

New Zealand Scholar Mamas: The Influence of Motherhood on Academic Careers

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Abstract

New Zealand women account for almost 64% of the academic workforce, (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), but are less represented in higher levels of Academia. This underrepresentation has been described and explained by various concepts such as the academic gender gap (Kalev, 2009), the chilly climate (Maranto & Griffin, 2011), and the leaky pipeline (Wolfinger, Mason, & Gouldren, 2009). There is currently a gap in research in New Zealand on the links between being a successful academic, being a mother, and the difficulties which arise from balancing these sometimes competing interests.

This research utilised a subjective ontology, an interpretivist epistemology, a qualitative methodology and narrative methods to explore the stories of seven courageous academic women, namely 'scholar mamas'. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of successful women academics around parenthood and to understand the impact on their academic careers over time.

Research findings reveal five main themes: 'manager and peer support'; 'flexibility'; 'career progression'; 'approach to professional obligations and academic focus'; and 'mummy logistics'. These themes are then grouped into three overarching themes to shape the discussion: 'The dominant maternity narrative', 'Shifting academic focus', and 'Heroes of the stories' which represent the contributions this study has made to the area of academic careers, especially in the New Zealand context. 'The dominant maternity narrative' finding suggested that the participants in the study placed huge emphasis on the early stages of their journey, constructing a narrative that focuses on the positive and negative experiences while being pregnant, on parental leave and in the early stages of returning to work. The 'Shifting academic focus' finding suggested that the participants' approach to both their career progression and how they met their professional obligations had changed since having their first child. Their career was no longer the priority and for some this even meant shifting to do just enough research to get by. The 'Heroes of the stories' finding suggested that participants place themselves as the centre of their stories. Beyond themselves, those who had positive experiences also tended to place significant emphasis on the

role of their manager or Head of Department (HOD). The participants placed less emphasis on other support networks such as their partners, family and child-care facilities.

The limitations of the study revolve around the criteria in which the participants were recruited. The participants were required to be at a particular point in their academic career and experiences and challenges which may have arisen from involving other women in the study may have been lost. The participants also engaged in unconscious 'smoothing' and downplayed some of the negative aspects of their experience, most notably in relation to their lack of career progression after having children. This smoothing could have also masked larger issues in regards to productivity and performance.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Camustoe", is written over a light gray rectangular background. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Date

30 August 2017

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank the seven courageous scholar mamas who agreed to share their amazing stories with me. Your personal narratives were so similar yet so contrasting to my own, and I was so inspired to hear about how you navigated the rough seas of managing your career with the tumultuous yet so rewarding path of motherhood. Without the gift of your stories, this project could not have happened and I hope that seeing the results bring you a sense of pride and joy about your story, and let know that you are not alone with the challenges that you have faced in your career.

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Chapter One

Introduction to the Inquiry

I've yet to be on a campus where most women aren't worrying about some aspect of combining marriage, children and a career. I've yet to find one where many men were worrying about the same thing – Gloria Steinem (Potts, 2008, p. 96).

Historically, the ideal professor was a variant of the 'ideal worker' a term coined by Arlie Hochschild (1995). This ideal worker was solely dedicated to their work and was free from external interruptions or issues with their private lives. The ideal professor was expected to be free from family or domestic demands. If a professor did have children, the assumption was that he had a wife at home who dedicated herself to her family to allow the professor to dedicate his time to his institution and his career. This assumption was the basis of the creation of tenure, and many of these biased presumptions still apply, which make it difficult for women, and women with children to succeed in Academia (Hochschild, 1995).

Academics work extremely hard and set high expectations for others, expectations that can present challenges in balancing their career with family life. Research examining the intersection between parenting and having an academic career has become an increasingly popular focus in publications especially in the United States (US) (Mason, Wolfinger, & Goulden, 2013; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Most scholarly works focus on academic mothers and it is important to note that many of these works have been produced by US academics whose experiences of being academic mothers are strongly shaped by the US tenure system in universities. In New Zealand, women account for almost 64% of the academic workforce (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), but are less represented in higher levels of Academia. However, the number of females enrolling in doctoral degrees has increased by 17% from 2010 to 2015, compared to an 10% increase in males (Ministry of Education, 2015). There is also evidence that women are delaying having children, with the median age of first time motherhood increased by approximately 25 per cent in the last 25 years (Statistics New Zealand, 2009). This is a significant issue for the country as a whole and can have huge socio-economic effects. What is also important is how this has affected

women individually, the impact it has on their careers and what experiences these women have had by making the choice to delay having children. Academia differs to many other professions, and on paper looks like the ideal career path for a working mother juggling her family with her work. It is largely known to be autonomous, with work able to be done from any place and at almost any time (Baker, 2012; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). This does not mean however that the work is easy and that there are less work hours in the week. In a 2013 New Zealand study, it was found that the median hours per week worked by a permanent faculty member was 43, with a range from a mere 1 hour per week to 100 hours per week (New Zealand Work Research Institute, 2013).

The study for this thesis is a narrative inquiry which has been undertaken with the aim of unravelling the stories that mothers in Academia have in regards to their journey into motherhood and their personal and academic life since. For the purpose of this study, the participants who were recruited were academic women who are mothers, and who have a tenured academic position and consider that they have a successful career in Academia. In this study, Academia refers to any tertiary education provider. The term scholar mamas throughout this report refers to any women who are in a tenured academic position. The reasons for the focus on Academics are twofold. The first is because of the personal interest I have in Academia as a budding academic. The second is due to the gap of research in New Zealand into the links between being a successful academic, being a mother, and the difficulties which come from balancing those two interests.

It may be helpful to give some background into the investment required to establish a tenured position in Academia, both within New Zealand as well as internationally. As competition between universities increases and the search for the highest quality staff becomes more aggressive, to begin a career in Academia now normally requires a doctorate in a certain field of study. This is no easy feat and takes a significant amount of dedication, time, resources, and support. A PhD would normally take at least three years to complete (Auckland University of Technology, 2014), which may take even longer when taking family and work commitments into consideration. Completing a PhD with children makes it even more difficult which may lead some women to put off having children until they have completed their study and are eventually able to secure a

tenured position at a university (Drago & Colbeck, 2004). The average age worldwide of a woman completing her PhD is around thirty-five years old, and it has been long established that there are increased physiological difficulties having children after this age (Drago & Williams, 2000). This does not take into account the time it takes pursuing promotions in order to gain a tenured position (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012).

The decision to focus this study on tenured female academics was purposeful. While paid parental leave in New Zealand is able to be transferred to the father of the child, women still made up over 90% of recipients of the paid parental leave scheme from July 2002 to June 2005 (Crichton, 2008). It has also been argued that men do not require the same level of commitment when it comes to their family lives so as not to detract from their productivity in the same way that it might for women (Benard & Correll, 2010). This makes the focus on females all the more important, especially in industries where there is an underrepresentation of women. Although there are a large number of women in Academia who are in non-tenured positions, tenure has historically been seen as the marker of having a successful academic career (Ward, Gast, & Grant, 1992). While there is often an equal or higher proportion of women academics compared with their male peers in the lower level positions within faculties, the proportion of women decreases as the level of the position increases, what has been described as the 'leaky pipeline' (White, 2010). Women at higher levels of professorship are generally under-represented in the industry which makes the focus on them even more important. There has been a significant amount of research conducted into the gender gap which exists within the academic industry, as well as the difficulties that women face in progressing into senior positions known as the 'chilly climate' (August & Waltman, 2004; Cooray, Verma, & Wright, 2014). There has been little research conducted into the links between these well-known issues and navigating Academia as a new mother, and the purpose of this study was to explore these links in greater depth and to understand the challenges that scholar mamas face in balancing their careers and family, especially in levels which are under-represented by women. The concept of tenure itself has changed significantly in New Zealand and is now vastly different to how it is defined internationally. Internationally, tenure was often defined as having a continuing and permanent position, whereas in New Zealand many academics gain this status from the beginning of their careers. The New Zealand system also does not use tenure-based method of

promotion unlike other countries. Ranks are also different, and certain titles are deemed to be more successful in New Zealand than they might be considered elsewhere.

Research Aim

This research aims to explore the experiences of successful women academics around parenthood and to understand the impact on their academic careers over time.

The Narrative Approach and Methods Used

This study will be completed using narrative inquiry which is concerned with lived experiences of individuals. It aims to uncover the stories of participant's lives in order to understand and represent their experiences as they lived them. In narrative studies, it is up to the respondent what information gets included and what is excluded, how events are explained and what they are supposed to mean. By doing this, it is hoped that the most valuable narratives will flow (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). The narrative approach has been used in the context of careers and allow the researcher to gain an in depth insight into the personal and emotive aspects of a person's experience and how such factors play into their career story (Price, Hall, Angus, & Peter, 2013; Taylor & Savickas, 2016; Weber, Kochem, & Weber-Hauser, 2016). For similar reasons, it has also been utilised in studies focusing on the academic career (Edmunds, et al., 2016; Bosanquet, Mailey, Matthews, & Lodge, 2017; McAlpine & Emmioğlu, 2015; Santos, 2015). Seven academic women were interviewed. The interviews were then professionally transcribed and later transformed into seven unique stories. Story-grids were used to assist with the data analysis which resulted in the identification of common themes.

Researcher's Background

It may be of interest to understand my own narrative about my journey into conducting this research, as my own experiences as a mother may influence some of the ways in which the narratives have been interpreted. My background could not possibly be more opposite than the participants' stories contained in this study. I had no interest to pursue higher education and was content at the ripe age of twenty years old working in a low responsibility job while pursuing more entertaining interests. Becoming pregnant started a series of events which has led to me to embarking on this study. I enrolled in my first paper at University, gaining special entrance due to

my age as I had not obtained university entrance. I completed two papers before taking a break to care for my new born son, and decided it was time to get serious about my career and my education. I got a part time job when he was ten months' old and continued to complete my study. I graduated three years later after picking up a full-time role and decided I wanted to pursue post-graduate study. From what I currently know about Academia, it seems unattainable trying to start off a career in Academia when I already have a child. During most of my time as a student, I was both studying and working full-time and had no time to be involved in any of the extra-curricular activities normally completed by students, and as such was not able to establish a name for myself amongst the academic staff or the university as someone who may want to work as an academic in the future. But, I wouldn't change any of it. I don't think I would have ever gotten serious about my career and my education if I had not gotten pregnant, so I would not be where I am today if I decided to forego having children. I am still extremely proud of the progress I have made and how far I have come and would never want my story about how I got here to change.

Overview of the Thesis

This first chapter has provided an introductory overview of the study, including its nature and background. It provided some detail as to why scholar mamas were chosen as the theme of the study, as well as a brief overview of narrative inquiry. It also gave a brief overview of my own story. The second chapter discusses the various literature surrounding academic careers, gender in Academia and motherhood in Academia. The third chapter discusses the methodologies and methods used throughout this study. It begins by outlining the philosophical assumptions I have had when completing the study, and also discusses the analytical tools I have used and how I have ensured there is rigour in my study. Chapter Four introduces the scholar mamas and gives a brief overview of their stories as well as what was found from the stories. It also uncovers a number of themes pertaining to 'manager and peer support', 'flexibility', 'career progression', 'approach to professional obligations and academic focus' and 'mummy logistics'. These themes were then sorted into three overarching themes for the purpose of discussing the findings in Chapter Five in relation to previous literature. These three themes are; 'The dominant maternity narrative' 'Shifting academic focus" and 'Heroes of the stories'. The final chapter concludes the study and presents directions for future research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

I have never met a woman, or man, who stated emphatically, "Yes, I have it all." Because no matter what any of us has—and how grateful we are for what we have—no one has it all - Sheryl Sandberg (Sandberg, 2013).

Introduction

Motherhood in Academia is not a novel concept in literature, with several studies having been conducted predominately from the US context (Benard & Correll, 2010; Bracken, Allen, & Dean, 2006; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2015), on the experiences and perceptions of balancing parenthood with an academic career. Many of these focus on the apparent disparity between the numbers of males in the field compared with the number of females, and the underlying bias which results in this uneven gender make-up of the industry (Baker, 2012; August & Waltman, 2004). However, there are also various aspects of a career in Academia which on its face seem as though it would benefit women, especially those with children and other family commitments. So is the gender gap still an issue at higher levels in Academia, and are the underlying factors of the gender gap causing more women to make difficult choices between their careers and motherhood? Furthermore, how does having children impact on a successful career in Academia? The following section sets out some of the literature which currently exists that have attempted to answer these questions, and which will provide context to the narratives from the scholar mamas involved in my own study. It will also provide an understanding of the current academic environment which will be vital when attempting to provide new insights into the issues mothers face in their academic careers.

The Academic Career

Generally speaking, an academic begins their career at the completion of their doctorate in a specific field of study, and then applies for an academic position. It is a long road, and on average takes academics over seven years to get to this point. It is an intensive and time-consuming

journey, and one of the biggest rewards that an academic gets from their investment is the security of tenure (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2015). As noted by M.C. Taylor (2010), the nature of academic work has also drastically changed in the last two decades which may cause issues with academics when attempting to gain a tenured position. As the competition between universities has increased, the emphasis placed on research has increased significantly. There has been increased pressure on academics to obtain external funding for research, and their research outputs became a key focus on judging an individual's performance as an academic, as well as when ranking universities. It has been found that the pressure placed on academics to obtain external funding results in academics being left with little time to personally conduct the research themselves (Taylor, 2010). Studies in Australia have found that research is commonly conducted by research staff whose positions in the university are highly uncertain as they are often employed on short-term insecure contracts and so do not have any security in their employment (Broadbent, Troup, & Strachan, 2013).

Tenure was founded by the American Association of University Professors in 1940. It was designed to guarantee academic freedom and to allow faculty members to devote time into new methods of research and teaching without fear of restraint and without fear of losing their positions (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). It is argued that the tenure system enables institutions to attract the highest level of individuals to the career, and helps to counteract the seemingly low pay for entering the position compared to what those highly knowledgeable individuals could be receiving by practising in their fields, especially in industries such as medicine and law (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Some critics of the tenure system argue that it is an expensive scheme and can cost institutions millions of dollars per member of the course of their career (Kaplan, 2010; Taylor, 2010). Others argue that it prevents institutions from remaining agile, and forces them to retain individuals who are no longer productive and who may not be contributing to the success of the institution (Ghorpade, Lackritz, & Singh, 2007; Kaplan, 2010).

The process in which academics obtain tenure differs between each field and institution. The first and most commonly accepted is that academics gain tenured positions through strong academic performance and through frequent publications of research (Lutter & Schröder, 2016). Another view is that of symbolic capital which suggests that academics gain tenure through reputation

gained via research experience, membership in institutions and achievement of awards, and that their individual teaching performance is not as relevant (Lutter & Schröder, 2016). Following this, there are theories of ascription which suggest that there are some factors which may disadvantage some academics over others, including gender and family status (Lutter & Schröder, 2016). While there is a consensus that frequency of publication of research is essential in gaining a tenured position, the importance of other factors is not yet clear, especially when it comes to issues such as gender, the effects of which are still largely contested (Musselin, 2010).

The motivation for academics to succeed and progress within their career is largely intrinsic, mainly due to the autonomous nature of the industry. As already mentioned, academics work hard and not only have high expectations of performance for themselves, but often set expectations which are extremely hard for others to achieve, especially individuals who have responsibilities outside of work (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Many universities both within New Zealand as well other countries throughout the world measure the perceived success of their professors and lecturers in several different ways, however the accepted definition for 'success' in Academia is the number, frequency and visibility of research publications (Hunter & Leahey, 2010). New Zealand universities' focus on research and output is largely due to the Performance-based Research Fund (PBRF). The PBRF requires staff to submit their research outputs, contribution to the research environment and peer esteem and are rated on each of these accordingly. These scores help make up a university's ranking within New Zealand which determines how much funding they will receive from Government budgets (Tertiary Education Commission, 2016). Visibility refers to the number of citations that a work receives (Ward et al., 1992). Usually visibility is increased by increasing the number of publications (Leahey, 2007). Another way that visibility is increased is by specialisation, whereby an academic becomes an expert on a topic in their field (Leahey, 2007). This process can allow an academic to get greater visibility by increasing their publication rates and through name recognition; however women are less likely to specialise than men (Henley, 2015).

In a New Zealand study, it was found 50% of all people hired externally for positions in 2008 were recruited for predominantly short-term positions to complete research on specific projects or to teach specific courses (Business and Economics Research Limited, 2010). Many of these recruits

were hired under fixed-term contracts rather than being employed under a tenured position. While this provides some flexibility for the university, it leads to uncertainty for the employee as to how long they will be employed, whether they will gain a permanent position, and does not provide them with a career pathway within Academia. It has been suggested that the practice of employing people under these short-term contracts would prevent a university from building capable and competent workforces long-term (Business and Economics Research Limited, 2010).

Autonomy and flexibility have traditionally been viewed as cornerstones of the academic profession (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). This autonomy combined with the challenging and variable nature of academic work are the key elements to the industry which both enables and encourages staff to focus on the fundamental activities of critical thinking, reflection and collegial interactions (Houston, Meyer, & Paewai, 2006). Autonomy is also one of the key factors which drive high performing students in both becoming and remaining an academic (Bellamy, Morley, & Watty, 2003). Faculty members often do not have a 'boss', however will report to a Head of Department (HOD) or dean who may assign teaching loads and other work duties (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Academic work can be done at almost any location and at any time of the day, however this is not to say that academics work less hours, and US research suggests that the average academic works over fifty hours per week (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004; Mason et al., 2013). The academic career may initially look like a career choice which will foster a work-life balance, but this is not always the case. Academics work long hours, and in some instances academics avoid having children due to the impact it will have on their ability to achieve the necessary outcomes needed to be successful in their role (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004; Mason et al., 2013). In a survey of eight thousand US doctoral students, 84% of women and 74% of men cited that family friendliness of their future workplace was a major concern, however more than 70% of women and over 50% of men surveyed did not believe that a career in Academia was friendly to family life (Mason et al., 2013). In another study many of the women interviewed quickly praised the flexibility and autonomy they had in their work and that it was helpful for them to balance between their work life and their families as they were able to set their own schedules and make time to spend with their children (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012).

However, it has been suggested that the work-life balance of an academic is directly linked to the level of institutional support available to an academic parent, and the systems which have been put in place to allow them to adjust their schedules to ensure that their work and home lives were balanced. Without this institutional support, it can seem almost impossible for an academic parent to produce the levels of research required which is so vital to the performance measurement of an academic (Baker, 2012). This is one of the commonly cited reasons for the gender gap within Academia which will be discussed later.

Gender in Academia - The Academic Gender Gap and Breaking the Ivory Ceiling

Before the 19th century, women in countries such as the US and Europe were not able to join many professions, including Academia. They were expected to be wives and mothers, and nothing more (Watts, 2007). There were also many restrictions on allowing women to obtain university degrees, however in the late 19th century an increasing number of women were allowed to enter tertiary education (Henley, 2015). Up to the 1960s, Academia was a male dominated industry, with very few women gaining professorship (Baker, 2010). Significant advancements have been made since then, and today's landscape is much more forgiving to the budding female academic, evidenced by the huge increase in the number of female academics since those earlier times. In the most recent Census of Women's Participation published by the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, it was shown that women now make up a quarter of all senior academic positions in New Zealand (New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2012), a vast improvement to the five per cent in the 1960s (Baker, 2010).

Research has indicated that the proportion of women in Academia starts to diminish as you move up the academic career ladder. This has been described as the 'leaky pipeline' effect (Wolfinger et al., 2009), and which is suggested to result from allocative discrimination (Petersen & Saporta, 2004). This refers to the idea that women are discouraged from pursuing an academic career at each career step, and that females are judged by harsher standards than their male colleagues (Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012). There has been significant research into why this leaky pipeline exists, and what factors are present within the academic industry which causes the participation of women to dilute as they progress through the academic

career. From this research, a number of themes have arisen such as family commitments; lack of institutional support including inflexibility of departments as well as a lack of mentorship; pressures such as unwelcoming work environment or having uncertain work contracts; and the under-representation of women in Academia in general.

Family commitments have a direct link to the career progression of an academic woman. Women are far more likely than men to reduce their hours of work to maintain their work-life balance, and they are also more likely to delay the start of their careers (White, 2010). The work versus family school of thought still plays significantly into the careers of many women and the historical nature of the workforce patriarchal structures created by men, for men, still persists in many circumstances and forces women to make choices between their work and their family (Mason et al., 2013). Lack of institutional support and mentorship is a major factor when determining a women's success in Academia. Women in Academia have reported that the lack of institutional support and challenges they faced attempting to juggle motherhood with their careers as a huge problem.

Women face pressures at various levels of their career to leave the academic industry, and as they progress into higher positions these pressures become more significant resulting in considering or pursuing a move into alternative careers (Mason et al., 2013). Silander, Haake and Lindberg (2013) found that women were prone to leave their academic careers because they are disappointed or because they were offered better positions outside of the industry. Another common reason was that the environment was not welcoming to them or because they were not provided with a permanent position. This was often linked to the difficulties that those women had with balancing their careers with their family.

It has been suggested another reason for the under-representation of higher-ranked women in Academia, is that it has only been a recent development that they have gained degrees in large numbers, and that time has not yet caught up. It is argued that in time, more women will gain professorships and move into higher positions, especially as older tenured males retire (Mason et al., 2013). Contradicting this belief however are some US statistics which show that while the relative number of women with doctorates have grown and the number of women faculty have

grown, the proportion of women in tenured positions is approximately the same as it was in 1975, and that the gap between male and female salaries in those positions has actually increased (Mason et al., 2013).

The 'chilly climate' of an academic career is an often-cited barrier for women's achievement and advancement. This 'chilly climate' refers to the exclusion, devaluation and marginalisation of women in Academia (Maranto & Griffin, 2011). Compared with their male colleagues, women often feel a lack of belonging in their departments and do not have the resources or means to establish the networks which are so vital in progressing their own careers. The nature of the relationships that women have in their departments also differs significantly than that of their male colleagues. Men were more likely to report receiving help and support from colleagues, whereas women were more likely to report some sort of harm to their career (Gersick, Dutton, & Bartunek, 2000). A model of the antecedents of a chilly climate for women faculty was suggested by Maranto and Griffin (2011). This model outlined in Figure 1 below, suggests that the percentage of women in a department, and a perceived inequity and procedural unfairness directly affects a faculty member's perception of exclusion from their department.

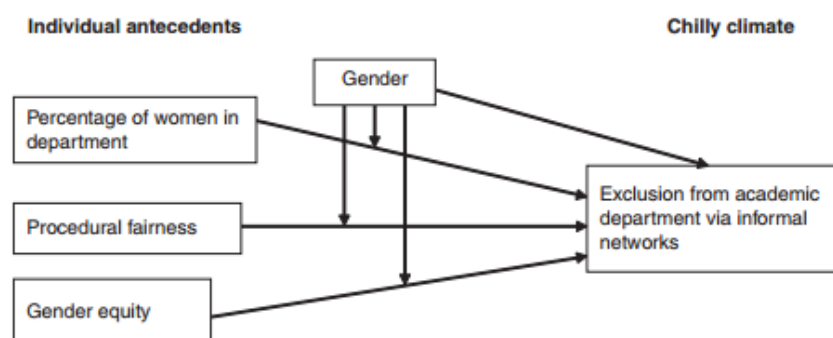


Figure 1 - Model of the antecedents of a chilly climate for women faculty. Reprinted from *The antecedents of a 'chilly climate' for women faculty in higher education* (p 143), by C.L. Maranto and A. EC. Griffin. Copyright (2011) by SAGE. Reprinted with permission.

Women in general are expected to perceive greater inequity than men. Supporting this proposition, researchers have found that women reported inequality in academic workplaces significantly more frequently than their male colleagues (Hesli & Lee, 2013). One explanation for this, which has already been mentioned, is the apparent isolation that women experience from being in a male dominated industry, and having limited networks available to them.

Despite this, the number of women entering into Academia as a career is higher than ever before, and like many other industries women are both under-represented in senior positions and perceived as less successful than men in the same field (Cooray et al., 2014). Relative to their male peers, women tend to be hired less frequently, are disproportionately hired into low ranked positions and more likely to be employed in lower ranked universities and in less prestigious disciplines. They are also more likely to be employed in non-tenure track positions which result in less job security and are often the lowest paying academic positions (August & Waltman, 2004; Baker, 2012; Holliday, et al., 2014). There are a number of barriers that have been identified in literature which have been suggested to prevent women from obtaining senior academic positions (Henley, 2015). Some of these barriers which will be discussed are the tenure system itself, the biased evaluations of success in Academia, the limited mentorship and networking activities and the lack of institutional support.

The academic gender gap is a term that has been developed to explain the differences in experiences and career outcomes that women academics have, compared to their male colleagues (Kalev, 2009). Studies looking into this gender gap have uncovered a number of factors which contribute to this gap and have found that women have a lower probability of achieving a doctorate, are less able to work full-time, are less likely to acquire a permanent position, have lower publication rates, and have lower salaries than their male counterparts (Monroe, Ozyurt, Wrigley, & Alexander, 2008; Toutkoushian, Bellas, & Moore, 2007). Studies have also found that compared with females, males have higher satisfaction rates regarding their job security, teaching loads and advancement opportunities compared to females (Baker, 2010; White, 2010).

The new generation of academics will be very different to those thirty years ago. In comparison, there are a much higher proportion of women completing their PhDs and the newer generations have different expectations when it comes to flexibility and balance between their work and private lives. It has been argued that the structure and culture of Academia has not shifted in time and the outdated belief of the 'ideal worker' still applies within the industry. Senior professors are still mostly male, so there are not enough senior role models to demonstrate the balance and flexibility that the new generation desires (Mason et al., 2013).

One factor which has been discussed in literature on academic women is the concept of satisficing. This concept argues that decisions made about a women's career is 'good enough' but not the optimum choice for their career (Corby & Stanworth, 2009). It was initially proposed in the context of economic decision making, and suggested that a person satisfices when they accept a choice or judgment as one that is 'good enough' (Reber & Reber, 2001; Simon, 1957). In the context of gender literature, satisficing has been used to explain the process that women use when attempting to balance competing personal and work interests, and that instead of maximising one at the expense of the other, they will instead 'satisfice' to reach a reasonable level in both areas (Corby & Stanworth, 2009).

Visibility is another issue discussed as a gender issue relating to inequality in the workplace. It has been found that gender issues tend to be less visible within organisations, and that practices within organisations to generate such gender inequality are so minor that they are difficult to see (Acker, 2006). However, this tends to extend to the type of people within that organisation. For example, with issues of race, white employees tended to see no issues with race inequality, whereas workers of colour did see issues. This could link into the gender issues within Academia, in which such issues may be invisible to senior faculty members who are dominantly men. Similar to this concept of 'invisibility' is that much of the research on organisational analysis fail to take gender into account and some research actually encourages the masculine notion of organisations, making significant references to male leaders and male managers (Lowe, Mills, & Mullen, 2002).

One of the key ways in which universities in New Zealand measure the perceived success of lecturers and professors is by the quantity and quality of publications that they produce. This has some inherent biases that can lead to purely subjective measures of success due to a number of factors, including the timelines required for publications, the types of publications produced as well as the visibility of those publications (Henley, 2015). These factors may be problematic for women who are more likely to take breaks in their careers to have children and may therefore decrease the rate of their research output. A study by Misra, Hickes, Holmes and Agiomavritis (2011) suggested that on average, men dedicated more time on their research than women, whereas women tend to spend more time teaching, mentoring and service which in many cases

holds less value in terms of promotion. This could possibly result in biased measures of success which inherently favour men (Mitchell & Hesli, 2013).

It has been recognised that in general, women publish fewer articles which directly affects a women's recognition in their relevant field (Henley, 2015). The 'productivity puzzle' was first introduced in a study by Cole and Zuckerman (1984) to explain the gender gap which existed in research and the gender difference in terms of productivity. The identification of this 'puzzle' resulted into research as to why this gender disparity existed, and which suggested that the measures of success are crucial in understanding what challenges women face in Academia.

While Henley (2015) proposed that women have lower rates of publication than men, it was also suggested that motherhood in general did not decrease the level of research output. In a survey of over 10,000 economists internationally, it was found that married mothers did not have a lower productivity than married fathers. However, they did find that married mothers or mothers with partners did on average publish more than single mothers and younger mothers under thirty years old. The reason for this was suggested that married mothers or those in committed relationships tended to plan their children, and so tend to do a lot of their research in advance. They also had greater access to childcare which provides them with additional time for research. Henley (2015) also argued that gendered processes exist within universities which may impact women's productivity and their visibility as in some academic fields, especially in the sciences, women have received less credit than men or no credit at all for their publications. It has also been suggested that publications by women are cited less than those by their male peers, which may result in reduced visibility (Mitchell & Hesli, 2013), and that reviewers can be more critical of topics that women are more likely to focus on. This has been termed as the 'Matilda-Effect', which refers to the idea that publications and achievements pay off more for men than what they do for women (Knobloch-Westerwick, Glynn, & Hoge, 2013). This term was first described by science historian Margaret Rossiter in 1993 which she used to describe the common bias against acknowledging the contribution of woman scientists in research, and that their work is often attributed to their male colleagues. She developed this term from the "Matthew Effect" which was made famous by Robert Merton in 1968. The "Matthew Effect" referred the second half of Matthew 13:12 in the Bible, which acknowledges the under recognition accorded to those who have little to start with.

The “Matilda-Effect” was named after, and aimed to call attention to Matilda J. Gage, an American suffragist and feminist critic in the nineteenth century who both experienced and articulated this phenomenon (Rossiter, 1993).

Research which focuses on gender in organisations found that women tend to lack support within their workplace, which has a direct link to their ability to ‘move up the corporate ladder’ (Roth, 2003). This institutional support includes mentorship as well as the interpersonal relationships that they have within their workplace (Kalev, 2009). Women often find it difficult to find mentorship within organisations, especially within industries which are historically dominated by men. This means that women have less support and do not have the knowledge or power to secure high level positions (Henley, 2015). For similar reasons, women in male dominated industries often find it difficult to build teams which allow them to network and gain exposure within their own workplace and their wider industry. This can have an impact on their ability to be on par with their male counterparts and move into higher positions (Kalev, 2009).

In the academic field, this can also create issues in terms of research and publications. In a study by Stack (2004), it was found that in disciplines where there are a higher proportion of women, academics were able to form networks which allowed them to minimise the barriers of productivity. It allowed increased collaborations and also increased their rate of publications. This increased both their productivity in terms of research output as well as the visibility that they received (Henley, 2015).

Mentorship has been found to be a successful factor in the success of women academics for several reasons. Firstly, mentorships have been found to be an important part in encouraging women academics to apply for promotion, where they initially may have felt that they could not apply. It is well known that there is a general reluctance among women to apply for promotion (Cooray et al., 2014). Research has shown that where mentorship is available, women are more likely to gain the confidence to apply for promotion, and be successful in their application (Winchester, Browning, & Chesterman, 2006). It has also been shown to play an important role in attracting higher quality of academics and to increase their research capabilities (Irvine, Moerman, & Rudkin, 2010).

Academic mentoring has been directly related to helping both women and men achieve promotion and foster a sense of career satisfaction. However past research has found that on average, men talk of their experiences in a much more positive light than that of women, especially when it comes to their experiences with supervisors in their journeys towards doctorates. It was found that men reported that their supervisors had a stronger interest in both their research as well as with publishing (Seagram, Gould, & Pyke, 1998). This discrimination by supervisors still remains an issue, and is reported frequently by mothers. Women who reported positively of their supervisory relationships were more likely to not have children during their doctorates. Research has found that women who become pregnant or have a child during their doctorate were less likely to be mentored into an academic position at the completion of their study (Bracken et al., 2006). It could be argued that mentorship programmes may be misused by organisations as a simple and low cost way to address gender issues, where they should instead be focusing on more critical solutions which have proven records of success such as leadership programmes which encompass many different elements.

There are now many of these successful leadership programmes within universities to specifically meet the need of mentorship, and to provide women with information on their own careers and progression, as well as to provide opportunities for networking (Harris & Leberman, 2012). One example of this which was developed in 2006 is the “New Zealand Women in Leadership Programme (NZWiL)” which was created by women, for women, to help them navigate the challenging landscape of Academia in New Zealand. In order to understand the effectiveness of the programme, it was independently evaluated in 2011 and 2014 which identified that it provides enormous value to the participants who went through the programme, as well as to the universities that those participants worked in. It succeeded in unlocking participant’s leadership potential, made the participants more visible for leadership roles, increased participant’s confidence and influence, helped clarify participant’s goals and created and strengthened participant’s networks (New Zealand Women in Leadership, 2015). These outcomes address many of the barriers which have been discussed that women must overcome to be successful in Academia.

Motherhood and Academia

While research on the issue of gender in Academia is extensive, there is limited research on motherhood and what research there is has been conducted in the US context. However, there is a dearth of research investigating Academia and motherhood analysing various factors such as country, culture, academic disciplines and the age and life stage at which point a woman becomes a mother (Benard & Correll, 2010; Correll, Benard, & Park, 2007; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2015). In studies which have been conducted into Academia motherhood, the emphasis has also been on having young children, and do not look at the similar yet vastly different challenges of raising teenagers when attempting to develop and maintain a successful academic career.

The timing, or 'ticking biological clock' influencing academic women's decisions to start a family is a scholarly avenue in this field. Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004), it was found that general concerns about tenure and their age were the significant factors which the women took into account when making a decision about when to have a child. The average age of first time motherhood often coalesces with around the time many academic women are near completion of a PhD (Drago & Williams, 2000; Statistics New Zealand, 2009). In another study focusing on academic careers in the American context, it was noted that the first five to seven years of a tenure-track position are the most demanding, and these years often fall in the 'peak' childbearing/childrearing years of their lives (Fothergill & Feltey, 2003).

New Zealand and International Contexts

It is important to recognise the different landscape that arises in the New Zealand context in order to fully understand the challenges faced by New Zealand scholar mamas. New Zealand has far greater protection for women when becoming mothers in terms of protecting their careers. While parental leave was introduced in 1987 under the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987, paid parental leave was not introduced until the act was amended in 2002 (Parental Leave and Employment Protection (Paid Parental Leave) Amendment Act 2000). The act now guarantees qualifying women with eighteen weeks of paid parental leave, and up to 34 weeks of additional unpaid leave to spend with their children whilst guaranteeing them a similar position when they return to work (Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987). The Human

Rights Act 1993 also protects all individuals, including mothers, from being discriminated against on the basis that they have children or because of their gender.

Despite these protections, many women choose to return to work before this which may be for a number of reasons, including financial pressures, work pressures or simply wanting to return to the workforce (Crichton, 2008). Difficulties can arise when negotiating an employee's return to work, especially if they are not able or willing to return to the position on the same hours as they previously held, or where greater flexibility is required. While the US also guarantees the same or similar position on a mother's return to work, only twelve weeks of unpaid leave is guaranteed (Addati, Cassirer, & Gilchrist, 2016). This may put more pressures on mothers in the US when it comes to deciding to have children and the choice of ability to return to work after that twelve week period ends. New Zealand employers are also specifically prohibited from discriminating against women due to their pregnancy or family responsibilities, as well as their gender (Human Rights Act 1993). The US prohibits only discrimination on the grounds of gender, and does not specifically provide for discrimination against pregnancy or family responsibilities (Addati et al., 2016).

Motherhood and Academia independently require dedication and trying to balance both of these is can be very challenging. There are many reasons why a new graduate student might reject an academic career, and one of the most prominent concerns are family considerations. In some disciplines, there is a nonstop race to the top which is particularly challenging for both men and women who either have a family, or want to have a family in the future (Mason et al., 2013). There are several themes identified in literature which attempt to explain the difficulties women face, including the 'narrative of constraint' and the 'chilly climate'. These terms refer to factors which can both inhibit a women's ability to progress in their careers, as well as a factor in some women's decision to put off having children to advance their careers.

The Narrative of Constraint

The narrative of constraint is a term which describes a trend often found within research on Academia. This term describes the idea that gaining a tenured position is not compatible with

other roles, such as being a mother. This narrative of constraint has been acknowledged in literature since it was first introduced by O'Meara, Terosky and Neumann (2008).

Research has also shown that women in Academia are less likely to have children compared with other professional women, and they are also more likely to remain single to succeed in their careers (Isgro & Castañeda, 2015; Mason et al., 2013). This, combined with the largely male dominated environment in Academia creates a chilly climate for women faculty members. In one study of over 8000 doctoral students, it was found that only 14% of men and 12% of women were parents. 76% of the female respondents cited that the work requirements associated with higher education was the most important factor in their decision to hold off having children, and women were far more likely than men to believe that higher education and parenthood are not compatible (Mason et al., 2013). Many of the women surveyed also believed that they would not be taken seriously and that their future employers would disapprove of the fact that they had children. Both male and female participants agreed that being a parent had a huge impact on a women's academic career. Mothers in the study spoke of issues with parental leave, breastfeeding between classes and arranging childcare during research leave to be the most challenging factors of balancing their family and their work, especially when their children were younger (Mason et al., 2013).

Balancing Work and Family

There are recurring themes in the literature on academic mothers, and many of these relate to managing their work and family lives. It has been found that a significant number of scholar mamas find that the occupational stresses experienced of working in higher education is different for males and females. It has been noted that women experience heavier workloads and higher stress when attempting to balance their dual roles as academics and mothers, as well as higher stress when it comes to navigating an unsupportive work environment (Kossek & Ruderman, 2012; Michailidis, 2008). This higher occupational stress can have negative flow on affects and came make it difficult for women to maintain a positive lifestyle, and some researchers have found that academic mothers resort to negative behaviours to manage their occupational stress such as smoking, drinking and over-eating (McGuire & Reger, 2003; Michailidis, 2008). Arranging breastfeeding and childcare were commonly cited issues that the working mothers faced and in

which they felt they had no support from their managers or colleagues as well as the stress they felt when attempting to arrange parental leave and return to their workplace, especially when the mothers wanted flexible hours coming back in order to allow them to juggle their family and their work lives (Baker, 2010).

However, some women have identified that their knowledge of the flexibility within the academic profession is what attracted them towards Academia. This is not to say that academic mothers put in fewer hours than their childless colleagues, but often work late nights once their children are in bed and also on weekends (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). This flexibility and autonomy often led to the mothers overlooking the long hours required to establish a tenured position, as well as the constant pressure to work all the time (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). In one longitudinal study completed by Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2012), one hundred scholar mamas were studied to discover how women balance their work-life with their family life. This study began when the interviewees were early in their career and already had young children. This is different focus than the women contained in this report, who have already established their careers prior to having children. In the study, follow up interviews were held during the mid-point of their careers to understand their experiences and the issues they faced when balancing the competing pull between their work and their family. The biggest positive that was cited was the autonomous nature of the work (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012).

Guilt is another factor which plays into balancing work and family that can influence women when making decisions about their careers and their personal lives. In a study by Guendouzi (2006), it was found that balancing these sometimes competing priorities can lead to both stress and feelings of guilt, especially in response to the ideological beliefs of what makes a 'good mother' and the stigma associated with placing children in day-care. Guilt has also arisen as a theme in studies on the academic career specifically, and mothers have spoken of the guilt they felt about spending too little time with both their children, and on their academic work (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004). In another study focusing on single mothers studying in higher education, it was found that academics who combined mothering with tertiary study often felt emotions of both guilt and pride. Guilt in taking time away from their children, and pride in taking steps to separate themselves from state assistance by completing their tertiary education (Longhurst, Hodgetts, & Stolte, 2012).

A theme of working a second shift has also been suggested by some studies. It has been suggested that women commonly take on a 'second shift' once they finish their work, in that they come home to complete domestic household tasks such as cleaning and childcare (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). It has also been suggested that 'working class' women tended to prioritise their family shift, whereas 'professional' women prioritised their work (Burris, 1991).

Preference Theory

Preference theory is a controversial but highly influential concept developed by Catherine Hakim which attempts to explain and predict women's choices about how they invest in productive or reproductive work. Hakim (2000) suggests that in contemporary, affluent societies there are new material realities which exist for women, which include contraception, the acceptance of equality, white-collar jobs, non-standard work, and an emphasis on personal preferences. She argues that these material realities, specifically contraception and equal opportunity policies ensure that women have the same access to all positions, occupations and careers as men. Hakim outlines three groups of women; 'home-centred' women who are centred on private, family work, 'work-centred' women who are centred on market work, and the 'adaptive' women who combine the two.

This theory has been criticised for several reasons, one of which is because of the assumption that all women are able to make choices about the way they work and how much hours they spend with their families instead of their work. Some studies have suggested that women do not get to make such a simple choice as to which group they belong, and believe that institutions and society play a great role on female participation in the labour market (Crompton & Lyonette, 2005; Lane, 2004). It has also been suggested that factors such as income limits will play a role in the amount of choice that a woman has in terms of their work preferences and that women with higher incomes are able to make more decisions about the way in which they work, whereas those with lower incomes have higher constraints (McRae, 2003). Preference theory is relevant in the context of this study in relation to the choices available to the scholar mamas, both in their return to work as well as the focus they place on aspects of their role following their return to work.

The Academic Maternal Wall

International studies have focused on the term the 'academic maternal wall' which is an expression used to describe the discrimination and stereotyping mothers face when seeking employment. Women in many professions face discrimination and challenges when it comes to being a working mother, and especially when it comes to trying to balance their work and life. Gatrell (2011) noted "despite years of legislation intended to protect pregnant women and new mothers from discrimination, the employed maternal body is often treated as unwelcome at work" (p. 102). Research shows that working mothers in many industries face discrimination when attempting to gain a job, as well as trying to secure higher positions (Correll, et al., 2007). This 'motherhood penalty' suggests that there is a subconscious bias which results in employers preferring non-mothers, as there is a belief that working mothers will have external family pressures which may negatively affect their productivity at work. This can include women who currently have family commitments, as well as those who may start a family in the future (Benard & Correll, 2010).

Research by Fox (2010) suggests that mothers face barriers in terms of advancement. This is linked to institutional barriers in terms of inflexible tenure tracks, limited research funding and limited research and teaching support. In academic institutions where there are strict budgets and inflexible advancement timelines, women are disproportionately disadvantaged (Henley, 2015). Mothers on average are required to take more time away from their work in order to support their family and children, and this may result in them losing time on their tenure clock. If institutional support is limited, this may result in academic mothers being less likely to be eligible for promotion and advancement than childless women or men (Henley, 2015).

Productivity Debates

There has been a lot of debate as to whether academic mothers are able to research at the same rate and frequency as their childless colleagues, especially men. A lot of this is argued to be due to women historically holding the primary responsibility when it comes to childcare, and due to this, working mothers in general have less time to commit to advancing their careers than men (Stack, 2004). As previously discussed, institutional support is vital to ensuring the barriers women have in terms of productivity are minimised. This is especially important for academic

women who are also mothers. Some studies have suggested that when institutional support is available and women are given supportive opportunities, their research outputs can be on par with women who have no children (Whittington, 2011).

Winslow (2010) suggested that male and female academics allocate their time differently in their work days, which may influence productivity if mainly measured by research outputs. She found that women academics tended to spend a greater proportion of their time on teaching and less time on research, whereas male academics tended to spend more of their time on research and less time on teaching. It was found that this could not be explained by individual preferences or institutional attributes, and could be some of the gender inequality which exists in the academic industry. The study also noted that it could have implications around job performance, productivity, retention and job satisfaction, especially among women.

Some studies have suggested that motherhood does not actually detract productivity (Henley, 2015). There has been some discussion which supports the proposition that having children does affect a mother's research productivity, especially when the children are young (Mason et al., 2013; Stack, 2004). However, in a study conducted by Kyvik (1990), it was suggested that the initial setbacks that mothers face when having children are offset by a higher level of productivity once their children reach at least ten years of age. However, other studies have provided an alternate view on this. In a study by Fox (2005), it was found that women with pre-school children were actually more productive compared with all women in the academic sciences. Hunter and Leahey (2010) suggested that while new mothers may face short-term decreases in their productivity, once they returned to work they could be more likely to publish, even when their children are still young. It has also been recognised that parenting younger children has a greater impact on the academic career, especially in the years following their return from parental leave (Wolfinger, Mason, & Gouldren, 2009), and women that have pre-school children are more constrained than women who have school-aged children (O'Meara & Campbell, 2011). However, some other studies argue that these constraints continue for many years, even while the children are at school. Early research suggests that there are difficulties which exist no matter what stage a child is at, right up until adolescence, and suggests a parent's productivity is most affected while during adolescence due to the absence of childcare for that age group (Ballenski & Cook, 1982).

A recent study by Hardy et al. (2016) found that different parents had different views as to how the ages of their children affected their careers. Some found that younger children were easier to manage, whereas others found that having young children raised many difficulties especially in terms of their transition back to work and coordinating travel. It was noted that some of these difficulties became easier as the children got older, such as travelling, but the emotional and logistical challenges of raising teenagers became a more pressing issue. Despite this apparent significance into the age of children in determining women's challenges in Academia, it is still largely under-researched. Differing opinions on the affect a children's age has on a mother's productivity remain. Several academics have called for further studies on the impact of children over the entire academic career including the different effects children have at different ages (Fox, 2005; Hardy, et al., 2016; Kyvik, 1990).

Fatherhood in Academia

Fatherhood in Academia is also an under researched area as scholarly investigations have largely focussed on the challenges and barriers that women face when attempting to advance their career. Still today, little is known about the effects of fatherhood on a man's academic career. This may be due to the fact that men may not face the same challenges and barriers that women face, and that men do not require the same level of commitment when it comes to their family lives so as not to detract from their productivity in the same way that it might for woman (Benard & Correll, 2010). It has been suggested that employers often see fatherhood as a positive trait and do not believe that it will detract from productivity (Hodges & Budig, 2010). The productivity debates surrounding academic mothers do not exist when it comes to fathers. This may be one reason for the apparent lack of focus on fatherhood. In one study, it was found that women that had children within five years of obtaining a doctorate were significantly less likely to achieve a tenured position than their male colleagues who had children at a similar point in their career (Mason et al, 2013). Men who had children soon after obtaining a doctorate achieved tenure at slightly higher rates than men who do not.

Love of Professional and Personal Roles

Another recurring theme throughout studies is the love that scholar mamas have while working in Academia, as well as the joy of their role as a mother (Raddon, 2002; Trussell, 2015; Ward &

Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Scholar mamas have expressed the satisfaction they have teaching and researching, and having their work recognised by colleagues in the field (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Interestingly, some mothers found that the satisfaction they get from work has changed since having children, in that some now gain their satisfaction from showing their children that they enjoy the work that they do (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Some scholars also argue that despite research suggesting the contrary, motherhood and Academia are complementary and can encourage the creation of knowledge. For examples, in a Canadian study by Trussell (2015) based on the authors own journey into motherhood, she wrote that despite the numerous stresses which arose from being in an academic position, she felt that her career and the opportunity she had to be in a tenured position made her happier mother. The author also felt that motherhood inspired her as an academic, and gave her a new sense of passion both in her research and in the classroom, driven by the internal desire to make the world a better place for her daughter to grow up in. She also felt that combining work and family broadened her thinking and had a positive effect on her research, her teaching as well as her emotional and psychological well-being. This reflects the study by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) who referred to the 'work-family enrichment process' which suggests that someone's professional life may enhance their personal life, and vice versa.

Summary

This chapter presents a review of the literature on the academic career, gender in Academia and motherhood in Academia. A number of themes have been identified which will be discussed in more detail alongside the narratives, including the narrative of constraint, the 'chilly climate' the productivity debate and preference theory. While there is an abundance of studies on the issue of gender in Academia, as well as the role of motherhood in context of these gendered discussions, the individual and rich stories of mothers in Academia and their experiences have been neglected, and the following chapters aim to provide an additional layer of understanding to the literature which currently exists.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Methods

The shortest distance between a human being and the truth is a story (De Mello, 1999, p. 8).

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the philosophical assumptions and methodology used in order to provide context as to how the data has been collected, interpreted and analysed and what factors might affect the outcomes of the study. It will then look at the methods used throughout the study and also discuss the different approaches that are commonly used in narrative studies, which aims to provide an insight as to why my own particular approach was used.

Philosophical Assumptions

Narrative studies often have difficulty uncovering epistemological and ontological significances (Squire, et al., 2014). What is useful is to attempt to understand how the manipulation of data throughout the research process is affected by realities. If a single reality exists, there should be no problem in interpreting someone lived experience. But if multiple realities exist, how can I ensure that the translation of that persons' reality into text? How can I then translate it back into the reality as I see it, ensuring that I maintain the core of that person's narrative? Schütz (1962) assumed there are multiple realities and the subjective constructs on the part of the researched and the constructions by the researchers in the collecting and interpretation of data interplay, this is outlined in Figure 2 below.

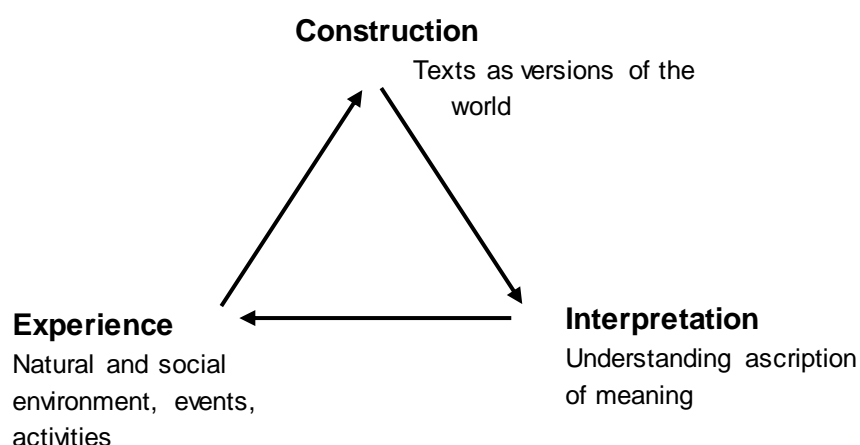


Figure 2 - Understanding between construction and interpretation. Reprinted from *Collected papers I. The problem of social reality (phaenomenologica)*, by A. Schütz, 1962, Den Haag, Nijhoff. Copyright (1962) by A. Schütz. Reprinted with permission.

The concept of mimesis is a useful way to clarify this idea. Mimesis originally referred to the transformation of worlds into symbolic words, a classic example of this would be producing a play. Elements of this concept which are commonly used in qualitative research are the transformation of experience into narratives, the construction of texts and the interpretation of such constructions by the researcher, and then interpreting these findings back as part of a report or presentation (Flick, 2002). The process of reading and understanding someone's life story will require me to be as involved in the construction of reality as the person I will be interviewing. The link between mimesis and narratives is interesting. As Bruner (1987) highlights:

When someone tells you his life . . . it is always a cognitive achievement rather than through the clear-crystal recital of something univocally given. In the end, it is a narrative achievement. There is no such thing psychologically as 'life itself'. At very least, it is a selective achievement of memory recall; beyond that, recounting one's life is an interpretive feat. (pp. 12-13).

Ontology

Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones once said, "Everybody's got a different way of telling a story – and has different stories to tell" (Richards, 2013). This quote is fitting as it demonstrates the subjective ontological position that I have. I believe every person's experience is unique to them, and the exact same experience for two different people may be understood and interpreted in completely different ways. Thoughts, feelings, and emotions are the very concepts which give stories their richness and meaning, and do not exist without human ability to perceive their meanings (Nicholls, 2009-a). This subjective view point is inherent throughout my study. The

scholar mamas' stories maintain their richness and individuality where subjective ontology is used. What gives their stories richness is the different views they have on common themes and how their individual experiences into the same career path has lead them to lead such different lives. Their emotions, thoughts and feelings are as important to the stories as the words that make them up.

Epistemology

I took an interpretivist approach when conducting this research, as I believed listening and playing an active role in the interviews with the participants was the most important part of my interviews (Cresswell, 1998). Interpretivist researchers often believe that you may get various opinions and points of view from your research, but that this is a good thing for society. It allows us to access the different aspects of reality which exist in the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), and is in line with my ontological assumption. Interpretivist researchers are also concerned with experiencing what they are studying, allowing feeling and reason to govern actions and accept any influences from personal experiences (Carson, Gilmore, Perry, & Gronhaug, 2001). In line with this, I made a point to relate and, and interact with the interviewees, even telling my own stories to compare and contrast how we started our journey into becoming mothers, and the different challenges we faced. By doing this, I was able to understand and relate to their experiences on a deeper level. I observed the participant in an attempt to understand their emotions and feelings when telling their stories, in order to help me interpret what it was that they were saying.

Methodology

The methodology utilised in this study is qualitative. The study is concerned with the unique experiences of individual people and is not looking to explore any single phenomena normally associated with quantitative studies (Bernard, 2000). Qualitative methodology therefore has a better fit with the aim of the research.

Data Analysis

This study is inductive. I had no theory that I wished to prove when conducting this study. I merely wanted to understand the lived experiences of a certain group of women. I hope to have come to a conclusion, or some theoretical understanding by the end of my research, as is the general desired outcome of inductive reasoning (Carpenter & Suto, 2008).

What is Narrative Inquiry?

We depend on stories almost as much as we depend on the air we breathe. Air keeps us alive; stories give meaning to our lives (Bochner & Riggs, 2014, p. 195).

It is human nature to tell stories, and we incorporate stories into many areas of our lives. We use them to explain complex ideas and to teach our children right and wrong. Narrative inquiry seeks to humanise the research process by utilising the stories that people tell about their lives and their experiences (Riessman, 1993). The exact meaning of narrative inquiry is not yet settled and there are disputes as to whether a definition is even required (Tamboukou, 2008). There are no obvious categories in which to focus and there is limited guidance available in regards to how to analyse and interpret the data. There are no overall rules about what materials to use or ways to conduct the investigation, and there is limited guidance as to how to best source the data (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2013). But this is perhaps what makes narrative inquiry so exciting and how it is able to uncover such rich and valuable narratives. It allows us to view the world in a different way and uncovers layers of meaning which may not be evident using other methods of analysis. It revolves around a person's own interpretation of the world and the way they have lived their experiences (Chase, 2013), it maintains the humanness of the discussions and allows us to understand the world at a deeper level (Squire et al., 2013). Narrative Inquiry revolves around a person's own interpretation of the world, the way they have lived their experiences and what they choose to highlight, filter out or smooth over (Chase, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1995).

Narrative Inquiry Approaches

While there are no specific categories of different narrative styles, a broad family of approaches has developed over time and as narrative inquiry has become more popular (Riessman, 1993). A common tension in the field of narrative inquiry is the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Thomas, 2010). On one end of the continuum are researchers who believe the researcher's role should be that of an expert (Atkinson & Delamont, 2007), where other researchers believe that all meaning and understanding of experiences should centre around the participant and researcher having collaborative conversations, rejecting the neutral role of the researcher (Chase, 2013). Five popular examples of approaches within modern narrative inquiry are:

- The story and the life;
- Storytelling as lived experience;

- Narrative practices and narrative environments;
- The researcher and the story; and
- The Labovian Approach.

Each of these will be looked into within this study in order to provide background and as a comparison to the approach I have taken in this study.

The Story and the Life

The approach focuses on the relationships between a person's life story and the richness of the experiences that they have had. When using this approach, researchers tend to focus on the topics of the person's stories such as the characters, the scenes and the plot (Riessman, 2008). Researchers using this method focus mainly on what someone's story is about, including the plot and the characters that make up the story (Chase, 2011). They are interested in how people narrate their lives. Researchers often use in depth interviews coupled with an ethnographic understanding of the participant's environment (Taylor, 2013; Chase, 2011). Proponents for this approach stress the importance of identifying new possibilities within the person's experience and to build on those (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). This does not mean however that the researcher should generalise these experiences and specific stories into concepts or theories, but should instead take a pragmatic approach and work collaboratively with interviewees to increase the richness of their stories (Chase, 2013).

Storytelling as Lived Experience

This approach focusses on how people narrate their experiences and researchers base their inquiry around understanding story-telling concepts in order to comprehend what the narrators are attempting to communicate. This can include things such as word choice, emotion, pauses, and repetition (Chase, 2013). Chase (2013) defines narrative under this approach as the "practice of constructing meaningful selves, identities, and realities" (p. 57). Researchers using this approach are interested in how people tell their stories, and are particularly interested in cultural discourses that those storytellers use in order to make sense of their own stories (Taylor, 2013). In order to facilitate this approach, researchers often use in-depth interviews as their preferred method of data gathering then convert the data into detailed transcripts so that they can uncover certain patterns in the narrator's verbal practices. They also pay close attention to the storytelling

itself and the relationship between both the narrator and the researcher (Chase, 2013; Riessman, 2008).

Narrative Practices and Narrative Environments

Instead of the content of the stories and how the stories are told, this approach instead focuses on the relationship between a participant's narrative environment and their narrative practices. This has been described as a 'reflexive interplay' and suggests that a person's narrative is shaped by their environment (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009). Researchers using this approach place less emphasis on the stories themselves, and instead focus on understanding narrative reality, what the narrator chooses to say, and what they choose not to say. Because this approach is strongly focused on the relationship between a participant's narrative practices and their local environments, the approach normally requires an ethnographic approach (Taylor, 2013). Ethnographic research is the oldest qualitative research approach and classically involves a researcher spending a significant amount of time observing behaviours and attempting to understand why those behaviours occur (Francis, 2013). Using this approach helps researchers to gain a clearer understanding of the local environments and circumstances that shape the participant's narratives (Chase, 2013).

The Researcher and the Story

Under this approach, the researcher's own stories about their lives both personally as well as in their research play an important part of the inquiry. This can sometimes mean including the researcher's own experiences when exploring a topic. Since a ground-breaking study in the 1970s by Barbara Myerhoff (1994), many researchers have become more open about their own experiences and how they relate to the studies they are completing (Chase, 2013). Myerhoff's ethnographic study focused on the experiences of aging Jews, participants in the same culture as her own (Myerhoff, 1994). Researchers using this approach often seek a more equitable relationship between the researcher and the story-teller, and sometimes incorporate their own experiences into the research itself.

The Labovian Approach

This approach is possibly the most classic model of narrative research (Riessman, 2008). The approach treats narratives as text and does not attempt to understand the narratives as a storytelling performance or interaction, and uses a structural method of analysis. This is very

distinct from some of the other approaches which were discussed previously. Its key purpose is only to understand past events in the form of a story and is extremely event-centred. It provides a detailed and rigorous technique for analysing narratives, especially to uncover important narratives within the text. A key problem with this method is that the researcher assumes that the narrative is reflective of what actually happened, and therefore an objective reality is assumed and as such does not fit with my interpretivist approach. This does not align with my philosophical assumption that multiple realities exist and that events mean different things to different people, including myself as the researcher (Patterson, 2012).

My Approach to Narrative Research

When conducting this research I will be taking an approach to narrative inquiry in line with 'the researcher and the story'. This approach links well to my philosophical assumptions and recognises that my own experiences may have played a part in how I have interpreted the data. While I have not used ethnography as a technique as Myerhoff did (Myerhoff, 1994), I used my own stories as part of the research process which helped build a level of trust between myself and the participant, and which may have helped their narratives flow. However, I have made sure that the stories the narrators tell come through the analysis in the way that they have intended, and with richness of the experiences maintained.

Sampling Method

Qualitative researchers do not attempt to sample people who 'represent' the population that is being researched, but instead aim to find a sample who provide the best insights into individual's lived experiences and their perceptions of the world (Nicholls, 2009-b). In order to find narratives relating to the experiences of academic women having children, a purposive approach was required which requires finding participants who match a certain criteria (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). I had predetermined criteria relevant to my research objective, and participants were selected according to those criteria. There are many different types of purposive sampling methods used to select participants, the common element of which is to achieve theoretical saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006), or the point in which no new information is being gained from the participants (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). What is most important in terms of the integrity of data obtained is the richness of the information rather than the quantity (Sandelowski, 2002). Different numbers of participants are suggested from various authors depending on what type of

methodology is used in the study. Morse (1994) and Cresswell (1998) suggested at least five to six participants for phenomenological studies, whereas Bertaux (1981) argued that qualitative research in general requires at least fifteen participants.

It is difficult to tell how many participants are needed before saturation occurs and to get the richest data from the study, but for the purposes of my study and the narrative approach I intended to use, I decided I would require at least five and a maximum of ten participants. Less than this and I would not be able to uncover common themes, as I had assumed that each of their experiences would be different. Too many more than this would risk losing the value of each participant's individual story, and small details which would otherwise be important to my analysis may be overlooked. My research supervisor also recommended that I found from five to eight participants. In the end, I interviewed seven participants which gave a balance of richness of information as well as ensuring the individuality of their stories was maintained.

Participant Criteria

The main and most obvious criterion of participation in my study of scholar mamas, was that the participant was both a scholar, and a mother. The purpose of the study was to understand the experiences of academic mothers who have come back into the workplace after having children, so these two criteria were the most important. In order to better suit the purpose of the study, participants were required to have at least completed their PhD before having their first child. This was to ensure that the stories obtained focused on their journey into motherhood after their academic careers had already begun, rather than before.

Another criterion was that their first child was at least five years old at the time of the interview. This was to be sure that the participants had enough time after having their children to return to work, and that enough time had passed to allow them to settle back into their work routines. I also focused on women who were currently in established tenured academic positions and were between the ages of 32 and 42 years old, to further support the purpose of the study.

Recruitment Procedures

I began my recruitment of my participants using purposive sampling (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), and utilising professional networks who were known to fit the criteria mentioned previously. I contact eight scholar mamas via e-mail along with the participant information sheet and the

participant consent form, and advised them that I had obtained their information from my supervisor. All but one of the scholar mamas accepted my invitation to be involved in the study. As I was able to get such a positive response, no further recruitment processes were required and communication to a wider network was not necessary. I then followed up with the potential participants and asked them to return copies of the consent forms and confirmed whether they were still interested in being involved in the study. All consent forms were returned, and all agreed that they were still interested in being involved. A copy of the participant information sheet is in appendix one. A copy of the consent form is in appendix two.

Data Collection

The most common method of data collection in narrative inquiry is interviews. Narrative interviews normally begin by asking a 'general narrative question', which refers to the topic of study. It is hoped that this question will stimulate narratives to flow. Questions which follow are designed to uncover narratives which may have been missed from the interviewee's first answer. An important part of conducting narrative interviews is to ensure the researcher listens carefully and does not ask the interviewee to clarify their points so that their flow of conversation is not interrupted. The researcher should instead empathise with the interviewee and signal their understanding of their perspective (Flick, 2002). Researchers however are able to take an active role in the interview and can even discuss their own experiences, in order to create a better relationship with the interviewee and which may help built trust in the research relationship (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This links back to the narrative approach I am using in this study of the 'researcher and the story'.

During these interviews, researchers try to develop the interviewee and interviewer relationship to one of a narrator and a listener (Chase, 2013). This leads to a huge shift in the types of questions that need to be asked, and move from common qualitative questions asking about general experiences to inviting narrators to tell the listener about their stories (Chase, 2005). Although researchers go into the interviews with questions in mind to ask, these are used more as a guide and interviews do not always fall within even the semi-structured definition due to the fluid nature required during the interview (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Interviewers using narrative are required to be mature and sensitive, attributes which take time to develop (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007).

In my interviews, I had a list of questions in mind that I wanted to ask (appendix three). I knew that they were a guide and that I may need to ask different questions depending on what the interviewees discussed and how much information they provided. During most of the interviews, I found no need to ask any additional questions. Asking the women to tell me their stories seemed to be enough to get a lot of rich and valuable narratives from the participants. They were immensely proud of their achievements and were glad to tell me how they got to where they were presently.

Due to the physical location of two of my participants I was required to conduct their interviews over the phone. This was not my preferred method of interviewing and I had hoped to conduct all interviews face to face so that I could get better insight into the participant's emotions and body language, which I was concerned would be lacking from a telephone call. Some research also suggests that face-to-face interviews are the most productive method for producing narrative data, and that any other method used is assumed to be 'second best' (Holt, 2010). However, it has been shown that where rigour is maximised and where the researchers are aware of the limitations of telephone interviews, a researcher can ensure they get the most positive outcomes so that the data is not limited by not having the interview conducted face-to-face (Stephens, 2007). During my phone interviews, I made sure that I took extra notes in terms of the participants' tone of voice and their emotion. While I could not visibly see the participants, I found that by being aware that I did not have the benefit of observing them while they are talking and by taking those extra notes, I was able to overcome any issues I thought may have arisen. I felt that I was still able to get the most positive outcomes from the phone interviews.

Analysis

The adaptability and flexibility of narrative studies, while one of its main strengths, have historically prevented the development of any step-by-step guidance as to how to analyse and interpret the data obtained from narrative interviews (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). However, there are a number of acclaimed narrative authors who have provided some guidance based on their own experiences using narrative inquiry as their preferred methodology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Molineux & Richard, 2003; Riessman, 1993). These provided me with the information I needed to step up to the daunting tasks of narrative data analysis. The analysis of

the data is one of the most critical steps of the research process, because it is that process which transforms the research into more than just a story (Riessman, 1993).

After the interviews had been completed, I had the interview tapes professionally transcribed. This external agency was required to sign a confidentiality agreement. In order to ensure the transcripts were accurate, I listened to the audio tapes while simultaneously reading the scripts that had been provided, and made some corrections where necessary. After removing identifying information and substituting names and locations with pseudonyms, I then sent the transcripts to the scholar-mamas who made deletions and adjustments where they felt it was necessary. Following this, I used a five-step process to transform the data from transcripts into stories (Molineux & Richard, 2003):

- The first step involved removing all of my interview questions and comments.
- Secondly, important events in the narratives were identified and put together in order to form a logical story structure.
- I then ensured events were in chronological order to help make up the plot of the story.
- I used all the participant's own words wherever possible, however
- Some linking sentences or words were used to ensure there was a narrative flow.

Transcripts have some inherent issues. They are prone to subjective translation and can leave out important information such as body language, voice tone and other unrecorded data (Silver & Lewins, 2014). To minimise these errors, I ensured that the core narratives were maintained throughout the transcription process, I read along to the audio tapes while reading the transcripts to ensure that no changes were made that might have changed the meanings intended by the interviewees. I also made notes of unrecorded visual and emotional cues which I have incorporated into my analysis to ensure the richness of those emotions are maintained.

One of the main tools that researchers use during the analysis phase of the research is their interpretive 'lens'. This 'lens' is influenced by several things, including the philosophical assumptions that a researcher has, their own personal knowledge and assumptions, the nature of the research itself and the approach that has been used. Part of my own lens has been guided by trying to understand the process that other researchers have used when interpreting their own

narrative data. Out of all of the guidelines I have read, I found that the model proposed by Lieblich et al. (1998) for reading narrative data was the most useful.

Lieblich et al. (1998) also provided a framework of narrative analysis involving two dimensions, holistic versus categorical and content versus form. These dimensions form a grid which provides four different approaches to analysis (Figure 3).

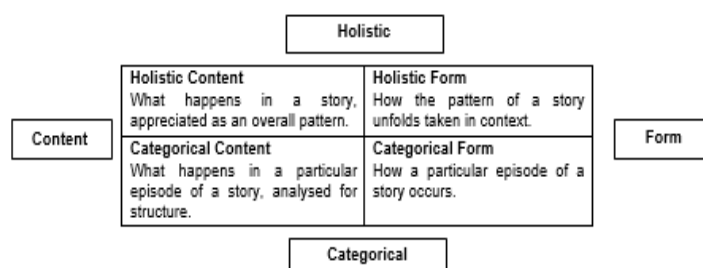


Figure 3 - Four Approaches to Narrative. Reprinted from *Narrative research: Reading analysis and interpretation* by A. Lieblich, R. Tuval-Mashiach and T. Zilber. Copyright (1998) by SAGE. Reprinted with permission.

A holistic approach involves taking a story as a whole and attempting to uncover patterns and metaphors. Conversely, a categorical approach focuses more on dissecting particular episodes where one participant's story or a number of participant's stories are separated into different sections and categorised into themes or categories. Content refers to what happens, to who and how they felt or thought about it, and form is considers the data in terms of its structure in terms of the narrative's storyline, and how it unfolds (Bleakley, 2005). This framework was useful in developing my narrative lens as it enabled me to distinguish between the form of the narratives and the content of what was said. However, Lieblich et al. (1998) made the important point that the four categories were not rigid and each cell represented either end of a continuum. While researchers are likely to sit at one end or the other, there are often times where individual parts of each grid are used. I found that while reading over the transcripts from my conversations with the scholar mamas that I ended up analysing the data categorically, however I mainly focused on the content rather than the form. This was because I was less concerned with the way they chose to tell their stories, and was more focused on what each of the scholar mamas actually said about their experiences. In terms of the way I viewed the content, I was more drawn towards categorically understanding the data, as I was concerned with the individual components of what was said rather than the overarching patterns which existed within the stories.

In a study by Richmond (2002), the researcher presented a story map grid incorporating different components such as self-identity, time and social context in order to help analyse data. Using this as a guide, I have created my own story grid incorporating Lieblich et al. (1998)'s content guidelines which have been discussed above (Table 1).

Table 1

Story Grid of Scholar Mamas' Narratives

Title	Protagonist profile	Who else is in the story?	What was the plot of the story?	What was positive about their experience?	What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?	What information was missing?	What resonated with me?

Adapted from Richmond (2002) and Lieblich et al. (1998).

The purpose of the first column "Title" was to allow me to think about what the story was about. The title of a story is designed to give the reader an indication of what the story is going to be about. Sometimes this indication will be clear before you begin the story, but sometimes you have to read the story to the end to understand the significance. In either case, the title holds strong meanings about the characters and plot contained within the story. By attempting to create a title for the story of each scholar mama, I hoped to maintain the individuality of their stories and the uniqueness of their own personality. In most instances, I wasn't able to fill in this column until the rest of the columns were completed as the more I read the transcripts, the more I learned about each of the scholar mamas and the experiences they have had during their journey into motherhood.

The purpose of the second column "Protagonist profile" was to think about who the protagonist of the story was. Part of this was to understand each scholar mama's personal identity, their demographics and their history which played an important part of their stories and to understand what was unique or special about their stories.

The third column "Who else is in the story?" enabled me to think about who else the story was about, whether they were specifically named or alluded to throughout the stories. Again this

enabled me to get a clearer insight into the scholar mamas' experiences and the factors and people that influenced their journeys.

The fourth column "What was the plot of the story?" allowed me to think about what the stories were really about, and the key events which occurred throughout their journey into motherhood. A plot has been defined as the main events of a play, novel, film, or similar work, devised and presented by the writer as an interrelated sequence (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.). It is a significant part of story telling and without a plot, there would be no story. So when attempting to understand the scholar mamas' own narratives, it was important for me to step back and attempt to identify the plot of their story. I asked each scholar mama to tell me their stories about how they became a mother and the effect on their career but I didn't want to assume that would be the main plot of their stories. Individual people place importance on different aspects of their own lives and I wanted to ensure that I was not making assumptions about what was important to them when they were telling their stories. I found that in most instances there were a number of smaller stories within their main stories.

The purpose of the fifth column "What was positive about their experience?" and sixth column "What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?" allowed me to take a step back and understand what factors of their stories they found to be positive, and what were not so positive. It was these two columns that gave me the greatest insights in terms of the themes which I have used when moving onto the discussion section of this study.

The seventh column "What information was missing?" allowed me to reflect on the stories and see what was missing from their stories, especially in terms of the information given by the other scholar mamas. It also gave me an important viewpoint into the possible limitations of my study, as well as options for future research.

The eight and final column "What resonated with me?" goes back to my overarching approach to narrative enquiry of "the researcher and the story" as earlier discussed. This column allowed me to reflect on my own experiences and what parts of the scholar mamas' stories really stuck out for me personally. Adding this column also allowed me to identify the potential bias and assumptions I had about their experiences, especially when I was relating it back to my own story.

After completing this analysis, I had seven wonderful and unique stories and their relative story grids outlining each scholar mama's journey into motherhood, and their subsequent return to work. Upon reading and re-reading the stories, I was concerned that many of the sub-stories would be easily identifiable to anyone else to whom they may have shared those stories. The scholar mamas all came from a similar discipline, and due to the small size of the New Zealand academic industry, I was concerned that anyone reading this study, especially the examiners, may have heard those stories before and know where they have come from. The stories themselves were also lengthy, and I decided to adjust the method in which I would display my data to ensure that their confidentiality was maintained, and that the length of each story would not detract from the valuable narratives contained within them.

Lieblich et al. (1998) noted that categorical-content analysis may involve breaking up texts from multiple authors into sections or single words of a defined category in order to develop common themes. Initially I thought this may be a good method for further analysing the data, but I was concerned that breaking up the stories by single words or sections may detract from the individual experiences of the participants, and as noted by some critics of this method can lead to separating the meanings from the stories (Charmaz, 2000). So, with my overarching goal of maintaining confidentiality, and also still following the categorical-content method of analysis, I decided that I would still utilise the story grids as they were a very useful way for me to uncover the themes of each story, and would display these in the findings section. The story grid themselves are general and do not provide specific instances in their story, so there was little concern that the scholar mama would be identifiable from reading the story grid. I then displayed long and detailed quotes from each scholar mama when I identified a particular theme, and grouped these all together. I also decided to withhold the names I had created for each scholar mama when discussing individual components of their stories, as I was concerned that providing the names of whom each narrative came from would allow a reader to piece together their entire story, and discover who that story has come from.

Many stories have a plot where everything works out in the end, no matter the trials and challenges a protagonist may face (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This is analogous to the classical narrative structure in film, where the protagonist almost always resolves the conflicts which had faced them during the story, or the classic 'Hollywood ending'. This common story structure flows

through in many narrative studies and can cause issues during data analysis, and is a process which has been described as narrative smoothing (Spence, 1986). Knowing this may be something that may occur during my study, I made sure I was alert to elements of the stories which may not have been told while the participant was engaging in this narrative smoothing, and also ensured that I did not engage in any smoothing myself when putting together the participant's stories.

Another interesting trend is that people who tell stories about their career often do so in order to make sense of their career and in that process may cast themselves as the centre piece, the person responsible for career change and success i.e. they become the hero of the story. Osland's study on expatriates (Osland, 1995), depicts the expatriates as heroes of their own career stories. The idea that an individual goes on an adventure and conquers a new challenge is not a new concept in the careers literature (Campbell, 1968), and has been drawn on to depict aspects of career transition and change (Hudson & Inkson, 2006) and as a metaphor for the career journey (Inkson, 2004). The act of telling a story is a subjective process and may involve a participant emphasising some aspects and filtering out other experiences and individuals who are in fact part of the story. Inkson, Dries and Arnold (2015) refer to this process of smoothing as sometimes involving "selective presentation, imaginative interpretation, creative fiction and deliberate untruths" (p. 277). This may result in the participant's emphasising the role they played in particular aspects of their stories, or potentially leaving out other characters who may have played a supporting role (Inkson et al., 2015).

Rigour

The rigour of science requires that we distinguish well the undraped figure of Nature itself from the gay-coloured vesture with which we clothe her at our pleasure – Heinrich Hertz (Capri, 2011, p. 8)

It can be argued that ensuring rigour is one of, if not the most, important parts of any research. This is especially so in qualitative studies, which are sometimes viewed as being less respectable than quantitative studies (Darawsheh, 2014). Research which is unreliable is said to lack academic rigour (Amankwaa, 2016). An important goal for any scholar is to take steps to ensure their research does not attract this criticism, and there are many ways to ensure that research outcomes are seen as having rigour.

A core element of narrative inquiry is the closeness between the researcher and the narrator's lives, stories and experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This leads to several methodological issues around the research relationship itself, with ethics, with interpretation and with validity which are discussed later under rigour. Qualitative research is subjective in nature, as it requires a researcher to interpret behaviour and meanings within words. This opens the data up to being influenced by the researcher's own bias, beliefs, pre-conceived ideas, and values which may affect the value of the research data. Some authors suggest that this subjectivity should not be avoided in qualitative studies, but instead should be celebrated (Munhall, 2012). When used correctly, it. Some researchers suggest that being subjective having the researcher utilise their experiences to better understand the research participant can lead to more positive outcomes in the study. In some studies, distancing yourself from the subject and remaining objective can limit the trust that the participant has which may prevent them from disclosing rich information (Letherby, Scott, & Williams, 2013). There are many different methods which researcher's use to ensure this risk is minimised, and which will also be utilised in this study.

Guba and Lincoln (1981) have suggested that all qualitative research must be trustworthy and have applicability, consistency and neutrality to be worthwhile. Each methodology and method requires different considerations in terms of these factors, and by meeting each of these a study can be said to have rigour or 'trustworthiness' (Amankwaa, 2016). These three criteria were later changed to four, and are now identified as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It has also been suggested that an additional requirement for narrative studies is reflexivity (Riessman, 2008).

Credibility refers to the confidence in the finding's truth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One of the most important parts of ensuring rigour in narrative research is whether or not the interviewee's account is actually a narrative. There should be a logical flow from beginning to end. This was met in my study, the scholar mamas told me their stories of their journey into motherhood from the moment that they embarked on their academic journey, right up until the moment the interview was conducted. In line with the recommendations outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) I used member checking to ensure there was credibility in my study. Member checking is often viewed as the most important technique in ensuring credibility and involves taking preliminary analysis back to the participants to ensure that the interpretation "rings true" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). To ensure

my interpretations were appropriate, I sent the final story versions of the transcripts back to each of the participants to ensure that they were reflective of what they meant. I also provided each scholar mama with an overview of what key themes I took out of their stories in order to determine whether I had interpreted them in the correct way. All scholar mamas agreed that the themes I took from their stories were accurate and reflective of what they believed they were narrating.

Transferability refers to showing that the study is applicable in other contexts, and that the burden of proof lies with the original investigator rather than the person who tries to apply the data elsewhere (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This contrasts to generalizability which refers to the tendency of the outcomes to be true in a larger group than those being studied, and which often isn't required for qualitative studies (Lawrence, 2015). In order to ensure transferability, I have used thick description where possible which involves describing a situation in sufficient detail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the introduction to each narrative, I have described many details such as location, atmosphere, attitudes, reactions from the participants as well as the bonds that were established between myself and the participants. By providing these details, it will allow future researchers to evaluate the extent of what conclusions I have made and why, and whether they are transferable to other people or their own studies (Amankwaa, 2016).

Dependability refers to showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The question is not that the findings could be found again, but is more whether the results are actually consistent with the data that has been collected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In terms of my study, many of the themes that arose out of the narratives linked well with a lot of the other research surrounding females and mothers in Academia (August & Waltman, 2004; Trussell, 2015). This suggests that the results were consistent with the data, and that it can be applied to other situations.

Confirmability refers to the extent that findings of a study are shaped by the respondents themselves, and not by researcher bias or motivation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In terms of narrative studies, this can be a difficult factor to prove. Because of the active role that the researcher plays in the research process, it can be very easy for their own bias, perception and motivations to shape the way that the interview progresses, or how the data has been analysed. One way that this can be avoided is by ensuring reflexivity which is discussed below.

Reflexivity can be appropriately defined as the constant analysis and self-reflection of the researcher, into their own personal involvement in the study to ensure it remains transparent and open (Darawsheh, 2014). It is considered an important part of ensuring rigour in a study, and as well as a hallmark of quality (Shelton, Smith, & Mort, 2014; Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). Reflexivity is the degree of influence the researcher has and exerts over the research outcomes, whether intentional or not (Jootun, McGhee, & Marland, 2009). It enhances the quality of the research by allowing the researcher to understand how their individual interests and beliefs can affect the research process (Primeau, 2003). A key part of ensuring reflexivity this is making sure the researcher goes into the study without any pre-conceived notions about the topic at hand, which prevents misinterpretations of the meanings intended by the participants. One way to do this is for the researcher to uncover their own beliefs, thoughts, bias, and presumptions about the topic, and having these at the forefront of the study to ensure that they approach the topic honestly and openly, a process which is often called 'bracketing' (Streubert Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). By doing this, a researcher can make changes to their study to ensure their study remains credible, which should be a key aim of all qualitative studies (Jootun et al., 2009). In terms of my own bias and beliefs, the fact that I had a contrasting experience to the women I interviewed in terms of my own journey into motherhood was at the forefront of my mind. I knew that I could not make any assumptions about the difficulties that they may or may not have faced when becoming a mother. I also had limited knowledge about the issue of motherhood in the academic industry prior to embarking on this study which enabled me to interview the mothers without any in-depth knowledge about what they might discuss or the issues that they faced.

To ensure rigour, it is also necessary to ensure the study has strong ethical foundations, and practices such as consent, confidentiality and the right of the participants to sight and approve interview data is crucial. As this study involved speaking with human participants, Ethical approval was sought from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee. Ethics approval was granted on the 11th of December 2015, AUTEK reference number 15/399 (appendix four).

Motherhood can be a sensitive issue, and there was a risk of participants feeling uncomfortable or distressed talking about their thoughts, experiences and journeys into motherhood. Because of this, I made it very clear to all participants that they could decide on the extent of information that they would like to share, and could refrain from talking about anything which they found

unsettling. I also advised the participants that they could end the interview at any time. This was communicated to them via a participant information sheet which was provided prior to their agreement to participate in the study, and was also discussed before beginning the interviews. A copy of the participant information sheet is provided below in appendix one. A copy of the consent form is outlined below in appendix two. I also tried to allow the participants to lead the conversations, so that the most powerful narratives would flow (Riessman, 1993). By asking open ended and general questions, it gave them the ability to tell me their stories in as much depth as they felt comfortable with, and only giving as much detail as they felt appropriate (Riessman, 1993).

Summary

This chapter began by discussing the philosophical assumptions underlying my study, and then went on to describe the methods used as well as giving an in depth explanation on the narrative methodology and which approach I have used during this study. Ways to ensure rigour during the study were also discussed, in particular in terms of the collection and analysis of data. Ethical considerations were also discussed, as well as how the study protected the participant's identity, their right to confidentiality and their right to have a say in how the data was used.

Chapter Four

The Narratives and their Findings

“Every great love starts with a great story...” - (Sparks, 1996).

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to give a brief introduction to each of the scholar mamas, and to identify the various themes which came out of the data analysis. For confidentiality reasons, I have not included the entire stories within the study, but I have included the complete story grids that were developed for each scholar mama as part of the analytical process. Each question in the story grid is then expanded on in order to give a greater understanding of the data and how the themes arose from my analysis. The main themes are then identified and excerpts from the stories are provided in order to give context and background as to how that theme arose.

Haylee’s* Story: “The Running Mama”

Haylee’s* Story Grid

Title	Protagonist profile	Who else is in the story?	What was the plot of the story?	What was positive about their experience?	What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?	What information was missing?	What resonated with me?
- The Running Mama	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Researcher- Lecturer- Mother- Wife- Two Children- PhD- Fell into Academia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ex-Husband- New Husband- Children- Colleague- Head of Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rush to get PhD completed- Determination- Questioning to give it all up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maternity Leave and researching- Support to change hours- Accommodating workplace- Flexibility- Autonomy- Work-life Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pressure to research- Impact on career- Breastfeeding Issues- General gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Career progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Determination- Support from HOD

What is the title of the story?

One part of this story that really stuck out was how Haylee* described spending the last year of her PhD ‘running’. She placed a lot of significance on this year and I felt that this really set the tone of her whole story. There was a sense of importance for her to complete her PhD before she gave birth, and the image that arose of her being a heavily pregnant mother running around trying to get it done gave her story a sense of humour, and we shared a laugh at her reminiscing of how she felt during that time. I feel that describing her as “The Running Mama” was apt for this story.

The rush to complete her PhD was a significant point in her career and being able to finish before giving birth was an important moment for her.

Protagonist profile

Haylee* was the very first scholar mama I interviewed. I walked into her office nervous about conducting my first interview, but she quickly put my mind at ease. After covering off some preliminary issues around consent, anonymity and withdrawal, she began her inspiring and honest story of how she became a mother. After completing her Masters she went into the corporate world but didn't last long before she decided that this career path was not for her. She had done some lecturing and had really liked doing that, so decided to talk to some of the people she had worked for at the university and they hired her. She then realised that she needed to get her PhD if she wanted to have a career in Academia. She is highly determined and had a lot of positive experiences throughout her journey into motherhood, despite some issues such as coordinating breastfeeding and dealing with the general gender issues within Academia.

Who else is in the story?

There are a number of other characters throughout the story. The two most prevalent are of course, her children, the first of which was the main character in one of the sub stories throughout her journey. She also talked about her ex-husband and her subsequent divorce, as well as the timing that she met her current husband and how that really influenced her story. She also talked about her HOD and the important role he played in her having such a positive experience becoming a mother while continuing her career.

What was the plot of the story?

The first main point that Haylee* talked about was the rush she felt to hand in her PhD before she gave birth. She never questioned going back to her career in Academia, however there was a turning point when she had sent her child to day-care and questioned whether or not she wanted to continue working, but she was outweighed by the fact that she had worked so hard to get to the point in her career that she was in. One other key parts of her story was the importance she placed on the flexibility she had in her role which she felt enabled her to manage her work and her personal life.

What was positive about their experience?

Haylee* talked a lot about the positive experiences she had when becoming a mother such as the flexibility and autonomy of her work, the support she had from her HOD and the nature of her position to allow to have a work-life balance. She also viewed maternity leave as a great way of getting ahead on her research, knowing that she couldn't just stop while she was on leave.

What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?

Despite valuing the time she had on maternity leave to do her research, Haylee* did acknowledge the pressure that she felt to continue researching despite being on leave. She also had trouble coordinating breastfeeding while trying to teach a three hour class and rushing between the day-care and her classes.

What information was missing?

Haylee* did not place a lot of emphasis on the way her career progressed. The importance she placed when telling me her story about her journey into motherhood and her career was more focused on the moment she became a mother, and her career really played a less important role in her story, at least in the initial stages of her journey. She did say that she had become more proactive in her career as her children got older but did not discuss how her career progressed since having children.

What resonated with me?

At the time I spoke to Haylee*, I had a limited understanding of other mother's experiences of becoming pregnant and managing their career. I didn't really know how different other mother's experiences were to my own. When I started talking to Haylee*, I realised how much that her story differed to my own, and we discussed our different experiences throughout the interview which allowed a lot of additional narratives to flow from Haylee*. Her determination was something that really resonated with me, as the drive I feel to complete my post-graduate study was similar to the determination she had to complete her PhD before she gave birth. The support she had from her manager and her flexibility when returning to work was also something that made me think a lot about my own experience, as I didn't have that level of support or flexibility when I became a mother.

Robyn's* Story: "Playing the Game"

Robyn's Story Grid

Title	Protagonist profile	Who else is in the story?	What was the plot of the story?	What was positive about their experience?	What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?	What information was missing?	What resonated with me?
- Playing the Game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Researcher - Lecturer - Mother - Wife - One Child - PhD - Loves Academia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Husband - Son - Head of Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rush to get PhD completed - Difficult Birth - Guilt - Time off with son - Change of personal identity - Change of priorities - Guilt - Acceptance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maternity Leave and researching - Support to change hours - Accommodating workplace - Flexibility - Autonomy - Work-life Balance - Supportive head of department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guilt about not performing - Guilt about putting children first - Guilt that she was no longer driven to get promotions - Work versus home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career progression - Role as academic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change of priorities - Change of personal identity

What is the title of the story?

A part of Robyn's* story that really stuck out for me the most was a comment she made when discussing how much her priorities had changed since she had children. She discussed how she no longer had as much drive to see her career progress as what she did before she had children, but that she felt pressure from other people in her department to continue to be as driven and motivated to succeed as she was before. She felt that she was now playing a game in her career, thus the title of this story "playing the game".

Protagonist profile

When I first met Robyn*, I had an inkling that I was going to get a great story. And a great story it was! She was obviously immensely proud of her achievements as both an academic and a mother. Her bright and sunny office was full of pictures of her children as well the various awards she has received throughout her time as an academic. While she never set out to have a career in Academia, she realised that she loved it while doing some tutoring and teaching while she was completing her post-graduate degrees, and has been teaching ever since. After the highly emotional and difficult birth of her child, she enjoyed a year off work with her son and returning to work realised her entire approach to teaching and her priorities had changed. She gave me an emotional and moving look into her life and her journey into motherhood, and an insight into her life as a scholar mama raising two beautiful children.

Who else is in the story?

There are a number of other characters throughout the story. Her son was a consistent character who underpinned a lot of the key events she spoke about. She also talked a lot about her HOD,

citing them as a key reason she had such a good experience in terms of going on leave and balancing motherhood with her work.

What was the plot of the story?

The first main point that Robyn* talked about was the difficult and emotional birth of her child, and how a sudden premature labour made her feel a lot of guilt that she was letting down her workplace. She then talked about the year she was able to take off work while on maternity leave, and her subsequent return to the workplace. Her return to the workplace was a significant part of her story. She spoke about the range of emotions she felt, including guilt and fear, and felt she wasn't going to be as good as she once was. There was a defining moment in her story where she said she no longer felt that fear, and realised that her career was no longer the most important thing in her life. She realised she was happy with just being good enough and not going the extra mile to progress her career, as the time she would have spent on career progression, prior to having children, was now better spent being a wife and mum.

What was positive about their experience?

Despite the large amount of guilt that Robyn* felt throughout her journey into motherhood, she talked a lot about how kind and supportive her workplace was of her unexpected early leave from work. They provided a lot of additional support including paying her fully for the additional time she needed off to support her premature child. She also talked a lot about the support she had from her department head in terms of when she was back in the workplace and having to juggle motherhood with her career, especially in terms of managing work when her child was sick.

What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?

One negative aspect that came through in Robyn's* story was the fact that she felt pressure coming back to work to continue to strive for promotions. She felt as if she was doing something wrong to woman in general, and the progress they have made, by not trying to further her career. There were also general tensions about what she wanted from work once she had children, and how her priorities had changed a lot of her views about spending her spare time working. She now prefers to spend time with her family than do the additional work she would have normally done once she got home.

What information was missing?

When Robyn* started to talk about her son and her experiences as a mother while working, she placed less emphasis on her role as an academic and more on her role as a mother. She did not talk about any of the key moments of her career itself once she returned to work after she had her son, and mainly focused on the pride in her role as a mother.

What resonated with me?

Something that really resonated with me when I spoke with Robyn* was when she discussed how much her priorities and her personal identity had changed since having her child. Her career was no longer her top priority, and she acknowledged that she only felt the drive to do 'enough' in her work, rather than go the extra mile. I compared this to how my own priorities and self identity changed once I became a mother, and realised how different her experience was to my own. Because I didn't have a 'successful' career when I became a mother, my priority was to finish university and to put a large amount of effort into my career so I could provide a stable and comfortable life for me and my son. I envied Robyn* in the sense that she was able to make the choice to put her child first, and contemplated how different my experience would have been if I was already established in a 'successful' career before I became a mother.

Debbie's* Story – “The Candid Mama”

Debbie's* Story Grid

Title	Protagonist profile	Who else is in the story?	What was the plot of the story?	What was positive about their experience?	What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?	What information was missing?	What resonated with me?
- The candid mama	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Researcher- Lecturer- Mother- Wife- Two Children- PhD- Full-scholarship to do PhD- Family history of Academics- Enjoys the industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Husband- Children- Writer of Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Infertility- Returning to work early due to money issues- Change of priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Flexibility- Autonomy- Crèche on campus- Department Support re: class schedules- Work-life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Regretted not taking more time off after having first child- Harder as children get older- Wanted more children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Role as researcher- How infertility has affected her career	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Honesty- Infertility

What is the title of the story?

Something which really stuck with me about Debbie's* story how honest and straightforward she was about her story. She talked about both the positive aspects of her journey as well as the challenges she faced with a very matter of fact and direct approach. She appeared very self-aware and knew the reasons behind the challenges she faced and the different choices she would

have made if the circumstances allowed. She was very passionate on her views about her children and the impact they had on her career. She was very open and honest about the fact that her career is no longer the most important thing. She explained about the difficulties of having school age children and trying to maintain a passion about her work, and that it isn't quite there for her right now. Her children and husband are the most important aspect of her life which was really summed up by her comment "I felt I didn't really care so much about work anymore. I suspect I will care again at some point".

Protagonist profile

From the moment I walked into Debbie's* office I could tell that she was an extremely busy lady. She motioned for me to sit down while she finished a phone call and once she was ready to start out interview I could tell she wanted to get straight into it so she could get back to work. Her office was filled with books, there were piles of research papers on her desk and drawings from her children placed strategically around her office, which you could almost miss if you weren't looking for them. She asked me a lot of questions about what my research was about and why I had chosen the topic I had, and after some brief casual conversation she asked what I wanted to know. Her story was to the point, but was certainly not lacking detail.

Debbie* is a successful scholar mama who is an effective lecturer and researcher. She described the reason for starting her academic career as 'laziness' as she liked the idea of the flexibility and autonomy which comes from an academic career. After marrying her husband, she struggled with infertility for a number of years before having her first child. Looking back, she regretted not taking more time off work with each of her children, but at the time she felt it was important to come back to her career, and also had financial pressures to return early. She was extremely honest about the fact that her priorities had changed once she came back to work, and did not care as much about progressing her career than she had previously. She made a conscious choice not to apply for higher positions so she could focus on her husband and two children.

Who else is in the story?

There weren't a lot of other people mentioned in Debbie's* story other than her two children. She briefly mentioned her husband and the fact that they share the pick-ups and drop-offs of their children, but that they do not often get to see each-other because of their schedules. She also

talked about her department providing her with extra flexibility once she came back from work. Part of her story involved a person who she didn't specifically name, but who was the writer of an article she felt passionately about. This article had made some assumptions about managing a career with motherhood that Debbie* did not necessarily agree with. Her assumptions of that person was that they were a female and that they had not children, based on the fact that they had made an assumption that that a career is the most important thing and felt strongly that it was a really wrong assumption for the writer of that article to make.

What was the plot of the story?

The first main part of this story was Debbie's* struggle with infertility, it took her a number of years to have her first child, despite wanting to have children earlier. The second main plot of the story was the decision to come back to work early after having her first child, despite wanting a full year off. This was a difficult decision for her to make and looking back she wishes she had taken longer before returning to work. She returned mainly due to financial pressures, but also felt that she needed to come back for her career. She also was bored at home and craved the conversations and engagement with adults. The last event was that once she came back from work, she found how much her priorities had changed. Her career went from being the most important thing in her life, to something she didn't really care about. She did her job but didn't go the extra mile to progress her career.

What was positive about their experience?

Debbie* cited a number of positive aspects about her experience. Some of these included the Crèche that was on campus which allowed her to breastfeed her children while she was at work, as well as visit them when she wanted to. She also talked about the support she received from her department in terms of class times to ensure she doesn't work nights. Another factor she mentioned was the fact that while academics have a lot of work to do, they can choose when to do it which fits in well with having a family.

What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?

Debbie* expressed some regret about not taking more time off after having children, but felt that she had to go back early for her career. She also acknowledged that as her children are getting older and starting school, that juggling her career with motherhood is becoming more difficult.

They are no longer close by in the crèche and need to be picked up from school at 3pm. She also felt that she would have liked to have a third child, but also felt that it would have been a “career killer”.

What information was missing?

Debbie* did not discuss her role as a researcher as much as some of the other scholar mamas. She also did not discuss in detail whether she felt the way she met her academic priorities had changed since having children and whether or not she feels she is a better academic after having children. Debbie* also discussed her difficulty in becoming pregnant, but she did not talk about whether her struggle with infertility affected her career.

What resonated with me?

Something that really resonated with me about Debbie* was how open and honest she was about her journey. She knew what she wanted, and openly discussed when she didn’t get something that she wanted and why it happened in a different way than she would have liked. Something that didn’t resonate with me at the time of our interview but does now that I am analysing the data, was her struggle with infertility. At the time I spoke with Debbie*, I had no experience with infertility and the unique challenges that comes with struggling to have children. I have a greater experience with this now and now looking back over our discussion, I have a new appreciation for some of the things that she said based on my own struggle with infertility to have a second child.

Wendy’s* Story: “Good Timing”

Wendy’s* Story Grid

Title	Protagonist profile	Who else is in the story?	What was the plot of the story?	What was positive about their experience?	What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?	What information was missing?	What resonated with me?
- Good timing	- Researcher - Lecturer - Mother - Wife - Two Children - PhD]	- Partner - Children - Head of Department - Mum	- Surprise pregnancy - PHD completion - Transition back to work	- Flexibility - Autonomy - Crèche on campus - Department Support - Mum’s support - Ease of breastfeeding	- Slowed down career	- Role as a mother	- Surprise pregnancy

What is the title of the story?

One thing that really stuck out for me was how straight forward Wendy* made her story sound, and how she made it sound so easy. Despite a surprise pregnancy, she didn't have too many obstacles in her way in terms of completing her PhD and transitioning back into work. She believed the timing she got pregnant was perfect and that she had a very easy pregnancy. She did acknowledge that she was extremely lucky that she had a lot of support from her mum, and that it may not have been as easy without her support. Her whole journey, as well as the way she told her story, made me think of her as a really serene and easy-going scholar mama, who had really great timing in terms of her journey into motherhood.

Protagonist profile

Wendy* was the one scholar mama who I met in person and who I didn't have the luxury of meeting in her office. She was on leave after her second child so only had a small window to meet with me to share her story, so we met her close to her home. She was very interested in the topic I had chosen for my thesis and was really excited to be able to be a part of the study. She always wanted a career in accounting and had never considered a job in Academia. After becoming bored with her job, she decided to go back to study and was offered a Graduate Assistant position. After being told about the academic career, she realised that the flexibility and travel opportunities that came with the job was really appealing so ended up starting her PhD. During her PhD she had a surprise pregnancy, but managed to complete her PhD relatively issue free, and had a seamless transition back into the workplace thanks to the support from her partner, mother and HOD.

Who else is in the story?

There were a number of other characters in her story. One key character who did not come up in other scholar mamas' stories, was her own mother and the support she provided while she was trying to transition back into work. She noted that without her mother, her journey into motherhood and returning to her career may not have been as seamless, even with the support from her partner who was also a character in her story. She also talked about her HOD, similar to most of the other scholar mamas, however their role was not as prominent in the overall positive or negative experience of their stories.

What was the plot of the story?

The first main part of Wendy's* story was her surprise pregnancy. She was very honest about her thoughts about becoming a mother and thought it was going to be a hindrance to her future. The next key part of her journey was the completion of her PhD, which she completed prior to giving birth to her first child. Next was her transition back into work, which was seamless due to the support system she had both personally and professionally.

What was positive about their experience?

There were a lot of good aspects about Wendy's* journey which she mentioned. The first was the timing that she got pregnant, regardless that it was a surprise. She was far enough through her PhD to allow her to complete it without her pregnancy being a hindrance, and she had her mother support her throughout her first few months of motherhood as well as during her transition back to work. She was able to adjust her classes and time at work to support her new role as a mother, and was able to easily breastfeed because of the location of her home and her mother bringing her child to her.

What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?

Wendy* didn't have much to say in the way of negative experiences during her journey into motherhood. One issue she did mention was that having her child did slow her career down, and that it was difficult having to take time off whenever her child was sick. Despite the focus of my research, she did not talk about this challenge in any great detail nor talk about how she managed this challenge.

What information was missing?

Interestingly, unlike many of the other scholar mamas, her children did not play a huge role in the story. While her children were obviously her number one priority, the story itself revolved around her role as an academic, unlike many of the other scholar mamas I spoke to. This may be because her journey into motherhood was largely positive compared to the other scholar mamas and because having children did not cause her too many difficulties when coming back to work.

What resonated with me?

Something that really resonated with me in Wendy's* story was when she talked about finding out she had become pregnant. The pregnancy was a big surprise for her, similar to my own

pregnancy, and the emotions and concerns she felt during that time reminded me of my own reaction to finding out I was pregnant, and the concerns and worries I had about my own future.

Ruby's* Story: "The Thankful Mama"

Ruby's* Story Grid

Title	Protagonist profile	Who else is in the story?	What was the plot of the story?	What was positive about their experience?	What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?	What information was missing?	What resonated with me?
- The Thankful Mama	- Researcher - Lecturer - Mother - Wife - PhD	- Husband - Children - Head of Department - Colleagues - Replacement	- Promotions - Pregnancy - Loss of position - Priorities changing - The 'aha' moment	- Timing - Promotions before children - Flexibility	- Demotion - Loss of responsibilities at work - Not knowing the university anymore	- Role as a mother	- Demotion

What is the title of the story?

Ruby* was the one scholar mama who I spoke to who looked as if she had directly disadvantaged her career by having children. She talked a lot about losing her senior role once she tried to transition back into work after having her children. At the time, she said she felt extremely "gutted" and disadvantaged by this at the time, but realised later that it was really a blessing in disguise. She knew her priority was no longer her career and looking back, she realised she couldn't have given the time to the position as it required. She now knows that the opportunity to get that position back is there if she wants to pursue it and that it wasn't such a negative thing as she thought it was at the time. The title of this story, was therefore "Blessing in disguise".

Protagonist profile

Ruby* is an extremely driven academic who placed a lot of emphasis on her career before she had children. She was promoted to a senior position before she went on maternity leave and felt that she was embarking on her journey as a mother at the best possible time in her career. Unfortunately, she lost her position when she came back into the workforce and this had a significant effect on her at the time. She now has two children and feels that everything that happened was supposed to happen, and looking back does not regret anything that occurred during her journey, even the negative aspects. Ruby* was the first person I spoke with over the phone. I initially had some reservations about conducting interviews over the phone and was not sure how I would be able to judge the emotions and feelings that I felt were such an important part of the stories. After my talk with Ruby*, my concerns were no longer there. She gave me an

emotive walk through her journey into motherhood and it was evidence how strongly she felt about the key parts of her story.

Who else is in the story?

One of the key characters in her story was a person who got her position once Ruby* wanted to come back to work from maternity leave. This was an important moment in her story, and it was evident that this event was a memorable part of her motherhood journey in terms of her career. She spoke about this person objectively, and understood why they insisted on a longer contract than what she believed they legally they were supposed to give him. She also talked about her colleagues, her HOD, her husband and of course her children.

What was the plot of the story?

The first major part of Ruby's* story was her promotion to a senior position. The immense pride she had when describing this achievement was evidence during our interview. Her pregnancy came next, and for a while everything seemed perfect for Ruby*. She had reached a significant level in her career and getting that promotion at the time she did was fortunate. The defining moment of Ruby's* story however was the loss of her senior role once she went on maternity leave as the person who took over her role demanded a longer contract than what they would have been given if Ruby* was going to return to her role. Her feelings about losing her role were not personally directed at any other person, but were more focused towards her own self-identity and losing a position she had worked so hard to get. At the time that it happened, she felt very disappointed but looking back came to an 'aha' moment or a realisation that it was really the best thing that could have happened. That signalled the next moment of her story, the realisation that losing that position was a positive thing for her family, and realising that she would not have been able to dedicate herself to the position when her priority had shifted to her husband and children. She ended up going back to work part-time in a less senior position.

What was positive about their experience?

The main positive aspect that Ruby* talked about was the timing that she had children. She had just secured a promotion when she was going on maternity leave, and looking back she felt this was the perfect time to have her first child. She was able to come back to work part-time, which would have been a positive experience if not for the situation surrounding it around losing her

position. She also talked about the support she received from her colleagues who also had small children.

What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?

Ruby* was the first scholar mama I spoke to whose negative experiences seemed to outweigh the positive ones. She had a lot of trouble when she wanted to come back to work. Not wanting to come back to work full-time, she lost her senior role as well as many of the responsibilities that came with it. At the time, she felt extremely badly about this experience. She also felt that she no longer knew the university and the culture once she returned from maternity leave, and felt that everything had changed.

What information was missing?

Ruby* focused a lot on her role as an academic throughout her story. This different to some of the other scholar mamas whose stories revolved centrally around their roles as mothers. The negative experience she faced when coming back to work really dominated much of what she had to say about her journey, and I couldn't help but think that there may have been a lot more she may have said about her journey if that particular part of the story was less dominant in her experience.

What resonated with me?

The emotions that came through when Ruby* talked about the loss of her senior role really resonated with me. It brought back feelings I felt when I had to resign from my position when I wanted to return from maternity leave. I resigned as my company wasn't able to offer me part-time hours, as the role I was doing could only be completed on a full-time basis. I had no ill-feelings towards my work at the time, as I knew that I couldn't expect them to keep me on when I wanted to dramatically drop my hours but I was disappointed nonetheless. I found it interesting that Ruby*, and on reflection this is true for many of the other scholar mamas, had an expectation that they would be able to keep their positions when moving to part-time hours. It may be because the flexible nature of the academic industry creates these expectations, where legally the university is not required to do so by law. So when that flexibility isn't offered, or where a loss of role results, very strong feelings are experienced by the scholar mamas who feel that they have been wrongly done by.

Louise's* Story: "The Breadwinning Mama"

Louise's* Story Grid

Title	Protagonist profile	Who else is in the story?	What was the plot of the story?	What was positive about their experience?	What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?	What information was missing?	What resonated with me?
- The Breadwinning Mama	- Researcher - Lecturer - Wife - Three children - Breadwinner	- Husband - Children - Managers in general - Colleague	- Pregnancy - Back to work due to financial pressures - Changing approach	- Flexible work	- Research interrupted - Career slows down - Breastfeeding issues - Travel - Less networking - Bias - Lack of mentorship	- Role of Husband	- Family dynamics

What is the title of the story?

Something that I found really interesting about Louise* was that she was the sole income earner of her family. Her husband was the stay-at-home dad, which according to societal standards is not the norm. Their scenario really got me thinking about why it is so strange for people to hear, admittedly even myself, that the father was the one at home with the children. Throughout her story, she talked about a number of issues she faced when trying to make their family dynamic work which is undoubtedly one of the reasons why it isn't common. Thus I called this story "The Breadwinning Mama".

Protagonist profile

Louise* was the one scholar mama who was the sole breadwinner of their family. She went back to work very soon after having her children, and her husband took on the role of a stay-at-home dad. Part of the reason she went back so quickly after her first child was due to financial pressures, and not qualifying for paid parental leave due to her child being born overseas. She had some difficulties transitioning back into work, including breastfeeding issues and travel, and looking back would have done several things differently. She now has three children and has been back full-time in Academia for a number of years.

Who else is in the story?

One of the sub-stories in Louise's* story was about a colleague who made some disparaging comments about her mental capacity while she was pregnant. She reflected on this and told me that she had found it quite amusing that he would say that, and believed it was representative of the types of thoughts that many people have about mothers which aren't often said out loud.

What was the plot of the story?

The first key moment of Louise's* story was the choice to go back to work. She had given birth while on holiday overseas, and unfortunately did not qualify for any sort of paid parental leave as she had not previously worked in New Zealand. Going back to work was a requirement, rather than a choice for her, and her husband became a stay-at-home dad to their new child. The second main part of the story was around moving back to a full-time workload, for reasons that she felt weren't fair. She believed that instead of being forced to move to a full-time schedule to accommodate her workload, she should have had her workload adjusted to meet her part-time schedule. The next and final main part of the story was the negative interaction she had with one of their colleagues, and the underlying beliefs which she felt was reflected of the general view about mothers in the workplace.

What was positive about their experience?

One of the only positive aspects that Louise* spoke about was in terms of the flexibility of her workplace. She noted that there some good policies in place at her university, and that if there were certain days she could not teach it wasn't too much of an issue. She did feel at some point that she was forced to go back to full-time hours, as she felt the workload she had while working part-time was not reflective of what she should be doing at those part-time hours.

What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?

Louise* had a lot of difficulty coordinating breastfeeding with going back to work. She noted that she had trouble expressing milk and could not build an adequate supply to put in place a consistent routine of feeding her child. She also noted that choosing to breastfeed made it difficult to travel, as the whole family had to go with her whenever she wanted to attend a conference. She felt that she felt guilty at times, and that her family were missing out on her if she chose to go to a networking event instead of going home, which she felt was important for her career and for her outputs. She discussed the general gender bias present in Academia, especially in terms of measuring performance. Louise* noted that if she could go back at do it again, she would look for a stronger networking group. She felt in terms of becoming a mother and coming back into the workforce, she didn't quite realise all the things she missed out on, or could have done different, and found that work a mentor or someone taking her under her wing, she may have had a better experience.

What information was missing?

Louise* was the only scholar mama whose husband had taken on the role of a stay-at-home parent. Despite the potential differences that this may have made on her ability to coordinate motherhood with her career, especially when compared to the other scholar mamas, she did not speak a lot about the positives or perhaps challenges which come from having that type of family dynamic. In fact, her husband did not play a significant part in her story and was only really mentioned in passing.

What resonated with me?

The fact that Louise* was a full-time working mother who had a husband who stayed at home immediately stuck out for me. I found myself making many assumptions about how easily she would have transitioned back into work, despite knowing nothing about her experience. After hearing her story, I realised how wrong I was. I realised she had faced just as many challenges as all of the other scholar mamas that I spoke to, and that having one parent at home doesn't automatically make coordinating motherhood and your career any easier.

Grace's* Story: "A Rocky Road"

Grace's* Story Grid

Title	Protagonist profile	Who else is in the story?	What was the plot of the story?	What was positive about their experience?	What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?	What information was missing?	What resonated with me?
- A Rocky Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Successful academic- One child- Researcher- Single mum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Manager- Dean- Colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Promotions- Pregnancy- Maternity Leave- Difficult transition back to work- Questioning whether to go back	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lack of management support- Issues arranging maternity leave- Lack of flexibility- Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Positive experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Single mum

What is the title of the story?

Grace's* story was fraught with difficulties from the moment she got pregnant, right up until the time we had our interview. From the issues she faced organising her parental leave, to the immense difficulties trying to come back to work, and then trying to navigate the road of parenthood without help or support. There were often times she questioned it all and wanted to give it up, but she stayed on her path. I felt that an apt name for this story was "a rocky road", which she is still currently walking.

Protagonist profile

Grace* was the only single scholar mama out of all the women I spoke to. This raised a completely different set of issues that may not have been present for the other scholar mamas. She didn't have a husband or partner at home to help her with the everyday tasks of parenthood, and not only this, her family lived in a different country so were not available to help out with childcare, or to help if she ever needed additional support. Her work-place was vastly different to the other scholar mamas, and did not offer the support and flexibility that I had come to assume was present in all universities. She had reached the top of her career before having her child, and had to make the difficult choice whether to continue working in such a difficult environment, or give it all up and start something new. Her priorities changed once she had her child and her role as a mother overtook her role as an academic. She was no longer as driven as she once was, and would always choose her child over her career.

Who else is in the story?

One of the main characters in this story was her manager who came up during a number of the key events throughout her journey. The difficulties she faced organising her parental leave, as well as transitioning back into the work force revolved around her manager. The lack of support she felt and the pressure she faced was a direct cause of the negativity she felt about her career and becoming a mother. Along with her manager, she also mentioned the dean and her colleagues who also did not play a supportive role, and made her journey more difficult.

What was the plot of the story?

Grace* got to a high level of her academic career before getting pregnant with her first child. Her pregnancy was unexpected, but not unwelcome. The first major part of her story was when she tried to arrange maternity leave. She faced difficulty when trying to organise her time off, and further difficulties when she tried to return to work and was not able to secure the flexibility that many other scholar mamas in this study enjoyed. A key point in her story was when she questioned whether or not she wanted to continue in her career. She made the decision to make the best out of the hand she was dealt, and decided not to give it all in just because of some of the difficulties she had faced.

What was positive about their experience?

One positive aspect that Grace* talked about was the autonomy she has in her career and that she was able to coordinate her workload without significant involvement from her manager. She noted that although she doesn't have the flexible working that many other academic mothers have, she is able to make decisions around balancing childcare with the jobs that she does, and the tasks that she needs to do.

What challenges/general tensions did they have throughout their journey?

Grace* was the one scholar mama who came across a number of issues when trying to organise her maternity leave. She had a male manager who she felt did not appreciate maternity leave or her legal entitlements. She was also the only one who had issues when trying to come back to work on a part-time basis. She had to go through mediation to agree on the hours that she would return to work which was a very stressful time for her. She explained that she was in a very male-dominated environment and that she had little support from her colleagues, manager or dean. She also felt that she had been less productive since becoming a mother and is not quite as driven as she used to be. She noted that her time in maternity leave didn't detract from the productivity measurement for her performance, and felt that the research environment is very male-dominated. She also talked about how it was practically impossible for her to travel. She didn't have any family nearby to look after her child so had to coordinate travelling alone, as a single mother, to attend conferences overseas. Another interesting factor she mentioned was that there was no support network for mothers at her university, and that would have been helpful for her to have.

What was missing?

Grace* came across a number of different issues throughout her journey into motherhood, both before giving birth as well her transition back into the workforce. Because of the number of issues that were present, not a lot of positive experiences came through in her story.

What resonated with me?

Grace* was the only single scholar mama who I spoke to as part of this study. All others had at least one support person to help them juggle with their lives as a mother and an academic. I found that I related a lot to Grace* and identified with a lot of the major challenges she faced in her

career. I started my journey into motherhood as a single mum, but I had a huge support network that helped me and looking back I don't think I could have done it without them. Grace* had little support from her work, and didn't have any family close by to help lend a hand.

Themes

After reading each of the scholar mama's stories and developing their story grids, a number of themes became clear. There were five main themes which arose from the data analysis. These were:

1. Manager and peer support
2. Flexibility
3. Approach to professional obligations and academic focus
4. Career progression
5. Mummy logistics

There were also several subthemes which arose which I have discussed under each of these headings and includes the importance of colleague support, guilt and a change of priorities. One final minor theme of 'gender Issues' was also identified which while was not directly relevant to the aims of this study, it does raise some interesting issues which have been discussed at length by other studies and were relevant to the scholar mamas themselves.

Manager and Peer Support

A dominant theme which came out in every story was the role that their manager played in their journey towards becoming a mother as well as when they wanted to come back to work. Whether they had a positive or negative experience came largely down to the level of support they were provided throughout most of the stages of their journey into motherhood including pre-parental leave, parental leave, returning to work, and then managing work they have returned. In most of the stories, their manager was their HOD however a small number of the scholar mamas had both a direct manager and a HOD.

The managers of the scholar mamas really played a pivotal role in their experiences as they made the decisions over many of the flexible work arrangements that the scholar mamas requested.

They also control the teaching timetables that the scholar mamas have, what additional support is provided and the number of other projects or additional responsibilities that the scholar mamas are required to do.

This departmental support also links to one of the other main themes around flexibility, as it seemed the ability to be flexible stemmed from the support from the manager. Without that support, there was limited flexibility. Some scholar mamas mentioned:

[M]y head of department is fantastic and says I can work from home as long as I keep up my outputs and my admin, and my service. And I do my teaching fabulously; he doesn't care where I do it from. My head of department is a man and had [a few] children.... [H]e is a very dedicated family man. And he understands that if I call him and say [my child] is sick, he just says "not a problem!", he always understood. I found an e-mail the other day in my archives where I asked him if I could bring [my child] to work with me as he was sick but I wanted to come in. And he was just like "sure, not a problem, if you can't look after him I'll look after him". He has always been 100% supportive. I don't think that happens in all departments. But I'm blessed to have him as my head of department really.

I also have an excellent and really understanding head of department... [w]e work really closely together. He's hugely understanding around family commitments and the fact that you can work obviously at home, or if you have to leave at 2.30pm to go and collect your children, there's no discussion around the fact that... it's obvious that you're going to catch up on that work somehow else, and you're not being questioned or held to accountability about that.

This support from the HOD was a big factor in most of the scholar mamas' experiences, and in many instances the majority of the positive aspects of their journeys had stemmed from that support. Conversely, it seemed that where the scholar mama had negative experiences, it was when they did not have that manager support. One scholar mama noted:

I had huge problems even organising my maternity leave and my study leave, and then had even huger problems getting back after that because I had a male line manager who didn't appreciate maternity leave. He was my immediate line manager. So I fought to even get my maternity/study leave combination. Then when I went back to work, I tried to go back – I wanted three days a week because my values were that I wanted to spend time with my child. Then can never be one again, right? Be home to see them walk, and all this kind of stuff. And he wouldn't allow it, he refused to agree to that... I heard through the grapevine that his argument was "we don't want a part-time professor and we want to get rid of her". And in the meantime, while I was on maternity leave, he had cancelled all my courses. So I really kind of had to fight to get back. And I had a dean that wasn't particularly supportive.

Another sub-theme that came up throughout the stories was the support from other colleagues in their department that the mothers did or may not have had in their career. One scholar mama noted that she had the support from other colleagues who also had young families, and that gave her a sense of unity:

I feel fortunate... as some of my close colleagues and friends in my own department – females particularly, also have young families, and you sort of feel united by that as well. You've all got the same issues and concerns and gripe and problems, and you can share discussions around that and sort of share ideas as how you can manage it.

What contrasted this was two of the scholar mamas looking back and acknowledging they would have liked to have that mentorship or colleague support:

I think if I could turn back time, I'd try get more mentorship, and that's partly about the position that I'm in, and there's only me and there was one other person in my area who was here before me, and they weren't very helpful. And I think because I had my children reasonably quickly, I think if I'd have had a lot more guidance, that would have been helpful. But at the time, I didn't realise I was missing it, but now when I look back, I sort of think – well you know, I could have got things figured out a lot more quickly if someone had taken me under their wing and given me some pointers.

I think it's interesting that in the universities I've worked at anyway, there's never been any kind of support group for mothers in Academia, and I've always been quite interested in that because it's easy when you're at home being a mum, to go to Plunket groups and mix with other ante-natal mums, and all this kind of stuff. But when you return to work as a full-time academic, you lose those support networks. And I think it would be a really nice thing to have within the university, but universities aren't about supporting mums, they're about productivity... the ones I've worked at aren't really particularly family friendly.

One other scholar mama also mentioned the lack of support from her peers and how it affected her thoughts towards her career:

I had colleagues who weren't supporting the fact that I was now a mother... It was almost like a real contrast for me that this was kind of a very masculine competitive ego-based environment that I was working in that didn't fit with the kind of maternal values and wider life – making shiny toys that rattle and baking cakes for kids' parties. It was a real turbulent time for me and I kind of didn't know whether I fitted anymore in Academia, whether it was actually worth carrying on... I guess I have to wrestle with the fact that I still have male colleagues who remind me that I'm not as productive as I used to be. And that's OK, right, but you have to learn to live with those comments and not let them unsettle you.

Another interesting factor which came up was around the general policies around children that exist within the university and the underlying issues that they can create for mothers in the workplace. One scholar mama noted:

Our university has a policy about no children on campus. We like to be PC and have all these policies around equal opportunity, but actually in practice they don't really work.

Flexibility

Flexibility was a common theme that arose throughout the narratives. This flexibility referred both to the flexibility to be a parent as well as an academic, and to be able to manage their work-life borders without significant spill-over. Most of the scholar mamas had very positive experiences,

and part of that was due to the flexibility they had on their return to work. The flexibility varied from being able to change their teaching hours, to being able to coordinate their days to include their family obligations, as well as being able to work from home when required. Most of the scholar mamas made comments about the flexibility in their jobs:

Academia is very flexible. I don't have to be here at a certain time, if I taught at 8am in the morning, I obviously have to be here at a certain time. But if I'm not, and I don't have to be here for my teaching... I can work from home as long as I keep up my outputs and my admin, and my service.

A career in Academia has definitely been helpful for me as a mother, it is much more flexible..... That isn't to say I'm not busy, my calendar is full and I have meetings all day but I arrange most of these meetings so if I block out time early enough [for my children], then I can make sure there is a gap that no one is putting a meeting in....

[T]he working schedule is really flexible. So I don't have to be there 8 till 5, or sometimes 8 till 12...I didn't anticipate how flexible it was, I was expecting to go to the office as that is the kind of job I was used to. The flexibility was something I learned later was so good with children... I don't need to start until 8.30am or 9am or whatever, so that gives me flexibility, I can go look after the baby in the morning, slowly finish whatever we need to do, then go to work.

I can block out time where I go see my [children], but I won't go to everything. Like I've never been on a school trip, but I occasionally block out a couple of hours to go see their sports or something in the middle of the day. You can't necessarily do that in a lot of other jobs.

Being an academic, we are quite lucky. I did not anticipate it, I knew it was flexible but I really did not anticipate I would have a baby that flexibility that allowed me to work with my baby, and work around my baby.

[T]here are some good policies in place at my university. So for example, we have to teach between [a certain time], and we have to make ourselves available for those hours. But if we have a reason why we can't... so I've always said I can't teach on [certain days in the week]. So at least I know that on [those evenings], I can be available for after school activities, you know? So that's good. Equally dropping off children on certain days, a person could say – look, I can't get to work until 9 or 10. Obviously you can't everyday, go and only be available 10-12, that's ridiculous. But there is a bit of flexibility there to specify a lack of availability, to allow you to plan and be available to manager you childcare.

Many of the scholar mamas also compared the flexibility they had in their careers with the flexibility normally given in other industries, acknowledging that Academia as an industry is more flexible than many other career paths:

I do think that being an academic mother is actually easier than other paid jobs. I seriously feel so sorry for those ones who are working in other industries such as accounting or auditing. It's just so un-family and un-friendly. So I was thankful that I did get my job, and I feel more blessed than other working mothers.

Not all narratives about flexibility were positive. One of the scholar mamas made an interesting observation about the paradoxes that exist within the flexible nature of an academic career. She noted that:

But the negative thing...if [you] are the one in a relationship where [you've] got more flexibility, then every time something needs to be done in the household, [you're] asked to do it.... so you're lumped with more of the household duties than you would otherwise get, because you're seen as having more flexibility.

Another interesting paradox was discussed by another scholar mama was that the flexibility meant they would have to pick up their work at a later time in the day:

[T]here are lots of times where I wish I could be somewhere [for my children] but I [have] to be in a seminar or something. So generally if I can be there, I will make it work and I'll prioritise my kids over my work, but you can't always do that. And again, if I have to leave early to pick the kids up from school sometimes, I know that what that probably means is that I am going to have to catch up once they are in bed and get stuff done, especially once the semester starts and it gets a bit busier.

One other scholar mama talked about another negative aspect in regards to flexibility, and that she ended up getting more workload than what she thought was reasonable for the amount of hours she was working:

I was given quite a lot of teaching, and I was part-time, and I said – “sorry, I can't cope with this... the only way for me to manage this is to increase my hours”, and at the time they said “Ok, yeah ok we'll just let you increase your hours”. But in hindsight, I sort of feel like maybe, I was robbed slightly, and I should have said – “You have actually given me more teaching than these part-time hours can manage”. But anyway, I was happy enough with it at the time... It did mean that I wasn't able to spend as much time [with my child] than if I had kept my original hours.

Another interesting factor which was discussed was the concept of working split shifts, and that scholar mamas play different roles throughout the day. One scholar mama noted that:

[B]efore I would have just stayed in the office and worked late, and now the timing is different where I'll stay in the office till 4 or 5 o'clock at the latest, then go home, do stuff with the kids, and then once they're in bed, do some work then. So I guess it's just moving around the schedule compared to what it was before. I am not sure if I do more or less work since having children because things are not the same before and after in that I am in different roles.

Another also mentioned having multiple shifts:

[A] Mum has three shifts. She's got the 6 o'clock to 9 o'clock to get the kids ready, shout at them 500 times, drop them off at day-care. You look great when you leave the house, until you get to day-care and there is slime or mucus on your pants and your hair is pulled out of your clip. And then you get to work about 10am, if you're heading into traffic. I don't

take lunch, I don't take morning tea, and I don't take afternoon tea. I [eat] at my desk. I'm very aware of the amount of time that I'm spending here, and I want to make sure it is quality over quantity and so I can leave by 4pm... Then [I] get home, so I can cook dinner or get something on a plate before they come home.

Another scholar mama also talked about the concept of split shifts, and discussed how the way she managed her days had changed since having children:

[Q]uite often now I'll work in the evenings, whereas before I worked at home then go on with my evening being social, or do whatever hobby or whatever I was going to do. Whereas now, I will leave work and make sure that I have some evening time, or I'm available for the children, whether or not they actually want to... whether they'd rather read a book or whatever, I'm around. And then I'll work again later.

This differed to one of the other scholar mamas who expressed the difficulty focussing on work once they got home:

But now [I'm] so tired, [and] there's no way I'm reading any articles or anything extra for work [now that I have children]. So the work/life balance has changed tremendously...

One other scholar mama had a contrasted view of their flexibility. While she acknowledged her university had allowed her flexibility in terms of when she started work and when she scheduled her classes, she noted that motherhood makes you more inflexible and made the following comment:

I don't have the flexibility of coming into work at 8am in the morning and then leaving, or staying at work until 8pm or whatever hours you wanted to do. I can't just sort of pop into work over the weekends like I used to. It's that type of inflexibility, I suppose. Of course you can, but you're sacrificing some of your family time and effort.

Another scholar mama who was given a lot of flexibility in their role also made the following comment and the general family issues which exist in New Zealand:

The sooner the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Women, and the Ministry of Employment get together and sort out family relations and how we run this as a country, the better, I mean, we're just not geared up. The schools are open from 9-3, and who is lucky enough to have a job where they work from half past 9 until half past 2, so you can go and collect your children or be with them, and drop them at school and collect them from school.

Lack of flexibility was not something that was widely discussed by the scholar mamas. One did made the following observation about the lack of flexibility in her workplace:

I'm in a work environment where you're expected to attend management group meetings, and they're always [late in the afternoon]... after school pick up hours, and it just means

that you can't spend time with your children. And I know we've got work hours and all that kind of stuff, but I'm really wrestling, I suppose, in my day-to-day job with trying to be the mother I want to be, and working within a system that has no flexibility. There are some days that I work incredibly long hours, and I work lots of weekends. It's not like I've shirked my responsibility, but there's just no room for flexibility.

The same scholar mama also mentioned:

[I]t's like one size fits all, and that one size is a man who doesn't have to look after a child. I would be much more productive if I leave work at half past two, pick my son up from school, come home, give him early dinner, because he's happier then, and then I can work once he goes to bed. Like it's much easier for me. But when you have meetings that are rigidly late in the afternoon, it's really hard.

Flexibility was also referred to a lot when the scholar mamas talked about their return to work.

Many didn't return on a full-time basis and were able to resume their previous position on a part-time basis. Some scholar mamas mentioned:

The university was very accommodating; I asked to make my class a three hour class so I only had to come in once for the week to teach that one class and they agreed.

The next year I went back to teaching, but only for about six hours per week. That really helped so I could schedule it to match with the baby.

[My university] has made a few very compassionate allowances for me. For example, I haven't been scheduled for an 8am class since I came back from having children, because I needed to breastfeed them and a little later on now they are at school, I have to drop them at school... I didn't do night classes while I was breastfeeding because I needed to get home to feed my babies. So it was really good.

Conversely, one scholar mama did not get the flexibility she wanted when she returned to work and had some negative feelings as a result:

[I]n the end I ended up going back almost [four days per week] or something. It was a compromise, which I didn't particularly want, but it was the only way I could actually get back to work without going back full-time, and I really begrudged that because it wasn't a family friendly environment at all, and still isn't... So I found that a real struggle because it's like – well, I've worked for you for years, and you're rewarding me by not actually supporting the fact that I'm a mother, as well as a professor. Yeah, it was a very difficult transition back to work.

Another part of the flexibility was around how much time they were able to take off when they were on maternity leave. One scholar mama made the choice to return early and felt that she didn't want to return to work full-time after a year, and wanted to ease back into it so worked part time from when her child was six months old. She did acknowledge that not a lot of people were able to have that flexibility and are required to resume working on a full-time basis as allowed

under the current parental legislation. It was important for that scholar mama to go back to work early as she felt that being away a year meant “you lose a lot of the skills you need”.

Another scholar mama regretted not taking a full year off after going back to work when her child was nine months old. She had made the choice to go back early as she “felt like [she] needed to get on with things that [she] needed to do more writing and research. But she did note that:

I did kind of miss being at work. In a lot of ways, particularly in this type of work, it is easier to spend a day talking to adults and doing interesting things, than it is to engage with babies. So I think I enjoyed my children more when I really don't have as much time with them, just a day or two a week and on the weekends. I think that's really quite good for both the babies and me.

One other scholar mama had two children close together, and returned from both periods of maternity leave on fewer hours than she was doing before she had children:

I came back from maternity leave part-time from my first child... which was three days per week. And by the time I came back to work I was already expecting baby number two, and you can only imagine that that was a pretty quick six months at work before I went on maternity leave again for another year. And then when I did come back after my second, I came back at four days per week. I think it would have been much more difficult for me to have kept up the workload that I was able to do before I had kids.

An interesting comment made by one of the scholar mamas was that she felt “privileged” to be able to spend the first year of her child's life not working. I found this to be quite a curious comment, as legally speaking most eligible women are able to take up to a year maternity leave to spend with their new child. Reflecting back, she may have meant that she didn't qualify for the full year but I found it an odd comment nonetheless.

Another interesting factor which arose was the sense of entitlement that some of the scholar mamas got about returning to work on a part-time or flexible basis. If their reduced hours or flexible work arrangement requests weren't accepted, they tended to feel that they have not got what they were entitled to, where in fact their workplaces are not legally required to allow them to reduce their hours, or to have flexibility. Where it was not accepted, or particularly when a loss of role resulted (for example, in Ruby's* story), there were very strong negative feelings towards their situation.

Another interesting factor which arose from this study was the limited roles that the scholar mamas gave their husbands in the stories. Most of the scholar mamas in this story were married,

but their husbands were not commonly discussed when it came to talking about taking care of their children. Many of the narratives revolved around their own responsibility for managing their children and it did not come across that their husbands played a significant part in the scholar mama's ability to coordinate their career with motherhood. Whether this is the case, or whether their husbands were just not discussed is not clear but it was interesting that it was a common trait throughout many of the stories.

Similar to this was the lack of recognition by the scholar mamas that other options for child care exists, such as day-care or after-school programmes. Many talked about having to drop off their children at 9am and pick them up at 3pm was a non-negotiable necessity, and the possibility of placing the children in care was not discussed. This may be because of the flexible nature of the academic career, and the expectations that the mothers had in having flexibility in their careers, something that is not so common in other career paths.

Approach to Professional Obligations and Academic Focus

Many of the scholar mamas I spoke to talked about the way that they meet their professional obligations have changed since having children. In most instances, this affected their teaching style and their attitude towards their research. Many of the scholar mamas made comments about how their focus as an academic had changed since becoming a mother, and many didn't feel the same drive to succeed as they once did.

One scholar mama found that becoming a mother made her a better academic and observed that:

[Becoming a mother] gives balance to my life... I see a lot of academics who are consumed with just their research and the politics at university...if you get consumed by that it will drive you crazy. So I think it's important to have balance in your life, and having a family gives me that balance.

Another interesting factor which came up in the stories was the concept of pastoral care in teaching:

I now sort of think of [students] as being somebody's son or daughter. So they're here entrusted in us and our care, and they're away from their families, and I suppose, even though my children are [much younger], I know it's not going to be very long before they're in that situation and you're relying on other people. It's not so much that I'm looking after them, but we are hoping to inspire them and to educate them. I suppose it's given me

that sort of sense. But that's just a mothering instinct, without being too much around pastoral care for the students.

A number of the scholar mamas felt that their style of teaching changed dramatically since having children, and they became more empathetic and understanding towards their students. One scholar mama explained:

I softened tremendously.... Before I had [my child] I was like "get off your phone and get out", "get off Facebook or get out", "You're late so get out", "Stop talking or get out"... After I had [my child] I was like "please get off your phone" [or] "don't yawn that's not nice".... I'm not the strict rigid person I was before. Now I listen to every soppy story that my students tell me when I wouldn't have before. Before I had children I would say "I'm not your mum, I'm not your doctor, and I'm not your priest, go away!" but now I'm like "that's such a shame, really? Is there anything I can do to make your life better?".... I've definitely softened and students approach me [more now] than they used to.

One scholar mama felt that becoming a mother has not only made her a better academic, but her academic focus had changed significantly since having children which has had an effect on her teaching:

I would say [having children] has made me a better academic, because I feel like I'm possibly more of a role model now that I used to be. I have female students, all the time – it doesn't matter what university I've taught at – that have said to me – you know, you're such an inspiration, you're such a strong woman, you're young, you're a role model – and I think having a child has made me realise – well actually, what kind of role model was I? But now, my values have really come to the fore, and I do everything much more values-based now. But I also think that probably comes with the privilege of knowing I don't have to jump through the hoops for promotions anymore. So I guess I've tried over the last [few] years to come back from maternity leave as a mother, so in every class at the start of the semester, I show a picture of my child, because I want to come across as a human being, not a machine. It's like, if I'm going to be a role model for other women going into an academic career I want to show them that it's ok that you can be a mother, than you can care, but it doesn't matter if you're not the most productive male in the world who's publishing a set of journals every week. Because we're just human beings, and I think Academia has lost a lot of humility, and I think mothers in Academia suffer because of that.

Similarly, some other scholar mamas noted a change their approach since having children:

I think since I have had children, I'm slightly more flexible and patient. I'm not a very patient person anyway. But perhaps it may be a bit more... I don't have a very big ego. I think some academics – actually probably more male academics anyway – maybe it makes you a bit more humble, because you realise that ultimately when you go home your kids don't give a stuff if you've just published an amazing paper or discovered something in your data, right? It's all about whatever's the priority on their agenda.

There's always some story [involving my children] that humanises me and creates a much stronger bond between my students and I. They don't see me as somebody rocking up and being an ice queen and just spurting out work like a robot. I try to bring in my human side, so they know I'm approachable.

It also gives me a different focus for my research. And that definitely feeds into my teaching. I use a lot of examples involving my children in my teaching. So I can draw upon my research and talk about that with the students.

Having children has also changed my research focus. It changes the way you think about things. I think sometimes I use examples in my lectures about my kids, it's probably not great.

They also found that the type of research they conducted was influenced by their children, and the topics they chose to research are chosen with their children in mind. Some scholar mamas mentioned:

I now think about the children when I do my research... I worry about how that topic might affect my children.

I find that a lot of the students can relate to [my research], because a lot of them still have younger siblings, or it's actually not that long ago that they remember being [young], and the impact on them. So I suppose I'm just more conscious about applying research to younger generations, and I find that I do that more.

Interestingly, research seemed to be the main part of their role that was affected negatively by having children. Many of the scholar mama noted that once they had children, they only did enough research to "tick the boxes" and to do "enough to get by". One scholar mama felt that:

I fall behind in what is currently the main areas of research in [my discipline]... because I just don't care anymore. I just don't care. It's just – it was always my number one priority in life, but it is not anymore... It's just like a production line now. I just care about pumping out what is necessary in order for me to keep my job. Just make sure that your teaching doesn't slip, just make sure that you publish at least one or two articles every two years. Just make sure you do those things. But there is no urgency like there was before, like "oh, I want to be dean some day" and now I'm like "oh, please no, just as long as I don't lose my job I'm happy".

Another scholar mama mentioned the difficulty of maintaining their research outputs once they had children:

I think it's difficult when you are having children, because it really does interrupt your research, I remember when I came back from [maternity leave], in that first week I got a rejection on a journal paper, and I was like – oh my god, what am I doing?

Similarly, another mama mentioned the notion of being 'good enough' in her professional obligations after having children:

I'd rather just be good enough in doing my publications and good enough in my teaching, but then be known as a super mum to my [children]. So that's just it. I'd rather be a fantastic mum and a good enough academic.

One other scholar mama made some interesting comments about how motherhood affects the different aspects of their teaching role, and how that effects their career progression:

[W]e are judged for our service and our teaching and our research. But you need time to do all of that, and unfortunately when you are short of time, the priority becomes your teaching, because you're going to be going up in front of classes and you have to be prepared for that. And of course, the things that suffer are really what we are mainly judged on, our research and the impact that you have to the community or across the institution. I think the time available after having children has been the biggest impact on my career, I can't carry out as much research as what I used to.

Conversely, one scholar mama noted that having children has actually helped her with her research:

Sometimes when you are on maternity leave it's actually quite good for your research because it means that no-one bothers you because they know you are on leave, and you can get a few more things done for your work... Even though you aren't necessarily working, Academia is such that you have to continue your research regardless, you can't just stop it, you can't tell journals when they send you comments – "No, I can't reply for six months sorry". It continues on, and you can catch up on a lot of research when [the baby] is sleeping."

One scholar mama also talked about the balance she tried to find between meeting her work obligations and spending time with her children:

I think it's just that period of transition where you have to wrestle with suddenly being a mother, and doing all the things that you used to have so much time to do. But now you never had enough time to do, like preparing for classes. And I think at the end of the day, something has to give. And for me, I always put my [child] first – always. IF something doesn't get done, it doesn't get done at work. And I guess my rule to myself is... "is anybody going to die if I don't do this by the deadline?" And if the answer's no, then I don't do it. And I've learnt to say no to a lot of other things that I would have normally done. I get inundated with doing reviews for journals, and I just say no to most of them now – probably 95% of them I say no to.

Another interesting concept that came up was the idea that the way in which they measure a researcher's productivity is potentially biased against mothers:

[T]hey didn't recognise maternity leave as having any impact on an academic's research productivity. And I was really quite angry about that, and you can ask anyone – the environment is very male-dominated and expects you to be like machines publishing all the time. But the fact that you have a baby seemingly, has no impact at all on your research productivity.

Career Progression

The scholar mamas all seemed to grapple with their career progression at some point throughout their stories. In most instances, it was noted that their drive to further their career had halted, at least while their children were young. Generally speaking, they didn't want to say they no longer

wanted progression in their career, but knew that their priorities since having children had changed, and that drive to progress had either halted, or slowed down. Many acknowledged that they felt this was temporary, and their drive to succeed would likely return in the future. One scholar mama felt that her children were a “very big brake” in her career. Another noted:

I guess the biggest impact [of having children] on my career is that I know I want a career. I definitely know that I do not want to be a stay-at-home mum... [B]ut it doesn't have to be like, I have to be an associate professor in five years. Why do I have to drive myself crazy and then be all snarky at my children because I'm so stressed, when I don't have to be? Who says that you have to be a professor by the time you are 45? Who cares? And then after that, you have to work another 40 to 45 years but you will still have the same title. So the biggest impact of having children on my career is that I have realised time with my children is much more important than spending time chasing a title.

Similarly, one other scholar mama mentioned:

[I felt that when I came back [from maternity leave], it was different. I felt I didn't really care so much about work anymore. I suspect I will care again at some point, but at the moment [my children] are in school...and I just think that once you have children you realise your career is a nice bonus, but it's not the most important thing in your life. Before I had children, my career seemed extremely important and it was important, it was great, and I'm really glad that I worked quite hard, but I've made some really clear choices around not being promoted to associate professor. So choosing not to do that, and choosing not to bust my gut, to give my best but not to do all that over and extra and above stuff at this point in my life.

One scholar mama felt that her career progression had completely stopped since having children:

[My children have] been a very big brake – a brake like a car's brake – on my career. In the sense that if I'm not with them, I want to be with them. And I will constantly think of them.

One scholar mama noted that she was still driven to succeed, but not to the same extent as she was before she had children:

Having a child probably makes me reflect better in terms of what is worth it in life. Whether it's worthwhile spending 12 hours per day at work and getting whatever promotion. I still want to be successful, but if I don't get the promotion I wouldn't beat myself up about it. I was probably a bit more driven before I had [my child], and now it's just eased a bit. I don't want to burn myself out.

One other scholar mama who noted that she had reached the top of their career, made the following comment about how their priorities and productivity had changed since having children:

Because I had children after I'd got to the top, and I hate saying that – Get to the top, but yeh it certainly hasn't impacted on my promotion, but it certainly has impacted on my day-to-day life as a professor, if that makes sense. I think I've become a lot less productive.

I'm not quite as driven as I used to be, there are more important things in life. You have to juggle being a mother.

Similarly, one other scholar mama who had already reached to the top of their career also talked about the shift in their priorities:

[I]n terms of my career, I have definitely put on the brake, and I'm not the ambitious woman that I used to be. I mean, I know a lot of women would probably say that it's halted their career, and it's held them up in their career, but for me I guess the reality was, I was already at the top of my career before I had my child. But since then I've really put the brakes on. My academic career is second now to me being a mother.

Other scholar mamas didn't talk about the concerns they had about their career slowing down or stopping. Their perception was more towards what was important to them, and at the time they talked to me their families were more important to them about progressing in their career:

I would rather be where I am right now, as a senior lecturer and not having the fancy title. I just care about having my pay cheque every month so I can take it to my children and we can survive on it. It's fantastic. I don't need any more than that. I just need to be where I am right now.

[My child] did slow things down a bit, but that is OK. That is the price you pay, and at the end of the day, I think the result will be the same even if it does take longer. Doesn't matter that I could have had a promotion two years earlier. You might progress faster without children, but so what! My child is worth it!

While many of the scholar mamas talked about their career progression slowing down or stopping, not many discussed the underlying reasons why this had occurred. They discussed how their approach to meeting their professional obligations had changed, but did not make a link about whether they felt that was the reason for the progression slowing down. One scholar mama did explore the issue of the lack of productivity during her maternity leave and the subsequent slowing down in her career progression:

I think it's always the case that having children slows down your career. I don't really live regretting it, it's just been busy trying to cope with actually what has happened. As an academic, you're evaluated on your research output, and you're not exactly being very productive when you're on parental leave. You're busy with your children. So that's probably the major issue.

One scholar mama reached what she considered to be the peak of her academic career just prior to going on maternity leave, and made a comment about how thankful she was that she reached that level prior to going on leave. She also made some interesting comments about the reasons she believed women with young children are less likely to get a promotion:

The year that I was expecting [my child] I applied for a promotion, and I found out just before [they] were born.... that I had got my promotion... So I went on maternity leave with that news, which was great. It was a nice position to be in going off on maternity leave being promoted. In hindsight, I'm really thankful that I got the promotion as I was expecting my [child], I look back and I go, thank goodness I got that done before I had the kids, rather than going to go get the promotion with the idea that I wanted it done before I had kids. I have looked at my colleagues, other women who have small children, and seen that that progress has just not happened for them, and it'll be for the same reasons that is the same for all of us, we just don't have the time of the energy to put those huge long hours in that you can do without family commitment. If I hadn't have already gotten the promotion, I don't think I would have got it. It would have been difficult coming back part-time and still being available for all those sort of committees that are important to get your recognition out across the institution, and to also get our service up on your CV.

One concept that came up in a couple of the stories was the expectations that others had of them once they returned to work. One scholar mama noted that:

People build up expectations of what you are and what you should be able to do. And then they expect the same level of determination... the same level of competency after you have children. Everything has to be the same.

Another scholar mama, when talking about how much her priorities had changed since having children, also made the following comments:

For a while there, I felt like the university got the short end of the stick, and that I wasn't an asset anymore. I was a liability. The biggest obstacle for me since going back to work was to save face. It is to pretend like you still want to be a professor, and that you are still so driven to meet that goal in five years. But inside, I'm like no thank you I don't care about that anymore. You just have to play the game... You just have to pretend, otherwise you're seen as putting the entire female race back 20 years. What they fought for, and now you just want to spend time with your children. I'm not an anti-feminist, but I'm not a feminist. I'm a mum.

While many scholar mamas noted that their career progression slowed down or stopped when they had children, they didn't mention losing any of the responsibilities or tasks they previously had in their position once they moved to part-time hours. However, one scholar mama mentioned that she lost her entire position when she came back from maternity leave:

The biggest impact on my career literally, was losing my position... I was so gutted. So when I came back, I came back on a part-time position. I couldn't do everything in the department, and do my school-wide position as well, and when the school appointed somebody to take over my maternity leave... they found a [replacement] and [they] insisted, and really rightly so, that [they] didn't want to just do it for a year. [S]o I sort of got thanks but no thanks on your return email about the position, and that was purely because I went on maternity leave. So that was a very real impact, because you're then coming back to a different position... At the time, I wanted to ensure that it was made public the reason why they were doing that, because I felt that it was going to be communicated that somebody else was talking over... and I wanted it very clearly communicated as to the fact or why that was happening, and that it had nothing to do with my performance. It was more that they were appointing someone else for maternity

cover, and that someone else had demanded a [longer contract]. Of course, that was never ever communicated across the school, so I was gutted about that... I just basically told myself that it was probably best to do that, because I wasn't going to have time to do everything else. I think if I had been coming back full-time, I would have been particularly, or especially annoyed about it. But because I was coming back part-time, realistically I couldn't have done it all anyway. But initially I was gutted. I probably could have done something if I had wanted to kick up a stink. Really, you should be coming back to the position that you left on when you go on maternity leave, and that didn't happen to me. But I didn't seeing I wanted to come back part-time.

Another interesting theme that came up was how the number of children a scholar mama has affects their career progression:

I think if I could do it all again, I would have had my kids earlier and I would have had three of them. And I wouldn't have come back to work. Well, I probably would have come back but a third child is probably a massive career killer. It is much more difficult. So everything does become a lot more complicated. Two kids are fine, but I think with three you are out-numbered, and it is a lot more expensive... You'd have less time with each child.

Mummy Logistics

There were several smaller themes which came up regarding the logistics of being a mother and trying to transition back into the work place. Most of these involved coordinating breastfeeding, trying to navigate travelling with their children, as well as just trying to get back into the rhythm of teaching and researching after having an extended amount of time off work.

Many of the scholar mamas found it difficult to fit breastfeeding in with their work, especially when they had to go to different locations and when there were long periods in between the breaks in their teaching. One scholar mama noted:

I ... hadn't realised the practicalities of breastfeeding a baby, rushing to teach a class for three hours, and by the end of the three hours you would be dying to feed the child again. So I would always been in pain driving home... to get home to feed him again, because otherwise you're about to burst.

One other scholar mama had a more positive experience coordinating breastfeeding, citing the location she lived as well as the help from her mother as factors of her positive experience, acknowledging that it may be more difficult for others:

I was breastfeeding, and because we lived close by my mum just brought the baby to my office then we could have a feed, and then they went back [home]... I think breastfeeding would have been difficult for anyone else, but with my mum there, that helped a lot.

In regards to travel, many mothers found it difficult to juggle having to go to academic conferences, especially when they had young children. Some made the decision not to go at all until their children were a bit older. One scholar mama noted:

I didn't want to go on too many conferences for the first couple of years because you don't want to go away and leave the baby behind. So I don't think I went until [my child] was at least two years old.

Another mentioned the difficulty of travelling:

[I] can't travel that much anymore, so I can't always go to conferences. With [children], you can't go to work and you have to be there when [they] are not allowed at crèche and you have to be there for the week to look after [them]... I thought that was a really tough time.

One other scholar mama discussed the difficulty of attending conferences while they were still breastfeeding their baby:

If [the conference] is away... the whole family had to come if you're breastfeeding, so it's more expensive. And then during the conference you try and figure out in the breaks when you can breastfeed and how you can get the milk back to the baby... [O]ne of the main things to do at conferences is to network and speak to other people and talk about research, which requires a lot of the time. If I had the time again, I would probably use the session to breastfeed, or to express the milk, and then on the coffee break, when you talk to people I would be present. But I didn't know that back then, so I was probably missing out on a lot of things because of trying to achieve that balance.

One scholar mama also talked about the difficulty of travelling when there is a lack of support system in their personal lives:

Like I used to be able to travel overseas, two-three times a year, and now I go once, because it's too difficult. How do you go to a conference as a single mother, with no support? It's just impossible.

Another key factor that many of the scholar mamas was that their universities had day-cares and crèche's close by that they could send their children. This had a very positive effect on many of the scholar mamas' transition back into work and allowed them to breastfeed easily, go and see them if they needed to, and not having to travel far to take them to an alternative child care provider. One scholar mama noted:

There is a crèche on campus, which made it really easy I had my children come in with me to work in the morning, drop them off, and then I could go visit them.

Another scholar mama also mentioned the advantages of having a crèche on campus:

[My] baby was enrolled into the university crèche and I just went to [breast]feed her in the lunch breach, and came back to do my work and writing, then took [them] home.

Another layer of complexity in these stories was the different issues that the scholar mamas face as their children get older. One found it easier while their children were young, but found it much more difficult once they go to school age:

[G]oing back to work when they were both pre-schoolers was pretty easy, because the crèche was right there and they were in one place, they were very close. It only took 20 minutes to drop them off. But as soon as school started, it is much more challenging and they finish at 3pm! So the time is an issue for me.

Conversely, another also mentioned that she felt the biggest impact when her children were younger:

But that is sort of changing now as well, because I think it's just the period when they're really small that has the major impact. But I can sort of already see that it's starting to change, and I am feeling like I am having more time and energy to get back into more writing and funding applications and things like that.

Another sub-theme which was mentioned was the general fear and trepidation about returning to work after being on extended leave:

I was scared coming back to work after I had my first child, scared that I couldn't do it anymore and that I had forgotten how to teach. I was scared I lost my flare. I was scared that whoever took over my role when I was gone did a better job at it, and I was going to be obsolete. I was scared that people forgot what an asset it was to the department back then.

What was interesting throughout the stories was the lack of focus on the years past their maternity leave. Many of the scholar mamas had children who were either already at, or close to attending school but their stories focused on their experiences throughout maternity leave and returning to work. Some made comments about the additional complexity that school age children brought, but most stayed silent on that and instead focussed on the difficulties they had when their children were young. This may have been because the key events that occurred throughout their journey into motherhood occurred during this early period, and that those events had the greatest significance in their lives when looking back about the positive or negative experiences they had coordinating their work with their family.

Gender Issues

Some of the scholar mamas, while talking about their experiences and journey into motherhood made comments about certain aspects of the challenges they faced, in that it may be due to general gender issues rather than being a mother per se:

I think in general, whether you have a child or not, it's harder for women.... Women don't necessarily speak up all the time, or they're not as proactive in promoting themselves as much as men.

Another scholar mama also mentioned the potential bias that exists in regards to how their performance is measured:

I think there is bias. If you look at student evaluations, the research shows the women always have slightly lower evaluations than men, and I don't believe that women are, on average, slightly worse teachers than men. So I expect there is the normal gender disadvantage. I don't know if it's any greater because I have children, maybe it is. And it's documented in the literature, it's very hard for an individual to discern a specific pattern of disadvantage, because it's all so hidden.

Conclusion

There were a number of key themes which arose from the narratives once I had read each of the scholar mama's stories and created their story grids. Interestingly, there were many contrasting viewpoints about each of the themes, some of which were not in line with the general literature mentioned previously. The findings including these contrasting viewpoints which will be discussed in the next chapter of this study.

Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

This study sought to obtain stories from successful and established women academics about their experiences of first time motherhood while employed as an academic (including parental leave) and to understand the impact on their New Zealand academic career.

The stories told by the seven scholar mamas who participated in this study gave a detailed account of their journey into motherhood and how becoming a mother had impacted on their academic career. The participants in this study placed a significant amount of trust in me when telling their stories and many focussed on the more emotional aspects of their journey. While each story was unique, there were a number of common themes which emerged out of the stories told by each participant. These themes were outlined in the findings section (Chapter Four) but in this chapter I will discuss them in three overarching themes; 'The dominant maternity narrative' 'Shifting academic focus" and 'Heroes of the stories'. Some aspects of these themes were spoken of positively, however some showed tensions in their transition back into the workforce and academic careers since becoming a mother for the first time.

For the purposes of this chapter, the early parental period or maternity stage refers to the stage of the parental journey where the mother is transitioning back into the workforce after being on parental leave.

The Dominant Maternity Narrative

The participants in this study were all at different stages of their parental journey. At the time of the interview, some participants had very young children, and some had children who were now at school. However when reading their narratives, it is difficult to tell how old their children were at the time that they were telling their stories, even though all had a child older than five years.

This is because the participants placed huge emphasis on the early stages of their journey, constructing a narrative that focuses on the positive and negative experiences while being pregnant, on parental leave and in the early stages of returning to work. The study sought to understand experiences of first time motherhood while employed as an academic (including parental leave) and to understand the impact on their New Zealand academic career, however the women spoke largely of the maternity time and less about their experiences as their first child has grown. So a key finding from this study is that the maternity stage and early years of their children's lives were the most significant and 'front of mind' period of their parental journey, which I have termed the 'dominant maternity narrative'.

This dominant maternity narrative has not been highlighted by other scholars in the field. While some authors have called for studies that consider the experiences of parenting children across the age ranges (Fox, 2005; Hardy, et al., 2016; Kyvik, 1990), my study highlights how the first child was a turning point for several of the participants in terms of their career orientation and academic focus, which I discuss further on in this chapter. In one study by Hardy et al. (2016) it was found that some academics found younger children easier to manage, while others faced greater difficulty during the early stages of their children's lives and that different academic parents had differing views on how the age of their children affected their careers.

Although the participants in my study now had primary school aged children or older, they only briefly touched on the experiences or issues that they had faced once their children were at school. Instead their narratives focussed on the early maternity stage and the pre-school years. I revisited the interview questions, participant information form and consent forms to see whether the questions I asked or information I provided influenced this focus. While some of the information and questions were directed to their maternity leave and early years of their child's lives, this was not a dominant line of questioning for the study and there were many opportunities for the participants to discuss the later periods in their children's lives. This suggests that for the participants, the early period of their parenting is the most important time of a mother's journey in terms of balancing their career, and the overall negative or positive feelings that they have about their experiences stems from that moment in time. This means that the support provided at this time was important in terms of how smooth their transition into motherhood was.

The majority of women in this study had fairly positive experiences throughout the maternity stage and early years of their children's lives, which indicates that any career difficulties when their children were older and in school were offset by the strong emphasis placed on the early part of their journey. Those participants who did have negative experiences really focused on issues which occurred during their maternity stage and although it seemed most of those issues no longer persisted when their children reached school age, their narrative focussed on the earlier period of parenthood and played a major part in their entire narrative. Mason et al. (2013) also identified the link between balancing their family and work and the narrative of constraint, especially when the children were pre-school age. This indicates that issues that academic mothers face during that time has a greater effect on the factors cited for the leaky pipeline, such as family commitments (White, 2010), lack of institutional support, an unwelcoming work environment (Mason et al., 2013) have a stronger effect when it occurs during the earlier periods of their parenthood.

There are a number of aspects which create a narrative of constraint within the academic career. One of these factors which has been discussed in literature is breastfeeding (Baker, 2010; Mason et al., 2013). However, in my study, many of the participants were able to successfully coordinate breastfeeding with work. Even the participants who did not have the flexibility that is normally associated with the academic career such as the ability to decrease their hours and adjust their teaching timetables did not mention issues with coordinating breastfeeding. In most cases there was an on-site day-care close to where they worked, so they were able to visit their child and breastfeed. Most participants noted that work-place flexibility enabled them to co-ordinate their academic commitments so that they were available to breastfeed their child at appropriate times throughout the day. A few participants however also noted that breastfeeding impacted on their ability to participate in important academic activities. Networking and travelling to conferences were particularly challenging to the participants. These activities are crucial for academics to build networks for research collaboration and to develop connections beyond the university. Networking has found to be an important part of an academic women's success in furthering their career and a lack of such opportunities has been cited as one reason for the academic gender gap (Monroe et al., 2008; Toutkoushian et al., 2007). One participant who didn't have a strong personal support network found that it was practically impossible to travel to overseas conferences without having to take her child with her. Participants felt that these constraints

imposed by becoming a parent also adversely impacted on their career progression in line with previous research on the academic gender gap.

Shifting Academic Focus

Participants' experiences of changing priorities after the birth of their first child was a common narrative throughout many of the stories and is a key finding in this study. This finding is consistent with research on the academic gender gap (Kalev, 2009; Monroe et al., 2008; Toutkoushian et al., 2007), and leaky pipeline especially where the changes in priorities are attributed to flexibility or work-hour issues (Mason et al., 2013; White, 2010).

Changing priorities aligns with Hakim's (2000) preference theory, which is a concept which was developed in an attempt to explain and predict women's choices about how they invest in productive or reproductive work (Hakim, 2000). Hakim (2000) argues that women in contemporary, affluent societies have access to material realities such as contraception and equal opportunity policies to ensure that women have the same access to all positions, occupations and careers as men, and can make choices about how to balance their academic and family obligations. In line with a criticised assumption of preference theory (Crompton & Lyonette, 2005; Lane, 2004), most of the women in this study were able to make choices about the way that they work and were able to reduce their hours to ensure they had enough time to spend with their families. It also did not come through in the narratives that they were constrained by their incomes when making choices about their career, as has been suggested by other academics as a factor that plays a role in the amount of choice a women has in terms of their work preference (McRae, 2003).

Prior to having children, the participants in this study were highly ambitious career focussed women who either already had or had plans of achieving senior level academic positions. But once they had children, their ambitions changed as many made comments around their families becoming the most important thing in their lives and that their career now came second. However, reflecting on their stories I found that not only had their priorities changed, several had allowed the prior pace and trajectory to slow and invested less effort in advancing their career. Various comments around no longer caring, or no longer wanting to progress higher in their careers were made by most of the participants however some did note that they felt that this might change in

the future, suggesting that their career paths had to be put on hold while they were raising their children. This concept of no longer caring has not been extensively documented in literature, however a study by Hardy et al. (2016) suggested that some parents consciously halt their career progression as a coping strategy to deal with the combined pressures of parenting and managing their career. This 'career parking' can result in academics focusing on teaching and abandoning leadership ambitions. The findings of my study support this proposition, and all participants in this study described some aspect of career parking in their stories, either from halting their career progression or by focusing on their teaching above their other academic responsibilities.

The comments that they made suggested that they had made a deliberate decision to no longer apply for promotions and that is why they had not progressed in their career since having children, and some participants made little or no mention of if and how their career had progressed since having children. It seems as if this may be a type of internal self-justification happening by the participants, and that they perhaps were coming to terms with the fact that their once eager ambitions were no longer eventuating now that they had children. By looking back at their experiences and trivialising or denying any negative consequences, it might allow them to make peace with the decisions they have made and how their career had progressed. By looking back at their experiences and smoothing or filtering out any negative consequences, it appears that the participants could make sense of and accept the decisions they had made and how their careers had subsequently evolved (Polkinghorne, 1995). It is a compromise and in telling their story it is as if the participants are placing themselves at the centre, enacting agency in their life process and finding meaning in their new path of balancing motherhood alongside their academic careers (Inkson et al., 2015; Osland, 1995).

While many studies in this field have discussed experiences of being a mother (Kalev, 2009; Seagram et al., 1998; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012), very few have addressed the impact on their career orientation in terms of trajectory as a whole. Some American studies highlight the trend of academics choosing to hold off having children until they are able to secure tenure, due to the delays which occur when becoming a parent and the difficulties that come with balancing an intensive workload with having a family (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004; Mason et al., 2013), however the affect that having children has on an academic's entire career trajectory is not something which has been extensively studied.

A strategy of survival was apparent from some of the participants. Some admitted that they pretended to be very career orientated as a survival strategy in Academia. The notion of 'appearing' as an ambitious academic has not been discussed by other scholars in this field. Interestingly, one participant also linked this to feeling as though admitting she was no longer striving for that next promotion was 'putting the entire female race back 20 years' and what women have fought for in terms of their careers. It is also interesting to consider the emotional and psychological affects that this may have on the participants, and the feeling that they are constantly having to save face or 'play a game' at their workplace. Also concerning is how long that this can last, and whether they can keep up this impression indefinitely. The decision to stop actively progressing in their career can also have issues for the participants as in many instances there are long lead times for promotions (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012), and if they change their mind about wanting to progress their career they may need to do a lot of work to catch up to put them back into a position where they may qualify for promotion. Additionally, there are other consequences regarding their academic reputation which is built by the regular dissemination of research.

The literature presents contrasting views on the gender differences in relation to research output and productivity. It is argued that women in general publish fewer articles which directly influences their recognition within their field (Henley, 2015), and that on average men dedicated more time on research than women do (Misra et al., 2011). It was also suggested that this lower rate of publication by women has a direct influence on the academic gender gap, due to the emphasis placed on research in terms of performance and promotion (Monroe et al., 2008; Toutkoushian et al., 2007). However, Whittington (2011) suggested that motherhood in general did not influence research output where they are provided with sufficient institutional support. This decrease of publication or 'tick box exercise' where the participants were doing just enough to get by, is also linked closely with some of the reasons commonly cited for the academic gender gap especially in terms of biased measures of success which exist within the industry which favours those who do not disrupt their research and career for family reasons (Henley, 2015). This is especially so in relation to the lower proportion of time the participants are spending on research compared with their other professional obligations as well as compared with how men choose to meet their professional obligations.

The findings of this study confirm that motherhood does have a direct influence on an academic mother's research outputs and career progression, despite the level of support available. This finding can potentially have significant implications for an academic mother's career, especially those who have children before securing a senior academic role. As previously discussed in the literature section (Chapter Two) in the New Zealand university environment, research productivity and quality are large components of determining how an academic's performance is measured and a decrease in research output could affect whether or not an academic mother earns promotions and/or higher positions.

Once the participants became mothers, there was a shift in their attitude towards their professional obligations. Teaching appeared to become their key focus at the expense of their service and research. Many of the participants noted that once they had children, they only did enough research to "tick the boxes" and to do "enough to get by". A concept of being 'good enough' was discussed by one of the participants which reflects the perspectives of the other participants when discussing their research obligations. One participant specifically mentioned that where they don't have enough time for all three of their professional obligations, teaching came first and their research and service suffered because of it. Winslow (2010) identified similar findings and which suggested that female academics tended to spend a greater proportion of their time on teaching and less time on research. This also may be linked to the concept of satisficing discussed in the literature review which suggests that women tend to satisfice competing interests in their work and home life, rather than maximising one interest over the other (Corby & Stanworth, 2009). The participants in this study specifically noted they were happy to be 'good enough', especially in terms of their research to ensure that they were able to balance their family lives with their professional obligations. But as previously discussed they were not always prepared to acknowledge this openly in the university, creating tensions around their professional and personal authenticity. This may be linked to the previously discussed finding of the participants feeling as though they had to keep up the appearance of being an ambitious academic in order to 'save face'.

Another aspect was how being a mother had shifted their academic focus after having children, and that some participants felt their children had influenced the focus of their research. Some noted that they were more aware of issues that existed within their discipline which might affect

their children in some way, or which have wider societal applications especially in terms of families. Similar to this, they found that they brought their children into their teaching and since they had become a mother they believed they were able to relate better to their students. One participant noted that she felt bringing her children into her teaching allowed her to become more 'human' to her students and she felt that it made a big difference in terms of the student reviews she received. This is a unique finding which has not been widely discussed in other studies on parenting and the academic career.

The attitudes that the participants had in relation to their research, especially as now being a 'tick box exercise' can have big implications for women in Academia and could influence the gender bias and perceptions that exist within Academia. This is especially so in the current landscape of the New Zealand university environment where research is emphasised in terms of performance and university rankings. By reducing the effort and time spent on research, the participants could be contributing to the bias which currently exists about motherhood, especially with the knowledge they have about the importance of such research on their academic careers. This confirmation could also extend to the bias that women are less productive than males and could be a reason behind the academic maternal wall and the motherhood penalty (Benard & Correll, 2010; Henley, 2015; Misra et al., 2011;).

Research productivity is also thought to be affected by the age of a mother's children, although there is some debate around this issue. Having young children can negatively impact on a mother's research productivity. This is in line with findings from Mason et al. (2013), Stack (2004) and Kyvik (1990) who also suggested that this was offset by a higher level of productivity once the children reached at least ten years of age. Hunter and Leahey (2010) counter these findings in their study which suggests that women with pre-school children were more productive. The participants in this study had children in a range of ages, and it was clear from the findings that no matter how old their children were they no longer placed significant emphasis on their research and did 'just enough' to get by, and focussed more on their teaching obligations.

There is little if any discussion in the extant literature on the shifting focus of academic women in response to motherhood. Yet the participant's in my study felt that having children had made them a better academic, despite many of them no longer having a drive to go 'over and above' in their

research and service obligations. When discussing their role as an academic, they focussed more on their teaching which many believed had changed significantly since becoming a mother, noting that their approach in dealing with their students softened greatly and they felt more empathetic and maternal towards their students. They thought of their own children going to study which lead them to feel a sense of responsibility of educating someone else's son or daughter. Similar to this, they found that they brought their children into their teaching and since they had become a mother they believed they were able to relate better to their students. Nevertheless teaching is perceived as less important in the promotion process (Lutter & Schröder, 2016), so while the participants felt they were better academics, in terms of the importance of research in determining academic performance in New Zealand, their focus on teaching can place them at a disadvantage compared with colleagues who do not have responsibility for children.

In the participants' narratives, flexibility and autonomy were aspects of their working lives that were clearly valued. Participants spoke about how having flexibility and autonomy had enabled them to shift their academic focus as discussed above to perform both as an academic and as a mother. The literature presents conflicting findings in relation to flexibility. One perspective is that flexibility has been viewed as a cornerstone of the academic profession and is valued by academic parents (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2015). . In contrast, another perspective offered in the literature is that a lack of flexibility for academic mothers contributes to the academic gender gap (Baker, 2012). The authors also argue that flexibility is dependent on the level of institutional support available to new mothers and the systems in place to allow them to adjust their schedules. My study confirms the importance of institutional support for new mothers transitioning back into the workplace and engaging in career progression.

Many of the participants talked about the ability that they had to block out time in their calendars to attend events for their children, any highlighted the importance of their ability to have their classes scheduled within their children's school hours. Managerial support was strongly attributed to their ability to manage their work hours with their personal responsibilities. The participants in this study expressed the sentiment that this was almost an expectation that they had in their role and there were no comments made about what might have happened if that flexibility was not provided.

Most of the participants in my study also had a lot of autonomy in their role which like flexibility is a common feature of the academic profession. While studies have suggested that academics work long hours despite this autonomy (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004; Mason et al., 2013), the findings of this study suggests that the participants utilised the autonomy in their role to balance their workload with their children and many noted that they now spend their free-time with their children rather than doing additional work as they might have before they had children.

Jacobs and Winslow (2004) found that academic mothers overlook the long hours and pressure to work consistently as was often required to establish a tenured position. While the participants in this study all had established academic careers and had achieved tenure by the time that they had children, none expressed any driving need or desire to work long hours over and above their contracted hours. This was especially so in regards to the shift they had in their priorities for career advancement. Some of the participants noted that prior to having children they would have gone home and continued working, either doing research or preparing for classes. However, after having children they specifically talked about choosing to spend time with their children and not having enough energy at the end of each day to continue working.

The participants in this study expected to have additional flexibility when returning to work. In New Zealand, employees are able to request flexible work arrangements but there is no requirement on an employer to accomodate such requests either on a temporary or permanent basis on a parent's return to work, so long as there are business reasons to prevent such arrangements being given (Employment Relations Act 2000; Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987). Despite this, the participants expected flexibility in their work arrangements and felt disappointed and disadvantaged when it was not offered or available. An example of this was the participant who had to compromise about the hours she would do when she went back to work after having her child. She eventually agreed that she would return to work doing four days per week, but was disgruntled that she was not able to work less and considered that her workplace was not a family friendly environment partly because of the issues she had in not receiving the flexibility she desired. Her work place was not legally required to allow her to return to her position on a part-time basis. Expectations of workplace flexibility was a key theme emerging from participant's stories and more participants than not experienced the level of flexibility they desired on their return to work. Lack of flexibility has been cited in literature as having a direct negative

impact on the career progression of women academics (White, 2010), and the 'leaky pipeline' (Mason et al., 2013). Research by White (2010) found that women are far more likely than men to reduce their work hours to maintain their work-life balance, and that this is one of the factors which has led to the academic gender gap. While this study has not attempted to uncover work patterns of male academics, many of the participants in this study had reduced their hours when coming back to work after going on parental leave and had not resumed full-time hours as their children had become older, even though their appointment term was a 'full time' academic. Interestingly, none of the participants mentioned having any significant career progression since returning to work and while many attributed this to their own personal choice, it could be argued that their flexible work hours combined with their lack of focus on research may have a direct impact on their ability to secure promotions. This flexibility is also a double-edged sword. On one hand it enables the participants to vary their work schedules to fit in with their family obligations, but on the other hand it reinforces the patriarchal structures which still exist within the labour force as noted by Mason et al., (2013), and which may disadvantage women in general as well as the participants in this study.

Mason et al., (2013) also suggested that women were also more likely to leave their positions as pressures on their career become more significant or because they were offered better positions outside Academia. However, in my study no participants identified their intention to leave Academia, including those who had negative experiences during the transition back into the university workplace. One participant who had two children did however note that having another child would be a "massive career killer". This was not in the context of leaving Academia for another industry, but was anecdotal to whether she would have a career at all after having a third child. The participants had made a significant investment in their academic career and had all completed their PhD prior to having children and so are unlikely at this point in time to leave Academia for another industry, especially after having received tenure.

The participants did not discuss in any detail alternative child care methods such as after school care or nannies once their children were in school. Generally speaking, the participants talked about the need to have part-time hours to pick up and drop off their children from school as non-negotiable. Some coordinated these day-care and school responsibilities with their husband or partner, but the possibility of any other sort of care was not mentioned. On reflection, it seems

that this expectation of non-negotiable care for their children is directly linked to the participant's expectations of flexibility which is viewed as integral to an academic career (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Monroe et al., (2008) suggested that work hours influenced the academic gender gap and noted that women were 'less able' to work full time. This wording is interesting, and suggested that women had little choice as to whether or not they could work full-time when also responsible for coordinating their family responsibilities.

Despite a discourse around shifting academic focus and flexibility, the participants did not always have an adequate level of institutional support when transitioning back to work and re-engaging in their academic careers. In this study, some of the participants felt they had to come back to work early for reasons such as financial pressures, that they needed to come back for their career, or out of boredom. One participant was also pressured into moving back into a full-time capacity to manage her workload when looking back she felt that her workload should have been reduced and appropriate for her part-time hours.

The concept of the participants working split shifts was also a unique aspect of this study as the idea of the multiple shifts that a mother may work during their day is not something that has been widely discussed in the context of academic careers, although it has been discussed in the context of careers in general (Burris, 1991; Hochschild & Machung, 1989). In my study, many of the participants moved between their role as an academic and their role as a mother many times during the day. For example, a participant could be in her shift as a mother in the morning in coordinating her children to get ready for the day and dropping them at day-care or at school, then working their shift as an academic, back in their shift as a mother in leaving work to pick up their children and get them ready for bed, and back to their shift as an academic once their children were asleep and they continued working until they themselves were ready to sleep. This finding of working split shifts was similar to that which was noted in literature by Hochschild and Machung (1989), in that working women often have multiple shifts when balancing their work and family lives. However, my study contrasted other literature which suggested that professional women prioritised their work shifts over that of their personal shifts (Burris, 1991). The participants in my study specifically noted that their family came first over their work, and many had non-negotiable standards of care when it came balancing work with the needs of their children, especially in terms of their work hours and teaching schedules.

Also related to this concept of split shifts are studies which have suggested that women experience heavier workloads and higher stress when attempting to balance their dual roles as both academics and mothers (Kossek & Ruderman, 2012; Michailidis, 2008), and this can have significant flow on effects for their well-being and lifestyle. This raises the question of how long these split shifts can continue, and whether an academic mother can maintain these shifts throughout children's childhood. This also links into the double-edged sword of flexibility. While most of the participants had the flexibility to transition between these shifts multiple times throughout the day, it could lead to greater burnout and stress and not having a significant amount of free time away from their work and family commitments.

The narrative about the timing of the birth of the participants' first child was an important theme to emerge from the research. Regardless of whether their first child was planned or unplanned, all the participants communicated that they had their first child at the optimum time in terms of their career development. The timing that academics had children was not something that was commonly discussed throughout the literature therefore this is an important finding which arose from this study. One study by Drago and Colbeck (2004) suggested that women may decide not to have children until they had finished their PhD due to the difficulties completing it with a child. Another study by Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) also suggested that women taken into account the concerns they have about gaining tenure, as well as their age when determining when to have children. The findings in this study are consistent with this research as the participants in my study who had completed their PhD by the time that they had their first child, which suggests they have made a choice to complete their studies and obtain a tenured position prior to having children. Despite each of the participants facing different issues and personal challenges at different points in their careers, most would not change the timing that they had their children. The only exception of this was the participant who struggled with fertility and would have liked to have had her children earlier.

Heroes of the Stories

As discussed in Chapter Two, individuals who tell stories about their careers often tend to be the 'heroes' of their own stories in an attempt to find meaning and reassurance in their experience (Inkson, 2007). This may result in the participants emphasising the role they played in particular aspects of their stories, or potentially leaving out other characters who may have played a

supporting role. This is a trend which has come through in my study. However, not only do the participants place themselves as the centre of their stories, those who had positive experiences tended to place significant emphasis on the role of their manager or HOD.

Professional Heroes

Manager

One of the most dominant themes from this study was the impact that the manager had on a participant's journey as a mother and a scholar, and the potential that managers had to make or break their experiences. Most of the participants directly attributed their positive experience to their HOD, who came through their narratives as a 'hero'. They talked about the amount of support their HODs gave to them during their pregnancy, maternity and return to work and that without that support they may not have had such a great experience. Most of the participants specifically talked about the allowances their HOD gave them to reschedule their classes around their children, or to adjust their hours to allow them to pick-up and drop-off their children from school. However, two of the participants who did not have such a positive experience really attributed it the lack of support from their HOD. This also seems to be a type of smoothing happening on behalf of the mothers who are attempting to make sense of their negative experience and find a person or factor in whom they can use to explain why they did not get the level of support they expected or wanted (Inkson et al., 2015; Spence, 1986).

Roth (2003) noted that the ability for a women to move up the corporate ladder was directly influenced by the level of support and the quality of relationships that those women had in their workplace. While the importance of institutional support is reported in the literature (Baker, 2012; Kalev, 2009), it is usually from a perspective of mentoring, interpersonal relationships, flexibility and work-life balance. There is limited research on the importance of institutional and managerial support from the perspective of the mother. There is also an absence of literature on the role of the actual manager in the success or difficulty that the mothers had in their journey, which is interesting considering how prevalent that theme was in the findings.

Peers and mentorship (lack of)

The participants noted that they would have liked to have a peer network or mentorship earlier in their parental journey, but that desire did not seem to last once their children got older. This links

in with the maternity narrative discussed previously and the importance that the participants placed on their early parental period. One of the commonly cited reasons for the gender gap in Academia is lack of mentorship. This was found in studies to result in women having less support and not having the knowledge or power to secure high level positions (Henley, 2015; Kalev, 2009). A study by Cooray et al. (2014) also suggested that women tend to lack support within their workplace, which has a direct impact to their ability secure promotions. Lack of effective networks was also noted in the literature as having a contributing factor to the development of a 'chilly climate', or the difficulties that women face in progressing into more senior positions within Academia (Hesli & Lee, 2013; Maranto & Griffin, 2011). Participants did not specifically talk about a lack of networks, but they did point to their exclusion from out of work activities (such as network events) in order to breastfeed and engage in other mothering activities. These limitations are another example of how mothers are filtered out of the patriarchal process and are rendered invisible in important places and spaces (Acker, 2006). While some aspects of flexibility are present in the participants stories (i.e. teaching hours), other academic activities such as networking are inaccessible as they are scheduled at the very time that mothers cannot be present. The participants were aware that there is a price of not being visible in the wider life of the university, and expressed some discontent about not being to prioritise those activities.

This could mean that the participants had less opportunities to network than their childless colleagues, which according to the literature could impact on their career advancement (Monroe et al., 2008; Toutkoushian et al., 2007). Research by Stack (2004) has suggested that where a high proportion of women exist within a discipline, networks were able to be formed which minimised the barriers to productivity and increase their rate of publications. Some of the participants specifically mentioned the lack of mentorship or support groups within their university and that they would have like to have had some sort of mentor who had gone through the parental leave process, or some other sort of support group specifically for mothers. Mentorship was something that has been widely discussed in research on the academic gender gap and is specifically mentioned in a number of studies (Henley, 2015; Kalev, 2009), and that they play an important part in encouraging women academics to apply for promotions and have more confidence in their career.

Personal Heroes

It was striking that the participants constructed themselves as the real heroes of their stores, far over and above other forms of personal support. The participants placed limited emphasis on their husbands, partners and personal support networks. Many discussed the coordination of their children's lives and balancing their work as if they were the sole carer of their children. Only one participant had no personal support network and the challenges that she faced were unique to her situation and did not appear in any of the other stories. An example of this is a comment made by that participant that it was practically impossible for her to attend overseas conferences, whereas the others only discussed this difficulty in the context of while they were breastfeeding. One participant talked a lot about her own mother and the support she provided in the early stages of her child's life especially when trying to coordinate breastfeeding when going back to work. Overall partners and other support systems were rarely discussed and it seemed that when telling their stories, the participants focussed primarily on the part they played and downplayed the role of others. These findings are consistent with the concept of the career hero in the careers literature (Inkson et al., 2015; Osland, 1995;). The participants told their stories in retrospect and considered their own decisions and actions as central to their career success. While their career journey may not have been the 'epic' battle or challenge that Campbell (1968) and Osland (1995) portray, nevertheless becoming a mother and managing an academic career was a significant and life changing event and in order to make sense of this process of transition and change, participants articulated a story of complexity and compromise in which they became the heroes of their own stories.

As previously mentioned during the discussion into flexibility, there was little mention of childcare from any of the participants. This includes both professional childcare such as nannies and after-school care, as well as personal child-care from families or partners. Some of the participants specifically mentioned having no support network available to help them look after their child, especially when wanting to travel. However in general most did not discuss childcare arrangements they used, if any. These career stories and the portrayal of the participant as the hero of the story offer important insights into how the participants reflect and process their own career and motherhood story. It is argued that career stories are "only one possible version of the career it describes. Stories involve subjectivity, personal interpretation and personal purpose" (Inkson et al., 2015, p. 277). In constructing themselves as the hero of their own story, as the

academic mother who can 'do it all', it appears that the participants are engaged in a 'modern epic' (Collin, 2000) where there is no final happy ending, but a continual process of career exploration and renegotiation in a context of ongoing change.

Guilt and Motherhood

While the women had established somewhat of hero status in their own stories, guilt was also a common sentiment expressed in their stories. Guilt is something that has been cited as a common emotion for both working mothers generally (Guendouzi, 2006), as well as in the context of the academic career (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004). This guilt occurred at many stages throughout their journey into motherhood and mostly derived from the participants feeling they were no longer able to deliver the same level of performance as what they previously had done. This is a factor which did not arise in other studies, which focused more on the time that they were spending at work or with their children (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004). One participant however talked about the guilt she felt that her family were missing out on her if she chose to go to the networking events she felt were so important for her career, which was in line with those previous studies. However, another participant felt significant guilt when she went into premature labour and felt that she had done something wrong to the university by having to go on leave earlier than expected. This narrative of guilt is not surprising given how many of the decisions and actions around caring for children seem to be directly managed by the women themselves. Guilt also implies some angst that comes with trying to juggle children with having a career. The emotions experienced by academic parents is a potential theme for future research, especially in relation to the factors which cause that guilt.

Summary

The three overarching themes discussed in this section were; 'The dominant maternity narrative', 'Shifting academic focus' and 'Heroes of the stories'. My study highlighted a number of new findings not discussed by previous studies and included the strong focus that the participants placed on the early maternity period and transition back to work period of their parental journey, feelings of survival and 'saving face' in their careers, the impact of being a mother on the trajectory of an academic's career orientation, the lack of emphasis that the women placed on their partners and/or support networks, the strong role played by the scholar mama's manager and/or HOD, and finally the construction of themselves as the heroes of their story.

Chapter Six

Conclusions

Introduction

This study presents the stories of seven courageous scholar mamas in order to understand the experiences that they had when becoming a mother, and transitioning back into their careers. There were several unique findings which have not arisen in other studies on the academic careers, leading to some interesting insights into the experiences of academic mothers in New Zealand. This chapter begins by revisiting the aim of the research, then provides an overview of the key findings. The contributions of the study are also discussed, as well as the significance of the narrative methodology which was used. Limitations of the research are then discussed, and suggestions for further research are proposed. This chapter concludes with some of the personal reflections I have had over the entirety of the study.

Research Aims

This research aimed to explore the experiences of successful women academics around parenthood and to understand the impact on their academic careers over time.

Overview of Findings

There were three overarching themes which arose and were discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter Five). These were; 'The dominant maternity narrative' 'Shifting academic focus" and 'Heroes of the stories'. The dominant maternity narrative suggested that the scholar mamas placed a very strong emphasis on their early parental journey including both their maternity leave and their transition back into work. The participants who were involved in the stories had children who were at least five years old at the time of the interviews, however it was difficult to tell how old the children were when looking back over their stories because of the strong emphasis they placed on that period of their journey. The experiences they had during that time, whether positive or negative, really set the tone for their entire stories and many of the defining moments of their

narratives were from during that time. These findings suggest that the experiences that academic mothers have during this period of their journey into motherhood are the most important in terms of how they felt their experience has been.

The next main theme was 'Shifting academic focus'. Part of this theme was the change in career orientation once the participants in the study had children and the reduced ambition they had in terms of gaining promotions. The way that they met their professional obligations also shifted after having children and for some, research was no longer a significant priority. Part of this also involved feelings of survival in terms of their academic identity with narratives about 'ticking the boxes' and 'doing just enough to get by'. These participants were also acutely aware of the importance of maintaining an image of wanting to progress in their careers, despite 'no longer caring'.

The last finding was 'Heroes of the stories'. Despite most of the participants being married or being in long term relationships, these partners were described as playing a limited role in terms of the participants' stories. They also did not widely discuss other support networks such as family members or formal childcare arrangements. Hence they mainly focussed on their own identity when discussing both the positive and negative aspects of their experiences. They were the 'heroes of their own stories'. Their narratives also included professional heroes such as the important role that their HOD played in their own perceived success of balancing their work and families. Those that did not have support from that HOD had a largely negative experiences in their academic career since becoming a mother.

Contributions

This study has made a number of unique and meaningful contributions to the area of academic careers, especially in the New Zealand context. Many of the findings had not previously arisen from other studies and have led to some interesting insights which will pave the way for future studies. The significance that the participants placed on the early stage of their parental journey, including their maternity leave and transition back into work is an important finding. The significance of their experiences at that early stage tells us that this period of their journey was extremely important to them in terms of how smooth their transition into motherhood was. I have termed this contribution the 'dominant maternity narrative'.

Another key contribution was the shifting academic focus as there is little if any discussion in the extant literature on the shifting focus of academic women in response to motherhood. This finding builds on previous work on the academic gender gap (Kalev, 2009; Monroe et al., 2008; Toutkoushian et al., 2007), and the leaky pipeline especially where the changes in priorities are attributed to flexibility or flexibility issues (Mason et al., 2013; White, 2010). This study found that after having children many of the participants had a significant change both in their internal drive for career progression as well the emphasis they place in completing their professional obligations such as research.

The finding that the participants tended to work split shifts was another key contribution of this study, and has not been widely discussed in the context of academic careers. This concept has been discussed in the context of careers in general (Burris, 1991; Hochschild & Machung, 1989), however my study further expanded the concept and found that many of the participants moved between their role as an academic and their role as a mother many times during the day. They did note though that their family came first and therefore many had non-negotiable standards of care when it came to balancing work with the needs of their children, especially in terms of their work hours and teaching schedules.

Another aspect of the research which has not been explored to any great degree was the narrative about the timing of the birth of the scholar mama's first child. Regardless of whether their first child was planned or unplanned, all the participants communicated that they had their first child at the optimum time in terms of their career. The timing that academics had children is not something that was commonly discussed throughout the literature.

A final contribution that this study has made in the area of academic careers, especially in the New Zealand context was the hero narrative. While the concept of 'heroes' has been discussed in the context of careers in general, it has not been widely discussed in the context of the academic career (Inkson et al., 2015; Polkinghorne, 1995). The participants constructed themselves as the heroes of their own stories, placing little emphasis on other support systems such as partners, family members and child-care facilities. They also emphasised the role of the HOD in terms of shaping both positive and negative experiences.

The Narrative Approach for Understanding Academic Mothers

The narrative approach elicited unique indepth insights into the journey of academic mothers. Exploring each participant's entire story and using story grids allowed the uniqueness of each story to be profiled as well as identifying common themes which arose between the stories. The 'researcher and the story' approach (Myerhoff, 1994; Chase, 2013) used throughout the study facilitated a greater level of trust with the participants which lead to them sharing many intimate and emotional aspects of their stories. Sharing stories with each of the participants and relating to many of their individual experiences, provided a sense of a common purpose in terms of navigating the treacherous seas of integrating motherhood and balancing work.

Limitations

The participants who agreed to partake in this study were recruited because they were at a particular stage of their career and parental journey. They had all completed their PhD before having children, and their youngest child was at least five years old at the time of the interviews. This criteria was set to gather stories from established scholar mamas who had time to transition back into the workforce before telling me their story.

Another challenge was the unconscious smoothing which seemed to occur throughout many of the scholar mamas' stories. Many downplayed their lack of career progression since having children and suggested it was their own choice why they had not gained higher positions since returning to work after having children. The true feelings and/or reasons behind this were somewhat hidden by this smoothing, and it may have underplayed the effects that having children had on their career. This smoothing could have also masked larger issues in regards to productivity and performance.

Further Research

An important additional to the field of knowledge on Academia and parenting would be more extensive studies focusing on parents of both genders who are in different stages throughout their academic and parental journeys in order to understand the differences in their experiences. While there have been large and longitudinal studies completed in America (Ward & Wolf-Wendel,

2012), academic contexts can differ by country and discipline, so New Zealand would benefit from an extensive study considering the academic career of various groups of parents.

Future research could also focus on how the age of children impacts an academic career at various stages, especially in the New Zealand context. There are some studies internationally which have suggested there are additional complexities as children become older (Fox, 2005; O'Meara & Campbell, 2011), however the age of the children did not play a large focus in my study and was largely not mentioned by the participants.

The affect that children have on the entire academic career trajectory is also something which could be further researched. While some studies address the effects that children have on certain aspects of an academic career such as research publications (Henley, 2015), there have been limited studies on how children affect the trajectory of an academic parent's career including the rate and number of promotions.

Another opportunity for future research is the type of emotions that occur throughout different stages of the parental journey, and how these emotions affect the mental wellness of an academic parent, and furthermore how it might affect their productivity and ability to meet their academic obligations. Guilt was a strong emotion that came through in my study, but it was not clear what the long-term effect of such guilt will be, how long it was felt and whether it had any direct or indirect impact on the scholar mama's performance.

Something which was implied throughout my study was the expectations the women had regarding flexibility in terms of the hours they worked and the times that they taught. This expectation is not something which commonly occurs in many other industries, however flexibility itself is something which many corporate organisations are attempting to implement in their workplaces due to a large amount of research suggesting it increases employee engagement, morale and performance. My study did not seem to suggest that the flexibility the scholar mamas were offered helped with productivity, but most noted it made a big difference in being able to coordinate their personal lives with their work which could positively impact their emotional well-being. Future research could also therefore focus on the link between flexibility being offered and an academic parent's productivity, and whether the flexible work arrangements inherent in the

academic industry have any significant bearing on the rates and quality of research publication and/or the efficiency of how those academics meet their other professional obligations.

While the dominant maternity narrative was a very interesting finding in my study, a lot of information may have been missed in terms of the challenges or positive experiences they faced once their children got older. Why exactly this time of their journey represented such a turning point in their experiences is something that could benefit from further study, especially if a longitudinal approach is used. It would be interesting revisiting these participants further down their career to understand whether the dominant maternity narrative remains or whether it might fade over time.

Thoughts on Gender Issues

The literature suggests that the reason for the disproportionate number of females versus males in senior academic positions is related to factors such as that females can be judged by harsher standards than their male colleagues. Family commitments, lack of institutional support including inflexibility of departments, absence of mentors, hostile work environments, precarious academic contracts, and the under-representation of women in Academia in general. This 'chilly climate' is well documented in research (Maranto & Griffin, 2011), and some of the scholar mamas throughout this study made comments in support of such research.

Many of the participants felt that a gender bias does exist, but were unable to point to anything specific which they felt that created this gender issue. There were many underlying aspects of the findings which indirectly related this, such as the biased methods of evaluation (Hunter & Leahey, 2010), the disconnect between the needs of mothers and families, and the protections currently available in the New Zealand legislature (Employment Relations Act 2000; Human Rights Act 1993; Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987).

Some of the literature pointed directly to the dominance of males within a department as having a direct effect on the 'chilly climate' which exists within the workplace (Maranto & Griffin, 2011), and interestingly the scholar mamas who specifically identified as belonging to a male dominated faculty were the ones who faced greater issues throughout their parental leave and return to work. Those who did not mention the gender make-up of their departments seemed to have better

experiences, however it is not clear whether the proportion of men in those departments were different to the women who had negative experiences.

Final Reflection

There were many times throughout this study that I found myself comparing my own story with those of the scholar mamas especially during the data analysis stage of my research. One of the aspects I found particularly interesting because of my own experience was the expectations that the scholar mamas had concerning flexibility on their return to work. I was envious that most of the scholar mamas had the ability to negotiate a flexible working arrangement, having being unable to do so with my own employer. When I got pregnant with my son, I was a single mother working as an entry level office administrator.

At the time, I had no doubt that I would return to work on a full-time basis. However, when the time came to return to work I realised that the amount of money that I would be earning would not cover the cost of full-time childcare. I tried to negotiate coming back to work on reduced hours which my workplace was unable to accommodate, so I was forced to resign. I had no negative feelings toward my employer as I knew they had no legal duty to accommodate my request and I was lucky that I was living with my mother and financially did not need a significant amount of money to survive.

Thinking about it now, I realise how many mothers are forced to return to work full-time being unable to negotiate reduced hours, and not having the support system to allow them not to work. Even now that I have a much more senior position, I am still required to put my child into after-school care programmes to keep my current work position, and without that care I would be required to find another potentially lower-level job that was willing to offer me part-time hours if I wanted to avoid putting him into any sort of care programme.

I also reflect back on the significant amount of trust that the participants had in telling their stories to me. They shared some immensely emotional aspects of their lives and I am honoured that they chose to share some very personal moments of their lives with someone who at first was a complete stranger. I hope that anyone reading this story will be as touched by their honesty and openness as I was and will be able to reflect on their own journeys.

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Appendices

AUT

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

Appendix One – Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

20 September 2015

Project Title

New Zealand scholar mamas: the influence of motherhood on academic careers (working title).

An Invitation

The researcher's name is Samantha Hamilton and is a post-graduate student at the Auckland University of Technology completing a Masters in Business (Human Resource Management). You are invited to take part in a research project exploring the stories of mothers who have had children after they have established their academic careers. Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary and you can choose to withdraw at any time.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to understand how having children has impacted the professional lives and careers of academics who are mothers.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You were chosen for this study as you have been identified as having a successful career in Academia and had your first child when you were from the ages of 32 - 42 years old and once your academic career was established. Your child is now over five years old and you have are working in a tenured academic position.

What will happen in this research?

This project will involve interviews which are designed to obtain valuable stories surrounding your journey into motherhood and the impact it has had on your career. Your participation in the interview is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the data collection, after this has concluded it will not be possible to withdraw. If you agree to be interviewed you will be asked to spend approximately one hour speaking with the researcher about your experiences. These interviews will also be entirely confidential, and any data published will be completely anonymous and unidentifiable. The interview will be audio-tapped and transcribed. You will be provided a copy of your transcripts at which point you can identify any information you are not comfortable with publishing.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Because motherhood can be a sensitive issue, you may feel uncomfortable or distressed talking about your thoughts and experiences in the interview.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

You can decide the extent of the information you would like to divulge, and choose not to talk about anything which you find distressing. You may also cease the interview at any time.

What are the benefits?

There are no immediate benefits to you for taking part in this study. You will be contributing by providing information about a topic which is not often studied and may provide future potential mothers with valuable insights when making decisions around motherhood and their career. It may also provide wider social value by providing employers and organisations insight into the issues that mothers face in the workplace and the impact that these decisions have on their lives, both personally and professionally.

How will my privacy be protected?

Confidentiality will be ensured in all aspects of the research process. Anonymity will also be ensured as will be no way to identify individual contributors in the published data. Where anonymity cannot be guaranteed, for example where the researcher knows the contributor, all information will be treated with the strictest confidence. Any identifying information such as names, locations, and workplaces will be replaced with un-identifying pseudonyms.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The only cost involved in partaking in this research is your time. If you choose to take part in the interview, this will take approximately one hour of your time. Any travel costs will be fully reimbursed by the researcher.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Please indicate within two weeks of receiving this information sheet whether you would like to take part in the interview.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

You can express interest to partake in the research by completing the attached consent form. Once you have completed the consent form, can you please email to the researcher and a time will be set to meet you at a convenient time.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you would like a copy of the research you can indicate this on your consent form. Once the results are available the results can either be sent to you directly via mail or email. The results will be available around twelve months after the initiation of the study.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Candice Harris, Candice.harris@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext.: 5102.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTC, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext.: 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Samantha Hamilton, spf1845@aut.ac.nz, 0210 298 9212.

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Candice Harris, candice.harris@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext.: 5102.

Appendix Two – Participant Consent Form

Consent Form

Project title: ***New Zealand scholar mamas: the influence of motherhood on academic careers (working title).***

Project Supervisor: ***Dr Candice Harris – Associate Professor – Faculty of Business and Law***

Researcher: ***Samantha Hamilton***

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 20 September 2015.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Note: The participant should keep a copy of this form

Indicative Interview Questions

Semi Structured Interview – Possible Questions

1. Tell me the story about your journey into Academia
 - a. What made you/when did you decide to pursue a career in Academia?
2. Please tell me about when you decided to have your first child
 - a. What factors influenced your decision about when to have a child or children?
 - b. How did having a child/children impact on your decision about continuing in an academic role?
3. Can you please talk about your experiences as an academic mother
 - a. Do you think the timing of having a child/ren affected the way your career has progressed? What do you consider are the impacts of having a child/ren on your academic career?
 - b. Have you experienced any difficulties have you faced coming back into your academic work place after taking parental leave?
 - c. Have you felt disadvantaged or discriminated against since having your child?
 - d. Has being a mother made you a better academic?
 - e. Has the way that you meet your professional obligations as an academic (research, teaching, and service) changed since becoming a mother?
 - i. If so, in what ways?
4. Do you identify with terms such as academic mothers or scholar mamas?
5. Would you have done anything differently if you could do it all again?

Appendix Four – Ethics Approval



AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

11 December 2015

Candice Harris
Faculty of Business and Law

Dear Candice

Re Ethics Application: 15/399 New Zealand scholar mamas: the influence of motherhood on academic careers.

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 10 December 2018.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 10 December 2018;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 10 December 2018 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate O'Connor'.

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Samantha Hamilton spf1845@aut.ac.nz