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Counselor Educator Mothers: Work-Life Enrichment and Occupational Satisfaction

Mary A. Hermann, Natoya Haskins, Cheryl Neale-McFall,
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We examined factors that affected the work-life enrichment and occupational satisfaction of 107 counselor educator mothers. Data were analyzed through content analysis. Results highlight various initiatives that could increase academic mothers' job satisfaction. Implications include the importance of providing policies and encouraging cultural norms that support working mothers.

Keywords: counselor educator mothers, occupational satisfaction, work-family enrichment, working mothers, academia

In her 2019 study, Collins concluded that it is harder to be a working mother in the United States than in any other developed country in the world. Multiple research studies support this finding, including studies exploring the experiences of mothers in academia (e.g., Connelly & Ghodsee, 2014; Philipson & Bostic, 2010; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). For almost 2 decades, researchers have highlighted challenges academic mothers encounter and suggested that universities adopt policies that support work-life integration (American Council on Education, 2005; Gatta & Roos, 2004; Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Yet, historical barriers remain, and balancing motherhood and academia seems to be increasingly more challenging (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018). As in other professions, in order to recruit and retain a diverse faculty, it is necessary to understand mothers' experiences and create an environment that supports their success (Sallee, 2014; Stinchfield & Trepal, 2010; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012).

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Wolf-Wendel and Ward (2015) found that women's experiences varied by academic discipline. Yet, few scholars have explored counselor educator mothers' experiences (Haskins et al., 2016), and most of the existing research focused on small numbers of participants. Prior to this mixed-methods study of over 100 counselor educator mothers, the only study on this topic with a large number of participants included 70 participants and was published 10 years ago (Stinchfield & Trepal, 2010). Other related research includes the work of Hermann et al. (2014), who described the experiences of five counselor educator mothers; Hermann and Neale-McFall (2018), who reported on the results of their interviews with 10 counselor educator mothers; and Haskins et al. (2016), who explored the experiences of eight African American counselor educator mothers. Themes from these studies include experienced discrimination (Haskins et al., 2016; Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012), challenges related to work-life balance (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012), and insufficient policies and norms that would support working mothers (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012). Estimating that approximately 25% of counselor educators are mothers of children who live at home, we addressed recommendations in the literature for further research on the experiences of counselor educator mothers (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012).

In designing this study, we considered that no studies have specifically focused on counselor educator mothers' experiences through the lens of occupational satisfaction. However, participants who were mothers reported lower satisfaction in Alexander-Albritton and Hill's (2015) study on female counselor educators' occupational satisfaction. Accordingly, Alexander-Albritton and Hill concluded that further exploration of counselor educator mothers' job satisfaction was needed. In addition, Neale-McFall et al. (2018) noted that some of the recent work-life balance literature has focused on work-family enrichment (Carlson et al., 2014; McNall et al., 2010)—how the experiences in one role (e.g., work) improve the quality of another role (e.g., motherhood; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Considering that scholars have found that work-family enrichment is correlated with job satisfaction for female faculty (Jijena Michel & Jijena Michel, 2015; Vadivukkarasi & Ganeson, 2015), we used these constructs to further explore variables related to counselor educator mothers' experiences.

Neale-McFall et al. (2018) collected data using a survey instrument that included a demographic questionnaire, an occupational satisfaction assessment, a work-family enrichment scale, and four open-ended questions. Reporting on their quantitative findings, Neale-McFall et al. concluded that higher job satisfaction is correlated with work-family enrichment for counselor educator mothers. The researchers also found that 61% of counselor educator mothers' job satisfaction was predicted by work-to-family enrichment, colleague support for work responsibilities, and number of children under the age of 6; work-to-

family enrichment and colleague support increased job satisfaction, whereas number of young children in the home decreased job satisfaction.

This article expands on Neale-McFall et al.'s (2018) analysis of their quantitative data by providing information on participants' responses to the open-ended questions in the survey. The open-ended questions were designed to allow participants to elaborate on their occupational satisfaction and their experiences with work-life enrichment. Specifically, we asked the following questions: (a) "Describe ways in which your work as a counselor educator improves your family role," (b) "Describe ways in which your role in your family improves your work as a counselor educator," (c) "If you could change three things in your work role so that you experience greater job satisfaction, what would those three things be?" and (d) "If you could change three things in your family role so that you experience greater job satisfaction, what would those three things be?"

We used content analysis to analyze participants' responses to these questions. The use of this methodology allowed us to gather qualitative data from a large number of participants. The results highlight benefits related to being a counselor educator mother as well as provide insight into why counselor educator mothers may experience lower job satisfaction compared with their colleagues. These data can be used to support the efforts of universities in creating a better working environment for academic mothers. The data have similar implications for working mothers in other professions.

METHOD

Participants

The participants in this study were full-time, tenure-track counselor educator mothers ($N = 107$). The ages of participants ranged from 29 to 63 years ($M = 42.83$, $SD = 7.38$). The majority of the participants identified as White ($n = 88$, 82.2%), followed by African American/Black ($n = 8$, 7.5%), Asian/Asian American ($n = 3$, 2.8%), Latina ($n = 3$, 2.8%), other ($n = 3$, 2.8%), and Native American ($n = 1$, 0.9%). One participant (0.9%) did not respond to this question. (Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.)

All participants had at least one child under the age of 23 years living at home. Seven participants (6.5%) had a child over the age of 19 years at home, 42 participants (39.3%) had one child under 18 years living at home, 40 participants (37.4%) had two children under 18 years living at home, 12 participants (11.2%) had three children under 18 years living at home, one participant (0.9%) had four children under 18 years living at home, and one participant (0.9%) had more than four children under 18 years living at home. Four participants (3.7%) did not respond to this question. Regarding partnership status, 92 participants (86%) identified as married, six (5.6%) as divorced, four (3.7%) as separated, three (2.8%) as single, and one (0.9%) as widowed.

Seventy-one of the participants (66.4%) were currently employed at teaching universities, and 36 (33.6%) described their university as research intensive. Most participants ($n = 53$, 49.5%) described their rank as assistant professor, followed by associate professor ($n = 30$, 28.0%), full professor ($n = 17$, 15.9%), other ($n = 5$, 4.7%), and clinical professor ($n = 2$, 1.9%).

Procedure

Because there is no database of counselor educator mothers, we used the internet to identify counseling programs in each state. This search yielded websites of master's programs and doctoral programs, programs accredited and not accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, and programs that provided training in a broad range of counseling specializations. We examined each program website and identified female faculty members' email addresses. After receiving institutional review board approval, we sent an email to potential participants informing them of the parameters, purpose, risks, and benefits of the study. Participation was requested from recipients who met the criteria of being a counselor educator mother with a child under the age of 23 years living at home. A link to the Qualtrics (<https://www.qualtrics.com/>) survey was included. Two follow-up emails were sent out over a 3-month period.

We obtained 1,284 email addresses from the 274 institutions identified, and 1,097 email addresses were usable. Of the prospective participants, 107 completed the surveys. Although a specific rate of return could not be calculated because of the lack of information about how many counselor educators met the study criteria, we were able to deduce an approximate return rate. Based on the participant data, the average number of full-time faculty in counselor education departments is 8.5. Participants indicated that two ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 2.21$) faculty members in their department were eligible to participate in the study. Considering these data, we estimated that approximately 258 (23.5% of the 1,097 faculty members) met the study criteria. Accordingly, the approximate return rate was 41.5%. The straight return rate, considering both the recruitment email recipients who met and did not meet the criteria for the study, was 9.8%.

Survey

The demographic questionnaire included familial variables (e.g., number of children at home), institutional variables (e.g., faculty rank, type of university, teaching load), and standard demographic information (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, partnership status). The Occupational Satisfaction in Higher Education Scale–Revised (Hill, 2005) and the Work-Family Enrichment Scale (Carlson et al., 2006) were used to examine job satisfaction and work-family enrichment, respectively. The four open-ended questions were included to provide additional data on how participants' work as counselor educators enriched their family roles, how participants' family roles enriched their work as counselor educators,

adjustments at work that could improve job satisfaction, and modifications in their family roles that could enhance their job satisfaction.

Analysis

Participants' responses to the open-ended questions on the survey were analyzed through summative content analysis, an approach frequently used in the analysis of answers to open-ended survey questions (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In this approach, researchers identify patterns or themes, referred to as categories in this methodology. Results allow researchers to further understand a circumstance, experience, or construct (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999).

Two researchers (first and second authors) from the research team examined the responses independently, identifying key words as they reviewed the text. The key words were then grouped into categories for each question (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). A coding scheme was developed and used to define categories and support the coding process. Categories were expanded through further analysis of the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). To determine how visible categories were throughout the data, the researchers used frequency counts to quantify the data for each question (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The researchers arrived at similar frequency counts, indicating coder consistency and providing evidence of trustworthiness (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). We report the data using percentages based on the number of participants who responded to each question as well as quotes that illustrate the lived experiences of participants.

RESULTS

Work-to-Family Enrichment

Of the 107 participants who completed the survey, 97 participants (90.7%) responded to the first open-ended prompt: "Describe ways in which your work as a counselor educator improves your family role." Four categories emerged from the analysis: (a) counseling training application, (b) flexibility, (c) fulfillment, and (d) resource accumulation.

Counseling training application. Participants identified several ways in which their training and experience improved their family role. Of the participants who responded to this question, many ($n = 17, 17.5\%$) reported that their counselor educator role increased their knowledge and use of effective parenting skills. Other participants ($n = 10, 10.3\%$) discussed amassing informational resources that support their parenting. Comments included, "I learn A LOT from my work that directly relates to parenting." Participants further explained that their work provides them with "cutting-edge information about parenting" and keeps them "updated on literature related to child development." Some participants ($n = 14, 14.4\%$) reported that counseling skills and knowledge also supported healthy family systems.

Flexibility. Flexibility was highlighted as another example of how the participants' roles as counselor educators improved their family life. Over one third of the participants ($n = 35, 36.1\%$) identified how flexible work schedules supported their ability to manage multiple roles. For instance, one participant commented, "The flexible schedule allows me to do two things I love: being with family and being a counselor educator." Other participants elaborated that the flexible schedule allowed them to drop off and pick up children, take kids to appointments, take time off for sick children, and attend school and family events.

Fulfillment. The participants expressed how their counselor educator role created a sense of fulfillment that enhanced engagement with their families. The enjoyment that many participants ($n = 9, 9.3\%$) derived from their work was evident. One participant observed, "I love my work and it makes me happy and fulfilled." Similarly, other participants made comments such as "[Work] increases my life satisfaction" and "The joy and intellectual stimulation of my work, and the passion for my career, enrich my role as a parent."

The participants ($n = 9, 9.3\%$) also expressed a sense of accomplishment related to their work. One participant indicated that work "gives me a sense of satisfaction, personal challenge, and accomplishment, and this makes me holistically happier and more productive in all of my roles." Another participant illustrated the impact of her work on parenting by stating, "I have a strong sense of identity that makes me a more confident and grounded parent."

Participants ($n = 12, 12.4\%$) described how maintaining multiple roles contributed to having an expanded frame of reference. Participants observed that their work "provides a different perspective on problems." They also elaborated on how their work "provides a time-out from parenting" and how "being at work is often a 'break' from household chores and childcare, and thus it recharges me for those tasks."

Resource accumulation. The final category to emerge from the responses to this question relates to how the counselor educator role allowed the participants to provide support for their family. Many participants ($n = 12, 12.4\%$) alluded to providing financial resources to the family. Specifically, participants highlighted the value of gaining "a stable wage and good benefits."

Family-to-Work Enrichment

Ninety-six participants (89.7%) responded to the second open-ended question: "Describe ways in which your role in your family improves your work as a counselor educator." Three categories were identified: (a) unconditional positive regard, (b) work-life balance, and (c) instruction.

Unconditional positive regard. Participants indicated that they further developed unconditional positive regard for students through their mothering role. Aspects of unconditional positive regard identified by the participants included increased awareness ($n = 5, 5.2\%$), enhanced understanding ($n = 19, 19.8\%$),

and empathy ($n = 24, 25.0\%$). One participant illustrated this point by sharing, “Being a mother has significantly expanded my awareness on the challenges of parenting.” Participants elaborated on this topic by indicating that they are “more realistic about expectations of others now” and “have more empathy for the work-life balance demands on graduate students.”

Work-life balance. Participants reflected on their own work-life balance as they described how their family role improved their work role. This category included the following subcategories: (a) perspective, (b) priorities, (c) boundaries, (d) support, and (e) lack of work-life balance.

Perspective was identified by 10.4% of the participants ($n = 10$), as illustrated by one participant who explained that her motherhood role “helps me keep academia in perspective.” Another participant elaborated, “My family life and my spiritual faith anchor my reality, and so that helps me not get too caught up in any stresses that come along with my role as a counselor educator.” Furthermore, participants indicated that family members “keep me grounded and remind me to balance work and fun.” Other participants added that having a family helped them “prioritize what matters” and “set better work-family boundaries.”

Participants ($n = 8, 8.3\%$) indicated that having balance was often predicated on the support they received from their partners and families. One participant noted, “I have a supportive husband that helps me and makes my many tasks easy to manage.” Other participants shared comments such as “I am very loved and supported and this fuels me in a lot of ways.”

Although many responses indicated that participants’ lives were enriched by their multiple roles, several participants ($n = 4, 4.2\%$) indicated that they did not experience family-to-work enrichment. For example, one participant stated that her family role did not improve her counselor educator role right now: “I have a 2-year-old and I am exhausted all the time. I can’t afford day care so I care for him when I am not teaching and work all night after he goes to bed to get ready for classes.”

Instruction. The final category that emerged from this question relates to how participants’ family roles supported their teaching. One subtheme of this category was demonstrated by many participants’ ($n = 15, 15.6\%$) belief that their understanding of concepts they taught about was increased by having a family. Specifically, participants described that their family life provides a “deep understanding of life span human development issues.” Another participant shared, “My understanding of the family life cycle, of relationships, and of systems is clarified by family experiences.” Many participants ($n = 20, 20.8\%$) expressed that their new level of understanding allowed them to integrate experiential examples from their family in their teaching. For example, one participant noted, “I use examples of family in my classes to illustrate concepts,” and another stated, “I am able to talk about development through the lens of raising a child and caring for elders.”

Support at Work for Increased Job Satisfaction

Ninety-eight participants (91.6%) responded to the third open-ended question: “If you could change three things in your work so that you can experience greater job satisfaction, what would those three things be?” Five categories emerged from the analysis: (a) instruction, (b) resources and support, (c) allocation of time, (d) policies/expectations, and (e) climate.

Instruction. Decreasing the number of evening and weekend classes that they were required to teach was suggested by almost one quarter of the participants ($n = 22, 22.4\%$). Participants noted that their teaching schedules conflicted with their home lives. Participants expressed that their job satisfaction could be improved by being able to teach daytime classes and teaching only on weekdays. One participant elaborated, “I teach at night—that used to work well, but now it means that I miss out on two to three evenings a week with my child.”

Nine participants (9.2%) commented that they wished that they had more autonomy related to teaching responsibilities. One participant explained, “I would like to be able to pick my classes. We have a rotation, but I’m low on the list, so typically I get a schedule that compromises my family responsibility.” The participants also described other changes to their teaching responsibilities that could increase their job satisfaction. Some ($n = 9, 9.2\%$) expressed that an increase in online instruction, including using technology instead of doing face-to-face clinical supervision, would be helpful. Others ($n = 9, 9.2\%$) suggested a decrease in overall teaching load.

Resources and support. Participants noted that their job satisfaction could be improved by the provision of additional resources. Higher salaries and better benefits were highlighted by one quarter of the respondents ($n = 25, 25.5\%$). One participant commented that she would like “increased compensation so that I do not have to teach so many courses to make ends meet.” Another expressed that she wanted “more money so I can hire people to help with childcare and housecleaning.”

Many participants ($n = 14, 14.3\%$) reported that they needed more research support, including additional opportunities for research collaboration. Participants noted that they “would love to have more time for research” and “a research release would be helpful.” Receiving greater financial support for research and having research assistants were also suggested. One participant added that she needed “more money to travel to conferences.”

Allocation of time. Participants shared that they would benefit from being able to allocate their time differently. Many participants ($n = 15, 15.3\%$) spoke about decreasing the amount of service they provided. Participants ($n = 12, 12.2\%$) also indicated that they would benefit from fewer clerical/administrative responsibilities. One participant further explained, “We do not have an administrative assistant due to budget cuts.”

Some participants ($n = 7, 7.1\%$) noted that they would benefit from efficient meetings at more convenient times. Participants’ recommendations included “less

unproductive meetings that cut into writing and work time.” One participant further commented, “Let’s take action and stop talking and processing everything.”

Less face time at the office was also highlighted by participants ($n = 11$, 11.2%) as a way to improve their occupational satisfaction, especially because some participants ($n = 6$, 6.1%) experienced a long commute (e.g., a 5-to-6-hour round-trip drive). Participants’ suggestions included “having office hours only three times a week, not 4 days a week” and having “virtual office hours.” One participant summed up this theme by commenting, “Lessen expectations regarding being in the office; change the male-dominant attitude that being at the office equals hard work.”

Eleven participants (11.2%) believed that their job satisfaction would increase by generally fewer expectations. Some participants wanted to work fewer hours and have more time off. One participant expressed that working “part-time seems appealing given that I have two small children at home.” Similarly, a participant summed up this theme by requesting “just fewer expectations so I can spend more time with my family on the weekends and in the summer. I’m excelling at work, but it is coming at a cost of family time.”

Policies/expectations. Participants delineated specific policy changes that could enhance their work experiences. Some participants ($n = 5$, 5.1%) indicated that they would benefit from better family leave policies, such as “longer paid maternity leave.” In describing her experience, one participant shared, “I adopted [a child] and our university would not let me use any leave time to care for my child who was in NICU [neonatal intensive care unit]. It was horrible.”

Some participants ($n = 6$, 6.1%) expressed that they wanted less ambiguity regarding expectations, including clearer tenure policies. A participant noted, “Lack of clarity leads to concern: ‘Am I doing enough?’ So, I think I end up doing more of everything.”

Climate. The final category that emerged from these data focused on improving the work climate. Many participants ($n = 10$, 10.2%) indicated that being treated equitably could increase their job satisfaction. Participants illustrated this theme by suggesting “equal participation and sharing of workload by all faculty.” Similarly, a participant commented that she wanted a “more equitable division of service/administrative tasks among the male and female faculty members so that the burden doesn’t disproportionately fall to the female faculty.”

Additionally, the participants ($n = 17$, 17.3%) wanted more collegiality. Collegiality included having a “more positive work environment” and “a faculty that works more kindly with each other.” Similarly, participants ($n = 8$, 8.2%) wanted to be treated with more compassion. For example, one participant requested “more understanding of family responsibilities,” and another wanted colleagues to have “increased awareness of the challenges of being a full-time working mother.” A participant further explained, “I am certainly at a disadvantage to ‘get ahead’ because I have to balance my work and family life more strategically, whereas my coworkers do not.”

Family Role Support for Increased Job Satisfaction

Ninety-four participants (87.9%) responded to the final open-ended question: “If you could change three things in your family role so that you experience greater job satisfaction, what would those three things be?” Three categories emerged from the analysis: (a) support from family, (b) childcare, and (c) work-life balance.

Support from family. Over three fourths of the participants ($n = 72, 76.6\%$) believed that more family support could lead to increased occupational satisfaction. Specifically, participants ($n = 8, 8.5\%$) expressed that if family members respected their work role more, their work would be more satisfying. For example, a participant identified that she wanted “greater understanding from my partner regarding the demands of my career.” Other participants wanted recognition for their financial contribution to the family. Several participants indicated a preference for “not having to explain that ‘working from home’ is truly working.” One participant concluded that she wanted to be “understood as a working professional as much as a man would be.”

Almost one fourth of the participants ($n = 22, 23.4\%$) noted that their job satisfaction could be increased by having more support from their partners related to family responsibilities. Participants expressed that they wanted their partners to pick up more childcare responsibilities, such as “taking kids to various appointments.” Additionally, almost one third of the participants ($n = 30, 31.9\%$) indicated that they would benefit from more shared responsibility with partners related to household management. A participant further illustrated these themes by noting that she wanted “less assumption on the part of my husband that I take care of all the home organization and childcare organization.”

Childcare. Participants explained that their universities were located in expensive parts of the country; their pay was low; their children’s schools’ parental expectations were high; and they lived away from family, which limited their ability to secure assistance with their children. Thus, greater access to childcare ($n = 17, 18.1\%$) and a better understanding of working parents from school systems ($n = 4, 4.3\%$) emerged as variables that could increase the participants’ job satisfaction. Specifically, participants wanted access to “better, cheaper, more reliable childcare.” Participants also noted that they would benefit from a childcare center on campus. One participant further commented that she wanted

greater access to quality childcare for my son with a disability, fewer early release days at school that leave working parents in a bind, and better planning among the schools in my community around the timing and scheduling of evening events.

A participant also responded that she would benefit from “less expectation from my children’s school for moms to volunteer weekly.”

Work-life balance. Contrary to the benefits described in the work-to-family enrichment responses, this category included participants’ perceived need for better work-family balance ($n = 15, 16.0\%$) as well as increased time for self-care ($n = 11, 11.7\%$). Some participants focused on how their family obligations were affecting their work. Other participants focused on how their careers were affecting their families. They expressed sentiments such as work-family balance would be improved if they were “not feeling torn about needing to respond to work emails around the clock the way colleagues can do.” In addition, participants identified that their intense schedule left little time for self-care. For example, they indicated that they would benefit from more time “to exercise for my health” and “prioritize hobbies.” They also expressed the need for “more sleep.”

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this research was to further explore counselor educator mothers’ experiences by focusing on work-family enrichment and occupational satisfaction. Themes from the data are congruent with existing research. Our findings also add to the literature on counselor educators’ occupational satisfaction, female faculty’s experiences with work-life enrichment, and counselor educator mothers’ experiences.

As reflected in previous studies on counselor educator mothers, many participants indicated that they struggled to establish an acceptable work-life balance (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Hermann et al., 2014; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012). Despite decades of research recommending increased understanding and support for academic mothers (American Council on Education, 2005; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012), our findings provide evidence that little has changed in the academy. Participants’ comments reflect that academic mothers still encounter a work environment and an associated reward system that were designed for a different generation of faculty who had secretaries, graduate assistants, and stay-at-home wives to manage all of the household work and childcare (Seltzer, 2015). Furthermore, in the past decade, budget cuts at universities have reduced resources and administrative support, resulting in professors experiencing higher workloads (Hermann et al., 2014; Hurtado et al., 2012; Seltzer, 2015). Concurrently, scholarship expectations have increased (Hurtado et al., 2012; Philipsen & Bostic, 2010). Increasing yet ambiguous expectations for promotion also contribute to what participants experienced as an infinite workload (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Philipsen & Bostic, 2010). Participants’ statements also highlighted the lack of policies that have been implemented to support balancing academic work and motherhood (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Philipsen & Bostic, 2010).

Participants’ comments align with and extend the literature documenting that female faculty experience an inequitable division of labor in the academy,

with women providing more teaching and service activities compared with men (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Sallee, 2014; Webber & Rogers, 2018). Participants expressed that their occupational satisfaction would be improved by a more equitable division of service and teaching duties (Hill et al., 2005). They added that they wanted greater support for their research, including more time for research, more access to research assistants, and more opportunities for collaboration.

Participants' experiences reflected the trend of courses being offered at night and on weekends (Sallee, 2014), and they noted that these teaching obligations interfered with their motherhood roles. They suggested a potential solution—increased online instruction. Participants also wanted more autonomy and greater voice in their teaching schedule and course selection, factors that have been found to have a positive, significant relationship to overall job satisfaction (Hill et al., 2005; Neale-McFall, 2020).

Participants' comments about their low compensation support the findings of the American Association of University Professors (2019) indicating that women are paid only 81.6% of what men are paid in academia. Williams and Segal (2003) concluded that motherhood accounts for a significant portion of the gendered wage gap. Our findings are also consistent with literature indicating that mothers report having less access to other financial resources (Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012). Participants clarified that increased financial support would help them teach fewer classes and obtain household and childcare assistance, factors that could contribute to a better work-life balance.

The participants' experiences with lack of collegiality and support from colleagues and administrators echo and extend findings in the counselor education motherhood literature (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012). These data are noteworthy given that collaboration and support from colleagues and administrators can enhance occupational satisfaction (Hill et al., 2005; Magnuson et al., 2009; Neale-McFall, 2020; Neale-McFall et al., 2018). Participants elaborated on this theme by specifying that they wanted more compassion and understanding of their motherhood role.

Although participants shared benefits related to the flexibility in their schedules (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012), our results expand on the literature by highlighting comments about the incongruence of the required face time at the university and electronic communication technology. Participants' occupational satisfaction was further negatively affected by inefficient meetings scheduled at times that interfered with their family responsibilities. Participants suggested fewer hours of required face time at the university and fewer meetings, which could also help ameliorate the high commute times some participants experienced.

The lack of family support for participants' work role is salient given that family support for counselor educators' work role can enhance occupational

satisfaction (Magnuson et al., 2009). The results of this study support research indicating that female faculty members, including counselor educator mothers, often still perform more of the housework and childcare than do their partners (Connelly & Ghodsee, 2014; Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Philipson & Bostic, 2010). Even when fathers are engaged in childcare, the participants' comments indicate that women still provide the management of the care of their children.

Difficulty obtaining affordable childcare contributes to the challenges faculty mothers encounter (Connelly & Ghodsee, 2014; Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018). For families with more than one child, the cost of childcare in the United States is often more than the cost of housing (Bloomberg News, 2015). As evidenced by participants' comments, finding childcare is particularly difficult because one of the ubiquitous challenges of an academic career is the need to relocate to secure a position (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Wolfinger et al., 2008). Relocation separates academic mothers from their extended family who may have been able to help with childcare. Thus, participants sought more affordable and reliable childcare, including having access to university childcare centers. The results of this study also provide unique insights into the societal issue of school systems ignoring the schedules and commitments of working mothers.

Our findings reiterate that faculty mothers enjoy both their professor role and their motherhood role (Connelly & Ghodsee, 2014; Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018). Benefits to balancing multiple roles include increased psychological well-being (Culross et al., 2008; Haskins et al., 2016; Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018) and life satisfaction (Halpern, 2008; Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018). Participants reported that they gained self-esteem benefits from their work role as well (Haskins et al., 2016; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). The findings of this study also provide new evidence that these benefits support academic mothers' parenting roles.

Participants' experiences align with previous research indicating that children can present a diversion from the pressures of academic life (Connelly & Ghodsee, 2014; Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018) and add information on how having children can help keep work experiences in perspective. The results of this study further illustrate that managing multiple roles helps women set priorities at work and at home. The findings reflect and extend research on benefits specific to counselor educator mothers, including that motherhood experiences provide poignant examples of concepts in the classroom (Haskins et al., 2016) and increase understanding of topics in the counseling curriculum. Our findings also illustrate that counselor educator mothers' experiences can result in enhanced understanding and empathy for student mothers. Furthermore, although Haskins et al. (2016) found that counseling training and experience can inform parenting skills, the current study provides additional information on this topic. This research also provides new information on how the training of counselor educator mothers supports healthy family systems.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study extends the research on the experiences of counselor educator mothers. Yet, the study is not without limitations. Although collecting self-reported data was an appropriate method for this investigation, the survey data are limited by the information we received from the participants (Hays & Singh, 2012). A broader diversity of participants (82.2% were Caucasian) could result in additional perspectives as well.

Although limitations exist, this study adds to the literature on counselor educator motherhood by providing data from over 100 participants on how managing multiple roles affects occupational satisfaction and work-life enrichment. Counselor educator mothers may find their experiences validated by these findings. The results can also be used to support advocacy activities in the academy. In addition, the data can inform future qualitative and quantitative studies on this topic, such as further study on the occupational satisfaction and work-life enrichment of all counselor educators, including faculty fathers. Continuing this line of research with professionals in other occupations is warranted as well.

The results of this study indicate that work-family enrichment benefits may buffer some of the challenges counselor educator mothers experience. University leaders can further enhance academic mothers' occupational satisfaction by supporting family-friendly policies and encouraging work-life balance initiatives. These policies can include the provision of a semester of paid family leave when a child enters the home of a faculty member (Ecklund & Lincoln, 2016). Automatic stop-the-clock policies are also critically important for pretenure faculty mothers (Ecklund & Lincoln, 2016; Mason et al., 2013), and these policies must include language that educates promotion and tenure committees that faculty are not expected to produce scholarship during the period in which the tenure clock is not active (Mason et al., 2013; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Mentoring programs can also support faculty who are managing multiple roles (Connelly & Ghodsee, 2014; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Furthermore, this research reiterates that administrators need to consider academic mothers' caregiving responsibilities when scheduling classes and meetings (Sallee, 2014; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012), and they must ensure an equitable division of teaching and service labor among all faculty (Bird et al., 2004; Webber & Rogers, 2018).

Although scholars have suggested family-friendly recommendations for almost 2 decades, little has changed for academic mothers and barriers to their success remain. Some universities have added family-friendly policies, yet mothers often experience discrimination for using them, and thus they may not truly have access to these policies (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Accordingly, creating policies is not enough—cultural change is needed (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Sallee, 2014).

Few universities have succeeded in changing their culture (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Sallee, 2014); however, faculty and administrators can learn from the universities that have successfully obtained a family-friendly environment (Lester & Sallee, 2009). These universities have leaders who view family-friendly policies as a means to recruit and retain a qualified and diverse faculty (Mason et al., 2013; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Faculty are aware of the policies at these universities because they are publicized on websites and at new faculty orientations. Additionally, academic leaders and faculty at these institutions support the use of these policies and ensure that there are no negative repercussions for using the policies.

The results of this study reiterate that support from colleagues is particularly important to mothers (Haskins et al., 2016; Neale-McFall et al., 2018; Trepal & Stinchfield, 2012). Counselor educators can help sustain a department climate in which faculty demonstrate collegiality and compassion. Counselor educators can also offer their colleagues opportunities for collaboration and can advocate for an equitable division of labor. Counselor educators can further support a family-friendly environment by sharing with faculty and academic leaders the findings and recommendations from this research and other academic motherhood studies.

Although this research relates to the academic environment, many of the findings have broader implications. This study supports previous research indicating that women's lives can be enriched through participation in multiple roles (Culross et al., 2008; Ruderman & Ohlott, 2002). Additionally, mothers' occupational satisfaction can be increased by an infrastructure that includes paid family leave, quality and affordable childcare, and equity in home and work roles (Collins, 2019; Slaughter, 2015). Given that counselors are trained in social justice advocacy and counseling professors educate future generations of advocates, counseling professionals are ideally positioned to promote norms and policies that support all working mothers.

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