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ROLE-SET DIVERSITY: BENEFIT OR STRAIN?

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ABSTRACT

Most social workers interact with many different types of people in performing their jobs. One view suggests such diversity is beneficial; an opposing view is that this causes job strains. This research indicates a correlation between increased strain and increased role-set diversity only for those age 36-41. Perceived benefits rose with diversity for those in mental health and public welfare settings. For mental health workers, benefits outweighed strains more often as diversity rose. Several areas of job satisfaction were explored for correlation with role-set diversity. There were significant findings by age, years of experience, and agency type. There were no significant correlations for the sample as a whole, indicating that the relationship between role-set diversity and benefits or strains is a much more complex one than has previously been believed.

Researchers investigating job satisfaction and burnout, a related concept, have found it particularly useful to invoke constructs derived from role theory as both explanatory and outcome variables (Brief et al., 1979; Cummings and ElSalmi, 1970; Harrison, 1980; Miles, 1977; Snoek, 1966; Wolfe and Snoek 1962). Briefly, role theory is concerned with the influence upon human behavior of the occupancy of social positions and the enactment of their attendant roles. A social position is an identity that designates a commonly recognized set of persons, e.g., physician,

janitor, athlete, grandmother (Biddle, 1979) while a role is defined to be a set of expectations applied to the incumbent of a particular position by both the incumbent and other persons known as role senders. These are all persons who serve to communicate and enforce the expectations held for a particular role (Brief et al., 1979; Snoek, 1966). The extent of role-set diversity experienced by an individual is defined to be the number of different classes of role senders with whom relationships must be maintained by the incumbent of a specific position (Snoek, 1966).

Of particular relevance to the study of job satisfaction are several constructs which refer to problematic aspects of role enactment. Primary among these is role strain, initially conceptualized by Goode (1960) as the "felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations" (p. 483). Role strain is frequently targeted as both a principal predictor of and a measure of work dissatisfaction (Brief et al., 1979; Harrison, 1980; Miles, 1977; Snoek, 1966). Recent theorists have teased out several subcomponents of role strain, such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload, for the investigation of their independent effects on dissatisfaction. Role conflict is a form of stress generated by the requirement to enact roles that conflict with the individual's value system, or that involve contradictory and conflicting expectations for the individual (Brief et al., 1979). Role ambiguity occurs when individuals confront single or multiple roles that are not clearly articulated in terms of behaviors or performance levels expected (Brief et al., 1979). Role overload is the inability to adequately meet all expectations held for a role in the time allotted (Sieber, 1974).

While theorists are generally in agreement that the above constitute crucial explanatory factors in the investigations of job satisfaction, they are not always in agreement as to how these factors should affect satisfaction. One such construct that has provoked considerable disagreement is role-set diversity, with some maintaining that an increase in this factor is associated only with increased strain (Goode, 1960; Snoek, 1966), and others arguing that whatever strains

are incurred are far outweighed by benefits acquired by virtue of having a multi-faceted role set (Marks, 1977).

In this paper, we attempt to bring some clarification to this controversy by examining the relationship between role-set diversity and various indices of job satisfaction among social workers in direct practice. We feel this population to be one of especial relevance to this issue since social workers must typically interact with a number of different types of people in the performance of their tasks. Therefore, a wide variation in role-set diversity is expected to obtain in this group. Furthermore, researchers interested in the phenomenon of burnout frequently point to social workers as a population that is at high risk for this problem, suggesting, at least tentatively, that the two variables may be related (Harrison, 1980; Larson et al., 1978).

Opposing Views of Role-Set Diversity

The view that a multiplicity of roles is predominantly stressful rather than beneficial is advocated forcefully by Goode (1960) in an early theoretical piece. Goode lists several properties of role incumbency per se which create stress for the individual. First, role demands are frequently required at times or places that are inconvenient for the incumbent and are therefore experienced as burdensome. Second, all individuals take part in many different obligations which are often themselves contradictory or involve conflicts of time, place, or resources for the individual. Third, each role relationship demands several activities or responses, sometimes involving a delicate balance of interpersonal relationships in order to avoid emotional turmoil. For these reasons, the individual typically faces a "wide, distracting, and sometimes conflicting array of role obligations" (p. 485). Goode argues that the individual cannot meet all these demands to the satisfaction of all those in his total role network and hence role strain is a normal occurrence in everyday life.

Since it is obvious that individuals do appear to manage these conflicting demands rather successfully, Goode goes on to describe the various techniques at the individual's disposal which serve to keep role strain at manageable levels so that societal functioning is not disrupted. A critical assumption in Goode's argument is that the individual's reservoir of energy and skills with which to fulfill role demands is finite, and that each additional role depletes some of these resources. Therefore, Goode maintains that expansion of the individual's role system is, in the long run, deleterious to ego since "role strain begins to increase more rapidly with a larger number of roles than do the corresponding role rewards or counterpayments from alter" (p. 487).

An entirely different perspective has been advanced by other theorists who take issue with the view that roles are energy-depleting, as advanced by Goode, and instead focus on the energy-producing and beneficial aspects of multiple roles. Marks (1977) characterizes this latter position to be an energy-expansion theory of activity and group life as opposed to a spending or drain theory. He buttresses these claims by citing the supportive and energy-producing aspect of family roles and by observing that abundant energy is "found" for activities to which we are highly committed, while we are frequently unable to "find" energy to fulfill those roles to which we are not very committed. In sum, he argues that "we need to see the experience of both time and energy as outcomes or products of our role bargains rather than assuming ...that they are already constituted for us as scarcities even before our role bargains are made" (p. 929).

Concurring with this position, Sieber delineates various rewards that accrue to the incumbent of multiple roles. For example, one with a diverse role set is likely to acquire additional rights and privileges with each added role. And in addition to legitimate rights and privileges which adhere to roles, the incumbent frequently finds greater access to noninstitutionalized privileges or perquisites, such as social and business contacts, or access to potential mates. Further, a wide variety of roles serves as a buffer against

failure in any particular role. Additionally, Sieber (1974) argues, multiple roles may enrich the personality and enhance one's self-conception. On balance, then, this perspective suggests that role-set diversity would provide incumbents of positions with more benefits than strains.

Research on the Effects of Role-Set Diversity

Empirical research, to date, on the relationship between role-set diversity and various indices of job well-being fails to provide overwhelming support for either theoretical position. Snoek's study of 596 full-time wage and salary workers revealed a significant association between tension on the job and interaction with a diversified set of role senders. Further, other variables such as gender, education, and size of organization, that were initially related to tension, were found to have no significant effect after role-set diversity and level of supervisory responsibility were controlled (Snoek, 1966). This study, however, has been criticized by others as being an inadequate test of the consequences of role-set diversity in that Snoek only measured tensions experienced on the job without concomitant attention to gratifications (Sieber, 1974). The possibility certainly exists that if respondents were queried regarding such elements as "sense of excitement" or "sense of having a challenging job," such benefits of role-set diversity would predominate over tensions (Sieber, 1974).

The research of Miles (1977) focuses on a factor that is similar to role-set diversity, and which he refers to as "role-set configuration," defined as the "mix of characteristics of role senders within the role set" (p. 22). His findings suggest that aspects of the role-set other than the sheer number of types of role senders are important predictors of the extent of role strain. In particular, organizational distance, or the number of distinct intra- or inter-organizational boundaries which separate focal person and role sender, was found to be positively related to role conflict for persons occupying internal organizational roles, but negatively related to role conflict for those in boundary-spanning roles. Further, the existence of

multiple superiors in the role set was found to be directly related to role ambiguity, particularly for those in internal organizational roles.

Still others have documented a positive effect for role-set diversity. For example, Woodward (1965) found that diversity in role senders did not result in conflict. In one study of 30 supervisors who received direction from five executives, the supervisors were favorable about the situation, voicing satisfaction because they knew everything that was going on in the firm. In another firm with a similar arrangement, she found that most interviewed felt the organization worked well. Cummings and ElSalmi (1970) found role-set diversity to be positively associated with several components of need fulfillment in their study of managerial positions. Managers having highly diversified role sets perceived smaller need fulfillment deficiencies than managers with less diversified role sets. This relationship was particularly pronounced in the higher-level need areas of self-actualization and eliminate autonomy. Role-set diversification was also positively related to need fulfillment and to the perceived possibility of need fulfillment in the future. On the other hand, managers with less diversified role sets perceived greater possibility of fulfillment of needs for security than did those having greater role diversity.

In sum, it would appear that both positive and negative points of view about role diversity have merit, and that evidence can be found to support either position. The present study is an effort to provide a more comprehensive test of these competing viewpoints by including measures of both strains and benefits in exploring the relationship between role-set diversity and job satisfaction. Several outcomes are possible using this expanded approach. It may well be that there is a level of diversity below which there would not exist adequate opportunity for gratifications, but also an upper limit beyond which role strain would outweigh the benefits. Then too, it is possible that benefits and strains offset one another to such an extent that variation in role-set diversity has no overall impact on job satisfaction. Since we wish to

give equal consideration to both theoretical positions outlined at the beginning of this paper, we have elected not to formulate specific research hypotheses, but have decided instead to proceed with a partial replication of the studies by Snoek and Cummings and ElSalmi, examining the impact of role-set diversity upon strains, benefits, and components of need fulfillment among social workers.

METHOD

Sample

Subjects in this study were members of the Alabama Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. A questionnaire was mailed in January 1985 to 500 members randomly selected. Replies were received from 274 for a response rate of 55 percent. Because burn-out, turnover, and other indicators of job dissatisfaction seem to be greater problems among direct-service workers, we selected only respondents who were in direct practice with clients and were not administrators or supervisors. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of this sample of 125.

Most had an MSW, and it is expected that drawing the sample from NASW members had resulted in an over-representation of those with MSW's. Nearly all the sample had either a BSW or MSW. Because of the lack of variability in education, gender, and race, these were not used as variables in the analysis. Responses were analyzed by age, years of experience, and agency type. NASW members might also represent practitioners who are more likely to be satisfied with their work, and the reader is cautioned about generalizing these findings to social workers who are not NASW members.

Measurement of the Dependent Variables

The dependent variables studied included indices of satisfaction such as perceived need importance, perceived need fulfillment, perceived need fulfillment deficiency, and perceived possibility of need fulfillment; strains; benefits; and the balance between strains and benefits. Data on the first four dependent

Table 1. Sample Characteristics.

<u>Years of Experience</u>		
<u>Years</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0-5	33	26.4
6-9	32	25.6
10-12	28	22.4
13 or more	32	25.6

<u>Agency Type</u>		
	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Medical	34	28
Mental Health*	48	39
Public Welfare	25	20
Other	16	13

* This category includes those working in mental hospitals, mental health sections of other hospitals, other residential mental health facilities, mental health centers, mental health counseling agencies (such as family therapy), or private counseling.

	<u>Age</u>			<u>Race</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>		<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
22-29	32	26	Black	13	10.4
30-35	34	27	White	112	89.6
36-41	26	21			
42 or older	32	26			

	<u>Education</u>			<u>Gender</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>		<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Social Work Degree	117	93.6	Female	108	86.4
Other	8	6.4	Male	17	13.6

NOTE: Not all categories total 125 due to missing data.

variables were collected using instruments identical to those used by Cummings and ElSalmi (1970), which measured the variables in five need categories: social, security, esteem, autonomy, and self-actualization. The questions in each category were scattered in the section on needs. Respondents were asked four questions on each item in this section: (1) How important is this item to you? (2) How much is there now in your position? (3) How much should there be in your position? (4) What do you think your chances are of attaining the level you desire in your present position? The first scale indicates need importance and the second scale taps need satisfaction. Need fulfillment deficiency was defined as the difference between question (3) and question (2). The last question dealt with the possibility of need satisfaction. Respondents rated the first three questions on a scale from 1 to 7 (with 7 indicating the most). The fourth question was rated on a scale from 0 to 100 percent with 10 percent intervals.

Strain was measured by the Job Related Tension Index (JRT) which Snoek (1966) used in his research. This scale, developed by the Michigan Survey Research Center, consisted of 15 items considered common problems on the job. Respondents were asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being the most often), how frequently they felt bothered by each item, and their mean response was calculated. Evidence for the validity of this index as a measure of job dissatisfaction has been provided by a number of studies (Snoek, 1966).

To test for benefits which might be the result of expanded role sets, a list of 15 items was constructed based on suggestions in the literature discussed above as to the rewards of role diversity. Respondents were asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being the most often), how frequently they felt each item. The items were:

1. Feeling that you have things under control.
2. Feeling that you have been successful at some work task.

3. Feeling that your job is interesting.
4. Feeling that you are appreciated or needed.
5. Feeling that you are free to make most of your own decisions about how to do your job.
6. Feeling that what you do is important.
7. Feeling that you have satisfying relationships connected with your work.
8. Feeling that you can get the information you need to do your work.
9. Feeling that you have others to turn to for help in getting your job done.
10. Feeling that you are able to handle persons having different points of view about issues in your work.
11. Feeling that you can adjust well to a variety of situations.
12. Feeling that you have a lot of influence.
13. Feeling that you have many opportunities to be creative in your work.
14. Feeling that others understand the limits on your time and adjust their demands accordingly.
15. Feeling that you can determine your own working pace (within limits).

Balance was defined as the difference between the mean benefit score and the mean strain score.

Measurement of Role-Set Diversity

Role-set diversity was operationalized as the number of types of persons with whom the worker interacts, as Snoek (1966) did in his research. This is

done on the assumption that there is some equivalence in all role relationships with a particular category of person--for example, between social workers and judges. Diversity, therefore, refers to the number of different relationships by type, and not to the number of persons with whom the social worker interacts. However, whereas Snoek only delineated five general classes of role senders, respondents in this study were presented a list of 23 types of role senders and an "other" category. They were asked to check each type of person with whom they interact on a regular basis. This list included clients, client collaterals, supervisors, people you supervise, agency administrators, agency board members, people who provide or might provide funding, co-workers, support staff (typists, receptionists, etc.), news people, volunteers, lawyers, judges, law enforcement personnel, social service personnel in other agencies (including persons who can provide resources), physicians (including psychiatrists), nurses, psychologists, teachers, home care or homemaker personnel, foster parents, adoptive parents, social work students or other students, and others. The total number checked was the role-set diversity score.

In addition to how many classes of role senders the respondent was involved with, Snoek also asked respondents to rate how frequently they interacted with each class and used that frequency in part of his analysis. A pretest of our research was conducted in which we asked for frequencies. However, most told us that they could not even make a good guess since they saw so many people, even when they were asked for frequencies for this week only. We elected to leave frequency out of the final questionnaire due to the apparent unreliability of the information.

RESULTS

Social workers in direct practice are involved with a large number of role senders. The mean role-set diversity score was 13.04. Strain scores had a possible range of 1.0 to 5.0. Respondents' scores ranged from 1.06 to 3.67. These results were not skewed as were Snoek's, who reported over 50 percent with scores below 1.6. In the present study, the mean was 2.29.

The pattern of correlations among role-set diversity and the various outcome variables in the study turned out to be more complex than was anticipated. A number of significant interactions were found by respondent's age, years of experience, and employing agency.

Strain

Whereas Snoek (1966) found strain to increase with an increase in role-set diversity, this study found no significant association between these variables for the sample as a whole ($r = .033$). However, a significant interaction was found with age: for those aged 36-41, which represent about 22 percent of the sample, the correlation of role-set diversity with strain is $.44$ ($p < .03$). There were no significant correlations for other age groups. No significant correlations were found by type of agency or years of experience.

Snoek grouped strain scores into categories: low (1.5 or lower) and high (1.6 or higher). He found an association between role-set diversity and high or low strain scores, significant at the $.001$ level, with the proportion of respondents in the high strain group rising as role-set diversity increased. We redid the analysis employing a similar regrouping of the data, but found no such relationship. We also grouped strain scores so that approximately half fell in the low group (2.67 or lower). Again there was no significant association.

Benefit

Sieber (1974) argued that an increase in role-set diversity would confer many additional benefits upon the individual. In this study, however, no relationship was found between role-set diversity and benefits for the total sample ($r = .04$). Grouping into high (3.80-5.00) and low (1.00-3.79) benefit scores still resulted in no significant association. However, once again a significant interaction effect was found. Benefit scores were positively correlated with role-set diversity for those working in mental health agencies ($r = .34$, $p < .02$) and those working in public welfare

($r = .41$, $p < .04$). No association was found for those working in medical settings, the only other agency type with sufficient numbers of respondents for analysis.

Benefit-Strain Balance

Since those arguing for the positive effects of role-set diversity have suggested that the balance of benefits versus strains incurred through increased diversity would be on the side of the former, this proposition was subjected to test in the present study. It is noteworthy that benefits predominated over strains in general for this group. For 89 percent of respondents, the balance score indicated that benefits exceeded strains on the job. Again, no correlation was found for the total sample between role-set diversity and raw balance scores ($r = .01$). Scores were further grouped into low and high balance, to see if a dichotomous distribution on this variable would reveal an association with role-set diversity. However, the factors remained unrelated. On the other hand, a significant interaction was found by type of agency in which the respondent worked. Among mental health workers, as role-set diversity increased, the balance score (mean benefit score minus mean strain score) increased ($r = .35$, $p < .02$).

Role-Set Diversity and Need Satisfaction

Cummings and ElSalmi (1970) found an association between role-set diversity and three components of work-need satisfaction: need-fulfillment deficiency, need satisfaction, and perceived possibility of need satisfaction in the current position. Table 2 presents the results, for the current study, of the correlation of need-fulfillment deficiency, need satisfaction, perceived possibility of need satisfaction, and need importance with role-set diversity for selected categories of social work personnel. As before, no significant correlation between role-set diversity and each need component emerged for the sample as a whole. On the other hand, several interesting interactions occurred, for specific need areas, with type of agency in which respondent worked, respondent's age, and respondent's years of experience in the position.

Table 2.
 Correlation of Need Fulfillment Deficiency, Need Satisfaction, Possibility of Need Satisfaction, and Need Importance with Role-Set Diversity for Selected Categories of Social Work Personnel.

Need Area	Social Worker Category	Correlation With Role Set Diversity
Need Fulfillment Deficiency		
Overall	Total Sample	.07
Esteem	Age 36-41	-.43*
Autonomy	Age 36-41	-.40*
Overall	0-5 Yrs Exper	-.39*
Autonomy	0-5 Yrs Exper	-.47**
Esteem	0-5 Yrs Exper	-.41*
Possibility of Need Satisfaction		
Overall	Total Sample	.02
Social	Mental Health Wks	.30*
Autonomy	Age 36-41	-.51**
Self-Actualization	Age 36-41	-.42*
Esteem	0-5 Yrs Exper	-.44*
Autonomy	0-5 Yrs Exper	-.49**
Need Satisfaction		
Overall	Total Sample	.03
Social	Age 22-29	.44*
Security	Age 36-41	.51**
Autonomy	Age 36-41	-.47*
Social	10-12 Yrs Exper	.40*
Need Importance		
Security	Age 22-29	.42*
Security	Age 30-35	.39*
Security	Medical Wks	.47**

* p < .05

** p < .01

For example, role-set diversity was negatively related to need-fulfillment deficiency in the areas of esteem ($r = -.43, p < .03$) and autonomy ($r = -.40, p < .05$) for those aged 36-41. A significant negative correlation was found between role-set diversity and overall need fulfillment deficiency for those having 0-5 years of experience ($r = -.39, p < .03$). This relationship was strongest in the area of autonomy ($r = -.47, p < .006$) and esteem ($r = -.41, p < .02$).

The area of perceived possibility of need fulfillment revealed divergent interactive effects for role-set diversity. Mental health workers tended to perceive a greater possibility of social need satisfaction with an increase in role-set diversity ($r = .30, p < .05$). Yet diversity for those age 36-41 was negatively related to perceived possibility of need satisfaction in the areas of autonomy ($r = -.51, p < .007$) and self-actualization ($r = -.42, p < .04$). Similarly, among those with 0-5 years of experience role-set diversity was negatively associated with perceived possibility of need satisfaction in the areas of esteem ($r = -.44, p < .02$) and autonomy ($r = -.49, p < .004$).

Mixed effects were also found for role-set diversity on perceived need satisfaction. Among those aged 22-29, role-set diversity was positively related to social need satisfaction ($r = .44, p < .02$). A positive relationship also obtained for those aged 36-41 between diversity and the satisfaction of security needs ($r = .51, p < .008$). Among those with 10-12 years of experience, diversity was also positively related to the satisfaction of social needs ($r = .40, p < .04$). On the other hand, diversity was negatively associated with the satisfaction of the need for autonomy among those aged 36-41 ($r = -.47, p < .02$).

Contrary to the findings of Cummings and ElSalmi, we found role-set diversity to be positively related to need importance only when specific sample subgroups were examined. For example, the importance of security needs rose with role-set diversity for those aged 22-29 ($r = .42, p < .02$), for those aged 30-35 ($r = .39, p < .03$), and for those working in medical settings ($r = .47, p < .004$).

DISCUSSION

In this study, the authors were unable to replicate any of the findings of either Snoek or Cummings and ElSalmi for the sample as a whole. Thus, role-set diversity appears not to be a general predictor of benefits, strains, or need satisfaction among this particular sample of social workers. It was hoped that measuring benefits as well as tensions attached to positions would enable us to examine whether the balance of these elements would be affected by role-set diversity. However, no relationship between balance scores and diversity was found for the total sample.

What does emerge, on the other hand, is the rather important finding that role-set diversity demonstrates varying effects upon these outcome variables, depending upon the characteristics of the worker. For example, those working in mental health agencies and in public welfare seem largely to benefit from a more-diversified role set, with diversity being positively related to benefits perceived on the job for both types of workers. Mental health workers were further characterized by an increase in the perceived possibility that their social needs would be satisfied in the current position and by benefits increasingly outweighing strains, with an increase in role-set diversity. Since no detrimental effects of role-set diversity were found for these groups, it would appear that an expanded role set is beneficial for mental health and public welfare workers.

Among workers in medical settings, the importance of security needs rose with role-set diversity. No immediate explanation comes to mind for this. We would suggest, however, that workers in medical settings may have several "bosses," since their work must meet requirements of the hospital administrators, physicians, supervisors, clients, and collaterals. This may lead to feelings of vulnerability and a desire for greater security in the job. In a similar vein, Miles (1977) found the existence of multiple superiors in the role set to be associated with role ambiguity.

Experience on the job emerged as an important mediator of the influence of diversity upon the outcome variables. For those with 0-5 years of experience, need-fulfillment deficiency generally and autonomy and esteem need-fulfillment deficiencies specifically decreased as role-set diversity increased. This suggests that providing newer workers with assignments which provide for more role-set diversity might increase job satisfaction in these critical early years. On the other hand, perceived possibility of need satisfaction in the areas of esteem and autonomy fell as role-set diversity increased. This might be because they are likely to encounter more situations in which they do not have sufficient experience to work independently and competently. They might then need to appeal for help. If such appeals are treated negatively, it would be reasonable that these workers would view the situation as having less potential for satisfying esteem and autonomy needs.

In regard to age, those 22-35 attached more importance to security needs as role-set diversity increased. These workers are most likely to be rearing children, and thus security needs might be more important to them. They also might be somewhat more vulnerable to role overload, so that their desire for security would increase with the additional burdens of an expanded role set. This age group also found more satisfaction of social needs as role-set diversity increased. This is probably due to the fact that these younger workers are more likely to be engaged in establishing themselves as social workers and welcome the additional contacts provided by a multifaceted role set.

Role-set diversity proved to be an especially influential factor for the 36-41 age group. Strain increased with role-set diversity. Perceived possibility of fulfillment of autonomy and self-actualization needs, as well as the satisfaction of autonomy needs all decreased as diversity increased. Why diversity has such a negative effect on this particular age group is not immediately apparent, although developmental literature does suggest that this is a particularly stressful period of adult life. As such, it may also

be a time when workers are especially vulnerable to the kind of role overload that could result from an excess of role responsibilities. On the positive side, however, security need satisfaction rose with role-set diversity, while need-fulfillment deficiency in the areas of esteem, self-actualization, and autonomy decreased.

Both the present study and that of Miles, in which the impact of role-set configuration upon role conflict and ambiguity was found to depend upon other characteristics of the position, indicate that a simplistic model attributing a uniform influence for role-set diversity upon job satisfaction is no longer adequate to account for the research findings. Future research should be directed toward the examination of which specific kinds of positions are affected in which specific kinds of ways by variation in role-set diversity. It will also be of interest to explore the ways in which workers negotiate with role senders for levels of expectations and demands that are acceptable to them, thus preventing strain from occurring when complex role sets are undertaken. Only by recognizing the complexity inherent in multifaceted roles can future research resolve the controversy over this issue.

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