

# Perceptions and Work-Family Balance for MotherScholars Living, Working, & Simply Being during COVID-19

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# Strand 1: Innovations in Teaching/Research

- Focus on how the needs of MotherScholars have been met (or not met) during COVID-19
- Look at permanent changes for the better that have resulted
- Examine partnerships that have helped in the support & serving of others
- Review how MotherScholars were able to thrive in the face of constant change
- Self-care practices
- Celebrate MotherScholars – reignite the passion!!



Mother Scholar

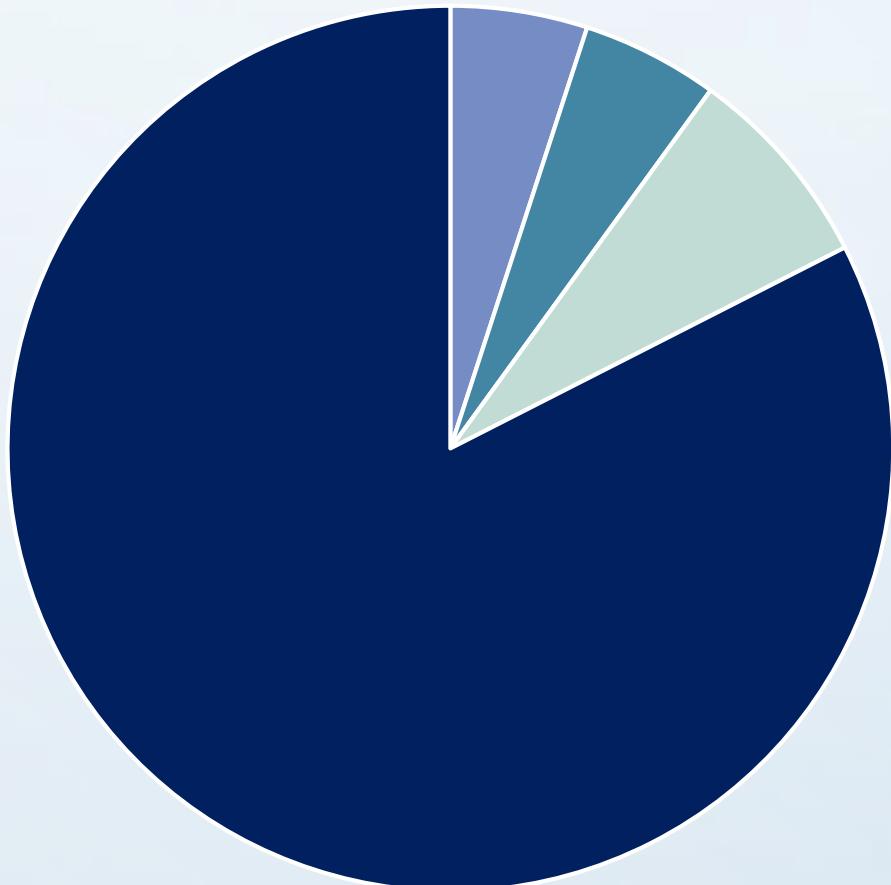


# Why Study MotherScholars?



# Demographics of Participants

40 MotherScholars (ranged from 35 – 54 years old)



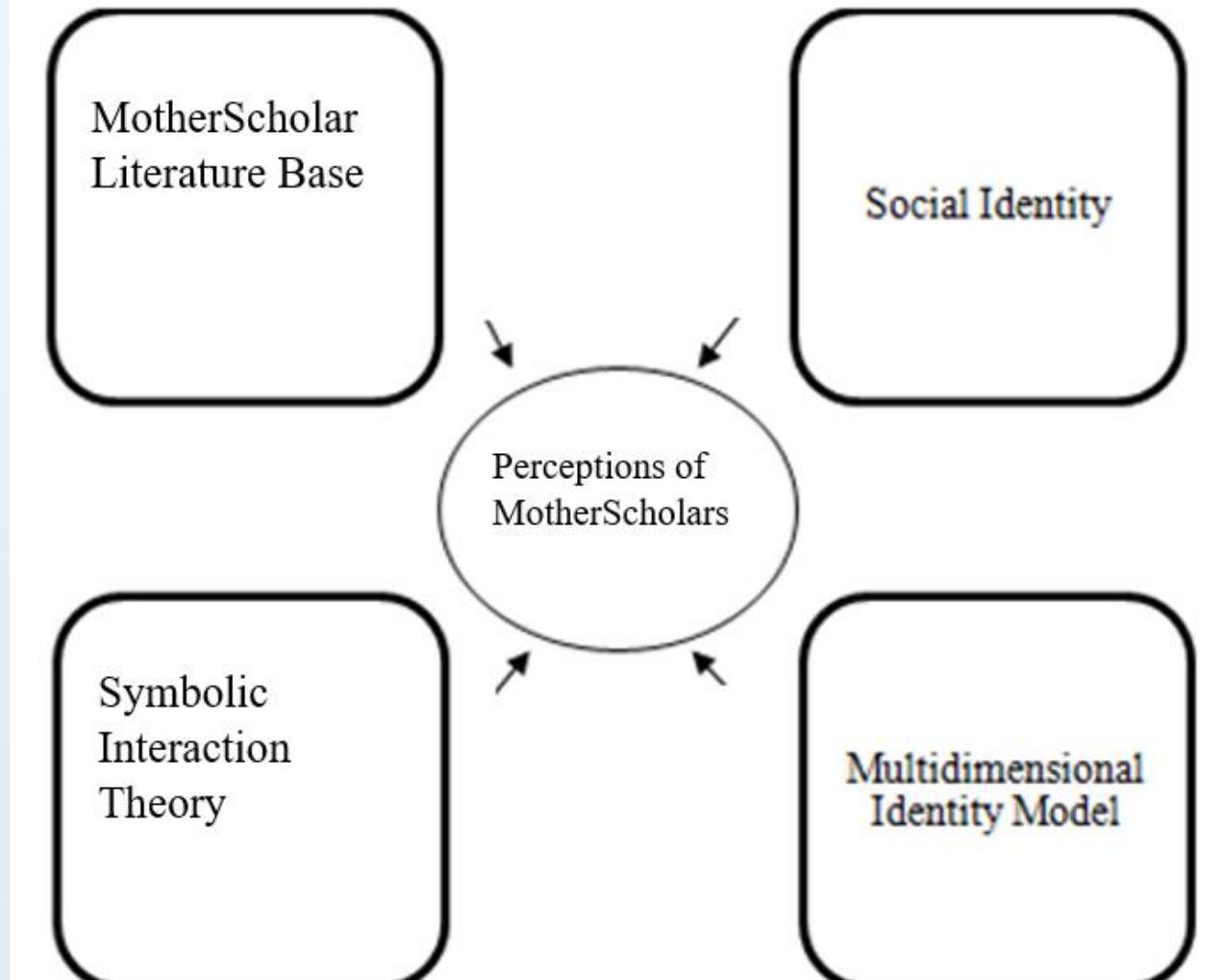
- Hispanic/Latina (2)      ■ Asian/Pacific Islander (2)
- Black/African American (3)      ■ White (33)



# Demographics of Participants (cont.)

| Number of MotherScholars | Age of Child  | Number of MotherScholars                                       | Age of Child |
|--------------------------|---------------|--|--------------|
| 3                        | In utero      | 2  | 13 years old |
| 1                        | 3.5 weeks old | 2  | 14 years old |
| 1                        | 10 weeks old  | 3  | 15 years old |
| 1                        | 5 months old  | 2  | 16 years old |
| 1                        | 7 months old  | 5  | 17 years old |
| 4                        | 1 year old    | 1  | 18 years old |
| 1                        | 15 months old | 3  | 20 years old |
| 1                        | 19 months old | 1  | 21 years old |
| 9                        | 2 years old   | 2  | 22 years old |
| 7                        | 3 years old   | 1  | 24 years old |
| 4                        | 4 years old   | 2  | 26 years old |
| 9                        | 5 years old   | 1  | 31 years old |
| 8                        | 6 years old   |  |              |
| 4                        | 7 years old   | Age of children ranged from in utero (3) through 31 years old. |              |
| 3                        | 8 years old   |  |              |
| 4                        | 9 years old   | The number of children per MotherScholar ranged from 1 to 11.  |              |
| 4                        | 10 years old  |  |              |
| 3                        | 11 years old  | The most common number of children per family was two (19).    |              |
| 5                        | 12 years old  |  |              |

# Theoretical Framework / Research Questions



1. How do those who classify as MotherScholars identify themselves?
2. Do MotherScholars report they are able to achieve work-family balance with regard to how they define themselves in the midst of COVID-19? Why or why not?



- Family First
- Boundaries
- Role of Mother
- Parenting Informing Work and Vice Versa
- Role of Job
- Passion
- Role Model

- Self-care
- Flexibility
- Fluidity
- Flexibility
- Schedule
- Time



- and Colleagues
- Interactions with Students
- Interactions with Peers and Other Working Mothers
- Setting

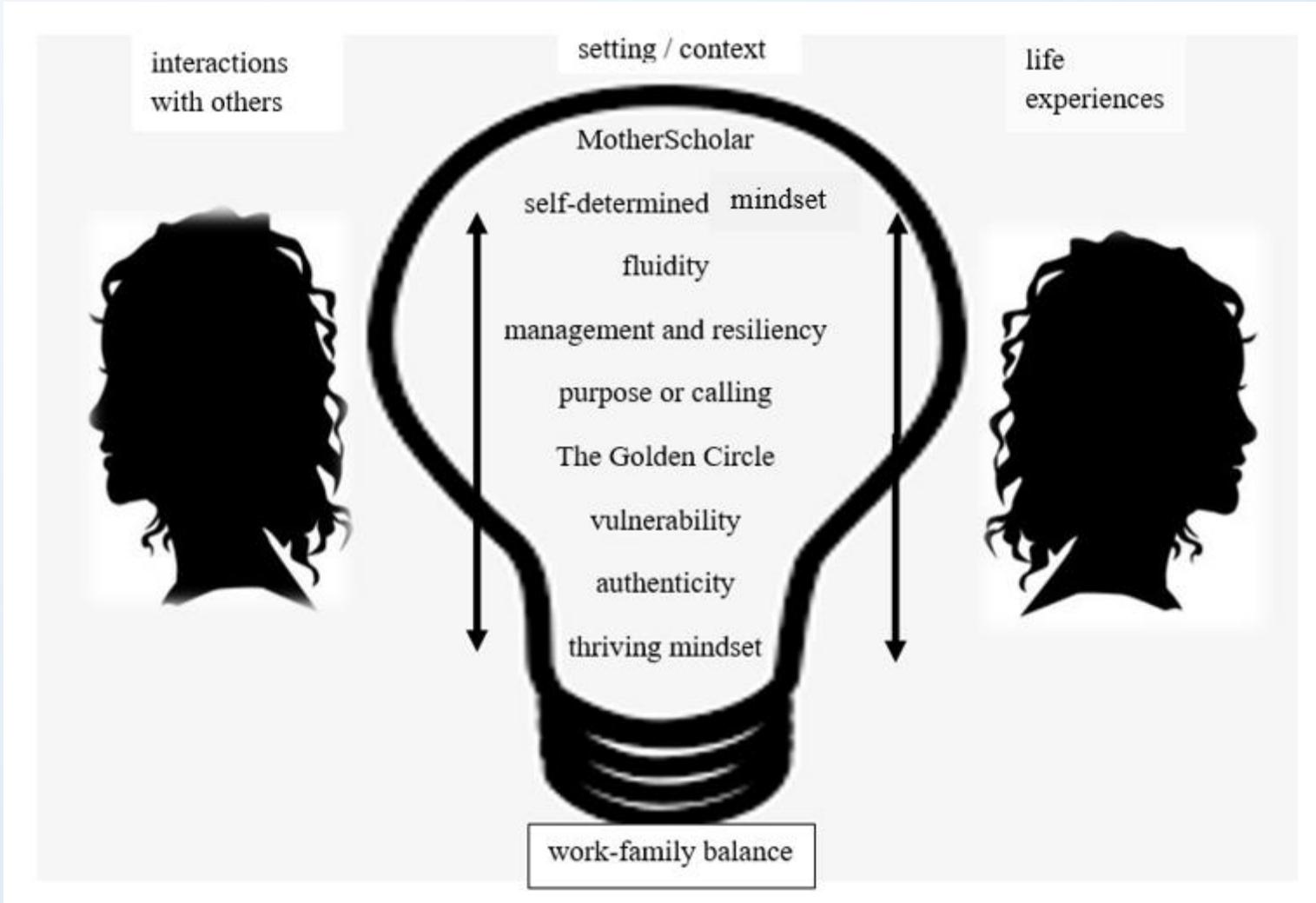
#### SOURCE

- Advocacy
- Expectations
- Multitask
- Guilt
- Support

“I love working, I'm a better mom because I have my work and my students. The escape from "mama" is refreshing for me and actually rejuvenates me to make me a better mother”. This notion of being a better mother when able to devote time to other things, such as work, has been examined by others in saying that while a MotherScholar is not an essential worker the work she does feels essential to her (Silbergleid, 2020).

"I never thought of being a work-from-home mom because, at its core, I love my work. It is a part of me. It's a way to create, learn, and grow. And I hope that I can show my kids that it's possible to do both. That I'm sending a positive message about working together as a unit to achieve our goals as a family. Balance isn't really ever true every day, but can be found over time. Sometimes the weekdays are hard with long hours, but the weekends are full of family fun. Sometimes the house is a mess, but we had a great family hike and cookout. That's the balance. Remembering what's most important and learning that some things can be let go."

“First and foremost, let me be clear. I am a mother. I am a mother to my four year old. However, I am also able to mother in other ways. I am a mother to my students through my teaching and my role as advisor at my university”. This statement that accounts for biological and other mothering (Claesson & Brice, 1989) highlights the Why for this particular MotherScholar in that she sees herself as both mother and teacher.



# Striking a Balance... or Attempting to find the Balance





# Recommendations



Create support networks either informally or formally  
(CohenMiller & Demers, 2019)

Form research and writing teams  
(Spradley et al., 2020)

Join social media groups, or other networks, to engage in research and/or solicit feedback on projects or pursue projects related to disciplines or gain ideas in how to engage in self-care  
(McDermott, 2020; Spradley et al., 2020)

Share personal experiences & stories (Piantanida et al., 2019)

Embrace multiple roles and needs including self-care (CohenMiller & Demers, 2019)

- ✓ Book is forthcoming in 2021/2022 – will be published via Lexington Books (an imprint of Rowman & Littlefield)

[\*\*Click Here for Book Trailer\*\*](#)

## MotherScholars' Perceptions and Experiences and the Impact on Work-Family Balance



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