

ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORKING WIVES IN AN URBAN SETTING

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The present study utilized a 2x2 factorial design to investigate the effects of civil status and sex differences on attitudes toward working wives. It was hypothesized that compared to male respondents, female respondents would show more positive attitudes toward working wives. The study further explored the effect of civil status on attitudes and its possible interaction with sex. Sixty graduate students equally divided according to sex and civil status were administered a twenty-item Likert-type scale. An analysis of variance revealed that the females had a more positive attitude concerning female employment than males ($p < .01$) while civil status did not appear to be a significant variable. No interaction effects were obtained.

The declaration of the International Decade for Women (1975 to 1985) by the United Nations served as the impetus for studies on the status and problems of women the world over. Consistent with this trend, the literature on Filipino women has grown extensively in recent years. Four books, (Castillo, 1976; Montiel and Hollnsteiner, 1976; Social Research Laboratory, 1977; and Rojas-Aleta, *et al.*, 1977), an annotated bibliography (Eviota, 1978), and a number of articles on the various facets of the status and role of the Filipino woman have been published. One of the areas of concern of such studies is female employment.

The most recent statistics available from the National Demographic Survey (1975) reveal that of females employed, 47.4% are married and living with their families while 9.2% are either widowed, separated, or divorced. Therefore, a total of 56.6% of the female labor force are faced with the problem of integrating multiple roles. Married working women are no longer a rarity.

Social scientists recognize that female employment has far-reaching social, economic, and psychological implications. The absence of the mother from the home and her presence in the labor force immediately points to the beginning of social change. Social change is of course facilitated when cultural values and attitudes toward such change are favorable. It seems necessary then to understand how the married working Filipina is viewed within her own society.

A survey of the literature reveals that the predominant attitude is a traditional one: the husband is the breadwinner and the woman's place is in the home (Rojas-Aleta, *et al.*, 1977). However, mainly because of economic exigencies the wife, more often than not, seeks employment. When this happens, she is beset by fears of a lowering in health status for her children, delinquency and discipline problems, quarrels between husband and wife, and abandoned housekeeping responsibilities (Social Research Laboratory, 1977). On the other hand, Illo (1977) points out in her

study of communities of the Bicol River basin, that the husband with a working wife is criticized for his inability to support his family. Castillo (1961), in her study of almost five hundred high school seniors, reports the same traditional trend: males tend to be more restrictive, but both males and females agreed that the husband's opinion concerning the employment of the wife should not be ignored.

This general trend is likewise reflected in Guerrero's (1965) study of 52 campus couples, all professionals, where two-thirds of the husbands reported that if they had a choice, they would want their wives to stop working. In contrast, only one-third of the wives said that they would stop working, given the chance to do so. This same group of wives cited personal reasons for working such as finding housework too boring, enjoying work outside the home, and wanting to put their education to use. It therefore appears that the middle class, well-educated woman may be in a more conflict-prone situation than her lower-income counterpart. In another study, Porio, et al. (1975) reported that 79 per cent of their respondents with incomplete schooling approved of working mothers, in contrast with only 60 per cent of those who were college educated. In a later study, Porio and Fernandez (1976) stated that their subjects were almost equally divided into those who felt that women should be housewives and those who thought that it was good for women to work. There were slightly more people in the second group, but even they assumed that the woman who worked would not sacrifice the proper running of the household. In the Guerrero study cited previously, 90 per cent of the husbands expected their wives to do the housework after the women came home from their jobs. Flores (1969) stated that among career women, their husbands usually approved of their working outside of the home, but 20 per cent of her respondents reported having "conflicts," which unfortunately were not specified.

In summary, the working woman, as viewed by herself and others, is expected to successfully integrate the roles of wife, mother, housekeeper, and worker, and if need be, sacrifice the last for the first three traditional ones. Integrating studies in this area, Rojas-Aleta, et al. (1977) point out that:

Society still dictates that the women's place is in the home. Husbands generally attribute the domestic role to females. If given a choice, the wife should stay home. Favorable endorsement of the working wife is based primarily on financial considerations. Better-educated people tend to look less favorably than others on the mothers who take an outside job. When the wife takes on an outside job, she is nevertheless expected to take care of her domestic responsibilities.

While the studies reviewed have pointed out the various areas of concern of working women, the data on which such conclusions were based have been derived from favorable or unfavorable endorsements of specific questionnaire items. In view of this, the present authors believe that the construction of an attitude scale on working wives would be a contribution to the more precise measurement of attitudes in this area. A twenty-item Likert type scale was therefore developed. To test the scale's ability to discriminate between groups, the following problems were investigated:

- 1) Are there sex differences in attitudes toward working wives?
- 2) Are there differences in attitudes toward working wives based on civil status?
- 3) Do sex differences in attitudes toward working wives depend on the civil status of respondents?

In accordance with the literature reviewed, it was hypothesized that female respondents would show more positive attitudes toward working wives as compared to male respondents. Because of limited research data on civil status, the study further intends to explore this variable and its possible interaction with sex. Thus, the null hypothesis is adopted.

METHOD

Subject.— Sixty graduate students at the University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila University, evenly divided by sex and civil status, participated in the present study resulting in a 2x2 factorial design. The distribution of subjects may be seen in the following table:

Table 1. *Distribution of subjects by sex and civil status*

		CIVIL STATUS		
		Married	Single	Total
SEX	Male	15	15	30
	Female	15	15	30
		30	30	60

Instrument.—A twenty-item, five-point Likert scale on attitudes toward working wives was used (See Appendix A). This scale was developed from a pool of 100 statements administered to forty undergraduate psychology majors. Total scores were computed, the highest and lowest quartiles defined, and using the t-test, items which significantly discriminated between the high and low scoring groups

were determined. Aside from the significance of the t-values obtained, another criterion utilized was the direction of the item loadings, so that in the end, the top ten negatively loaded and the top ten positively loaded items were retained for the final scale. A fresh group of forty subjects was used for determining split-half reliability, using Bulon's formula as follows: $4 = 1 \frac{d^2}{t^2}$, where d^2 is the variance of the difference between odd and even items and t^2 is the variance of total scores. The resulting reliability coefficient was .8875.

Procedure.— The subjects in the present study were asked to respond to the 20-item Likert scale and to indicate their sex and civil status. Total scores for the various groups in the factorial design were determined and an analysis of variance was performed.

RESULTS

The mean attitude scores for each of the four groups surveyed were: Married Male = 43.27, Married Female = 53.6, Single Male = 43.13, and Single Female = 50.53. Pooling scores for the two levels of the sex and civil status factors resulted in the following attitude mean scores: Males = 43.2, Females = 52.07 and Married = 48.43, Singles = 46.83.

Scores were subjected to a 2x2 analysis of variance. Results are presented in the table below:

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Civil Status	38.399	1	38.399	0.519
Sex	1179.263	1	1179.263	15.928**
Civ. St. x Sex	32.268	1	32.268	0.433
Within Cells	4146.0	56	74.035	
Total	5395.930	59		

**p. < .01

Inspection of the table shows a significant effect for the sex variable ($F = 15.928$, $p < .01$) indicating that men and women differ in their attitudes toward working wives with females holding more positive attitudes than males. Thus, the first hypothesis was confirmed by the results of this study.

The main effect for the civil status variable was not significant, which means that married and single respondents did not differ in their attitudes and supports the null hypothesis of no difference. Likewise, no interaction effect was found between the two variables investigated.

DISCUSSION

The significant finding of this study refers to the more positive attitudes of Filipino women toward female employment as compared to Filipino men. Such results seem to express a somewhat stronger desire of women to work outside the home than may be appreciated by men. In terms of content, how can these differences be interpreted? An inspection of the most highly discriminative items of the scale (item numbers 10, 11, 3, 16, 19) seems to indicate that men especially value the attention and care they and their children receive from a non-working wife and mother. Women, on the other hand, would favor intellectual stimulation and professional satisfaction over boring housekeeping activities. These data tend to correspond with the studies that portrayed men as being more restrictive (Castillo, 1961) and educated women finding housework too boring (Guerrero, 1965). The female attitude might be enhanced by the Filipino setting wherein household chores can be delegated to helpers and the woman, de facto, would have some time to pursue her own career. Unlike the Western woman, who usually had to choose between profession and motherhood, the educated urban Filipina seems to view herself in the ideal position of being able to combine both career and homelife, as long as a more traditionally oriented husband agrees.

However, the majority of women in the Philippines work primarily for financial reasons (Bulatao, 1977) to cope with the steadily increasing cost of living. This fact raises the question: Does the necessity to work eventually change the attitude toward working wives? Cognitive dissonance theory would predict a change in attitude (Festinger, 1957). Interestingly, the same two items of the scale received highest and lowest agreement respectively by all four groups investigated. The most endorsed item was "Marriage should not be a barrier to the professional career of a woman," while the least endorsed item was "A woman's primary duty is to take care of the home and the family." Compared to the traditionally predominant attitude expressed in the statement "The husband is the breadwinner and the woman's place is in the home" (Rojas-Aleta, et al., 1977), the findings of this study seem to suggest a slightly more progressive overall trend. Thus, differing male and female scores might be reflective only of a difference in the degree to which generally positive attitudes towards working women are maintained. Unfortunately, the overall mean score (47.63, with a range of 0 to 60) of a Likert scale does not allow definite decisions as to the favorability or unfavorability of the attitude towards the attitude object. Further research is needed, including longitudinal attitude studies using the Thurstone scale, in order to assess more accurately possible attitude changes toward female employment.

Non-significant results regarding civil status effects were somewhat surprising. Although not sufficiently covered in the literature, it had been assumed that single respondents might show more positive attitudes due to their expectations of putting their education to use. In contrast, data revealed marginally higher mean attitude scores for married (48.43) as compared with single respondents (46.83), with the female married group (53.6) surpassing the female single group (50.53). One possible explanation could be that mar-

ried female graduate students are more sensitized to the problems related to the situation of an educated non-working wife and mother as they personally might have experienced frustrations or conflict.

Limitations of this study are seen in the lack of demographic data which could have further contributed to the interpretation of results. Also, as the sample consisted of highly

educated urban respondents of probably middle to upper socio-economic status, findings might not necessarily generalize to the average Filipino. Suggestions for further research include the use of a more representative sample or comparisons of other groups such as varying SES and educational levels in order to increase generalizing and differentiating data on attitude toward working wives.

Appendix "A": AN ATTITUDE SCALE ON WORKING WIVES

Instructions: The following are statements about working wives. Under each statement is a 5-point scale of:

Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Neutral (N)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)
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Please indicate your agreement/disagreement by checking the letter that corresponds to your answer.

1. A working wife tends to be too tired to attend to her husband's needs.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

2. A working wife tends to neglect her housekeeping responsibilities.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

3. There can be no substitute for full time mothering.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

4. A working mother has a shorter but more intense interaction with her children.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

5. I would encourage married women to work.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

6. Marriage should not be a barrier to the professional career of a woman.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

7. A husband receives better intellectual stimulation from a wife who works.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

8. For a woman, her husband's career is somehow also her own career.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

9. A woman's place is in the home.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

10. Housewives are more relaxed and therefore more attentive to their husbands.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

11. A professionally satisfied woman is a better wife and mother than a frustrated housewife.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

12. I approve of working wives.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

13. A woman's primary duty is to take care of the house and the family.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

14. It is good for a wife to work outside the home.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)

15. A woman's proper role is to be a wife and mother.

(SD) (D) (N) (A) (SA)

16. Housework is too boring for an educated married woman.

(SD) (D) (N) (A) (SA)

17. The husband's traditional role is to be sole breadwinner.

(SD) (D) (N) (A) (SA)

18. A woman can find true fulfillment only in her role as wife and mother.

(SD) (D) (N) (A) (SA)

19. Children of working mothers receive proper care.

(SD) (D) (N) (A) (SA)

20. Only women who work experience personality growth.

(SD) (D) (N) (A) (SA)

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