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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

WOMEN PREPARING TO REENTER THE WORKFORCE

BY

MARION R. SCHAPIRO

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1991

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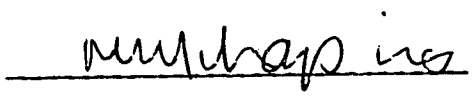

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THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT THEY HAVE READ, AND RECOMMEND TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH FOR ACCEPTANCE, A THESIS ENTITLED Women Preparing to Reenter the Workforce SUBMITTED BY Marion R. Schapiro IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Education.

Dr. G. W. Fitzsimmons

Dr. D. L. Stewin

Dr. K. Ward

Date:

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to:

- my father who died suddenly but peacefully on October 18, 1990 (my first experience of death). I am who I am through knowing and loving Dad, and being loved by him. His love shall continue to sustain me throughout my lifetime;

- my husband, Alan, my friend and partner. I appreciate deeply the support, love, and patience you always show to me (the thesis was no exception);

- my darling children, Gideon, Talya, and Raphael, for your love, sense of humour, and sensitivity (remember how you called my thesis the fourth child in the family!); and

- my mother who has always guided, loved, and encouraged me in all of my endeavours.

I love you all.

Abstract

Expansion of the service sector as well as the Womens' Liberation Movement are the two major factors responsible for the increased number of women who are reentering post-secondary educational institutions and the workforce. Earlier research had indicated that reentry women comprised a homogeneous group. With the increased numbers of divorced, widowed, and separated women reentering, it is questionable whether homogeneity still exists within the reentry population. The questions asked in this thesis address these issues. Are these differences between reentry groups in terms of their personality characteristics, life events, and work values?

Subjects were 75 women from three different reentry populations. These samples of convenience consisted of: (a) college reentry women, referred to as Adapters; (b) women from the 'Options for Women' agency who were considering whether to return or not, referred to as Explorers; and (c) women on social assistance who had applied to the job reentry program of the Canadian Job Strategy, referred to as Change Seekers. Data were gathered using the Personality Research Form, Psychiatric Epidemiology Research Form (PERI), and the Life Roles Inventory - Values Scale.

Results indicated that differences in personality characteristics did exist between the three groups. However, women did not differ on all of the personality characteristics

that had traditionally described the reentry woman. All three groups scored low on autonomy as expected, but their achievement scores were not as high as research had indicated. Differences between groups was found on harmavoidance, succorance, change, and the infrequency scale. These differences may be explained in terms of demographic variables as well as female career development theory. Significant differences on the stress scale were found between the Adapters and the Change Seekers. Significant differences were also found on six of the 20 values. Recommendations included implementing different counselling strategies based on the needs of the individual as well as on the similiarities found to exist between the groups.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

Women reentered the workforce or post-secondary educational institutions at midlife, a time in their lives when parenting responsibilities had lessened and the need for personal satisfaction was strong. Reentry women were conceptualized as a homogenous group, having highly similar demographic and personality characteristics.

Expansion of the service secter as well as the Womens Liberation Movement were two major factors responsible for the increased numbers of women who were reentering (Russel & Fitzgibbons, 1982). The increased number of divorced, widowed, and separated women has led to women reentering at different ages and stages of their lives and for different reasons (Lewis, 1988; Scott, 1980). It becomes questionable whether reentry women can continue to be categorized in a sterotypic way. More recently, research has indicated that results have often been overgeneralized (McGraw, 1982) that is, can the results based on college reentry women be generalized to include all reentry women? Also noted is the fact that little is known about the subgroups of reentry women (Pickering, 1985). Questions such as these represent a relatively new field of endeavor. One of the questions asked in this study is: Are there differences in

personality characteristics between three groups of reenetry women?

Another area of concern is the nature of the stress women experience while making the transition from home to work (Tittle & Decker, 1980). This notion is based on the assumption that life changes require adaptation on the part of the individual and are stressful. Persons experiencing significant changes are susceptible to physical and psychological problems (Baruch, Biener, & Barnett, 1987). Recent studies have examined the types of stress college women experience (Roehl & Okun, 1984; 1985). Spouse support among male and female returning college students has also been studied (Huston-Hoburg & Strange, 1986). What is not known is whether groups of reentry women differ with respect to the stress they experience.

The third area investigated in this study is values. Values are a fundamental part of a decision making paradigm. Values guide occupational choices as well as facilitating the self-awareness process. To the writer's knowledge, there are no studies that have examined the values of reentry women. Since reentry women are involved in career decision making, a study of values, of necessity, must be included in a study on reentry women. Therefore, the question asked is: What are the values of different groups of reentry women?

To summarize, women are reentering the workforce or post-secondary educational institutions in increasing numbers.

Yet, little is known about the different subgroups of reentry women. This study addresses these issues by studying personality characteristics, life events, and values of reentry women.

Overview

This is an exploratory, descriptive study designed to learn more about the demographics, personality characteristics, life events, and values of different subgroups of reentry women. Subjects were 75 women from three different samples of convenience. Groups consisted of (a) college reentry group referred to in this study as Adapters, (b) a group of 'planners' who had approached the 'Options for Womens' agency referred to as Explorers, and (c) a group of women on social assistance who had applied to the job reentry program of the Canadian Job Strategy referred to as Change Seekers. Three inventories and a demographic data sheet were used to gather the data. Two women from each group were later interviewed so that more could be learned about the experience of reentering. It was hoped that by gaining knowledge, counsellors would be better equipped to help service the needs of reentry women. Significant differences between groups were found on the personality inventory and on the values scale. Significant differences were also found between two of the groups with respect to stress that was experienced.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain whether there were differences in personality characteristics, life events, and

values between three subgroups of reentry women. In order to help reentry women through their transition, it becomes important to learn as much as possible about them. For counselling strategies to be effective, they need to be based on the specific needs of individuals. A knowledge of personality characteristics, life events, and values provide some of this much needed information.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theories of Career Development

The definition of career theory has undergone changes. It has changed from a static conceptualization of the individual and the environment to one that gives greater consideration to the entire lifespan and the multiple roles adults occupy (Sonnenfeld and Kotter, 1982). The process of reentry to the work force involves the adoption of a work role that needs to be integrated with the other roles that are already being fulfilled. This process is not without conflict (Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980; Osipow, 1975). Career development theories provide an understanding of the changes that occur when women reenter. This information is important to the vocational counsellor. Therefore, when studying reentry women, it is important to study theories of career development. The three major types of vocational/career theories that have been identified are trait and factor, life span developmental and the theories that combine both life span and life space (Herr & Cramer, 1984, Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982).

Trait and factor theories grew out of the longstanding search for an explanation of individual differences. These theories focused on the relationship between individual traits and career choice (Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982). This approach conceptualized career choice as occurring once-in-a-lifetime. Therefore, career choice was built upon a static conceptualization

of the individual, the work environment and the decision making process (Herr & Cramer, 1984; Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982).

The next era in vocational/career theories involved incorporating the theories of developmental psychologists such as Buehler (1933). This approach adopted a more dynamic view of the individual and the environment (Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982). It also recognized that choices are made frequently throughout an individual's lifetime (Herr & Cramer, 1984). Super's (1957) model conceptualized the career development process as involving five stages, spanning a lifetime. Growth (birth - 14 years) involved role playing, becoming aware of one's likes and dislikes, developing a concept of oneself and the world of work. Exploration (15 - 24 years) involved three sub-stages, making a tentative choice; crystallizing a vocational preference and implementing a choice by entering the workforce. The next stage was maintenance (45 - 65 years) and involved maintaining one's position in the workforce. The decline stage commenced when disengagement occurred (Herr & Cramer, 1984).

With respect to women's career development, Super (1957) was the first to specify their career patterns (Lasserle, Spokane, 1987). His identification of career patterns was based on traditional career development theory which explained career patterns in terms of the discontinuities of career behaviour. According to Super career patterns describe the general career behaviour of individuals which are seen as being regular and

predictable (Osipow, 1983).

The classification of women's career patterns provided the opportunity for analyzing the major work periods which constitute a career (Super, 1963). The classification included the stable homemaking with no significant work experience; the conventional pattern which involved working after education but not after marriage; the stable working pattern which was characteristic of single women who worked continuously; the double track pattern which comprised of married women who worked continuously; and the interrupted pattern that characterized married women who work, then become full time homemakers, then return to the workforce (Super, 1963).

The third major type of theory has focused attention on the entire lifetime. This included a combination of both life span and life space. This expanded view of career has led to career being defined as:

> The course of events which constitute a life, the sequence of occupations and other life roles which combine to express one's commitment to work in his or her total pattern of self-development; the sense of enumerated and non-enumerated positions occupied by a person from adolescence through retirement, of which occupation is only one, includes work-related roles, such as those of student, employee, and pensioner along with complimentary avocational, familial, and civic roles. Careers exist only as people pursue these,

they are person-centered. (Super, 1976 p. 4)

Limitations of Traditional Career Theories

Not all theories are equally useful for explaining the career development of women (Astin, 1985, Brooks, 1984; Fitzgerald & Betz, 1983; Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980; Osipow, 1975; Vetter, 1973). The trait and factor approach did not adequately portray the realities of career choice, particularly because of the lack of awareness of the developmental aspects of the individual (Herr & Cramer, 1984). Moreover, these theories, in particular Holland's theory, have been criticized on the basis of being sexist in nature. Since sex role prescriptions inhibit the implementation of a full range of personality types, this theory maintains the status quo (Herr & Cramer, 1984; Osipow, 1983).

The developmental theories have been criticized for assuming that work was a central component in an individual's life. Furthermore, these theories ignored the interaction between work and non-work aspects of life (Astin, 1985; Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980; Osipow, 1975; Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982). Whereas for men the work role often did assume central importance, for women the work role and family role are not mutually exclusive (Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982). "Men and women differ in the degree to which they perceive the roles in their lives as interconnected." (Evans, 1985, p. 20) Women are differently influenced by virtue of sex-role socialization which inhibits a

woman's ability to implement personal attributes in a career (Forrest & Mikolaitis, 1986; Gold, 1978; Osipow, 1975). Moreover, these barriers are sex-related roles and occupational stereotypes which lead to such subtle psychological problems as role conflict, role overload and fear of success (Osipow, 1975).

Developmental psychologists that are proponents of stage theory believe that growth proceeds in a universal stage-like manner. "Females as a group are more heterogeneous with respect to their life career patterns than men." (Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980, p. 46). Richardson (1981) expressed a similar criticism of earlier developmental theory "as flexibility in choice, timing and sequencing of roles in adulthood increases for both men and women, assumption of normative role patterns becomes more questionable" (p. 16). Sonnenfeld and Kotter (1982) criticized Super's (1957) stage theory on the basis that it perceives the individual to be passive and often overlooks the role of biographical data such as historical dynamics. Stage theories such as Super's (1957) mistakenly focused on the individual without considering sufficiently the influence of the social role that the individual is enacting (Richardson, 1981).

In studies of women's career patterns to date, researchers have considered only a few of the possible patterns that might exist and therefore the studies do not provide an adequate model for the examination of the complex and varied participation

patterns women exhibit in the labour force (Fisher, Carlton-Ford, & Briles, 1979). Today one finds considerable variation in the timing of withdrawal and subsequent re-entry into the labour force (Applebaum, 1981). Women either withdraw for shorter periods of time, re-entering when their youngest is school-aged, or they do not withdraw from the labour force following marriage or birth of children (Applebaum 1981).

Acc rding to Brooks (1984), Fitzgerald and Crites (1980), Kahn (1983), Osipow (1975), and Richardson (1979), major variables that affect women's vocational behavior have been omitted or ignored in the development of established theories of career development. "A large body of literature does confirm that women face issues not ordinarily faced by men as they contemplate the place of work in their lives." (Brooks, 1984, p. 356)

Theories of women's career development need to include constructs that express the relational component (Gilligan, 1982). Also, whereas traditional theories suggest implementing a self concept, for women the concept of identity is more complex (Forrest & Mikolaitis, 1984). Zytowski (1969) noted that one of the difficulties of constructing a separate theory of women's career development is the fact that women's roles are not static. Marriage and homemaking continue to pose a major constraint on women's career development (Hall, 1975; Osipow, 1983).

Astin (1985) has criticized those theorists that have emphasized the role of marriage, mothering and homemaking in

women's vocational development, on the basis that it perpetuates an image of women bound to the men and children in their lives, thereby reinforcing the status quo. Astin (1985) stated that:

> Women and men share a common human condition and live together in the same world of personal obligations and other socio structural imperatives, therefore a single theory should be able to account for the work behavior of both men and women. (p. 119)

In spite of the criticisms that have been levelled against Super's (1957) theory, "his developmental approach has received the most continuous attention, stimulated the most research, increased most pervasively the field of vocational psychology and is the most comprehensive" (Herr & Cramer, 1984, p. 123).

Towards a Theory of Female Career Development

Female career development is gaining increased attention due to the women's movement, increased participation of women in the labour force, economic pressures, as well as changing attitudes and values toward marriage, family responsibilities and working women (Osipow, 1983). Whereas traditional career theory has a contribution to make to the understanding of women's career development, the theory may be necessary but not sufficient to explain women's career development fully (Osipow, 1975). Women's career development is considered to be more complex than men's due to the combination of multiple roles women fulfil as well as

sex role expectations (Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980). "Considering the tremendous increase in women's participation in paid work, meaningful career/lifestyle planning for women is one of the current major social issues for women and for society in general." (Crozier, 1988, p. 22)

Super's (1980) life cycle approach to career theory has emerged largely as a result of the psychologist's examination of adult development (Sonnenfeld & Kotter 1982). Theories of adult development no longer viewed adulthood as static, rather they began to incorporate life cycle and developmental concepts into their theories of career development (Okun, 1984). This approach suggests that a large number of factors are relevant to career dynamics. These factors include the dynamic evolution of the individual, their families and their career over a lifetime (Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982).

Super's (1980) life-span-life space model of career development is seen as having constructs that are directly applicable to the life situation of adults in the 1980's (Crozier, 1988). Of most relevance is the fact that not only is the wo[illegible]mphasized but all of the life roles across an individ[illegible]me are included. In this model several roles can be oc[illegible]t one time. Also, roles are seen as interacting with each other (Super, 1980). Super (1980) stated "the simultaneous combination of life roles constitute the life-style, their sequential combination structures the life-space and

constitutes the life-cycle. The total structure is the career pattern" (p. 288).

The roles that comprise the life cycle can wax and wane in importance depending on the stages and tasks that are confronting the individual at that particular phase (Super, 1980). Super (1980) defined "importance" in terms of the actual time involved in the role and in terms of the amount of psychological involvement the individual has in the role. This is especially relevant to women who re-enter the work force since they continue to fulfil multiple and inter-related roles. This is in keeping with Gilligan's thesis (1982) of the importance of including a relational variable in a model of women's career development. The lifestyle model of career planning validates the nurturing role as a viable alternative while at the same time allows women to consider others. "With no single universal meaning of work, work exists in our society; for some an end in itself, and for others it is a means to an end." (Okun, 1984 p. 143) The theory, maximizes women's choices, encourages flexibility and adaptation to change. Women are not forced to fit the stereotype as outlined in traditional vocational theories. Nor does the theory for any sterotypic lifestyle on women (Crozier, 1988).

Super's (1980) life-space, life-span theory is a dynamic and multi-dimensional theory with a relational perspective. It advocates the examination of adult life-styles involving the examination of work and non-work aspects. This viewpoint is

considered necessary in order to understand adult career development (Osipow, 1982; Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982; Vondrack et al., 1983).

"There is a need for further attention to the career development of women, in particular, for conceptualizations that can integrate existing knowledge and guide interventions." (Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980, p. 45) The two impeding factors which hinder women's career development are sex-role stereotyping and sex segregation in the work place (Barnett & Baruch, 1978, Farmer, 1971, Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980; Hall, 1975; Horner, 1970; 1972). Richardson (1981) found that there are two persistent themes that characterized women's career development: the multiple roles women fulfil and the inter-relatedness of these roles. Women are simultaneously involved in both the occupational sphere and in family responsibilities. Houseknecht and Vaughan (1987) supported Richardson's (1981) findings with respect to the struggles that women face.

It has been found that multiple role women experience both the costs and benefits of their roles (Bridges 1987). Combining multiple roles leads to role overload (Grey, 1983) since women who work continue to have the major responsibility of child rearing (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1978; Wilder, 1980; Zimmerman, 1979). Multiple roles can also lead to feelings of well being and self-esteem (Baruch, Biener, & Barnett, 1987).

Although important to broaden the range of occupations for

women, Richardson (1974) cautions career counsellors not to denigrate the homemaker role in the process. Kahn (1985) agrees with Richardson (1974) and states "broadening the definition of work to include unpaid family work may encourage men to do more unpaid work in the house and thereby decrease status and power differentials between men and women" (p. 145). Astin (1985) made a similar plea when she stressed "the importance of including social factors in a career development theory for women" (p. 117).

In summary, Super's (1980) life span-life space theory has potential for conceptualizing and understanding female career development. The theory is multi-dimensional, involving the life span, (concerned with describing vocational development over the life span) as well as describing life space (concerned with the role that adults fulfil in their lives). Women re-entering the workforce or returning to further their education are often combining the work role with the family, leisure and community role. Super's (1980) theory explains the relationship between roles and thus is useful for conceptualizing the re-entry women's change in career development. When relating this to the reentry process, one may find that the decision to reenter includes role overload and conflict because of family responsibilities, which in turn may create marital problems as well as a sense of dissatisfaction and a lack of fulfilment. Super's (1980) theory has also generated instruments, including the standardizing and

norming of the Life Rules Inventory (Fitzsimmons et al., 1985; Madill, 1985; Super & Nevill, 1984).

The lifestyle approach to career development emerged largely as a result of the examination of adult development. In order to understand career outcomes, it is important to focus on adult development, the family life cycle and career stages (Sonnefeld & Kotter, 1982). This phenomenon is important because "Career outcomes are the result of the interaction of occupation, personal and family factors throughout the lifetime." (Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982 p. 36) The next section will examine research concerning adult development.

Theories of Adult Development

This section will review major theories of adult development. Development is defined as a life long process beginning at conception and ending with death (Evans, 1985). According to Baltes, Reese, and Lipsitt (1980) life span developmental psychology is not a theory but rather an orientation to the study of behavior and development.

This view differs from that of developmental psychologists. Developmental Psychologists are interested in somatic growth including infancy childhood and adolescence. This view assumes that development ends with the end of growth or maturity (Evans, 1985; Honzik, 1984). In contrast with this view is the life span developmental psychologists who have been largely concerned with the adult years and aging. Recently there has been a noticeable

increase in interest in the life span. This phenomenon has led to the conceptualization of a number of models of adult development (Evans, 1985; Honzik, 1984).

Approaches can be grouped under three headings: Life Stage Perspective, Individual Timing Perspective, and the Life Events Perspective. Several studies have indicated that the Individual Timing Perceptive is useful for describing the lives of women (Evans, 1985). However the Life Events model has greater explanatory value. It is useful for explaining how the different dimensions (family and career roles as well as relationship and identity issues) are interconnected, mutually influencing and being influenced by the other facets of a woman's life.

According to Okun (1984), women's lives are more complex and less predictable. As a result planning is more difficult. Stress is increasingly expressed by women who plan to combine multiple roles. Therefore, vocational counsellors and student affairs professionals need to support women who are confronting these decisions in their lives. Women need to be informed as to the consequences of various options they might choose. In this way life style possibilities, and the "trade-offs" of various combinations of roles can be known to women. A knowledge of theories of adult development can greatly facilitate this understanding.

Life Stage Perspective

The concept of life stages characterizes the earlier theorists

of adult development (Erikson, 1963, 1978; Gould, 1978; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Valant, 1977). Theorists falling within the life stage perspective include Erikson (1963), Levinson (1978), and Gould (1978). These models were influenced by the psycho-analytic perspective. They assumed that stages are structured by regular socio-cultural patterns in adult lives (Herr & Cramer, 1984). Stage theories assume some universality in age-specific experiences--namely that people pass through similar experiences at similar ages (Schlossberg, 1984). Life stage perspectives differ according to the degree to which they view tasks as being age linked, specific rather than general, and characterized by continuity versus discontinuity (George, 1982; Rossi, 1980). Development is influenced primarily by an internal time table, and influenced by environmental events only in a minor way (Evans, 1985). "Adults become more individuated and complex throughout their lives, with later developmental tasks building on earlier ones in a predictable progression." (Evans, 1985, p. 12) Failure to complete an earlier developmental task seriously inhibits later development. Whereas Levinson et al. (1978) perceived stages as being more age related, the stages of Erikson (1963), Vallant (1977), and Gould (1978) were based on issues that precipitated new development.

Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee (1978) conducted a study with a representative sample of American men. They focused on relatively universal age-linked developmental periods

that unfold in an orderly sequence. They concluded that a man's life involved four seasons as well as developmental transitional stages (Crozier, 1985). The stable periods alternate with transitional periods. A shift from one stage to another implies a basic qualitative change in the organism structure of life experiences (Levinson, 1978).

The studies show that the dominant role in the lives of men from early adulthood into their 40's is an overwhelming priority towards work commitment and career progression (Levinson et al., 1978; Rossi, 1980). The shift in mid-life, according to Levinson (1978) witnesses a change from work as a central preoccupation to a greater investment in the family role.

In these theories no mention is made of the other life roles. Life span developmental theories such as these also focused the attention of researchers on the issues of life transition as experienced by the middle-aged and the aging (Watz & Benjamin, 1981). Similarly, this perspective is based almost exclusively on the male experience and may not be helpful for understanding the experiences of women (Evans, 1985).

Limitations of Earlier Adult Development Theories

The major limitation of adult development models has been the fact that research has been based on the lives of a small sample of men born in the 1920s and 1930s. Increases in female participation have created a diversity of lifestyles quite unlike the cohorts of the 1920s. As a result our understanding of

female development and people born at other times is limited (Okun, 1984; Richardson, 1974; Rossi, 1980; Van Dusen & Sheldon, 1978). Similarly our understanding of women in the middle years is weak (Barnett & Baruch, 1978). According to this perspective women's development is viewed in a very narrow way, often judged as abnormal for not adhering to the male pattern (Evans, 1985). Gilligan (1982) criticized the theories of Gould (1978), Levinson et al., (1978), and Vallant (1977) for minimizing the role of relationships in adult development. Schlossberg (1984) agreed with Gilligan (1982) and stated that both sexes experience conflict in the area of relationship. Mahoney and Anderson (1988) found that as women grow older they continue to retain their commitment to human relationships as a basis for directing their behavior. Therefore, the notion of stages as outlined by Levinson et al. (1978) is not useful for understanding adult development and in particular female development.

According to Barnett and Baruch (1978), Levinson's (1978) model reflects the male experience and for this reason they focus on chronological age as a key variable. Implicit in this assumption is the notion of a continuous uninterrupted series of events such as marriage and occupational commitment. Women's lives are more variable and it is unlikely that age would be a coherent variable for conceptualization (Barnett & Baruch, 1978; Mahoney & Anderson, 1988).

The theorists within this framework reduced the lives of women to stages within their reproductive cycle or equated women's development with the family life cycle (Applebaum, 1981; Okun, 1984; Van Dusen & Sheldon, 1978). This life cycle model would describe the typical participation pattern of women as follows: women enter the labour force prior to marriage, they withdraw to raise a family, and typically re-enter when child rearing responsibilities have decreased.

According to these assumptions, women would re-enter the workforce during mid-life only. This is because women with adolescent children who are in the "launching phase", have fewer child rearing responsibilities. They have the opportunity to pursue outside interests (Okun, 1984). Women often make changes by returning to school or work or by working more ambitiously (Bardwick, 1980).

The importance of other aspects of a woman's life was severely underestimated. Similarly the failure of theorists to explore the increasingly central role of work in the lives of women also became a problem. More recent research has explored the role of work in women's lives.

More recently, Barnett, Baruch, and Rivers (1983) in their research on the lifespan of 300 women born in 1935, (women who would be in their middle years) found that like men work was important in these women's lives. Women's need for achievement and challenge was as important as their need for relationships,

yet theories of adult development do not reflect these realities. The increasing importance of work in the lives of women has been noted by other theorists (Astin, 1985, Bardwick, 1980; Barnett & Baruch, 1978; Okun, 1984; Rossi, 1980).

However, some theorists have tried to modify Levinson's model of adult development to fit the life experience of women (Chickering & Havinghurst, 1981). Others have tried to develop stage models that correspond to women's lives more closely (Scarf, 1980). However, those findings have indicated that the varied experiences of women are very difficult to categorize as occurring at specific ages or in a specific sequential order. Therefore, the life stage perspective can not adequately conceptualize women's development. This is due primarily to the fact that the ordering and timing of family and career cycles show greater diversity for women than men, that is, women's lives require a greater integration of the life roles.

Individual Timing Perspectives

"Those who view adult development from an individual timing perspective stress the variability of adult life and downplay the role of biology in human growth and change." (Evans, 1985, p. 14) Neugarten (1968) was a proponent of this view. Unlike Erikson (1963; 1978) and Levinson et al. (1978) viewpoint, the individual timing perspective has no overarching "ground plan". She states that although age was useful for understanding crisis points in youth, in adulthood, one finds greater

variability in the chronological age at which a given psychic crisis occurs.

According to the individual timing perspective, environmental influences have an affect on human development. "Everyone develops a "social clock" that indicates what behaviors are appropriate at particular ages." (Evans, 1985, p. 14) Social time is influenced by historical time--meaning that expectations concerning age-appropriate behavior can vary over time.

However, not all transitional periods are psychologically traumatic. Predictable transitions that occur "on time" are not psychologically traumatizing. It is the events that happen "out of sync" that have potential for psychological stress (Neugarten, 1976; Rossi, 1980; Schlossberg, 1984). Butler and Lewis (1977) state that "stress along the lifeline is not inherent in developmental transitions as in the normative-crisis model, but is a manifestation of a synchronicity--the timing of life events" (p. 12).

Men and women at middle age "look to their position within different life contexts--body, career, family rather than chronological age for their primary cues in clocking themselves" (Neugarten, 1968, p. 94). According to this view major life events can occur at different ages for different people (Rossi, 1980). Neugarten (1968) found that in mid-life people do not undergo crisis but a "normal gradual changing in their time perspective . . . life is restructured in terms of time-left-to-

live rather than time-since-birth" (p. 97).

Several studies have indicated that the individual timing perspective is useful for describing the lives of women. Weisman (1980) found that the women in her sample identified mid-life more by the events on the social clock--children leaving home, death of parents, career plateau, than by chronological age.

Today's women reenter at different times during the family life cycle because of rapidly changing cultural forces (Okun, 1984; Yohalem, 1980). The life events perspective that focuses on variability and environmental factors is particularly useful for conceptualizing women's lives.

Life Events Perspectives

The late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed a move away from the linear conceptions of life plans and towards a new period of increased variance in the timing of both work and family roles (Rossi, 1980). "Women in their thirties are more likely to experience a more profound and prolonged transitional period than men of the same age." (Rossi, 1980, p. 46) Van Dusen and Sheldon (1978), and Yohalem (1980) found evidence that fewer women abandon their educational plans upon marriage and child bearing, also women who do exit from the workforce set aside their plans only temporarily.

There is a great need for theories that are capable of explaining women's development. Since the decisions women make in one area of their lives impacts and is impacted on by

decisions made in other areas, planning becomes more difficult since women's lives are more complex and less predictable. As a result women experience stress when adapting to changes. Recent studies document the increasing incidence of depression in women (Roehl & Okun, 1984). Barnett and Baruch (1978) note the increasing depression in women with young children and in single parents in low paying jobs. In order to assist women in these transitions, a more comprehensive approach to female development is required. The life events perspective is particularly helpful for understanding women's development.

"The life events perspective acknowledges the important role of timing, duration, spacing and ordering of life events on human development." (Evans, 1985, p. 13) Developmental events are not necessarily linked to specific ages (Evans, 1985). Life events are defined as "identifiable discrete changes in usual patterns of behavior, changes that can create stress and can pose adaptive challenges to the individual" (George, 1982, p. 27). This approach focuses on the environmental influences that lead to behavioral change as well as the intertwining of the many different dimensions of development over the life span (Rossi, 1980). These dimensions include family and career roles as well as relationship and self concept issues. This approach, which focuses on variability and environmental factors rather than age, is particularly applicable to women's lives (Evans, 1985).

There have been a number of studies that have supported the

usefulness of this theoretical perspective for understanding women's development. A major difference between theories of men's and women's development is the degree to which they perceive the roles in their lives as inter-connected. For men, occupation is viewed as separate from marriage and parenthood while for women the three roles are linked (Tittle, 1982). Gilligan (1982) indicated that "women . . . define themselves in a context of human relationships while men have tended to devaluate that" (p. 13). Whereas masculinity is related to autonomy, feminity is related to attachment and intimacy. Richardson (1981) attempted to understand adult development in terms of shifts in adult role patterns. Adult role patterns are considered the major source of change and stress in adult's lives. The study of role interaction provides a perspective for understanding adult development (Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982).

Bardwick (1980) reformulated Levinson's (1978) theory in an attempt to conceptualize female development. Unlike Levinson's conceptualization of the central dream--a man's ideal occupational image, "a woman's dream" had more of a relational component involving her husband, family, friends while not excluding occupational aspirations. Whereas for men whose central focus is work, for women the central focus was on self and relationships, which is equated with the worker and homemaker roles. According to Bardwick (1980) interdependence rather than independence is more relevant to the lives of women. From this

perspective, decisions women make in one area of their lives greatly affect and are affected by, decisions in other areas (Evans, 1985).

The literature highlights the extent to which the various roles assumed by women are inter-related. McGuigan (1980) describes women's development as "braids of threads in which colors appear, disappear, and reappear" (p. xii). Theories of female adult development emphasize the relationship aspect of women's lives which include the role of wife, mother and friend (Barnett & Baruch, 1978; Gilligan, 1982). This view contrasts sharply with the life stage approach which reduces the lives of women to stages in their reproductive cycle.

The concept of the family life cycle was considered important for describing the lives of women, because the family life cycle was a dominant under current in the female life cycle (Van Dusen & Sheldon, 1978). It can no longer be assumed that women re-enter the workforce only at mid-life. Women reenter at different times during the family life cycle (Okun, 1984). Changing sex roles and cultural values have created highly variable lifestyles, which continue to have a great impact on the lives of women (Rossi, 1980; Van Dusen & Sheldon, 1979). In addition multiple causes are seen as having an influence on a women's decision to re-enter the workforce (Yohalem, 1980).

The increased participation of women in the workforce has increased the awareness of the meaning of work in women's lives

and the need for additional research (Astin, 1985; Bardwick, 1980; Okun 1984; Rossi, 1980). Although theories of female adult development are not completely formulated, they do provide constructs that help explain the varying lifestyles of women. However, more research in the area is needed in order to understand more fully the nature of these changes.

Demographic Characteristics

This section of the literature review summarizes the demographic data as it pertains to women returning to the workforce or to post-secondary education.

Reentry women were conceptualized as being a homogeneous group with respect to age, marital status, level of income, age of children and their reasons for returning. Research was often non-empirically based and samples consisted of women who were planning to return to post secondary education and who had sought counselling services during the process. McGraw (1982) stressed the need for more research, particularly in the area of women returning to the workforce rather than to post secondary education. Similarly with the increasing numbers of displaced homemakers returning to the workforce and to educational institutions, the stereotypic reentry women may no longer adequately characterize the reentry population. Are reentry women more heterogeneous with respect to age, marital status, education, work experience and social class? Or can one assume that the same counselling interventions are appropriate for all

reentry women? It is issues such as these that are addressed in this study.

To establish training programs and to help reentry women through their transitions, it becomes important to know more about the demographics of reentry women (Chandler, 1984; Doty, 1966; Lamb-Porterfield, Jones & McDaniel, 1985; Saslow, 1982). The vocational counsellor also needs this important information to effectively plan and implement counselling interventions. Post secondary institutions need the information when developing policies and procedures to meet the needs of the increasing number of reentry students (Badenhoop, Johanneson, 1980; Clayton & Smith, 1987; Huston-Hoburg & Strange, 1986; Read, Elliott, Escober, & Slaney, 1988; Roehl & Okun, 1984). Included in this study are women returning to post secondary education, women who are currently receiving social assistance and women who are at the stage of considering their options whether to return or not. In this way it is possible to learn more about the process of reentry for the different groups as well as the changes that occur prior to the decision to reenter.

Increasing numbers of women are returning to the workforce or to post secondary education. Farmer and Fyan (1983) define the reentry woman as "reentering the educational system after having left it for time periods ranging from a few years to 20 or more" (p. 359) These women are sometimes referred to as empty-nesters, homemakers or second careerists (Lewis, 1988).

Factors such as age, maturity, background experience and family responsibility discriminate reentry women from the traditional 18 - 22 year old student. While the traditional aged student's primary role is that of a student, many returning reentry women students must combine the student status with other responsibilities, including the role of wife, mother, significant other, wage earner and community member (Lewis, 1988).

The growth of capitalism had unfortunate consequences for women's roles and status (Applebaum, 1981; Armstrong & Armstrong, 1978). Rather than having families co-producing for their needs, men became the primary wage earners and women and children became dependent on their salaries. Industrialization was responsible for creating the two forms of work. Men received a salary for their work whereas women's domestic work remained unpaid (Applebaum, 1981). The age old sterotypic occupation for women in our society, namely nurturing and child-rearing, is one of many issues that has been challenged by the feminist movement of the past few decades (Applebaum, 1981).

A large number of women work to support themselves and their children. They comprise the growing number of displaced homemakers who are ill-equipped and unprepared to reenter the workforce (Jacobs, 1982). Financial crisis often accompanies widowhood and forces women back into the labor market (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1979; Jacobs, 1982; Yohalem, 1980). However, problems arise because these women

often do not have the marketable skills that can facilitate their employability (Balding & DeBlassie, 1983; Yohalem, 1980). Today, displaced homemakers are increasingly represented in samples of reentry women.

Age, Marital Status and Ages of Children

The tremendous increase in the number of mature women who are returning to educational institutions is well documented (Badenhoop & Johansen, 1980; Clayton & Smith, 1987; Kirk & Dorfman, 1983; Sands & Richardson, 1984; Scott, 1980; Speer & Dorfman, 1986). It has stimulated an urgent need for college personnel to develop special services to meet the reentry women's unique needs (Sands & Richardson, 1984; Saslow, 1981). The age and marital status of reentry women as well as the presence or absence of children has been found to relate directly to women's career concerns and their reasons for reentry (Read, Elliott, Escober, & Slaney, 1988). Knowledge of this kind is of interest to the vocational counsellor and is included in this study.

Hill (1976) notes that researchers often ignore the rich intra-group variability that exist within the reentry population. Similarly, Tittle and Denker (1977) stated that there are many sub-categories of women within the broad category of reentry women. They suggest that reentry women can be classified on the basis of family variables such as the length of marriage, the number of children, years of working experience, goals, and various personality traits.

Pickering (1985) hypothesized that a cluster analysis would reveal the existence of clearly demarcated sub-groups of reentry women. However, results indicated that reentry women exhibited a great deal of homogeneity with respect to age, marital status, ages of children and income level.

Whereas it has been proposed that sub-groups of reentry women exist within the broader reentry population, research findings indicate that reentry women are fairly homogeneous with respect to their demographic characteristics. This may be due to the fact that studies which describe the characteristics of the reentry woman have been based solely on samples of returning students (except Pickering's 1985 study where the sample consisted of women who returned to the workforce). These findings were then generalized to include all reentry women (Brandenberg, 1976; Lewis, 1988; Scott, 1976). It becomes important to do further research in this area. The present study used three different groups of reentry women in order to learn more about their specific demographic characteristics.

According to Lewis (1988) their age may range between 25 - 65 years with the majority between 25 - 50 years old. The ages of their children may also vary. They may have preschool children, school-aged children, grown children, or are childless. Scott (1976) surveyed the reentry student and found that the age range was also between 25 - 52 with a mean of 33.3. Sixty-five percent were married, 60% had children, the average family having three

children, and 21% were single. Forty-seven percent had average incomes of over $15,000 and 34% had average incomes over $20,000.

A study by Brandenberg (1974) showed that the average age of women returning to Queens College was 35 years old. Almost all women were married with children. The majority had paid work experience or extensive volunteer experience. They also had some formal education. Almost all had been out of school for at least 15 years. Astin (1976) found during her investigation of 15 CEW programs that almost 70% of reentry women were married with the median age of 36.5 years. Roach (1976) also described reentry women as being in her late 30s.

Markus (1973) found that 53% of women who contact local CEW programs were between the age of 30 and 40 years. Only Tittle and Denker's (1977) research gave a slightly higher estimate (average age of 43 years) which may be due to the fact that their study involved only students who were 35 years or older. In Roehl and Okun's (1985) sample the average age of reentry women students was 35 years. Forty-three percent had incomes over $25,000, 93% had worked outside of the home, 65% were married with children, only 35% of those women had preschool children.

Pickering (1985) found that the majority of reentry women were married. Women had an average of two children, none of them under six years old. The majority of women were in the $30,000 and over income bracket. The average age of the reentry woman was slightly higher and more diverse than expected (mean age

44.3). Aanstad's (1972) findings with respect to the number of children concurred with Pickering's (1985) findings. It was found that the majority of women had two children and 75% of women had no preschool children. Based on the above review, reentry women are family homogeneous with respect to their demographics.

Pickering's (1985) group of planners (to reenter the workforce in the next two years) were also between the ages of 30-39 years, white and married. The majority had two children and were in the over $30,000 income bracket. What distinguished this group from the reentry group was the fact that the majority of these women had children under six years old. To date there are no studies involving single parents.

Demographic data has been gathered with respect to other variables. Income level has been compared with level of education. Scott (1980) found that whereas continuing education was once viewed primarily as a middle class phenomenon, this is no longer true. Reentry women may be economically deprived, working class, upwardly mobile and middle and upper class. In terms of their educational level some reentry women may never have attended college, while others are completing college degrees. Some women will continue with the same major while others will have made some marked shifts in their interests. Some women may have been absent from an educational setting for more than 35 years while others simply left briefly to assume

family responsibilities or to pursue employment. A recent study by Pickering (1985) indicated a trend towards shorter periods of absences from the workforce. Pickering (1985) found that whereas two-thirds (46 of 65) of reentry women had been out for nine years, only 27% of the women who had returned within the last year had been out for that long.

In summary, the earlier research focused largely on middle class, middle income, middle-aged women who returned to college. Reentering post secondary education is no longer a middle class phenomenon. Increasing numbers of minority low income women and women who are head of households are returning to college. They represent a large population of college reentry women (Lewis, 1988; Scott, 1980). There may also be many diverse and special need groups including minorities, older women, displaced homemakers or disabled women (Ross, 1988; Tittle and Denker, 1986). The race of ethnicity of reentry women may vary considerably within a given institution (Lewis, 1988; Tittle and Denker, 1986).

Research into the average age of reentry women students was about as consistent as the information on marital status. Studies have indicated that the average reentry student is a married woman, average age between 30-40 years (Aanstad, 1972; Astin, 1976; Markus, 1973; Pickering, 1985; Roach, 1976). Studies also indicate that the modal reentry woman is married with no preschool children (Astin, 1976; Brandenberg, 1974;

Pickering, 1985; Scott, 1976). It also seems that women remain out of the workforce for shorter periods of time (Pickering, 1985).

More research is needed, primarily because these research findings (mainly non-empirical) have been based on samples of reentry women students and generalized to the larger population of reentry women. Similarly the increased divorce rate has led to an increase in the number of women who are reentering the workforce. Little is known about the demographic characteristics of these women. This study addresses these shortcomings and broadens the research-based knowledge in this area.

Reasons for Returning to Post-Secondary Education or to the Workforce

As the number of older women attending college increases, educators have attempted to explore their reasons for returning to school (Astin, 1976; Badenhoop & Johansen, 1980; Brandenberg, 1974; Brooks, 1976; Clayton & Smith, 1987; Doty, 1967). Information on a woman's needs and motivations are central to self assessment within the career planning process. Therefore, a knowledge of the reasons for returning provides the vocational counsellor with important information to use when planning programs and counselling interventions.

Expansion of the service sector created a demand for women to fill a number of white collar and service jobs. Between 1950 and 1986 the labor force participation rates of women between 35

and 44 and 44 - 54 years rose from 35% and 38% respectively to about 66% (Couchman & Peck, 1987). The majority of women who responded to these employment opportunities were married with several family responsibilities (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1979; Couchman & Peck, 1987).

The women's movement is cited as the single most significant social factor responsible for increasing the number of women who are participating in the labor force (Russell & Fitzgibbons, 1982). Another reason given for women's increased participation in the labor force is the rise in educational attainments of young women. This enabled women to have access to jobs that were previously inaccessible to them because of their lack of training (Osipow, 1975).

Also, trends towards postponing marriage and child bearing have contributed to higher participation rates and a more continuous career pattern (Applebaum, 1981). As women withdraw for shorter periods of time they find that their careers are less hampered, with the result that promotions in salary and status are more likely to occur (Boothby, 1986). Women find it harder to relinquish financial independence, status, challenge, recognition and satisfaction (Hoyt, 1988; Wojciechowski, 1982).

The desire for personal growth and tangible rewards outside the home becomes stronger as children grow older and family responsibilities lessen (Canadian Council on the Status of Women, 1979; Cramer, Kietel, & Rossberg, 1986). Working also allows for

the development of social relationships that were denied to the isolated housewife (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1976). With the advent of time saving home appliances, fewer family responsibilities and an increased need for additional income, women returned to the workforce. The return to the workforce was not conflict free (Wojciechowski, 1982). According to Wojciechowski, "thus began a long arduous process of role redefinition and image reconciliation for working women" (p. 108).

Economic necessity is a compelling force behind many married women's decision to reenter the workforce. Married women return to the workforce in order to share in the financial responsibilities of supporting a family. The large number of women with pre-school children who reenter the workforce supplement their husband's income especially at times when family expenses are high (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1979).

Earlier studies searched for a single motive to explain a woman's return to college. Doty (1966) in her study found that a desire for knowledge was the main reason given for returning to school. Women enrolled in courses out of interest and not for employment possibilities.

Results of other studies have suggested that issues of boredom, self fulfilment and a search for identity were the main reasons cited for returning to college (Astin, 1976; Brandenberg, 1974; Letchworth, 1970; Roach, 1976).

Today, career concerns and employment possibilities are cited as major reasons for returning to college (Holliday, 1985; Saslow, 1981; Scott, 1980; Slaney & Dickson, 1985). However, the current literature suggests that women are extremely diverse in their reasons for returning to an academic environment (Clayton & Smith, 1987; Read, Elliot, Escober, & Slaney, 1988; Scott, 1980; Tittle & Denker, 1980).

Reasons for returning have been linked with transitional age periods. According to this view, women reassess their life structure "the decision to return to school might be interpreted as a necessary step toward implementing changes decided upon during such reassessment" (Ross, 1988, p. 112). The mid-life transition was one such transitional stage where women entered the workforce or returned to post-secondary education.

Barnett and Baruch (1978) have suggested that age is not a core variable in understanding women's lives. A life events perspective, including the family life cycle, career paths, interpersonal relationships and the self concept are interconnected dimensions, mutually influencing each other and thereby constituting the facets of a woman's life (Evans, 1985). According to this perspective, reasons for returning are varied, involving predisposing external life events as well as internal motivations (Farmer & Fyan, 1983; Mahoney & Anderson, 1988; Ross, 1988; Scott, 1980),

In order to facilitate women's development, it is important

to understand their developing needs, including the forces that influence their return to the workforce or post secondary education. Planning appropriate interventions is more difficult because women's lives are so varied. Counselling interventions need to be based on a thorough understanding of why women return and for this reason the variable was included in this study.

A review of the research (Brandenberg 1974; Scott, 1980; Tittle & Denker, 1986) that focused on women's reason for returning to college revealed several major themes: (a) economic necessity either adding to the financial base of the family or gaining financial independence; (b) preparation for a career or occupation; (c) need for intellectual stimulation, satisfaction or realization of potential; (d) more time to devote to her own interests because less time is needed for child care; (e) preparation for a career change; (f) enhancement of skills and abilities to increase job options; (g) divorce or death of a spouse; (h) an increased desire for education; (i) desire for increased status as a college graduate; and the need for achievement in areas other than the interpersonal sphere.

Clayton and Smith's (1987) research helped to dispel the myth that there would be a single dominant motive to explain why women engage in educational pursuits. Rather a combination of motives may be responsible for motivating a woman's return. Commonly identified needs include to become financially self supporting, to expand and grow, to raise self esteem, to learn

about life and the world, to take pride in achievements, to prepare for employment, to increase the chances of being hired or promoted and issues relating to role and family expectations, as well as social and humanitarian desires (to make others proud, to share knowledge, to benefit others and to meet new people).

Ross (1988) disagreed with Clayton and Smith's (1987) conceptualization of motivational subtypes because it failed to consider the unique circumstances of each individual. The unique history of psycho-social influences and inter-personal changes combine and motivate a woman's decision to return to school. Using an interviewing procedure, Ross (1988) studied the life events women saw as significantly influencing their decision to return to school. Furthermore, not only were relational events such as divorce or empty nest considered, but so were "triggers", that is, a change in financial status or a geographical move were also likely explanations for returning to school.

Of the events reported as significant in Ross's (1988) study, 68% were related to changes in work life, financial status or changes in family relationships. Changes in the perceptions of events rather than specific occurrences such as job dissatisfaction or awareness of aging were also reported. Of significance, was the differential impact of life events for the different age groups. Women can be placed on a continuum depicting the relative predominance of either internal forces or external forces responsible for determining their decision to

return to school The older women (34 - 49 years old) were more internally motivated whereas the younger women (22 - 33 years old) were motivated by an identifiable event to return to school. Mahoney and Anderson (1988) study supported both Ross (1988) and Clayton and Smith's (1987) emphasis on considering a multiplicity of motives for returning. However, Mahoney and Anderson (1988), like Ross (1988), stress the unique circumstances of each individual's life history rather than attempting to subtype motives for returning (Clayton & Smith, 1987). According to Mahoney and Anderson (1988) "the timing of enrollment for women returning to college would be specifically determined by the state of their relationships and life events and not solely by motivation (defined as felt desire to enroll in college)" (p. 271).

Marital status has been found to be a significant variable associated with a woman's reason for return. Read, Elliot, Escober, and Slaney (1988) found that marital status affected a women's reason for return.

Concern for the family acts both as a helping and impeding factor in the decision to return to work or to college. Mahoney and Anderson (1988), and Badenhoop and Johansen (1980) found that a woman often postponed reentry until children were old enough, or when family responsibilities had lessened. Significant others, spouse and family members were found to play a central role in the decision to return to college and in the non-persistence of

earlier reentry attempts (Ross, 1988). In Mahoney and Anderson's (1988) study, support and encouragement were important variables in considering to return to school. Having others believe in one's capabilities as well as having partners offer their help with household task and child care were stated as considerations for returning to college.

In summary, research that examined reasons for reentry to post secondary education or the workforce initially associated reasons for reentry with age-related transitionary periods. More recent research indicates that reasons for returning are associated with life reassessment which is a complex process involving all of the life areas.

Women's reasons for returning are varied (Baruch, Rivers, & Barnett, 1983; Saslow, 1981; Tittle & Denker, 1980). Women no longer return only for self fulfilment, rather employment, self fulfilment, or social contacts are reasons given for returning. Whereas earlier research sought a single motive to describe why women return, more recent research indicates that a multiplicity of motives may be responsible for motivating a woman's return (Clayton & Smith, 1987). These motives are not only psychologically determined, rather it is also important to consider the unique circumstances of each individual (Ross, 1988).

The purpose of enumerating the multiple reasons for women returning point out how difficult it is to stereotype the reentry woman. What propels a woman to enroll in college at a particular

point is a complex interaction of life events, personal motivation and goals (Badenhoop & Johansen, 1980; Brandenberg, 1974; Mahoney & Anderson, 1988; Ross, 1988). Therefore, it is important to include in a study of reentry women a section on their reasons for returning.

Social Support

The home-career conflict plays a significant role in women's lives. It has also been cited as a determining influence in a woman's career development (Cramer, Kietel, & Rossberg, 1986; Farmer, 1971; Farmer & Bohn, 1970; Madill, 1985). The nature of the conflict has changed over time, primarily because of the changing cultural values that have occurred. Whereas previously the role conflict reflected a marriage versus career dichotomy, today the home-career conflict reflects a career versus child rearing dichotomy.

It has been found that the home-career conflict may lower women's aspirations. Ambition may be moderated and goals sacrificed in favor of other's needs (Cramer, Kietel, & Rossberg, 1986). It has also been found that multiple responsibilities influence the dropout rate amongst reentry women students (Astin, 1974; Huston-Hoburg & Strange, 1986; Markus, 1973). In spite of recent research that indicates that role conflict is not an inevitable outcome of multiple role incumbency, the majority of women may experience role conflict primarily due to the repetitive and boring nature of their work and because of a lack of support

from husba , amily and friends with respect to household responsibilities and childrearing (Baruch, Biener, & Barnett, 1987).

The support offered by husbands and family systems becomes an important issue when dealing with today's complex problems that women face in returning to the workforce or post-secondary education (Yogev, 1983). In fact, "disapproval by husbands of their wives working proved to be more of a conflict than either the presence of children or the wives' own attitudes about whether women should work outside of the home" (Lottinville & Scherman, 1988, p. 167). To date little is known about the social support systems of separated, divorced, or single parents who plan to return to post secondary education or the workforce. This is due to the fact that the majority of studies have used married women in their samples. The results of these studies have indicated that social support plays a significant role in ameliorating depressive symptoms (Roehl & Okun, 1984). It was found that a husband's support contributed significantly to a woman's successful reentry to post secondary education (Astin, 1976; Brandenberg, 1974; Huston-Hoburg & Strange, 1986). A husband's attitude towards his wife's employment is an important factor determining actual or planned employment (Astin, 1976; Grandrose, 1987; Spitze and Waite, 1981).

This study involved determining whether there were differences between groups of reentry women with respect to their

support network (higher levels of support would minimize the role conflict experienced). Since very little is known about the support system of divorced, separated, widowed and single women, the study attempted to determine whether there were differences in their support systems. In other words, do friends and family support compensate for the lack of a spouse' support? It was also important to know whether there were differences in support systems as a function of group membership. In other words, do single, widowed, divorced or separated women on welfare receive less or more support than women with similar status but who belong to a different reentry group?

A knowledge of support networks provide information that can be used for determining whether groups of reentry women would benefit from different counselling interventions. Since illness, depression and different forms of physical and psychological dysfunction are associated with a lack of social support, an important questions is to know whether some groups are more at risk than others (Roehl & Okun, 1984).

The life events perspective of adult development assumes that the family life cycle, career paths, interpersonal relations and the self concept are interconnected, mutually influencing dimensions that constitute the facets of women's life (Evans, 1985). Women planning to reenter the workforce or post secondary education are planning a major life change that involves combining the work and family role. Stress (home-career conflict) is

increasingly experienced by women who plan to combine multiple roles (Okun, 1984). McGraw (1982) in her review article stated that "the role of wife, mother and volunteer no longer infuse life with meaning so they search outside the family for . . . experiences to enhance their well being. This search is not conflict free as the research literature reveals" (p. 469).

The importance of building social support has received considerable attention. Negative life events have been positively correlated with depressive symptoms whereas social support is inversely related to depressive symptoms (Roehl & Okun, 1984). Similarly social support may also be an important mediator of the beneficial health effects of employment (Repetti, Mathews & Waldrom, 1989). Huston-Hoburg and Strange (1986) investigated spouse support among males and females who returned to college. Roehl and Okun (1985) investigated the types of social support reentry women received. Social support has been found to be an effective roadblock (intervention technique) that can minimize the potential for vulnerability to disease. People who experience a great deal of life change but had family or friends to discuss their problems contacted no more illness than people who experienced less life change. However, people who experienced a great deal of change but did not have family or friends support contracted much more illness than others (Greenberg, 1980).

In order for women to achieve in the workforce or in their educational pursuits, they need the support of their families and

friends. When women return to post-secondary education, the attitude of the institution towards their reentry status as well as the helpfulness of professors has a profound effect on the reentry women's experiences.

It has been reported that the home-career conflict is one of the major issues confronting the reentry woman (McGraw, 1982; Scott, 1980). The home-career conflict creates feelings of guilt, psychological and physical weariness as well as inter role and inner conflict (Astin, 1976; Kirk & Dorfman, 1983; Markus, 1977; Scott, 1980). The repetitive nature of sales and clerical work, combined with the lack of support from husbands and family members for child rearing responsibilities and housework contribute significantly to this conflict.

The conceptualization of this conflict has been explained in terms of traditional sex role stereotyping. Women are socialized to take primary responsibility for the emotional well being of their family, believing that their own well being depended on their unconditional availability to their family (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1979). Women, therefore, carry a disproportionate responsibility for home and child rearing responsibilities, which in turn affect their commitment to the work role (Applebaum, 1981; Huston-Hoburg & Strange, 1986; Kirk & Dorfman, 1983; Lewis, 1988; Rossi, 1984).

According to Huston-Hoburg and Strange's (1983) empirical study, the traditional parenting roles are challenged when a

woman returns to college, which in turn produces stresses within the family system. As a result these roles need to be renegotiated. Similarly,in a study by Roehl and Okun (1984), findings indicated that the quality of family relationships had a significant effect on the level of depression experienced by the reentry woman, conversely social support was found to ameliorate depressive symptoms.

Other research has found that support from a husband and from children is perceived as more important at the time of enrollment into college whereas that support may be perceived as less important with the passage of time (Astin, 1976; Brandenberg, 1974).

Hall (1975) found that the number and age of children that a woman had was directly related to the amount of role conflict they experienced. That is, women without children may not experience role conflict and may thus approach career concerns in a dissimilar way. More recently a study by Read, Elliot, Escober, and Slaney (1988) supported these earlier findings. Women with children perceived family issues as major barriers to goal attainment (reflecting multiple roles). However, married women perceived themselves as receiving more support than did women who were divorced or separated.

Gerson (1985) challenged the assumption that strain was an inevitable consequence of multiple role incumbency. Pickering (1985) found no difference in the level of conflict experienced

between a group of women returning to the workforce and a group of career women. According to Baruch, Biener, and Barnett (19[illegible], combining multiple roles through most of the adult lifespan was found to raise levels of self esteem than does the exclusive focus on either occupation or familial roles. The role of worker was perceived to be the most likely catalyst for the psychological distress and ill health women experienced. As a result, the role conflict and role overload inherent in the family roles was largely ignored.

Baruch, Biener, and Barnett (1987) found that women who fulfilled only family role responsibilities experienced more stress compared to women who fulfilled both work and family responsibilities. However, the well being derived from work was greatest when women viewed their work as a career rather than just a job. Baruch, Biener, and Barnett (1987) caution not to draw generalizations since difficult family situations, including large numbers of children, being a single parent having major responsibilities for the household, or a lack of meaningful work may increase the stressfulness of employment. A study by Repetti, Mathews, and Waldron (1989) also caution against drawing over generalization. Employment appears to have beneficial effects on the physical and psychological health of unmarried women and married women who have positive attitudes toward employment.

However, the majority of women may experience stress and

role conflict from multiple role enactment because in most cases family support is lacking (Cramer, Kietel, & Rossberg, 1986). Similarly because of the sex segregated occupational structure, women fulfil the low level jobs while men traditionally fulfil the management positions, which increases the likelihood that women will not view their jobs as a career and are more likely to experience role conflict as a result. Women are often unable to accept jobs that demand a substantial investment of time outside the regular hours of work or that requires time spent away from home (Boothby, 1986). As a result women do not accept promotions and often remain at entry level jobs which contributes to level of strain and stress experienced (Baruch, Biener, & Barnett, 1987).

Numerous non-empirical studies in the literature have all noted evidence of this conflict. Scarato and Sigall (1979) stated that the competing time demands were the prime factor in role conflict, particularly when someone attempted to fulfil all the roles and to do so perfectly. These same sentiments were put forth by Brooks (1976), and Manis and Mochizuki (1972). They indicated that reentry women students experience a certain amount of internal conflict when they sought reentry. In support of this hypothesis was the finding by Katz and Knapp (1974) that even those women who were <u>considering</u> returning to work also suffered from "confusion and mild depression, conflict in the family and in the maternal role" (p. 106). Tittle and Denker

(1977) stated that although the realities of life continue to change, our stereotypes remain and therefore constitute a significant barrier to women who seek to reenter the educational arena.

The term displaced homemakers was introduced into the literature in 1979 by Sommers. It describes a middle-aged woman who, as a result of widowhood, divorce or separation has lost the sole source of income on which she was dependent while fulfilling family and homemaker responsibilities (Yohalen, 1981).

Many displaced homemakers experience difficulty negotiating the transition to independence (Morgan, 1987). The more involved she has been with the home and children, the more difficult is her adjustment to decreased family responsibility for the household (Balding & DeBlassie, 1983). According to Cramer, Kietel, and Rossberg (1986) the displaced homemaker may be more susceptible to physical and psychological exhaustion than the married reentry woman. Similar findings were found in Read, Elliot, Escober and Slaney's (1988) study. They indicated that the impact of role conflict and role overload was more severe for the displace homemaker because of their lack of support systems.

Women from lower socio-economic groups who plan to return to post secondary education may experience greater conflict in the area of self concept development, self esteem and parenting because of the lower value their home environment may have placed

on education (Suchinsky, 1983). Women from these backgrounds "are taking a developmental step that is enormous and frequently in[illegible]s a great deal of courage, initiative and motivation" (S[illegible]sky, 1983, p. 37).

Recent research has provided evidence that women may choose to work even though their husbands do not approve (may not be offering support). Another explanation may be that peers are providing the source of support the women need (Huston-Hoburg & Strange, 1986). This is consistent with Gilligan's (1982) model which stresses the importance that relationships have in directing women's lives.

In summary, the life events perspective of adult development is useful for conceptualizing women's career development. Women who reenter the workforce or return to post-secondary education are involved in a major life change producing stressful consequences known as the home-career conflict. The support of a spouse, family or friends have been found to be helpful in ameliorating the negative physical and psychological effects. For this reason the variable of social support was included in this study.

Even though Baruch, Biener, and Barnett (1987) indicate that role conflict is not an inevitable consequence of multiple role encumbrance, it seems that their results can't be generalized since a large proportion of reentry women do have a major responsibility for the household and therefore the stressfulness

of combining employment is heightened. Furthermore, the majority of women work in sales, service, and dead-end clerical jobs with little chance for advancement or meaningful employment. These women experience stressful consequences. However for the small proportion of women who do view their reentry as an opportunity for advancing in their careers, conflict may not be experienced as a result of performing multiple roles.

The home-career conflict is one of the reentry woman's major obstacles that may hinder their occupational involvement. The home-career conflict may also interfere with women's success at college. Knowing whether different groups of women experience different degrees of role conflict provides information that is of vital importance to the career planning process.

Summary

Work was perceived to be a prelude to the major focus of a woman's life, namely marriage and family (Applebaum, 1981). The process of mature women reentering the workforce is not an isolated phenomenon but rather it is part of a complex combination of social and economic forces that have significantly changed the family and the occupational structure (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1979; Cramer, Kietel, & Rossberg, 1986). It was expected that all reentry women were married, between ages 30-40 with no preschool children and returning to alleviate boredom. Such generalizations were often based on non-empirical studies and on samples of college reentry women. These

assumptions need to be empirically tested (Pickering, 1985) and for this reason three different groups of reentry women are included in this study.

Today one finds increasing numbers of married women returning to work out of financial necessity and because of the rising divorce rate (Yohalem, 1980). The displaced homemaker is increasingly represented in the reentry population (Jacobs, 1982; Yohalem, 1980). It is not known if these groups of women can be considered similar to college reentry women or whether there are subgroups within the reentry population. This study attempts to investigate such questions.

Reasons for return are both psychologically and environmentally determined. Although motivational subtypes may exist within the population of returning women, it is important to consider each individual in a unique way based on their unique histories and goals (Ross, 1988). Role conflict is one of the reentry woman's major obstacles that hinder their occupational involvement and their success at college. It is important that professionals dedicate themselves to meeting the needs of women so as to minimize the risk of creating a permanent underclass of persons qualified to fill only the lowest level jobs (Hoyt, 1988).

Personality

One of the ways of conceptualizing career development is in terms of personality theories. The general hypothesis underlying these studies is that workers choose jobs because of the potential

it offers for satisfying their needs (Osipow, 1983). Since this study examines women and work issues, it is important to study their personality characteristics.

The relationship between work and personality is important for this study for the following reasons. The psychological benefit of work is likely to accrue only to those women who regard paid work as a meaningful self fulfilling activity (Coleman-Antonucci, 1983; Pietromonaco, Manis, & Markus, 1987). According to Pietromonaco, Manis, and Markus (1987) in order to understand the consequence of employment for women's well being, "individual perceptions of the value or significance of paid work in their lives needs to be taken into account. Is employment construed as a job, fulfilling financial needs, or as one's life work and career?" (p. 468) A process such as this involves an assessment of personality, values and significant life events. Therefore in this study these variables have been included.

Secondly, for counselling strategies to be effective, they need to be based upon the particular needs of the individuals. A knowledge of personality characteristics provides some of this much needed information.

This section will outline four approaches to understanding the relationship between personality and work. Also included is a summary of the personality characteristics that have most frequently described the reentry woman. The methodological procedures will also be critically evaluated.

The notion of personality traits and the assessment of personality has been under scrutiny for many decades (Buss, 1989; Hogan & Nicholson, 1988). According to Buss (1989) traits are regarded as dispositions to behave, only under certain conditions or only in conjunction with environmental manipulations. Trait psychologists seek to reveal the psychological dimensions along which people differ from one another and the ways in which traits cluster within individuals.

One of the major issues in the area of personality involves the assessment of personality traits. Hogan and Nicholson (1988) believe "that a single issue - construct validity - underlies the perceived and actual shortcoming of current assessment-based personality research" (p. 621). The problem of construct validity is not unique to measurement based personality research (Hogan & Nicholson, 1988).

Personality constructs do not transcend the assessment context. "The theoretical meaning of a descriptive term for any quality is derived from the source of evidence." (Kagan, 1988, p. 614) In other words one cannot assume that because constructs have similar names they are also measuring the same behavior.

Using traits to predict behaviors has yielded mixed results because of methodological problems such as those outlined above (Buss, 1989). What is important in this study is that caution is needed not to over-generalize the findings on the personality test score since the meaning will always be tied to the specific

operational definitions that were used.

The Relationship Between Personality and Work

Within the personality-based career theory perspective there are four different approaches to understanding personality and work. Each approach differs with respect to their assumptions and theory, and each has different practical implications. The four are: Holland's Theory, Jackson's Vocational Interest Survey, Personality Research Form and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

Holland's Theoretical Perspective

Holland's (1959; 1973) theory is probably the most influential to follow from a trait oriented approach (Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982). Holland's (1973) theory of vocational behavior suggests that vocational satisfaction, stability and achievement depend upon the extent of congruence between the work environment and the worker's personality. This theory is based on four "working assumptions":

1. In our culture most persons can be categorized as one of six types: realists, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional.

2. There are six kinds of environments: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional.

3. People search for environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values and take on agreeable problems and roles.

4. A person's behavior is determined by an interaction between his personality and the characteristics of his environment (Holland, 1973).

Holland developed vocational interest inventories to assess the extent to which an individual resembles each of the six personality types. On the other hand vocational interest and choice represent "the expression of personality in work, school subjects, hobbies, recreational activities and preferences" (Holland, 1973, p. 7). By matching an individual with the appropriate environment, Holland (1973) has demonstrated the degree to which a person's personality resembles a category and "should predict a large portion of his behavior" (p. 24). Holland (1973) states:

> A person is in a congruent or fitting environment where the environment calls for activities he prefers, demands his special competencies and reinforces his personal disposition and its associated characteristics . . . a special outlook on the world, role preference, value and personal traits. (p. 9-10)

Holland (1981) has noted the strengths and weaknesses of his own theory. It is easily understood, clearly defined and has a broad base of research support from diverse age and occupational groups. It can also be easily applied to practical problems. However, Holland (1981) also stated "many important personal and environmental contingencies lie outside the scope of his

typology" (p. 22). Holland's (1959; 1973) theory has also been criticized primarily because it is built on a static perspective of individual-occupation-environments and the decision making process (Herr & Cramer, 1984; Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982).

According to Herr and Cramer (1984) career decisions involve not only rational cognitive processes but emotional reactions as well. Therefore, Holland (1973) has considered only a few factors in career choice and has largely ignored the developmental approach of individuals and the changing circumstances surrounding an individual. In spite of these criticisms Holland's (1959; 1973) theory has gained considerable support (Osipow, 1982).

Jackson Vocational Interest Survey

In contrast to Holland's (1973) theory of career choice the Jackson Vocational Interest Survey (JVIS) is not theory based, nor are there any assumptions underlying its usage. The JVIS is not predictive of behavior.

The JVIS was developed to measure interests and preferences relevant to work along a common set of dimensions. The interests and preferences are conceptualized in terms of job descriptions for specific jobs. Therefore, the JVIS conceptualization of vocational interest dimensions transcends any particular occupational group.

Occupational preferences are conceptualized in terms of

vocational roles and styles. A high score indicates a greater probability of satisfaction. "Using basic interest dimensions rather than occupations as the fundamental unit of analysis provides a framework for economically describing the interest patterns of a wide array of occupational groups." (Jackson, 1977, p. 1)

The JVIS does not predict behavior. It is useful for obtaining job descriptions for specific jobs.

Personality Research Form (PRF)

"The Personality Research Form (PRF) is designed to yield conveniently a set of scores for personality traits broadly relevant to the functioning of individuals in a wide variety of situations." (Jackson, 1984, p. 4)

The starting point for the PRF was the set of personality variables originally defined by Murray (1938) and his colleagues to describe personality. Jackson (1984) deliberately sets out to identify dimensions of character. The PRF indicates those characteristics judged to be most important and most relevant to a wide variety of areas of human functioning.

From the literature it appears that some of the traits ascribed to a reentry woman correspond to some of the scales on the PRF. It was also noted that the PRF had been used in other studies on reentry women (Pickering, 1985). Therefore, it was decided to use the PRF in this study. These descriptions are devoid of theory and therefore caution is needed when making interpretations.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

The Myers-Briggs type Indicator (MBTI) is based on the theory of psychological types as described by Jung (1921; 1971). The purpose of the MBTI is to make Jung's (1921; 1971) theory understandable and useful in people's lives. The essence of Jung's (1921; 1971) theory is that "random variation in behavior is actually quite orderly and consistent, being due to basic differences in the way individuals prefer to use their perception and judgeme" (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator MBTI Manual, p. 1).

The aim of the MBTI is to identify, from self reports, the basic preferences people have with regard to perceptions and judgement so that the effects of each preference, either singly or in combination, can be established by research and put to practical use. Perceptions involve ways of becoming aware of things, people and ideas. On the other hand, judgements involve all the ways of drawing conclusions about what has been perceived. Therefore, if people differ systematically on how they perceive and make judgements, they will also differ in their reactions, interests, values, motivations and skills. The MBTI explains and observes personality differences rather than predicting personality.

The MBTI differs from other personality instruments. It is designed to implement a theory, therefore the theory must be understood to understand the MBTI. The theory postulates

dichotomies. There are specific dynamic relationships between the states which lead to the description and characteristics of 16 "types".

The type descriptions and the theory include a model of development that continues throughout life. The scales are concerned with basic functions of perception and judgement that enter into almost every behavior.

The MBTI conceives of four separate dimensions on which people can vary. These are: extraversion versus introversion, sensing versus intuition, thinking versus feeling and judgement versus perception. Each index reflects one of four basic preferences which in turn yields 16 possible combinations, called "types". These preferences affect not only what people attend to in any given situation but also how they draw conclusions about what they perceive." (MBTI Manual, 1985, p. 2). The characteristics of each type follow from the dynamic relationship between these processes and attitudes which in turn have developed as a result of individuals favoring one process over another. In this way preferences or habitual choices rather than traits or behaviors are identified.

The four approaches to understanding the relationship between personality and work differ from each other because of the different assumptions on which they are based. The utility of each model depends on the particular research question asked.

Personality Characteristics of Reentry Women

This section of the literature review summarizes the personality characteristics that have been most frequently attributed to the reentry women. It has been noted in the literature how little is known about the reentry woman in spite of the fact that increasing numbers of women are choosing the "work option" (Millinger & Edwins, 1984; McGraw, 1982; Pickering, 1985).

Much of the research has been done in the absence of collecting any objective data. When data has been collected it has been done in a highly subjective way. Research has also been flawed because generalizations are made to include all reentry women (McGraw, 1982; Pickering, 1985). More empirical research in the area is needed.

One of the problems is the absence of any data Klatz and Knapp (1974) described the reentry woman in terms of experiencing an "inner push to explore their own potential and expand their horizons" (p. 106). However, they cite no data collection process nor data in support of their description.

A second problem concerns those researchers who have collected data but have done so in a very unscientific way. Much of the data is narrowly based and/or highly subjective in nature (Pickering, 1985). Brooks (1976) described the programs she had designed for reentry women and then attributed specific characteristics to reentry women and identified problem areas.

She described reentry women as suffering from low self-confidence experiencing role conflict, guilt and time management difficulties. Brooks' (1976) descriptions are based upon a sample of women who sought counselling services at a university. Her descriptions are therefore narrowly based because they are self reports based on her subjective judgements and on a specific reentry group. Brooks (1976) did not gather any objective data nor did she test any hypotheses. Similarly, Brandenberg (1974), Manis and Mochizuki (1972) and Letchworth (1976) have all reported their subjective impressions concerning reentry women and have stated the findings in an overgeneralized form.

The third problem is that of over-generalization of descriptions to include all reentry women whether they return to colleges or to the workforce and whether or not they sought counselling. For example, Brooks (1976) found that reentry women who returned to college and who had sought counselling services experienced low self-confidence, guilt, and time management difficulties. It cannot be automatically assumed that all reentry women have similar experiences. In this study differences between three groups of reentry women are sought. Therefore, this study addresses the problem of over-generalization.

Roach (1976) described the reentry women by saying "as she begins to reject her former narrowly defined wife-mother-homemaker role in the family structure, the family continues to see her

exclusively in that role" (p. 87). Since Roach (1976) did not collect any data, she is unable to reliably estimate the percentage of women who experience this kind of conflict. She overgeneralizes her findings to include all reentry women. Until data is systematically collected one has no idea as to how many reentry women encounter family conflicts or a loss of peer group (Pickering, 1985).

These studies provide interesting hypotheses that need to be tested in an objective way. More empirical research is needed (Pickering, 1985). McGraw (1982) in her review article makes a similar plea for more objective studies. She stresses the need for studies that include samples of women who return to the workforce and women who return to post secondary institutions without seeking counselling assistance. Therefore, in this study a post secondary group of reentry women are compared with a group of reentry women who are on social assistance and a third group of women who are considering their options including returning to work or attending a post secondary institution.

More recently, there have been studies that are empirically based. Pickering (1985; 1988) examined a number of hypotheses regarding reentry women by comparing career women with reentry "working women". Mellinger and Edwins (1984) studied a number of personality dimensions using groups of women distinguished by role and age variables. The present study will add to the body of empirically based studies.

Having noted the problems and difficulties associated with the research on the reentry women, the literature will now be reviewed. The most frequently cited characteristics of reentry women will be discussed. The personality characteristics to be reviewed include: achievement, autonomy, self-confidence/self-esteem, assertiveness, aspirations, endurance, and dominance and impulsivity.

Achievement

Although there is a large body of literature on achievement motivation, the majority of studies are based on samples of men. Since women's development differs considerably from that of men, the findings cannot be automatically generalized to women (Brown, 1985; O'Leary, 1977).

In our society it is expected that a woman's affiliation needs will take precedence over her achievement needs (Brown, 1985). Not until affiliation identity needs are fulfilled will women's achievement needs resurface, which in turn may lead to an increased motivation to assume involvement outside of the family (Bardwick, 1971; Baruch, 1967).

Markus (1973) and Baruch's (1967) research indicate a temporal cycle in the achievement motivation associated with age and family situation of college educated women. There is a period of low achievement corresponding to high family involvement. When family responsibility lessens there is a return to previously high achievement levels which often

coincides with women's desire to return to college.

Fitzgerald and Crites (1980) have theorized as to the possible causes of this cycle. They concluded that the desire to achieve was inhibited by society's values - namely that achievement strivings were inconsistent with the feminine role. As Baruch (1967) indicated, a woman's achievement motivation was free to return to its normal level and the basic demands of marriage and motherhood has lessened.

Baruch (1967) cautions against any generalizations that can be made from the study, because the study was based on a sample of college women who chose where to return and who were also more likely than reentry working women to be qualified for jobs which could satisfy their achievement motive. For this reason one may have found an increase in their achievement motive. Today women from all socio-economic levels return to college. The variable of achievement is included in this study because one cannot assume similar patterns of achievement without having additional research to verify it.

McGraw (1982) also concluded that reentry women were not afraid to achieve. A reentry woman feels an intense need to bring meaning into her life and shed the role of vicarious achiever. Pickering's (1987) study supports Markus (1977) and Baruch's (1967) notions of a temporal cycle in the achievement motive. Pickering (1987) using a sample of women who returned to the workforce, rather than students, found that the reentry women's

need for achievement was as high as career women who had uninterrupted career patterns.

On the other hand, the group of "planners", referred to as those women planning to reenter within two years, received significantly lower scores on achievement compared with the reentry and career group of women. These findings are entirely consistent with earlier research which found that reentry women had older children. This contrasts with the "planners" group who had predominantly preschool children and thus the family responsibilities for these women had not yet lessened.

The results of Astin's (1975) study also indicated high achievement scores amongst reentry women. Reentry women perceived themselves as being higher on independence and achievement than was their husband's perception of them.

Although research has indicated that reentry students are high achievers, little information is available on women who return to the workforce (Pickering, 1985). Therefore the present study will provide the much needed data on women who return to the workforce.

Autonomy

Brooks (1976) suggested that programs for reentry women should include assertiveness training. This notion is based on the assumption that reentry women exhibit a significant amount of dependence and dependent thinking (Pickering, 1985). However, some studies indicate that this may not be the case.

Astin (1976) as part of her Continuing Education for Women program (CEW) review, asked reentry students how they would rate themselves on various traits compared to other women their age and asked their husbands how they would rate their wives. Results indicated that women rated themselves considerably higher than their husbands did on independence. Therefore, women's self-perceptions do not reflect dependent thinking. In this regard, Waters (1973) concluded that the older woman student seemed to be more independent than the traditional stereotypes suggests.

Pickering's (1988) study supported the observations made by Brooks (1976) and was contrary to Astin's (1976) and Waters' (1973) findings. Using the Personality Research Form (PRF) Pickering (1988) found that women returning to the workforce received lower mean scores on the measure of autonomy when compared with a sample of career women.

Findings appear to vary depending on the particular sample used--whether a sample of returning students are used or whether a sample of women returning to workforce are used. The question asked in this study, is are these differences between women returning to post secondary education as compared with a group of women who are involved in an on the job training program and with women who are considering their options?

Self-Confidence/Self-Esteem

Although few theorists would claim that reentry women lack

self-confidence, many programs for such women include a self-confidence/self-esteem component.

Astin (1976) in her study of 15 Continuing Education for Women (CEW) programs stated, "as women reenter the academic world, they are confronted with both personal problems and institutional barriers . . . one such problem is the lack of self confidence which a woman invariably feels after being out of school for some time." (p. 55) Later, Astin (1976) qualified her generalization. Astin (1976) found that only 27% surveyed reported feeling a lack of self-confidence. Therefore not all reentry students experience a lack of self confidence.

Bartlett and Oldham's (1978) study involved late middle-aged women who returned to the labor market. It was found that lack of self-confidence was cited as a significant problem that involved the re-introduction to the labor market. Brandenberg (1974) interviewed a number of reentry students, but gave a questionnaire only to some (n not given). She concluded (without reference to any empirical findings) that "many of these women have for a long time been subverting their own needs and interests to those of others. Frequently they have gone from being dependent on their parents to being dependent on their husband" (p. 1213). The problem of dependency and the resulting lack of confidence may undermine the entire educational process (Brandenberg 1974).

A lack of self-confidence is perhaps the most fundamental

and pervasive attitude hampering a reentry woman in attaining her goals (Brooks, 1976; Canadian Advisory council on the Status of Women, 1979; Cramer, Kietel, &Rossberg, 1986). Reentry women feel unsure of themselves because of the lack of self awareness of their capabilities and relevant work experience. They also lack information concerning the job market (Couchman & Peck, 1983).

In Brooks' (1976) suggestions as to how best to help the reentry woman (not supported by any objective data) she indicated that women suffered from a lack of self confidence. Similarly Manis and Mochizuki (1972) support Brooks' (1976) suggestions to address women's feelings of worthlessness and low self-confidence (no data was presented to support their observation). Reynolds, Purtell, and Voorhee's (1969) research also indicated that reentry clerical trainees exhibited low levels of self-confidence. However, the problem was considered to be temporary and would therefore change over time. McGraw (1982) in her review article noted that the transitional period in particular was often laden with feelings of low self-worth and self-esteem.

Since the majority of those studies gathered no objective data, it is not clear whether all reentry women experience low levels of self confidence or whether different groups of reentry women experience the problem differently. As indicated, more empirical research is needed.

Assertiveness

It has been assumed that reentry women experience a lack of assertiveness (Pickering, 1985). Both Bartlett and Oldham (1978), and Brooks (1976) suggested the inclusion of assertiveness training in any intervention aimed at the reentry woman. Roach (1976) made a similar plea in her summary of suggestions to counsellors. "Becoming more self assertive and autonomous is a necessary first step for many reentry women." (p. 89) Pickering (1988) found that the group of women returning to the workforce scored lower on assertiveness than the career group of women thus supporting Roach (1976).

It is not clear whether all reentry women experience assertiveness problems. This study attempts to answer such questions, thereby providing useful information to vocational counsellors who may or may not need to provide assertiveness training to all reentry women.

Aspirations

Women are returning to post secondary institutions and to the workforce for a variety of reasons. According to the Markus (1973) study, women who return have varied long term goals. Results indicated that 26% listed obtaining a degree was important whereas 41% said their reasons for return was to train for a new job.

In Waters' (1973) study 50% of the older respondents in a community college had higher aspirations. They hoped to have a

professional level jot within the next 10 years. Other research has also indicated higher aspirations for the older women returnee. Badenhoop and Johansen (1980) noted that the educational goals were higher among reentry (older) women. In their study 20% of the older students planned to earn their Masters degree and 40% of the women intended to pursue a doctorate or a professional level degree.

Pickering (1985) noted that there were no studies on the aspirations of women who returned to the workforce. It is not clear if and how the aspirations of women who return to the workforce differ from those women who return to post secondary education. In this study, using three subgroups of reentry women, it is possible to observe whether any differences in aspirations do exist.

Endurance

"Given the time demands faced by many reentry women, one might guess that they would need a great deal of endurance." (Pickering, 1985, p. 25) Pickering (1985) found that the reentry women's score on endurance was as high as the career women sample, indicating a high level of endurance. The question, in this study is, is there significant differences on the endurance scale between the three groups of reentry women?

Dominance and Impulsivity

Pickering (1988) found that his sample of reentry women did not receive lower scores on the dominance scale when compared

with career women. Reentry women and career women received lower scores on the PRF impulsivity scale compared with the group of planners.

Summary

The issues raised in this section support the need for additional empirical research so that more can be learned about the personality characteristics of reentry women. Reentry women students exhibit high levels of achievement (Astin, 1976; Baruch, 1967; Markus, 1973; McGraw, 1982) and perceive themselves not to be lacking in independence (Astin, 1976). Reentry women students have also been found to experience low self confidence (Astin, 1976, Brooks, 1976, McGraw, 1982). However, levels of aspirations were found to be high amongst reentry women students (Waters, 1973), the older the woman, the higher the aspirations (Bade Hoop & Johansen, 1980).

On the other hand women returning to the workforce exhibited lower scores on autonomy but scored as high as a sample of career women on the endurance scale (Pickering, 1985). Women returning to the workforce scored lower on assertiveness than the sample of career women (Pickering, 1985). Lack of self confidence has been found to be less of a problem amongst the older reentry women to the workforce (Bartlett & Oldham, 1978). It was suggested that initial differences would soon disappear with the passage of time.

What is not known is the nature of the achievement motive

and level of aspirations of women who return to the workforce. Similarly studies focusing on reentry women with respect to their self confidence and self esteem have not been supported by objective data (Badenhoop, 1976; Brooks, 1976; Manis & Mochizuki, 1972). Nor have there been empirical studies with respect to the assertiveness level of reentry women students. Many of the earlier studies date back to the early 1970s. Tremendous cultural shifts have occurred from 1976 to the present time. Therefore much of the literature is outdated. The literature review on many of the personality characteristics is sparse, suggesting therefore, that more research in the area is needed. This study addresses some of the major weaknesses inherent in the reentry literature on personality characteristics. In particular, it offers the opportunity to compare the groups of reentry women with respect to the most common characteristics that have typically been ascribed to the reentry woman.

Life Events

The measurement of common social stressors has received much attention over the past few decades and the use of life events schedules has become accepted practise in wellbeing research (Warner, 1990). The stress term was first introduced into the health fields in 1926 by Hans Selye. He noted that individuals suffering from a wide range of physical ailments seemed to have a constellation of common symptoms. Therefore, it followed, that a highly non-specific array of psychological,

physiological responses occur independent of the nature of the stressor. Stress, according to Selye (1974) was the "non-specific response of the body to any demand" (p. 4).

Selye's (1956; 1974) notion that life stress was a physical or psychological change elicited in response to an event, provided the basis for later systematic experimental research. Selye's (1974) notion of stress enabled quantification of what had largely been a qualitative area of study. It also allowed for the scaling of different magnitudes of life events. The best known measurement of life events is Holmes and Rahe (1967) formulation of the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SARS). This scale has influenced the contents of almost all other life events scales, including the Psychiatric Epidemiology Research Interview (PERI).

However, methodological problems abound in the stress literature. Criticisms of the life events approach, focus primarily on the fact that too little attention has been given to the unique meaning of the stress for the individual. Secondly, although life events scales include both positive and negative life changes, growing evidence indicates that the negative stressors exert the greater impact on disease and wellbeing (Perkins, 1982).

The purpose of the present study was to determine whether there are group differences with respect to the stressors that reentry women experience. The items on the PERI are drawn from

the major life areas and include school, work, family, legal, finances, and health. According to the life events perspective of adult development, women's lives undergo changes in their major life areas (Evans, 1985). Making the transition from home to the workforce creates the need for women to adapt to their changing environments. A life events scale provides a means of assessing the relative difference in stress experienced by different groups. It is not comprehensive, (not able to assess stress as uniquely experienced by the individual) in its assessment. However, an estimate of stress experienced by the different groups of reentry women is provided.

Health care professionals are confronted daily with clients who suffer from excessive psychological physiologic stress arousal. This fact has created a need to know more about the stress response and its treatment. According to Tittle and Denker (1980) women reentering college are in a transition that is accompanied by a number of problems. Studies such as these are based on the assumption that life changes require adaptation on the part of the individuals and are stressful. Similarly persons who experience significant changes during their recent past are susceptible to physical and psychological problems. Therefore, there is a need to understand the stress response of reentry women.

The two vulnerability factors of social support and coping strategies have received the most attention in the literature.

Huston-Hoburg and Strange (1986) investigated spouse support among male and female returning adult students. Similarly studies by Roehl and Okun (1984; 1985) have investigated the life events experienced by reentry women students and the types of social support they received. Results indicate that the most frequently reported stressors were related to school issues; including changes in time pressures since returning to school, changes in financial status and changes in the family's attitude.

The majority of studies on reentry women have used samples of students. Although results indicate that reentry women experience stress when making the transition from home to school, it is not known whether other groups of reentry women experience similar stressors. To answer this question, total scores on the PERI life events scale for the different groups will be compared. In this way, a knowledge of the relative difference in the amount of stress experienced will be obtained. While a comprehensive understanding of stress is not obtained using this procedure, it does however, allow for valuable comparisons of the different groups. More research in the area is needed.

The Underpinnings of Life Event Scales: The Contribution of Selye's Work

Selye's (1956) notion that life stress is a physical and psychological change elicited in response to an event, provided the basis for later systematic experiential research in an area

where research had largely been non-experiential. In order for life events to provide a single index of life stress, two assumptions need to be made (a) life changes require adaptations on the part of the individual and are stressful, and (b) persons experiencing marked degrees of life changes during the recent past are susceptible to physical and psychological problems.

From Selye's (1956) work the following issues, relevant to life events study emerged:

1. The stress-disorder relationship is linear--some events elicit more stress than others. Therefore, not all life events are equally stressful. One of the "central issues that has guided research is, what are the properties or conditions that distinguish more stressful from less stressful life events?" (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974, p. 4).

2. The change construct assumes that individual events are independent and additive; the same event always elicits the same amount of stress. Therefore, the stress that arises out of a combination of events is not included in this model.

3. The assumptions upon which life event scales are based assume a "black box" view of human experience. This is because it is assumed that nothing of significance intervenes between the objectively quantifiable stimulus (the life event) and the individual's adaptive response, except for an awareness that the event did occur. "Events are thus seen as non-specific stimuli that impact on different people from different situations

to approximately the same degree." (Perkins, 1982, p. 323)

4. No mention is made of the individual's perceptions of the event or the degree of social support available to an individual. Therefore what can't be explained is the exact nature of the changes elicited.

5. "The concept of life stress as non-specific change thus seems limited and over-simplified." (Perkins, 1982, p. 323). However, as already indicated, this conceptualization is critical for assessing the question asked in this study.

Numerous methodological problems are associated with life events research. Zimmerman (1983) stated the nine common issues as follows:

1. Symptoms contamination of life events scales.
2. Temporal relationship between evens and illness.
3. The dating of events and disorder.
4. The content of life events scales.
5. The generalizability of weights.
6. The use of subjective ratings.
7. The reliability of the reporting of life events.
8. The scaling of positive and negative life events.
9. The relationship of positive events to mental health and illness.

Further examination of all of these methodological issues is beyond the scope of this literature review.

Historical Antecedents of Life Events Scale

The foundation of systematic experimental research on the effects of stress was laid by Cannon (1929). From his detailed observation, he put forth the argument that stressful life events can prove to be harmful (Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend 1974). Stimuli associated with emotional arousal cause changes in basic physiological processes.

Following Cannon's (1929) reasoning, was Adolf Meyer's (1951) major contribution in the development of a life chart as a tool for medical diagnosis. This life chart included a medical history from birth together with changes of habitat, school entrance, jobs held, dates of important births and deaths in the family and other significant environmental indices. Thus, life events, even the most normal and necessary ones may play an important role in the aetiology of a disorder.

Holmes and Rahe (1967) developed further the concept of Meyers' (1930) life chart into a systematic set of procedures for measuring the magnitude of stressful life events. Holmes and Rahe (1967) developed the Schedule of Recent Experience (SRE) and later the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS). These scales were both based on Selye's notion of stress, namely that different demands are placed on individuals which in turn require adaptation to change, and not all life events are equally stressful (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974).

Holmes and Rahe's (1967) scale has been criticized because

life events that cluster at the time of disease onset would include some that are concomitant or effects rather than agents that may be responsible for producing a disorder. Similarly, the appearance of the disease is often gradual so identification of time of onset is often gradual. Other criticisms have been levelled at the ambiguity of the descriptions e.g. changes in the responsibilities at work, changes in living conditions. In spite of criticism, Holmer and Rahe's (1967) SRRS scales has influenced the content of about all other lists including the Psychiatric Epidemiology Research Interview (PERI) (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974).

Problem Involved in Measuring Life Events

Available research instruments have been restricted to predominantly the cumulative score type where participants respond to a series of content items with either a true or false endorsement. These studies rely on retrospective self report studies which are subject to distortion due to reasoning and perceptions. Measurement involves quantification of the life change, ignoring the psychological meaning of the experience for the individual.

The relationship between stress and illness is complex. Illness can result from too little stress just as it might result from too much stress. By far the greatest part of excessive stress is self-initiated (Everly & Rosenfield, 1981). More recently, the Life Experience Survey (Sarason, Johnson, & Siegal,

1979) has been considered an improvement over earlier scales since it can assess separately positive and negative life experiences as well as individualized ratings of the impact of events.

Reason for Using the PERI Life Events Scale

What is of interest in this study is the magnitude of environmental stress present in women's lives at the time of reentry. Each item on the SRRS and PERI scales was constructed to contain life events whose advent is either indicative of or requires significant change in the ongoing life pattern of the individual. A life events scale appears to be appropriate for the questions asked in the scale because "the emphasis is on life changes from the existing steady state and not on psychological measures, emotions or social desirability" (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974, p. 46)

The PERI Scale has the potential to quantify important events. Its cumulative score type format makes it particularly useful for answering the type of questions asked in this study.

The list of 102 events have undergone many revisions. The wording of events has been updated. Items that are subjective in nature have been excluded. This minimizes the dependency on subject's reports of their occurrence and maximizes the opportunity for obtaining true measures of social environmental stressors.

Whereas the earlier life event scales were based on

samples of patients the PERI was constructed as part of a study in New York City. A wider age range of people and a more diverse population (poorly and highly educated people) were included in the weighting of the scales. Since a diverse reentry population of women comprise this study, the PERI appeared to be a relevant and appropriate choice of instrument. While there are many reasons for using the life events scale, it is important to be aware of the scale's limitations when drawing inferences and generalizations to individuals and groups.

In summary, research on stressful life events generally support the notion that magnitude weights do provide for useful interpretations. Rahe (1974) indicated that for a young single population whose life experiences tend to reflect items usually weighted low, a high correlation was found between weighted and unweighted life events. In cases such as these, weighted life events can be used interchangeably with unweighted life events (Perkins, 1982). Rahe (1974) recommended using weighted scores for a middle-aged population. These subjects usually have had life events that include those with larger weights. Therefore correlations between weighted and unweighted life events would be lower.

Similarly the issue of whether the list of life events, (PERI) drawn from a sample of New York patients (5,000) restricts the inferences that can be made when different populations are involved. According to Dohrenwend, Askenasy, Krasnoff and

Dohrenwend (1982) "limiting the use to this particular urban setting seems unnecessarily restrictive" (p. 358). At the same time these authors indicate that the list of events do not adequately represent a rural population or the experiences of urban populations in other countries.

Any list of life events is only a sample of events taken at a particular time and may become less representative as time passes (e.g., leaving and entering the armed forces is less prominent than the experiences of those in the 1970s). Therefore it is important to review the list of life events as time passes and before it is used in other sociological settings (Dohrewend, Askenasy, Krassnoff, & Dohrewend, 1982).

Values

Vocational choice theories have moved toward a more dynamic perspective. The concept of values as related to career choice has been explored extensively by Super (1957; 1981; 1983), Holland (1957; 1981; 1983), and Lofquist and Davis (1978). More recent research indicates a broadening of this concept to include consideration of the entire life style, not only the work role (Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982; Super, 1980). According to this view, values may be expressed in all of the life roles, not only the work role.

Values are rooted in theories of vocational behavior that incorporate the self-concept as well as the perceptions individuals have of themselves in relation to the work role.

Super (1957) defined self as a developing set of perceptions of the individual's characteristics. Work provides the opportunity to further develop and implement one's self-concept. Inextricably linked to this process is the attempt to fulfil one's values.

The increased participation of women in the workforce has resulted in the work role assuming an important position in the lives of women (Astin, 1985; Bardwick, 1980; Okun, 1984; Rossi, 1980). Women returning to post secondary education or to the workforce need to make career choices. Values are a fundamental part of the career-decision making process. Values guide occupational choices as well as facilitating the self-awareness process (Super, 1968). Since reentry women combine work with the other life roles, Super's (1981) theoretical constructs are particularly useful for exploring the values of reentry women (Brooks, 1984; Crozier, 1985; Madill, 1985; Osipow, 1983; Richardson, 1979).

There exists a multiplicity of work values or meanings that complicates the task of the career guidance counsellor (Herr and Cramer, 1984). Counsellors can no longer assume that work is equally meaningful for all persons. Counsellors are in a strategic position to help "clients find a variety of outlets for their talents and for their values in work, in play, in the family and in the community" (Super, 1981, p. 33). The study of values provides the starting point to achieve this end.

In summary, there exists two major reasons why values were

included in this study. To the writer's knowledge there were no empirical studies that examined the values of reentry women. Secondly, women who return to post-secondary education or to the workforce are involved in career planning. Values are central to self-assessment within the career planning process.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUMENTATION

The content of Chapter III deals with the procedures involved in conducting the study. A description of the sample as well as the strategies and techniques for collecting the data were also outlined.

Introduction

One of the functions of a mixed-method design is to enhance the richness of findings by using two different methods to study the same phenomenon (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). Parametric statistics and interviewing techniques were used to examine the personality characteristics, values and life events of three different groups of reentry women. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the biographical data.

The Sample

Seventy-five women from three different reentry populations were included in the study. These samples of convenience (selected because they were readily available rather than to represent a known population) were comprised of the following groups. One group consisted of 27 reentry women from post-secondary educational institutions, the University of Alberta, Grant MacEwan and NAIT. These women were committed to reentering since they are all enrolled in courses and programs. Another group consisted of 26 women who had all registered at "Options for Women", an agency funded by Employment and

Immigration Canada. These women are often at the stage of considering their options for the purpose of making lifestyle changes. The third group consisted of 22 women on social assistance, and who had applied to the Job Reentry Program of the Canadian Job Strategy. The particular program was entitled "Hospitality Industry Training for Women". As this group of women received on-the-job training, they had already reentered the workforce.

For the purposes of research, all participants were screened to meet the following requirements: (a) English speaking; (b) out of the workforce (post-secondary institutions for a minimum of one year); and (c) volunteered for inclusion in the study.

Instrumentation

The following instruments were used to answer the research question (a) Life Roles Inventory-Values Scale; (b) Psychiatric Epidemiology Research Interview (PERI); (c) Personality Research Form-Form E (PRF); and (d) Biographical Data Sheet.

Life Roles Inventory-Values Scale (LRI-VS)

In Canada, the LRI was developed by George Fitzsimmons, Donald MacNab and Catherine Casserly (1984) as part of the WORK Importance Study (WIS). The main objective of the WIS was to develop more effective means of assessing the motivation to work. A number of developmental steps and reviews were involved in the International and Canadian WIS team. As a result, two instruments were developed--the values scale and the salience inventory known

together as the Life Roles Inventory (MacNab, Fitzsimmons, & Casserly, 1984).

The final version of the values scale is a norm referenced standardized inventory of 100 items consisting of 20 values or satisfactions most people seek in their lives. Values include the following: ability utilization, achievement, advancement, aesthetics, authority, autonomy, creativity, economics, lifestyle, personal development, physical activity, prestige, risk, social interaction, social relations, variety, working conditions, cultural identity, and physical prowess. Respondents are asked to indicate how important an item is or will be for them. The response format is based on a 4-point scale, 'little or no importance', 'some importance', 'important', and 'very important'. There are five items per scale which are spaced 20 items apart. Three of the five items are common to all countries and are used for international comparison. The remaining two items are unique to a particular country. Some sample items are:

1. Use all my skills and knowledge. (ability utilization scale)

62. Achieve the goals I have set for myself. (achievement scale)

The LRI-VS was normed on a Canadian sample of 10,000 (Fitzsimmons, Macnab, & Casserly, 1984). Fitzsimmons, Macnab, and Casserly (1984) obtained internal consistency coefficients, the alpha ranging from .68 for achievement to .91 for altruism. The

median interval consistency coefficient of .83 was found using samples of post-secondary students. Similar coefficients were found with national samples who responded to the English version of the LRI-VS. Test-Retest coefficients were obtained with a group of high school students (n = 986). The highest coefficient was .82 (physical activity and physical prowess) and the lowest was .61 (personal development) with a medium test-retest coefficient of .70. Reliability coefficients have also been calculated from 159 bilingual high school students using alternate forms (English and French).

A variety of studies have been carried out in different countries of the factor analysis of the scales. Fitzsimmons, Macnab and Casserly (1984) explored the factor structure of the LRI-VS for the Canadian norming sample (adults, post-secondary students, high school students, French, and English). Findings indicated the same factor structure across all groups. The first factor loaded highly on Ability Utilization, Achievement, Advancement, Prestige, and Personal Development. This factor was called Achievement and Development. Factor 2 loaded on Altruism, Social Interaction and Social Relations. This was designated as a Social Orientation factor. Factor 3 had high loadings on Autonomy, Creativity, Life Style, and Variety, and stressed Independence. Factor 4 stressed the importance of Economic Conditions with highest loadings on Economics, Working Conditions and Cultural Identity. Factor 5 was called a Physical Risk factor

and loaded highest on Physical Prowess, Physical Activity and Risk.

Face validity for [illegible] values scales was established through the mutual agreemen[illegible]e Project Director. Convergent and discriminant validity was established by examining the relationship between the LRI-VS and the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire, the Work Aspects Preference Scale and the Work Values Inventory. Correlations were consistently high, thus demonstrating that the inventories were measuring highly similar constructs (i.e., convergent validity is present). The agreements between each scale were relatively independent of agreements on other dimensions, therefore, discriminant validity was also demonstrated (Fitzsimmons, Macnab, & Casserly, 1984).

Concurrent validity for the LRI-VS was established by having correctly classifying 74% of the total sample (comprised of students in Education, Business, and Rehabilitation Medicine) into the different groups. In addition, Macnab (1989) demonstrated that in comparison to the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire, the Work Aspect Preference Scale and the Work Values Inventory, the LRI-VS had the highest correct classification rate for the cross-validation hold out sample.

Psychiatric Epidemiology Research Interview (PERI)

The PERI life events scale consists of 102 events pertaining to life events and human conditions which cause stress, concern or upset to a person. The main question asked of a person is to

indicate which of the following events had occurred in the past 12 months. Both positive and negative events are included since it is believed that both make adaptive demands on the individual and thus produce stress. The weighting of each event involves a rating procedure that estimates the amount of change or readjustment required on the part of an individual. The estimate of the total life stress experienced by an individual is the sum of the weights reported. The PERI was used in this study because it makes possible the quantification of significant life events. The PERI was also based on a diverse population. This fact facilitates the generalization that can be made from this study. Caution is also needed since the samples were random but stratified.

The PERI is considered an improvement over earlier life event scales such as Holmes and Rahe's (1967) Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS). Unlike the SRRS where ambiguous item descriptions are found, the PERI was constructed with increased attention paid to methodological issues. The selection of events to be included in the scale were carefully analysed. Increased attention was given to the appropriateness of the wording of the items. Although many of the items on the PERI were based on existing stress measures (SRRS), other items were included because they were judged (based on the consensus among four judges) to be events that occur frequently and exert a significant impact on the lives of people who experience it. Detailed attention has been

paid to item selection. The items on the scale were compiled from two subpopulations of events that are distinguishable in terms of their generality. One of the subpopulations of events represent the universality of human experience, including marriage, birth, illness, injuries, and death. These events constitute the core that are included in any list regardless of the setting in which it is to be used.

The second subpopulation of events varies with the social and cultural setting. The sample of events comprising this subpopulation may become less representative or obsolete with the passing of time (entering or leaving the armed forces). Therefore, it is important to reassess the appropriateness and representativeness of items continuously so the scales remain relevant.

Since the potential for error or bias in the ratings is a major problem affecting the validity of the PERI, a great deal of attention has been focussed on the weighting of the items. Although extensive rating procedures were involved in the construction of the PERI, there was no universally agreed upon rating for the scale. Wide variability exists in the judges' estimation of the weightings of the scale. Differences occur as a function of the social class or other identifiable characteristics of the judges, their age group, sex or ethnicity. When judges are grouped according to sex, ethnicity or age, mean ratings of events were .90. Ratings by women judges were on the average .56 points

higher than for men. Ratings differed according to the social classes of the judges with a spread of 94 points between middle class means which were the highest and upper class means which were the lowest. However, the variability was found to be less for the different ethnic groups.

Test-retest reliability studies to date have reported reliability coefficients ranging from .26 to .90. Such variability has been attributed to the difficulties involved in recalling stressful life events. The self reported nature of the scale as well as the individual's cognitive style in remembering or reporting experiences also combine to increase the variability in the test-retest reliability coefficient (Dowrenwend & Dowrenwend, 1982). In addition to the extensive procedures involved in rating the items, the judges have also undergone interview training and supervision so as to facilitate their performances.

The PERI scale construction has highlighted methodological shortcomings and technical weaknesses inherent in any life events scale. The PERI also clearly indicates potential shortcomings as well as where more research is needed. It is thereby considered an improvement over earlier research tools.

Jackson Personality Research Form-Form E (PRF)

The PRF Form E was used in this study for the following reasons:

1. The PRF-Form E was normed on a college and non-college population. Therefore, the norming was well suited to the samples of women in this study.

2. The PRF-Form E has been identified as being useful because its scales corresponded to some characteristics that had been attributed to the reentry woman (Pickering, 1988). The PRF-Form E had also been used in a previous study of personality characteristics of reentry women (Pickering, 1988).

3. In the PRF-Form E detailed attention has been given to construct validity and reliability. Moreover, an important issue in personality test construction is controlling response desirability. According to Wiggins (1986), the PRF (Form E) has controlled adequately for bias as well as other technical considerations. It is, therefore, a highly recommended instrument for personality research.

The PRF (Jackson, 1967) was based on the work of Henry Murray. The purpose and rationale of the development of the PRF-Form E was to strengthen its psychometric foundation and to extend its range of use to populations other than college and university students. It focuses on normal functioning. The relative independence of the PRF-Form E from measures of psychopathology is evidenced by the fact that the anxiety trait (a measure of psychopathology) on the Jackson Personality Inventory

(JPI) does not correlate highly with any of the PRF-Form E content scales.

The final versi of the PRF-Form E consists of 22, 16 item scales as well as an infrequency and desirability scale for detecting invalid responses. Personality characteristics include the following: abasement, achievement, affiliation, aggression, autonomy, change, cognitive structure, defendence, dominance, endurance, exhibition, harmavoidance, impulsivity, nurturance, order, play, sentience, social recognition, succorance, understanding, infrequency, and desirability. The PRF is untimed and can be administered in a group setting under supervised conditions. It can be hand or machine scored. Standard (E) scores with a mean of 50 and standard deviation of 10 permits comparison of separate scales scores for a given subject.

In developing the PRF-Form E, attention was given to the PRF scales and their definition as well as the item pool. The influence of desirability and infrequency has also been investigated. Acquiesence is controlled by employing equal numbers of true and false keyed items. The infrequency and desirability scales provide a means of detecting subjects who respond in a deviant way or who respond in terms of a desirability bias.

Traits on the PRF can be interpreted as separate measures or as groups of scales. Factor analytic results based on theoretical considerations and factor analytic studies suggest a basis for

organizing the characteristics measured by the scale into a number of superordinate categories (Nesselroade & Balte, 1975).

The degree of confidence which may be placed in a scale score and a representation of a construct depends on the validity and reliability of the test. The PRF has evidenced both convergent and discriminant validity. Validation studies have used ratings by judges, psychometricians and individuals who have had frequent opportunity to observe the assessee. However, the validity findings have been constrained because of the modest reliability of the criterion judgement. Validity data have been collected for each scale by comparing subjects' scores on the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) and with behavioral ratings made by a pool of judges. The behavioral ratings and correlations were around .50 and the comparison with the CPI indicated that the scales exhibited a high degree of convergent validity and an acceptable degree of disciminant validity. A study by Kuysyszyn (1968) also indicated similar validity coefficients ranging from .47 to .52 respectively.

Reliability of the PRF indicates some stability of scores over time. The PRF manual states test-retest (one week) reliability for four personality scales (autonomy, achievement, dominance, and impulsivity) of .77, .80, .88, and .81 respectively, as well as an odd even reliability of .78, .77, .86, and .66.

Buros (1974) cited Anastasi who reviewed the PRF in "Tests in Print II" and concluded that technically the PRF appears to be statistically well designed with extraordinary attention to psychometric detail. Clarke (1973) reviewed measures of achievement and affiliation motivation and concluded that of all the individual measures, the PRF is the most reliable and best validated test for researching achievement and affiliation motivation. Wiggins (1986) cited the PRF (Form E) as an exceptionally promising instrument in the realm of personality testing primarily because of its psychometric soundness.

Biographical Data Sheet

A biographical data sheet was designed by the researcher for the purpose of obtaining information on the marital status, age, level of education, income level, reasons for returning, length of time out of the workforce, years of working experience, support systems available, and age of children (see Appendix A). Participants were asked to read each question and to indicate which statements were true for them. In instances where the questions were open ended, the participants were instructed to fill in their answer in the space provided.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data for this study were gathered in Edmonton from October 1989 to April 1990. The data gathering procedure differed slightly for the three groups. A proposal of the study and letter of introduction was sent to the Options for Women Agency, the

Canada Job Strategy Program and the Mature Undergraduate Society at the University of Alberta (see Appendix B). Included in the letter was an outline of the nature and purpose of the study, a review of the questionnaires, provisions for confidentiality, time commitment involved in the study, and the method of returning questionnaires (see Appendix C). The researcher then contacted the agencies and arranged a meeting to discuss the study more fully and to answer any additional questions.

Between January and April 1990, the researcher attended the Options for Women intake meetings that were held every Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. At the meeting the researcher gave a verbal presentation of the information contained in the covering letter. It was believed that the personal contact and presentation by the researcher would elicit more response than a mailing format. Of the total 35 packages handed out, 26 were totally completed. In early April, a follow-up letter was mailed out to participants. Phone calls were also placed to follow-up the outstanding questionnaires.

The Mature Undergraduate Society (MUGS) of the University of Alberta was approached in early October 1989 with a request that the researcher be allowed to present the study at one of their meetings. A membership list was also requested. At the meeting an outline of the study was presented. The women who were interested and who fulfilled the criteria for inclusion in the study were handed the questionnaire package as well as a stamped,

self-addressed envelope for returning the completed questionnaires and signed consent forms. The participants of this group gave the researcher the names and telephone numbers of women who they knew had recently reentered NAIT and Grant MacEwan. The researcher telephoned these women and explained to them the nature of the research and limits of confidentiality. These women who agreed to participate were mailed the questionnaires, consent forms, a standard covering letter, as well as a self-addressed envelope.

The Operations Officer of the Job Strategy Program was approached in October 1989 with a proposal of this study. A brief letter was also sent out to the project coordinators of the particular project entitled "Hospitality Industry Training for Women". The researcher was invited to attend one of the workshops that was held in October 1989. At the workshop the researcher gave a verbal presentation of the information contained in the covering letter. All but one of the participants consented to participate in the study. The data were gathered in a single two hour session.

Interviewing

Two participants from each group volunteered to be interviewed. Arrangements were made to determine a convenient time. Average time per interview was one hour. An open ended interview schedule was used (see Appendix D). Participants were oriented to the interview in such a way so as to encourage further elaboration of the information already obtained from the

biographic sheet and the three questionnaires. Areas that were covered included individual's background and reason for returning, the kinds of emotional support systems available to them, the nature of stressful life events, values sought in wanting to return, and which of their personal qualities were particularly useful to them at this time of reentry.

Statement of Purpose

The increased number of divorced, widowed, and separated women has led to women reentering at different ages and stages of their lives and for different reasons (Lewis, 1988; Scott, 1980). It becomes questionable whether reentry women can be categorized as a homogeneous group. To date, research has indicated that results have often been overgeneralized (McGraw, 1982).

Pickering (1985) stated that little is known about the subgroups of reentry women. Based on the above, the following questions became the focus of this thesis.

Research Questions

This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. Are there differences in personality characteristics between the three groups of reentry women?

2. Do the three groups of reentry women experience different degrees of stress as measured by a Life Events Scale?

3. Do the values held by the three groups of reentry women differ from one another?

Evaluation of the Data

The data analysis involved three phases. Phase 1 consisted of computing frequencies on all the demographic variables. This enabled one to readily determine the frequency with which individual items were endorsed by respondents. In order to cross tabulate demographic variables, the chi-square for independent samples was used to analyse frequencies. In instances where the respondents answered with their own comments (reasons for returning), the substance of the response was analysed and labelled. The nature and frequency of the major response themes will be presented.

The next phase of data analysis in this investigation consisted of submitting data specific to the stated research questions to appropriate inferential statistical procedures. This involved the use of the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Those analysis of variance which were determined to be statistically significant were submitted to appropriate follow-up tests (Scheffe procedure). The level of significance was set at $\leq .01$.

Phase 3 of data analysis utilized content analysis. The transcribed interviews were read, and recurring themes were noted. A summary of the most frequently occurring themes will be presented in Appendix E.

Summary

This chapter has discussed procedures specific to conducting the investigation on the topic of reentry women. It has included the (a) design of the study, (b) subjects included in the research project, (c) instruments to be used for data collection purposes, (d) procedure for data collection, and (e) plan of statistical analysis for the data obtained in this investigation.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to learn more about reentry women and their characteristics. Data were obtained from 75 women using three samples of convenience. The data were collected by means of three instruments as well as a demographic questionnaire. In addition, two women from each group were interviewed.

Data analysis consisted initially of three phases. The demographic data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The data specific to the research questions were analysed using quantitative analysis procedures (ANOVA). Additional findings from comparisons with norm groups will also be described. The qualitative data were organized in terms of themes.

Section 1

Sample characteristics are presented in the first section using descriptive statistics. A summary and tabular presentations of descriptive findings follow.

Sample Characteristics

The total sample consisted of 75 women. The mean age was 32 years with a range between 21 - 59 years (see Table 1). Table 2 shows age by group. Their reasons for returning were varied and are grouped according to content and frequency of response (see Table 3). The mean and mode for each group were also calculated in order to assess the number of reasons per person that were

Table 1

Sample Description by Age

Age	Frequency
21 - 25	4
26 - 30	12
3i - 35	18
36 - 40	15
41 - 45	6
46 - 50	6
51 - 55	4
56 - 59	1
Total	66

Nonsignificant difference between group means

Sample mean $\bar{x}$ = 32.02; SD = 14.19

Nine participants refused to state age

Table 2

Age by Group

Sample Characteristic	Group							
	Adapters		Explorers		Change Seekers		Total	
Age	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
21 - 30	4		3		9		16	24.2%
31 - 40	14		11		8		23	50.0%
40 - 49	5		9		3		17	25.8%
Total	23	(34.8)	23	(34.8)	20	(30.3)		

Inspection of Table 2 indicated that the majority of women in the sample (50%) are between the ages of 31 - 40 years. There was a non-significant difference between the group means.

Adapters $\bar{x}$ = 31.1 years

Explorers $\bar{x}$ = 34.6 years

Change Seekers $\bar{x}$ = 30.0 years

Table 3

Reason for Return (Total Sample)

Reason	Change			
	Adapters	Explorers	Seekers	Total
Financial	6	19	11	36
Looking for a new career	5			5
Personal fulfillment	9	8	2	19
To develop new skills/ upgrade or further education	12			12
To supplement family income	1	3		4
To meet people	1	2		3
Lessening of childrearing responsibilities			3	3
To qualify for pension plan in the future		1		1
To be off s[illegible]sistance		1	3	4
Looking for n[illegible]r paying occupa			5	5

given. Differences between the three groups were also calculated (see Tables 4, 5, and 6).

It is evident from Tables 4, 5, and 6 that all three groups indicated financial and personal fulfillment as reasons for their return. Financial reasons were most frequently endorsed by Explorers and Change Seekers (19 and 11 respectively). Personal fulfillment was the most favoured response from the Adapters (9 responses given). Upgrading and developing new skills were reasons given only by the Adapters (12 responses). Looking for a better paying occupation was a reason given only by the Change Seekers (5 responses). A lessening of childrearing responsibilities was given by the Change Seekers (3 responses) and meeting people was a reason stated by the Adapters (1 response) and the Explorers (2 responses). It is interesting to note the responses of Change Seekers, namely, only three women stated that they wanted to be off social assistance. With respect to the Explorers, one woman stated she wanted to be off social assistance. It is also of interest that women stated more than one reason for returning. The Adapters and Explorers stated up to three different self-generated reasons for their returning, whereas for the Change Seekers, the maximum number of reasons given were two.

Tables 7 to 21 describe the sample in terms of their marital status, number of children at home, years out of the workforce, years of working experience, level of education, and income level.

Table 4

Reason for Returning (Adapters)

Reason	Total
Financial	6
Looking for a new career	5
Personal fulfillment	9
To develop new skills/upgrade or further education	12
To supplement family income	1
To meet people	1
Total	34

One participant did not answer

Table 5

Reason for Returning (Explorers)

Reason	Total
Financial	19
Personal fulfillment	8
To supplement family income	3
To meet people	2
To qualify for pension plan in the future	1
To be off social assistance	1
Total	34

n = 25

Table 6

Reason for Returning (Change Seekers)

Reason	Total
Financial (include need to be self supporting	11
Personal fulfillment	2
Youngest child in school	3
To be off social assistance	3
Looking for new and better paying occupation	5
Total	24

One participant did not answer

n = 22

Inspection of these tables reveal that 41% of women are married, with two children (37%), have been out of the workforce between 1 and 5 years (58%), have 6 - 10 years (40%) work experience, have a Grade 12 education level (37.5%), and are in the under $12,000 per annum income bracket (41%).

Inspection of Table 8 reveals that the three groups differ in terms of their marital status. The majority of Adapters are married (18); Explorers had equal numbers of married (12) and divorced, widowed, or separated women (12). Change Seekers had the majority of divorced, widowed, or separated women (14) and only one married woman.

Tables 9, 10, and 11 show that the majority of Adapters earn over $35,000 per annum; 22.6% of women earn between $35,000 and $49,000, and 37.0% of women earn over $50,000 per annum. All of these women except for one in the $35,000 to $49,000 bracket are married. It is also evident that Adapters have the smallest percentage of women in the under $12,000 income bracket (14.8%). The women in this income bracket are from the divorced, widowed, or separated category. Explorers represent all of the income brackets. However, one finds that the majority of women are in the under $12,000 (8) income bracket. These women are either divorced, widowed, or separated. Only one married woman earns over $50,000. Change Seekers had the largest number of women (19) in the under $12,000 income bracket. These women are from the divorced, widowed, or separated cateogry. There were no women

Table 7

Sample Description by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	31	41
Single	11	14
Divorced	15	20
Separated	13	17
Widowed	5	6
Total	75	100

Table 8

Marital Status by Group

Sample Characteristic	Sample Subgroups		
Marital Status	Adapters	Explorers	Change Seekers
Married	18	12	1
Divorced/Widowed /Separated	7	12	14
Single	2	2	7
Total	27	26	22

Table 9

Marital Status by Income for Each Group

Adapters

	Income				
Marital Status	Under $12,000	$12,000-$20,000	$21,000-$34,000	$35,000-$49,000	Over $50,000
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Married	0	0	2	5	10
Single	0	1	1	0	0
Divorced/Widowed /Separated	4	1	1	1	0
Total	4 (14.8)	2 (7.4)	4 (14.8)	6 (22.2)	10 (37)

Missing data - 1

Table 10

Marital Status by Income for Each Group

Explorers

	Income				
Marital Status	Under $12,000	$12,000-$20,000	$21,000-$34,000	$35,000-$49,000	Over $50,000
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Married	1	3	3	2	1
Single	1	1	0	0	0
Divorced/Widowed /Separated	6	1	1	2	0
Total	8 (30.8)	5 (19.2)	4 (15.4)	4 (15.4)	1 (3.8)

Missing data - 4

Table 11

Marital Status by Income for Each Group

Change Seekers

	Income				
Marital Status	Under $12,000	$12,000-$20,000	$21,000-$34,000	$35,000-$49,000	Over $50,000
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Married	0	0	1	0	0
Single	7	0	0	0	0
Divorced/Widowed /Separated	12	2	0	0	0
Total	19 (86.4)	2 (9.1)	1 (4.5)	0	0

earning over $34,000. Table 12 describes the sample in terms of number of children, and Table 13 describes the sample in terms of the number of years out of the workforce.

Inspection of Table 14 reveals that in all three groups the majority of women had shorter periods of time out of the workforce (59.9% or 44 women in the sample are in the 1 - 5 year category). Explorers has eight women who have been out of the workforce for 11 - 15 years compared with three women in Adaptor and none in Change Seekers. From Table 16 it is evident that almost all the women have had work experience. From Table 17, the majority of women (58.7%) have had 1 - 7 years of work experience.

Table 18 indicates that reentry women have achieved varying educational levels. The majority of women have a Grade 12 education (37.5%). Table 19 reveals that Adapters have achieved a higher educational level than the Explorers or Change Seekers. Change Seekers have the highest number of women with less than 12 years of education.

Table 20 indicates that wide variability exists in terms of reentry women's income levels. Inspection of Table 21 shows the breakdown of income for Adapters. Nine women earn above $50,000 per annum, six women earn above $35,000, and five women earn above $21,000. This compares with the Change Seekers where no one earns above $20,000. Explorers and Change Seekers have the largest number of women in the under $12,000 income bracket (7 and 19 respectively).

Table 12

Sample Description by Number of Children

Number of Children	Frequency	Percent
0	16	21
1	16	21
2	28	37
3	12	16
4	3	4
Total	75	99

Inspection and further analysis of Table 12 indicated that one woman in the Adapter group had a preschool child, nine women in the Explorers group had preschool children, and four women in the Change Seekers group had preschool children.

Table 13

Sample Description by Years out of the Workforce

Years out of Workforce	Frequency	Percent
1 - 5	44	59.4
6 - 10	19	25.6
11 - 15	11	14.8
Total	74	99.8

One participant did not answer

Table 14

Years out of the Workforce by Group

Group	1 - 5 Years		6 - 10 Years		11 - 15 Years	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Adapters	15		9		3	
Explorers	10		8		8	
Change Seekers	19		2		0	
Total	44	(59.5)	19	(25.7)	11	(14.9)

Table 15

Years out of the Workforce by Age

Age	Years out of the Workforce					
	1 - 5 Years		6 - 11 Years		12 - 20 Years	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
21 - 30	15		0		0	
31 - 40	15		11		7	
40 - 59	7		6		4	
Total	37	(56.9)	17	(26.2)	11	(16.9)

Inspection of Table 15 shows that irrespective of age group, 56.9% of women are out of the workforce for the shortest period of time (1 - 5 years) compared with 26.2% of women (6 - 11 years), and 16.9% of women (12 - 20 years).

Table 16

Sample Description by Years of Working Experience

Years of Working Experience	Frequency	Percent
1 - 5	25	33.4
6 - 10	30	40.0
11 - 15	9	12.0
16 - 20	5	6.6
21 - 25	2	2.7
25 - 30	2	2.7
31 - 35	1	1.3
Total	74	98.7

One participant did not answer

Table 17

Years of Working Experience by Group

Group	Length of Time					
	1 - 7 Years		8 - 17 Years		18 - 35 Years	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Adapters	14		10		3	
Explorers	18		7		1	
Change Seekers	12		5		5	
Total	44	(58.7)	22	(29.3)	9	(12.0)

Table 18

Sample Description by Education

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
Less than Grade 12; no other training	22	30.5
Grade 12	27	37.5
Up to two years post-secondary including apprenticeships	18	25.0
Bachelor's degree	5	6.9
Total	72	99.9

Three participants did not answer the question

Table 19

Education by Group

Group	Education Level							
	Less than 12 Years		Grade 12		Up to 2 Years Post Secondary		Bachelor Degree	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Adapters	2		6		13		5	
Seekers	8		12		5		0	
Change Seekers	12		9		0		0	
Total	22	(30.5)	27	(37.5)	18	(25.0)	5	(6.9)

Table 20

Income Level

Income Level	Frequency	Percent
Under $12,000	30	44.0
$12,000 - $20,000	8	11.7
$21,000 - $34,000	10	14.7
$35,000 - $49,000	10	14.7
Over $50,000	10	14.7
Total	68	99.8

Five participants did not answer

Table 21

Income by Group

Group	Income				
	Under $12,000	$12,000-$20,000	$21,000-$34,000	$35,000-$49,000	Over $50,000
Adapters	4	2	5	6	9
Explorers	7	4	5	4	1
Change Seekers	19	2	0	0	0
Total	20	8	10	10	10

Tables 22 to 27 provide information on the types of support women receive by group and marital status. Analysing marital status in terms of group provided the opportunity to examine changing trends in demographic characteristics of reentry women. From the data it appears that married women represent almost half of all reentry women, with divorced, widowed and separated representing the other half.

All participants were asked to indicate the person(s) supportive of their plans. Responses were organized in terms of the following categories: husband, family, friend. Chi-square was performed on the type of support received by each group. Chi-square was also performed on the type of support received when marital status was controlled.

There were significant differences betweeen the Adapters and Change Seekers in terms of support received from husbands but not from family or friends. It was found that Change Seekers received no support from husbands compared with Adapters who received 59.3% support and Explorers who received 50.0% support (see Table 22).

To further examine these significant results, additional chi-squares were performed controlling for marital status. When marital status was controlled (married) no differences between groups in terms of support by husband was found (see Table 23).

From Table 23 it is evident that within the Change Seekers group, only one woman is married and she does not receive any support from her husband. In the Adapters group, 18 women are

Table 22

Support by Husband

	No 0	Yes 1	Count
Adapters	Count: 1 Exp. Val: 16.6% Row Pct: 40.7% Col. Pct: 23.9% Tot. Pct: 14.7%	Count: 16 Exp. Val: 10.4% Row Pct: 59.3% Col. Pct: 55.2% Tot. Pct: 21.3%	27 36.0%
Explorers	Count: 13 Exp. Val: 15.9% Row Pct: 50.0% Col. Pct: 28.3% Tot. Pct: 17.3%	Count: 13 Exp. Val: 10.1% Row Pct: 50.0% Col. Pct: 44.8% Tot. Pct: 17.3%	26 37.7%
Change Seekers	Count: 22 Exp. Val: 13.5% Row Pct: 100.0% Col. Pct: 47.8% Tot. Pct: 29.3%	Count: 0 Exp. Val: 8.5% Row Pct: 0.0% Col. Pct: 0.0% Tot. Pct: 0.0%	22 29.3%
Total	46 (61.3)	29 (38.7)	75 (100)

Chi-square	DF	Significance	min EF	Cells with EF <5
20.10556	2	0.0000	8.507	none

Number of Missing Observations
0

Table 23

Support by Husband Controlling for Marital Status

Married	Not Receiving Support	Receiving Support	Total Number of Married Women in Each Group
Adapters	3	15	18
Explorers	2	10	12
Change Seekers	1	0	1
Total	6	25	31

married, 15 receive support; in the Explorers group, 12 are married and 10 receive support from husband. When taking into consideration the possibility that divorced, widowed or separated women may continue to receive support from their ex-husbands, it was found that only four women out of a total of 33 received this type of support; one women was from the Adapter group and three women were from the Explorers group (see Table 24).

Inspection of Tables 25 - 27 shows that married women receive support from all three sources, although less support from family (71%) and friends (48%) when compared with the divorced, widowed, or separated group and the single group. Seventy-three percent of divorced, widowed, or separated women indicated they received support from family and 64% indicated they received support from friends, whereas 88% of the single women indicated they received support from family and 64% indicated they received support from friends.

The majority of married women comprise the Adapters group (15 of the 25 women who indicated they received support from husband were in this group). The remaining 10 women are in the Explorers group. Change Seekers have only one married woman who does not receive support from her husband but does receive support from family and friends. Change Seekers have the largest number of divorced, widowed, or separated women.

Eighty-three percent of married women in both the Adapters and Explorers groups indicated they received support from their

Table 24

Support by Ex-Husband Controlling for Marital Status

Divorced/ Separated	Not Receiving Support	Receiving Support	Total Number of Divorced/Separated Women in Each Group
Adapters	6	1	7
Explorers	9	3	12
Change Seekers	14	0	14
Total	29	4	33

Table 25

Type of Support by Group and Marital Status

Group	Support Received by Husband								
	Married, Receiving Support	Number Incurred in Sample	Percent	Divorced/Widowed /Separated, Receiving Support	Number Incurred in Sample	Percent	Single, Receiving Support	Number Incurred in Sample	Percent
Adapters	15	18	83%	1	7	14%	0	2	0%
Explorers	10	12	83%	3	12	25%	0	2	0%
Change Seekers	0	1	0%	0	14	0%	0	7	0%
TOTAL			80%			12%			0%

Table 26

Type of Support by Group and Marital Status

Group	Support Received by Family								
	Married, Receiving Support	Number Incurred in Sample	Percent	Divorced/Widowed /Separated, Receiving Support	Number Incurred in Sample	Percent	Single, Receiving Support	Number Incurred in Sample	Percent
Adapters	14	18	77%	6	7	85%	2	2	100%
Explorers	7	12	58%	10	12	83%	0	2	0%
Change Seekers	1	1	100%	13	14	93%	6	7	86%
TOTAL			71%			73%			88%

Table 27

Type of Support by Group and Marital Status

Group	Married, Receiving Support	Number Incurred in Sample	Percent	Divorced/Widowed /Separated, Receiving Support	Number Incurred in Sample	Percent	Single, Receiving Support	Number Incurred in Sample	Percent
Adapters	7	18	39%	3	7	43%	2	2	100%
Explorers	7	12	58%	8	12	67%	1	2	50%
Change Seekers	1	1	100%	10	14	71%	4	7	57%
TOTAL			48%			64%			64%

husbands. Seventy-seven percent of married women in the Adapters group indicated they received support from family and 39% of married women indicated they received support from friends. This compares with the Explorers where 58% of married women indicated they received support from friends. In contrast to the support from family and friends that married women in the Adapters and Explorers groups receive, is the increased number (83%) of divorced, widowed, or separated women in the Explorers group who receive support from family (83%), and 67% who receive support from friends. Eighty-five percent of divorced, widowed, or separated woman in the Adapters group indicated they received support from family and 43% of divorced, widowed, or separated indicated they received support from friends. This compared with Change Seekers where 93% of divorced, widowed, or separated women receive support from family and 71% receive support from friends.

Divorced, widowed, or separated women in all three groups receive higher levels of support from family and friends than the married women in the same groups. Divorced, widowed, or separated women in Change Seekers group receive higher levels of support from family and friends than these same women in the Adapters and Explorers groups. Conversely, women who have the support from their husbands indicated that they received lower levels of support from their family and friends. However, they do receive support from all three sources. Although the divorced, widowed, or separated women indicated high levels of support from family

and friends, except for one woman in the Adapters group and three women in the Explorers group (who received support from ex-husbands), the reamining women (including the single women) receive support from only two sources, namely family and friends.

Section 2

The second section deals with the research questions asked in the investigation. This includes the results of comparisons between groups on personality characteristics, life events and values. Results of the comparison of groups with norm groups and with their group averages will be described so that more is learned about reentry women in general.

Research Question 1

Are there differences in personality characteristics between the three groups of reentry women?

A one way analysis of variance was used to test for differences between groups on personality characteristics. The mean differences between the groups are shown in Table 28. Using the Scheffe $p < .01$, the following values were significant.

The results of comparisons between means on the PRF indicate that Change Seekers differ significantly from Adapters in terms of the following personality characteristics: change, play, and infrequency scale; and significantly from Explorers in terms of harmavoidance. Explorers differ significantly from Adapters in terms of succorance.

Table 28

Mean Standard Scores on Personality Characteristics by Group ($\bar{x}$ = 50; SD = 10

	Adapters	Explorers	Change Seekers
Change	41.8*	44.2	50.8*
Harmavoidance	55.4	57.8+	48.9+
Play	43.1*	46.5	53.8*
Succorance	44.9Δ	54.5Δ	48.9
Infrequency	48.4*	49.2	56.5*

* Change Seekers significantly different from Adapters ($p < .01$)

+ Change Seekers significantly different from Explorers ($p < .01$)

Δ Explorers significantly different from Adapters ($p < .01$)

Research Question 2

Do the three groups of reentry women experience difference degrees of stress as measured by a Life Events Scale?

One way analysis of variance was used to test for the differences between means on the Life Events Scale. Using the Scheffe $p < .01$, significant differences were found between the mean of the Adapters ($\bar{x} = 278.3$) and the Change Seekers ($\bar{x} = 524.3$). Change Seekers experience significantly more stress as measured by the Life Events Scale than Adapters.

Research Question 3

Do the values sought by the three groups of reentry women differ from one another?

One way analysis of variance was used to test for differences between the groups on the values scale. The values that were significant are shown in Table 29.

The results of comparisons between means on the values scale of the Life Roles Inventory can be summarized in the following way. Change Seekers differ from Adapters in terms of the following values: advancement, aesthetics, economics, risk, and cultural identity. Explorers differ from Adapters in terms of esthetics, economics, working conditions, and cultural identity; Change Seekers differ from Explorers in terms of the risk factor.

Comparisons between reentry women and the norm group (female English-speaking adults) were calculated. Examination of the 20 values (see Table 30) reveal that all three groups of reentry

Table 29

Significant Differences Between Mean Scores on the Life Roles Inventory - Values Scale by Group ($\bar{x}$ = 50; SD = 10)

	Adapters	Explorers	Change Seekers
Advancement	47.9*	52.2	57.1*
Aesthetics	46.5*Δ	53.4Δ	56.5*
Economics	44.2*Δ	53.6Δ	55.7*
Risk	48.5*	50.2+	59.1+*
Working Conditions	46.1Δ	56.0Δ	54.0
Cultural Identity	45.3*Δ	53.1Δ	54.5*

* Change Seekers significantly different from Adapters ($p < .01$)

+ Change Seekers significantly different from Explorers ($p < .01$)

Δ Explorers significantly different from Adapters ($p < .01$)

Table 30

Mean Standard Scores for the Three Groups on the 20 Value Scores ($\bar{x}$ = 50; SD = 10)

	Adapters	Explorers	Change Seekers
Ability Utilization	48.0	50.5	49.3
Achievement	46.2	49.6	50.4
Advancement	47.9	52.2	52.1
Aesthetics	46.5	53.4	56.5
Altruism	46.0	50.3	49.4
Authority	49.5	45.4	53.2
Autonomy	49.2	46.4	49.7
Creativity	49.0	45.5	50.3
Economics	44.2	53.6	55.7
Lifestyle	51.4	47.3	54.6
Personal Development	45.9	48.5	48.2
Physical Ability	45.5	47.9	49.8
Prestige	45.2	48.5	49.1
Risk	48.5	50.2	59.1
Social Interaction	45.9	51.4	54.3
Social Relations	48.3	52.0	50.7
Variety	47.2	48.3	55.4
Working Conditions	46.1	56.0	54.0
Cultural Identity	45.3	53.1	54.5
Physical Prowess	46.3	48.5	55.9

women scored lower than the norm group on autonomy, personal development, physical activity, and prestige. Group averages were also calculated and comparisons made between the individual values scale and the group average (see Table 31). All three groups of reentry women scored consistently lower than their group average on achievement, personal development, physical activity, and prestige. The three groups scored consistently higher than their group average on the risk factor.

Further examination of the 22 personality scales (see Table 32) reveal that the reentry sample differed from the norm group, female college students ($\bar{x}$ = 50; SD = 10) on five of the 22 personality variables. The three reentry sample groups scored consistently higher than the norm group on endurance, nurturance, order, and congitive structure, and lower than the norm group on the variable autonomy.

Consistencies in scores were found between the three groups when comparisons of each score on a variable were made with each of their group averages. These common characteristics, characterize in general terms job reentry women. Results are presented in Table 33. All three groups scored consistently lower than their group average on autonomy, change, defendence, exhibition, and impulsivity, and consistently higher than their group average on affiliation, aggression, cognitive structure, nurturance, and order. From these results in this study, it

Table 31

Comparison of Scores on Value Scale with Group Average for each Group

	Adapters	Explorers	Change Seekers
Group Average	47.1	49.9	52.6
Ability Utilization	+	+	-
Achievement	-	-	-
Advancement	+	+	-
Aesthetics	-	+	+
Altruism	-	+	-
Authority	+	-	+
Autonomy	+	-	-
Creativity	+	-	-
Economics	-	+	+
Lifestyle	+	-	+
Personal Development	-	-	-
Physical Ability	-	-	-
Prestige	-	-	-
Risk	+	+	+
Social Interaction	-	+	+
Social Relations	+	+	-
Variety	+	-	+
Working Conditions	-	+	+
Cultural Identity	-	+	+
Physical Prowess	-	-	+

Table 32

Mean Standard Scores for the Three Groups on the Personality Research Form ($\bar{x}$ = 50; SD = 10)

Average	Adapters	Explorers	Change Seekers
Abasement	45.3	50.9	50.2
Achievement	52.9	51.7	48.3
Affiliation	49.9	50.3	55.2
Aggression	50.3	50.3	52.9
Autonomy	49.2	43.8	47.5
Change	41.8	44.2	50.8
Cognitive Structure	54.1	54.7	53.5
Defendence	48.8	49.8	51.6
Dominance	50.3	49.2	55.9
Endurance	51.0	50.5	50.5
Exhibition	49.5	46.5	51.0
Harmavoidance	55.4	57.8	48.9
Impulsivity	46.1	47.7	50.8
Nurturance	51.7	52.8	55.9
Order	56.7	54.0	52.9
Play	43.1	46.5	53.8
Sentience	48.1	47.2	52.9
Social Recognition	48.4	48.6	52.4
Succorance	44.9	54.5	48.9
Understanding	53.3	49.1	50.8
Infrequency	48.4	49.2	56.5
Desirability	54.5	48.8	50.5

Table 33

Comparison of Scores on Personality Scale with Group Average for Each Group

Average	Adapters	Explorers	Change Seekers
Group Average	49.7	49.9	51.9
Abasement	-	+	-
Achievement	+	+	-
Affiliation	+	+	+
Aggression	+	+	+
Autonomy	-	-	-
Change	-	-	-
Cognitive Structure	+	+	+
Defendence	-	-	-
Dominance	+	-	+
Endurance	+	+	-
Exhibition	-	-	-
Harmavoidance	+	+	-
Impulsivity	-	-	-
Nurturance	+	+	+
Order	+	+	+
Play	-	-	+
Sentience	-	-	+
Social Recognition	-	-	+
Succorance	-	+	-
Understanding	+	-	-
Infrequency	-	-	+
Desirability	+	-	-

appears that reentry women as a group can be described by these above mentioned commonalitaies.

The results of this study indicate that significant differences do exist between the three groups on some of the personality characteristics and values. Significant differences between groups were found on the Life Events Scale as well. Results also indicated a consistency between groups on some of the personality characteristics and values. From the results in this study, women can also be described in general terms (that is, in terms of those personality characteristics and values common to all groups.

Section 3

It was decided in this thesis to interview reentry women so as to learn more about the qualitative experience of reentering. To this end, two women from each group were interviewed using an interview schedule consisting of five questions. The transcribed interviews can be found in Appendix E. Below is a summary of these findings.

There were similarities and differences between the three groups. Groups were similar in that they all valued the importance of social support, emphasized the stressfullness of the reentry process, and the need for self-confidence. They differed slightly in their reasons for returning. The statistical results support the interview findings.

All three groups agreed that in order to make a successful transition, social support was important. All the women indicated that th try transition was a stressful time for them. However, e the decision had been made, women appear to be determined to succeed in their endeavours. Both economics and personal development played a part in all six women's reasons for returning. Some women returned because they had become the sole supporter of their families, others returned to supplement a husband's income at a time when family expenses are high. What had changed over the years was a shift away from only married women comprising the reentry population to an increase in the numbers of displaced homemakers. This fact is borne out in the demographic data as well as in the fact that four out of six women interviewed were divorced.

The reasons given for returning differed for the three groups. The post-secondary group of women (Adapters) plan to upgrade their skills and education thereby achieving economic self-sufficiency in a personally fulfilling way. If economics were the sole motivator one woman said she would have chosen to reenter the workforce immediately. In essence they are planning for a more lucrative and/or self-fulfilling career. The social assistance group (Change Seekers) refer to the need, "to better themse es". Both women indicated that they were anxious to be off social assistance. The Job Strategy Program affords them 'on the job training', the possibility of a job, as well as the

upgrading of work-related skills. Joining the program improves their employment possibilities and/or to remain off welfare. The Options for Women group (Explorers) are only planning to reenter. According to the interviews, these women are planning to supplement their husband's income, as well as develop and achieve on a personal level. The timing of their decision to reenter is influenced by childhood responsibilities as well as the need to combine family responsibilities with the work role. In Group 2, women's reasons for returning indicate a planfulness rather than an implementation of their decision to reenter.

The post-secondary group (Adapters) are presently involved in extensive training, the aim of which is to prepare them for jobs that have some opportunity for advancement. These women differ from the Explorers who are in the planning stages and from the Change Seekers who have already reentered the workforce.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Whereas the preceding chapter listed the statistical and descriptive findings, this chapter will discuss those findings as well as their implications for career counselling. Also included are the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Research Question 1

Significant differences were found on the personality scale between the three groups. It was also found that the personality characteristics that had commonly been ascribed to reentry women as a group, were not the same as those personality characteristics that were found to be statistically significant between the three groups of reenetry women. When comparisons of personality traits were made to the norm group and to each group's specific group average, some support was found for those personality characteristics that the literature had identified as characterizing the reentry woman. For example, all three groups scored below the norm mean on autonomy but this variable was not found to be significant between groups.

Confirmatory evidence for research question one is supported by other research in the area (McGraw, 1982; Pickering, 1985). In their studies, recommendations were made to research subgroups within the reentry population to avoid problems of

overgeneralization. Pickering (1985) found significant differences between a group of reenty women, a group of planners, and a group of career women.

It was not surprising to find the college reentry group (Adapters) scoring significantly lower than the social assistance group (Change Seekers) on the variables change and play. These results may be explained in terms of female career development theory and college reentry students high achievement needs in the work area. According to female career development theorists (Bardwick, 1980; Richardson, 1981) womens' career development involves a balancing of career and family roles. Their observation is supported in this study where 18 out of the 27 women in the Adapter group are married and 78% of the total sample had children. A low score on change would be expected since too much variability and changes would severely complicate the lives of Adapters, who are balancing their multiple roles. Moreoever, the Change Seekers are receiving income (on social asssistance) and therefore not involved in the work role, their need to balance their roles may not be present to the same extent as Adapters who in addition also have high achievement needs. In this study their mean score (achievement) was higher than the Explorers and the Change Seekers, and slightly above their group mean. As a result, Change Seekers may have lifestyles that would allow them more time for play and recreation. Their lifestyles can also tolerate more change since they are not balancing as many roles as Adapters nor

is their need to do well in the work role adding significant pressure to their lives.

Explorers scored significantly higher than the Adapters on the variable succorance and significnatly higher on harmavoidance compared with Change Seekers. According to the life events perspective of adult development, stress occurs when changes are made in the individual's usual way of adapting to their environment. Explorers have not yet reentered the workforce, whereas the Adapters and Change Seekers have. They also have the largest number of preschool children (higher levels of family responsibility and potential role conflict). It is not surprising to learn that these women are in need of more reassurance and support (high on succorance and harmavoidance) compared with the Adapters. This may be because they are only at the planning stages of reentering. It is also of interest to note the Change Seekers' low score on harmavoidance. The majority of these women are divorced, widowed, or separated. As heads of households making the major decisions in the family, one would not expect them to be fearful or apprehensive. These women are involved in on-the-job training programs that offer the possibility of employment (rather than being on social assistance). They are determined to succeed, and are more willing to risk in the process, hence a lower score on the variable harmavoidance. Change Seekers' high infrequency score compared with Adapters is not an unexpected finding if one considers that Change Seekers

represent a deviant group (samples were not chosen for representativeness but for convenience). The majority of these women are divorced, widowed, or separated, with low incomes, and low educational levels. They vary considerably from both the norm group which in this case consisted of a female college population and from the Adapter group, where the majority were married, with high income levels, and considerably higher educational levels than the Change Seekers.

As a group, reentry women scored higher than the norm group mean on affiliation and nurturance. This is consistent with the research of Gilligan (1982) and Bardwick (1980) and the reenetry literature. This research stresses the importance that women place on relationships in directing their lives. Since reentry women are in the process of making decisions, their high score on affiliation and nurturance is consistent with the literature. The higher than norm group score on nurturance, order, cognitive structure and consistently higher than group average score on cognitive structure and lower than group average score on change, tends to support a lifestyle approach to career development, that is, career outcomes are the results of an interaction of occupation, personal and family factors, and the need for balancing these roles with planfulness and tenacity. All three groups scored consistently lower than their group average on impulsivity, and the Adapters and Explorers scored below their norm group mean on impulsivity. These results are supported by

Pickering's (1985) research and support the notion that reenetry women are not impulsive.

According to the literature, reentry women were generally described as having low self-confidence, low autonomy, low dominance, and high achievement. In this study, all three groups scored consistently below their group averages and below the norm group mean on autonomy. This is consistent with Brooks (1976), McGraw (1982), and Pickering (1985) who suggest assertiveness training for all reentry women, but contrary to Waters (1973) who suggested reentry women were independent. Adapters scored well below the norm group mean on abasement. This may be interpreted as supporting earlier research where it was found that college reentry women lacked self-confidence (Astin, 1976; Brandenberg, 1974; Cramer, Kietel, & Rossberg, 1986). However, it must be noted that caution is needed when interpreting personality traits since traits with similar or dissimilar names may or may not have the same meaning (Kagan, 1988). Results such as these invite further examination using different scales.

Explorers' below mean score and below group average score on dominance is consistent with Pickering's (1985) group of 'planners'. It may be that these scores are low because their plans at this stage are tentative. Feelings of powerlessness may also occur in this present situation. These feelings may, however, dissipate as plans become less tentative are evidenced by the fact that Adapters and Change Seekers have scores above the

norm group mean. It may be speculated that the higher than norm group score on aggression may be the only way reentry women have of coping with this transition.

Results in this study did not support the literature where it was found that reentry women had higher achievement needs. This may be because the sample of college women in the earlier studies could choose whether to return or not (Baruch, 1967; Pickering, 1985). It was believed that women returned only once their affiliation and family responsibilities had been met (Bardwick, 1971; Baruch, 1967; Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980; Markus, 1973). In this study the overwhelming reason given by women returning, was financial. The lower than expected achievement scores found in this study may be because women today combine family responsibilities with career rather than choosing one or the other. Women return not only to satisfy their need for achievement. In this study the below mean score of Change Seekers (where financial considerations are crucial) and the slightly above mean score in the Adapters and Explorers (higher percentage of women are married, thereby assuming at least one income) supports the above explanation with respect to reentry womens' achievement needs.

Research Question 2

The results confirm the research questions, namely that differences were found between groups with respect to the stress they reported. A possible explanation as to why Change Seekers

differed significantly from Adapters may be partially explained by the differences in these groups' demographic variables--more specifically because of differences in marital status, education, and income levels. Secondly, since the items on the Life Events Scale cover issues such as financial, family, and work, some of the higher stress items can be found in those demographic variables that discriminated between the two groups and which, in turn, contributed to Change Seekers' score on the scale. These higher stress scores cannot automatically be interpreted as meaning that higher levels of stress are experienced. This is because social support has been found to ameliorate stress. In spite of the fact that previous research had indicated women lacked social support (Huston-Hoburg & Strange, 1986) results in this study indicated that all three groups received support, however, from different sources and in varying degress. In this study no conclusion can be made concerning the degree of stress since the value of each support was not rated by the respondents. Further research may examine the potency of different support systems.

Research Question 3

Significant differences between the three groups were found on six of the 20 values on the Life Roles Inventory- Values Scale. Change Seekers scored significantly higher than Adapters on advancement and significantly higher than Explorers on risk and economics. From these results it may be stated that Change

Seekers appear to be determined to get ahead. They are even willing to take risks in order to improve their standard of living. Since the majority of Change Seekers are divorced, widowed, or separated with low incomes and educational levels, this interpretation appears relevant. The significantly higher score on aesthetics for Change Seekers compared with Adapters and Explorers may be more easily understood when aesthetics is interpreted in economic terms (having the finances to buy luxuries thereby beautifying the surroundings rather than in terms of aesthetic beauty in the abstract sense). Change Seekers significant higher need for advancement economics and risk compared with Adapters' and Explorers' significantly higher score on economics and aesthetics compared with Adapters, both need to be understood in terms of the equally important need to be accepted as a member of their own race, religion, and ethnic group (cultural identity). Of interest is the fact that these values comprise Factor 4 (when factor analysis was performed on the 20 values) which stresses the importance of economic conditions. It is within this factor that significant differences between groups were found. Further corroberations for these consistencies in values is found in the fact that no significant differences were observed between groups on Factor 3, the independent factor. This factor is described by the variables autonomy, creativity, lifestyle and variety, and stress the importance of environments that allow people to behave in an independent and creative manner.

It is interesting to note that the only value above the norm group mean for Adapters was lifestyle. Yet, this value did not significantly differentiate between groups. The reaons for returning given by this group (Adapters) namely "to develop new skills or upgrade education and personal fulfillment", fit well with the endorsement of a lifestyle value.

All three groups scored below the norm group mean on prestige and personal development. This result (not valuing achievement) would be consistent with the reasons women gave for returning, namely, financial. All three groups scored consistently higher than their group average on risk, thus indicating the large extent to which reentry women are willing to take risks in order to achieve their purpose.

Implications for Career Counselling

From these findings it appears that there are at least six significant implications for career counselling.

1. The reentry women in this study did not score highly on the variable aspiration. This fact has implications for those who counsell women. Counsellors need to help raise the aspirations of women which may be low because of sex-role socialization. Counsellors also need to be sensitive to the needs of reentry women (balancing of family and career responsibilities) which may differ significantly from their own.

2. Since all the women in the sample scored low on autonomy, assertiveness training is a relevant counselling intervention.

The development of decision making and goal setting skills would also be included with assertiveness training. Such life-span development counselling could be done in a group setting with women may benefit from each other's experiences.

3. Divorce, widowhood, and singleness counselling (if needed) may be applicable since half the sample of women fall into this category. Counselling would involve helping women cope with financial stress, lonliness, single parenting, as well as new relationships.

4. Family and marital role counselling may also be relevant since 79% of the sample have children and approximately 50% of the sample were married and 50% were divorced, widowed, separated, or single. Since a change in the family situation may have prompted the reentry woman to return to work or college, she may be experiencing uncertainties associated with significant changes in the family situation.

5. Perhaps the most significant comment to all of the above is that there are no 'typical' reentry women. There are instead, types of reentry women who may share common needs. Yet at the same time, Counsellors need to be aware of each individual's needs whether it be enhancing self-awareness or helping with decision-making skills. In this regard, it may be helpful to analyse the types of decisions that have to be made and thereby the types of services to be developed to assist women with these decisions. Needs may vary from gaining information on the job

market, helping with decision-making skills, meeting the demands of job and family responsibilities, stress management, overcoming womens' lack of training, or offering emotional support.

Limitations

1. This study was intended to be descriptive in nature. The samples used were samples of convenience. The results cannot be generalized to other groups of reentry women nor to groups in other geographic areas. Caution is therefore needed in the understanding and interpretation of these findings.

2. The meaning of personality constructs is derived from its source of evidence (Kagan, 1988). Caution is needed because meanings across different personality scales cannot be generalized. The results in this study are, therefore, tied to the specific scales used.

3. Although the stress level was highest for women in Group 3, no inferences can be made about their psychological well-being because the support systems that may ameliorate the stress level was not rated by the respondents.

4. In this study, no corrections were made for the number of comparisons that were undertaken. Therefore, the chances of making a Type I error (finding significant differences when there are none) is increased. Partial justification is produced by the exploratory nature of the study. Also, the level of significance was set at $p = <.01$. This made finding significance more stringent, thereby minimizing Type I error.

5. The instruments used in this study were imperfect for its purpose. The Personality Research Form E was normed on college females and the Life Values Inventory - Values Scale was normed on English-speaking adult women. There are no instruments designed specifically to measure the personality characteristics and values of reentry women. Researchers are left to use instruments whose norm group differ from those of interest.

Further Research

The data generated by this study presents at least several issues that warrant further research.

1. The personality characteristics that significantly differentiated between the three groups were not the same ones that had traditionally characaterized reentry women. This finding lends itself to future research. In other words, either reentry women need to be characterized by other personality chracteristics or what has been stereotypically applied to reenety women is inadequate in its explanation. More research using different samples of reentry women and perhaps different instruments is warranted, in order to learn more about the personality characteristics of reentry women.

2. The second issue is associated with Research Question 2 which deals with the stress level of reentry women. In spite of the fact that Change Seekers experienced significantly more stress than Adapters, one cannot interpret this to mean that Change Seekers experience significantly more psychological distress.

This is because social support and coping stratgies ameliorate stress. It becomes important for future research to analyze the potency of each social support system so as to be able to interpret more accurately the needs of reentry women.

3. The lifespan model of career development has already been cited as being useful for understanding womens' career development. This study was no exception. Future research can benefit greatly by using this model as a conceptual framework.

4. More research can focus on the values of reentry women since to the writer's knowledge, this study was a first in the area.

5. Since the meaning of personality constructs are derived from its source of evidence, it could be important to replicate studies such as this one using different personality inventories. In this way, more could be learned about the personality characteristics of reentry women.

6. With increasing numbers of divorced, widowed, and separated reentry women, future research may examine marital status as a variable.

7. Longitudinal studies would also be of interest. Of significance would be studying the group of planners in order to see whether they become more like the other reentry groups with the passing of time. For example, would their scores on succorance and harmavoidance change to be more in line with other reentry groups?

Concluding Remarks

For me, personally, this study provided evidence of womens' tremendous capacity to cope with multiple roles and responsibilities. Many of these women have reentered the workforce or returned to post-secondary institutions under the most abject of circumstances. Yet, they demonstrated tremendous commitment to take risks for values they most highly prized.

I have entered and reentered the workforce and post-secondary institutions at different times in order to fulfill my family responsibilities. That experience has enabled me to empathize with the stories of the women with whom I came in contact.

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Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

Age

Status

Married	Single	Divorced	Separated	Widowed
( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

How many children living at home?

How old are your children?

Are you receiving social assistance?

Yes	No
( )	( )

Have you ever worked outside the home?

Yes	No
( )	( )

Years of working experience (also part-time)

How long have you been out of the workforce?

Who is supportive of your plans?

Who is non-supportive of your plans?

Level of education

Combined family income

Under $12,000	$12,000-$20,000	$21,000-$34,000	$35,000-$49,000	Over $50,000
( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Reason for returning

Appendix B

Outline of Research Project

Outline of Research Project

I am a Master's student in the Department of Educational Psychology, currently working on my thesis. The question addressed is: What are the personality characteristics and life events that characterize reentry women and how do they relate to their work values?

Having raised a family and changed profession, the topic has personal relevance for me.

Research of this nature adds to the body of literature on the "reentry woman". Agencies serving the needs of reentry women are able to apply research-based knowledge in a way that maximizes benefit to women.

Participants will be asked to complete a personality inventory, a life events scale, and a work values inventory - approximate time, 60 minutes.

Women are free to choose whether to participate or not. Those participating will sign a consent form. Confidentiality will be maintained; no names will be used. Stamped, self-addressed envelopes will be used for returning the questionnaires.

Results will be made available to interested participants once the study is completed.

Thank you in advance for your support, time, and effort.

Sincerely,

Marion Schapiro

Appendix C

Consent Form

University of Alberta
Edmonton
Canada T6G 2G5

Department of Educational Psychology
Faculty of Education
6-102 Education North, Telephone (403) 492-5245

I, _____ hereby agree to participate in the research project on re-entry women and I understand that information obtained through the use of testing and interviews may be used for research purposes in a confidential manner by Marion Schapiro.

_____ _____

signature date

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the results, please complete:

Name:

Address:

Postal Code:

Appendix D

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. What led you to decide to pursue post-secondary education/the Job Strategy Job Reentry Program/the Option for Women Agency?

2. Some people think that in order to have a successful reentry, social support is important. How do you feel? What has been your experience?

3. A number of people spoke about only two or three life events. What are the richer or more extensive range of events that have happened to you recently?

4. What are the special characteristics you have, that you think helped you be successful in this pursuit?

5. Pick out two or three values from the Values Scale of the Life Roles Inventory that have influenced your return to college/work/considering your options.

Appendix E

Transcribed Interviews

Transcribed Interviews

Transcribed interviews from two women who are pursuing post-secondary education

Karen

Karen is a 27 year old single parent with two children aged three and five years. After completing Grade 12, she married and had children. She was divorced three years ago.

As a single parent with two children, Karen was eligible for Social Assistance. She decided to stay at home with her children. However, she found that experience "isolating and expressing". Furthermore she said, "it's pointless to go to work because with a Grade 12 education I would not be able to earn enough money to support my family any better than I am currently doing on Social Assistance.

Education was highly valued when Karen was growing up. "Both my parents are teachers." This provided Karen with motivation to further her studies. Karen felt that a degree would improve her life circumstances. Karen had also been in an abusive relationship which had undermined her self-confidence. She said "I am aware of the need to prove to myself that I am smart." In 1988, karen enrolled in an arts degree at the University of Alberta.

2. Karen indicated that social support had played a significant role in her decision to return to university. Karen's parents offered her the necessary economic support. However,

Karen did not receive any additional help with the children and she missed that. Karen said her friends are supportive whereas her ex-husband denigrates her and says "what are you doing that for?"

3. Karen found the transition from home to university very stressful. At the same time as she was preparing for university, she became aware of the fact that she had been sexually abused as a child. Karen began to feel overwhelmed. Her children were difficult to handle and she felt afraid and insecure about returning to university. Child Welfare arranged for a "family support worker" to assist her in developing more effective coping skills.

By the end of the first term Karen said, "I have a right to be here. I am capable of doing this work." She had earned good grades and her self-confidence had grown. She also joined the mature students group.

4. Karen feels that her increased self-confidence is what has helped her to be successful. Karen believes in what she is doing. "It is worth having the debt to repay." She said that when she was on Social Assistance she was able to save money each month and this has given her courage to believe in herself. "I will not allow poverty to limit me."

5. Karen's decision to return to university was influenced by economics and personal development. "I wanted to be challenged and the kind of work one gets with a Grade 12 is often boring and

repetitive." Furthermore, "if money was the only issue, I would be training and studying for something that would give me a trade or profession. I would not be doing a B.A."

Janet

1. Janet is a single parent with two children age 9 and 11 years. For the past 12 years she had stayed at home to raise her children. Two years ago she divorced her husband. She needed to earn money to support herself and her children, since her husband did not make regular child support payments. Janet summarized her choices as either having to enter the workforce at a job entry level with little chance for advancement, or she could return to an educational institution to improve herself.

Janet participated in a career workshop offered by the Alberta Career Development Centre. She met with Social Services in order to find out about funding. Social Services would only support her for a two year program. Janet was fortunate to be able to move in with her parents. She felt that they would help and support her in the raising of her children. Last year Janet decided to enroll in a two year Social Work diploma program at Grant MacEwan Community College.

2. Janet said social support is critical for a successful reentry. "I have noticed at school that those women who do not have support have dropped out." Janet feels that she could not have managed without her parent's helpfulness and support. Janet's circle of friends are also supportive of her.

3. In spite of her parent's support, Janet finds that living with three generations of family is stressful. Janet finds that her parents want to parent her children and herself. They also want Janet to live according to their values and lifestyle. However, Janet said the major source of stress is the conflict between her school responsibilities and the need to spend time with her children.

Janet has also found it stressful to maintain her own social life while living with her parents. "Dating has been very difficult for me." The opinion of her children and her parents, as well as her own emotional vulnerability, combine to create considerate stress. "I have come to realize that I need time to deal with my own vulnerabilities."

4. Janet said that the single most important characteristic that has helped her in the reentry process is her self-confidence. She said, "liking and believing in myself is a really important quality. I needed to convince Social Services that I was unemployable so that I would be eligible for funding." Janet said that she notices how very cautious she is. "I thought ahead before I left my marriage. Also before enrolling in college I checked out what a realistic salary would be."

5. Janet needed to be economically self-sufficient. She said, "I am achievement oriented, it is important that I perform well in this program."

Transcribed interviews from two women who participated in the Canada Job Strategy Job Reentry Program

Brenda

1. Brenda is a 38 year old single parent. She divorced her husband 10 years ago and has raised her two daughters, aged 16 and 14 year old alone. During that time she has worked at "dead end jobs" waitressing and bartending. Brenda says she "now wants to move up."

Brenda was unemployed at the time she saw the advertisement in the newspaper for the Canada Job Strategy Job Reentry Program. She responded to the advertisement which offered training and the possibility of employment in the hospitality-sector for women who were on Social Assistance. Brenda has been involved in the program since October 16, 1989. She received Social Assistance cheques as well as a clothing allowance while in training.

2. Brenda said her daughters were initially very supportive. However, during the course of the year she has had many problems with her daughters. The younger daughter threatened to leave home. She said, "throughout the program I have struggled to keep going. I often wanted to quit." Brenda's extended family has not been very supportive of her plans and Brenda has found that difficult to accept.

3. Brenda is afraid that should her daughter leave home she will not longer qualify for Social Assistance. This is a problem for Brenda as she has not been guaranteed employment after her

training and she is concerned about how she will support herself. Brenda is also finding it hard to deal with the fact that as her children grow older, they need her less and less.

4. Brenda was able to name some special qualities she had. "I am good with people. I am not a quitter." She said she is beginning to like herself more and feels more self-confident.

5. Brenda is determined not to be on Welfare for the rest of her life. She is motivated not only economically but also to achieve. Her goal is to work for a large hotel in a resort area.

Joan

1. Joan had worked in the catering business for the past 20 years. Two years ago she was diagnosed as having cancer. She had had three operations and was advised not to return to the catering business because of the heavy lifting involved. After being discharged from the hospital, she want on Social Assistance. She said that after having worked continuously for such a long period of time she found Welfare "a real blow to my ego." She said, "I felt there has to be something better than Welfare."

Joan divorced her husband two years ago. He was not supportive of her while she was in the hospital. Furthermore, he had been abusive in their marriage and had continually minimized her. Joan's sister told her about the Job Strategy Job Reentry Program advertisement in the newspaper and Joan decided to apply.

2. Joan said that social support had played a very important role to her successful reentry. While in the hospital, members of

the Salvation Army visited her constantly. She said, "I have rededicated my life to the Salvation Army. A lot of prayer is important to me."

3. Joan identified three stressful life events that had impacted on her reentry process. One week before the program had begun one of the babies that she had recently babysat died a crib death. Joan said that it really affected her, especially since her daughter-in-law was pregnant. "I was frantic that something would happen to my daughter-in-law or the baby." Secondly, Joan mentioned that one of her most supportive friends in the Salvation Army moved away for two months. Joan found that very difficult since she had no one to talk with. Joan was also concerned about her health. She said, "I was not sure if my health would allow me to finish the course. I thought about dropping out."

4. Joan described herself as very shy. She felt that her low self-esteem was the greatest obstacle to overcome. She said that the hardest thing was to go every day to the program. "I would not look anyone in the eye. I never participated in the class."

Today Joan has realized that she has a great deal to offer. She said she feels good about herself and feels she can accomplish whatever she sets herself to do. "I am an intelligent person. I feel valuable. I am hardworking, reliable, and extremely honest." She said the program has given her a great deal of self-confidence. "I have come a long way in the past six months.

I have given a sermon at the church, taught Sunday School classes, and have even sung in the Church."

5. Joan's interest in the program was economically motivated. She now feels that the hotel job is "just a stepping stone." She said, "I don't plan to work in the hotel business forever." Joan wants to improve herself. She is interested in studying social work or counselling in the near future.

Transcribed interviews from two women who had contacted the "Options for Women" Agency to seek help in their job reentry endeavors

Karen

1. Karen is a 31 year old married woman with four children. She "dropped out" of school at the end of Grade 11 in order to get married and have children. Her husband is a diabetic. However, he does not take good care of himself and frequently lapses into a coma and needs to be hospitalized. She says "his health is not important to him, he does not even have any life insurance." Karen says, "he lives only for the now."

Karen plans to pursue a career in nursing. Karen said she knows a great deal about nursing because her mother has worked as a nurse for many years. She needs to upgrade and complete her Grade 12. Karen said, "this is the first time I am not scared. I have mapped out the next 15 years and feel better." Karen had been to the Career Development Centre. During that time she became aware of her mixed emotions for her husband. "I have lived his life not my own. I love him and I hate him because he does not look after himself and his family." Karen wants to make the marriage work, yet at the same time she is aware of how much control her husband has over her. She resents having to ask him "for every nickel" she needs. She says, "I've had it."

Karen contacted the Options for Women Agency for career guidance counselling and for some support.

2. Karen's husband is not supportive of her plans. She says that since August, 1989 when she told him that she wanted to become a nurse, he insults her intelligence and ability at every opportunity. He also refuses to pay toward any of her tuition fees. Karen said that since she told some of her friends of her plans, they avoid her, insinuating that she is now too busy for them. karen also needs to organize babysitters for the youngest child.

Karen's mother is a nurse and is very supportive of her daughter. She lends Karen the car and has also offered to pay her tuition fees. Karen says her children are supportive, in particular, her 11 year old is "very excited for me." However, Karen has decided to earn her own money and plans to work from her home as a seamstress.

3. Karen indicated that the long suffering and eventual death of her mother-in-law profoundly influenced her current plans. "It woke me up that my life was my own and I need to do it on my own. I don't need to be dependent on my husband."

Her husband's ill health also contributed to her awareness to be financially independent. Similarly with children's demands lessening, Karen became aware of the need to do something for herself. Yet her decision to make changes has created additional stress that she feels she needs to deal with.

4. Karen said, "I believe in myself. Once I decide it, it will happen." Karen also admitted to feeling scared, and afraid of not succeeding in her endeavours.

5. Karen indicated that personal development and economics are the values she seeks in wanting to return to post-secondary education. She said, "they sort of go together; by achieving financial security I would in turn be developing as a person."

Shelly

1. Shelly has been married for the past three years. She has been at home taking care of her two year old son. She said, "I feel very strongly about staying home, yet I am feeling pushed economically to find work." Shelly contacted Options for Women in order to plan for her reentry.

Shelly's husband is an apprentice welder who will earn a good salary only when his apprenticeship is completed. He feels guilty that he cannot adequately provide for his family, and feels that Shelly should find a part-time job to supplement his income.

Both of Shelly's parents worked at semi-skilled jobs. They did not value education nor did they try to improve themselves financially. Shelly feels that, whereas in the past she would have been satisfied with a secure easy job, she now wants a job with a challenge. She wants her child to have the best of life. She also wants to role model for her child a different lifestyle than the one she grew up in. Shelly is, therefore, motivated to improve her position.

2. Shelly feels that support is important. She says her husband is supportive but she is worried about how much support she will receive once she commences studying or on-the-job training. Shelly's father is not supportive. He says, "go out and find a job." Nor are Shelly's friends supportive. Shelly said that she is having difficulty getting started with her plans. She will need to organize childcare for the baby.

3. Shelly's husband is stressed because he will only earn a higher salary once he is a qualified welder. He is also feeling guilty because being the father and husband he should be able to provide for his wife and child.

On the other hand, Shelly feels torn between staying home with her child and the necessity to earn extra money. Last year her mother died. Shelly did not get along well with her mother. She said she is now feeling very guilt as there are so many things she would have liked to say to her.

4. Shelly said that in the past her self-confidence has helped her deal with changes, stress, and sad times. She said her self-confidence developed as a result of having to deal with major problems. "I guess things that have happened have given me my fidence."

Shelly is aware of the big step that is needed in order to get started. She said, "I know I can do it. I have confidence in my ability--I scored highly on my aptitude tests." Yet at the same time Shelly feels scared.

5. Economics is the driving force behind Shelly's decision to enter the workforce or to return to post-secondary education. She said, "I never want to be poverty stricken again." Shelly admits coming from a chauvinistic home. She wants to develop fully as a person, using her abilities to the utmost.