

WORK AND FAMILY VARIABLES AS MEDIATORS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WIVES' EMPLOYMENT AND HUSBANDS' WELL-BEING

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This study found that husbands of employed women reported slightly lower levels of job satisfaction, marital adjustment, and quality of life than husbands of housewives. Husbands' time commitment to work and satisfaction with childcare were found to mediate the effect of wives' employment on husbands' job satisfaction and marital adjustment, respectively.

The continued increase in the rate of married women's participation in the labor force, which reached 56 percent in 1987 (U.S. Department of Labor, 1987), has stimulated growing research interest in the effect of wives' employment status on both their own and their husbands' well-being. Although there is substantial evidence that employment outside the home tends to enhance the psychological well-being of women (Kessler & McRae, 1982; Warr & Parry, 1982), the consequences of such employment for their husbands' well-being is less clear. Concern about this issue derives from a wider research interest in relationships between work and family roles (Kanter, 1977; Nieva, 1984) and in growth of the dual-earner life-style in contemporary society. Investigating such issues brings into sharper focus the intrusiveness of work into family life and the effect of family life on job experiences (Moen, 1985; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971). Thus, the purpose of this study was to (1) investigate the relationships between women's employment and multiple indicators of husbands' well-being pertaining to work, family, and overall quality of life and (2) identify the mediating variables or underlying mechanisms that explain observed relationships.

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Prior research in this area has been both provocative and inconclusive. Several studies have found small but significant negative effects of women's employment on their husbands' well-being. For example, husbands of employed women have been reported to experience more job pressure (Burke & Weir, 1976), higher levels of depression (Kessler & McRae, 1982; Rosenfield, 1980), lower self-esteem (Kessler & McRae, 1982), greater marital instability (Booth, Johnson, White, & Edwards, 1984), lower marital satisfaction (Burke & Weir, 1976), lower job satisfaction (Burke & Weir, 1976; Staines, Pottick, & Fudge, 1985, 1986), and lower life satisfaction (Burke & Weir, 1976; Staines et al., 1986) than husbands of housewives. These studies have clearly indicated that both the work and family domains are permeable and that experiences in one domain affect the other (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1986).

However, other researchers have found no differences in levels of psychological depression (Roberts & O'Keefe, 1981), marital adjustment and marital satisfaction (Glenn & Weaver, 1978; Locksley, 1980; Staines, Pleck, Shepard, & O'Connor, 1978), or overall happiness (Benin & Nienstedt, 1985) between men married to employed women and those married to housewives. Moreover, although Booth (1977) found wives' employment to have generally nonsignificant effects on the marital discord and stress reported by their husbands, the few significant effects observed indicated that husbands of employed women tended to enjoy happier marriages, were less likely to have infectious diseases, and had lower levels of psychiatric impairment than husbands of housewives.

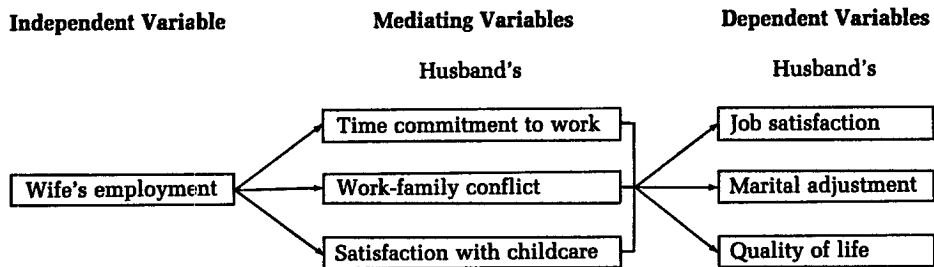
Staines and colleagues (1986) examined several potential mediators of the relationship between a wife's employment status and her husband's well-being. Although the results did not support the study's hypotheses that husbands' additional domestic burdens, negative attitudes toward wives' employment status, and restricted career mobility would have mediating roles, the researchers did find that the husbands of employed women felt less adequate as breadwinners than the husbands of housewives and that this feeling of inadequacy as a breadwinner mediated a negative relationship between a woman's employment and her husband's well-being. These disparate and sometimes conflicting findings of previous studies emphasize the need for new research reexamining the relationship between a woman's employment and her husband's well-being and clarifying the role of salient mediating variables that serve to explain the nature of the relationship.

SCOPE OF THE CURRENT STUDY

Figure 1 presents a conceptual model of the variables in this study and the hypothesized pattern of relationships among them. As indicated in the model, a wife's employment status is expected to be related to three dimensions of her husband's well-being, respectively representing his affective reactions to the domains of work, family, and personal life: job satisfaction; marital adjustment, or the degree of happiness of the husband in his marriage; and overall quality of life.

On the basis of prior research (Staines et al., 1986) suggesting that the

FIGURE 1
Conceptual Model of the Relationship Between Wives' Employment and Husbands' Well-being



effect of wives' employment on husbands' well-being is indirect, the model posits that a husband's time commitment to work, work-family conflict, and satisfaction with childcare will mediate the relationships of a wife's employment with his job satisfaction, marital adjustment, and quality of life. According to James and Brett (1984), a mediator effect is present if all the influence of an antecedent variable x (in this study, wife's employment) on a consequent variable y (husband's well-being) is transmitted through a third variable m , the mediating variable. In terms of the variables examined in this study, we expected that the relationship between a wife's employment and her husband's well-being would disappear when any one of the three potential mediating variables was held constant. The rationale for the inclusion of each mediator in the model follows.

Regarding time commitment to work, we expected that the husbands of employed women would devote less time to their work and that this would detract from their feelings of well-being in the work and nonwork domains. Recent studies (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Pleck, 1979, 1985) have shown that husbands in dual-earner families spend more hours per week engaged in housework and in childcare than do husbands of nonemployed women. One consequence of this increased participation in domestic activities by husbands of working wives may be that they become less involved in their jobs than are the husbands of housewives (Gould & Werbel, 1983), in turn receive fewer job-related rewards, and thereby experience decreased job satisfaction and develop more negative attitudes toward other life domains, including marriage and the overall quality of life (Lewis & Cooper, 1987).

It was also expected that work-family conflict would mediate the relationship between wives' employment and the three indicators of husbands' well-being. Work-family conflict refers to role demands in the work domain that conflict with simultaneous role demands in the family domain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The additional family-role activities required of men in dual-earner relationships are likely to produce high levels of work-family conflict for husbands as they attempt to manage simultaneous work- and family-domain pressures. Moreover, work-family conflict has been associated with decreased marital functioning (Barling, 1986) and with low levels

of job, family, and overall life satisfaction (Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980; Staines & O'Connor, 1980). Therefore, a wife's employment was expected to heighten the intensity of work-family conflict experienced by the husband and through that to have adverse effects on his job satisfaction, marital adjustment, and quality of life.

Finally, considering satisfaction with childcare, Benin and Nienstedt (1985) found that husbands in dual-career families with no children or with grown-up children (18 and older) reported greater happiness than did husbands of working wives with preschool and school-age children. This raises the possibility that arrangements for the care of preschool and school-age children may be a salient factor influencing a husband's reactions to his wife's employment. Pleck, Staines, and Lang (1978) identified childcare-related dilemmas as a major source of pressure on the employed parents of young children. Thus, the specific arrangements for childcare (Lewis & Cooper, 1987), the quality of such care (Bryson, Bryson, & Johnson, 1978), and the husband's satisfaction with these arrangements may mediate the relationship of a wife's employment with indicators of her husband's well-being. We expected that the husbands of employed wives with young children would experience more dissatisfaction with childcare arrangements than would husbands of nonemployed women, and that dissatisfaction with childcare would be associated with decreased satisfaction on the job, lower marital adjustment, and lower quality of life. This prediction was based on the assumption that stresses and dissatisfaction within the family role may not only affect marital adjustment and the quality of life (Burke & Weir, 1976; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1986; Lewis & Cooper, 1987), but also intrude into the work domain (Crouter, 1984) and affect work-related attitudes (Lewis & Cooper, 1987).

In summary, three indicators of well-being—job satisfaction, marital adjustment, and quality of life—were compared for husbands of housewives and husbands of employed women. To the extent that a woman's employment was related to her husband's well-being, three variables—husband's time commitment to work, work-family conflict, and satisfaction with childcare—were examined as possible mediators of this relationship.

METHODS

Sample

The sample for this study was drawn from a data set of 1,080 accountants randomly chosen from the membership lists of the Association of Government Accountants, the American Society of Certified Public Accountants, the National Association of Accountants, and the American Association of Women Accountants (Greenhaus, Bedeian, & Mossholder, 1987; Mossholder, Bedeian, Touliatos, & Barkman, 1985). The participation rate of individuals chosen for the overall data set was 63 percent. Inclusion in the present set ($N = 413$) was restricted to men who were employed full-time and married at the time the data were collected. Roughly half the men were industrial accountants, and the rest were certified public accountants or

government accountants. Approximately 75 percent of the accountants earned annual salaries of between \$20,000 and \$49,999. Eighty percent of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 59, and the modal age category ($N = 178$) was 30–39 years. Average levels of job tenure and organizational tenure were approximately two and six years respectively. Nearly 94 percent of the respondents held college degrees and 41 percent of the wives were college graduates.

Measures

Wife's employment status was assessed from responses to an open-ended question regarding spouse employment. The data showed that the wives of 214 respondents were employed at the time of the study and the wives of 199 were not employed. A dichotomous variable was created in which husbands of employed wives were coded 2 and husbands of nonemployed wives were coded 1.

Overall job satisfaction was measured by the short form of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). Responses to the 20 items were averaged to produce a total job satisfaction score ($\alpha = .91$).

Marital adjustment was assessed by Locke and Wallace's (1959) Marital Adjustment Scale, which taps the degree of happiness within a marriage; agreement or disagreement between spouses on such matters as finances, demonstration of affection, and philosophy of life; mutuality in resolving disagreements; and commonality of spouses' interests. Responses to the 15 items were averaged so that high scores reflected high levels of marital adjustment and low scores reflected the presence of extensive marital problems ($\alpha = .76$). The scale has been cited as the most widely used and validated measure of marital quality (L'Abate & Goodrich, 1980).

Quality of life was assessed with a scale used by Staines and colleagues (1986) and derived from Quinn and Shepard's (1974) Quality of Employment Survey. In the first portion of the scale, respondents rated their present life situation on eight 7-point bipolar scales (e.g., boring-interesting, lonely-friendly, empty-full). Following previous usage (Greenhaus et al., 1987), we averaged and standardized the seven items. Responses to two other items measuring happiness ("Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days? Not too happy, pretty happy, very happy"), and life satisfaction ("In general, how satisfying do you find the ways you are spending your life these days? Not very satisfying, pretty satisfying, completely satisfying") were also averaged and standardized. We then averaged the two component standard scores to produce an overall quality of life index ($\alpha = .93$).

Time commitment to work was determined from individuals' responses to two items asking them to indicate their employment status (part-time or full-time) and, on the average, how many hours a week they worked on their current job. We excluded respondents who reported working part-time from this study and combined and coded the response options for hours worked by full-time accountants to create four categories of approximately equal

intervals: 30–40 hours, 41–48 hours, 49–59 hours, and 60 hours or more. The modal response category was 41–48 hours per week ($N = 200$).

Work-family conflict was measured by eight items adapted from Burke, Weir, and Duwors's (1979) scale assessing the impact of job on homelife. The eight items measured the perceived effects of current job demands on mental and physical states at home, participation in home activities, vacation, and social activities, and the respondent's relationship with his spouse. Responses to the 5-point items were reverse-scored and averaged ($\alpha = .92$) so that high scores reflected a negative impact of job on homelife (work-family conflict), and low scores reflected a positive impact of job on homelife.

To assess satisfaction with childcare, we asked respondents with young children at home ($N = 221$) to identify childcare arrangements; the options specified ranged from in-home care by self or spouse through care in a day-care center to self-care by the child. They were also asked to indicate their satisfaction with the arrangements on a 4-point scale ranging from 1, very dissatisfied, to 4, very satisfied.

Finally, demographic variables were assessed. Recent studies (Fendrich, 1984; Staines et al., 1985, 1986) have pointed to the importance of controlling for the effects of potentially confounding demographic variables in assessing the relationship between wives' employment and husbands' well-being. We selected five demographic variables suggested in prior research as salient controls: husband's age, education, and salary (Staines et al., 1986), wife's education (Duncan, 1979), and number of children in a family (Bryson et al., 1978; Fendrich, 1984).

Husband's age included five levels ranging from 20–29 years to above 59 years. Both husband's and wife's education were categorized into eight levels ranging from not having completed high school to attainment of a doctoral degree. Husband's salary consisted of six levels, from \$10,000–19,999 to over \$59,999. Number of children was measured by an item asking respondents to indicate the number and ages of their children.

Data Analysis

Following the procedure used by Staines and colleagues (1986), we performed multiple regression analysis to examine the relationship between wife's employment and husband's well-being. In the first step, each indicator of husband's well-being was regressed on wife's employment status to establish the presence or absence of an association between the independent and dependent variables. In the second step, husband's well-being was regressed on wife's employment, and on the five demographic variables (husband's age, husband's education, wife's education, husband's salary, and number of children). If the relationship between wife's employment and husband's well-being was substantially similar after the inclusion of demographic controls, the relationship could not be attributed to the demographic characteristics of the sample. In the third step, husband's well-being was regressed on wife's employment, the five demographic controls, and one of the proposed mediators: time commitment to work, work-family conflict, or

satisfaction with childcare. If the relationship between wife's employment and husband's well-being was substantially reduced by the addition of any one of the three hypothesized mediators, we assumed that the variable played a mediating role. The step-by-step inclusion of the demographic controls and the mediator variables facilitated a clear assessment of which particular variables mediated the relationship observed between wife's employment and the three indicators of husband's well-being.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the correlations among the study variables. Note that wife's employment was significantly related to husband's job satisfaction and quality of life. Subsequent *t*-tests revealed that job satisfaction was significantly lower ($t = 2.58, p < .01$) among husbands of employed women ($\bar{x} = 3.29, s.d. = .65$) than among husbands of nonemployed women ($\bar{x} = 3.45, s.d. = .58$). In a similar vein, quality of life was lower ($t = 2.70, p < .01$) for husbands of employed women ($\bar{x} = -.10, s.d. = .90$) than for husbands of nonemployed women ($\bar{x} = .14, s.d. = .88$). The significant correlations among quality of life, job satisfaction, and marital adjustment show that the three indicators of husbands' well-being are moderately inter-related (median $r = .41$).

Table 2 presents the results of the regression analyses predicting husbands' job satisfaction. Wife's employment had a significant effect both prior to ($\beta = -.13, p < .01$) and after ($\beta = -.10, p < .05$) the inclusion of the demographic control variables. The effect of wife's employment was reduced to nonsignificance following the inclusion of time commitment to work. The inclusion of work-family conflict also reduced the effect of wife's employment on husband's job satisfaction to nonsignificance. An inspection of Table 1 reveals that time commitment to work was the only mediating variable that was significantly related to both wife's employment ($r = -.10, p < .05$) and husband's job satisfaction ($r = .29, p < .001$). Further inspection of the data shows that husbands of employed women reported working fewer hours per week than husbands of housewives ($\bar{x} = 1.91$ vs. $2.06, t = 1.94, p = .053$). Thus, it appears that a reduction in husbands' time commitment to work provides a partial explanation for the negative relationship between wives' employment and husbands' job satisfaction. Although work-family conflict was unrelated to wife's employment, it had a negative effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = -.30, p < .001$).

Because the childcare satisfaction variable was available only for the 221 respondents with young children, we conducted a separate regression analysis to test for the mediating effect of this variable on the relationship between wife's employment and husband's job satisfaction. Columns 5, 6, and 7 of Table 2 report this analysis. The results show that for the subgroup of the sample with young children, wife's employment had a nonsignificant effect on husband's job satisfaction both before and after the inclusion of demographic controls and after the inclusion of childcare satisfaction in the regression equation.

TABLE 1
Intercorrelations Among Variables^a

Variables	Means	Standard Deviations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Independent variable									
1. Wife's employment ^b	1.52	0.50							
Dependent variables									
2. Job satisfaction	3.38	0.62	-.13						
3. Marital adjustment	7.27	1.67	-.08	.14					
4. Quality of life	0.03	0.90	-.13	.52	.41				
Mediating variables									
5. Time commitment to work	1.98	0.81	-.10	.29	-.06	.06			
6. Work-family conflict	2.86	0.80	.05	-.30	-.33	-.46	.21		
7. Satisfaction with childcare	3.66	0.56	-.52	.10	.17	.11	-.02	-.02	

^a $n = 413$ for all variables except satisfaction with childcare ($n = 221$). For variables with $n = 413$, r 's of magnitude .10 and above are significant at the .05 level or better; for variables with $n = 221$, r 's of .12 and above are significant at the .05 level or better.

^b Wife not employed = 1, wife employed = 2.

TABLE 2
Results of Regression Analyses Predicting Husbands' Job Satisfaction^a

Variables	All Respondents			Respondents with Young Children			
	Before Controls 1	After Controls 2	Time Commitment to Work 3	Work-Family Conflict 4	Before Controls 5	After Controls 6	After Controls and Mediating Variable with Childcare 7
Independent variable							
Wife's employment ^b	-.13**	-.10*	-.09	-.09	-.12	-.07	-.04
Control variables							
Husband's age	.07	.08	.08	.03	.02	.02	-.02
Husband's education	-.08	-.07	-.07	-.07	.08	.08	-.08
Wife's education	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.02	.00	.00	
Number of children	-.11*	-.08	-.08	-.12*	.01	.01	.06
Husband's salary	.25***	.25***	.17***	.26***	.38***	.38***	.38***
Mediating variables							
Time commitment to work			-.25***				
Work-family conflict				-.30***			
Satisfaction with childcare							
R ²	.02**	.09***	.15***	.18***	.01	.15**	.15***
df	1,401	6,396	7,395	7,395	1,220	6,215	7,214

^a Cell entries are standardized regression coefficients. Results reported in columns 5, 6, and 7 pertain to respondents (n = 221) with young children.

^b Wife not employed = 1, wife employed = 2.

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

Table 3 presents the results of the regression analyses predicting husbands' marital adjustment. The data show that the initially nonsignificant relationship between wife's employment and husband's marital adjustment ($\beta = -.08$) became significant with the inclusion of the demographic controls ($\beta = -.12, p < .05$) and remained significant after time commitment to work was included ($\beta = -.13, p < .01$). The effect of wife's employment on husband's marital adjustment remained significant also when work-family conflict ($\beta = -.11, p < .05$) was included as a mediator. Columns 5, 6, and 7 of Table 3 show the results of the regression analysis for the restricted sample of men with young children. Although the multivariate F for the regression equation as a whole only approached significance ($p = .10$), the effect of wife's employment on husband's marital adjustment after controlling for the demographic variables ($\beta = -.13, p < .10$) dropped to nonsignificance when satisfaction with childcare was included as a mediator. Husbands of employed women were less satisfied with childcare arrangements than were husbands of housewives ($\bar{x} = 3.29$ vs. $3.89, t = 9.10, p < .001$). The strong negative correlation between wife's employment and husband's satisfaction with childcare ($r = -.52, p < .001$) and the positive relationship between childcare satisfaction and marital adjustment ($r = .17, p < .01$) provide some evidence for the mediating role of childcare satisfaction in the prediction of husbands' marital adjustment.

Table 4 reports the regression results predicting husband's overall quality of life. The effect of wife's employment was initially significant ($\beta = -.14, p < .01$) and remained significant after the inclusion of the demographic controls, as well as when time commitment to work and work-family conflict were respectively included as mediators. Columns 5, 6, and 7 of Table 4 report the results of the regression analysis examining the potential mediating effect of satisfaction with childcare on the quality of life for the subsample of married men with young children at home. The data show that wife's employment was unrelated to husband's quality of life both before and after the addition of the demographic control variables and childcare satisfaction. Therefore, none of the proposed mediators explained the relationship between wife's employment and husband's quality of life.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirmed previous findings concerning the effects of wives' employment on husbands' well-being. Small but significant negative relationships were observed between women's employment status and two indicators of their husbands' well-being, job satisfaction and overall quality of life. The persistence of these relationships across different professional groups, including engineers and accountants (Burke & Weir, 1976) and public and private accountants (the present study), as well as across different occupations and jobs represented in national employee samples (Kessler & McRae, 1982; Staines et al., 1985, 1986), highlights the potential for wives' employment to have adverse effects on husbands' well-being.

TABLE 3
Results of Regression Analyses Predicting Husbands' Marital Adjustment^a

Variables	All Respondents				Respondents with Young Children		
	Before Controls		After Controls and Mediating Variables		Before Controls	After Controls	After Controls and Mediating Variable
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Independent variable							
Wife's employment ^b	-.08	-.12*	-.13*	-.11*	-.11	-.13†	.06
Control variables							
Husband's age		.12*	.11*	.07		.04	.03
Husband's education		.07	.06	.07		.05	.05
Wife's education		.13*	.13*	.11*		.17*	.15*
Number of children		-.05	-.05	-.06		.06	.06
Husband's salary		-.09	-.08	-.08		-.05	-.04
Mediating variables							
Time commitment to work			-.05				
Work-family conflict				-.32***			
Satisfaction with childcare							
R ²	.01	.04*	.04*	.14***	.04†	.05	.13†
df	1,401	6,396	7,395	7,395	1,220	6,215	7,214

^a Cell entries are standardized regression coefficients. Results reported in Columns 5, 6, and 7 pertain to respondents (n = 221) with young children.

^b Wife not employed = 1, wife employed = 2.

† p < .10

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

TABLE 4
Results of Regression Analyses Predicting Husbands' Quality of Life^a

Variables	All Respondents				Respondents with Young Children		
	Before Controls 1	After Controls 2	After Controls and Mediating Variables		Before Controls 5	After Controls 6	After Controls and Mediating Variable 7
			Time Commitment to Work 3	Work-Family Conflict 4			
Independent variable							
Wife's employment ^b	-.14**	-.13*	-.13*	-.11*	-.10	-.08	-.04
Control variables							
Husband's age		.06	.06	-.01		-.02	.03
Husband's education		-.03	-.03	-.02		-.02	-.02
Wife's education		.03	.03	.00		.06	.06
Number of children		-.02	-.02	-.04		.12	.13
Husband's salary		.07	.06	.09		.11	.12
Mediating variables							
Time commitment to work			.03				
Work-family conflict				-.48***			
Satisfaction with childcare						.06	
R ²	.02**	.03	.03	.25***	.01	.04	.04
df	1,401	6,396	7,395	7,395	1,220	6,215	7,214

^a Cell entries are standardized regression coefficients. Results reported in Columns 5, 6, and 7 pertain to respondents ($n = 221$) with young children.

^b Wife not employed = 1, wife employed = 2.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

However, the overall effect of wife's employment on husband's well-being observed in this study was small, explaining 2 percent or less of the variance in the three dependent variables. Wife's employment status has accounted for similarly low percentages of variance in measures of husband's well-being in previous studies (Staines et al., 1985, 1986). These results suggest that other, unmeasured, variables (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1982) not included in this study may provide additional explanation of variation in husbands' well-being.

In previous studies and in the present research, the negative relationships between wives' employment and indicators of husbands' well-being could not be attributed solely to the influence of demographic characteristics on the independent and dependent variables. Moreover, although wife's employment had no negative effect on husband's marital adjustment by itself, the emergence of a significant relationship subsequent to the introduction of demographic controls reinforced the importance of including salient demographic covariates in assessing relationships of wives' employment with measures of husbands' well-being.

The expectation that selected work and family variables would mediate the relationship between wives' employment and husbands' well-being was partially supported. The negative relationship between wife's employment and husband's job satisfaction seemed attributable to a reduction in husband's time commitment to work. The husbands of employed women tended to work fewer hours per week than the husbands of housewives; this lower time commitment to work was accompanied by lower levels of job satisfaction, possibly due to fewer job-related rewards. These results indicate how a family-related variable like spouse's employment can affect behavior in the work domain and suggest that time commitment to work may be considered, along with adequacy as a breadwinner (Staines et al., 1986), as a mediator of relationships between wives' employment and husband's job satisfaction.

The results regarding the mediating role of satisfaction with childcare on marital adjustment should be interpreted cautiously, since they only approached significance. However, the data provide tentative evidence that dissatisfaction with childcare arrangements mediates the relationship between wives' employment and husbands' marital adjustment for families with young children. Wife's employment was negatively related to husband's satisfaction with childcare, which in turn was positively related to marital adjustment. Viewed in terms of the life stage in husbands' well-being (Benin & Nienstedt, 1985), this finding suggests that not merely the number of children in a family but also the satisfactoriness of childcare arrangements affect marital adjustment. Further research is needed, however, before any firm conclusions can be drawn about the mediating role played by this variable.

Although work-family conflict did not emerge as a significant mediator, it was negatively related to husband's job satisfaction, marital adjustment, and quality of life, findings that are highly consistent with prior research (Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983; Sekaran, 1985). The failure to

serve as a mediator appears to be due to the absence of a relationship between wife's employment and work-family conflict. This unexpected finding suggests that other family variables, such as the division of domestic labor within a household, may moderate the relationship between a wife's employment and the level of work-family conflict experienced by her husband, a topic worthy of further study.

The present study demonstrates the complex interrelationships between spouses' work and nonwork roles in dual-earner relationships (Greenhaus, 1987; Sekaran, 1986). The findings represent an extension of previous studies that have emphasized the intrusiveness of family situation variables on women's work attitudes and behavior. Although the magnitude of the negative relationships found between wives' employment and indicators of husbands' well-being was modest, the present results emphasize the need for husbands to understand the effects of their wives' employment on their own lives so they can make career decisions that meet both spouses' needs. Similarly, the data suggest that women must understand the impact, if any, of their own work behavior on their husbands' careers and lives. In short, the pursuit of parallel work and family roles by spouses in dual-earner relationships requires mutual understanding of the implications of this life-style for their well-being in both work and nonwork domains (Gilbert, 1985; Greenhaus, 1987).

Although this study provides interesting new insights into the effects of women's labor force participation on dimensions of their spouses' well-being, additional research is required to map more completely the contingencies affecting the strength and pattern of relationships. For example, in the present study, it was impossible to determine whether a woman was employed part-time or full-time. Although previous studies have found wives' employment to have deleterious effects on husbands' well-being when wives were employed 20 hours or more (Staines et al., 1986), when wives were employed full-time and part-time (Burke & Weir, 1976), and when the number of hours worked by wives was not specified (Kessler & McRae, 1983; Rosenfield, 1980), a direct examination of the effect of women's employment status (part-time versus full-time) is necessary to clarify this issue. Moreover, since a woman's salary can increase the family's standard of living and can shift the distribution of power between spouses (Sekaran, 1986), future research should also assess the effect of the level of wives' income on husbands' well-being.

In this context, it is also necessary to assess whether the salience of the work role or the type of job held by a woman (e.g., managerial versus clerical or blue-collar, or professional versus technical) affect the strength of the relationship between her employment status and her husband's well-being. To the extent that wives are intensely involved in their careers, they may have less time available for expressive interaction with their husbands (Burgess, 1981), and the reduction in emotional support provided may decrease well-being among husbands. This is an area that deserves investigation. Finally, the need for longitudinal research should not be surprising. Al-

though causal relationships between wives' employment and husbands' well-being have been implied, the possibility of reverse or reciprocal causation cannot be ruled out. For example, it is possible that some women resort to outside employment as a means of relief from a dissatisfying marriage or a husband frustrated with his job. Nevertheless, the identification of patterns of relationships between wives' employment and husbands' well-being, as in the present study, is a necessary first step in the development and refinement of a causal theory.

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