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DELAYED CHILDBEARING: CORRELATES OF
MATERNAL SATISFACTION AT ONE YEAR POSTPARTUM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Susan Stickel Coady, B.S., M.S.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1982

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VITA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Trends in fertility patterns among college educated career women show a substantial increase in late first time childbearing. Census figures show that women are not only marrying later but are also delaying their first birth for a period after marriage. Legitimate first births during the period 1960-1964 were, on the average, 14 months after marriage. For the 1975-1978 period, this interval had increased to 24 months. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980). Another example of this trend is the increase in the proportion of women over the age of twenty-five who are bearing their first child. In 1978, nearly one-third of first births were to women twenty-five years of age or older (U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, 1980).

The trend toward delayed childbearing, while not yet a national norm, is currently producing a bumper crop of first-time parents in their late twenties and early thirties (Daniels and Weingarten, 1982). Better educated and career-oriented young women are beginning to see the advantages that delayed parenthood offers
them for career and personal development (Beckman, 1978; Wilkie, 1981). Many of these women are delaying parenthood not for just a year or two, but for as long as it takes them to accomplish preparental agendas of personal and professional development (Daniels and Weingarten, 1982). Wilke (1981) reports that during this period women continue their education, develop marriage relationships, establish a network of friends and social activities, strive for economic security, and pursue the challenges of a career. Because of the variety of reasons for postponement, even this seemingly homogeneous group of women may show variability in their response to the mother role.

Perhaps these women have timed their entry into motherhood to maximize their satisfactions with the parent role. Campbell, Converse, and Rogers (1976) reported that the major motivation for having the first child was the expectation for satisfaction with the parent role. Fawcett (1978) reported similar findings in his study about the value of children. We could assume that the women who postpone childbearing also anticipate a satisfying mothering experience. It is possible that these women have observed their friends and relatives struggle with the dual roles of mother and worker (Birnbaum, 1975; Cherlin, 1980). Perhaps
by delaying parenthood in order to become established in other life roles, they hope to alleviate some of the stress of role conflict, and to make their own mothering experience more satisfying. Unfortunately, the literature offers little empirical evidence upon which to base such a decision. The relationship between delaying childbearing and subsequent maternal satisfaction is virtually unexplored.

**Background**

Early studies about the mother role come from psychoanalytic and social role theory (Brim, 1966; Parsons and Bales, 1955; Deutsch, 1959; Erikson, 1959; 1968). The major themes emerging from these orientations suggest that there is a universal nature to mothering which is strongly influenced by the woman's intrapsychic needs and her social role orientation. The universal characteristics include the intrapsychic turmoil of the pregnancy and postpartum period and the societal pressures to assume the mother role (Deutsch, 1945; Brim, 1966).

Deutsch (1945) discussed what the intrapsychic concerns of pregnancy and motherhood mean in the lives of adult women. Her general theory of motherliness is based on the concept that it is the deepest, most
powerful wish of women, and that healthy ego development for women is closely related to that wish. The concept of biological determinism is evident in the work of many theorists of the psychoanalytic school of thought. For example, Erikson (1968) described a woman's inner space and her need to fill it. He feels that motherhood provides a basic function in establishing a woman's identity.

Role theory has been useful in supplying the concepts and prescriptions of the mother role. It is one of life's major social roles and carries strong cultural prescriptions, age norms, and age constraints. A woman may bring her own personal biases and experiences to this role; however, there are also definite cultural norms she should follow (Neugarten, Moore, and Lowe, 1965). There is cultural pressure to assume the role (Tangri, 1972), to possess "maternal" qualities (Bernard, 1974), and to be "on time" in her delivery (Neugarten et al., 1968). Except for a few writers who considered individual differences in women (Rossi, 1968; Bernard, 1974; Benedek, 1959), these early theorists did not address women's satisfaction with the mother role. The mother role was intricately interwoven with women's early adult development and there were few attempts to study women's adult lives without including motherhood (Rossi, 1981).
Early descriptions of the mothering experience viewed the maternal role from an entirely different social and historical context than the context in which women are experiencing it today. Medical advances, educational opportunities, and career possibilities have changed the course of women's lives. While the theoretical themes of the early writers are still important to consider, women of today are experiencing many more choices for their lives. These choices enable women to decide whether they want to have children and to consider the motives for this decision (Feldman, 1981; Gerston, 1980). Some women today still choose a traditional agenda for their life timing; others are choosing to delay or reject childbearing as an adult role (Rossi, 1981).

Even though women who delay childbearing appear to be similar in many ways, it should be recognized that not all women respond in the same way to their roles (Wilkie, 1980; Elder, 1977; Kappellman and Ackerman, 1980). They may be influenced by a variety of psychological and situational forces present in their lives. As more has been learned about the nature of the mothering role and as fathers have become more involved in birth and child care procedures, there has been an increasing interest in the interactive
character of the parenting experience (Belsky, 1979; Sameroff, 1975; Entwisle and Doering, 1980; Grossman, Eichler, and Winickoff, 1980). In such a conceptualization, the mother is viewed as an individual developing within a social network. The woman's individual experience in the mother role would affect and be affected by other aspects of her life situation.

Several factors have repeatedly appeared in mother-infant research as correlates of women's adjustment to the mother role. Four of these have been selected as independent variables for this research because of the interactive relationship they suggest: 1) maternal competence (Hock, 1976); 2) father support (Grossman et al., 1980); 3) career salience (Hock, 1980; Hoffman, 1973); and 4) infant temperament (Chess, 1973; Carey, 1973). Two additional variables were chosen for this research because of their expected association with this particular group of mothers, perception of age norms (Neugarten et al., 1965) and locus of control (Entwisle and Doering, 1981; Rotter, 1975). Although each of these variables has been discussed in relation to role adjustments in the literature, they have not previously been measured with a group of women who have the life experiences of those women who delay childbearing. The proposed
research will view maternal satisfaction as a product of these interacting forces.

Statement of the Problem

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the maternal role satisfaction of those women who delay parenthood. The large number of women who are delaying their first birth suggests that this is a growing response to major societal changes in women's lives. For many of them, there is a strategic, programmatic quality to their timing; they are using their twenties to cultivate opportunities in other life arenas, such as in education and careers.

By carefully planning the timing of their first baby, these women may be increasing their expectations for satisfaction from this role (Wilke, 1981; Kitzinger, 1978; Lopata, 1971). These older mothers have many resources which may contribute to that satisfaction. For instance, research indicates that age at first birth is positively correlated with socioeconomic status, educational attainment, occupational status, and social support (Rindfuss, Bumpass, and St. John, 1980). In fact, these correlates of delayed childbearing are so impressive that they could minimize possible deterrents to the satisfaction which
these women desire. For example, some of these women may feel their childbearing is off-time. Some may have nontraditional needs and personality attributes. Many have made substantial investments in other life roles. How will their personality attributes interact with their infant's temperament? Will their husbands be supportive? How will these circumstances affect their satisfaction with being a mother?

Research has found that many postponers adapt easily to motherhood and identify virtues in this delay (Wilkie, 1981; Daniels and Weingarten, 1982; Schultz, 1979). Other research indicates that educated and career-oriented women experience conflict and uncertainty about their roles when they become mothers (Hock, 1980; Rossi, 1968; Beckman, 1978; Hoffman, 1973).

The large number of women who are currently participating in this trend toward delayed childbearing makes an investigation of this issue essential. Who are the women who postpone childbearing? Are these women satisfied with the maternal role? What factors contribute to their satisfactions?

These questions led to the formulation of the following objectives for this research:
1. To provide a description of the life circumstances of a group of women who delay parenthood.

2. To identify the global and specific feelings of maternal satisfaction which these women experience.

3. To identify the contributions of preselected variables to the maternal satisfaction for this group of women.

**Hypotheses**

This study was designed to investigate the maternal role satisfaction of the women who delay parenthood. The general hypothesis tested was that maternal satisfaction for these women is influenced by personality attributes, feelings of social support, commitment to work, and infant temperament.

Specifically, it was hypothesized that:

1. Career salience when measured by the Greenhaus (1971) career salience scale is negatively related to the global rating for maternal satisfaction;

2. Maternal competence scores as measured by the interview-based rating scale is positively related to the global rating for maternal satisfaction;

3. Internal locus of control as measured by the Factor I of the Rotter scale is positively related to the global rating of maternal satisfaction (Rotter, 1966);

4. Father support as measured by the interview-based rating scale is positively related to the global rating for maternal satisfaction;

5. Infant temperament as measured by the Infant Behaviors and Temperament Questionnaire is positively related to the global rating of maternal satisfaction (Bates, et al., 1979; Carey, 1973);
6. The age norm discrepancy score is negatively related to the global measure for maternal satisfaction.

Definitions of terms:

**Maternal satisfaction** - The positive orientation a woman expressed toward her role as a mother. The woman high in maternal satisfaction found pleasure in all aspects of mothering and faced her role essentially without regret or conflict.

**Maternal age** - The age of the mother when her first child was born.

**Delayed parenthood** - The intentional postponement of the first birth until the mother was twenty-eight years of age or older.

**Father support** - The degree to which the father provided emotional and physical support to the mother, as reported by the mother.

**Locus of control** - The amount of control the mother felt she had over what happened to her.

**Infant temperament** - The predictability of an infant's behavior and ease of care as perceived by the mother.

**Career salience** - The strength of a woman's orientation toward a career and achievement outside the home.

**Maternal competence** - The feelings of achievement or success which are provided by the mother role.

**Age norm** - The cultural expectations or consensus about appropriate times for life events.

**On-time/off-time discrepancy score** - The numerical difference between a woman's actual age and her perception of the ideal age to have a first baby.
Limitations:

1. The participants in this study were volunteers and may, therefore, be a select group of mothers.

2. Because the sample is from a restricted population of women and homogeneous by design, the ability to generalize the findings is limited to similar population groups.

3. Interviewer ratings for maternal satisfaction may have been influenced by and, therefore, not entirely independent of the ratings given to the questions related to maternal competence and father support. However, in support of their independence, it should be noted that 1) the rating guidelines are very detailed 2) these measures have been used successfully, at least in part, by other researchers, 3) that these measures are not highly intercorrelated and 4) they are based on different subsets of questions in the interview.

4. The study is based entirely on the mother's perceptions of their own situations. Different conclusions may be reached by interviewing fathers or by observing family interactions.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The relationship of a decision to delay childbearing and subsequent satisfaction in the mother role is an underinvestigated area of research. Very few studies have examined the life context of women who delay this role or considered their satisfactions as mothers.

The purposes of this review are to a) establish an appropriate theoretical orientation for the study of delayed childbearing b) provide a rationale and discuss methodology for the variables selected for study, and c) summarize other research investigating delayed childbearing. These topics are addressed in this chapter.

Theoretical Orientation

The interactionist framework was chosen as the theoretical basis for this study of role satisfaction. This framework has been used in other studies of role satisfaction, such as marital satisfaction. It has the flexibility needed to account for individual differences caused by intraindividual changes as well as
differences caused by interindividual changes. This framework assumes that a person's behavior in a role will be affected by a) his experiences in that role b) the responses of influential others c) the situational context and d) a relatively stable "core self" (Turner, 1978). This framework seemed well suited to the study of maternal satisfaction because of the necessary reciprocity which exists between the mother and her immediate environment.

The interactionist framework, because of its flexibility, encouraged the consideration of many variables for this study; that is, a number of variables such as marital satisfaction or maternal stress, could have been chosen which would have been appropriate for use with this framework. The variables selected were those which appeared to be most related to older mothers who, it was felt, would have a strong sense of self, financial security, and established marriages. The variables selected were all logically drawn from the assumptions of this framework. The combination of these variables suggested a dynamic, interactive system.

For the purposes of this study, the interactionist framework was modified, as suggested by considerable literature, to view the infant as having a
temperament at birth; this framework considers the infant to be asocial at birth (Burr et al., 1979). The interactionist framework, adapted for this study, would suggest that a mother's behavioral responses reflect her experiences in this role, her infant's and husband's response to her efforts, the situational context, and aspects of her relatively stable personality predispositions.

Maternal Satisfaction

A survey of related research indicates that maternal role satisfaction, per se, has received very little empirical attention. Perhaps this can be explained in part by the lack of a common definition for this concept. Studies reflecting a similar focus but labeled as maternal attitudes, salience, gratifications, or investment appear in the literature. The lack of common definition makes it difficult to use these studies to generate hypotheses.

There is a large but ambiguous literature which addresses the transition to parenthood. Typically, two different research approaches have been taken. The first approach centers around whether or not parenthood is a crisis (Hobbs, 1965; Russell, 1974); the second describes the changes which occur in the marital system (Rollins and Cannon, 1974; LaRossa and
LaRossa, 1981; Entwisle and Doering, 1980; Veroff, et al., 1981). For the most part, these studies have yet to be adequately synthesized and a number of ambiguities remain. The findings are generally negative suggesting that parenthood is a crisis of varying intensity for couples which decreases the satisfaction with the marriage. Only inferential data concerning the satisfactions of mothers with their role is contained in this literature.

Campbell (1981) described satisfaction as a contributor to one's sense of well-being; a feeling which increased as the discrepancy between life experiences and life expectations decreased. This conceptualization provided an understanding of what women meant when they said they were satisfied with the mother role. It suggested a complex assortment of personal expectations and feelings.

For the purposes of this research, maternal satisfaction was defined as "the positive orientation a woman expressed toward her role as a mother, her pleasure in all aspects of mothering and her lack of regrets and conflicts" (Moss, cited in Hock, 1976).

**Background.** In early theoretical writing, maternal satisfaction was rarely discussed. Motherhood
was depicted as the fulfillment of a woman's life and few questioned her satisfactions (Deutsch, 1945; Erikson, 1968). Women's desire to give birth and their subsequent satisfactions from the role received very little empirical attention. More recently writers have shown a special interest in the effect of a woman's life situation on the mothering experience. Rossi's (1968) classic paper on the birth transition focused on the impact of the mother role on a woman's life. She weighed the gratifications of motherhood against women's involvement in non-family interests and social roles. She suggested that the role requirements of maternity were too high a price to pay for a well-educated and socially adept woman. Bernard (1974) recognized the special problems of the educated and professional woman searching for satisfaction from the mother role. She argued, however, that many women are multidimensional and receive satisfaction from multiple roles. These theorists have suggested that the mother role does not elicit the same response in all women and that satisfaction with the role is not assured.

Recent research findings. Satisfaction with mothering has been addressed in two research projects using survey style methodology (Hoffman, 1973; Hoffman
and Manis, 1979; Hoffman, 1978; Fawcett, 1978; Veroff, Douvan and Kulka, 1981). The Value of Children study (1975) produced interesting analyses related to the satisfactions of parenting. In one analysis of this data, Hoffman (1979) focused on psychological satisfaction which children provided for their parents; love, stimulation, the expansion of self and generativity were identified. Hoffman (1978) reported that twenty-five percent of the first parity women in this study saw children as a fulfillment, as giving life meaning. In comparing zero parity with first parity women, she noted that the attitude toward the mother role became more positive after the first child was born.

Using the same data, Fawcett reported that motivations for the first child included anticipated satisfaction with the mother role. He reported that 70% of the women with one or no children saw a child as someone to love and with whom to identify. He further reported that male children did not provide as much satisfaction for the women who expressed these feelings.

Veroff et al. (1981) addressed satisfactions with parenthood in their national sample. In this analysis, 1976 answers to parenting-related questions were
compared with answers given in 1957. They concluded that parents, particularly mothers, expressed more concern with relational and affiliative aspects of parenting in 1976. Unconditional positive responses to questions concerning the salience of parenthood decreased by approximately 11 percent. Based on these findings, they suggested that parents were no longer overly invested in this role; it was no longer an all encompassing aspect of their lives.

Because of the large increase in the number of mothers who work, considerable research has been conducted concerning the compatibility of work and the mother role. Recently, several investigators have looked at the relationship between employment status and maternal satisfaction. Hock (1976, 1978) made an important distinction between work status and career salience. She reported that work status, per se, was relatively unimportant with respect to maternal satisfaction; career orientation was suggested as a more important determinant. This suggests that it is the desire to work and the enjoyment of ones career which may be in conflict with mothering. Hock (1978) identified the importance of the "satisfaction with mothering" variable. Hock, Christman, and Hock (1980) suggested that personality attributes, maternal
competence and infant temperament were important components of this variable. They found an overall satisfaction of women with their roles; they suggested that women may turn to the role that enhances their self-esteem.

Beckman (1978) researched the relative rewards and costs of parenthood and employment for 123 professional and non-professional mothers who were employed full time. She found that women with professional status and low parity were more likely to see children as interfering with employment. In another study of multiple roles and satisfaction, it was found that competence, commitment to work, and husband's satisfaction with role patterns were significant contributors to role satisfaction (Barnett and Baruch, 1979). Birnbaum (1975) found that professional women did not discuss self sacrifice or guilt when they spoke of their dual roles. They emphasized they were missing the fun and pleasure of being with their children.

Methodology. As with any subjective area of research, appropriate and reliable methodology was essential to a sensitive investigation of maternal satisfaction. Mothering is a highly personal role which is subject to many influences and value interpretations. For these reasons, the selection of sensitive, yet unobtrusive methodology, were critical to this study.
There have been questions raised in the literature concerning the comparative reliability of two methods for scoring satisfaction; i.e. self-reports and interviewer ratings. Studies using both methods have been cited in this review. Self-reports have traditionally been used with large samples where interview techniques may not be possible. This method has been criticized as being prejudiced by a woman's desire to make the socially acceptable response. Interviewer ratings are more likely to be used with smaller samples in an attempt to obtain more indepth information. This clinical approach has been criticized as being too subjective. Interviews with mothers, however, have the advantage of providing valuable insight into research questions. Often casual comments or incidental information provide key bits of knowledge. Some researchers have combined these methods and used a self-report rating within an interview format. The interviewer's style and experiences should also be considered when selecting appropriate methodology.

For the purposes of this study, it was determined that the most appropriate measure of maternal satisfaction would be a combination of the two methods; thereby, profiting from the best aspects of each. This
would also take advantage of this author's experiences with parents and in conducting maternal interviews. Ideally, the measure for satisfaction would be the mother's self-report of satisfaction expressed through her answers to several questions pertinent to the topic. From these answers, the interviewer could rate her satisfaction using a detailed rating guideline. This would remove some element of the social desirability factor and use the skills of trained researchers.

An established interview format was desired; one that was flexible enough to permit the addition and deletion of items to fit the definitions of this research. Such an instrument was selected for use in measuring maternal satisfaction in this study. This instrument was originally designed by Moss; it was adapted by Hock (1976) and used extensively in her research. Within the context of this interview, the mother responded to several questions related to the variables under study. Using her answers and a detailed scoring guideline, the interviewer gave her a rating.

The same interview schedule (Hock, 1976) addressed two other variables which were included in this research, Father Support and Maternal Competence.
The measurement of these variables was handled in a similar manner.

An evaluation of recent research helped to identify relevant correlates of maternal satisfaction for this study. Key variables were identified repeatedly in the literature as having an impact on the mother role. This section describes the significance of these variables for this research.

**Maternal Competence**

Women are less prepared for motherhood today than were their own mothers and grandmothers. In the past, with the proximity of the extended family, there was a greater opportunity to learn about the mother role. Today, women are spending more time in school and less time in learning how to be mothers (Entwisle and Doering, 1981). This seems to be especially true for women who delay childbearing. These women have high achievement needs (Birnbaum, 1975; Tangri, 1975) and have experienced competence in other roles. They may find the unpredictable and chaotic nature of the early months of childrearing to be frustrating. Lopata (1971) suggests that school and work teach young women to be task-oriented and to measure accomplishments in terms of finished products. However, the norms for
childrearing are not clear and the dynamic nature of childhood makes it difficult for a woman to become proficient in this role.

A woman's perception of her competence in mothering may be influenced by the comparisons she can make with her competence in other situations. Research indicated that older, more educated women were more critical of themselves as parents. It was found that education sensitized parents to difficulties. Educated parents reported both problems and inadequacies as parents. They perceived problems clearly and seemed to be in tune with the psychological aspects of this relationship (Veroff et al., 1981).

Middle class mothers want to be the best mother possible and provide their baby with all possible experiences (Kitzinger, 1978). They feel compelled to learn everything possible about mothering. An example of their desire to be knowledgeable is the popularity of childbirth education classes for older primiparous couples (Mercer, 1981). Hock (1976) reported that older mothers expressed lower feelings of competence in meeting infant needs than other mothers in her sample. She further suggested that these women may blame their infants' difficultness on their lack of competence as mothers. Barnett and Baruch (1979) reported that the primary predictor of maternal
satisfaction in their research was the mother's perception of her own competence. The literature suggested a positive relationship between feelings of maternal competence and satisfaction with mothering.

**Father Support**

A relationship between the women's support system and her mothering satisfaction has been found in several research reports. Grossman et al. (1980) observed that maternal behavior was influenced favorably by the amount of positive support she received. Support appears to be most effective when people's engagement with one another extends to a level of involvement and concern, such as in a marriage relationship (Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan, and Mullan, 1981). Although other figures such as parents or friends may provide this support, only the support of the husband will be considered in this review.

In the literature there are references to two kinds of father support; i.e. child care support and emotional support. There have been numerous studies which have considered the extent of the father's child care responsibilities; results of these studies are inconclusive. Many of them, however, have found that child care is still considered to be women's work (Rebelsky and Hawks, 1972; Hoffman, 1974).
A few empirical studies have examined the relationship between the father's attitudes and maternal satisfaction. For example, Entwisle and Doering (1981) found that the fathers' emotional response to the first birth was a dominant factor in the wife's role behavior. Grossman et al. (1980) report that first-time mothers with anxious husbands had less positive feelings about the mother role at one year postpartum. Women who have postponed childbearing may be more dependent on their husbands for support because of their possible separation from any other 'kin' (Wilkie, 1981). Educated couples are reported to be more mobile. They often are transferred or accept jobs some distance away from close friends and relatives (Daniels and Weingarten, 1982; Hoffman, 1979).

The woman's successful adaptation to her new role may be largely determined by the husband's emotional support and his estimation of his wife's worth as a mother (Gladdieux, 1978). Husband's support appeared to be positively related to a woman's satisfaction with mothering.

**Infant Temperament**

The child's temperament has consequences for the tone of his interactions, the frequency of his
interactions, and the way the child will react to the reactions of others. The fit between parenting styles and the child's temperament play an important part in the quality of this relationship (Newman and Newman, 1978).

The notion of temperament suggests that there are some inherited biological characteristics that predispose one to certain actions. In a longitudinal study of infant development, Thomas, Chess, and Birch (1970) rated 141 infants on nine temperamental qualities. From these ratings, they were able to identify three types of babies, those who were "easy", those who were "slow to warm up", and those who were "difficult." These ratings were used to study mother-infant relationships over time. They reported that the infant's temperament influenced his care and that these temperament qualities remained fairly stable over time.

Bates, Freeland, and Launsbury (1979) assessed infant temperament and maternal personality. They reported that high difficultness in infants was related to low maternal achievement and primiparity. Several other studies have reported negative maternal reactions to fussy babies. Hock (1978) suggested that infant fussiness affected maternal satisfaction. Hock et al. (1980), suggested that maternal aversion to
fussiness in babies influenced career-related decisions. Entwisle and Doering (1981) found that the middle-class mothers in their study were troubled by a crying baby. Newman and Coady (1982) found that a fussy baby was the aspect of child care least enjoyed by the older mothers in their sample.

The literature indicated that there is variability in the temperament of infants; in addition, the mother's response to her infant is influenced by this temperament. There are indications that the interplay of the mother's personality and the infant's temperament is an important determinant of her satisfaction with motherhood.

**Methodology.** The instruments available for measuring infant temperament fall into two categories, reports of actual infant behaviors and reports of mother's perceptions of her infant's ease of care (Carey, 1973; Bates, Freeman, and Launsbury, 1979). Both methods have some limitation for use with twelve month old infants. The child's actual behavior was considered to be the most accurate indicator of his temperament. However, infant behavior is very changeable during this period. The child's rapid acquisition of new skills made it difficult for the mothers to
report specific behaviors related to specific situations. A mother's perception of her infant's ease of care was determined to be a more subjective rating and likely to be highly correlated with the mother's feelings of success in this role. However, this technique had the advantage of being based on a history of experiences with this child. Because of the advantages associated with each measure, it was determined that a combination of these techniques would represent the most accurate rating for this variable.

Locus of Control

Locus of control has been identified as a relatively stable cognitive characteristic of individuals (Rotter, 1975). The assumption behind cognitive personality variables is that, while specific behavior is perhaps highly variable between situations, certain cognitive "sets" or modes of perceiving may be used more or less consistently by the individual in a variety of situations (Doherty, 1981).

Locus of control, as a personality characteristic, developed from social learning theory. It has been described by Rotter (1966) as a generalized expectancy or belief that one's outcomes are either
under personal control (internal) or under the control of external forces such as luck, fate, or powerful others (external).

Recent reviewers of the literature on this subject have identified correlates of an internal orientation (Lefcourt, 1976; Phares, 1973). A person who believes in personal control over important life events would be characterized as not easily influenced by others, optimistic about self, and, in general, more successful in achievement situations. Internals report better personal adjustment than do externals.

The locus of control construct has been used primarily for studies of individual behavior rather than for relationship dimensions (Lefcourt, 1976; Phares, 1965). Doherty (1981), however, found locus of control to be a useful concept in a study of the marital relationship. Hock (1980) investigated this personality dimension in her study of working and nonworking mothers and found the groups differed on this dimension. She found nonworking mothers to be more external.

By extending the locus of control construct to parenthood, one may speculate that internals, believing in personal control over events, may work harder to achieve success. They may demonstrate an assertive, task-oriented approach to parenthood.
Internals may be independent and depend less on support from their husbands. Women who delay parenthood have been described as possessing personality attributes similar to the suggested correlates of an internal orientation.

**Methodology.** There has been some discussion in the literature concerning the generalization of control across reinforcement areas. The multidimensionality of this construct has been well established in the literature (Lefcourt, 1975; Reid and Ware, 1974). Researchers have identified separate factors within the locus of control construct and have debated about their use. Rotter's instrument has been factor analyzed and two main factors have been identified (Mirels, 1970). These factors have been successfully used in many research studies. Lefcourt (1976) suggested that it was time to devise and use measures of perceived control for specific reinforcement areas. Researchers have constructed specific measures relating to their special interests. For example, Pearlin et al. (1981) used two questions to determine a parent's feeling of control over the outcome of his child's life. Several measures of this construct were considered for use in this research. It was decided that an established measure would be readily
understood and easier to interpret. Therefore, Factor I of Rotter's scale was selected.

Perceptions of Age Norms

Neugarten et al. (1965) suggested a prescriptive time table for the ordering of life events which they described as the "social clock". These expectations regarding age-appropriate behaviors provide a system of norms which govern behavior. It was reported that people were aware of their own timing and readily described themselves as "early, late, or on time" with regard to family and occupational events.

In a recently completed study from which this study evolved (Newman and Coady, 1982), it was found that women over thirty, who had recently delivered their first baby, considered themselves to be "off-time" in this life event. They were aware of the "social clock" and felt that they were older than their own expressed ideal age. Feelings of general social support come from being "on-time" (Neugarten et al., 1965). The women who delay parenthood may experience a lack of support as they enact the role of mother. Their perceptions of their own timing may be an influential contributor to their satisfaction.
Career Salience

Career salience is an especially intriguing variable for this study because of the non-traditional role orientation it suggests. It could be argued that women who delay childbearing hold non-traditional views about the importance of work and family in their lives; many have been involved in careers during these postponement years. On the other hand, these women may also have traditional feelings about children and family which the presence of a baby might stimulate.

Daniels and Weingarten (1982) and Entwisle and Doering (1981) reported that the early postpartum period was a time for emotional upheaval and questioning about the future. Many women found their babies more compelling than they had anticipated. Their non-traditional orientation appeared challenged. The salience of their careers diminished sharply during this time. This same finding is repeated many times in the literature (Barber, 1982; Grossman et al., 1980; Altman and Grossman, 1977).

Career salience and work status have both been studied in relation to the mother role. Work status has received the major thrust of these efforts (Hoffman, 1973; Hock, 1978). In an analysis of career salience and work status, Hock (1980) suggested that
career salience was a stable predisposition which affected the woman's experience in the mother role. They found that career salience produced predictable results with regard to work status. That is, women high in career salience returned to work; those low in career salience stayed at home. The women scoring in the moderate range on this scale seemed to be influenced by a variety of personality and infant related variables. The stability of strong role orientations was apparent in their research. Career salience appeared to tap a more basic predisposition than work status. If this orientation is strong, it may be in conflict with maternal satisfaction.

Methodology. Career salience has been measured using a variety of instruments. The measure desired for this research would tap a basic underlying predisposition toward a career. Employment status would not be a factor in achieving a high score on this measure. The factor analysis of the Greenhaus instrument for measuring career salience (1973) revealed a dimensionality to this construct. The factor content included a) the priority rating of a career b) general attitudes toward work and c) concern with career advancement and planning for a career. These aspects of career salience seemed applicable to the women to be
studied in this research. Therefore, the Greenhaus instrument was selected.

Related Studies

The research which has been conducted with older primiparous women is divided among three orientations. The first orientation has provided an analysis of Census data. The studies in this category were largely demographic and detected early trends toward this aspect of fertility behavior. They also identified demographic correlates of delayed childbearing for this early group of postponers (Rindfuss et al., 1981; Wilkie, 1981). Rindfuss et al. (1981) examined the link between education and fertility in relation to age at first birth. Education was found to have the greatest influence on age at first birth. As the educational level of women rose, so did the age at which they their first baby. Another correlate, decreased fertility, has received attention in this literature. Both motivation and ability to limit the size of families are associated with increased age. Career salience and economic security have also been suggested as correlates of delayed parenthood (Wilkie, 1981).

The second orientation, the medical orientation, has been the most prolific in terms of empirical work.
The research in this area which was most relevant to the present study discussed the obstetrical care of these women and assessed the risks involved. The ages of the women who are delaying childbirth challenged medical professionals to reassess past recommendations and beliefs about the safe ages for childbearing. While current medical opinions minimize the risks of prenatal complications for women under the age of 35, there are empirical data which support the existence of perinatal difficulties for these women (Kessler, Lancet, Borenstein, and Steinmetz, 1980; Barber, 1982; Daniels and Weingarten, 1982). These researchers report a high incidence of cesarean delivery, induction of labor, and abnormal birth presentations in their samples of older primiparous mothers. Kessler et al. (1980) reported a significant number of cesarean deliveries in their sample of 98 primiparous women over the age of 35. In a related, but not medical analysis, Daniels and Weingarten (1982) reported that 50% of their mid-life mothers gave birth by cesarean delivery. These findings were supported by the present research in which 28% of the sample did not have a vaginal delivery. While these statistics are higher than those for the general population, the consensus in the medical literature indicates that these women should not be considered high-risk.
A related medical consideration for these women has also been addressed. An increase in infertility has been found among older primiparous women. While age alone does not predict infertility, the research suggests that age and health are intertwined; women should consider the possibility of health related infertility during their thirties (Daniels and Weingarten, 1979).

The third orientation which addressed delayed parenthood was the most relevant to this study. This literature was mainly descriptive and provided insights into the significance of the trend. The most relevant studies are discussed here. The first major work on this topic took a retrospective indepth look at the timing of parenthood for eighty-two couples (Daniels and Weingarten, 1982). This study discussed this trend in developmental terms by comparing a group of late-timing parents with a group of parents who chose an earlier timing.

The researchers used intensive, unstructured interviews to gather information from 82 couples chosen on the basis of the wife's age and the timing of her first birth. Three age groups, thirties, forties, and fifties experiencing early (average age 21.5) or late
(average age 30.5) childbirth created six cells for making comparisons. A seventh cell included women who were over forty at first childbirth. The data are presented in terms of emblematic (common), extreme (uncommon), or idiosyncratic vignettes. These personal statements offer an understanding of the consequences of parental timing. Couples found their own timing to be the most advantageous. Consequences for the midlife mothers and their careers emerged in three patterns:

a) childbirth created a restructuring in their lives; the career was less important, even temporarily - abandoned
b) the expectations and the realities created stress; standards and controls found in other areas of life did not apply to parenthood
c) the infant was easily incorporated into the couple's lifestyle. In midlife fathers were reported to "glow" with fatherhood; women's careers were less affected by the late timing pattern. This research adds insight into an area for which little systematic study has been completed. However, the lack of a statistically based data analysis and the retrospective nature of the data seem problematic.

Recent research by Barber (1982) has contributed to the knowledge about career-committed women who delay parenthood. She interviewed thirty-five career
oriented women and their husbands. She found them to be very satisfied with their parenting roles. The ages of children represented in this study ranged from two weeks to five years; thirty-one of the couples had one child. The greatest degree of satisfaction came to these women when their infant's communication skills grew to include smiling, recognition, and vocalizations. She found that the mothers of toddlers were no longer experiencing the emotional highs observed in mothers of one year olds. Sixty-six percent of the women in this study had returned to work before the baby was six months old. These findings indicated that the women expressed feelings of confidence that they could balance and manage all responsibilities. Eighty-six percent planned to be both a mother and a career person. Eighty-five percent felt a career was as important as parenting or being a wife. The majority felt they were performing their roles according to their own high standards. Most of these women reported stress and a general lack of time.

On Spanier's Marital Satisfaction Scale, 91% of Barber's sample rated their marriage as happy, very happy, or extremely happy. She described these women as well-organized, goal oriented, and highly motivated
to achieve. This study adds to the very limited knowledge about the life situation of women who are currently experiencing delayed parenthood. It is basically descriptive in nature. A tighter control on the age of the child would have strengthened these findings.

One of few systematic empirical studies related to delayed parenthood suggested that increased maternal age was related to greater maternal satisfaction, greater time commitment to the role, and to more optimal observed behavior. Mothers, ranging in age from 16 to 38, were assessed at two time points, one and four months postpartum, to examine the proposition that maternal age influenced parental role performance and satisfaction (Ragozin, Basham, Crnic, Greenberg, and Robinson, 1982). They reported that when other demographic factors and psychosocial variables were controlled, increased maternal age was significantly related to greater satisfaction with parenting. These researchers suggested that a linear age effect for satisfaction calls into question the belief that late childbearing increases the risk of poor parenting outcomes. The authors suggested that maternal age should be controlled when studying maternal satisfaction.
These studies have described the women who delayed parenthood in their samples and have discussed the developmental implications of this trend. They have described the satisfactions associated with this decision. There has not been a systematic study which directly identifies the components of these women's lives which are influential in determining their satisfaction.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This is a correlational study which: 1) provides descriptive information about a particular group of women, those who delay parenthood and 2) identifies the degree of relationship between six independent variables and maternal satisfaction. Discussed in this chapter are sample procurement, procedures for data collection, instrumentation, and treatment of the data.

The Sample

In order to collect the data needed for this project, seventy women were selected to participate. The criteria, rationale, and procedure for their selection follows.

Criteria

In order to be eligible to participate in this research project, the mothers met the following criteria: They 1) were twenty-eight years of age or older when their first baby was born 2) were one year
postpartum at the time of the interview 3) were married to their baby's father 4) had attended at least one year of college and 5) had some experience in the work force. Adoptive mothers and mothers of twins were not included in this study. Only two mothers who were contacted and interviewed had late first babies entirely due to infertility problems. They were dropped from this sample of intentional delayers.

Rationale

The above criteria were used for selecting the sample in order to secure a group of first time mothers which was somewhat homogeneous and yet, one which was as representative of the total group of women who delay parenthood as possible. At the time of their selection for this study, these women were approximately one year postpartum. Based on the work of Grossman et al. (1980), one year postpartum was selected as a time when most women have overcome the emotional fluctuations associated with the early months of childrearing. By this point, women will have had time to integrate their new role into the other significant roles and relationships in their lives.
Selection

The names of potential sample members were selected from a variety of sources, i.e.: the Labor and Delivery Records of The Ohio State University Hospitals, the waiting list of The Ohio State University Day Care Center (Appendix A), The LeLeche League of Central Ohio membership list, and from announcements in the offices of two local pediatricians (Appendix B). The sample was supplemented by the use of network sampling techniques.

Ninety-one potential subjects were identified and contacted for this study. The study was explained to them in a telephone call. Of the ninety-one potential subjects, eighteen mothers did not meet all of the criteria and three refused to participate because they were too busy. The remaining seventy mothers were enrolled as participants in this study.

Procedures

Data for this study were collected over a two month period during July and August 1982. It was collected through the use of 1) a semi-structured interview which took place in either the subjects' homes or their places of employment and 2) four pencil and paper tests that were sent to subjects prior to
the interview. Prior to the data collection a pilot study was conducted to test the procedures used in this research.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with ten mothers of year old infants. The ages of these women ranged from 29-36; the ages of their infants ranged from 15 to 20 months.

The purpose of the pilot study was to test the research instruments for ease of scoring, ease of administration, measurement accuracy, and interviewer reliability. The same administrative procedures were followed as were to be used in the actual data collection.

The pilot study revealed some methodological difficulties which were corrected in the following ways: 1) the order of some questions was changed to improve the flow of the interview, 2) several questions were reworded to facilitate the scoring, 3) one question was added to the Father Support variable to address a feeling which many women expressed (No. 32), and 4) two additional scoring guidelines were added to the Maternal Satisfaction variable.

The pilot study was very useful for organizing the procedures, methods, and printed material
necessary for the final data collection. Several important changes in instrumentation were made.

**Interview Procedures**

Each subject was contacted by phone, informed of the objectives of the study and the scope of what her involvement would be if she chose to participate. If she agreed to participate, a time and place for the interview was scheduled. The interview took place at the subject's convenience; it was scheduled at a time and place of her choice. Most of the women chose to schedule the interview at home when their child was napping or otherwise entertained. Some of the working women preferred being interviewed in their work setting during the business day. One week before the scheduled appointment, the subject was sent a letter thanking her for agreeing to participate and reminding her of the interview time (Appendix C). She was also sent four short pencil and paper tests to be completed before the interview. These were discussed, if necessary, and collected by the interviewer during the scheduled appointment.

During the interview, the interviewer had each subject sign a consent form (Appendix D). She then conducted the interview by reading each question to
the subject and writing each answer given verbatim on the interview form. After the interview, the subjects were asked if they had any questions or anything to add to their comments. They were told they would receive an abstract of the findings, if they desired. After leaving each interview, the interviewer rated three of the variables measured in the interview -- maternal satisfaction, father support, and maternal competence. The interviewer read the answers to the subset of questions related to the Maternal Satisfaction variable, consulted the appropriate guidelines, and made that rating. She then read the subset of answers related to the Father Support variable, consulted the appropriate guidelines, and made that rating. The last rating, Maternal Competence, was made in the same way. That is, the interviewer read the answers to the subset of questions related to the Maternal Competence variable, consulted the guidelines, and made the rating. These ratings will be explained in detail under the section on Instrumentation.

**Interviewer and Coder Training**

The data were collected by two interviewers, the author of this study (54 interviews) and another graduate student (16 interviews) in the Department of
Family Relations and Human Development at The Ohio State University. Both interviewers had previous experience in interview situations and in making home contacts with parents. In order to make all interview situations as similar as possible, the two interviewers thoroughly discussed both the questions and the objectives of the study prior to data collection. In addition, a pilot study consisting of ten interviews was conducted. Five of these interviews were taped and scored by both interviewers in order to develop similar styles and techniques of questioning and interpretation. During the course of the data collection, an additional check was made to ascertain the continued reliability between interviewers. The interrater reliability coefficient based on eighteen ratings was computed to be .76.

The coding of the data was done by a graduate student in the Department of Family Relations and Human Development of The Ohio State University. She was not informed of the purpose of the study and was trained only in the techniques of coding data from the interview forms to the data sheets. Five of these interviews were also coded by the author. The intercoder reliability measured by a ratio of hits to misses was .85. The coder also scored the four short
pencil and paper tests; she then compiled all the scores for each subject to prepare the data for analysis.

The Hollingshead Two Factor Analysis of Social Position was used to determine the socioeconomic status rating (S.E.S.) for each subject (Hollingshead, 1957). Educational level and occupational category were the two factors used to determine this rating. Since all of the women in this study were married, the S.E.S. total was computed using the occupation and the education of the marriage partner who appeared to be the major wage earner in family.

Instrumentation

Data for this study were collected by the use of both interview techniques and pencil and paper tests. The instruments were selected to address the following variables: 1) maternal satisfaction, 2) father support, 3) maternal competence, 4) age discrepancy 5) career salience, 6) locus of control, and 7) infant temperament. These instruments are described in this section.

The Interview

The interview was designed to collect pertinent
demographic information as well as to provide a means of generating more subjective data related to the variables under question. The five variables which were addressed by the interview were 1) maternal satisfaction 2) maternal competence 3) father support 4) age discrepancy score and 5) the woman's personal rating of satisfaction. The interview consisted of fifty-eight questions and took approximately fifty minutes to administer (Appendix E).

**Interview ratings.** Global interviewer ratings were made for three variables -- maternal satisfaction, father support and maternal competence. Using rating scale guidelines, each of the three variables was given a rating from one to nine. Nine was the most positive rating for each variable. The questions asked to determine the rating for each variable are summarized in the descriptions that follow:

1) maternal satisfaction -- this variable was addressed by a group of five questions (39-43) concerned with a) the women's feelings of role conflict, b) any possible resentment toward the child, c) her expectations about the mother role, d) the positive and negative aspects of child care, and e) her sense of personal fulfillment in the mother role.

The rating for maternal satisfaction was determined by matching each mother's answers to these
questions with the scoring guidelines for this variable. Her score for maternal satisfaction was the numerical designation given to the guideline most similar to her responses. The questions and rating scale guidelines for this variable were adapted from the Positive Attitude Toward Maternal Role variable developed by Moss (Cited in Hock, 1976). This variable was also used by Hock (1976; 1980) and Hock, et al. (1980).

2) Father support -- this variable was addressed by seven questions (32-38). These questions were concerned with a) the father's understanding of what child care entails, b) his feelings of jealousy or resentment toward the child, c) the amount of time he spent with the child, and d) the amount of emotional support he gave the mother.

The rating for father support was determined by matching each mother's answers to these questions with the scoring guidelines for this variable. Her score for father support was the numerical designation given to the guideline most similar to her responses. The questions and rating scale guidelines for this variable were adapted from the Satisfaction with Father Involvement variable developed and used by Hock (1976; 1980) in her research on working women.
3) Maternal competence -- this variable was addressed by six questions (numbers 47-52). These questions were concerned with a) the mother's ability to understand and interpret her child's needs b) her feelings of success in meeting the infant's needs c) any feelings she had of inadequacy as a mother and d) a comparison of her competency in other roles with her competency as a mother.

The rating for maternal competence was determined by matching each mother's answers to these questions with the scoring guidelines for this variable. Her score for maternal competence was the numerical designation given to the guideline most similar to her response. The questions and rating scale guidelines for this variable were adapted from the Confidence in Maternal Skills variable developed by Moss (Cited in Hock, 1976). This variable was also used by Hock (1976; 1980).

The interview questions and the rating scale guidelines for these variables were developed by Moss and supplemented by Hock (1976) and this investigator. Further description of these variables and their scoring guidelines are found in Appendix F.

The interview also provided information concerning the women's perception of her own timing in
this life event as well as the woman's self-rating of her personal satisfaction with the mother role.

The on-time/off-time discrepancy score. A woman's perception of the appropriate age to have a first baby was determined by the answers given to the following three questions: 1) What is the ideal age to have your first baby? 2) At what age do most of the people you know have their first baby? 3) At what age would you want your daughter to have her first baby?

The score for 'ideal age' was a composite of the answers given to these three questions. For example, if 'ideal age' was specified, it was used. If it was not given as a specific age, the other two questions served as a reference in providing this information.

Since all mothers identified a younger age as ideal, the on-time/off-time discrepancy score was calculated by subtracting the age the mother felt was ideal to bear her first child from her real age at the time of her first birth. This age discrepancy score was used to represent the woman's perception of her own timing in this life event.

Self-rating for maternal satisfaction. This personal assessment of maternal satisfaction was given at the end of the interview by each mother. The mothers
were asked to rate their own personal satisfaction with the role of mother. Each mother was told that this was not a rating of how much she loved her child; but, rather a rating of her satisfaction with the role of mother. The mothers rated themselves along a nine-point scale, nine being the most satisfied.

**Pencil and Paper Tests**

The following four pencil and paper tests were sent to each mother one week before the scheduled interview. These tests were used to collect additional data related to the preselected correlates of maternal satisfaction.

**Gratifications of Parenthood Checklist.** This checklist was designed to measure the extent to which parenthood positively contributes to twelve personal aspects of parent's lives (Russell, 1974). For example, the mothers were asked to rate 'since the birth of my baby I feel closer to my husband' on a four point Likert scale. Russell used this checklist with a sample of 511 randomly selected working class and middle-class couples. She reported the reliability of this checklist, as computed by the split-half method, to be .93.

Russell used three response categories in her research. They were 1) not at all 2) somewhat and 3)
very much. In this study this instrument was changed to include a fourth response category. This change increased the possible response range from 12-36 to 12-48, thereby creating more variability for this measure. In this study, this instrument was used to provide a more detailed description of the enjoyable aspects of the maternal role (Appendix G).

**Career Salience.** This instrument, developed by Greenhaus (1971), is a twenty-eight item measure of the perceived importance of work and career in a woman's life (Appendix H). The mothers were asked to answer the career-related questions along a five-point Likert scale. A total career salience score was derived by summing the unweighted responses of the first twenty-seven items. Possible scores for this rating range from twenty-seven to a hundred thirty-five. The higher the score the more salient a career. Items numbered 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 17, 21, 24, 25 and 27 were scored in reversed order. For item twenty-eight, the mothers were asked to rank-order, according to how much satisfaction they provided, the following six roles: 1) family relationships 2) leisure time activities 3) religious beliefs 4) career or occupation 5) participation in community affairs 6) participation in activities toward the betterment of national or
international affairs. These rankings were used as descriptive data for this research. The coefficient alpha for this instrument is .81 (Greenhaus, 1971).

Infant Temperament. The measure of infant temperament consisted of fourteen items taken from the Carey Survey of Temperamental Characteristics (1973) and three questions taken from the Infant Characteristics Questionnaire developed by Bates et al. (1979). The first fourteen questions were taken from eight of Carey's twelve temperament categories. These questions were selected because they described the actual behavior of a baby and did not call for more subjective maternal perceptions of behavior. The mothers were asked to respond to the fourteen questions by checking one of three answer choices. The three choices described either a difficult, a variable, or an easy baby. The mothers' responses were totaled with the highest total score representing the easiest baby. Possible scores range from 14-42. The following questions from the Carey instrument were used: 1, 2, 5, 8, 16, 18, 19, 34, 37, 46, 47, 56, 62, and 63. Numbers 8, 18, and 34 were stated in reversed order.

The three questions from the Bates et al. (1979) instrument required the mother to rate their perception of their baby's temperament on a more global
level. These three questions were scored on a one to seven scale. Seven was the score given for an optimal temperament.

The scores from these two measures were summed to give a total score for Infant Temperament. (Appendix I).

Locus of Control. This psychological variable was measured using Factor I from the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale. Items in this factor focus on the individual person as the target of control. The item numbers used from Rotter's original scale in order of their factor loadings are 11, 16, 25, 23, 15, 18, 28, 5 and 19 (Mirels, 1970). These items are stated in a forced-choice format. The mothers were asked to check the answer they more strongly believed to be true. The scores were totaled so that the internal control dimension received the highest score. Possible scores ranged from zero to nine (Appendix J).

Treatment of the Data

The data collected by the interview was condensed and coded into a form suitable for data analysis. The
four pencil and paper tests were tallied and the total score for each was used for further analysis. The techniques utilized for the analysis of this data consisted of frequency counts, means and standard deviations, correlations, and multiple linear regression. In order to produce a descriptive analysis of the sample, frequency counts and means and standard deviations were computed for all variables.

A correlation coefficient was obtained between the interviewer rating and the self-rating for the dependent variable, maternal satisfaction, to determine the degree of relationship between these two measurements. Reliability coefficients were obtained between the two coders and the two interviewers. Correlations coefficients were also obtained among all the major variables, i.e.: maternal satisfaction, father support, maternal competence, perception of age norms, locus of control, infant temperament, and career salience, to determine the degree of relationship of such variables with each other. Descriptive variables were added to this matrix to determine their degree of relationship with the major independent and dependent variables. Frequency distributions were obtained for the descriptive variables which warranted this type of analysis.
A simultaneous multiple linear regression equation was employed to determine the amount of variance which was explained by the total model of the independent and dependent variables ($R^2$) (Cohen and Cohen, 1968). From this analysis, semipartial correlations were calculated. They determined the amount of variance accounted for by each of the independent variables when the others were held constant.

In order to describe the specific gratifications which the women mentioned, maternal age was correlated with each of the twelve dimensions on the Gratifications of Parenthood scale. A correlation coefficient was also obtained between maternal age and the total score for this measure.

Post hoc T Tests determined within sample differences on the maternal satisfaction measure for three dichotomous variables, i.e.: sex of child, planned or unplanned pregnancy, and working vs. non-working women. Post hoc analysis of variance (reason for delay x maternal satisfaction) determined the significance of within sample differences on this variable.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study was designed and conducted to a) provide descriptive information about a group of women who have delayed childbearing, b) determine the degree of relationship between six preselected variables and maternal role satisfaction, and c) determine the total amount of variance in the dependent variable accounted for by the full set of independent variables and by each independent variable individually. The data analyses were performed at the Instruction and Research Computer Center at The Ohio State University with the consultation of William Insko of the Quantitative Psychology Department of the same university.

This chapter presents a descriptive analysis of the sample, the reliability coefficients for the raters, the findings related to the hypotheses, and the results of the simultaneous multiple linear regression analysis.

Respondents

In order to examine the maternal role satisfaction of women who delay childbearing, a sample of
seventy primiparous women from the Columbus, Ohio area were interviewed at one year postpartum. The descriptive information, summarized in Tables 1, 2 and 3, illustrates the life situations of these women.

Description of the Mothers

The seventy participants met the following criteria of this study. That is, they a) were twenty-eight years or older when their first baby was born, b) were married to their baby's father, c) had attended at least one year of college, and d) had work experience.

The following categories of descriptive data will be presented for this group of mothers: 1) maternal age 2) socioeconomic status 3) years in school 4) length of time married 5) reason for their delay 6) employment status 7) length of time worked prior to birth 8) prenatal class attendance 9) sex of child 10) planned or unplanned pregnancy and 11) occupations. Where appropriate, descriptive variables were correlated with the major variables under study as well as with each other using Pearson product-moment correlational analysis. This analysis provided means and standard deviations, presented in Table 1, as well as correlation coefficients, presented in Table 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Min. Value</th>
<th>Max. Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Age</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in School</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of time married</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of time worked prior to delivery</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequency distributions are presented for the variables where means and standard deviations were not considered appropriate (Table 2).

Maternal age. As shown in Table 1, the mean age for the women in this sample was 32 years, ranging from 28 years to 40 years. The standard deviation was 2.7. The women in this sample were evenly divided into two groups. Thirty-four women were thirty years old or less when their infant was born; thirty-six were 31 years or older. Forty-one percent of the sample was between the ages of 30 and 32 when their first baby was born. Maternal age was significantly correlated with two of the major variables under study. It was negatively correlated with the measure for Maternal Competence ($r = .25, p < .05$) and positively correlated with Age Discrepancy ($r = .66, p < .001$) (Table 3).

Socioeconomic Status (S.E.S.). Using Hollingshead's Two Factor Index, the mean S.E.S. rating for this sample of women was 21 (Table 1). This rating represents a social class designation of II which is described by Hollingshead as upper middle-class. In this classification, the higher the rating, the lower the social class designation. The range of S.E.S. scores for this sample was from 11 to 47; the standard deviation was 9.8 (Table 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you currently employed?</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex of Child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was this pregnancy planned?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you attend Prenatal Classes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for Delay in Childbearing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Marriage</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prebaby Agenda</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postponed, then</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infertility</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned no children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales or Service</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>70</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.30***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.32***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>.62***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>.72</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>-.26*</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>.08</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05,  **p < .01,  ***p < .001
Years in School. Counting from grade one, the mean number of years in school for this sample was 16.9. This represented a range from 13 to 25 years with a standard deviation of 2.35 years (Table 1). One or more advanced degrees were held by 50% of this sample. The Years in School variable was significantly correlated with two of the major variables under study, Maternal Satisfaction ($r = -0.24, p < 0.05$) and Career Salience ($r = 0.51, p < 0.001$).

Length of time married. The mean length of time married for this group of women was six and one half years. This represents a range from one to 14 years of marriage with a standard deviation of 3.19 (Table 1). The Length of Time Married variable was significantly related to one of the major variables under study, Locus of Control ($r = 0.31, p < 0.01$).

Reason for the delay in childbearing. The reasons for the delay in childbearing were coded into four groups (Table 2). Group one represented those women who had intentionally delayed childbearing in order to reach specific goals (e.g. finish college, buy a house, go to Europe). There were forty-five women in this group, representing 64% of the total sample. Group two represented the women who delayed
childbearing because of a late marriage. There were nine women in this group, representing 12% of the sample. The third group represented the women who had postponed childbearing until age 28 or older and then experienced problems with infertility. There were ten women in this group representing 14% of the sample. The fourth group of women were those who had planned to be childless and then had either changed their mind or had an unplanned pregnancy. There were six women in this group representing 9% of the sample. Analysis of variance was employed to ascertain differences in maternal satisfaction between these categories of women. There were no significant differences in their satisfactions with the mother role.

Employment status. In this sample of 70 primiparous women who had postponed childbearing, 39 women (56%) were employed at one year postpartum (Table 2). The mean number of hours worked per week for these mothers was 34, ranging from six to sixty. Forty-two percent of the working women had returned to their jobs by three months postpartum; eighty-two percent were back at work by six month postpartum. The remaining 16% returned to work between six months postpartum and the time of the interview. Employment status was significantly correlated with two of the
major variables under study, Career Salience \( (r = -0.26, p < 0.05) \) and Father Support \( (r = -0.23, p < 0.05) \) (Table 3)]. These are reported as negative correlations because of the direction in which employment status is scored. The correlations indicate that the higher the scores on Father Support and Career Salience the more likely the women were to be employed. This variable, Employment Status, was also correlated with two descriptive variables, Sex of Child and Planned Pregnancy. These findings will be reported under those headings.

**Length of time worked prior to delivery.** The mean length of time the women worked prior to the child's birth was 8.2 years. This represented a range from one to 20 years with a standard deviation of 4.2 (Table 1). There was a negative relationship between Career Salience and Length of Time Worked which approached significance \( (r = -0.21, p < 0.08) \) (Table 3)].

**Prenatal classes.** Sixty-four mothers in this sample (94%) attended childbirth preparation classes prior to their delivery; fifty-nine husbands (90%) attended with them (Table 2). Sixty-five fathers were present at the delivery (97%). Ninety percent of the women gave positive evaluations of the content and objectives of these classes. The variable, Prenatal
Class, was not correlated with any of the major variables under study.

**Sex of child.** There were 34 female and 36 male children represented in this sample (Table 2). This variable was not significantly correlated with any major variable under study. However, the Sex of Child variable was significantly correlated with two descriptive variables. Baby's Sex was negatively correlated with Employment Status, indicating that women with female babies were less likely to be employed \( (r = -0.23; p < 0.05) \). Baby's sex was also correlated with Normal Delivery indicating that the women who had male children were more likely to report a normal delivery \( [(r = -0.27, p < 0.05) \text{ (Table 3)}] \). Normal deliveries were reported by 71% of this sample.

**Planned or unplanned pregnancy.** Sixty women in this sample (85%) had planned the pregnancy which produced their first child. Ten women indicated that this baby was unplanned (Table 2). This variable was significantly correlated with another descriptive variable, Employment Status. This was a negative correlation indicating that women who had planned their baby were less likely to be employed at one year postpartum \( [(r = -0.28, p < 0.01) \text{ (Table 3)}] \). Planned or
unplanned pregnancy was not significantly correlated with any of the major variables under study.

**Occupations.** The diversity in occupations which are represented by this sample are presented in Table 2. While traditional female occupations are well represented in this sample, the more non-traditional professional occupations are in evidence as well.

**Summary.** In summary, the respondents for this study of maternal satisfaction consisted of seventy middle to upper middle class women who resided in Central Ohio and whose first child was approximately one year of age. A large percentage of the sample had delayed childbearing to achieve specific goals in their lives. As a group, they represented women in their early thirties who had attended 16 years of school and had been married over six years. They had been in the labor force for an average of eight years prior to their first birth; approximately half of the women were employed at the time of the interview. The sample represented a wide range of occupations and interests.

Most of the women in this sample had attended prenatal class with their husbands and many of their husbands were present at the delivery of their first
child. Eighty-five percent of these pregnancies were planned. While this group, on the average, conforms to preconceived notions about the life situation of women who delay childbearing, there were greater within group differences than expected.

Results of Analyses

The results of the statistical analyses used in this study are presented in this section. First, the mean and standard deviations of the seven major variables under study are presented. The correlations between the two raters and the two coders are then presented indicating the degree of reliability between their ratings. Finally, the results of the correlational and multiple regression analyses are presented with reference to the hypotheses stated in chapter one.

The Means and Standard Deviations of the Major Variables

The means and standard deviations of the major variables under study are presented in Table 5. These variables represent distributions slightly skewed toward the positive dimension of their respective scales. In all cases, however, an adequate range of
response was obtained for to make them sensitive measures of the variance represented within this population.

**Reliability Correlations**

A reliability coefficient was obtained between the two interviewers' ratings for three variables, maternal satisfaction, father support and maternal competence. The ratings for six subjects were used to make this test of reliability. The eighteen scores for the three measures were standardized to minimize the between subject variability. The standardized scores were then correlated to obtain the reliability coefficient. The coefficient obtained between interviewers for the 18 scores was .76. The small number of scores entered into this analysis had a minimizing effect on the level of the correlation. The actual scores between the interviewers are different in only seven of the 18 measures. For these seven measures, the discrepancy is never greater than two.

Reliability measures were also obtained for the two coders. Twenty questions from the interview were selected to be used in this check of reliability. These questions contained a combination of interval, nominal, and ordinal data. It was difficult to obtain a statistical correlation among these types of data.
Therefore, a ratio of hits to misses was calculated for five subjects who were coded by both coders. The reliability measures for these five subjects were as follows: 1) Subject 1 = .90; 2) Subject 2 = .80; 3) Subject 3 = .85; 4) Subject 4 = .85; 5) Subject 5 = .85. The mean rating for the reliability between coders was .85.

Findings Related to the Hypotheses

The hypotheses in this study were tested to determine the degree of relationship between each of six preselected independent variables and maternal satisfaction. For the purpose of this study, the probability level used for reporting significance was .05. The findings related to the hypotheses are presented in this section.

Hypothesis 1. Career salience, when measured by the Greenhaus (1971) career salience scale, will be negatively and significantly related to the global rating for Maternal Satisfaction.

To test this hypothesis, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to determine the strength of the relationship between Career Salience and Maternal
Satisfaction. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis was not significant \((r = .07)\) and the degree of the relationship was too small to ascertain the direction of this correlation (Table 3). Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that there would be a significant relationship between Career Salience and Maternal Satisfaction was rejected (Table 4).

**Hypothesis 2.** Maternal competence scores, as measured by the interviewer based rating scale, will be positively and significantly related to the global rating for Maternal Satisfaction.

To test this hypothesis, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to determine the strength of the relationship between Maternal Competence and Maternal Satisfaction. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis indicated a positive and significant relationship between these two measures \([(r = .52; p < .001) \text{ Table 4}]\). On the basis of this analysis, the hypothesis which stated that there would be a positive and significant relationship between Maternal Competence and Maternal Satisfaction was accepted.
Hypothesis 3. Locus of control, as measured by Factor I of the Rotter Scale, will be positively and significantly related to the global rating for Maternal Satisfaction.

To test this hypothesis, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to determine the strength of the relationship between Locus of Control and Maternal Satisfaction. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis does not show a significant relationship between these two variables \((r = .02)\) (Table 4). On the basis of this analysis, the hypothesis which stated that there would be a significant relationship between Locus of Control and Maternal Satisfaction was rejected.

Hypothesis 4. Father support, as measured by the interview-based rating scale, will be positively and significantly related to the global rating for Maternal Satisfaction.

To test this hypothesis, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to determine the strength of the relationship between Father Support and Maternal Satisfaction. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis indicated that there was a positive and significant relationship between these variables
On the basis of this analysis, the hypothesis which stated that there would be a positive and significant relationship between Father Support and Maternal Satisfaction was accepted.

Hypothesis 5. Infant Temperament, as measured by the Infant Behaviors and Temperament Questionnaire (Bates et al. 1979; Carey, 1973), will be positively and significantly related to the global rating of Maternal Satisfaction.

To test this hypothesis, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to determine the strength of the relationship between Infant Temperament and Maternal Satisfaction. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis indicated that there was a positive and significant relationship between these variables [(r = .42; p < .001) (Table 4)]. On the basis of this analysis, the hypothesis which states that there will be a positive and significant correlation between Infant Temperament and Maternal Satisfaction was accepted.
### TABLE 4

Pearsonian Correlation Coefficients Between Preselected Independent Variables and Maternal Satisfaction

(N = 70)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Pearson r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Support</td>
<td>.38***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Salience</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Competence</td>
<td>.52***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Temperament</td>
<td>.42***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Discrepancy</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***: p < .001
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Satisfaction</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Support</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Salience</td>
<td>80.18</td>
<td>10.97</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Competence</td>
<td>7.17</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Temperament</td>
<td>50.21</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Discrepancy</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 6. The Age Norm Discrepancy Score will be negatively and significantly related to the global measure of Maternal Satisfaction.

To test this hypothesis, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to determine the strength of the relationship between Age Norm Discrepancy Score and Maternal Satisfaction. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis indicated, interestingly, that the relationship was not in the predicted direction. However, this relationship was not significant \((r = .10)\) (Table 4).

Summary of the Findings Related to the Hypotheses. Six hypotheses were tested, using Pearson product-moment correlations, to determine the degree of relationship between six preselected independent variables and the dependent variable, maternal satisfaction. The results of these analyses indicated that there was a significant and positive relationship between three of these variables; i.e. Maternal Competence, Father Support, and Infant Temperament and Maternal Satisfaction. These findings led to the acceptance of Hypotheses two, four and five. Hypotheses one, three and six were rejected as the correlation coefficients related to these hypotheses did not reach an acceptable level of significance.
Since the major independent variables were not highly intercorrelated, all six preselected variables were entered into a simultaneous multiple linear regression equation to determine the total amount of variance in the dependent variable, maternal satisfaction, accounted for by the full set of independent variables. In addition, the amount of variance in the dependent variable, accounted for by each independent variable individually, was calculated. In the following section, the results of the multiple linear regression analysis are presented.

Findings Related to the Multiple Linear Regressions

The multiple linear regression procedure for the full set of variables produced a significant $R^2$ of .48 ($R = .69, F (6,63) = 1.67, p \ll .001$). Table six summarizes the findings of this analysis. Semipartial correlation coefficients were then calculated for each of the independent variables in the equation. A semipartial correlation is the correlation between each independent variable and the dependent variable, after common variance with other independent variables has been removed (Edward, 1976). Three of the six independent variables in this study were found to contribute
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Unstandardized Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Semipartial Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Standardized Regression Coefficient (Beta)</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Support</td>
<td>.236</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.319</td>
<td>.330</td>
<td>12.35**</td>
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<td>Career Salience</td>
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<td>Maternal Competence</td>
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<td>.37</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td>16.53**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Temperament</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.310</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Discrepancy</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R = .69
R² = .479

* p < .01; ** p < .001
to this equation at a significant level, i.e., Maternal Competence, Father Support, and Infant Temperament. These three variables are presented in terms of semipartial correlation coefficients which indicate the amount of variance in the dependent variable for which they accounted: 1) Maternal Competence ($r^2 = .37$, $F(1,63) = 16.53$, $p < .001$), 2) Father Support ($r^2 = .32$, $F(1,63) = 12.35$, $p < .001$) and 3) Infant Temperament ($r^2 = .29$, $F(1,63) = 10.39$, $p < .001$).

Based on the literature, two interactions between variables were predicted and tested. The interactions tested were between 1) maternal competence and infant temperament and 2) father support and career salience. Neither of these interactions reached the .05 level of significance in these analyses.

**Summary of the Findings Related to the Multiple Linear Regressions.** A multiple linear regression equation was employed to determine the total amount of the variance in the dependent variable which could be predicted by the full set of independent variables. This equation produced a significant $R^2$, .48 ($R^2 = .69$, $F(6,63) = 9.67$, $p < .001$).

In this equation, three variables were identified
as contributing a significant amount of variance to the dependent variable when the other independent variables were controlled; i.e. Maternal Competence, Infant Temperament, and Father Support. These findings lend support to the three hypotheses, Hypotheses two, four, and five, which were accepted in a previous section of this chapter.

Findings in Relation to the Gratifications Checklist

The total score and the individual item scores for the Gratifications of Parenthood checklist were correlated with Maternal Age and the Maternal Satisfaction variables to provide information about the specific gratifications which were enjoyed by this group of women. The total score for this measure was also correlated with the major variables under study in this research. There were no significant correlations in any of these analyses. When correlated with demographic variables, the total score for this measure showed a negative correlation with Years in School ($r = -.27$) which was significant at .05. This correlation indicated that the more education a woman possessed, the lower her gratification score. Since
this measure did not contribute to the stated objectives of the research, it was excluded from further analysis and discussion in this dissertation. It will be considered in future analyses of this data with specific subsets of subjects.

Findings Related to the Personal Rating for Maternal Satisfaction

The personal rating of maternal satisfaction was made by each subject as the final question in her interview. The rating was made to evaluate the reliability between two ratings of maternal satisfaction. This rating was not used in this analysis for the following three reasons: 1) the mean rating for this item was 8.2 on a nine point scale; the standard deviation was .79. These figures indicated that the self-rating measure of maternal satisfaction was not a sensitive measure of this variable 2) the position of the question in the interview, after 45 minutes of discussion about their baby, seemed to lead the mothers toward making a higher, less objective rating and 3) the correlation between the interviewer rating and the personal rating was .41. This indicates that the two ratings were not measuring exactly the same concept. This discrepancy may have occurred because
the mothers were not aware of the definition of maternal satisfaction which was being used by the interviewers. For these reasons, the personal rating of maternal satisfaction was excluded from further analysis and discussion in this study.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study focused on the maternal satisfaction experienced by women who delay childbearing. This chapter will include a) a summary of the major findings, b) a discussion of these findings, and c) implications related to theory, research, and intervention.

Summary of the Major Findings

Sample

Seventy middle to upper middle class women who resided in Central Ohio and whose first child was approximately one year of age were the respondents for this study. These women were twenty-eight years of age or older when their first child was born. As a group, they were in their early thirties and had been married for over six years. They had spent an average of 16 years in school; fifty percent of this sample held one or more advanced degrees.

Prior to the birth of their children, these women had been employed an average of eight years. Those who had the most education had been employed for the
shortest length of time. Thirty-six women were employed at the time of this interview. The mothers who were employed, spent an average of 34 hours a week at work. Forty-two percent of these working women had returned to work by three months postpartum. Thirty-six percent of the women who were not working had no plans to return to work in the near future. The women who had planned their babies were more likely to be unemployed at one year postpartum.

This sample of mothers produced thirty-four female children and thirty-six male children. Sixty women (85%) had planned the timing of this birth, often with great precision. A high percentage (94%) of the mothers and fathers had attended childbirth preparation classes prior to their delivery and found them to be a positive experience. However, even though most of them felt well prepared for childbirth, few reported feeling prepared for parenting.

The labor and delivery experiences of this group indicated that the average length of hospital labor was 13 hours; 71% of them had normal (vaginal) deliveries. Cesarean sections and abnormal presentations accounted for 62% of the remaining deliveries which were considered by subjects to be atypical.
The subjects gave the following four reasons for their delay in childbearing: a) sixty-four percent identified a prebaby agenda, b) twelve percent had late marriages, c) fourteen percent delayed and then experienced infertility problems and a) nine percent had originally planned to be childless.

The mean rating on the Maternal Satisfaction variable for this sample was 7.15 on a nine point interviewer-rated scale. These women appeared, in general, to be quite satisfied with the role of mother.

**Findings Related to the Hypotheses**

Six hypotheses were tested in this research to determine the degree of relationship between six pre-selected independent variables and the dependent variable, maternal satisfaction. The results of these analyses indicated that there was a significant correlation between three of the variables, Maternal Competence, Father Support, and Infant Temperament, and Maternal Satisfaction. These findings led to the acceptance of Hypotheses two, four, and five.

Hypotheses one, three, and six were rejected as the correlation coefficients related to these hypotheses did not reach an acceptable level of significance.
A simultaneous multiple linear regression equation was used to determine the total amount of variance in the dependent variable which could be predicted by 1) the full set of independent variables and 2) each of the independent variables individually.

In this equation, three variables were identified as significantly accounting for variance in the dependent variable. The three variables identified were Maternal Competence, Father Support, and Infant Temperament. Table 6 presents a summary of these findings.

**Discussion**

The trend toward delayed childbearing has raised questions about a) the life situations of the women who are participating in this trend and b) the satisfactions which these women can expect to receive when they become mothers. Few studies have focused on the mothering experiences of the women who delay childbearing. Are these women all well-educated career women? Is their life context related to their satisfactions in the mother role? The data presented in Chapter IV of this study suggest possible answers to these questions. This section of the chapter will present discussion related to the relevant descriptive characteristics of the sample and the statistical findings of this research.
Life Situations of Older First Time Mothers

The women in this sample were similar, in many respects, to the older primiparous women described in related studies (Daniels and Weingarten, 1982; Barber, 1982; Wilkie, 1982; Kappelman and Ackerman, 1981; Doering and Entwistle, 1981). They were educated middle to upper middle class women with a desire to be competent in all areas of their lives. Their family roles were considered to be their most important roles, followed in importance by their career roles and their leisure activities.

In some respects, this sample was more heterogeneous than other samples of programmatic postponers. The career salience issue highlights this difference. A widely accepted reason for postponing childbearing has been the woman's desire to pursue a career. For example, Barber (1982) reported that 88% of her educated sample was back at work before their children were one year of age.

The findings of the present study indicated that not all women who delay are highly career-oriented. The data suggested that some women worked to achieve goals (e.g. buy a house, become financially secure, put husband through college). They delayed childbearing in order to do this. When these goals were
achieved, they had a baby and stayed at home. The negative relationship between Career Salience and Years Worked supports this interpretation.

The professional women in this sample reported that they were surprised at the strength of their desire to stay at home after the birth of their first baby. Many experienced conflict between their roles; fifty-eight percent indicated a desire to decrease their commitment to their professions. Daniels and Weingarten (1982) and Barber (1982) also found the pull of motherhood to be surprisingly strong for the professional women in their samples.

Two other descriptive variables were related to Employment Status and were interesting enough to warrant discussion. Employment Status was significantly correlated with Planned Pregnancy ($p < .01$). This suggests that women who have not planned their pregnancy are more likely to be employed at one year postpartum. Because of the small size of this subgroup, it is not possible to say if this finding relates to their satisfaction with mothering or if they are still completing a prebaby agenda. It is surprising, however, that in this group of seventy educated women there would be ten unplanned pregnancies. Psychodynamic theorists would explain this as the desire of women to fulfill their deepest and most
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powerful wish, that of becoming a mother (Deutsch, 1945; Erikson, 1968).

Employment Status was also significantly correlated with Sex of the Child ($p < .05$). This correlation indicated that a woman was more likely to be out of the labor force if her child is female. Several possible explanations for this relationship exist in the literature. Chodorow (1978) described the mother–female child relationship as being profoundly important to the reproduction of mothering. She described the importance of the mother as a role model. Perhaps there is a desire to portray a traditional female role to a daughter. Fawcett (1979) reported that for women who looked to their child as someone with whom to identify, female infants were more satisfying. A substantial amount of research on mother–infant interaction suggests that sex related differences in infants during the first year affect maternal response (Lewis, 1969; Moss, 1967; Goldberg and Lewis, 1969). Moss (1967) reported that male infants slept less and cried more than female infants. He also reported that mothers held female infants longer, were more successful in comforting them, and interacted with them more. Goldberg and Lewis (1969) reported
that at six months female infants were more likely to be touched, talked to, and handled than male infants. Lewis' observations of infant behavior revealed that female infants were more dependent and showed less exploratory behavior than males.

In light of this research, it seems reasonable to suggest that mothers make employment related decisions based on their perceptions of their infant's needs. If a female infant is dependent, easier to care for, and responsive to the mother's attention, a woman is likely to consider staying at home.

Employment status has proven to be a very significant variable for providing insight into the life situations of these women. This variable was also significantly correlated with one of the major independent variables in this study, Father Support. It will be further discussed in the section addressing this variable.

It has been suggested in the literature that women who intentionally delay childbearing represent a unique group of highly educated, career-women (Rindfuss et al. 1981; Daniels and Weingarten, 1982; Entwisle and Doering, 1981). Daniels and Weingarten (1982) have identified these women as "programmatic postponers". They described this type of postponement
as one which was determined by the existence of a prebaby life agenda and suggested that the eighties would become the era of the programmatic postponers. The findings of the present research suggest that this era has arrived. The percent of intentional postponers in this sample was higher than had been reported in earlier research (Daniels and Weingarten, 1978, 1982; Kessler et al., 1980). While there was originally some concern as to the availability of seventy women in this category, this sample was surprisingly easy to identify. In fact, it appears that programmatic postponement is a relatively common occurrence among educated women in the 1980's. The data from this research indicated that not all women who postpone childbearing are highly educated and career-oriented as was suggested in earlier research. Many of these women had traditional role orientations; but, they also had the maturity needed to delay their gratifications. Wilkie (1981) discussed similar findings in her paper on demographic trends in childbearing. She also highlighted a preparental period in women's lives which included plans for childbearing along with their other life goals.

The life circumstances of the women in this sample depicted a group of women who were having
different experiences with the mother role. The composition of the sample and the findings of this study suggest a more universal trend toward delayed parenthood than has been reported in previous literature. Many women have recognized this opportunity and used it to their personal advantage.

Findings Relating to Maternal Satisfaction

Maternal satisfaction has been defined in this research as the positive orientation a woman expressed toward her role as a mother. The women who expressed high satisfaction found pleasure in all aspects of mothering and faced their role essentially without regret or conflict. Six possible influences on maternal satisfaction were presented as independent variables in this study. They were selected in combination because of the interactive system or network which they suggest. Three of these variables were identified by correlational analyses and multiple linear regression as being significantly related to a woman's satisfaction with the mother role. These variables, maternal competence, father support, and infant temperament, along with maternal satisfaction, represent components of a dynamic family system (Lerner and Spanier, 1978). A discussion of the four variables
which have been identified in this research as components of this system follows.

**Father support.** This variable measured the amount of emotional support and physical help which the father was seen as providing to his wife in her mother role. Father Support was a complex variable which appeared to measure not only the father's support in relation to the child; but, also, a more generalized support for the mother as a woman.

Thirty-five percent of the women in this sample described their husbands as willing to help with the baby; but, not fully understanding the baby's needs. Sixty-two percent, however, felt that their husbands understood the baby's needs quite well. Only two women (3%) indicated that their husbands did not understand a baby's needs at all. Entwisle and Doering (1981) report that both the husbands and wives in their sample were quite unprepared for understanding newborn babies and took several months to adjust to their needs. The subjects in the present study described a relationship between the child and the father which had developed over the first year. Many of them expressed surprise at the depth of their husband's involvement with the baby. In response to the question,
"Are you happy with the way the father responds to the baby?", 85% gave a positive answer. These fathers appeared to be similar to those described by Daniels and Weingarten (1982). They reported that the men in their sample felt fatherhood was important and were anxious to talk about their experiences.

The subjects in the present study depended on their husbands for emotional support. Seventy-four percent felt that their husbands gave them the support they needed. Entwisle and Doering (1981) reported that the father's emotional response to the first birth was a dominant factor in the wife's role behavior. The subjects in their sample expressed a need for their husband's support as they refocused their life roles. Gladdieux (1978) reported that this support was essential to the women in her sample as they restructured their life and their self-image.

In the present study, the fathers helped when they were at home or had the time; only one father had restructured his life to help care for the child. However, very few mothers expected them to react differently and seemed pleased with the help they received. This seems to suggest that traditional roles were operating in many of the marriages represented in this sample.
Father support was significantly correlated with Employment Status in this sample, but not with Career Orientation. An important distinction has been made in the literature between these two variables. Career orientation is a rather stable predisposition toward wanting to achieve outside the home and enjoying the challenges of the work role. Employment status only measures if one is working or not; it does not account for satisfaction with the work role. The first finding indicates only that there is a significant relationship between a woman's work status and her husband's support.

Seven women in the sample (10%) scored three or less on the Father Support variable. This not only indicated that they received little support from their husbands; but, that they also felt resentment toward him concerning this issue. These women indicated that the father ignored the baby and resented the amount of time she devoted to it. They seemed generally depressed with their lives and viewed their husbands' actions as a personal statement about their effectiveness in the mother role.

Maternal Competence. This variable measured the degree to which a woman felt she was performing adequately in the mother role. To determine this rating,
the women were asked if they understood their baby's needs and if they felt good about themselves as mothers. Ninety-eight percent of this sample felt that they understood their baby's needs. They often described this understanding as a talent which was acquired through months of trial and error. Ninety-four percent reported that they looked to their baby for cues concerning his needs rather than depending on the clock or instinct.

In response to the question, "Have you ever felt that you are not as good as a mother as you would like to be?", thirty-two percent answered positively; twenty-four percent said they had never felt that way; forty-two percent reported that they felt inadequate occasionally. The two reasons most often given for these feelings of inadequacy were related to the baby's fussiness and the mother's lack of patience. Veroff et al. (1981) also reported that the older more educated women in their sample were critical of themselves in this aspect of parenting.

Most of the women in this sample considered themselves to be competent in all their roles. Sixty percent indicated that they felt as competent as a mother as they did in other roles. The most highly educated women, however, disagreed. They felt that
their training and experience in career related roles made them more competent in that aspect of their lives. Only seven percent of the total sample felt more competent in the mother role than in their other roles. Tangri (1975) and Birnbaum (1975) suggested that many educated women have experienced exceptional competence in other roles and may, therefore, have a higher comparison level. Lopata (1971) suggests that school and work teach young women to be task-oriented and to measure competency in terms of finished products. The dynamic nature of mothering makes it difficult for a woman to become proficient or to complete her task.

In this sample, Maternal Competence was negatively correlated with Maternal Age ($r = -.25, p<.05$). It is difficult to decide if these older women are really less competent or if they are more open about admitting their inadequacies. Perhaps their longer tenure in the world of work is more sharply contrasted to their sense of being a novice at mothering.

Although these women did discuss some feelings of inadequacy, their general tone was not one of failure. They seemed to be capable women who had the unique capacity to become competent in more than one role.
This variable was highly correlated with maternal satisfaction.

**Infant Temperament.** This variable measures the mother's perception of the ease or difficultness of her child. To measure this variable, the women were asked to complete a scale which described baby behaviors. They rated their baby's behavior as easy, average, or difficult. They were also asked to rank their baby as to their overall ease of care in terms of their excitability and their moods. Difficult babies have been identified as a major source of maternal dissatisfaction by a number of researchers (Hock, 1976; Entwisle and Doering, 1980; Bates et al., 1979). Hock et al. (1980) suggested that fussiness in babies may influence career-related decisions. A correlation between Infant Temperament and Employment Status was not found in this research.

Infant Temperament was correlated with Maternal Competence in this research. It is possible that a woman's feeling of competence in the mother role is influenced by the temperament of her infant. Or perhaps women who feel less competent perceive their babies as more difficult. This finding is supported by
Hock's (1976) work in which she suggested that women blame their infants' difficultness on their own lack of competence in the mother role. Many women in this study indicated that their feelings of competence in their roles were determined by the feedback they received from others. The infant's behavior and temperament obviously served as feedback to these mothers.

Maternal Satisfaction. Generally, the women expressed positive attitudes regarding their mothering experiences and were eager to discuss their infants. Ninety-four percent indicated that they were more satisfied than they expected to be. They attributed this satisfaction to their love for their child and the sense of fulfillment which the experience gave them. Many researchers have reported similar responses to similar questions (Daniels and Weingarten, 1982; Barber, 1982; Veroff et al., 1981; Grossman et al., 1980; Entwisle and Doering, 1981). Barber (1982) reports that the women in her sample whose infants were between the ages of four and 12 months were "glowing" with excitement from this new experience. The satisfaction in her sample grew when the infant began to smile, walk and communicate. In the present study, women also described one year as being exciting.
When asked to describe their favorite aspect of mothering, the most frequent response was "playing". Other responses to this question included breastfeeding, reading to the baby, and watching their child's development. The aspect of mothering which was enjoyed least by these subjects was the constancy of the care (35%). Fifty-five percent of these subjects felt some resentment about the time their baby took; most of this subgroup mentioned that they missed their personal freedom and their time alone. Daniels and Weingarten (1982) reported that the older mothers in their sample described similar feelings.

Seventy percent of the sample indicated that motherhood was not the type of experience they had expected. Forty percent felt it was better. Some indicated that it was more difficult and more time-consuming; others indicated that they didn't know what to expect. Four women reported that they were less satisfied with the mother role than they expected to be. These women had all experienced conflict between their professional and family roles.

Maternal Satisfaction was negatively correlated with educational level (p<.05) in this analysis. In light of this finding, it should be noted that the women in this sample with the most education had the
shortest time to pursue their careers. Many of them were recent graduates who were just beginning to establish themselves in professional roles. The role strain inherent in this situation may explain this negative relationship.

Sixty percent of this sample could not imagine feeling self-fulfilled if they were not mothers. Using a large national sample including women of all ages, Hoffman (1979) reported that 25% of first parity women saw children as life's fulfillment. In comparing this finding with zero parity women, she reported that the attitude toward the mother role became more positive after the first child was born. The women in the present sample seemed quite satisfied when compared with these other samples of women. The variability in related aspects of their lives which was revealed in this study, has provided important information concerning correlates of this satisfaction.

The correlates identified in this study suggested that maternal satisfaction for older mothers was strongly influenced by their life situations. The support of their husbands, the temperament of their infants, and their own feelings of competence in the mother role contributed significantly to this feeling. These findings suggested a model for predicting
maternal satisfaction. By assessing strengths and weaknesses in relation to each of these correlates, women could theoretically use this model to predict their satisfaction. While this model may also be relevant for younger mothers, it seems especially relevant for the women who delay. These women have established marriages, are mature, and are sensitive to the feedback they receive from their environment.

Discussion of Three Variables - Locus of Control, Career Salience, and Age Discrepancy - Not Significantly Related to Maternal Satisfaction

It was hypothesized that three additional variables, Locus of Control, Career Salience, and Age Discrepancy, would be significantly related to Maternal Satisfaction. Despite theoretical indications that they would contribute to the Maternal Role Satisfaction of these mothers, these variables were not significantly related in this analysis. In this section, a brief discussion will address possible theoretical and methodological reasons for their lack of significance.

Locus of Control. It was hypothesized that an internal rating on the Locus of Control measure would be positively related to Maternal Satisfaction in this
research. Women who delay parenthood have been described in the literature as possessing personality attributes similar to the suggested correlates of an internal orientation. That is, they are optimistic about self, successful in achievement situations, and express high levels of personal adjustment. Because they believe that they have personal control over life events, they may work harder to achieve success in their life roles.

While this psychological variable seemed relevant for this group of women, it was not related to Maternal Satisfaction when tested by correlational analysis and multiple linear regression. Two possible reasons for the lack of a relationship are suggested: 1) Locus of control may have a curvilinear relationship with Maternal Satisfaction. That is, either a high or low score on this measurement may be unrelated to Maternal Satisfaction. However, a moderate score on this measure may be related to Maternal Satisfaction. Only a linear relationship was tested for in this analysis. 2) Based on the findings of the present study, one could also question the usefulness of studying personality variables during the time of this major life transition. The intensity of the early mothering experience often causes introspection and
reorganization of one's self-image. During this period, the immediate situational aspects of a woman's life may be more salient predictors of her satisfaction with this new role than personality variables. When the child is older and the situational context stabilizes, this variable may be a more relevant measure.

**Career Salience.** It was hypothesized that this variable would be negatively related to Maternal Satisfaction in this research. Women who delay childbearing have been identified in the literature as being career-oriented, educated and employed. A career orientation has been identified as a basic, personality predisposition which influences women's decisions about employment and their experiences in the mother role. However, in this analysis, Career Salience was not significantly related to Maternal Satisfaction. Three possible reasons for this lack of relationship are suggested: 1) The relationship between Career Salience and Maternal Satisfaction may be curvilinear. That is, a high or low score on this measure may not be related to Maternal Satisfaction. However, a score in the moderate or undecided range may be significantly related to the dependent measure. Only a linear relationship was tested for in this analysis. 2) Career
Salience may not be as relevant as Employment Status for predicting Maternal Satisfaction at one year postpartum. Perhaps, the immediacy of an infant's demands takes precedence over the mother's personal role preferences. A woman's actual employment status could be considered a direct indicator of her time and energy level and, thereby, an influence on her satisfaction with mothering. 3) A more complex relationship between Employment Status, Career Salience, and Maternal Satisfaction is also possible. An interpretation of different combinations of Career Salience scores with Employment Status may help to describe this relationship. For example, a mother who has a low score on Career Salience and is Employed may be less satisfied in the mother role than one who is high in Career Salience and Employed.

Age Discrepancy. It was hypothesized that this variable would be negatively related to Maternal Satisfaction. That is, the more "off time" a woman felt with her first birth, the lower her level of satisfaction with mothering. A social clock has been described in the sociological literature; it is said to dictate acceptable timetables for the enactment of major life events. This theory suggests that being "on time" is important to one's feeling of social support.
and subsequent adjustment to life situations. Therefore, it was hypothesized that the greater the discrepancy between the woman's actual age and her expressed ideal age to have a baby, the less satisfied she would be as a mother. Unexpectedly, a positive relationship was found between these two variables (F = 2.53, p < .10) in the Multiple Regression analysis. While this relationship did not reach an acceptable level of significance, the direction of the relationship was interesting. Three possible reasons are suggested for this finding: 1) Social age norms surrounding the later ages of childbearing are not strong for this group of delaying women. In fact, the positive relationship between Age Discrepancy and Maternal Satisfaction suggests that the farther a woman is from her expressed ideal age when she has her first baby, the more satisfied she feels. 2) The age range represented by this sample may have been too narrow to produce sufficient variability on this measure. 3) Instead of responding to a recognized social age norm when asked about an ideal age for childbearing, these older, but satisfied women, may have been expressing their recognition of a biological constraint limiting their ability to have another child. Many wished they
had not waited so long to have their first baby and that they had been better prepared for the positive aspects of the mothering experience.

Because the theoretical rationale for this variable has been questioned by the findings of this research, further analyses are not suggested.

Implications

The implications of this research will be divided into three sections. Included will be implications for theory, research, and intervention. Several factors, as discussed in Chapter One, must be considered when discussing the implications of this study. First, the results are based on a restricted sample of women, and generalizations beyond this sample must be done with caution. Second, the study was correlational in nature and care must be taken not to imply cause-effect relationships. Third, the maternal satisfaction rating may not be entirely independent of the ratings for father support and maternal competence. Fourth, the ratings in this research were based on mother's report and must be considered as reflecting her perceptions.

In view of these considerations, the findings of this study indicated that elements of a woman's life situation were significantly related to her
satisfaction with the mother role. Implications resulting from these findings follow.

Theory

The women who have postponed childbearing provide an interesting developmental contrast to those women who follow a traditional timing. This delay extends women's childrearing responsibilities into their fifties. How do fifty year old women, who are in the midst of childrearing, compare to other fifty year olds who are faced with an "empty nest"? Comparisons could be made with respect to marital status, career development, and personal philosophies. Through consideration of the later years of the life span for these women, it may be possible to disentangle the effects of parenthood from other aspects of women's lives.

The late timing of parenthood also has implications for the interaction between generations. A thirty to forty year age difference between generations could decrease the involvement of one generation with another. It seems reasonable to suggest that children would have less contact with their grandparents. This would have implications for those in both generations and for the transmission of family history and values.
There was support in the present research for aspects of psychodynamic theory. It is suggested that a strong desire to mother was revealed through the occurrence of unplanned pregnancy and the reluctance of women to return to work; many women reported that mothering was more appealing and satisfying than they had expected. These findings raise questions about society's support for young women who want to pursue both the mother role and a career. Because of societal pressure, some young women with high career aspirations may choose to remain childless.

There is also support for family system theory in this research. A pattern of reinforcement among members of these families was identified as influencing a woman's satisfaction in the mother role. During the birth transition, father support, infant temperament, and maternal competence appear to be components of a highly interdependent system for these older mothers. As the family matures and situational factors change, this configuration is likely to be different.

Research

There are recommendations for additional analyses and research which are suggested by this study. They are presented in this section.
Recommendations for additional analyses. In this research, it was hypothesized that six independent variables would be significantly related to Maternal Satisfaction when tested using correlational analysis and multiple linear regression. These analyses were made and identified three of the preselected variables, Maternal Competence, Father Support, and Infant Temperament, as being significantly related to Maternal Satisfaction. The other three variables, Locus of Control, Career Salience, and Age Discrepancy, were not significantly related in these analyses. However, two of these variables, Locus of Control and Career Salience, continue to be of theoretical interest in this investigation and should be the subject of further analyses. Based on the findings of this dissertation, the following additional analyses of these data are recommended:

1. The Locus of Control variable should be reanalyzed to determine if it has a curvilinear relationship with Maternal Satisfaction. This would determine if a moderate score on this measure is more highly associated with Maternal Satisfaction than either a high or low score.

2. The Career Salience variable should be reanalyzed to determine if it has a curvilinear relationship with Maternal Satisfaction. This would determine
if a moderate or an undecided rating on Career Salience would be more related to Maternal Satisfaction than either a low or a high score on this measure.

3. Separate analyses for employed and unemployed mothers should be made to determine if different configurations of the preselected variables emerge for these two subgroups. It is possible that while these mothers are all relatively satisfied, different factors are influencing their satisfaction. The items and the total score for the Gratifications of Parenthood checklist should be analyzed with these subgroups to determine if these groups identify different specific gratifications of parenthood.

4. Career Salience and Employment Status should be separated into four different combinations; i.e., 1) Low Career Salience/Employed; 2) Low Career Salience/Unemployed; 3) High Career Salience/Employed; and 4) High Career Salience/Unemployed. This would make it possible to determine if any combinations of these variables are better predictors of satisfaction than Career Salience alone.

5. The four groups representing the different reasons for delayed childbearing should be compared to identify possible differences in their relationships with the independent variables. Even though an
analysis of variance did not identify significant differences between these groups in Maternal Satisfaction, it is possible that additional analyses may reveal different predictors in these subgroups. The Gratifications of Parenthood Checklist could be used to identify specific differences in gratifications expressed by these subgroups.

6. Separate analyses should be made for women having female children and those having male children. The correlation of the Sex of Child variable and Employment Status suggests that women may react to this experience differently depending on the sex of their baby. In addition, an analysis of the Gratifications of Parenthood checklist with respect to these two subgroups of mothers may indicate that different gratifications are identified depending on the child's sex.

Recommendations for additional research.

1. The first recommendation would be to add a longitudinal component to this study; continue to follow these mothers through the early years of their infants' lives. This would provide the data needed to
determine cause-effect relationships among the variables found to be significant in this research. The longitudinal data could also be used in model construction to determine interactive relationships among these same variables.

2. The second recommendation would be to include a father interview in the study design. An interesting comparison may exist between the fathers' and mothers' perceptions of his support. This interview could provide the data for the father support variable thereby disentangling it from the maternal satisfaction rating. Fathers may contribute substantially to the decision to delay; this is an area which deserves more attention.

3. The third recommendation would be to gather information concerning the family history of women who delay childbearing. This investigation may reveal a family pattern of delayed childbearing much as is described in the literature for adolescent childbearing.

4. The fourth recommendation would be to incorporate a medical component into the study to ascertain whether the high incidence of perinatal difficulties are related to medical or psychological factors.

5. The fifth recommendation would be to add an
observational assessment of maternal competence to the study. A comparison between the observational measure and a self-report measure would provide an interesting analysis.

6. The sixth recommendation would be to assess women before and after the first child's birth to ascertain the salience of their careers, their work involvement, and their methods of prioritizing their lives.

7. The final recommendation would be to continue to study segregated age groups of women. The functioning in adulthood is too complex to be further confounded with developmental and cohort differences.

Intervention

Several recommendations for clinical and educational intervention are suggested by the findings of this research. They are presented in this section.

1. First, the mothers in this study were unprepared for the intensity of the first three months of parenting. Because they enjoyed their prenatal classes and were women who responded to education, postnatal classes are recommended. These classes would be information-providing and also serve as a support network for these women. They should focus on infant
temperament and help parents to identify strategies for meeting the needs of different kinds of babies. They should stress that not all differences in infants are related to the competency of the mother.

2. Second, this research suggests that husband involvement and support are essential to maternal satisfaction. Fathers should continue to be included in educational and clinical programs designed to help parents before and after the prenatal period. There should be an emphasis on the father role and the importance of his support.

3. Third, career women should be counseled as to the best time for parenting in relation to their career development. Career counselors should be well informed about the strain of simultaneously developing family and career roles. This counseling should include some advance warning about how engaging as well as demanding childrearing is; many women having their first child really do not want to be separated from that child as soon as they had expected.

4. Fourth, women should be made aware of the biological factors which make infertility in the thirties more prevalent. The emphasis in the literature has been primarily on birth defects; women need to also be aware of other constraints.
5. A final recommendation would be to prepare women for the life span implications of the timing for childbearing. There appears to be a misconception in the literature concerning the length of this obligation. Women contemplating delayed childbearing need to be aware that there may be costs in the later years as a result of this timing.


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APPENDIXES
APPENDIX A
June 14, 1982

Dear Mothers:

The Ohio State University Day Care Center has released the names on their waiting list to me for my dissertation research. I am writing to explain the general purpose of my study and to explain the criteria for my sample selection.

I am proposing to investigate the maternal role satisfaction of women who delay parenthood. Although this appears to be a growing trend among women, there is very little research on this subject. I am hoping to identify correlates of maternal satisfaction for these women.

In order to participate in this research, women must have been 27 or over when their first child was born, be one year postpartum (range 10-14 months), have attended college, and be married to their baby's father.

Participation involves a one hour interview and the completion of four short questionnaires. The total time involvement would be approximately ninety minutes.

Within the next two weeks, another interviewer or I will call you. If you qualify and are interested, we will schedule an interview time for you. If you have any questions, please call me at 457-2822.

Your participation in this research in no way affects your status on the O.S.U. Day Care Waiting List.

Sincerely,

Susan S. Coady
MOTHERS NEEDED

IS YOUR FIRST BABY BETWEEN TEN AND FOURTEEN MONTHS OLD? WERE YOU OR YOUR WIFE OVER TWENTY-EIGHT WHEN THIS BABY WAS BORN? IF SO, PERHAPS YOU CAN HELP ME. I AM LOOKING FOR SEVENTY WOMEN WHO FIT THE ABOVE DESCRIPTION TO PARTICIPATE IN MY DISSERTATION RESEARCH. PARTICIPATION CONSISTS OF AN ONE HOUR INTERVIEW SCHEDULED AT YOUR CONVENIENCE. THE GENERAL PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH IS TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC CORRELATES OF MATERNAL SATISFACTION FOR THE GROWING NUMBER OF WOMEN WHO ARE DELAYING CHILDBEARING.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW WOULD BE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH, PLEASE CALL SUE GOADY AT 457-2822.
June 14, 1982

Dear Mothers:

Thank you for consenting to participate in our project on Delayed Parenthood. I am writing to confirm your Interview time with ______________ on _____________.

Enclosed you will find the four questionnaires which we discussed in our phone conversation. The directions are printed on the first page of each form. If possible, please complete these before your scheduled appointment. If you have questions about these questionnaires, we can discuss them during the Interview.

If you need to contact me before the Interview, we can be reached at 457-2822 or 299-9001.

Thank you for your cooperation and your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

Susan S. Coady
Research Associate
Department of Family Relations and Human Development
1787 Neil Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43210
The Ohio State University
University Hospitals

Research Involving Human Subjects
Consent to Serve as a Subject in Research
Behavioral and Survey Research Form

I consent to serve as a subject in the research investigation entitled:

MATERNAL ROLE SATISFACTION OF WOMEN WHO DELAY PARENTHOOD

The nature and general purpose of the research procedure have been explained to me. This research is to be performed by or under the direction of Susan Coady and Dr. Barbara Newman who are authorized to use the services of others in the performance of this research.

I understand that any further inquiries I make concerning this procedure will be answered. I understand my identity will not be revealed in any publication, document, recording, video-tape, photograph, computer data storage, or in any other way which relates to this research. Finally, I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time.

Signed_______________________
Participant

Date_________________________

Time _________A.M. P.M.

Witness

Investigator
INTERVIEW ONE YEAR POSTPARTUM.MOTHERS

Date: ________________________

Interviewer's Name: ________________________

Time Interview Began: ________________________

A. 1. Mother's Name ________________________ Age-
2. Baby's name ________________________ Age-
3. Are you currently employed? Yes ☐ No ☐
   If yes, describe present job.
   If no, describe most recent job.

4. How many hours per week do you work?

5. How long were you at home after your baby's birth?

6. Did you work before your baby was born? How long?

7. Do you plan to return to work? When the baby is how old?

8. How many years did you attend school?

9. Are you married? Yes ☑ No ☐
10. How long have you been married?

11. Did you attend prenatal classes? Yes ☐  No ☐
    Can you tell me your reactions to those classes?

12. Did the baby’s father attend prenatal classes? Yes ☐  No ☐

13. How old is the baby’s father? __________________________

14. Is the baby’s father currently employed? Yes ☐  No ☐
    If yes, describe present job.
    If no, describe most recent job.

15. Was the father present at the delivery? Yes ☐  No ☐

16. What is your baby’s birth date? ________________________

17. Where was your baby born? ____________________________

18. Did you have a normal delivery? Yes ☐  No ☐
    If no, what were the complications? (describe briefly)

19. How long was your labor? ______________________________

20. Did the baby have any problems right after birth? Yes ☐  No ☐
    If yes, describe.

21. How long did you stay in the hospital? ________________

22. Did the baby come home with you? Yes ☐  No ☐
    If no, describe.

23. Was this baby planned?
24. Some of the mothers we see are employed and some are not. The amount and type of child care of these women varies considerably. Therefore, could you tell me how many hours per week you use child care?

25. Who cares for your baby when you need this type of help?

26. Are you satisfied with this arrangement?
INTERVIEW NEW MOTHERS 1 Yr. P.P.

27. When you have questions about your child's care, where do you go for answers?

28. How old was your baby when you left her/him alone for the first time?

** 29. Do you think it is good or bad for young children to be left alone with someone other than their mother or father?

30. Children need to feel loved. How do you give your child this feeling?

31. Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior in the last few months?

31a. Describe your child. (fussy, social, happy)?

32. To what extent does your husband understand what is involved in the care of a child? Very much somewhat He doesn't really understand
33. Does your husband or any one else you care about feel resentful about the time you spend with your child? If yes, how do you cope with that?

34. Next to you, who spends the most time caring for your child?

Who else helps? How much?

35. How much does the child's father share in meeting the child's needs? (i.e. changing, bathing, feeding).

36. How many hours per week does your husband care for your child when you are not there?

**37. Are you satisfied with the way the father responds to the child?

38. Do you feel your husband gives you adequate emotional support in dealing with family matters?
39. Children take a lot of time and many mothers experience feelings of resentment about this. Do you ever feel resentful about the time your child demands? If yes, what would you rather be doing?

** 40. All mothers enjoy certain aspects of caring for their children more than others. What have you enjoyed the most?

Which aspect has not been as enjoyable for you?

41. Has motherhood been the type of experience which you were expecting? If so, in what ways?

If no, in what ways?

42. Generally, are you more satisfied or less satisfied with this experience than you expected? What has contributed to this feeling?

* 43. Now that you've been a mother for one year, can you imagine feeling self-fulfilled (happy or satisfied) if you were not a mother?
44. Since the birth of your baby have you changed any personal or professional plans for your future?

What changes have you made?

45. What caused you to reach this decision?

Was it your own decision?

46. Did you experience any personal conflict in making this decision?

If so, would you describe it as:

a. slight
b. mild
c. severe

47. Do you feel you understand what your child needs most of the time?
48. How do you know what your child wants?

49. What methods do you use to comfort your child? Are these methods usually successful?

** 50. Many mothers feel that they are not as good at being a mother as they would like to be. Have you ever felt this way? What type of circumstances cause this feeling (probe)?

   a. Do you feel this way often or only once in awhile?

   b. How do you cope with these feelings?

51. Are there other roles in which you feel more competent or as competent as you do in the mother role? What are these roles?

52. What is it about these roles which make you feel competent?
53. The following four questions deal with age norms and your perceptions of them. What is the ideal age to have your first baby? Why do you feel that this is ideal?

54. We are interested in the timing of the first birth and in your reasons for the timing you have chosen. What factors contributed to your having a baby at this age?

55. At what age do most people you know have their first child?

56. At what age would you want your daughter to have her first baby?

57. Do you plan to have any more children?

If yes, when and how many?

58. On a scale from 1-9 how would you rate your own personal satisfaction with the role of mother?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9

Not Satisfied  Very Satisfied

* Moss (Cited in Hock, 1976)
** Hock (1976)
**RATING SCALE**

**INTERVIEW - BASED VARIABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Description</th>
<th>Typical Question</th>
<th>Rating Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| #1 Maternal Satisfaction rates the positive orientations the mother expresses toward her role as mother. | Now that you've been a mother for one year can you imagine feeling self-fulfilled (happy or satisfied) if you were not a mother? | This variable assesses the positive orientations M expresses towards her role as a mother. She may find pleasure in all aspects of mothering, the pleasureable and not so pleasureable (i.e. diapering, night feeding, etc.); to be a mother means to be fulfilled and is faced essentially without conflict or regret. Conversely, M may express intense negativism towards being a mother, annoyance with the baby's demands, regret at what she loses in "freedom" etc., and wonder whether it is "worth it." She also may describe herself as someone who doesn't like children or whom children don't like.  
1-M expresses virtually no positive feelings towards the maternal role. (Feels trapped, tied down.) May feel that motherhood is not the type of experience she expected. |
3-M expresses a few positive attitudes about the mother role but evidences much conflict. The baby causes her worry and concern and creates problems in other aspects of her life. She mentions more negative aspects of mothering than positive ones. She is less satisfied with role than she expected. She may indicate a concern about her lack of strong maternal feelings.

5-M expresses a moderate amount of positive orientation but also gives evidence for conflict and negativism. Her feelings are mixed but overall she is satisfied with many aspects of motherhood and it is very much as she expected it.

7-M expresses quite a positive orientation (only one or two negative aspects) toward the mother role but gives evidence of slight conflict. While motherhood is much as expected or better than expected she may be able to imagine feeling self-fulfilled without being a mother.
9-M expresses strong and exclusively positive feelings towards motherhood and experiences all of its demands with pleasure. Since experiencing motherhood, she cannot imagine feeling self-fulfilled if she were not a mother. Motherhood is better than she ever could have imagined.

** 2. Father Support - The mother’s perception of the amount of emotional and physical support which the father provides.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Support</th>
<th>Does your husband give you adequate emotional support in dealing with family matters?</th>
<th>This variable assesses the amount of emotional and physical support the wife feels she gets from her husband in relation to handling the mother role.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Father is not helpful and mother wishes he would be different. He resents the time she spends with the baby and lends no emotional support in this area and really does not understand what care babies require.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Father is helpful and supportive on occasions. Mother describes moderate emotional support and some of his nurturant behaviors toward the baby. He spends an average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3 Maternal Competence

| The mother's perception of her ability to perform effectively in the mother role. | Many mothers feel that they are not as good as mothers as they would like to be. Have you ever felt this way? | This variable assesses the mother's feeling of competence in the maternal role. How well she feels she can meet the infant's needs, nurture, and understand her baby. |

1. Mother has virtually no confidence in her maternal skills, belittles and minimizes herself in this regard. Wishes she were better mother in many respects. Feels more competent in other roles.

5. Mother has moderate confidence; in some tasks she does well; others not. She feels she is reasonably adequate. Her techniques are moderately successful. She feels as competent as a mother as she does in other roles.
### Interview Based Variables

<table>
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<tr>
<td>9. Mother feels competent; her techniques are usually successful. She feels she is doing as well as she hoped she would. She feels more successful and better at being a mother than she does in other roles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Adapted from Moss (Cited in Hock, 1976) description for variable 'Positive attitude toward the maternal role.'

** Adapted from Hock (1976) description for variable 'Paternal Involvement.'

*** Adapted from Moss (Cited in Hock, 1976) 'Confidence in Maternal Skills.'

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These consist of pages:

Gratifications of Parenthood Checklist (Appendix G Pages 156)
Career Salience Scale (Appendix H Pages 158-160)
Infant Temperament Measure (Appendix I Pages 162-164)
Factor I of Rotter's Scale for the Measurement of Locus of Control (Appendix J Pages 166-167)
APPENDIX H
APPENDIX J