

## **Role of Stage of Motherhood, Work Commitment and Identity on the Well-being of Professional Women**

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This study explored the impact of stage of motherhood, work commitments and aspects of identity on wellbeing. Mothers (n=133) who had valued their careers and had at least one child under 22yrs described their stage of motherhood based upon the age of their youngest child (stage 1 (0-4yrs); stage 2 (5-12yrs); stage 3 (13+)); work commitment (at home, part-time, full-time); aspects of identity (as a woman; mother; someone with a career) and wellbeing. Those at stage 2 reported highest levels of anxiety and depression; those not working reported greatest fatigue; greater wellbeing was associated a lower endorsement of being a woman or having a career and a higher endorsement of being a mother. Further, the influence of identity on wellbeing varied as children became more independent or work commitments changed highlighting the importance of consonance between identity and reality. For example, a stronger sense of having a career or being a woman was associated with less wellbeing in those at home fulltime or with children in stage 1 whereas a stronger identity as a mother was associated with greater wellbeing in those staying at home. To conclude, adaptive identities across the life course may facilitate wellbeing in professional women.

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