody to talk to who had already gone through all of it...I felt very supported....and she [the faculty member] said we're going to create a good situation for you because I wanted somebody to have done it for me. . . . You know, we talk about women supporting women, and that was really, really true.” Docmama 1 stated that “Dr. ---, he'd say that sometimes writing is not most important right now. Raising that baby is . . . and he was saying that out of support, not because he wanted me to pause or take more time. He wanted me to really feel OK that being a mom would always take precedent.” The mothers all described the major influence that relationships with peers and faculty had on their experiences, and how much influence they placed on the faculty’s opinions of them as students. One mother (Docmama 1) described the importance of her relationship with her chair in this way: “I want him so desperately to think I'm smart and good, and good enough, you know?”

An interesting aspect of this data was the role that technology played in the support the women felt and, in their ability, to navigate their multiple roles. The influence that technology had on their being able to stay connected to all aspects of their lives could not be overstated. They all mentioned elements of technology and how it impacted their experience on multiple levels, from childcare apps

and texting that allowed them to communicate efficiently with those with their children to the effectiveness of Zoom in allowing them to connect with clients, supervisees, professors, family and friends, to teaching and supervising while holding babies or staying at home and texting and having calls with the various relationships they held. While this influence was largely positive, one did comment that she felt that for her it had been a mixed experience, citing a relationship she had with a coworker where she felt that they had drifted apart due to only seeing each other over Zoom the past two years because of COVID precautions.

Navigation (“You have to have a master plan in your mind of how you're going to compartmentalize and manage”)

It was apparent throughout the interviews that the participants all invested time and energy into the various ways that they navigated roles of mother, family member, community member, and doctoral student. They all spoke of the significant thought and effort that it enabled to be able to successfully switch between roles and to accomplish the tasks inherent to each. While the ways in which they accomplished the tasks and responsibilities of their lives varied, they all spoke of certain aspects of their experiences of navigation that were elemental to their success. Grouped into larger themes, these themes were childcare details and accessibility, time usage skills and techniques, the supportive connections they received from family, community, and academic relationships, mindset, and the importance of having flexibility within the work, home, and community structures within which they functioned.

In exploring the narratives of the academic mothers, a salient subject was the constant nature of navigating childcare tasks and childcare accessibility along with other roles at home. Many of the mothers outlined these duties as paramount to their success in all navigation realms, and also felt the least successful when they perceived that they were not upholding their duties in this area. All of the mothers relied on a family member, nannies/babysitters, school, or daycare to navigate the childcare

issues that involvement in work and academics required. Docmama 3 who was employed as a school counselor explained that she took her children with her when working in after-school care, and this aided her in being able to span both her work duties and childcare needs. “Sometimes they have to come back to school with me until I’m finished with after-school and I have classrooms that I check. If there are student issues, I take care of those so a lot of times they come with me.” In describing her family’s relationship with her supportive babysitter, Docmama 2 stated: “I think probably one of my biggest resources is my babysitter. She’s the best. I wouldn’t be able to do this if I didn’t have her and she’s been with us forever. I mean she was the first babysitter my oldest had so she’s been in our lives now for over 7 years, and I trust her very much . . . she’s a good one . . . having her in my life is very important.” The mothers all spoke extensively of the constant navigation and planning involved in either caregiving or in coordinating care for their children. Despite varying caregiver involvement from partners, family members, babysitters, and others, the mothers still all felt overwhelmingly responsible for the unpaid labor tasks such as childcare and management of the domestic domain. As one participant (Docmama 2) stated: “[I]f something’s not right, if something doesn’t go well, it’s my responsibility to make sure that my family’s functioning, and to make sure that everything’s okay. It’s my responsibility to make sure everyone has eaten, it’s my responsibility to make sure everyone is wearing clean clothes, it’s my responsibility to make sure everyone’s healthy, it’s my responsibility to make sure homework gets done, you know everything’s my responsibility, and if it’s not done, then it’s a reflection on me, you know . . . like if my kids don’t get enough sleep and they’re tired and grouchy, and they misbehave at school, that’s a reflection on me. There’s no option to opt out.” When partners took on more of the childcare or home tasks burden, there seemed to be an element of “owing” them and some anxiety surrounding this role reversal due to the fact that their partners seemed to largely rely on them to make the bulk of the decisions and to perform duties surrounding caregiving and other home

tasks. Docmama 3 phrased this expectation as “feeling like sometimes like we owe them, or like we have anxiety about them doing more than we want them to, or we should think that they should, you know . . . that was really bad, like when the kids were babies . . . like he would be totally OK being at home, for you know, like a while with them, but I would stress.” There also seemed to exist the expectation to be both physically and emotionally present at all times when home, and this was highlighted in the mothers’ responses as well. As discussed in the “Pressures” section above, when the mothers were required to spend more time away from caregiving tasks, greater feelings of stress and guilt usually occurred. “The finding time to get stuff done . . . I feel like that was probably the biggest adjustment . . . all this stuff that had to be done. But then the guilt of feeling like I needed to be present with my kids, and so trying to just work at night, or you know, when they were asleep, or when I wasn’t with them, that was also really hard” (Docmama 2).

When at home, all discussed how they regularly cared for their children and completed other tasks while also attempting to work on academics. In addition to this, several mothers described situations of needing to be away from their children and needing childcare, presenting them with a stressful either-or predicament of providing or coordinating care. Additionally, the elements of financial cost of childcare and their doctoral programs added to this burden. Docmama 1 described this issue: “I’m working four quarter time jobs . . . equivalent to 200% of my time . . . and that’s not even counting mommy role, you know . . . that’s just the other things that are that I’m doing, because either I love it or because it’s what I’m doing to make money for my family right now . . . whenever one of us has to stop working it is a direct impact on what we feel needs to be done, and that’s challenging.”

In being interviewed about their roles, the participants all listed practical methods of time management that they engaged in to navigate their daily tasks related to academics, family, and community. These methods consisted of various solutions, from prioritizing working hours for their

academics during the evenings and weekends to multitasking when home and school responsibilities coincided. All of the participants reported needing to utilize weekend and evening hours to accomplish their academic and home tasks. One mother (Docmama 3) describing this process as follows: “Working as a school counselor, I don't have any time during the day to accomplish anything so that's kind of pushed all of the work now to stuff that has to happen on the weekends, or in the evenings, which is also, you know, the only time that I have with my kids and so, that's I think a big piece of what's been hard for me . . . that time management.” Along with usage of these hours, they also engaged in constant multitasking in order to span the gap where tasks overlapped. As one of the mothers (Docmama 2) phrased this: “I've never, like, been able to fully shut things off . . . and that's okay. I get work done when I can and how I can.” They all described tending to children and home while also engaging in academic assignments as a regular part of their experiences. Along with multitasking, compartmentalization, and prioritization, the mothers all engaged in some form of delegation to handle the tasks with which they were faced. This often looked like requesting partners or family members to watch children during certain times or to handle certain household tasks that otherwise would have fallen on the mothers to perform. While this method was shared as an option, they all reported that in these situations the additional burden of managing the delegation also was their responsibility. Docmama 3 stated: “A lot of times it goes back to it being just me – so if I can't pick them up, I'm the one having to figure that out, you know? It's not like ‘well let's have the neighbor do that today’ you know? Like it's me . . . that all falls on me.” Additionally, the mothers solely prioritized family and academics at various times in their weeks or at various life points in order to navigate them. This was described by one mother: “. . . the time management, the role navigation for that time period was literally just like ‘I'm doing this this time, and then I'm going to do this, and then I'm doing this and then we're doing it again . . . sometimes our lives require that’” (Docmama 3).

In interviewing the mothers about navigation of roles, one of the most prevalent themes was the need for some amount of flexibility within the structures surrounding community, home, and academics. Having some flexibility in the location, time frame, or details surrounding a task was incredibly important to successful navigation. The ability to utilize online components for teaching, work, and supervision was commonly listed when discussing flexibility. One new mother (Docmama 1) described using Zoom to navigate her roles in this manner: “You know when I was teaching online I was grading online I was meeting with supervisors online . . . all of that was able to be done with a baby either on my lap or in, you know, on the floor or pack and play or during nap . . . and I did more than one pumping session like this [turns the camera so it just shows her face] . . . I had to. I had to pump and I had to handle a meeting, and that was it. What I found was interesting is I never thought I would want to be a mom that stayed home . . . but what it turns out I really love is the flexibility of some of this.” She added: “It’s allowed us to be in multiple places at once, which we desperately needed at this time . . . and it’s made us better at it, you know what I mean? Like it’s made us better at doing things efficiently.” The participants all discussed how an unanticipated issue like a sick child or an academic or work assignment could create major stressors and role challenges for them, and how these types of situations created issues when they could not attend to them due to schedule or location inflexibility. When these situations arose, the mothers often seemed to internalize them as personal failings rather than the role issues that they truly were even though they acknowledged them as role issues. Docmama 3 described this Catch-22 in these words: “It does feel like failure if we can’t navigate all these things like it’s the only thing on our plate, you know? What’s the saying? You’re supposed to work like you don’t have kids, and parent like you don’t have a job. There are some times that I just feel that in my soul, because it’s unfair . . . because we’re up against people who are not navigating these things.” Docmama 1 explained how having a sick child affected her experience in this manner: “More

often than not, I have to reschedule those [counseling and supervision clients] all to another day so then that makes another day go for 12 or 14 hours in order to get everybody moved . . . just lots of juggling of moving things around to get it to work” When flexibility was extended to them by someone in a managing or leading position, they all reported feeling increased confidence in being able to navigate their roles and lessened stress and anxiety as well. This was especially apparent in their accounts of academic interactions where their other roles were acknowledged as being of importance and taking time and effort, and flexibility and support were given by the individual. In describing the immense value of these interactions, one mother stated: “He [chairing professor] wanted me to really feel that being a mom could take precedent, too . . . like the writing would still be there, but the babies . . . the babies don't keep.” Docmama 2 described the warm relationship she had with her professor in these words: “Because I'm a perfectionist I tend not to take things that are offered, but I know that if I called her [professor] and said I need more time on this or I'm freaking out about this, that she would . . . help me.”

No matter how well the mother was supported or how perfectly she utilized her time and resources, the process of dissertation and motherhood was widely described as difficult. The study's participants all communicated how their mindset and valuing systems about this process strongly impacted the experience, especially in times when aspects of this navigation felt especially difficult. The mothers all strongly valued their educational goals but acknowledged that their parenting roles came first in their lives. They all described a process of prioritization that they returned to when roles were in major conflict. They spoke of how ultimately their children's needs came first in situations where they needed their mothers. Having this valuing process as preestablished allowed them to quickly make hard decisions where doctoral or community roles were in conflict with mothering demands. In describing the importance of having a preestablished valuing system, Docmama 3 stated:

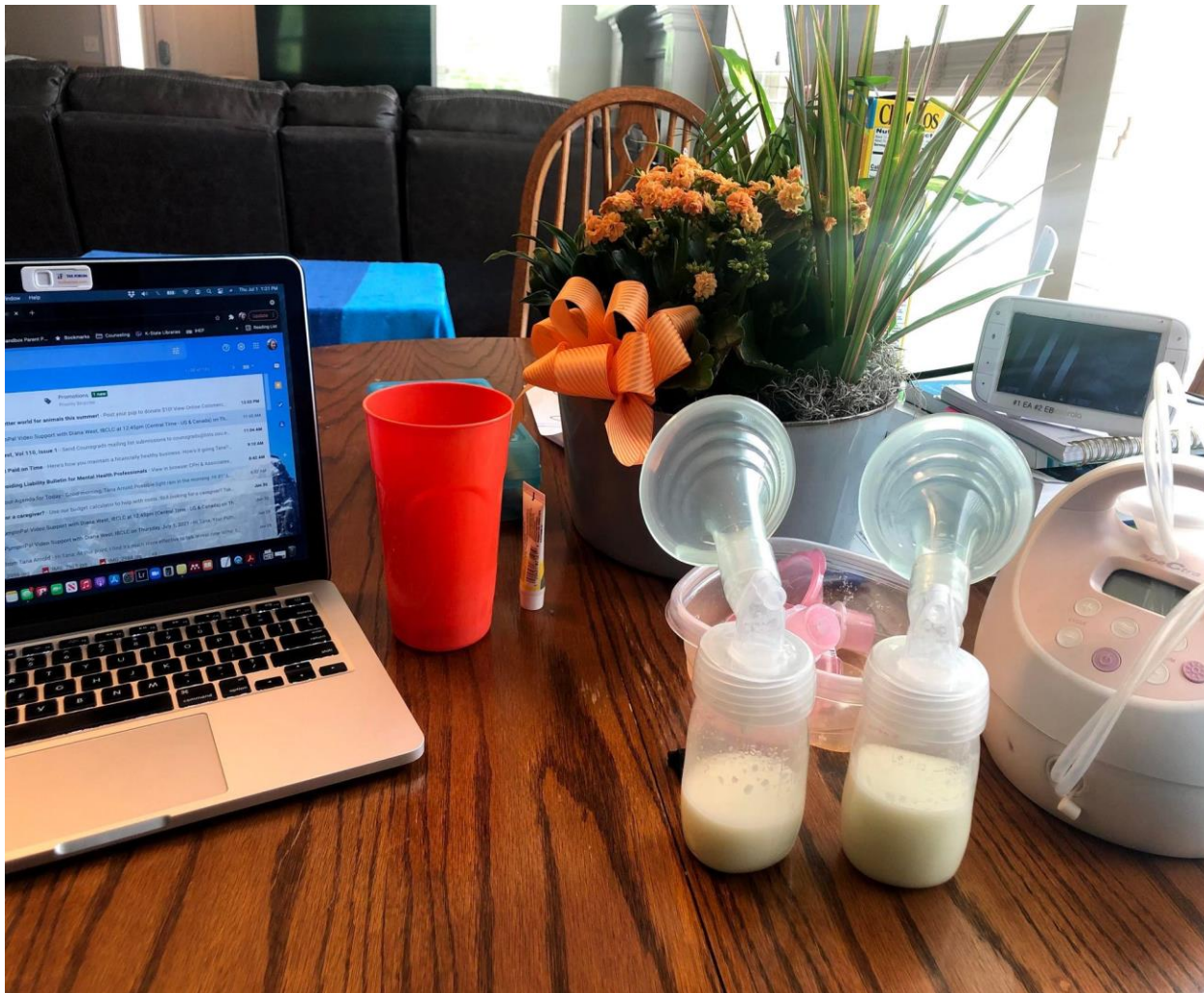
“... those pieces of ... being okay with, acknowledging and being intentional about the trade-offs ... you’re understanding the sacrifices.” While the mothers did not seem to regret these values, they did acknowledge that they came with obvious tradeoffs. Docmama 1 described this as follows: “For me it’s the doctoral and professional role that feels like it catches the brunt of it because I will always prioritize the girls. I don’t have an option ... I have to keep them alive. This paper can sit here on my desktop and be fine, but my babies don’t keep – especially when they’re sick and need somebody to hold them.” They often spoke of the small and large academic and work opportunities that they had delayed or turned down as a result of needing to be present in their mothering roles. For many of them, the dissertation phase had proven to be particularly challenging due to the solitary work, long hours, and unpredictability of the editing process. Docmama 2 discussed this difficulty: “You know, the upper-level thinking or functioning? I feel like it knocks that out sometimes ... I guess part of it too ... is the motivation to put in these ridiculous hours and stay up late and be away from my kids ... this ‘does this really matter’ piece of it was something I had to kind of work through and take some time with in this process.” For all of them, there was an element of loss with this value system even as they described their love and devotion to their family. Another mother (Docmama 3) described her experience in this manner: “When you’re a mom, something is always going to be piled up or like something like you have to give or let go on something. I would really like to be done in May ... I have had so many sleepless nights and so ... it’s remembering things like ‘this is not the end of the world.’ You know what I mean? Like I have to talk myself off of the cliff. My kids are healthy. I am healthy. This is certainly a priority ... yes, I really want to be May. But I have to keep myself sane and healthy ... if I am a December graduate, I am a December graduate. I go back to where is my foundation in this?” While navigation of their roles came with elements of loss and stress, the mothers also explored how the combination of roles enriched their lives. They described the fast pace and

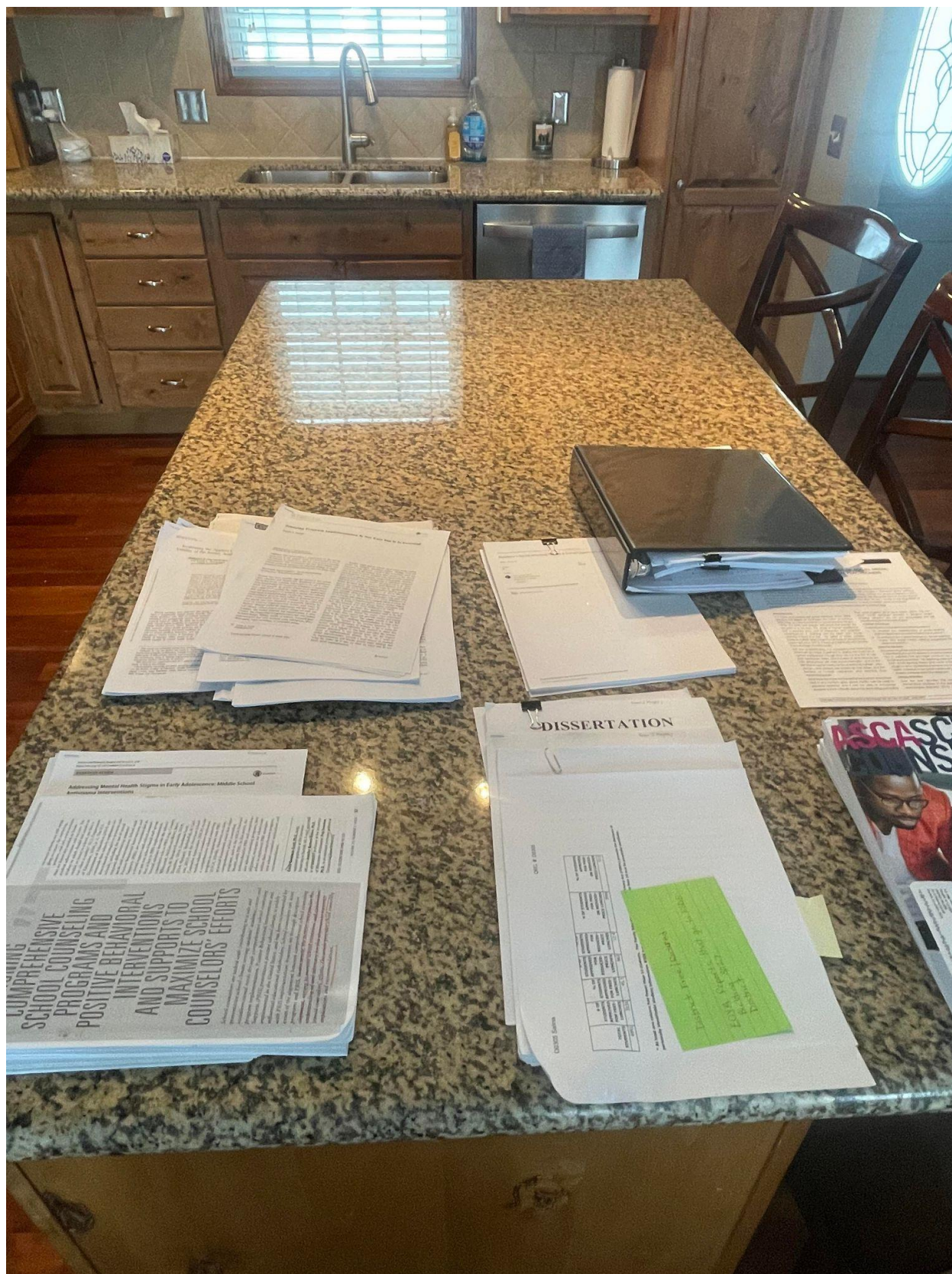
juggling process as somewhat natural, and as one that they were well suited to. Docmama 1 stated: “I enjoy busy . . . busy honestly keeps me on top of all of it. I start dropping balls when I slow down” She also noted that the skills she had gained throughout her doctoral journey aided and enriched her skills in the mothering realm: “All of the research that we've done throughout . . . and that critical thinking, I applied that to my role as mom also . . . whenever I didn't know the answer and I didn't feel like I had somebody to go to I was able to apply some of those critical thinking skills, and it changed the way I was looking at information.” Another (Docmama 3) described how her identity as a student was integral and precious to her identity, commenting: “Oh, my goodness – I kind of feel like I've never stopped being a student . . . I'm actually a little bit freaked out about what happens next fall when I'm not taking classes!”

In the focus group interview concluding the individual interview process, the mothers all had the opportunity to bring an artifact describing the process of navigating their roles. While some of the thematic results are presented in the sections above, the researcher would like to highlight some of the details that emerged from the focus group conversations. For each of the mothers, the processes of mother, doctoral student, and community member were represented and described as vitally interconnected by the mothers in the focus group interviews. They all described their photo artifacts in terms of this integration, and these photos are presented below for ease of reference. The researcher found this interconnection to be an interesting detail to note, as they seemed to take pride in presenting their multifaceted identities in each of their realms rather than downplaying aspects of them in certain roles. The other subject of interest in this group interview was the great appreciation the mothers expressed in getting to talk about their experiences with someone, in their words, who “gets it” (Docmama 2). They described the value of being able to spend time in a space where their unique issues and perspectives were understood and mirrored by their companions, and also described how

rare this experience was for them. Docmama 3 described her perspective in these words: “...so thank you for that, because I think that this experience provided an outlet for me that I could have never even identified, you know? Just...thanks. I've looked forward to our meetings even though they've been brief and in between chaos and whatnot...but seriously, thank you, it's been kind of a unique experience to get to be a part of.”

Participant Photo Artifacts from Focus Group





Chapter Summary

In this chapter the researcher reported the demographic characteristics of the study's participants. The researcher also explored outcomes of the memoing and journaling practices engaged throughout the interviewing process. The chapter included the identified themes of pressure, support, navigation, and representation of the data with participant quotes derived from the transcripts. A table with the alignment of the research questions, results, themes, and theoretical frame is also included. Within these themed sections the researcher also discusses the contributing codes and their data.

Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusion

Chapter five reviews the interpretational aspects of this research study and its findings. The chapter also includes the limitations that were reflected in the data and process. Finally, it lists potential implications for academic, home, and community realms and outlines recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Results

This study's findings indicated that guilt and stress were common emotions expressed by the mothers along with some feelings of loss and loneliness. Accounts of these emotions typically revolved around notions of perfectionism and standards that were ultimately unattainable. While the mothers acknowledged this reality, they all still experienced the toll of self and societal expectations surrounding these standards. Unattainable standards surrounding “perfect” motherhood typically function within a context of intensive mothering ideologies (Hays, 1996). Based on the concept that mothering requires abundant amounts of time, energy, and resources, this ideology also stipulates that in order to mother effectively, they must utilize unending amounts of one-on-one time, money, and activities (Parson et al., 2012). Mothers who are unable to engage in these types of mothering practices are viewed by society as less than, and often are deemed inadequate by others (Friedman, 2013). The pressures of these societal and self-expectations can leave mothers feeling vulnerable to higher levels of maternal guilt and other mental health stressors (Rizzo et al., 2012). The mothers in this study commented frequently on this pressure and elaborated on the overwhelming nature of their combination. As conceptualized, role overload is described a state in which individuals perceive the expectations and responsibilities of their roles as overwhelming and beyond their time, energy, and capabilities (Eatough et al., 2011). The overwhelming nature of the mothers' roles and responsibilities associated with them seemed to permeate every area of their experience, contributing heavily to the

stress and other negative emotions expressed in interviews. The phenomenon of role strain occurs when an individual is unable to meet the social role demands put upon them (Goode, 1960) resulting in experiences of stress. The mothers in this study reported feeling pressures to perform in these roles despite acknowledging that they realized that these were certain societal and self-expectations that were often ultimately unattainable and feeling guilt and other strong emotions when they perceived themselves as failing. These types of expectations seemed to lead the mothers to feel increasingly responsible for childcare and other domestic duties and seemed to create undue levels of stress on them. Noting these stressors, the mothers in this study described their own early experiences of motherhood and how they felt that they “missed out” due to the emphasis on this conception of intensive mothering. The phase of new motherhood, or matrescence, brings with it many changes that may be extremely different from what the individual might have envisioned for themselves. Hardships mothers face when in the transitional process of motherhood can potentially add to the already difficult nature of these changes (Sawers & Wong, 2018).

The myriad physical, psychological, and other changes of this process in combination with increased societal and role pressures can lead to increased experiences of negative emotions (Dunford & Granger, 2017). Effective mothering ideologies have remained salient for years, and majorly conflict with many of the more contemporary and practical considerations of modern parenting. These conflicts can ultimately lead to parental burnout (Meeusen & Van Laar, 2018). In this study, the combination of some of these self and societal expectations on the mothers seemed to contribute additional stress to an already pressure-filled time in their lives. Despite the fact that all of the participants worked as well as attended school, they all expressed feeling largely responsible for navigating, completing, and delegating domestic tasks such as housework, cooking, and childcare. This created additional stressors due to the reality of navigating a “second shift” (Hochschild, 2003) of work and home tasks. This

concept described the unequal workloads that individuals may undertake due to the dual responsibilities of work outside the home and within the home. For the mothers in this study, this load extended to academic responsibilities. These reported emotions are important to consider due to the fact that they can spring from ideologies that can exacerbate the negative emotions that the pressures of motherhood may already bring. These pressures resulting from feeling ultimately responsible for children and home tasks along with academic and other workloads were often reported in the interviews as causing increased negative emotions and stressors. These results are consistent with research indicating that graduate mothers can experience academic motherhood in a socioculturally constructed way where their identities can construct an environment where the mothers find it hard to navigate the competing ideals of “good student” and “good mother” (Lynch, 2008). Another finding consistent with this research was the fact that when the mothers were required to be absent from their home and childcare tasks due to academic developments, guilt and other self-directed negative emotions were often the result. As the mothers in this study were all poised to graduate in the spring semester and were under heavy academic deadlines, these emotions were consistently described as chronic aspects of their current experiences.

Together with contributing to the role navigation pressures described by the mothers, their additional identities as counselors created aspects of described hardship due to issues related to current heavy social climate and other factors. The phenomena of role strain and overload along with demands of trauma containment can predispose this population to difficult and potentially traumatic outcomes related to vicarious trauma (Brown et al., 2018). The mothers’ identities as counselors seemed to be indicated as an additional cause of increased stress and guardedness towards social connections. Vicarious trauma can occur from chronic exposure to trauma accounts (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995), and individuals in the helping or care-giving professions are at significant risk (McCann & Pearlman,

1990). Vicarious trauma can result in helpers experiencing feelings of powerlessness, decreased trust and confidence in others, greater feelings of vulnerability, and a sense of being isolated from their social connections (McCann & Pearlmann, 1990).

While the pressures of motherhood and doctoral work are challenging due to issues related to multiple roles (Munn, 2017), a positive element of this research was the element of role navigation described by the mothers in interviews and focus groups. The participants described their academic roles as vital to their identities and, as integral to their identities as the other roles they upheld. Even when they considered withdrawing or stopping scholastic work, all of them continued in their studies. Research reported that for the majority of women, obtaining an advanced degree is a transformative experience that can raise self-esteem and respect despite facing complex challenges (Markle, 2015). Resources to support and equip the mothers were reported to be extremely vital to successful role navigation. The factors of mindset, supportive relationships, and time management skills were all identified by the mothers as vital to their navigation. Giancola's (2009) reported on the influences of family-school and school-work conflicts. The study indicated adult women learners were able to resolve the stresses of these conflicts through coping strategies such as positive cognitive reappraisal and time planning. Trepal et al. (2014) illustrated how expectations of self and environment and mindset influence how doctoral student mothers viewed themselves and their priorities. Strategies to successfully negotiate roles in doctoral student motherhood were extensively described both in this study and across research discussing graduate student motherhood and academic motherhood (Grenier & Burke, 2015; Lynch, 2008; Tiu, 2013; Trepal et al., 2014) which, similar to this study's results, identified strategies for navigation in broader research discuss integration of mothering and academia. Studies such as those completed by Tiu (2013) and Lynch (2008) also identified time management strategies graduate mothers engaged, including prioritization and compartmentalization to successfully

navigate their academic roles along with their maternal ones. Interestingly, a difference in data results between this study and others exists surrounding integration of identity. The mothers in this study often described how they openly integrated their mothering identities and tasks into their scholastic roles. These approaches seem to differ from other research surrounding this aspect of navigation. Tiu's (2013) illustrated ways that doctoral student mothers chose to "drop," their identity as mothers within their academic environments. However, the mothers did describe how they felt pressures to perform each of their roles like they were their only responsibility. This finding would seem to be in alignment with Lynch's (2008) study findings, which indicated that the participants developed techniques to present themselves as good students to others, which involved, for instance, creating an image of a doctoral student who did not have additional obligations as a mother.

These interviews allowed graduate student mothers to safely express their experiences, and in doing so, also helped explore different ways in which those seeking to support them can better do so and can aid in alleviating the perceived emotional burden of their roles. The great impact of the presence or absence of supportive relationships on the role navigation experiences of the mothers was apparent through their many accounts of community, family, and academic influences. The mothers spoke warmly of many of their interactions with these supports and also communicated deep loss where they had experienced the absence of them. Because discussion of these impacts is significantly tied into study implications, these elements are discussed below along with relevant recommendations. The next sections continue to explore these findings as well as potential implications for higher education institutions, home environments, and community realms.

Implications for Scholastic, Family, and Community Environments

Discussions of the mothers within this study highlight a number of ways that academic, family, and community environments can both potentially contribute to stressors felt by student mothers and

contribute to support. Due to the scope of this study and the vast nature of this subject, the discussion results and implications for support are narrowed to include only the most prominently described aspects of participant experience.

The participants in this study often described an increase in stress, guilt, and other negative emotions as a result of academic demands, pressures, and perceptions of competition. These experiences were in addition to demands of family and community dynamics, caregiving and other domestic responsibilities, and societal expectations felt by the mothers. These experiences were in alignment with research describing outcomes of the role stressors of graduate parents. McCutcheon and Morrison's (2017) study highlighted the need that the participants felt to choose between work and family, and how it intervened with academic success, and stressed the need to examine academic culture in order to better support student-parents. Markle (2015) described how many mothers can cycle through guilt and other negative emotions, feeling that they are not doing enough in school due to their home obligations, and feeling that they do not do enough at home as a result of their academic demands. This leaves mothers feeling that they are often in a state of constant negative evaluation. These feelings were echoed by the mothers in this study. The mothers also described feeling that when they perceived these academic relationships as scarce, it contributed to the already elevated levels of competition within the mothers' worlds, contributing to unsafe relationship dynamics between other mothers and between peers. The mothers described levels of competition amongst students in their cohorts and listed this issue as one that contributed to them feeling less connected and more stressed.

Conversely, when they received increased support by their school, the mothers reported higher levels of confidence, self-efficacy, and engagement, which led to better role navigation. This consisted of a consistent, encouraging, and supportive relationship with a faculty member where the mothers felt their non-academic roles were respected and acknowledged, and some flexibility was extended to them

as a result. Lovitts (2001) reported the influential role of faculty relationships on the influence of departmental faculty support on graduate school persistence and experiences. Cockrell and Shelley's (2011) study examined the correlation between doctoral persistence and academic support systems. In their study, factors including student satisfaction, academic resources, and expectation mindset, were positively correlated with the participants' persistence in their programs. Based on these results, attention should be given to the existence and quality of these relationships and to fostering supportive dynamics. While the positive impact was expected the great degree to which supportive faculty relationships influenced student mothers' experiences surprised this researcher. She feels that it is important for any future or current supervisors, professors, or advisors in this field to understand about their potential influence in their graduate student mothers' lives.

The doctoral student mothers in this study described their family relationships with those in their home as a major aspect of their experience. A central theme of these conversations was the heavy load that navigating childcare and other domestic tasks put upon the student-mothers, and the role that family played in exacerbating or reducing this stress. These findings echo participant concerns in many studies exploring experiences in graduate student motherhood (Grenier & Burke, 2008; Lynch, 2008; Trepal et al., 2014). Some of the mothers voiced a longing for consistent, accessible childcare supports while others discussed the ways in which family members' participation in childcare affected their experience. These discussions also echo broader research findings on these populations. Lynch (2008) reported on childcare accessibility and Grenier and Burke (2008) on family support in childcare. The mothers detailed how these constant tasks remained salient and pressing across all areas of their lives and had a major effect on their ability to navigate their roles effectively. They also described their great appreciation for the moments when a partner or other family member was able to support them adequately and intuitively in navigating these tasks. This is consistent with research showing that

despite there being increases in domestic and childcare tasks from fathers (Unger, 2018), most responsibility for these types of labor is still largely assumed by mothers. The mothers in this study were all employed along with shouldering their academic and domestic demands and expressed how often the toll of their childcare tasks interfered or conflicted with their work and academic obligations. These situations of role overload illustrate the fact that these overlapping responsibilities can cause mothers to make decisions that affect their career trajectories (Mason & Goulden, 2002). Partners and other family members can aid in supporting academic student mothers by increased participation in the childcare and domestic tasks of the home, working to upset the status quo that leaves these demands to fall majorly on the shoulders of society's mothers. This increased participation can also aid in supporting mothers' mental health, as they would perhaps be less prone to the maternal guilt and other negative emotions that can occur as a result of society and their own unachievable expectations related to intensive mothering ideologies. Another element of the mothers' experiences that is relevant to this discussion is how the mothers felt concern surrounding their partners' emotions regarding the mothers' absence due to academic or work demands, and their concerns about their partners or family members taking on more of this burden. They described the element of guilt and of owing their partners, and this contributed to the stress that the mothers were under, leaving them to continue to assume the lion's share of the domestic burden or to assume the emotional burden of this debt. The results indicate the need for increased understanding of these societal dynamics by partners and family members, and increased voluntary participation of partners and family members in the childcare and domestic tasks often perceived to be a mothers responsibility.

Finally, themes in the participants' community realm indicated a concerning dearth of support. The unique combination of professional, academic, and environmental factors contributing to this phenomenon is interesting, and is to be noted. This aspect of the data particularly surprised the

researcher, and she feels that these results are of particular importance to readers in understanding the experiences and the unique challenges of this population. While the mothers did report limited connections to church and work, they all described how the element of community support in their lives had been lacking due to several factors. One of the most commonly cited was their unique identities as doctoral students and how they combined in hard and lonely ways with their other roles. The mothers described these identities in select cases precluded them from accessing or receiving (when they did reach out) adequate support and connection from these relationships. Another element of this issue was their additional identities as counselors, and how these identities created stressors or even trauma for the participants. Another contributing factor was the heavy social and emotional climate that the mothers were currently navigating due to COVID and its associated fallout. Finally, they reported that the heavy resource toll of their academic and motherhood tasks left little time or energy to socialize in their community environments. Shifts in domestic and childcare-related tasks suggested by the researcher in the above sections could make major differences in the mothers' time and energy to access these connections. Along with these shifts, the researcher feels that it is important to add that access to mental health resources that can support this unique population is especially needed due to the social, environmental, and identity elements that they are currently navigating. Counseling professionals and targeted interventions concerning role overload and strain elements, societal and internalized ideologies such as intensive mothering mindsets, and elements of identity related to roles including mental health counselor are incredibly needed and could be extremely helpful in combination with each other in supporting counselor education student mothers.

While the themes of this study give rise to many implications for the community, academic, and family realms, their sheer number places them outside of this study's scope. However, by discussing

the most salient and prominent aspects of these results, the researcher hopes that she will contribute to the understanding and discussion of this population.

Study Limitations

Although this study seeks to prompt new insight into the experiences of counselor education doctoral student mothers and adds important discussion to the conversation of maternal well-being, it is not without limitations. The primary limitations of this study were the demographic composition of the participants and the context of the research itself. The context of this research was conducted in an institution rooted in elements of socioeconomic privilege (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Additionally, all of the participants in this study were heterosexual and Caucasian women who had the resources to pursue their post-graduate educations. Although the women grappled with very real struggles, they also had access to resources and opportunities that many other mothers potentially would not have. Finally, derived data was based on verbal accounts and descriptions of experience. The fact that the researcher is a female doctoral student who is also engaged in motherhood and enrolled in a counselor education program could be a potential limitation to this research. This could create a tendency to feel that certain terms and concepts are self-explanatory when in fact they may need increased explanation or context. It is also important to note that the researcher has been working in this academic realm for several years during her masters and doctoral studies and may have preconceived ideas of this population's lived experiences based on her own background and university environment that could affect objectivity in the study and analysis of data. As a method to intentionally stay aware of these issues and increase study rigor, the researcher utilized research-backed methods to improve data quality, such as reflexivity practices (Berger, 2018) like journal writing and checking in with advisor, bracketing (Creswell, 2014; Roulston, 2010), and member checking (Edmonson & Irby, 2008). Despite these potential limitations,

this study offers insight into a topic that has largely gone unexamined, and also challenges problematic ideologies within academic, community, and domestic realms.

Future Research Recommendations

In the future, the researcher would like to continue in this research vein with an expanded participant pool with increased diversity. The study could also be expanded to include greater participant numbers or participants from various schools or locations. Future research could also focus the research lens on the implications of maternal stress and guilt and doctoral student success rates for mothers. Additionally, future research elements of interest for this population would include fulltime versus parttime experiences, overall time to complete doctorate, and financial aid and assistantship rates, and self-efficacy measures related to these aspects of their experiences. In the future, deeper research and application of the Matrescence process and academic motherhood is also of interest to the researcher in examining this study population.

Summary and Conclusion

This study utilized feminist theory along with concepts inherent to role theory to guide the interpretation and analysis of the community, home, and doctoral experiences of mothers in Counselor Education. Recognizing that the motherhood process and identity is deserving of its own unique standpoint, the researcher drew upon Auran's (2022) concept of the matrescence process. The research provides insight into the challenges faced by Counselor Education graduate student mothers and within a context that has been largely unexamined. Research studies that are informed by feminist ideology can help to foster empowerment, liberation, and emancipation for marginalized groups (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2014). The study's theoretical emphasis on the impact of societal expectations emphasized that many gender norms are variable and subject to history rather than being universal or natural products of biological reproduction. The experiences of graduate student mothers were a driving focus of the

research. The results of this study emphasize the multiple family structures, communities, and higher education institutions contribute to the pressures felt by this population, and they also provide insight on methods of support that the mothers identified as particularly helpful. The feminist lens allows for examination of many topics that have been stigmatized, such as the burden of labor and emotions like maternal guilt and stress. The topics, methodology, and lens of this research aid in centering women's lived experiences (Hesse-Biber, 2014).

The results of this study contribute to literature surrounding academia and motherhood and speak to the unique gap in research regarding Counselor Education graduate student mothers. These findings also add to discussions surrounding maternal mental health, hopefully having broader ramifications for scholastic attrition rates, postpartum and new mothering experiences, and overall maternal health and well-being. The implications of these findings are meaningful on both theoretical and practical levels. Giving voice to the subjective experiences of these mothers can allow future cohorts of women graduate students to place their own experiences within a broader context, helping them feel less isolated in facing the challenges inherent to their situations. Further, by understanding the unique perspectives of this population, academic institutions and their leaders can continue to develop supportive policies and practices aimed at creating a more inclusive educational environment.

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APPENDIX A – Interview Guide

The proposed project was divided into three rounds of interviews and a focus group with distinct phases for each. The questions included in the guide below informed the interviews, with an open-ended format intended to be flexible and allow the researcher to adapt consecutive interviews as needed to for enhanced participant responses. The goal was for the final interview to continue to add to the themes of the research. Intended beginning points and topical boundaries from which the researcher initiated interviewees were: Doctoral journey and background, counselor education, motherhood and academia, role overload and strain contributing and protective factors, and overall lived experiences in students' educational environments. More specifically, the interviewer asked about aspects of social demands, time conflicts, balancing work and home, and institutional and community support.

Phase 1: Introductory Visit, Clarification of Informed Consent Document, and Initial Interviews

At this stage, the researcher will contact identified interview candidates with a summary of the project. The researcher will send initial emails explaining the study and research parameters and requesting participant involvement. Interested participants will be invited to contact the researcher via phone or email to discuss interest in the project. Based on this follow-up interaction, participants can confirm or decline their interest and participation. For those that fit the qualifying criteria and confirm their interest and willingness to participate, a meeting day, time, and location will be scheduled to meet with researcher to clarify and further explain the research project. During this initial interaction, the interviewer will seek to build rapport and continue building participant's knowledge of the project goals. The informed consent will be discussed and signed by the researcher and participant. Particular attention will be given to the recording, transcribing, and storage process. The informed consent and debriefing statement include the Principal Investigator and PhD student researcher's contact information should the participant have questions or concerns. The researcher will then begin the initial

interview with a conversation-style which will allow the researcher to listen to the feedback and perceptions of participants on the following questions and statements:

-Let's review the informed consent and confidentiality aspects of this project together-what concerns or questions do you have related to this that I can help clarify?

-Would you be willing to share the story of your educational journey with me as well as your motherhood narrative?

-Feel free to begin wherever feels best.

During this phase, the interviewer will be focused on building rapport, creating a safe climate where participants will feel comfortable to be authentic and honest in discussions with the researcher.

Interviews may be completed in either a face-to-face format or via Zoom depending on the preference of the participant and the researcher. Regardless of the face-to face or Zoom format, each interview will be recorded using Zoom teleconferencing. Each interview will be 30-60 minutes depending on-schedule and responses of the participant.

Phase 2: Follow-Up Interviews

After each interview with the participants, the information gathered will be reviewed and analyzed to construct a more concrete data collection plan/questions for the second and third round of interviews. Beginning each interview, the researcher will remind the participant of the informed consent details and the supports available to them if they need them as a result of anything processed in their interviews or as a result. In the consecutive interviews, the questions will follow in the vein of the first round but will become more detailed depending on participant feedback and answers, allowing the interviewer to gain data that can be compared across participant interviews in order to gain a more complete understanding of the experiences of these individuals. Here are anticipated questions that will prompt and inform the third round of interviews:

- Tell me about a time when you had to navigate a time conflict?
- As a mother and doctoral student, what social demands do you regularly navigate in your life?
- Would you bring/show me an object or artifact that represents the ways you balance work and home life?
- In what ways has community and institutional support impacted your motherhood/doctoral journey?
- What effects, if any, have the navigation of multiple roles had on this experience?

Phase 3: Final Interviews and Debriefing Protocols

The participants' responses to the first and second rounds of interviews will continue to shape this process, and continue to add to the themes and direction of this project. At the beginning of interview three, the researcher will again review informed consent and ask the participant if she has any questions about the study. Following the interview, participants will be thanked for their time and reminded of the debriefing information. In the analysis and discussion of the project, if the researcher chooses to highlight a participant's particular responses, she will send them the anticipated language for interviewee to review for accuracy and accurate representation. This information will also be addressed in the interview guide and informed consent: Participants will be apprised of any anticipated risks of questioning, reminded of rights, and that they can withdraw from the project at any time if uncovering any triggering information of any kind. They will be informed of interviewer's status as a licensed clinical counselor, and if the methods/process of the interviews are triggering in any way, the researcher will provide support and resources.

Debriefing Statement

Before beginning this interview, I want to thank and assure you that your willingness to engage in this interview is very much appreciated. Your feedback will contribute to the research regarding mothers engaged in counselor education graduate work. This is a totally voluntary activity and you are welcome to withdraw from participating at any time. The informed consent includes the project goals, coding, confidentiality, storage, and recording information.

Also, I want to remind you that I have resources for you in the event that any of the information discussed in our interactions and interviews are traumatic or emotionally triggering. There are procedures in place if you experience trauma reprocessing as a result of this project. Should you have questions or concerns, you are welcome to contact Dr. Judy Hughey, 785-532-8905, jhughey@ksu.edu or me, Emily Johnson, ebjohnson@ksu.edu.

APPENDIX B – Participant Invitation Email

Hello,

The purpose of this letter is to request your assistance in conducting a research study. I am asking you to allow me to interview you on the topic of being a mother and completing a doctorate.

The goal of research is to study two experiences in a woman's life: new motherhood and completing your phd in Counselor Education. Research methods for the study will be in person or over zoom, and participants will have the opportunity to review their responses for accuracy at the completion of the interview process. Please know that it is my plan to utilize this data for dissertation and further research.

No known risks are anticipated in this project to either participants or researcher. However, should the discussion cause any discomfort, resources to address any feelings that arise will be made available. Participants may withdraw at any time. Responses will be confidential and anonymous. Your identity will be protected by implementing the following precautions:

A.) Informed consent forms will be stored on principle investigator's KSU Onedrive and accessible only to the principal investigator and phd student investigator.

B.) All data will be coded and identification information will be stored separately from consent forms and interview data.

C.) Recordings and coded transcription materials will be stored on the principal investigator's KSU Onedrive accessible only to PI and phd student investigator.

The project will be divided into two-three rounds of 30-60 interviews with distinct phases for each.

They will be over zoom, in-person, or both. Whatever you prefer. Intended starting points for interviews are as follows: doctoral journey and background, decision making in counselor education,

motherhood and academia experiences, and perception of role overload and impact of community on the doctoral/motherhood journey.

Please confirm your participation by replying to this email. I will then contact you regarding further details about scheduling. Informed Consent documents are attached. Please feel free to contact Dr Judy Hughey (jhughey@ksu.edu, 785-532-8905) if you have any issues or concerns.

APPENDIX C – Interview Guide Organizational Table

	RQs	Interview Questions	Supplemental Document and Artifact Collection (Planned and Potential)	Data Analysis
	Interview 1 Focus on RQ 3: Doctoral Student Membership	1. (Introductions, Confirmation of informed consent, ice-breakers) 2. Tell me about you navigated your transition to motherhood as a doctoral student? 3. Walk me through a story (Walk me through a day/week/semester?) that illustrates your path to motherhood while working on doctoral studies? 4. Bring an object/picture/artifact that represents your experiences as you transition(ed) to motherhood while pursuing the doctorate? <i>Can you tell my why you chose this? Do you have any stories that are connected to</i>	Follow up emails Pictures Etc.	Coding Analytic Memos Researcher Journaling (Pre and Post Interviews)

		<i>this object/picture/a rtifact?</i> 5. Tell me about how you prioritize your doctoral studies as it relates to your other roles and obligations? Tell me about how those priorities unfold in reality? 6. Tell me about how balance your responsibilities as a doctoral student with your responsibilities as a mother or family member? (Transitional data to prep for next interview) 7. Tell me about how you approach time management? 8. Tell me about the resources that you lean on most heavily as you transition to motherhood as a doctoral student? 9. Tell me about the resources you wish you had as you	
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		transition to motherhood as a doctoral student? 10. Tell me about how you navigate stress as you transition to motherhood as a doctoral student?		
	RQ2: Family Membership Focal point of Interview 2	• Last interview, you spoke about _____ (family related), tell me more about.... • Last interview, you walked me through a story about _____ (family related), tell me more about... • Tell me about you navigated your transition to motherhood as a MOTHER, DAUGHTER, SPOUSE, SISTER, ETC., while tending to your responsibilities as a doctoral student? • Walk me through a story (Walk me through a day/week/semester		Coding (Saldana) Analytic Memos Researcher Journaling (Pre and Post Interviews)

		r?) that illustrates your doctoral journey while being a mother? • Bring an object/picture/artifact that represents your experiences as you transition(ed) to motherhood? <i>Can you tell me why you chose this? Do you have any stories that are connected to this object/picture/artifact?</i> • Tell me about how you prioritize motherhood as it relates to your other roles and obligations? Tell me about how those priorities unfold in reality? • Tell me about how balance your responsibilities as a mother with your responsibilities as a doc student and community member? (Transitional data to prep for next interview) • Tell me about how you approach		
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		time management? • Tell me about the resources that you lean on most heavily as you transition to motherhood ? • Tell me about the resources you wish you had as you transition to motherhood? • Tell me about how you navigate stress as you transition to motherhood?		
	RQ3: Community Membershi P	• Last interview, you spoke about _____ (family related), tell me more about.... • Last interview, you walked me through a story about _____ (family related), tell me more about... • Tell me about you navigated your transition to motherhood as a community member while tending to your responsibilities as a doctoral student?		Open coding or A priori (Saldana) Analytic Memos Researcher Journaling (Pre and Post Interviews)

		• Walk me through a story (Walk me through a day/week/semester?) that illustrates your community role while working on doctoral studies and motherhood? • Bring an object/picture/artifact that represents your experiences as community member as you transition(ed) to motherhood while pursuing the doctorate? <i>Can you tell my why you chose this? Do you have any stories that are connected to this object/picture/artifact?</i> • Tell me about how you prioritize your community role as it relates to your other roles and obligations? Tell me about how those priorities unfold in reality? • Tell me about how balance your responsibilities as a community member with your		
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		responsibilities as a mother or family member? (Transitional data to prep for next interview) • Tell me about how you approach time management? • Tell me about the resources that you lean on most heavily as you transition to motherhood as a community member? • Tell me about the resources you wish you had as you navigate community role/motherhood as a doctoral student? • Tell me about how you navigate stress as you navigate community role in transition to motherhood as a doctoral student?		
	FOCUS GROUP (All questions are focal points)	LOOKING TO AFFIRM, ELABORATE, AND/OR PROBLEMATIZE FINDINGS UTILIZING OPEN ENDED PROMPTS		

		DERIVED FROM PRELIMINARY FINDINGS • Through our interviews, a few of you spoke about _____ (from preliminary findings obtained through original lines of questions), tell me more about.... • Through our interviews, you walked me through several stories about _____ (from preliminary findings obtained through original lines of questions), tell me more about... ALSO think about how this could inform future research and practice: • As a group, if you could get more support from your university, family, or community, what would you ask for? • As a group, if you could thank your university, family, or community,		
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		what would you thank them for?		
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APPENDIX D – Kansas State University Informed Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE: Holding It All Together: Exploring Doctoral New Mothers' Perceptions of Role Navigation and in Counselor Education

APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT: TBD

EXPIRATION DATE OF PROJECT: TBD

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Judy Hughey, NCC, Associate Professor

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S): Emily Johnson PhD Candidate

CONTACT NAME AND PHONE FOR ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS: Dr. Judy Hughey, NCC, Associate Professor; 785-532-5527, jhughey@ksu.edu
Emily Johnson, ebjohnson@ksu.edu

IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION:

Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: The goal of the research is to study two experiences in a woman's life: motherhood and completing a PhD in counselor education. Interviews will focus on the experiences of role navigation as a community member, family member, and academician in counselor education.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED: The study will be conducted via four interviews and one focus group.

LENGTH OF STUDY: The interviews and focus group interview is estimated to take approximately 4 hours to complete.

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED: No risks or discomforts are anticipated.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: The researcher will study two experiences in a woman's life: motherhood and completing a PhD in counselor education. Goals of the research are to

*Fill gap in research in which the unique combination of factors inherent to mothers in counselor education programs;

*Add to literature on strategies to best support first-time mothers in academic and motherhood journeys;

*Aid current and future academic mothers in ways to persist and succeed in graduate counseling programs; find community, target helpful themes and factors in their support network;

- *Aid university programs to better understand and support the needs new first-time mothers in counselor education programs (retention and overall student satisfaction) and,
- *Contribute to an informed and more supportive community for women.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: The interview data are confidential and participants identity will be protected. Email addresses, names and/or institutions will not be correlated to responses via coding procedures. All data will be stored on the Kansas State University OneDrive.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify by proceeding with these interviews that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described.

APPENDIX E – Researcher Journal Sample

First sample entry:

Upon concluding cycle one coding: a few things came up as I attempted to delve into second cycle coding plans after concluding the nine interviews with participants and focus group session. One is whether my closeness to this data blinded me or enhanced my understanding of the issue, or a little of both. I have been reflecting on this process and how raw aspects of it have been for me and for my participants. I prepared for this in relation to others but did not fully anticipate or prepare for the places that this would take me. Is that ever 100% possible in research-especially this type of research? Perhaps not. This process feels like a continual evaluation of responsibility, evaluation of power and control, and of a return to my ethical and methodological processes. It has also involved significant emotional and psychological energy...some of it anticipated and some of it which has surprised me. I wrote in my informed consent about preparing them for this process, empowering them to apply boundaries to spaces that they did not wish to go, and also about how I was prepared to provide support resources in the event of psychological pain. I did not fully apply this same standard to myself, and I feel that it was initially rather painfully evident to me. I felt it in the interviews and in my interaction with this data and with these participants.

Second sample entry:

-‘s comments about needing community but sacrificing it in favor of other pursuits that upheld her family and student/work roles resonated with me-I noticed that for the participants there seemed to be an element of failure with not being able to uphold these “social tasks” and I feel it too. It surprised me that this was a theme in their data and in my own story as well...especially currently with baby, winter, heavy work load, etc. I need to be careful not to overidentify with them due to this connection and to consequently press any meanings or preconceptions of their experiences on them as a result of

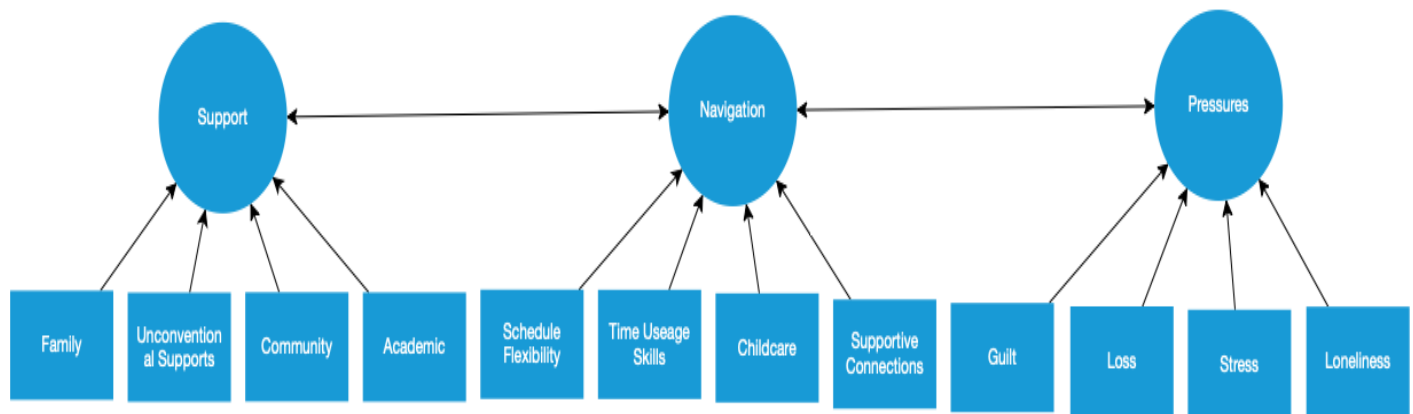
this overlap. They may have other contributors, and I can acknowledge my understanding of this need while leaving them space to describe, contradict, or agree.

Third sample entry:

Continued thoughts on dissertation writing, data analysis, everything: Engaging in this process has compelled me to have a little more integrity and care in relation to myself. If I am to do this well, steps for my own health as a mother, as a student, as a community member must also be present and thought out for my own emotional and psychological health. It is imperative not only for myself but for my research process and for my new little family as well. For me this meant investing some thought into the spaces that I was not willing to go and why these spaces were scary or painful for me and extending this to my participants in case this was also their experience. I do not know if it was pride, ignorance, or a combination that caused me to feel that I was above these steps, but there is work to be completed here in order to progress in this method of inquiry and to just survive as a doctoral student new mother attempting to write her dissertation in a pandemic.

APPENDIX F – Thematic Chart and Data Codes

Generated from InVivo Coding Software



APPENDIX G – Letter of Approval from Institutional Review Board

TO: Judith Hughey Proposal Number IRB-11073 Spec Ed, Counsel & Student Aff Manhattan, KS
66506

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 03/14/2022

RE: Approval of Proposal Entitled, “Holding It All Together: Exploring Doctoral New Mothers’
Perceptions of Role Navigation and Support in PhD Counselor Education and Supervision
Programs.”

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects has reviewed your proposal and has granted
full approval. This proposal is approved for three years from the date of this correspondence.

APPROVAL DATE: 03/14/2022 EXPIRATION DATE: 03/13/2025 In giving its approval, the
Committee has determined that: No more than minimal risk to subjects This approval applies
only to the proposal currently on file as written. Any change or modification affecting human
subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. All approved proposals are
subject to continuing review, which may include the examination of records connected with the
project. Announced post-approval monitoring may be performed during the course of this
approval period by URCO staff. Injuries, unanticipated problems or adverse events involving
risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the IRB and / or the
URCO.

Electronically signed by Rick Scheidt on 03/14/2022 12:16 PM ET