

WOMEN AT THE POSTPARENTAL STAGE: JOB

SATISFACTION AND MARITAL STATUS

By

ANNETTA C. WILSON

Bachelor of Science  
in Education  
University of Central Arkansas  
Conway, Arkansas  
1961

Master of Education  
in Counseling  
Northeastern Oklahoma State University  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma  
1989

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
May, 1995

This study is dedicated to

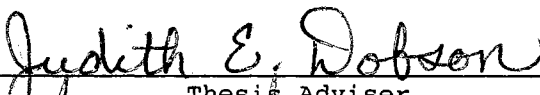
The three men in my life  
Paul, Lane and Lyle

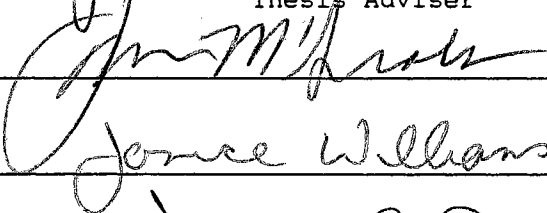
and

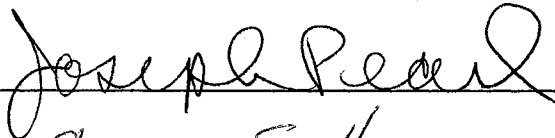
My Mother

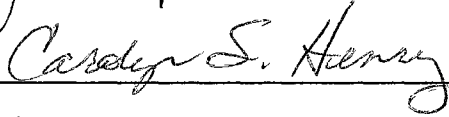
WOMEN AT THE POSTPARENTAL STAGE: JOB  
SATISFACTION AND MARITAL STATUS

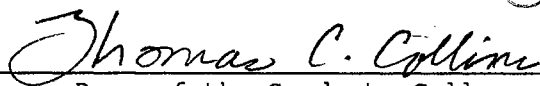
Thesis Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Adviser

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joyce Williams

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph Pearl

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carolyn S. Henry

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of the Graduate College

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the many professors who have assisted me with my studies at OSU during the past four years. It has truly been a special time for me. Always helpful and encouraging, especially throughout this study, has been the guidance and support of Dr. Judy Dobson. I am grateful to Dr. Janice Williams for her assistance with the statistical portion of this study. I would like to express my gratitude to the other members of my committee: Dr. Joe Pearl, Dr. James Seals and Dr. Carolyn Henry for their help with this project.

To the beauty shops who took time to tell women of this study and distribute packets, thank you. A special thanks to Michelle Evans of Hair Images, Susan Camp of Personal Touch Salon, and Josine Haustermanns of Coiffures Continental & Utopia for bearing with me throughout this project. And to some very special women who took an interest in this study and helped in so many different ways: Dr. Barbara Evans, Dr. Kathryn Govaerts, Regina Lloyd, Joy Walker, Gerry Brennan-Burns, Angela Douglas, and Maureen Wilson.

To my husband, Paul, who suffered through every class with me including papers I wrote and tests I took, without your support and encouragement this project would not have taken place--thank you.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Theoretical Foundation. . . . .	3
Erikson's Theory of Adulthood. . . . .	3
Jung's Theory of Adulthood . . . . .	5
Statement of the Problem. . . . .	6
Significance of the Study . . . . .	7
Definition of Terms . . . . .	9
Hypotheses. . . . .	11
Major Hypothesis. . . . .	11
Secondary Hypothesis. . . . .	11
Limitations . . . . .	12
Organization of the Study . . . . .	12
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE . . . . .	13
Job Satisfaction and Postparental Women . . . . .	13
Psychosocial Health . . . . .	20
Biological Influence . . . . .	22
Cognitive Influence. . . . .	24
Social Influences. . . . .	24
Internal-External Locus of Control. . . . .	28
Present Study . . . . .	31
III. METHOD . . . . .	34
Subjects. . . . .	34
Instruments . . . . .	37
Internal versus External Control of Reinforcement ( <u>I-E Scale</u> ). . . . .	38
The <u>Job Descriptive Index (JDI)</u> . . . . .	40
<u>Measures of Psychosocial Development (MPD)</u> . . . . .	42
The Demographic Data Form. . . . .	44
Ethical Considerations. . . . .	44
Procedure . . . . .	45
Statistical Analysis. . . . .	46
IV. RESULTS. . . . .	48
Major Hypothesis. . . . .	49
Secondary Hypothesis One. . . . .	52
Secondary Hypothesis Two. . . . .	53

Chapter	Page
Secondary Hypothesis Three. . . . .	55
Summary . . . . .	56
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	58
Summary . . . . .	58
Conclusions . . . . .	60
Recommendations for Research. . . . .	66
Recommendations for Counselors. . . . .	67
REFERENCES . . . . .	70
APPENDIXES. . . . .	75
APPENDIX A - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FORM . . . . .	76
APPENDIX B - LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS. . . . .	79
APPENDIX C - IRB APPROVAL. . . . .	82

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Ranges, Means, and Standard Deviations of <u>JDI</u> (Job in General), <u>I-E Scale</u> , and <u>MPD</u> (Total Resolution Scale) . . . . .	48
2. Regression Analysis Summary Table - Present Job . . . . .	50
3. Regression Analysis Summary Table - Present Pay . . . . .	51
4. Regression Analysis Summary Table - Job in General. . . . .	52
5. <u>MPD</u> Resolution Scales' Mean Scores and Standard Deviations Reported by Marital Status . . . . .	54
6. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for <u>JDI</u> Scales Reported by Marital Status. . . . .	56

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Demographic changes have had an enormous impact on creating discontinuity in the lives of women in the United States. These changes seem to touch every aspect of a woman's life including marriage, divorce, employment, and parenting (McLaughlin, Melber, Billy, Zimmerle, Wings, & Johnson, 1988). "There was a time in America when the attitudes, values, and behavior of each generation were effectively passed on the next generation as the natural result of interaction between parents and children" (Ryley, Dinkmeyer, Frierson, Glenn, & Shaw, 1985, p. 14). "When the United States was primarily an agricultural society, the family served as the locus of both production and consumption. As such, it enabled women to be major participants in the production process" (McLaughlin et al., 1988, p. 7).

By 1950, according to Ryley et al. (1985), 70% of Americans lived in cities. "Clearly, many Americans found cities attractive, because they moved to cities and stayed there. Cities were places of economic opportunity, and of excitement and adventure as well. There can be no doubt also that rural areas were frequently dirty, lonely, and full of hard work for many Americans" (Wells, 1985, p. 140). As the United States shifted from an agricultural society



to an urban society the production role was no longer performed by the family, but shifted to the male members of society.

Perhaps of greater consequence to the day-to-day existence of life of an American family has been the movement to suburban communities with the associated separation of economic and domestic activity. In the suburbs, frequently the adult males, and increasingly adult females, leave home to go to work elsewhere in the larger urban area. As a result, the home has become a place of recreation, rest, and retreat, rather than economic activity (Wells, 1985, pp. 166-167).

Thus the family function became that of consumer only (McLaughlin et al., 1988). "The return of women to the labor force and the recent trend toward being employed over the life course represents women's regaining a central role in the productive process, which was lost during the Industrial Revolution" (McLaughlin et al., 1988, p. 7).

Other than gaining a role in production, considered as paid employment outside the home, another trend having a tremendous impact on women in the United States is higher divorce rates. According to McLaughlin et al. (1988), ". . . the upturn in divorce since 1960 has occurred primarily among women married after 1962" (p. 61). Recent trends in the McLaughlin et al. study show a decline in the number of people getting married, an increase in age of the couples who do marry, more of the population choosing not to marry, and an increase in divorce rates. These trends indicate that the amount of time women may spend married has declined while the years women spend divorced or single has increased (McLaughlin et al., 1988). This results in more single-parent families headed by divorced women with children. "These women typically have significantly less money than two-parent families because there is

only one earner and women are often employed in low-paying occupations" (Mclaughlin et al., 1988, p. 77).

Raup and Myers (1989) state that "Experiencing the empty nest as a single parent may be quite different from the transition experience for those who remain in the couple situation" (p. 181). This, they conclude, may be true for the cohort group of women who will be age 41-60 during the years 1960 to 1999, because this group may have been affected by the higher divorce rate.

This study examined two life patterns of women, married-employed and divorced-employed, after the completion of the active parenting years to determine if variance in job satisfaction could be accounted for by marital status, locus of control, and psychosocial health. This study also examined women in these two life patterns to see if there was a difference between the two groups (married, divorced) in internal-external locus of control, job satisfaction, and psychosocial health.

#### Theoretical Foundation

##### Erikson's Theory of Adulthood

Erikson (1982) terms his seventh psychosocial stage generativity versus self-absorption and stagnation. Generativity is ". . . procreativity, productivity, and creativity, and thus the generation of new beings as well as of new products and new ideas, including a kind of self-generation concerned with further identity development" (Erikson, 1982, p. 67). All the strengths already developed in previous stages are needed for development at this

stage. "Where generative enrichment in its various forms fails altogether, regression to earlier stages may occur either in the form of an obsessive need for pseudo-intimacy or of a compulsive kind of preoccupation with self-imagery" (Erikson, 1982, p. 67). Preoccupation with self imagery or a need for pseudo-intimacy leads to a ". . . pervading sense of stagnation" (Erikson, 1982, p. 67). According to Erikson (1982) intimacy and generativity have a close connection and when affiliations in early adulthood result in isolation rather than intimacy the next critical developmental stage of generativity may not be faced.

Erikson (1964) believes the desire to teach is not just for those in the teaching profession, but that adults know the satisfaction that can be gained from teaching others. An important aspect of this process is the realization by the person giving information to sense that they are understood. Erikson (1964) says care then is the virtue connected to generativity. Care means a person will have concern for what they create and leave to others. Middle adulthood's responsibility in terms of generativity can be best stated as ". . . maintenance of the world" (Erikson, Erikson, & Kionick, 1986, p. 73).

Regardless of the many faces seen in generativity, concern for their own children is the dominate theme for those adult men and women no longer in an active parenting role in Erikson et al. (1986) study of 29 octogenarians. The primary focus of adult responsibility seems to be parenthood. Therefore, adults tend to

measure the success of their children to determine how successful they were as parents (Erikson et al., 1986).

### Jung's Theory of Adulthood

Jung uses the term individuation to explain the process involved in becoming one's own self. Individuation may be understood best in terms of the person's experiences in becoming who he/she actually is (Jacobi, 1943). "Our collective education provides practically nothing for this transitional period. Concerned solely with the education of youth we disregard the education of the adult man" (Jung, 1928, p. 70).

At midlife people, due to the influence of the psyche, turn inward and begin to examine their lives. The unconscious, speaking to individuals through dreams, encourages this recognition so that balance and harmony may be restored. Thus, the midlife period marks the transformation of the psyche. Instead of continuing to conquer the external world, individuals now use this energy to focus on their inner selves. Through the guidance of the unconscious, individuals can develop unrealized potentials (Crain, 1985).

Jung (1928) states that since the second half of the nineteenth century women have become more involved in activities that once were reserved for only men. Although these activities have had some positive results for women, the fact remains that ". . . working in a man's way, woman is doing something not wholly in agreement with, if not directly injurious to her feminine nature" (Jung, 1928, p. 168). Yet the activity of paid employment, once considered

reserved for men, seems to contribute to a feeling of mastery and well-being for women as indicated by Baruch, Barnett, and Rivers, (1983) study.

#### Statement of the Problem

Research conducted by Adelman, Antonucci, Crohan and Coleman (1989) predicts that the cohort of women ". . . whose young adulthood coincided with the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s and who are now in the midst of mid-life" (p. 188) will have a positive postparental experience based on the potential of these women to have experienced uninterrupted labor force participation which may result in better job conditions and higher wages. Other studies also have found a positive relationship between employment and well being of women in the postparental period (Adelman et al., 1989).

Raup and Myers (1989) indicated that this same cohort of women also has experienced a high divorce rate that might influence their postparental transition experience. Thus, divorced and married employed women may not have the same postparental transition experience.

Therefore this study was designed to answer the following questions:

Can marital status, locus of control, and psychosocial health account for variance in job satisfaction for the cohort of women born from 1930-1949, who have completed the active years of parenting? Are there differences between divorced and married

employed women after the active parenting years on measures of internal-external locus of control, psychosocial health, and job satisfaction?

#### Significance of the Study

The intention of this study was to explain the variance in job satisfaction for two of the six life patterns of women, divorced-employed and married-employed, researched by Baruch et al. (1983). The significance of this study was to expand on the Baruch et al. research by looking at a discontinuous stage of life for women, the postparenting stage. The Baruch et al. study found divorced-employed women to be different from the other life patterns of women studied. This difference was revealed in the relationship divorced-employed women had with their children and how the quality of this relationship contributed strongly to these women's sense of mastery and pleasure. Another element reported in the Baruch et al. study that contributed to the divorced-employed women's sense of mastery was the prestige these women received from their occupation. In contrast, Baruch et al. (1983) found married-employed women had love (relationship with husband) as well as work for the major contributing factors toward mastery and pleasure. Work was the common element that contributed to a sense of mastery for both married and divorced women.

Neugarten (1967) contends that there is a lack of evidence to support the many symptoms ascribed to menopausal change, as well as a lack of evidence to support the effects of menopause on the

cognitive and social development of women. The biological approach does not seem to adequately explain what is happening in the lives of women who are no longer in the active parenting role. Neugarten conducted interviews with women (28 premenopausal, 41 menopausal, and 31 postmenopausal). These interviews led Neugarten to conclude ". . . that climacteric status as we had defined it is relatively insignificant to women aged 45 to 55, and that instead women in this age group regard themselves as falling within a general life period during which the climacterium occurs" (p. 68). What was significant for these women was not necessarily whether they still had their menstrual cycle, but the whole period of time where movement took them through a combination of biological, psychological, and social changes until they were aware of being in a new stage of development (Neugarten, 1967).

As women continue to live longer more years are spent in the postparenting stage. This means women have more time devoted to seeking fulfillment outside the home and family. How women perceive job satisfaction at this time of life may be an important aspect of their continued well-being. As the population of women in the United States who reach the postparental years increases, counselors need a better understanding of this time in a woman's life. Because of the rapid changes for women in our society it becomes important for counselors to determine if theories of development based primarily on male subjects are adequate in explaining women's development. More women are now pursuing the uninterrupted career path or spending more years devoted to a career; therefore, an

increased understanding is needed to explain what constitutes job satisfaction for these women. This is especially important since a relationship appears to exist between a woman's well-being and paid employment. Perhaps as women continue to spend more years working in uninterrupted career paths their development through the life span may more closely resemble men.

The results of this study are useful to counselors who work with women at the postparental stage of development in understanding the relationship between psychosocial health and job satisfaction. Because divorced-employed women with children only recently became an accepted life pattern, research is meager for this population. This study fills a void in the literature for that group of women who are no longer in the active parenting role.

#### Definition of Terms

The following terms, pertinent to this study, are defined.

Job Satisfaction. "Job satisfactions are feelings or affective responses to facets of the situation" or ". . . the feelings a worker has about her/his job" (Smith, Kendall, & Hulen, 1969, p. 6). In this study, job satisfaction is measured by the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) (revised) (Balzer & Smith, 1990). Scores on the instrument range from 0 to 54 on each of the five facet scales and the overall job satisfaction scale with higher scores indicating greater job satisfaction.

Internal-External Locus of Control. "If the person perceives that the event is contingent upon his own behavior or his own



relatively permanent characteristics, we have termed this a belief in internal control" (Rotter, Chance, & Phares, 1972, p. 261). In this study internal-external locus of control was measured by Rotter's Internal-External Scale (I-E Scale). Scores on the instrument range from 0 to 23 with lower scores indicating greater internality.

When a reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following some action of his own but not being entirely contingent upon his action, then, in our culture, it is typically perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate as under the control of powerful others, or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of the forces surrounding him. When the event is interpreted in this way by an individual we have labeled this a belief in external control (Rotter et al. 1972, p. 261).

Psychosocial Health. In this study psychosocial health refers to ". . . an indication of the relative importance and intensity of the conflicts involved in all eight of Erikson's developmental stages for that individual" or ". . . an indicator of the developmental issues and conflicts that are salient for an individual" (Gable, 1992, p. 520). In this study psychosocial health was measured by Measures of Psychosocial Development (MPD) (Hawley, 1988) using the Total Resolution Scale (overall psychosocial adjustment). Each of Erikson's eight developmental stages were assessed giving a Positive Scale, Negative Scale, and Resolution Scale.

Postparental Period. Raup and Myers (1989) state that the "postparental period begins when the last child leaves home . . ." (p. 180). In this study postparental period will refer to the stage

of development when women are no longer involved in active parenting.

Employed. In this study employed refers to women who have paid employment outside the home with a job that is considered an important aspect of their life.

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated based on research conducted and reported by Baruch et al. (1983), Friedrich (1988), Boyce (1988), and Adelman, Antonucci, Crohan, and Coleman (1989).

#### Major Hypothesis

Variance in job satisfaction of postparental women will be accounted for by marital status, locus of control, and psychosocial health.

#### Secondary Hypotheses

1. Using the I-E Scale (Rotter et al., 1972) women whether divorced or married at the postparental stage will not be different on higher generalized expectancies for internal locus of control.

2. Using the Measures of Psychosocial Development (Hawley, 1988) marital status at the postparental stage is unrelated to overall psychosocial health.

3. Measured by the Job Descriptive Index (revised) (Balzer & Smith 1990) job satisfaction is unrelated to marital status at the postparental stage.

### Limitations

Women in this study were currently married or divorced for at least two years. Therefore, some women in this study were currently married but had experienced divorce. Generalizability of this study is limited to this cohort of employed women, married or divorced. However, research of Adelman et al. (1989) indicated women at the postparental stage benefit from employment regardless of cohort group.

### Organization of the Study

Chapter I introduces the topic and includes a review of the theoretical foundations, statement of the problem, significance of the study, definition of terms, and the hypothesis. Chapter II provides a review of the literature pertinent to postparental employed women, either married or divorced. Chapter III describes the sample, instruments, and the type of research design that was used in this study. Chapter IV details the results of this study and Chapter V includes a summary, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of literature on women, divorced and married, after the active parenting years are completed. Topics addressed include job satisfaction as it relates to postparental women, psychosocial health of women at this stage of development (including biological, social and cognitive influences), and the concept of generalized expectancy in social learning theory-internal-external locus of control.

#### Job Satisfaction and Postparental Women

A relationship seems to exist between paid employment and women's well-being at midlife. A purpose of this study was to look at factors that might be related to job satisfaction for this population.

There is a relationship between higher levels of educational achievement and participation in the labor force by women. This relationship according to Mclaughlin et al. (1988) has strengthened during recent years and at least in part accounts for the increase in employment among those women graduating from high school and college. Because of additional training women now are entering more of the occupations considered reserved for men. At the same time women also are spending more years working outside the home. "As

the number of women in the work force has increased, greater numbers have selected careers that require extensive preparation and considerable commitment for career development" (Govaerts & Dixon, 1988, p. 265).

Education and health are variables that ". . . affect both the ability to secure and retain a job as well as the motivation, generally, to seek employment and remain in the labor force" (Moen, 1991, p. 137). The amount of time, energy, and money women spend preparing for a career seems to affect the length of time they remain a part of the work force. The experience of uninterrupted employment is more often observed in women who have never-married or previously been married. ". . . the desire for economic independence suggested by our concept of the rising importance of women as primary individuals is a significant factor" (McLaughlin et al., 1988, p. 116) contributing to women being in the work force for a greater part of their lives. Usually it is expected that the single woman will have an uninterrupted career for support, but for her the job is also an aspect of self-realization (Rogers, 1979).

Women married may enjoy a full-time job for the security it offers, comparing the job to an insurance policy if something happens to the husband's income. A wife also sees herself within the family as having more power when she is employed and contributes financially to the support of the family (McLaughlin et al., 1988). Yet married women's view of work, according to Rogers, (1979) may be different from single women. Success at work is not as critical for married women since they usually are not the primary source of

support for the family (Rogers, 1979).

A study conducted by Govaerts & Dixon (1988) was to identify variables that predict vocational satisfaction in dual-career couples who live apart due to their occupations as compared to those whose job does not require separation. This study included 58 married women. Of the 11 variables used to predict job satisfaction in both sexes, only one was significant. The variable Govaerts and Dixon found to be statistically significant in predicting job satisfaction for both sexes was job security.

Another study, conducted by Potuchek, (1992) interviewed wives from 153 dual-earner couples. Potuchek found that those women who had redefined the meaning of breadwinner often did so because of circumstances such as

. . . a husband whose income cannot adequately meet the financial needs of the family or a divorce that propels her into the position of primary provider for her children. She may also be pulled into negotiating new gender boundaries by career success that makes work more central to her self-identity, by high earnings on which her family comes to depend, or by a second marriage that provides an opportunity for rethinking old rules and roles (p. 557).

Also found were those women whose circumstances did not encourage redefining gender boundaries. Those circumstances included long-standing marriages, high-earning husbands, and children at home.

The Adelman et al. (1989) study used two cross-sectional nationwide surveys conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan to obtain their sample. The sample of 374 midlife women age 40-59 was drawn from 2460 adults who were surveyed

in 1957, and 312 midlife women drawn from a sample of 2264 adults surveyed in 1976. The purpose of the study was to determine if psychological well-being in midlife women could be predicted by empty-nest status, cohort membership, and employment status. Indications from this study revealed that cohort and employment are independently related to women's well-being at midlife. "Increasing evidence has shown that women involved in achievement-oriented activities at midlife, in particular paid employment, have higher well-being than full-time homemakers" (Adelmann et al., 1989, p. 186). Women in the Adelmann et al. study who were employed showed less anxiety and immobilization resulting in a better sense of well-being than homemakers. According to this study women appeared to benefit from paid employment at midlife regardless of their cohort group.

Enns (1991) reviewed five theories that indicated a woman's identity was related to her relationships with others. In reviewing the "new" relationship models, Enns suggested that the relationship between self-esteem in women and their relationship with others is stronger than the relationship that exists between work and self-esteem. Yet Enns continues by saying this is not consistent with the Baruch et al. 1983 study. The Baruch et al. research showed approximately half of the women in their study indicated achievement in both work and education as the most rewarding part of their lives.

Raup and Myers study (1989) reviewed variables that women react to during the postparental stage and determined characteristics of

women who have a greater chance of experiencing difficulty during the postparental stage of life. The study indicated identity issues become important again at the postparental stage of life. It is during this period in women's lives when they sometimes return to a career or even start a new career. Discontinuity at the postparental stage due to role loss may result in growth; therefore, women at this stage of development might benefit from career counseling according to Raup and Myers. Career counseling may be able to assist women in choosing careers that have a higher potential for job satisfaction and also help women look at alternative roles for development of satisfaction other than parenting.

Kuhlen (1968) stated that it is during these later years of life that individuals are motivated by physical and social losses. Women at the postparental stage have experienced loss in the parenting role and are assimilating this change. Discontinuity at the postparental stage could become the motivating force in career achievement. Married women according to Rogers (1979) do not just work to supplement the family income, but they have some of the same motives for working as men. Those motives may include working for money and personal gratification.

Hamachek (1990) stated that women also want to contribute something to society and be a productive member of that society. This is Erikson's generativity versus stagnation stage of development. Hamachek indicated that stagnation usually will be manifest by showing less care and concern for people. An individual



who is exhibiting stagnation will show little interest in achievement or productivity.

At midlife an individual may like his/her ". . . type of work and actual job but that an organizational change is necessary to enhance job satisfaction" (Okun, 1984, p. 253). This type of self-assessment to determine the fit between the organization and future opportunities usually requires the reassessment of one's capabilities. Okun believes this happens at midlife as one deals with the time perspective. Women, because of the loss of the parenting role, may invest more energy into work at the postparenting stage and become enthusiastic about their jobs, perhaps resembling men when they embarked on their careers at a younger age (Okun, 1984).

Research conducted by Read, Elliott, Escobar and Slaney (1988) at a large Midwestern university studied the effects of marital status and being a mother on the career goals of 119 college reentry women. The women were divided into four groups based on marital status and children. The four groups included 30 divorced or separated women with children, 30 married women without children, 30 married women with children, and 29 separated or divorced women without children. The average age of the sample was 31.62 years of age. Women with children rated better employment, financial need, and children growing up as factors important in seeking career goals. Separated and divorced women rated financial need and dissatisfaction at home as the most important reason for seeking their career goals. Three important factors related to the effects

of children on the career goals of women are financial issues, family issues, and shortage of time (Read et al., 1988). Another finding of this study was ". . . a statistically significant main effect for marital status" (p. 51). "Women who are separated or divorced expect to receive significantly more future life satisfaction from their careers than did married women" (Read et al., 1988, p. 53). Job satisfaction may be a higher priority for divorced than married postparental women. As Rogers (1979) concludes success on the job for married women is not critical, and the pay they receive supplements the family income. When the effects of children are removed for women at the postparental stage of life, career goals may be more accessible and enhance job satisfaction.

Sixty-two women were interviewed in depth for the Baruch et al. (1983) study. These women were divided into six different life patterns. Those patterns are (a) employed-never married; (b) married, with children at home; (c) employed-married, without children; (d) married, without children at home; (e) married-employed with children; and (f) divorced-employed with children. Two pictures of well-being emerged from the study of these women. One picture of well-being Baruch et al. called mastery. This picture, they stated, emerged because of the statistical relationship found with self-esteem, perceived control over one's life, and depression. In their study high self-esteem and feelings of control resulted in depression scores being low. Mastery appears to relate to the instrumental (doing side of life).

The other picture that developed in the Baruch et al. study involved a strong relationship between well-being and happiness, satisfaction, and optimism. This picture of life is labeled "pleasure" (feeling side of life) (Baruch et al., 1983). "A key finding of our study, . . . is that the women who scored highest on all the indices of well-being were married women with children who have high-prestige jobs" (Baruch et al., 1983, p. 143). Therefore job satisfaction may be the key that impacts women's sense of well-being rather than simply being employed. An important area of the Baruch et al. study was determining what the major rewards and problems are connected to women and their jobs. Major findings indicate two clusters that relate to rewards at work. These two groups are called the "challenge" cluster and the "social relationships" cluster. The picture that emerged from the Baruch et al. study (1983) showed that the challenge items resulted in greater job satisfaction for women. The challenge items seem to show a strong positive relationship to mastery and pleasure. Social relationships, although not as important for job satisfaction, do show an effect on pleasure (Baruch et al., 1983).

#### Psychosocial Health

Using Erikson's stages of psychosocial development the postparental stage of life focuses on the theme of generativity versus stagnation (Crain, 1985). However, "Erikson reminds his readers that a part of the developmental process is the daring to risk the achievements of the previous stage as one enters the next"

(Wright, 1982). The previous stage Erikson calls intimacy versus isolation. "The vicissitudes of human relatedness both plague and inspire us throughout life, but at no time more critically than in late youth and early middle age, when all that we have achieved as sensual, skillful human beings is tested for its depth and plasticity" (Coles, 1970, p. 134).

According to Boyce (1988) female development may not be linear, but involves negotiating several developmental tasks at the same time. "Women cannot continue to be defined by their roles as a wife and a mother when those responsibilities and connections change" (p. 57). Using Boyce's model midlife women might be involved in industry, identity and intimacy at the same time. Boyce views generativity as a continuous aspect of women's lives. "The importance of nurturing and taking care permeates females and is expressed in many creative ways throughout their lives" (p. 62). During this midlife transition women are experiencing the loss of roles, a discontinuous process, where identity is changing as these women find out who they are in a new way. During this regrouping process ". . . they expand the network to include professional connections" (Boyce, 1988, p. 58).

Studies since the 1960s focusing on the aging woman in America include many contradictions and maybe even a few surprises. Apparently women are no longer suffering from symptoms related to poor mental health, when they have new experiences that lead to continued growth. In fact many professionals have been confused over the ". . . absence of trauma, pathology and impairment when

they started seriously studying the aging of women" (Friedan, 1993, p. 136). What seems to characterize the women in the 1980s facing aging was a new sense of identity, autonomy needed for change, and a commitment to meet new challenges. This was more evident in women who had been in the traditional role of housewife and at midlife were free to experience new growth (Friedan, 1993).

### Biological Influence

Postparental women are in varying stages of the biological transition called the climacterium. A theme of Mendall's (1988) research reports, "Menopause is viewed as a 'marker' of aging, and is a compelling catalyst toward evaluating the past and anticipating and attempting to shape the future" (p. 187). This view of menopause is consistent with the reentry of women at the postparental stage of life into the work world. Menopause, according to Formanek (1988), does not cause an increase in vulnerability to life stresses, but rather it is life events which cause the increase in vulnerability. These are life events which mark exits from women's social networks such as separation, children leaving home, or loss of support system through death.

Research conducted by Kaufert and Gilbert (1986), studied menopause as a causal factor in psychotropic drug use with women at midlife. The population included women between 40 and 59 years old living in Canada. Questionnaires were sent to 4150 women taken from the Voters Registration Lists in rural areas. Out of this number 2500 women completed the questionnaire for this study. Stereotypes

of menopausal women include fear of the loss of their fertility at the same time they may face children leaving home. If the primary roles of women are reproduction and mothering then midlife women would be prime candidates for depression and the use of psychotropic drugs. However, when Kaufert and Gilbert actually examined the use of psychotropics, they found that women who were unemployed, or without a marital partner, or had no children at home more likely to have used psychotropic drugs. The group of menopausal women without children at home and unemployed were more likely to use psychotropic drugs than pre-menopausal women. The common theme seemed to be that unemployed women rather than just menopausal women are candidates for depression and the use of psychotropic drugs. This is consistent with the Baruch et al. (1983) study that found employment highly related to well-being in women.

Neugarten (1967) reports the greatest concerns expressed by 100 midlife women as being widowhood, concern for children leaving home, getting older, and the fear of illness connected to aging. Only four women mentioned menopause as a concern. Neugarten's study relates to Mendall's (1988) findings that menopause is viewed more as a marker of aging and can prompt women to look at the future as they evaluate the past. The women in Neugarten's study list future happenings as items of greatest concern, rather than the present marker, menopause.

### Cognitive Influence

Middle age according to Neugarten (1968) is a time of reflection. The focus is on looking back at where you have been to determine where you want to go. ". . . women become more responsive toward and less guilty about aggressive and egocentric impulses" (p. 140). Before middle age, due to socialization, Crain (1985) states that women tend to develop their nurturing and affective side and neglect the abilities they might have for independence and logical thought. Sheehy (1992) believes women at the postparental stage now have an opportunity to redirect their energies and creativity. "The task now is to find a new future self in whom we can invest our trust and enthusiasm" (p. 136). These descriptions of midlife are consistent with the definition of individuation that Jung uses to describe the process a person experiences in becoming one's own self. The postparental period for women seems to be an important time to reflect and reevaluate careers; by considering a new career, starting a career, or reentering a career.

### Social Influences

"However, the termination of a significant relationship plays an important part in our lives precisely because it represents not only an ending, but also a beginning" (Levinson, 1990, p. 46). The postparental stage signifies the termination of the active parenting role for a woman, but also the beginning of . . . "defining and delimiting the new relationship with her grown children" (Oliver, 1988, p. 103). At the same time, women who worked during child

rearing may revise their careers in midlife or re-enter the job market (Viorst, 1986). Yet, Viorst concludes that not much is known about this period of employment for women because researchers have not addressed this stage of women's lives in relationship to employment. Until recent years paid employment for women was viewed as something they should not have to do.

The hypothesis that was the focus of the Cooper and Gutmann (1987) study compared pre-empty nest women with post-empty nest women on gender identity and ego mastery styles. Fifty women participated in this study ranging in age from 43 to 51. To control for the effects of work and socioeconomic level only employed teachers were in the sample. Twenty-five women comprised each group. This research study supports the theory that psychological change occurs at the postparental stage. Postparental women ". . . are more free to express some of the masculine qualities of assertion, aggression, and executive capacity which they have had to repress in the service of parenthood" (Cooper & Gutmann, 1987, p. 352). The women in this study still see themselves as nurturing, but the masculine characteristics are in addition to the already existing feminine characteristics. Career counseling may assist women at this stage to look at these emerging masculine qualities and consider the postparental stage as a period of expansion and as a normal period of life (Cooper & Gutmann, 1987).

A longitudinal study of personality characteristics originally tested 141 women who were in their senior year at Mills College either in 1958 or 1960. One hundred one of these women completed



the California Psychological Inventory again in their early 40s and again in their early 50s (Helson & Wink, 1992). Helson and Wink observed a process in these women that they termed as ". . . becoming one's own pillar of society" (p. 54). This study showed the women increased in confidence and decisiveness as they approached their 50s. Most women included in the Helson and Wink study by their early 50s were employed at least part-time and 83% of the women in the study rated their lives as very good or good on a 4-point scale. These women indicated ". . . that the time and energy released from the mother role were redistributed in a variety of ways" (Helson & Wink, 1992, p. 49). Personality changes in these women as measured by the California Psychological Inventory appears unrelated to menopause, postparental status, or being caregivers for aging parents. According to Helson and Wink the findings support a view that personality changes during the midlife period in normal ways that are not associated with biological or social events, but these changes are attributable to trends that develop over a longer period.

Okun (1984) concludes that many factors determine the quality of the experience at the postparental stage. These factors include health, career satisfaction, economic status, and the well-being of the launched children. Of these factors, career satisfaction may be the most difficult to define for women at this stage. Yet it is an important factor as women continue to live more years of their life after the children are launched. Career satisfaction is also the

factor that may offer women more control and be directly related to another factor, economic status.

According to Samuel (1976) women from age 45 to 54 who are divorced, commit or attempt more suicides than women who are married. Samuel attributes this to loneliness--a feeling that no one cares. Even with the stress that divorced women have when making a home for their children, they do have a home and someone to love. They feel needed by someone else. Yet, at the postparental stage children are no longer a part of the equation and women experience the loss of this role. Coombs (1991) review of the literature on marital status and personal well-being revealed a consistent trend that married individuals show less stress and emotional pathology than those that are unmarried. This is especially true of men. The evidence is consistent with the protection/support hypothesis that would support the claim that the married ". . . have continuous companionship with a spouse who provides interpersonal closeness, emotional gratification, and support in dealing with daily stress" (Coombs, 1991, p. 100).

Ponzetti and Cate studied (1988) college students in a large university in the Northwestern United States. Four hundred students participated in the research, 236 women and 164 men. The average age of the sample was 19.7 years. The students were asked to complete the revised UCLA Loneliness Scale for measuring loneliness. This study indicated friendship network variables were the most predictive of loneliness in women. "One central feature is that women stay with, build on, and develop in a context of connections

with others. Indeed, women's sense of self becomes very much organized around being able to make and then to maintain affiliations and relationships" (Miller, 1986, p. 85). Women at the postparental stage are redefining relationships with children and for the married women the relationship with a spouse as well. Does this maze of connections in any way account for job satisfaction in married and divorced women after active parenting is complete?

If one's satisfaction, one's sense of value, comes from other people rather than from one's own accomplishments, it follows that the departure of these significant others will leave one with an empty shell in place of self. If the woman's sense of self comes from her own accomplishments, on the other hand, she is not so vulnerable to breakdown when significant others leave (Bart, 1980, p. 218).

The accomplishments women receive from paid employment at the postparental stage are important to increased levels of well-being. Maddy (1985) believes women need to balance the first half of life with the second. A woman achieves this, according to Maddy, by giving herself permission to nurture self, and let go of the need to always nurture others. Letting go of the mothering role will not be a crisis for a woman if she has accomplishments in other areas. Thus, the importance of mastery or achieving a balance between mastery and pleasure as reported by Baruch et al., (1983).

#### Internal-External Locus of Control

Crucial aspects of job satisfaction, a focus of this study, seems to involve acquiring skills and being able to perform skills.

Several factors, the role of reinforcements and the gratification received from the event, may influence a future response to a like event, according to social learning theory (Rotter et al., 1972). Rotter (1982) however, states individuals differ in the way they regard an event and react to it. A determining factor is the way an individual sees the reward that follows the event. If the reward is seen as dependent upon the person's behavior, Rotter (1982) defines it as internal locus of control. Control of the reward by an outside force that occurs independently of the person's actions is defined by Rotter as external locus of control. Internal-external locus of control is one measure of individual differences based on social learning theory concerning the ". . . nature and effects of reinforcements" (Rotter et al., 1972, p. 261). In social learning theory, ". . . a reinforcement acts to strengthen an expectancy that a particular behavior or event will be followed by that reinforcement in the future" (Rotter et al., 1972, p. 261). Thus, it seems that higher degrees of job satisfaction would be indicated by those women who perceive the rewards of acquiring job skills and the ability to perform on the job contingent upon their own attributes and behavior, than those women who perceive the ". . . rewards as the result of luck, chance, fate, as under the control of powerful others (Rotter et al., 1972, p. 265).

According to Rotter (1971) generalized expectancies may influence an individual's behavior under times of stress or in social situations. If a person believes that the decisions she/he makes determine what happens then Rotter states this is

internal control of reinforcement. If a person believes that the decisions she/he makes are controlled by others more powerful, or what happens is the result of luck or fate then Rotter states this is external control of reinforcement.

Research on internal-external locus of control is generally supportive of internals being more motivated toward achievement, although Rotter (1982) states that maladjustment may occur at the high and low end of the scale. Individuals who see a situation as being determined by luck or change are not as likely to ". . . raise expectancies for future reinforcement as high following success as if they perceived the reinforcement to be dependent upon skill or their own efforts" (Rotter, 1982, p. 209). Women who view success in a career as dependent upon skill or their own efforts may raise expectancies for future reinforcement which could affect job satisfaction.

In a study conducted by Friedrich (1988) results supported locus of control as being relevant to job aspirations and expectations. The study included 58 women who were enrolled in introductory psychology classes at a private Eastern liberal arts college. Externality in this study was shown to be associated ". . . with lower realistic expectations for various job satisfactions and greater discrepancy between what students aspire to ideally and what they believe they will obtain" (Friedrich, 1988, p. 338). This would indicate that externality may prevent women from seeking information or control over the outcomes related to work which could improve aspirations and expectations. Friedrich

stated more research is needed to determine if these findings can be generalized to other decision-making contexts.

#### Present Study

A review of the literature indicated a relationship exists between the well-being of women at midlife and paid employment. In fact paid employment may be one of the most important aspects of a woman's life after the parenting stage is complete. Yet, women in this stage of life have not received much attention in research studies concerning job satisfaction. Research for this age woman has concentrated on menopause, the biological aspect; or the empty-nest syndrome, the social aspect. Research now indicates that most women view menopause as a normal happening causing little disruption to their lives. Literature also indicated that women may actually look forward to children leaving home and the cessation of menstruation at this stage of life. Women tend to view menopause as a marker focusing them on the amount of time left; therefore, it prompts women to reevaluate their lives.

When the task of active parenting is complete, women have time and energy to devote to other areas of their life. For many postparenting women the focus now is to receive more satisfaction from their job. Literature indicated that the employment experience may not be the same for married and divorced women. Married women may regard their jobs as an extra insurance policy; therefore, job security may be more important to this group of women. The divorced

women, according to the literature, may see achievement in the job and financial security important aspects of job satisfaction.

Psychosocial stages of development also may affect the aspect of job satisfaction (relationships) that is important to this group of women. According to the literature women who are in generativity will possibly be more interested in jobs that involve caring relationships with people.

The psychosocial health of women at the postparental stage of life seemed tied to continued development. This is a discontinuous stage for women due to the experience of role loss. How women make this adjustment appeared to relate to other roles in their life (i.e. employment). The potential for new growth at the postparenting stage may be related to women's ability to negotiate several developmental tasks at once. Those tasks Boyce (1988) believes may be industry, identity, and intimacy with generativity always present for women.

This stage of life for women seemed to be a time of reflection and possibly a time to develop that part of self neglected in the past because of other obligations (i.e. parenting). For the women in this study change had been experienced in the loss of the active parenting role. The adjustments made to this change, children leaving home, and the relationship that develops with grown children may influence women's psychosocial health and job satisfaction.

The way the event (children leaving home) is perceived also may affect decisions made during this stage that relate to job

satisfaction. Therefore, locus of control may influence the way these women view their jobs and adjust to the loss of the active parenting role.



## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

This chapter provides information on the subjects in this study and how these participants were obtained. The procedures used for subjects to obtain the research material and information detailing the contents of the research packet are addressed. The instruments used in this study are reviewed including reports of reliability, validity, normative data, and scoring. Ethical considerations are addressed and the chapter concludes with a discussion of how the data were analyzed.

#### Subjects

This study included 66 subjects, 36 married-employed and 30 divorced-employed women at the postparental stage of life, born from 1930 to and including 1949. Four packets returned to the researcher were not included in this study; two had not completed one or more instrument, one was still involved with active parenting, and the other had no children. The women in this study viewed their careers as continuous and one of the important roles in their lives. The currently married subjects had been married from 3 to 39 years with a mean of 24.5 years married. This group ranged in age from 45 to 64 with a mean age of 51.3 years and a mode of 47 years. Salaries for this group ranged from under \$10,000 to above \$40,000

with 41% reporting earnings of \$20,000 to \$30,000. Seventeen percent reported making above \$40,000 and 14% stated making from \$30,000 to \$40,000. Ninety-seven percent of these women ranked their health as good to excellent. Thirty-three percent in this group reported having college degrees including 11% at the masters level and 5.5% at the doctoral level. Twenty-eight percent reported some college and 30.5% reported completing high school and/or specialized training. Eight percent in this group ranked "my job" as the most important aspect of their lives, 44.4% ranked "my job" second, and 36% ranked "my job" as third. Eleven percent of the women in this group did not respond to that question. Approximately 56% of the married women ranked their intimate relationship first in importance and 25% ranked significant others first. The mean number of children in this group was 2.1 with an average length of time in the work force of 24 years.

The divorced sample ranged in age from 45 to 61 years with a mean age of 52.4 years and a mode of 50 years. This group had been divorced from 2 to 27 years with a mean of 12 years divorced. Ninety-seven percent of this group ranked their health as good to excellent. This group's salaries ranged from \$10,000 to above \$40,000 with none reporting under \$10,000. Thirteen percent of this group reported incomes of above \$40,000, 20% stated making \$30,000 to \$40,000, 40% reported salaries between \$20,000 and \$30,000, and 26.6% received salaries of \$10,000 to \$20,000. Out of this group 40% had college degrees, 23.3% graduate degrees (none at the doctoral level), and 16.7% undergraduate degrees. Thirty-seven

percent reported some college training and 20% reported completing high school and/or specialized training. Fifty-three percent of these women placed significant others as the most important aspect of their lives. Seventeen percent said their job came first, 23.3% placed their job as second and 33.3% placed their job as third. This group's mean number of children was 2.03 and their average time spent in the work force was 20.5 years.

The individuals for this study were recruited by placing packets containing a letter of instruction, I-E Scale, Measures of Psychosocial Development, Job Descriptive Index, and the Demographic Data Form in six beauty shops from different geographic locations of a metropolitan area in a Southwestern state. These beauty shops became distribution points for the research packets. Each beauty shop participating in the study was given the same number of packets for married and divorced women. Beauty shops participating in the study also were given information sheets concerning the study's purpose (i. e., an investigation of job satisfaction in married-employed and divorced-employed postparental women) including time required to participate in the study (less than one hour). A woman meeting the requirements to participate in this study, which included paid employment outside the home, a parent no longer involved in active parenting, married for at least two years or divorced for at least two years, and volunteering to participate was given the research packet that could be completed at the beauty shop or at home.

### Instruments

Three instruments were used, the I-E Scale (Rotter et al., 1972), Job Descriptive Index (revised) (Balzer, & Smith, 1990), and Measures of Psychosocial Development (Hawley, 1988). The internal versus external control of reinforcement (I-E Scale) is a single scale score that focuses on the generalized expectancies for how reinforcement is controlled. The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) measures five scales related to different facets of job satisfaction as well as an overall score of job satisfaction. These six scales were used in this study. The Measures of Psychosocial Development (MPD) gives a score connected to each of Erikson's developmental stages as well as an overall psychosocial resolution score, and an indication of conflict resolution related to each stage. The Total Resolution Scale was used in this study. "Resolution scales tap the degree and direction of resolution existing between the two attitudes for each stage conflict. Total scales assess overall psychosocial adjustment" (Hawley, 1988, p. 2). The total scales include a Positive Total Scale, Negative Total Scale, and the difference between the two which is called the Total Resolution Scale. The Demographic Data Form (see Appendix A) gathered information concerning the subjects and their feelings and thoughts about work and the postparental stage of life.

Internal versus External Control  
of Reinforcement (I-E Scale)

The I-E Scale is a 29 item forced-choice self-report test including ". . . six filler items intended to make somewhat more ambiguous the purpose of the test" (Rotter et al., 1972, p. 273). According to Rotter ". . . the items deal exclusively with the subjects' belief about the nature of the world. That is, they are concerned with the subjects' expectations about how reinforcement is controlled. Consequently, the test is considered to be a measure of a generalized expectancy" (Rotter et al., 1972. p. 276).

Reliability. According to Anastasi (1988) I-E Scale reliability is reported using the split-half and Kuder-Richardson reliabilities of total scores which cluster around .70. After intervals of one to two months the retest reliabilities are also at .70, but will vary depending on the length of the interval, the way the test was administered, and the makeup of the group. The I-E Scale has low correlations with social desirability scores and interest tests (Anastasi, 1988); therefore, indicating that the I-E Scale is not measuring social desirability or interest. Rotter (1982) reports that the correlation with intelligence is low also.

Validity. The I-E Scale has a single general factor that accounts for most of the response variance indicated from factor analyses (Anastasi, 1988). However, later studies have indicated multifactorial structures which may include the difference in ". . . a belief in a difficult world, an unjust world, an

unpredictable world, and a politically unresponsive world", Collin's study (cited in Anastasi, 1988. p. 589).

Rotter et al. (1972) states that "discriminant validity is indicated by the low relationships with such variables as intelligence, social desirability, and political liberalness" (p. 293-294). Studies using the I-E Scale offer strong evidence of construct validity by successfully predicting differences in behavior for subjects above and below the median on the scale.

A series of studies provides strong support for the hypotheses that the individual who has a strong belief that he can control his own destiny is likely to (a) be more alert to those aspects of the environment which provide useful information for his future behavior; (b) take steps to improve his environmental condition; (c) place greater value on skill or achievement reinforcements and be generally more concerned with his ability, particularly his failures; and (d) be resistive to subtle attempts to influence him (Rotter et al. 1972, p. 294).

Normative Group. The I-E scale has been administered to a variety of populations including 605 females in the Ohio State sample. This sample was obtained over a two-year period with the test being given at different times during the year. The test, however, always was given in a group setting using psychology classes. Female scores on the I-E Scale compared to male subjects tend to show very little difference. This is especially true for samples in the Midwest. The mean score for the 605 females in this study was 8.42 with a standard deviation of 4.06 (Rotter et al., 1972).

Scoring. A score on the I-E Scale is determined by counting the total number (23 possible) of external choices for an

individual. The items are samples of attitudes in a variety of situations and are not arranged in any order of difficulty. Higher scores, (scores range from 0 to 23) indicate an external orientation with lower scores indicating more internal control.

#### The Job Descriptive Index (JDI)

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) (revised) (Balzer & Smith, 1990) was used to measure each woman's perception of job satisfaction on six scales: (a) work on present job, (b) present pay, (c) opportunity for promotion, (d) supervision, (e) people on your present job (coworkers), and (f) job in general. "Each facet is measured with either 9 or 18 adjectives that have been shown to differentiate between job conditions" (Williams, 1984, p. 728). Research conducted by Smith et al. (1969) shows job satisfaction includes two components, descriptive and evaluative. Therefore a combination of items about the work environment are included in the JDI, some only describe aspects of the job while other items allow value judgments.

Reliability. Split-half estimates of internal consistency are reported at an average corrected reliability estimate of .79 for the direct scales. Higher internal consistency reliabilities are reported for each scale: (a) work .84, (b) pay .80, (c) promotions .86, (d) supervision .87, and (e) coworkers .88 (Smith et al., 1969). The job in general scale showed with  $N > 100$ , coefficient alpha reliability estimates to exceed .90 (Balzer and Smith, 1990).

Validity. The evidence from the JDI research has consistently shown support for content validity. Good predictive validity has been shown for "job withdrawal" behaviors including absenteeism and turnover. Discriminant and convergent validity also have been reported for the JDI. "Regarding discriminant validity, it was expected that the JDI facets should distinguish satisfaction with pay from satisfaction with work and, in turn, distinguish these from satisfaction with other aspects of the job" (Balzer & Smith, 1990, p. 46). Studies over a period of five years revealed JDI measures possessed high levels of both discriminant and convergent validity (Balzer & Smith, 1990). Intense use by researchers in industrial-organizational psychology has shown overall high performance for the instrument for all forms of validity. This is indicative of the JDI having excellent construct validity (Kerr, 1985).

Normative Group. Data were available from the old and revised JDI items from 1737 workers coming from many occupations including pharmacists, retail managers, and employees of hospital administrators and staff. A transformation of the original JDI norms was undertaken to provide norms for the revised version of the JDI which was used for this study (Balzer & Smith, 1990, p. 49). Median scores for the norm group with 16 or more years of work experience were (a) present job, 40; (b) present pay, 34; (c) opportunities for promotion, 16; (d) supervision, 42; and (e) coworkers, 45 (Balzer & Smith, 1990, p. 137). Percentile norms also are available for these five scales. Norms for the Job in General scale are not yet available.



Scoring. The six scales are each on a separate page. The subject is asked to put Y beside any item that describes an aspect of his/her job, an N if the item does not describe an aspect of his/her job, and a ? if the subject can not decide. A response of yes to a positive item receives a weight of three. A no response to a negative item also receives a weight of three. A ? on any item receives a one. Any dissatisfied response is given a weight of zero, such as a yes response to a negative item. Each scale has a maximum score of 54. Two scales, present pay and opportunities for promotion, have only nine items giving a total of 27 possible. The total score on those two scales is doubled to give 54 as a maximum score. Other scales have 18 items and the score for each of these scales is computed by adding the points for each item.

### Measures of Psychosocial

#### Development (MPD)

Measures of Psychosocial Development (MPD) (Hawley, 1988) was created to study Erikson's theory of human development. Erikson's theory includes eight stages and the conflicts to be resolved at each stage. This 112-item instrument represents all eight stages and provides a measure of the positive and negative personality traits associated with each of the developmental stages. The instrument also reveals a measure evaluating the conflict resolution at each stage and a total resolution score to indicate psychosocial health. The Positive Scale for each stage represents a measure of the desirable outcome of that stage's conflict. The Negative Scale

is a measure representing the problematic outcome of that stage's conflict. The Resolution Scale is a measure of the difference between the Positive and Negative Scale. The results of administering the MPD is a measure that gives an indication of the critical nature of the conflict at each developmental stage as well as the measure of overall psychosocial health (Carmer, 1992) In this study the Total Resolution Scale was used as the measure of overall psychosocial health.

Reliability. The test-retest (from 2 to 13 week intervals) reliability coefficients for the individual scales are nearly .80 or above .80 reported from testing 108 adolescents and adults. The lowest scale coefficient is .67. Adequate alpha internal consistency coefficients are reported ranging from .65 to .84 reported from testing 372 adolescents and adults (Gable, 1992).

Validity. Content validity is supported from the literature as well as expert judgment. Instrument development decisions are presented and defended to add support to content validity. Empirical evidence is offered to show construct validity through multitrait-multimethod correlational studies using discriminant and convergent reasoning that is consistent with the expectations of the described theory (Gable, 1992).

Normative Group. Norms were developed for each scale along with total scores for both genders and four different age groups. Separate profiles are obtained for females and are reported in T-scores and percentiles. The norms were developed using 2,480

subjects from 13 to 86 years of age mostly white and single living in the South with more than 12 years of education (Gable, 1992). The mean for the 50+ female normative sample on the Total Resolution Scale is 114.76 with a standard deviation of 45.76.

Scoring. There are 112 self-descriptive statements on the MPD which are answered using a 5-point Likert Scale (Not at all like me to Very much like me). Separate profiles are obtained for males and females by hand scoring the instrument. Three scores are obtained for each stage: Positive, Negative, and Resolution Scale. The MPD takes from 15-20 minutes to complete and is self-administered (Carmer, 1992).

#### The Demographic Data Form

The Demographic Data Form (see Appendix A) is not a standardized measure but was developed by the researcher to gather information from the sample. This information sheet gave the subjects an opportunity to choose the most important aspect of their life, career or relationships. An opportunity also was given for the subjects to describe risks they would like to take and risks they would like to avoid. Subjects were asked to rate their present health as excellent, good, or poor.

#### Ethical Considerations

Female subjects were volunteers. They also were informed in writing that (a) they could withdraw from the study at any time, (b) responses would be kept confidential, and (c) results of the

study would be available to them. The Institutional Review Board at Oklahoma State University acknowledged that subjects participating in this study were not at risk (see Appendix C).

#### Procedure

Six beauty shops were recruited by the researcher from different geographic and socioeconomic locations in a Southwestern metropolitan area of the United States as distribution points for this study. Packets were distributed to the shops who agreed to participate in the study by early July, 1994. A time frame of three months was used to collect data. Data collection ended in early October, 1994. At this time three beauty shops were still active participants in the study. Two beauty shops were active for approximately two months and one beauty shop dropped out early due to very few of her clientele participating in the study. Each beauty shop received the same number of packets for married and divorced women with the larger shops receiving a greater number of packets (e.g., small shops five each, large shops ten each). The instruments were counterbalanced and women were instructed to complete the instruments in the order they were placed in the packet. This was to eliminate the possible influence that one instrument might have on another. By counterbalancing, potential carryover did not confound the treatment effects explored in this study.

A packet of research material containing (a) letter of instruction from the researcher (see Appendix B), (b) the three

counterbalanced instruments (JDI, MPD, and I-E Scale), and (c) Demographic Data Form was given to each subject. Subjects completed the materials privately at the shop or at home. Completed materials were left at the beauty shops in individual envelopes with a designated person, usually the owner of the shop, and were picked up by the researcher each week. Stamps also were left at each beauty shop so subjects could mail the completed packet to the researcher. Early in the collection of data it became apparent that most women preferred the privacy of their own home to complete the instruments and wanted to mail the packets directly to the researcher. At this point stamps were placed on all remaining packets. Beauty shops who participated in this study received a summary with the results of the study. Two women who participated in the study wrote the researcher expressing interest in the study and requesting a summary of the results.

#### Statistical Analysis

This study was designed to answer the following questions:

(a) Can marital status, locus of control, and psychosocial health account for variance in job satisfaction with women at the postparental stage of development; and (b) is there a difference between the two groups (married, divorced) on measures of locus of control, psychosocial health, and job satisfaction? The three independent variables used in this study to account for variance in job satisfaction for women after the active parenting years were marital status (married, divorced), locus of control (measured by

the I-E Scale), and psychosocial health (measured by the MPD). Multiple regression analyses were used to assess the contribution of each of these three independent variables on six scales of job satisfaction as measured by the JDI (a) present job, (b) present pay, (c) opportunity for promotion, (d) supervision, (e) coworkers, and (f) job in general. The Job in General Scale was used to assess overall job satisfaction. Examination of the data revealed that psychosocial health measured by the MPD was the only statistically significant contributor in accounting for variance in job satisfaction for this population on three JDI scales. Those three JDI scales were present job, present pay, and job in general. There were no significant joint associations between marital status and locus of control nor marital status and psychosocial health; therefore, no further analyses were indicated. The data were analyzed using the Mynstat Statistical Applications Macintosh Edition (Hale, 1992). The implications of this study (use by counselors for this population) justify the confidence level being placed at .05.

Independent t tests were calculated to determine if the two groups (married, divorced) differed on measures of locus of control measured by the I-E Scale, psychosocial health measured by the Total Resolution Scale on the MPD and overall job satisfaction measured by the Job in General Scale on the JDI. No statistically significant differences were found between the two groups (married, divorced) on any of the three measures.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

This chapter details the results of this study. The study was designed to explain variance in job satisfaction for two groups of women (married, divorced) after the years of active parenting. Examining the correlation matrix of the variables revealed no values above .30. Therefore, the I-E Scale and the Measures of Psychosocial Development appeared to be measuring different constructs, in that the measurement overlap is less than 10%.

Table 1 reports the ranges, means and standard deviations for the three instruments used in this study: (a) Job Descriptive Index, (b) I-E Scale, and (c) Measures of Psychosocial Development.

Table 1

Ranges, Means, and Standard Deviations of JDI (Job in General), I-E Scale, and MPD (Total Resolution Scale)

	<u>JDI</u>	<u>I-E Scale</u>	<u>MPD</u>
N of cases	65	66	66
Range	45	19	214
Mean	44.55	9.38	113.91
SD	9.72	3.38	48.71

### Major Hypothesis

The major hypothesis postulated that variance in job satisfaction of postparental women would be accounted for by marital status, locus of control and psychosocial health.

Six separate multiple regression analysis were performed. Five used a different facet of job satisfaction from the JDI for the dependent variable and one used the Job in General (JIG) scale from the JDI as the dependent variable. Only one independent variable, psychosocial health, measured by the Total Resolution Scale of the MPD was statistically significant in accounting for variance related to two facets of job satisfaction: present job { $F(1,63) = 7.909$ ,  $p = .007$ } and present pay { $F(1,63) = 8.993$ ,  $p = .004$ }.

Psychosocial health also was statistically significant in explaining variance related to overall job satisfaction (JIG) { $F(1,63) = 7.326$ ,  $p = .009$ }. The two independent variables, marital status and locus of control, were not statistically significant in accounting for variance in any of the five dependent variables related to different facets of job satisfaction: (a) present job, (b) present pay, (c) opportunities for promotion, (d) supervision, and (e) coworkers. Marital status and locus of control also were not statistically significant in accounting for variance in overall job satisfaction measured by the JIG scale. Psychosocial health was not statistically significant in accounting for variance related to three facets of job satisfaction: (a) supervision, (b) coworkers, and (c) opportunities for promotion. Therefore, the full model was



reduced by using the  $t$  ratios to eliminate the nonsignificant independent variables (Pedhazur, 1982, p. 126-128). Tables 2, 3, and 4 provide a summary table for each of these regression analysis.

Results indicated that psychosocial health accounted for 11.2% of the variance in job satisfaction with present job, 12.5% of the variance in job satisfaction with present pay, and 10.4% of the variance in overall job satisfaction (job in general).

Table 2

Regression Analysis Summary Table - Present Job

Variable	Coefficient	Std Error	Std Coef	Tolerance	t**	p
CONSTANT	31.198	2.993	0.000		10.422	0.000
MPD	0.068	0.024	0.334	.100E+01	2.812*	0.007
* $p < .05$		** 2 tail				
Multiple R: .334		Squared Multiple R: .112				

Analysis of Variance

Source	SS	DF	MS	F-Ratio	p
Regression	681.048	1	681.048	7.909*	0.007
Residual	5424.890	63	86.109		

\* $p < .05$

1 case deleted due to missing data.

Table 3

Regression Analysis Summary Table - Present Pay

Variable	Coefficient	Std Error	Std Coef	Tolerance	t**	p
CONSTANT	12.668	5.592	0.000		2.266	0.027
MPD	0.135	0.045	0.353	.100E+01	2.999*	0.004
* p < .05		** 2 tail				
Multiple R: .353		Squared Multiple R: .125				

## Analysis of Variance

Source	SS	DF	MS	F-Ratio	p
Regression	2813.807	1	2813.807	8.993*	0.004
Residual	19711.639	63	312.883		

\*p &lt; .05

1 case deleted due to missing data.

Table 4

Regression Analysis Summary Table - Job in General

Variable	Coefficient	Std Error	Std Coef	Tolerance	t**	p
CONSTANT	37.259	2.930	0.000		12.716	0.000
MPD	0.064	0.024	0.323	.100+01	2.707*	0.009
* p < .05		** 2 tail				
Multiple R: .323		Squared Multiple R: .104				

## Analysis of Variance

Source	SS	DF	Mean-Square	F-Ratio	p
Regression	629.410	1	629.410	7.326*	0.009
Residual	5412.652	63	85.915		

\*p &lt; .05

1 case deleted due to missing data.

## Secondary Hypothesis One

The study's secondary hypothesis one was that women, after the active parenting years, regardless of marital status would not be different on higher generalized expectancies for internal locus of control. The mean score on the I-E Scale for married women was 9.72 with a standard deviation of 4.19 and for the divorced sample the

mean was 8.97 with a standard deviation of 3.12. The difference between the two means (married, divorced) was .75. Using the  $t$  test for independent samples the difference between these two means was not statistically significant,  $t = 0.805$ ;  $\{t(.05), df = 60, is 2.000\}$ ; therefore  $p > .05$  and this null hypothesis was not rejected.

#### Secondary Hypothesis Two

The study's secondary hypothesis two stated that women, regardless of marital status, at the postparental stage would not be different in overall psychosocial health. The married sample had a mean score of 111.22 with a standard deviation of 52.90, and the divorced sample had a mean score of 117.13 with a standard deviation of 43.84 on the Total Resolution Scale of the MPD. Hawley (1988) reports a mean score of 114.76 for women 50+ with a standard deviation of 45.76. In this study the married sample was under the mean by 3.56 points and the divorced sample was above the mean by 2.37 points. Combined the married and divorced sample's mean score was 113.91. The difference in means of the two samples (married, divorced) was 5.91. Using the  $t$  test for independent samples,  $t = 0.485$ ;  $\{t(.05), df = 60 is 2.000\}$ ; therefore  $p > 0.05$  and the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 5 compares the married and divorced sample using the resolution scores for each of Erikson's developmental tasks. Divorced women scored higher in autonomy and initiative by more than two points. All other developmental tasks showed a difference of 1.31 or less. Using the  $t$  test for independent samples the

difference between means (married, divorced) on the developmental task of autonomy was statistically significant,  $t = 2.36$ ;  $\{t(.05), df 60 = 2.000\}$ . No other scales were statistically significant.

Table 5

MPD Resolution Scales' Mean Scores and Standard Deviations  
Reported by Marital Status

Variables	Trust		Autonomy		Initiative		Industry	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Married	15.00	8.59	10.92	8.13	8.56	8.48	18.19	7.54
Divorced	15.00	6.51	15.13	5.84	10.80	7.42	18.97	6.68
Difference	0.0		4.21*		2.24		.78	

\* $p < .05$

Variables	Identity		Intimacy		Generativity		Integrity	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Married	14.05	9.95	12.60	9.30	13.56	8.27	15.36	11.35
Divorced	14.16	7.09	13.37	6.45	14.87	6.48	14.90	6.13
Difference	0.11		0.77		1.31		0.46	

### Secondary Hypothesis Three

Secondary hypothesis three stated that job satisfaction would be unrelated to marital status. The married sample had a mean score of 44.50 with a standard deviation of 10.21, and the divorced sample had a mean score of 44.62 with a standard deviation of 9.24 on the JIG scale of the JDI. The difference in means on overall job satisfaction (job in general) of married and divorced women was 0.12. Using the t test for independent samples,  $t = 0.049$ ;  $\{t(.05), df = 60 \text{ is } 2.000\}$ ; therefore,  $p > .05$  and the null hypothesis was not rejected.

However, with this sample of women, divorced women tend to be better satisfied with their present jobs, have jobs with greater opportunities for promotion, rank their supervisors higher and enjoy their coworkers more than the married sample. Table 6 reports the means, standard deviations, and the difference between means for each of the five facets of job satisfaction and the overall job satisfaction scale by marital status.

Compared to the norm group of women on five facets of job satisfaction this sample of women was at the 53rd percentile on present job, 45th percentile on present pay, 62nd percentile on opportunities for promotion, 48th percentile on supervision, and 40th percentile on coworkers.

Table 6

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for JDI Scales Reported by Marital Status

Variables	Present Job		Present Pay		Opportunities for Promotion	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Married	37.77	10.04	28.71	13.75	15.00	14.68
Divorced	40.37	9.18	28.53	18.89	19.00	16.61
Difference	2.60		0.18		4.0	

Variables	Supervision		Coworkers		Job in General	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Married	40.17	14.31	39.90	16.42	44.50	10.21
Divorced	42.40	9.65	44.17	11.43	44.60	9.24
Difference	2.23		4.27		0.10	

#### Summary

The statistical analyses for this study were presented in this chapter including the results of those analyses. Results showed that psychosocial health measured by the Total Resolution Scale of the MPD was statistically significant in accounting for variance related to job satisfaction in women who are no longer involved in active parenting. Psychosocial health accounted for variance in two facets related to job satisfaction (present job and present pay) and also accounted for variance in overall job satisfaction (JIG scale).

The other two independent variables, marital status and locus of control were not statistically significant in accounting for variance on any facet of job satisfaction or overall job satisfaction with this population. Joint associations of marital status with locus of control and marital status with psychosocial health also were not statistically significant.

Using independent t tests, no statistically significant differences were found between the following pairs of means: (a) women (married, divorced) on a measure (I-E Scale) of locus of control, (b) women (married, divorced) on a measure (MPD) of psychosocial health, and (c) women (married, divorced) on a measure (JDI) of overall job satisfaction.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine two life patterns of women, married-employed and divorced-employed, after the completion of the active parenting years to determine if variance in job satisfaction could be accounted for by marital status, locus of control and psychosocial health. Another purpose of this study was to determine if there was a difference between the two groups (married, divorced) on measures of locus of control, job satisfaction and psychosocial health. Raup and Myers (1989) study stated that the higher divorce rate for women age 41-60 during the years 1960 to 1999 might affect the way this cohort of women experience the postparental stage of life. The two groups, (married, divorced) may have a different transition experience.

Sixty-six employed women, 36 married and 30 divorced, participated in this study. Subjects were born from 1930 through 1949, ages ranged from 45 to 64, and all were involved in paid employment outside the home. Adelman et al. (1989) research predicted that those women who were young adults during the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s and are now in midlife would have a positive postparental experience because of uninterrupted labor

force participation that could result in better job conditions and higher wages. The group of women in this study were in young adulthood during the 1960s and 1970s. The mean number of years in the work force for the married group was 24.5 years ( $N=34$ ), and the mean for the divorced group was 20.5 years ( $N=30$ ). Three instruments were used, the I-E Scale, Job Descriptive Index, and Measures of Psychosocial Development each self-administered individually at home or in beauty shops. Instruments were counterbalanced to prevent undue influence of one instrument over another. All women who participated in this study lived in the Southwestern part of the United States. Limitations of the study include: (a) generalizability of the findings is limited to employed women (married, divorced) at the postparental stage of development, (b) findings are generalized with caution to women in other cohort groups, women living in other sections of the United States, or women living in other countries.

To investigate the main hypothesis, six multiple regressions were used. These analyses examined three independent variables: (a) marital status, (b) locus of control, and (c) psychosocial health to determine if variance in each of five facets of job satisfaction (present job, present pay, opportunities for promotion, supervision, and coworkers) could be accounted for by these three independent variables. The sixth analysis examined the same three independent variables to determine if variance in overall job satisfaction, JIG scale, could be accounted for by these independent variables. Only one independent variable, psychosocial health,

measured by the MPD's Total Resolution Scale was statistically significant in accounting for variance connected to two facets of job satisfaction measured by the JDI, present job and present pay. Psychosocial health also was statistically significant in accounting for variance in overall job satisfaction, JIG scale on the JDI. No other independent variable nor joint associations were statistically significant in accounting for variance in job satisfaction.

To investigate the three secondary hypotheses independent  $t$  tests were used to determine if differences in pairs of means (married, divorced) were statistically significant on the I-E Scale, Job in General Scale (JDI), and Total Resolution Scale (MPD). None of the differences in means were found to be statistically significant.

### Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn based on the results of this study.

1. The results of the first multiple regression analysis indicated that the Total Resolution Scale of the MPD was the only statistically significant independent variable to account for variance in present job satisfaction measured by the JDI. Marital status was not statistically significant either as a main effect or a joint association with MPD or the I-E Scale. Therefore, neither marital status nor the way women perceived outcomes in their environment (locus of control) appeared to influence the way they viewed present job satisfaction. Yet, the way these women seem to

have resolved the developmental tasks of trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, intimacy, generativity, and integrity based on Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, appeared to account for variance in present job satisfaction.

2. The results of the second multiple regression analysis indicated that the Total Resolution Scale of the MPD was the only statistically significant independent variable in accounting for variance in present pay satisfaction measured by the JDI. Again marital status was not significant either as a main effect or a joint association with MPD or I-E Scale. Thus, neither marital status nor locus of control seemed to influence the way postparental women viewed present pay satisfaction. Yet, it seems that the way women resolved the developmental tasks may account for some of the variance in present pay satisfaction.

3. The results of the third, fourth, and fifth multiple regression analyses indicated that none of the independent variables (locus of control, marital status, psychosocial health) nor the joint associations of marital status with locus of control and psychosocial health were statistically significant in explaining variance for three facets of job satisfaction (a) opportunities for promotion, (b) supervision, and (c) coworkers.

4. The results of the sixth multiple regression analysis indicated that the Total Resolution Scale of the MPD was the only statistically significant independent variable in accounting for variance in overall job satisfaction (job in general scale on JDI). Again marital status was not statistically significant either as a

main effect or a joint association with psychosocial health or locus of control. Therefore, neither marital status nor locus of control seemed to influence the way women who have completed the active years of parenting viewed overall job satisfaction. Yet, resolution of the developmental tasks possibly explains some of the variance in overall job satisfaction.

The only statistically significant independent variable to account for variance in job satisfaction was psychosocial health measured by the Total Resolution Scale of the MPD. Okun (1984) states many factors influence women at the postparental stage, career satisfaction being but one aspect; yet, Okun concludes career satisfaction may be difficult to define for this group but important to do so.

Comparing this group of working women to the normative sample age 50+ of women on the MPD, the women in this study scored higher in autonomy, initiative, industry, and identity. They had lower scores in generativity and integrity. When comparing the working women in this study to the normative sample of same age group men on the MPD, the two are nearly identical in trust, initiative, and identity. This sample of working women scored higher on autonomy, industry, and intimacy and scored lower on generativity and integrity than did the normative sample of same age group men.

This sample of divorced women had higher resolution scores on tasks of autonomy, initiative, industry and generativity than the married sample, with the difference in means (married, divorced) for autonomy being statistically significant. Other resolution scores

were the same for the two groups (married, divorced) or the difference was less than one point. This is consistent with the Baruch et al. (1983) study that found divorced women high in mastery skills.

According to Rotter (1975) the locus of control ". . . concept deals with situational parameters and individual differences" (p. 265). Most research with locus of control has looked at individual differences. This study looked at job satisfaction in two groups of women to see if there were group differences. Locus of control is better in detecting group differences when the situation is more novel or ambiguous. As an individual gains experience in a situation the generalized expectancy decreases (Rotter, 1975). This study included women whose mean years in the work force was over 20 years; therefore, these women had experience in the job market. This may account for locus of control not being statistically significant in explaining job satisfaction for this sample.

Another factor is the designation given to some externals as "defensive externals." These individuals express external preferences on measures of locus of control as a defense or rationalization in case of failure; yet, in competitive situations are internal (Rotter, 1975). The job market would qualify as a competitive situation.

A comparable age group was not found for the I-E Scale. Reported research has been with younger high school and college age

women. Mean scores for college women range from a low of 7.75 to a high of 9.62 (Rotter, 1982). The divorced sample with a mean of 8.97 had a slightly lower (0.76) mean score than did the married sample with a mean of 9.72; however, the difference was not statistically significant.

5. Using independent  $t$  tests no statistically significant differences were found between the two groups (married, divorced) on the I-E Scale, Total Resolution Scale of the MPD, and the overall job satisfaction scale (jobs in general) of the JDI.

Information gathered from the Demographic Data Form indicated postparental employed women, regardless of marital status, have more similarities than differences. Their jobs usually were ranked second in importance for both groups with first consideration given to important relationships. Both groups ranked their health as excellent to good. Only two out of sixty-five women ranked their health as poor. This indicates the same positive relationship between employment and health that many studies have found regarding postparental women.

Both groups indicated the difficult aspects of children leaving home included loneliness, having to look at who they were, aging process, and concerns for their grown children. This is consistent with Erikson et al. (1986) research that adult men and women, no longer in the active parenting role, have concern for their children as a dominate theme. Many women reported having the children leave home was not difficult. It gave them time to develop other interests and become aware of who they were in a new way.

Jung's theory, that at midlife people turn inward and examine their lives, was a consistent theme with the answers given by women in this study.

Sixty-seven percent of the divorced women stated that accomplishments were the most important aspect of their job, and 22% of the married women mentioned accomplishments as an important part of work. The Baruch et al. (1983) study found that divorced women received a sense of mastery from their occupation. Many of the women, both married and divorced, saw the most important part of work as helping others which is consistent with Erikson's task of generativity for the postparental stage.

Boyce (1988) thinks identity changes at midlife because of the loss of roles. Women at this stage find out who they are in a new way. Many women in this study wrote about change. They talked about a new maturity, everything being "together," liking the person they've become, looking forward to new roles (i.e. grandparenting), accomplishments, more money, contentment, challenges, and freedom to start "new careers." Others wrote about the loss of youthful looks being difficult.

Another common theme was the balancing act of job, aging parents, and family. This was addressed on a positive note. One woman summed it up by writing, "I'm pleased with my life and children." Another stated, "I wish it (this stage of life) would last forever-happy." One woman wrote, "I am fairly content with things as they are. Feel I am still in a constant stage of learning



and growing." Another woman wrote, "It is sad so much emphasis is on a person's age and not their abilities."

Women in this study named the risks they would still like to take. Some of those risks included creative writing, new career, changing jobs, intimate relationship, remarriage, fall in love again, start a business, move to a new city, and buy a new home. Women also wrote about risks they would like to avoid. Those risks usually fell under three categories: (a) financial loss, (b) illness, and (c) unhealthy relationships (either outside or within the family).

The relationship theme was apparent in both divorced and married women. With the married group it was to enhance the existing marriage, and for the divorced group it involved risking another marriage/relationship. Thirty-three percent of the divorced sample wrote that they would like to risk remarriage. Both groups mentioned changing relationships with grown children. These findings are consistent with Neugarten (1968), Sheehy (1992), Levinson (1990), Cooper and Gutmann (1987), and Helson and Wink (1992).

#### Recommendations for Research

Based on this study the following recommendations are made for future research.

1. Research in the future could consider including other life patterns of midlife women (e.g. single women, widowed women) to further explore job satisfaction.

2. Future research could consider other variables to explain job satisfaction in midlife women to gain a clearer picture of what might influence this area. Other variables might include level of education or training, age, and recreational activities.

3. Future research could consider using a sample of working midlife men to compare with working midlife women on possible differences/similarities in job satisfaction. Erikson's psychosocial stages could be explored using the MPD to further study any developmental differences between the sexes.

4. Research in the future could clarify any differences between working women still in the active parenting role with postparental women on measures of job satisfaction and the MPD.

5. Research in the future needs to consider the influence of psychosocial health in other areas of women's lives (i.e. relationships). Women seem to consider work and relationships as the two important arenas in life. Since psychosocial health appeared to account for some of the variance in job satisfaction, it also might be an important aspect of healthy relationships.

#### Recommendations for Counselors

Postparental women seem to have two important arenas in life, the arena of work and the arena of relationships. Both appear to be important in the lives of women, and they desire to maintain a healthy balance between the two. At midlife working women no longer involved with active parenting, seem to have more time to devote to the arena of work. As a result of this study the following

recommendations are made for counselors who work with postparental women.

1. Only one statistically significant difference was found between the two groups (married, divorced). The divorced sample scored higher on the developmental task of autonomy than did the married sample. The divorced sample seemed to value independence and their ability to handle tough situations. Being aware of this possible difference may be helpful in understanding the world view of these clients.

2. Counselors who work with this population of women may find the MPD a useful tool since psychosocial health appeared to play a role in job satisfaction, and job satisfaction seems to be a contributing factor to well-being in this population. By using the MPD, a counselor is able to determine how a woman sees herself in relation to Erikson's eight developmental tasks. This can give direction to the counseling sessions and create opportunities for insight by the client as she works through unresolved developmental tasks.

3. The profile of the working postparental woman from this study should provide useful information for the counselor. These women scored highest on the developmental task of industry versus inferiority. Characteristics of high scorers on industry include

. . . active orientation toward learning, competence, and production. High scorers relish achievement in their work, skills, and abilities, which is in itself a source of pleasure and recognition. They like to tackle tough jobs and see them to completion. They demonstrate an eager absorption in the productive situation and a determined striving towards the

completion of things. High scorers consistently attempt to be useful and to do useful things (Hawley, 1988, p. 9).

This gives the counselor an indication of the importance of industry to these women, and hopefully a better understanding of women at the postparental stage. One woman in this study wrote, "I'm here and it's great." When it is not great for a woman who fits the profile of the women in this study, consideration may need to be given to the task of industry. Exploring this avenue should offer opportunities for counselors to incorporate career counseling.

This population of women will continue to increase and as their numbers continue to grow the need for a better understanding of their concerns will exist--because this is the stage before old age. Successful transition of this stage may influence the development of integrity rather than despair in the elderly.

## REFERENCES

- Adelmann, P. K., Antonucci, T. C., Crohan, S. E., & Coleman, L. M. (1989). Empty nest, cohort, and employment in the well-being of midlife women. Sex Roles, 20, 173-189.
- Anastasi, A. (1988). Psychological testing (6th ed.). New York, NY: Mcmillan.
- Balzer, W. K. & Smith, P. C. (1990). User's manual job descriptive index (JDI) job in general (JIG) scales. Bowling Green, IN: Bowling Green State University.
- Bart, P. (1980). Loneliness of the long-distance mother. In J. Hartog, R. J. Audy, & Y. A. Cohen (Eds.). The anatomy of loneliness (pp. 204-219). New York, NY: International Universities.
- Baruch, G., Barnett, R. & Rivers, C. (1983). Lifeprints: New patterns of love and work for today's women. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Boyce, M. E. (1988). Female psychosocial development: A model and implications for counselors and educators. In R. Hayes & R. Aubrey (Eds.), New directions for counseling and human development (pp. 45-65). Denver, CO: Love.
- Carmer, J. C. (1992). Review of the measures of psychosocial development. In J. J. Kramer & J. C. Conoley (Eds.). The eleventh mental measurements yearbook (pp. 520-521). Lincoln, NE: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.
- Coles, R. (1970). Erik H. Erikson: The growth of his work. Boston, MA: Little Brown & Company.
- Coombs, R. H. (1991). Marital status and personal well-being: a literature review. Family Relations, 40, 97-102.
- Cooper, K. L., & Gutmann, D. L. (1987). Gender identity and ego mastery style in middle-aged, pre-and post empty nest women. The Gerontologist, 27, 346-352.
- Crain, W. C. (1985). Theories of development concepts and applications (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice- Hall.
- Enns, C. Z. (1991). The new relationship models of women's identity: A review and critique for counselors. Journal of Counseling and Development, 69, 209-217.

- Erikson, E. H. (1964). Insight and responsibility. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Erikson, E. H. (1982). The life cycle completed: A review. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Erikson, E. H., Erikson, J., & Kionick, H. Q. (1986). Vital involvement in old age. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Formanek, R. (1988). Menopause myth and reality. In J. O. Zuckerberg (Ed.), Critical psychophysical passages in the life of a woman (pp. 199-275). New York, NY: Plenum.
- Friedan, B. (1993). The fountain of age. New York, NY: Simon & Shuster.
- Friedrich, J. (1988). The influence of locus of control on students' aspirations, expectations, and information preferences for summer work. Journal of College Student Development, 29, 335-339.
- Gable, R. K. (1992). The review of the measures of psychosocial development. In J. J. Kramer & J. C. Conoley (Eds.). The eleventh mental measurements yearbook (pp. 521-522). Lincoln, NE: The Buros Institute of Mental Measurement.
- Govaerts K. & Dixon, D. N. (1988). . . . until careers do us part: Vocational and marital satisfaction in the dual-career commuter marriage. International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 11, 265-281.
- Hale, R. H. (1992). Mystat statistical applications (Macintosh ed.). Cambridge, MA: Course Technology.
- Hamachek, D. (1990). Evaluating self-concept and ego status in Erikson's last three psychosocial stages. Journal of Counseling and Development, 68, 677-683.
- Hawley, G. A. (1988). Measures of psychosocial development (rev. ed.). Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.
- Helson, R. & Wink, P. (1992). Personality change in women from the early 40s to the early 50s. Psychology and Aging, 1, 46-55.
- Jacobi, J. (1943). The psychology of Jung. New Haven, CT: Yale University.
- Jung, C. G. (1928). Contributions to analytical psychology. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & Company.

- Kaufert, P. A. & Gilbert, P. (1986). The context of menopause: psychotropic drug use and menopausal status. Social Science in Medicine, 23, 747-755.
- Kerr, B. A. (1985). Review of the job descriptive index. In J. V. Mitchell, Jr. (Ed.). The ninth mental measurements yearbook (pp. 754-755). Lincoln, NE: The Buros Institute of Mental Measurement.
- Kuhlen, R. G. (1968). Developmental changes in motivation during the adult years. In B. Neugarten (Ed.), Middle age and aging a reader in social psychology (pp. 115-136). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Levinson, D. J. (1990). A theory of life structure development in adulthood. In C. N. Alexander & E. J. Langer (Eds.), Higher stages of human development (pp. 35-53). Oxford: V Press.
- Maddy, J. E. (1985, April). Midlife women: The need to nurture self. Paper presented at the annual convention of the American Association for Counseling and Development, New York, NY.
- McLaughlin, S. D., Melber, B. D., Billy, J. O., Zimmerle, D. M., Wings, L. D. & Johnson, T. R. (1988). The changing lives of American women. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina.
- Mendall, D. (1988). A study of menopausal women in analytic treatment. In J. O. Zuckerberg (Ed.), Critical psychophysical passages in the life of a woman. New York, NY: Plenum.
- Miller, J. B. (1986). Toward a new psychology of women (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Beacon.
- Moen, P. (1991). Transitions in mid-life: Women's work and family role in the 1970s. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 53, 135-150.
- Neugarten, B. L. (1967, December). A new look at menopause. Psychology Today, 43-45, 67-69.
- Neugarten B. L. (1968). Adult personality: Toward a psychology of the life cycle. In B. Neugarten (Ed.), Middle age and aging a reader in social psychology (pp. 93-147). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Okun, B. F. (1984). Working with adults: individual family, and career development. Monterey, CA: Brook/Cole.

- Oliver, R. (1988). "Empty nest" or relationship restructuring? A rational-emotive approach to a mid-life transition. Journal of Rational Emotive and Cognitive Behavior Therapy, 6, 102-117.
- Pedhazur, E. J. (1982). Multiple regression in behavioral research (2nd ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College.
- Ponzetti, J. J., & Cate, R. M., (1988). The relationship of personal attributes and friendship variables in predicting loneliness. Journal of College Student Development, 29, 292-297.
- Potuchek, J. L. (1992). Employed wives' orientations to breadwinning: A gender theory analysis. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 54, 548-558.
- Raup, J. L. & Myers, J. E. (1989). The empty nest syndrome: myth or reality. Journal of Counseling & Development, 68, 180-183.
- Read, N. O., Elliott, M. R., Escobar, M. D., & Slaney, R. B. (1988). The effects of marital status and motherhood on the career concerns of reentry women. Career Development Quarterly, 37, 46-55.
- Rogers, D. (1979). The adult years an introduction to aging. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Rotter, J. B. (1971). Clinical psychology (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Rotter, J. B. (1982). The development and applications of social learning theory selected papers. New York, NY: Praeger.
- Rotter, J. B., Chance, J. E., & Phares, J. E. (1972). Application of a social learning theory of personality. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Ryley, H., Dinkmeyer, D., Frierson, E., Glenn, D. H., Shaw, D. (1985). You've got to be kid-ding! A look at adolescents. Boulder, CO: American Training Center.
- Samuel, D. T. (1976). Love, liberation, and marriage (pp. 186-196). New York, NY: Funk & Wagnalls.
- Sheehy, G. (1992). The silent passage menopause. New York, NY: Random House.
- Smith, P. C., Kendall, L. M., & Hulin, C. L. (1969). The measurement of satisfaction in work and retirement: A strategy for the study of attitudes. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.



- Viorst, J. (1986). Necessary losses. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Wells, R. V. (1985). Uncle sam's family issues in and perspectives on American demographic history. Albany, NY: State University of New York.
- Williams, J. E. (1984). A sample methodology for site-specific instrument selection. Evaluation Review, 8, 726-733.
- Wright, E. J. (1982). Erikson: Identity & religion. New York, NY: Seabury.

**APPENDIXES**

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FORM

Year of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Currently Married \_\_\_\_\_ Currently Divorced \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years married \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years divorced \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children \_\_\_\_\_ Number currently living at home \_\_\_\_\_

How do you rate your general state of well-being?

Poor \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_\_

Your occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time employed in this occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time in work force \_\_\_\_\_

What has been your educational experience (include specialized training)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Approximate salary

Under \$10,000 _____	\$10,001-\$20,000 _____
\$20,001-\$30,000 _____	\$30,001-\$40,000 _____
above \$40,000 _____	

The most important aspect of my job now is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The most important part of my life today is (rank order 1-3)

my job _____	significant others _____
my intimate relationship _____	other _____

The best part of being employed is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The most difficult part of being employed is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The most difficult aspect of my children leaving home was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The decade of my life that has meant the most to me was

20s \_\_\_ 30s \_\_\_ 40s \_\_\_ 50s \_\_\_

The reason that period was best for me is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are your feelings about this stage of your life? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What concerns do you have for the future? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you involved in any care giving roles at the present (i.e. aging parents)? \_\_\_\_\_

If not is this something you anticipate doing in the future?

\_\_\_\_\_

What risks would you like to take? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What risks would you like to avoid? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B**

**LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS**

Thank you for considering to participate in this study of job satisfaction with paid employment in married and divorced women who have completed the major task of parenting. I am currently working on my dissertation for a Doctoral Degree from Oklahoma State University. My study involves volunteer participants responding to three instruments and a questionnaire. These instruments look at certain aspects of jobs, the way life is viewed, and the way different social tasks are approached. This study has been approved by Dr. Judith Dobson, Oklahoma State University, Department of Applied Behavioral Studies in Education. Without your help this study would not be possible.

Participation in this study is voluntary. At any time you may decide to withdraw from the study. If you choose to participate ALL items of your questionnaire and the three instruments must be completed. Although the questionnaire requires demographic information about you, no attempt will be made to identify individual respondents. I hope you have decided to participate in this study. If so this list is provided to help you make it through the materials.

1. Please complete the instruments in the arranged order. If you are interrupted while completing the material, just start again. We are hopeful that you will be able to complete the set of material.

2. The Environmental Preference Scale has 29 items in which you will be able to choose the response that best describes how you feel about certain events in our society. It takes about 5-10 minutes to complete.

3. The Job Descriptive Index has 6 scales concerning your attitude toward your job/career. It takes about 5-10 minutes to complete.

4. The Measures of Psychosocial Development has 112 items where you rate how accurately the statement describes you. This instrument takes about 15-20 minutes to complete.

5. The Demographic Data Form is a way for you to introduce yourself. Some questions ask for specific information related to the study. However, most questions give you an opportunity to share some of your opinions, being aware that you are doing this anonymously, about this stage of life after the children have left home. No time limit on this task. If you need more space use the back of the pages.

6. You have now completed your part of the study. Thank you for participating. Your part in helping us know more about this stage of life for women is greatly appreciated. Once the study is complete, information sheets concerning the results of the study will be left at the beauty shops for those of you who are interested.

7. Before you put all your work in the return envelope make one last check to see if the materials are all completed.

8. Thanks again. Now place all materials in the envelope. It will be picked up from the beauty shop.

Remember if you have any questions concerning your participation in the study, or about the study itself, or think of something else you would like to say, you may call Annetta C. Wilson at 918-357-1391 or Judith E. Dobson, Ph. D. by calling 405-744-6036. You may also write to Annetta C. Wilson at 23110 East 67th Street, Broken Arrow, OK, 74014.



APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 05-04-94

IRB#: ED-94-100

Proposal Title: JOB SATISFACTION WITH PAID EMPLOYMENT FOR MARRIED  
AND DIVORCED POSTPARENTAL WOMEN

Principal Investigator(s): Judith E. Dobson, Annetta C. Wilson

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

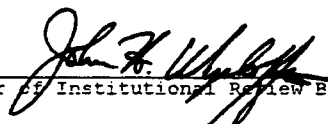
Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT  
MEETING.  
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR  
RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.  
ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

---

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for  
Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:

  
Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: May 17, 1994

VITA 

Annetta C. Wilson

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

**Thesis:** WOMEN AT THE POSTPARENTAL STAGE: JOB SATISFACTION AND  
MARITAL STATUS

**Major Field:** Applied Behavioral Studies

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born in Jonesboro, Arkansas, June 28, 1940, the daughter of Tom and Byrl Craig.

**Education:** Graduated from Conway High School, Conway, Arkansas in May 1958; received Bachelor of Science in Education degree from University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas in May 1961; received Master of Education degree from Northeastern Oklahoma State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma in May 1989; Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May 1995.

**Professional Experience:** Junior High Math Teacher, North Little Rock Public Schools, 1961-1962; Junior High Math Teacher, Jacksonville Public Schools, 1962-1963; Middle School Math Teacher, Broken Arrow Public Schools, 1979-1988; Middle School Counselor, Broken Arrow Public Schools, 1988-1992; Teaching Assistant Oklahoma State University, 1992-1993; Senior Child Advocate: Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS) Tulsa, 1993-1994; Adjunct Instructor: Tulsa Junior College, 1992-1994; Middle School Counselor, Broken Arrow Public Schools, 1994 to present; Part time Children's Counselor: DVIS Tulsa, 1994 to present.

**Professional Memberships:** Phi Delta Kappa, American Counseling Association, Association of Play Therapy, American School Counselor Association.