

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF ROLE OVERLOAD AMONG STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

One of the biggest problems facing college students today is finding ways to fulfill all of their academic, work, and social responsibilities. More than any other generation, a large number of college students are combining full time studies with working 25-40 hours per week. In addition, they are being directed by parents, faculty and advisors to participate in student organizations, internships, competitions, and professional organizations. The result of these overwhelming responsibilities is often the feeling that they can never do it all; that is, a feeling of "role overload." This notion of role overload has been researched in a variety of fields including marketing, psychology, and sociology and occurs when one is "fulfilling several roles simultaneously" (Coverman 1989, p. 967) and "when the sheer volume of behavior demanded by the positions in the position set exceeds available time and energy" (Reilly 1982, p. 408).

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of the current study is to add to the sparse research in this area. Specifically, the study examines the degree of overload of business and nonbusiness students at a major state university and whether overload varies by the students gender, major, and/or class rank. In addition, the study investigates whether there is a relationship between degree of role overload and students' involvement with their education.

RESULTS

The results revealed no significant differences between marketing versus non-marketing business students and non-business students in their perceptions of role overload. However, there are significant differences between the sexes in terms of perceptions of role overload. Specifically, women perceive significantly greater overload, are much more educationally involved, and participate in more beneficial learning behaviors than do their male counterparts.

REFERENCES

Reilly, Michael D. (1982), "Working Wives and Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 8 (Winter), 407-418.

Coverman, Shelley (1989), "Role Overload, Role Conflict, and Stress: Addressing Consequences of Multiple Role Demands," *Social Forces*, Vol. 67 (4) (June), 965-982.