



## Working Women's Strategies When Exposure to Role Strain

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### Abstract

The aim of present research was to study working women's strategies when exposure to role strain. Study population were all working married female in Babol city. Purposive sampling method was used, so according to research qualitative method, theoretical saturation method was performed for subject's number. 18 participants were selected for qualitative analysis. Study design was qualitative of the content analysis type. Data were gathered by field and library methods. Then data were collected by semi-structured interview with working women and were analyzed by theoretical coding method using MAXQDA software based on theories of social role and work-family conflict. Concepts and categories were obtained from participants and their significant statements. In another word, deductive reasoning was performed for content analysis. So that, in some part according to theoretical sensitivity, important concepts were extracted and denominated. Then, by summarizing technique, the basic topics were determined based on common aspects. Results showed that women adopt strategies such as denial or concealment of role strain, adaptability, physical and mental empowerment, planning, use of service centers, decrease traditional and social roles when exposure to role strain.



## Extended Abstract

**Introduction:** Following the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century in the western developed countries, there were advances in industrialization in Europe and as a result of changes in the way of life and the functioning of the family and, in particular, in the aftermath of World War II and the urgent need for female labor in the economies of the countries involved; gradually, the conditions for wider women's socio-economic participation were provided in a new form at the community level, to the point that today, the level of women's economic activity is one of the indicators of the development of countries in the world. International organizations have concluded that the development of women's employment has a positive and direct impact on many activities in different countries and leads to economic development and job opportunities, and on the other hand can improve the social and cultural situation and the health of women and their families. But problems have also arisen for them, as the norms of the modern world call for women to participate more socially, to be more present in society, and to cooperate more actively in the economic field, while traditions call and invite them to the preservation of the family. In the meantime, how to play traditional roles and coordinate them with modern roles has caused conflict in life and many problems have arisen for them. Role strain is one of this considerable problems. In this situation, working women are wandering between their traditional and modern roles expectations and as a result they seriously experience “role strain” phenomenon in their life. Regarding the arisen problems, the recent research intended to study working women's strategies when exposure to role strain.

**Method:** Present research is based on qualitative research method and content analysis method. Data were collected by deep observation and semi-structured interviews among working mothers of Babol city. Purposive sampling method was performed. 18 participants were selected for qualitative analysis. Researcher obtained theoretical saturation after 18 interviews. Interview time was 60-90 minutes. All interviews were recorded completely and then participant's words were extracted exactly. During data analysis phase, data were analyzed by MAXQDA 10 software and open coding technique. then concepts and topics were extracted from significant dialogue and statement. In another words, content analysis type is deductive reasoning. It means that, in some parts, important concepts were extracted and denominated according to theoretical sensitivity. Then, basic topics were created by means of summarizing technique according to their common concepts. In other parts, concepts and topics were extracted and denominated by means of data from text.

**Results:** Based on performed analysis of coding, following topics were extracted: physical and mental empowerment, adaptability, decrease professional and social roles, obtain economic independence, decrease traditional roles and housewifery, planning for all, denial of role strain, hope for decreasing strain in future, reduce fertility, move and relocate, remove personal time were strategies that research participants mentioned.

**Conclusions:** Based on the analysis in coding, several categories include; physical and mental empowerment, adaptation, planning, personal time, reduced fertility, relocation,



etc. were some of the strategies mentioned by the participants of the present study. About the role strain denial strategy; During the interview, a number of participants stated that they did not feel any pressure at all. But as the interview deepened, it was discovered that these women were also feeling the strains of the roles. They mentioned things like being physically and mentally unfavorable, and also tending to be part-time or to apply for their severance pay. This set of strategies makes it clear that for some reason they are trying to hide the strains of the role. The most important reason for this denial was the lack of support from the spouse. Because they believed that if they expressed pressure, their wives would tell them to quit, and women did not want that. In a deeper answer to why these women hide the pressure of the role, following the theory of rational choice, the conclusion is that the status quo is ultimately in their favor. Whether when the main motivation is financial need or when other motivations are involved in their employment. Another strategy stated by almost all women was that if they reached a certain level financially, they would start an independent business. This strategy reflects the desire of women to become entrepreneurs and gain economic independence, which they like to move towards economic independence by reducing the pressure of administrative work. Reducing traditional roles and housekeeping were also mentioned as other strategies; which reduces anxiety and stress in their family life. The next solution is to hope that the situation will improve in the future. Other important achievements of the research include: There was a relationship between education and income with the choice of solutions. So that the higher the level of education and income of the participants, the more choice was to increase physical fitness, reduce traditional roles and housekeeping, and increase the desire for economic independence. Also, there was a relationship between age and work experience of individuals with the degree of adaptation to the conditions, so that the older the age and work experience, the more the expression of the role strain and the less tolerance it had.

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