

Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

---

Theses

Theses & Dissertations

---

1991

## The Effects of Spousal Career Status on the Decision to Offer Promotion

Gregory B. Holder

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/theses>



Part of the Business Commons

---

Thesis  
H711e  
1991

### Abstract

## THE EFFECTS OF SPOUSAL CAREER STATUS ON THE DECISION TO OFFER PROMOTION

Gregory B. Holder, B.A.

An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate  
School of Lindenwood College in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Art

1991

## COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF CANDIDACY

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the possible relationship between the career status of a female employee's spouse and her promotability. Previous research has suggested managerial bias against dual-career marriages based on assumptions regarding geographic mobility and commitment to career (Rosen, Jerdee, and Prestwich, 1975; LeLouarn and Decotiis, 1983). Expanding on this premise, 60 managers from a large, regional corporation were enlisted. Each manager was given a brief series of personnel decisions to rate on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (certain denial) to 4 (certain approval). One of these decisions concerned whether or not to offer a female employee a promotion which would include a geographic transfer. Among the information included was the husband's career status manipulated across three levels, ranging from a sales representative to a vice-president. A basic frequency count and chi-square analysis was performed and showed no significant relationship between spousal career status and the decision to offer promotion. In light of past research and the limits of this study, further research is warranted to explore managerial attitudes and assumptions regarding the dual-career couple.

COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF CANDIDACY:

Raphael Becvar, Ph.D.  
Chairperson and Faculty Advisor

James Evans, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor

Patrick Openlander, Ph.D.  
Faculty Advisor

## DEDICATION

This culminating project is dedicated to my parents, Brooks and Jackie, whose faith and encouragement were there at the beginning and ultimately at the end of this process, and lastly to my wife, Robin, whose love and patience makes one dual-career marriage a joy.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Howard Kapp for his assistance in this study. Without his willingness to work within the confines of the apparatus used in the study, I could not have had such easy access to a significant number of managers for the research. I would also like to thank James Evans for his concise, but always helpful, insights throughout the research and assimilation process. Lastly, I want to express my appreciation to Ray Becvar who assisted me as both Faculty Advisor and Chairperson of my committee. His calm and genuine encouragement allowed the actual completion of this study to become a reality.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	5
CHAPTER 3	METHOD.....	17
CHAPTER 4	RESULTS.....	24
CHAPTER 5	DISCUSSION.....	27
APPENDIX A:	DECISION TO OFFER PROMOTION MEMORANDA.....	35
APPENDIX B:	MEMORANDA CONTAINING UNMANIPULATED PERSONNEL DECISIONS.....	38
APPENDIX C:	MEMORANDUM FROM MANAGER- CONTACT TO CO-WORKERS.....	41
REFERENCES	.....	43

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Possibly now more than ever, the relationship between industry and family is under scrutiny from a variety of sources. Successes and failures from either arena are often attributed, sometimes unjustly, to the other. Whether this perceived relationship has a more positive or negative effect, work and home are invariably linked. What's more, both of these systems, family and industry, send powerful messages to each other regarding priorities. Many of these communications are as blatant as the printed policy regarding maternity leave or the angry spouse who expected dinner instead of his or her mate's working overtime. Such messages may appear clear in their content and intent, while others may not. Some communication is more covert; unwritten rules of conduct and expectations are also passed between these systems. It is this less than obvious means of conveying a message which can exert a great influence on either system.

Such a method of communicating has been referred to as "meta-communication" by Virginia Satir (1983). It not only functions on the literal level of content, but also addresses the relationship between sender and receiver. As Satir (1983) asserts, there is an attempt to influence the receiver to give the sender what he or she wants. If such



a definition is applied to the possible meta-communication between the business world and the family system, then what does industry want from the family? More specifically, what does industry want or expect from the increasing numbers of women who have chosen to maintain contact with both of these systems? With certain expectations regarding priorities and commitment no doubt a motivation, the female employee is being sent some rather covert messages by employers. Some of this communication is addressed to the rather new and burgeoning phenomena of which many women are a part, the two-career marriage.

As the number of women entering the work force increases, so does the number of marriages affected by the dual-career status. It should therefore be of little surprise that this relatively new entity, the two career couple, is now receiving such scrutiny by researchers interested in the family. As early as 1969, Rapoport and Rapoport were referring to such couples as a "variant pattern" which represented "social change." This pattern has continued to emerge since that time, as a result of a variety of reasons ranging from the above mentioned sociological changes to sheer economic necessity. It has been suggested that therapists in general should expect to encounter more dual-career marriages (Pendleton, Poloma, and Garland, 1982). If this

is indeed true, then psychotherapy itself should begin addressing the various issues which may present themselves in the context of such a family. Thus it seems prudent for those interested in helping today's family cope with contemporary problems to have a working knowledge of the dual-career marriage with its unique set of stressors. Some of these stressors may involve the expectations of industry conveyed via subtle, and possibly unfair, messages from management.

Of course it is neither prudent nor helpful to assume more difficulties are present in a marriage merely on the basis of how many careers are being pursued. But Holstrom (1973) noted, while commenting on the inflexibility of professions, specific sources of strain for dual-career couples:

pressures for geographic mobility, the status inconsistencies of professional women because the professions are dominated by men, and the pressure for full-time and continuous careers. (p. 517)

Thus it is realistic to expect some differences in the types of problems encountered by a dual-career couple. It may also be realistic to expect certain messages conveyed to the dual-career couple by their employers to be a specific source of stress.

### Statement of Purpose

The intent of this paper is not to infer a quantitative dissimilarity of stress between one-career and two-career families, but rather to look

for a specific qualitative difference. One such difference involves possible messages sent to the wife in a dual-career marriage and how these may affect her own career development/advancement. There has been an increasing interest in how such marriages are perceived and under what pressures they must function. One such pressure which will be explored further is the possible assumption by management personnel that one's spouse can undermine individual commitment to the job. More specifically, how does the perceived success of a work husband affect the career possibilities of a professional woman? In an attempt to examine this issue, a specific apparatus was constructed and administered to a population of middle-level managers.

The more germane definition for the research of the distinction made by Pogrebin (1975) between a "job" and "career." The dual-career marriage is one in which career goals, motivation and importance is placed equally on both partners' careers, whereas a "job" is dispensable and secondary to the primary career of the marriage. This research's definition of dual-career marriage is that both partners have the progression of both careers as a goal.

Unfortunately, the research is not only in the definitions applied to this special group of individuals, but also in the basic career development theories used by them. O'Neil, Fishman, and

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is quite a variety of terms and definitions related to the dual career family. Of course the phrase was originally used by Rapoport and Rapoport (1969), but since that time various authors (Rice, 1979; Maples, 1981; and Aldous, 1982) have made distinctions to clarify just what constitutes a dual-career couple. Hall and Hall (1980) state that a two-career couple is two people who live together, have separate work roles, and a relationship that supports and facilitates both. While such a definition is helpful, due to the apparatus employed in this study the actual quality of the relationship is not a part of the given information. The more germane definition for this research is the distinction made by Pogrebin (1975) between "job" and "career." The dual-career marriage is one in which commitment, motivation and importance is placed equally on both partner's careers, whereas a "job" is dispensable and secondary to the primary career in the marriage. Given such a definition of dual-career marriage as having to incorporate the progression of both careers will prove useful.

Unfortunately, there are limitations not only to the definitions applied to this special group of married couples, but also in the basic career development theories regarding them. O'Neil, Fishman, and

Kinsella-Shaw (1987) have suggested that most theories have focused on conceptualizing one career outside the context of marriage:

Overall, career development theory has emphasized choosing work, not how careers affect family and marital life. Career theories have not considered how family and marital life affect career development. (p. 54)

In addition to how one specific aspect of marital life - the second career - affects career development, particular assumptions and attitudes regarding two-career marriages are reviewed.

Therapists should not infer that pursuit of a career by the wife in a marriage will automatically have a negative impact on the relationship. In addition to finding that a wife's employment does not independently affect marital adjustment, Feinauer and Williams-Evans (1989) found that marital adjustment is only negatively influenced when the wife who wants to work is not employed and her husband does not want her to work. Thus there are some instances, ironically, which are more stressful with one career in the marriage. Even if the wife's occupational status is high, there is no support for the hypothesis that marital stress is inevitable (Richardson, 1979). In addition to the above mentioned, there are many possible sources of stress in the family, some of which have little to do with career involvement. It would be wise for counselors to consider both the psychological and external social components of a client's problem as Gilbert (1984) has

suggested.

With such a warning firmly in mind, it will prove quite useful to consider specific stressors to which a dual-career marriage may be exposed. Unfortunately, one such source of stress is the internalized bias against this type of marital arrangement. This is often an indication of an underlying disapproval against any variation from the norm, which this type of marriage is. Though not often stated, many of these negative assumptions arise when the wife is seen as career-oriented. It is rather easy to understand the economic and social pressures which have contributed to the second career's importance, but apparently much harder to accept on deeper level. Again it is Rapoport and Rapoport (1976) who assert that the dual-career marriage is approved intellectually but is not compatible with "internalized values." Thus it is the concept of a woman devoting time and energy, alongside her husband, to a career (and not the home exclusively) that is less than palatable for many. The incompatibility arises then not only from a deviation from past social expectations, but from a specific difference in personal value judgements. According to the authors, these values are a result of early socialization and can remain quite powerful in adult life. Such incongruity between these early values and present-day situations can produce unpleasant

emotions including tension, anxiety, and guilt (Rapaport & Rapoport, 1976).

Although such internal battles are significant in their effect on dual-career marriages, it is the purpose of this paper to explore how such value judgements and assumptions are revealed in an employer's behavior. Many employers may not even be fully aware of the dissonance within themselves regarding this issue. But there is a conflict for many between social reality and personal conviction. When an emerging social norm clashes with personal norms, a "normative dilemma" arises (Rapaport & Rapoport, 1969). Because the reality of two careers in the same family is becoming more common, there may be an erroneous assumption that it is becoming more accepted. This social development may be gaining acceptance, but the difficulty some are having with this "dilemma" should not be ignored. It has been suggested that beliefs and attitudes change more slowly than the social and/or economic conditions in which they are embedded (Gilbert, 1987). It would seem to be no different in this instance. Although quite difficult for most employers to admit, many may have some personal bias against this relatively new marital arrangement. Rosen, Jerdee, and Prestwich (1975) have shown the presence of discrimination based on less managerial confidence in the

ability of a female to balance home and career responsibilities. Perhaps the core issue is closely related to Rapoport and Rapoport's "normative dilemma" (1969), as Rosen et al. (1975) assert:

Managerial attitudes that consider the appropriate role for women as that of wife and mother may lead to a number of subtle discriminatory practices that could affect both the career and marital adjustment of working women. (p. 565)

It should be noted that researchers themselves were not entirely helpful in preparing today's employer for this development. There were some rather prominent career development theories which did little to establish any relationship between career and family goals (Super, 1957). Talcott Parsons may have seen this trend coming, but his assertions were less than promising for dual-career marriages (Parsons, 1954). He believed that a single "occupational link" between the home and society was best and that such a link should be the adult male in the family. He then described a destructive competitiveness which could have an adverse effect on both careers, not to mention the relationship. Since that time Parson's hypothesis of mutual destructiveness has been tested and disproved (Martin, Berry, & Jacobsen, 1975). However, the notion of mutual destructiveness remains a persistent notion and thus, a relevant topic.

It may indeed be valid to assert that there are instances when



either career or family suffer at the hand of the other. As Young and Shoun (1981) have written, there are many opportunities for conflict when attempting to integrate family and career priorities. Such conflict may give rise to decisions which are not always suitable by industry's standards. However, it is impossible to predict with unflinching accuracy how and when such variables will manifest themselves in job performance. The existence of a conflict between priorities does not mean these two constructs are always in opposition. Family and career goals are not always exclusive. Again it is Martin et al. (1975) who suggest an alternative hypothesis of "professional-marital endogeny." This allows for the wife to take advantage of close interaction with her husband to accelerate her career. A type of "cross-fertilization" occurs, contributing to occupational success. Thus mutual destructiveness between marriage and career cannot be assumed. While Schultz and Henderson (1985) acknowledge that family related variables may indeed influence job performance, they also suggest that better coordination between family roles and work roles can result in increased productivity. Such a realistic approach is desirable, if not always prevalent.

To heed Gilbert's admonition (1984) mentioned earlier, there are many aspects of this possible conflict to consider. And it is likely that

such conflicts do exact a certain price from job performance on occasion. As these concerns emerge, the motivation of both employer and employee behavior becomes clearer. It becomes particularly important to gain insight into the concerns and assumptions of a manager who may communicate subtle bias to a wife in a dual-career marriage.

In reviewing the literature, there are a variety of findings regarding the actual relationship between career and marriage. Some of these are surprising and some are quite congruent with traditional expectations. One such relevant aspect previously mentioned is the possible effects of a wife's successful career. While Richardson's (1979) work refuted the inevitability of marital stress when the wife is successful in her career, there is a finding which aligns with a more traditional assumption. When the success of the wife's career exceeds that of her husband's, an obvious gender-role norm has been violated (O'Neill et al., 1987). Traditionally, the man's career has enjoyed an elevated status in marriage. It is suggested that men may feel like failures if this expectation is violated. Such negative feelings may contribute to the husband's limiting support or even undercutting his wife's career. Whether this is a predominant outcome or not is beyond the specific scope of this paper, but the mere possibility of such

negative reaction on the part of a male partner is interesting. If such strong feelings are aroused by the man in the relationship, could not another man remotely connected to this relationship also have such feelings? Particularly in light of the "normative dilemma" suggested by Rapoport and Rapoport (1969). It is possible that a male employer dealing with a successful female employee may be reluctant to go against his internalized values. If so, one might expect a noticeable bias in specific management decisions. This then, is a major point of this discussion and subsequent research.

It may come as no surprise that the structure of the labor force shows a marked discrimination on the basis of sex (Scott, 1982). Such behavior is at least partly based on assumptions and internalized values such as those discussed above. Although much harder to define, there may also be discrimination on the basis of how many careers are in the family. Research has shown that employers base their hiring decisions on what they assume to be the motivations of a dual-career couple (Gilbert, 1987). If hiring decisions are based on such assumptions, it would seem likely that promotion decisions might also be affected. The focus of this paper will deal with the possibility of managerial bias towards an employee of a dual-career marriage. It will address more specifically how such bias is manifested in the

decision to offer promotion.

Along with promotion often comes a need to relocate. Guinn and Russell (1987) have suggested that when a company hires a manager in a dual-career marriage, they must be willing to deal with several unpredictable variables, one of these being relocation. The more upwardly mobile an employee is, the more willing he or she must be to relocate. According to Anderson and Stark (1988), people in management or highly technical positions can expect a geographic transfer every two to three years. It is especially significant in the dual-career couple, where one spouse must choose to give up their position with no guarantee of career advancement. It is obvious why Gilbert and Rachlin (1987) suggest that job placement and occupational mobility may be the most difficult issue that a two-career couple faces. It may also be one of the more difficult issues an employer faces. The inconvenience of a relocation involving two careers may discourage an employer from offering a geographic transfer (LeLouarn & DeCotiis, 1983; Maynard & Zawacki, 1979). Thus a certain amount of geographic constraint is imposed purely on the basis of the presence of a spouse's career. This in itself is significant bias, but is only the foundation of this research. It has been asserted that assumptions and internalized values can contribute adversely to an employer's

decisions. It has also been shown that specific assumptions regarding a second career in the marriage can be especially constraining, when related to a possible geographic transfer. If one is to assume that promotion may eventually involve a move, then the perceived inability to make such a move might influence managerial decisions to promote.

This has been shown to be the case in the research of Rosen et al. (1975). Their results reflected a pattern of discrimination based partly on, "less expectation that career women's husbands should sacrifice for the sake of their (wife's) careers" (Rosen et al., 1975). Such subtle discrimination may be exhibited in a managerial decision regarding promotion. The intent of this paper is to explore how such decisions might be affected by unspoken assumptions regarding an female employee's spouse and his career status. Is there a gradation of what managers assume a husband would sacrifice for the sake of his wife's career? This study will attempt to assert that the more successful and entrenched a husband is perceived to be in his career, the less likely a manager would be to offer promotion to the wife. It should be noted that such hesitation on the part of a manager is not without some justification. Bird and Bird (1985) found that both husband and wife expressed that they would locate where the husband has a job. It has been shown that even when she so desires, the wife is less able to

initiate a geographic move in a two-career marriage (Shaklee, 1989). If this is interpreted by management as a less than committed attitude, could it not affect decisions regarding promotion? Such decisions may not be based on actual conversations with the employee, but more on specific assumptions regarding that employee's marital relationship. Due to the previously mentioned internalized values and their possible effect on managerial attitudes, the perceived career status of a female employee's spouse could have a deleterious effect on her career development. This then is the basic premise of this paper: managerial attitudes regarding promotion, particularly if it involves a geographic move, will be affected by the career status of the spouse.

### Statement of Hypothesis

The frequency to offer promotion to a hypothetical female employee will be significantly related to the perceived career status of her husband. The more successful and entrenched the husband is perceived to be by the manager, the less likely the female employee will be offered the promotion.

The specific dependent variable measured was the decision to offer promotion to an employee measured on a scale from 1 (certainly not) to 4 (certainly). The independent variable manipulated is the career status of the employee's spouse. Three different levels of husband career status were used. This variable was then incorporated in the description of a hypothetical employee being considered for promotion. A series of personnel decisions was prepared for submission to a sample of managers. Among these was the one decision involving possible promotion.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

#### Subjects

The subjects were 55 managers from a large regional corporation; 30 were female and 25 were male. Their cooperation was solicited from a single manager within the corporation on a completely voluntary basis; no inducements were employed. The contact within the company was aware only of the general purpose of this research: to study managerial attitudes regarding specific issues. The content of the apparatus and approximate time involved in completing it were also discussed with the company contact before approaching the subjects. This particular company does have offices ranging across a number of states. Therefore the possibility of a geographic transfer introduced in the apparatus is quite relevant to this population. In addition to the actual apparatus which will be detailed below, a short demographic questionnaire was included in the packet given to each participant.

Of the 55 participants, 43 were married and of those 43, 38 had spouses who work outside the home. The average number of years spent at this present position was 5.1 years. There were four age-ranges into which each subject fell: 10 were between 25-34 years, 24 were between 35-44 years, 20 between 45-54 years, and 1 subject was



over 55 years. Of the 30 female participants, 21 were married, and of these 20 had spouses who worked outside the home. Each female manager had an average of 4.6 years experience at the present position. Of the male participants, 22 out of the 25 were married. Of these, 18 had spouses who worked outside the home. The average number of years at the present position was 5.69 years. Sixty middle managers within two divisions of this company were given surveys, five subjects refused to complete the study, with no specific reason given.

### Materials

In dealing with a large population of managers, time became a serious concern. To realistically expect adequate participation, the apparatus used needed to allow each manager to complete it in a minimal amount of time. The "in-basket" technique employed by Lopez (1966) allows for such a time consideration. A series of managerial decisions are given with the idea that the manager will process these decisions in his "in-basket." This allows a series of decisions to be made in a very short period of time, a desirable quality in this study.

Another study which used the Lopez technique in an effort to measure managerial attitudes is the previously mentioned work of LeLouam and DeCotiis (1983). The apparatus used in that particular

research became the foundation for this research. Their work focused on the mere presence of a second career in the family having an adverse effect on possible promotion. Since the present research is very closely related, it became quite useful to employ a variation of their methods. In this study, the presence of a second career is constant. Rather than manipulate the presence of a second career as they did, three different levels of a second career serve as the independent variable. The attempt here is to manipulate the perceived success and entrenchment involved in that second career by a manager and measure possible bias because of that perception. The three levels of the independent variable were chosen on the basis of both status and entrenchment. The lowest of these used was that of a sales representative for a food manufacturer, a career with some specialization but with some possible mobility across markets. The second of these, an engineer for a local firm, is more specialized with possible limits on employment opportunities depending on the market into which he was moving. The third career was that of a vice-president of a local bank. Although specialization may be less of a consideration, the amount of local prestige and influence is a greater loss if a move were initiated. Thus, these three levels of a husband's career were used in the following apparatus.

A series of three personnel decisions was prepared for each

manager to consider. Among these was one decision which involved a possible promotion for a female employee. It was made clear in all three versions of this decision that a geographic transfer would be involved. The memo was as follows:

#### MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. or Ms. Smith

From: Personnel Office

Subject: Promotion of Ann Taylor

As you know, one of your employees is being considered for possible promotion. Ann appears to be one of the most qualified candidates. This promotion would involve an eventual transfer to our Dallas office. We did think it prudent to ask Ann about her home situation. She said her husband is presently a sales representative for a food manufacturer and is involved in his career. What do you think? Should we offer Ann the job?

1	2	3	4
Certainly Not	Probably Not	Probably Yes	Certainly

The dependent variable was the decision to offer promotion to the hypothetical female employee, Ann Taylor. This was measured on the above scale from 1 to 4. The independent variable had three levels: sales representative, engineer, and vice-president of a local bank. Everything else in the above memorandum remained the same across all three versions. The other two versions can be found in the Appendix A. 20 copies of each of the three levels of husband career status was

made. Along with this decision was included two different personnel decisions which did not change among the three levels, these memos can be found in Appendix B. In addition to these three decisions, a brief introductory letter and a brief questionnaire were included. Each of these was printed on a separate 8 1/2" x 11" page. Sixty separate packets were assembled with the above mentioned materials and placed in 60 unmarked manila-colored envelopes.

### Procedure

A single male manager served as a contact within the corporation used in this study. The basic intent and motivation for this research was discussed with him. He was not aware of the specific attitude being measured, nor how any variables might be manipulated. To minimize possible bias, however, he was not allowed to participate in the actual survey. The actual distribution of the 60 unmarked envelopes was the major task performed by the manager-contact. Prior to giving the packets to him, random digits were assigned to each of the 60 packets which were then assembled in numerical order into one stack, beginning with the packet assigned the lowest number. He was then instructed to distribute the packets in the following manner: as subjects were approached he handed each the packet on the top of the stack, and was told to not stray from this "top to bottom" order in

which they were given to him. The population of managers was made aware of a possibility of being involved in a research experiment prior to the contact actually presenting them with an envelope. This was done via a short memorandum distributed to managers of two separate divisions within this company. A copy of this memo is included in Appendix C.

Once the subject opened the packet, he or she found the five separate pages with an introductory letter that also served for giving basic instructions for the exercise. Although each of the three memos encountered are self-explanatory, some instruction was given to lessen possible rejection of the task by the subject. The instruction/introduction letter was as follows:

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for participating in this brief exercise. The purpose is to notice managerial attitudes and how they might affect personnel decisions. There are three separate "decisions" to make regarding hypothetical employees. Although you would no doubt want more information to make an actual decision, in the interest of time each description is limited. Select the most honest response based on the information given. At the end is a brief questionnaire to be completed, there is of course complete anonymity. Thank you again for your time.

After reading this letter, there were three "in-basket" decisions presented, one of which involved the possible promotion of Ann Taylor, the hypothetical female employee in the previously mentioned

memorandum. The other two decisions did not involve possible promotion but did involve realistic personnel subjects, copies of which can be found in the appendices. The actual time needed to complete the materials given appeared to be under 5 minutes, according to subjects' reports back to the contact.

Packets were delivered to the contact and were picked up one week later. There were no complaints of the exercise taking longer than expected or of not understanding the written instructions. No reason was given to the contact for the five packets which were not returned.

Due to the 2x2 design of the independent variable and the four levels of the dependent variable, a 3 x 4 contingency table was constructed as shown in Table 1. This table also includes the percentages corresponding to each cell.

Of the 17 packets returned, 14 were returned with a certain career status, 14 were returned with a probable promotion, 1 were returned with a certain denial, and 1 was returned with a probable promotion.

There were 10 packets returned with a certain denial and vice-president level of career status; 11 packets were identical at both levels, 11 certain denial and probable promotion, 1 probable

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

There were four possible responses regarding the decision to offer promotion to the hypothetical female employee. Each subject made one response to only one level of the independent variable. Thus each subject was represented only once in the following data.

All data were in the form of frequency counts: number of promotion responses per group. Therefore, all group differences were tested for significance with the chi-square statistic at the .05 level of significance. With 6 degrees of freedom,  $\chi^2$  was significant if it exceeded 12.592.

Due to the three levels of the independent variable and the four levels of the dependent variable, a 3 x 4 contingency table was constructed as shown in Table 1. This table also includes the percentages corresponding to the frequencies.

Of the 17 responses at the sales representative level of career status, 14 were certain promotions. In contrast, only 2 were probable promotions, 1 was a probable denial, and there were no certain denials.

There were 19 responses at both the engineer and vice-president level of career status. Interestingly, the frequencies were identical at both levels. 11 certain promotions, 7 probable promotions, 1 probable

denial, and no certain denials.

Chi-square was found to be nonsignificant,  $\chi^2(6) = 3.619$ ,

$p > .05$ . Since this is less than the critical chi-square, the null hypothesis could not be rejected. The frequency of decision to offer promotion is not significantly related to career status of the spouse (husband).

Sales Rep.	14 (0.82)
Engineer	11 (0.58)
Vice-President	11 (0.58)

Note. In constructing the contingency table for the testing of chi-square, 6 cells had an expected frequency of less than 5. In view of the restrictions suggested by the literature (see, for example, Parnace's (1982) formula was applied, which requires a minimum of 5 cells in the contingency table was found to be four. Since the number of cells in the table (55) / (3 x 4)  $\geq 4$ . This suggests that a chi-square analysis is appropriate in this instance.



Table 1

Frequency of Manager Decision to Offer Promotion, Including Percentages (In Parentheses) Corresponding to Frequencies

Career Status	Manager Response			
	1	2	3	4
Sales Rep.	0 (0.00)	1 (0.06)	2 (0.12)	14 (0.82)
Engineer	0 (0.00)	1 (0.05)	7 (0.37)	11 (0.58)
Vice-President	0 (0.00)	1 (0.05)	7 (0.37)	11 (0.58)

**Note.** In constructing the contingency tables and the computing of chi-square, 6 cells had an expected frequency of less than 5, contrary to the restrictions suggested by Hays (1981). However, Faraone's (1982) formula was applied, and the grand total (n) for the contingency table was found to be four times greater than the number of cells in the table ( $55 / (3 \times 4) \geq 4$ ). This suggests the adequacy of a chi-square analysis in this instance.

## CHAPTER 5

## DISCUSSION

The basic hypothesis for this study was that a husband's career status would have a significant effect on a female employee's ability to promote. The more successful and thus the more entrenched her husband was perceived to be in his career, the less likely she would be offered a promotion. Therefore a manipulation of the husband's career was expected to significantly affect the frequency of managerial decisions to offer promotion.

When a frequency count and chi-square analysis were performed, no significant relationship was found between spousal career status and the decision to offer promotion. Only 3 of 55 respondents registered a probable denial, with one such decision made at each level of the independent variable. There were no certain denials, but 36 of 55 subjects granted a certain promotion for the hypothetical employee. If previous authors (LeLouarn & DeCotiis, 1983) have shown discrimination to be present with a similar study, how can such results be interpreted?

One explanation may be as follows. Previous research has debated whether to provide a hypothetical organization with its own procedures and protocols or to incorporate the procedures of a

manager's own organization when studying managerial behavior (Kovach, 1981; Rosen et al., 1975). Due to previously mentioned concerns about time requirements and manager participation, no hypothetical organization was introduced. The choice to allow managers to approach these decisions as they would other such decisions in their organization was made for simplicity's sake. But such an approach also yields a more realistic response, as Taylor and Lounsbury (1988) assert, "utilizing the procedures of an executive's own organization should more closely approximate the decisions a given individual would actually make on the job" (p. 413). Thus, as the instruction letter indicated, each manager was to make the decision which seemed most likely for him/her. It may prove useful to put these results in the context of the subjects' specific organization, with its own procedures and policies.

A post-test interview was conducted with the contact which indicated a managerial attitude with intentional avoidance of possible bias. He described that as a large corporation, they were very conscious of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Again, he was not aware of the actual focus of the study, but did notice possible discriminatory issues in the apparatus. He expressed an

expectation that most of the managers would give a very standard and unbiased answer. Whether or not this was their true inclination, he suggested that most subjects would respond out of training and awareness of the company's stance regarding discrimination. It is interesting to note that of the three probable denial responses, all had less than six months experience at their present position. It is possible that this is an instance which supports another aspect of the research of LeLouarn and DeCotiis (1983) which states that decisions might vary according to organization and organizational policy.

To further suggest this, the contact went on to describe this company's approach to dual-career couples. They apparently discuss career motivations and plans periodically in an effort to anticipate possible conflicts and how they can be resolved prior to any actual personnel decision such as promotion. There is even a willingness to assist in the relocation process for the spouse. Therefore there is a distinct awareness of the dual-career couple and an avoidance of any possible discrimination. There were several unsolicited comments on the returned responses which underscore this attitude such as the following, "I feel compelled to tell you to promote on qualifications and keep out of personal matters. This is dangerous and could be discriminatory!" This coincides with Struick's (1974) suggestion that,

"when a married female applicant is being considered, it is she and/or her husband who 'own' the problem of the husband's job" (p. 11) . It appears that this is one organization which has made a concerted effort to allow the dual-career couple to make its own decisions regarding geographic moves.

In addition to strong organizational influences, another factor to consider is the number of female managers who participated in the study. Almost 55% of the subjects in this study were women. Contrast this with LeLouarn and DeCotiis (1983) who stated, "there were almost no women in the sample" (p. 1041) . Apparently this is not a new development with the average experience at this position for females being 4.60 years, compared to 5.69 years for male managers. With such a population, the internalized values suggested by Rapoport and Rapoport (1976) may not apply as broadly as anticipated. Over half of the managers themselves are working women, the vast majority of whom are in a dual-career marriage themselves. Thus the normative dilemma referred to by these same authors (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1969) would not be as stressful, if existent at all. With 38 of the 43 married managers having a spouse who worked outside the home, the dual-career couple is more than a variant form of marriage in this specific population.

Such unexpected demographic details could certainly be part of the explanation for these results. Coupled with the previously mentioned organizational attempt to anticipate and limit discrimination on the basis of sex and/or family situation, the data which so resoundly reject the hypothesis are more easily understood.

Limitations of the study. Such discussion also suggests drawbacks to this study itself. In the effort to elicit a large response from the managers approached, the apparatus constructed was extremely simple. Although it did in fact generate a good response rate, it may have been too obvious. More generic information might have been included in the case descriptions, thus making possible awareness of the independent variable less likely. This is particularly relevant in light of this population. As managers in a company so conscious of possible discrimination, it may not have been too difficult for these subjects to notice and avoid any possible controversy. The more information included, the more subtle the apparatus might have been. It would then prove interesting to see how this would affect the overall response rate and ability to generate a satisfactory n.

These results are not too generalizable because of the specificity of the population. As previously mentioned, company policy may have

had a significant effect on the results. Such results might not apply to any other population of managers whose companies may or may not have the same attitude and approach to dual-career couples.

In addition to these limitations, a more specific pre-test study regarding perceptions of career levels was warranted. In so doing, a more reliable set of spousal careers and the perceived entrenchment involved with said careers could have been determined prior to the construction of the apparatus. This might have had a more significant effect on managerial concerns. Overall, there is a need for a clearer, more generalizable glossary of terms as suggested by Hiller and Dyehouse (1987) to avoid confusion and to broaden the applicability of the research.

Suggestions for future research. Such limits immediately suggests a study of how various professions are perceived by management personnel regarding success, entrenchment, and geographic immobility. The willingness to move appears to be an extremely important factor with regard to career advancement. (Markham, Macken, Bonjean, & Corder, 1983). Thus a survey of which spousal careers are perceived as contributing to geographic constraint of an employee would prove useful.

A larger population, across a variety of company sizes,

structures, and policies might also yield different results. Such a study would most likely encounter a larger population of male managers which would also have different implications. As mentioned earlier, a more sophisticated instrument used on such a large scale might better measure managerial attitudes. If such a large study was conducted, a randomized factorial design could explore possible interaction effects of such variables as age, sex, marital status, and company size.

As suggested in the introduction, there is a relationship between family and business and with such a relationship comes some influence. As Hiller and Philliber (1982) suggest, "sex equality in the labor market and work organizations and egalitarian relationships at home, at least for the society as a whole, are mutually, dependent upon one another" (p. 61). Thus it is that these two systems are affecting one another, whether consciously aware of it or not. Satir (1983) puts it more succinctly when she suggests that people cannot not communicate. The juxtaposition of industry and family, both struggling with an emerging type of marriage, has generated communication which must be explored. Further study of the possible messages being sent to the dual-career marriage and the ensuing stress they may cause is warranted.



Continued research and development of theory is needed to prevent what Hunt and Hunt (1982) predict as a, "growing polarization of career-centered families and family-centered lifestyles" (p. 508) .

APPENDIX A

DECISION TO OFFER PROMOTION MEMORANDA

TO: NO. OF MEMORANDA

FROM: PER. DIV. OFFICE

SUBJECT: PROMOTION OF SERGEANTS

As you know, there are 100 sergeants in the Department who are eligible for promotion. Each year, a number of these sergeants are promoted to the rank of sergeant major. The Department has a policy of promoting sergeants to sergeant major on the basis of their performance and seniority. The Department has a list of eligible sergeants and their seniority dates. The Department will promote the sergeants on this list to sergeant major in the order of their seniority.

1. Name of Sergeant  
2. Seniority Date  
3. Name of Sergeant  
4. Seniority Date

TO: MR. OR MS. SMITH

FROM: PERSONNEL OFFICE

SUBJECT: PROMOTION OF ANN TAYLOR

As you know, one of your employees is being considered for possible promotion. Ann appears to be one of the most qualified candidates. This promotion would involve an eventual transfer to our Dallas office. We thought it prudent to ask Ann about her home situation. She said her husband is presently a vice-president of a local bank and is involved in his career. What do you think? Should we offer Ann the job?

1	2	3	4
Certainly Not	Probably Not	Probably Yes	Certainly

## APPENDIX B

## MEMORANDUM CONTAINING UNMANIPULATED

TO: MR. OR MS. SMITH  
FROM: PERSONNEL OFFICE  
SUBJECT: PROMOTION OF ANN TAYLOR

As you know, one of your employees is being considered for possible promotion. Ann appears to be one of the most qualified candidates. This promotion would involve an eventual transfer to our Dallas office. We thought it prudent to ask Ann about her home situation. She said her husband is presently an engineer at a local firm and is involved in his career. What do you think? Should we offer Ann the job?

1	2	3	4
Certainly Not	Probably Not	Probably Yes	Certainly

APPENDIX B

MEMORANDA CONTAINING UNMANIPULATED  
PERSONNEL DECISIONS

TO: DIRECTOR

FROM: MR. [Name]

SUBJECT: [Subject]

It has been reported that Mary is having difficulty in her work. Upon investigation it was found that she is having difficulty in the care of her young daughter who is hospitalized. After a conference with the teacher and the principal, it was decided that the teacher should be relieved of all duties for the time being until the child is discharged from the hospital.

Very truly yours,  
[Signature]

## MEMORANDUM

TO: MR. OR MS. SMITH

FROM: PERSONNEL OFFICE

SUBJECT: LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR MARY BROWN

It has come to our attention that Mary is requesting a leave of absence. Upon further inquiry, we found that she is having difficulty taking care of her young daughter who was recently hospitalized. Mary's husband is a school teacher and would be able to offer more assistance this summer. She is requesting time off until this summer. What do you think? Should we grant the leave of absen

1

Certainly Not

2

Probably Not

3

Probably Yes

4

Certainly

## MEMORANDUM

TO: MR. OR MS. SMITH

FROM: PERSONNEL OFFICE

SUBJECT: TRANSFER OF BILL JONES

As you are no doubt aware, Bill has had a significant increase in absenteeism over the past quarter. It has come to our attention that he might be having difficulty with the amount of stress related to his recent separation and divorce. There is an opening in another division which could be less stressful. What do you think? Should we offer Bill the transfer?

1	2	3	4
Certainly Not	Probably Not	Probably Yes	Certainly

## REFERENCES

- Kalichman, S., & Stark, C. (1988). Psychosocial problems of job relocation: Perceived roles in industry. *Social Work, 33* (1), 18-21.
- Levin, G., & Rind, G. (1985). Determinants of mobility in two-career families: Does the wife's income count? *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 47*, 753-758.
- Dear Manager:
- I appreciate your taking the time to fill out the attached questionnaire, which should take less than five minutes.
- Background for this is as follows. A friend of mine is completing his graduate work and this measurement of managerial attitudes is part of his program. He does not work for us and the use of the word Dallas in one of the questionnaires is pure coincidence. He asks that you give your "first gut feeling" after reading each question, and has specifically designed the entire package to take three to five minutes to complete at the most. The information provided is extremely limited and he is looking for your immediate reaction.
- Thank you for your help.
- Chen, L. L., & Kivimäki, Y. (1987). Marital health and psychological well-being in dual-career families. *The Counseling Psychologist, 15* (1), 7-19.
- Chen, L. L., & Kivimäki, Y. (1987). Perceived benefits and the impact of dual-career families. *Longview Relations, 3* (1), 43-49.
- Holmbeck, G. N., & Lohr, T. J. (1981). Dual-career couples. In C. L. Cooper & P. T. P. O'Leary (Eds.), *Current concepts in occupational stress* (pp. 113-128). New York: Praeger.
- Levin, G. (1981). *Spouses at work*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Wells, D. V., & Dychouse, J. (1987). A case for banishing "dual-career marriages" from the research literature. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 49*, 787-795.



## REFERENCES

- Anderson, C. & Stark, C. (1988). Psychosocial problems of job relocation: Preventive roles in industry. Social Work, 33 (1), 38-41.
- Bird, G. & Bird, G. (1985). Determinants of mobility in two career families: Does the wife's income count? Journal of Marriage and the Family, 47, 753-758.
- Faraone, S. (1982). Chi-square in small samples. American Psychologist, 37, 107.
- Feinauer, L. & Williams-Evans, L. (1989). Effects of wife employment preference on marital adjustment. The American Journal of Family Therapy, 17, 208-218.
- Gilbert, L.A. (1984). Understanding dual-career families. Perspectives on career development and behavior and the family: Family therapy collections, (pp. 56-71). Rockville, MD: Aspen Systems.
- Gilbert, L.A. (1987). Introduction to dual-career families in perspective. The Counseling Psychologist, 15 (1), 3-6.
- Gilbert, L.A. & Rachlin, V. (1987). Mental health and psychological functioning dual-career families. The Counseling Psychologist, 15 (1), 7-49.
- Guinn, S.L. & Russell, L.G. (1987). Personnel decisions and the dual-career couple. Employment Relations Today, 14 (1), 83-89.
- Hall, D.T. & Hall, F.S. (1980). Stress and the two-career couple. In C. L. Cooper & Payne, R. (Eds.), Current concerns in occupational stress. New York: John Wiley.
- Hays, W.L. (1981). Statistics (3rd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Hiller, D.V. & Dyehouse, J. (1987). A case for banishing "dual-career marriages" from the research literature. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 49, 787-795.

- Hiller, D.V. & Philliber, W.W. (1982). Predicting marital and career success among dual-worker couples. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 2, 53-62.
- Holstrom, L.L. (1973). The two-family career family: Cambridge, MA: Schenkman.
- Hunt, J.G. & Hunt, L.L. (1982). The dualities of careers and families: New integrations or new polarizations? Social Problems, 29 (5), 499-510.
- Kovach, K.A. (1981). Implicit stereotyping in personnel decisions. Personnel Journal, 60, 716-722.
- LeLouarn, J. & DeCotiis, T.A. (1983). The effect of working couples' status on the decision to offer geographic transfer. Human Relations, 36, 1031-1044.
- Lopez, P.M., Jr. (1966). Evaluating executive decision-making: The in-basket technique. AMA Research Study, 75. New York: American Management Association.
- Maples, M.F. (1981). Dual-career marriages: Elements for potential success. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 60, 19-23.
- Markham, W.T., Macken, P.O., Bonjean, C.M., & Corder, J. (1983). A note on sex, geographic mobility, and career advancement. Social Forces, 61 (4), 1139-1146.
- Martin, T., Berry, K., & Jacobsen, R. (1975). The impact of dual-career marriages on female professional careers: An empirical test of a Parsonian hypothesis. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 37 (4), 734-742.
- Maynard, C.E. & Zawacki, R.A. (1979). Mobility and the dual-career couple. Personnel Journal, 58, 468-472.
- O'Neil, J., Fishman, D., & Kinsella-Shaw, M. (1987). Dual career couples' career transitions and normative dilemmas. The Counseling Psychologist, 15 (1), 50-96.

- Parsons, T. (1954). Essays in sociological theory. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.
- Pendleton, B.F., Poloma, M.M., & Garland, T.N. (1982). An approach to quantifying the needs of dual-career families. Human Relations, 35, 69-82.
- Pogrebin, L.C. (1975) . Getting yours. New York: Avon.
- Rapoport, R. & Rapoport, R.N. (1969). The dual-career family: A variant pattern and social change. Human Relations, 22, 3-29.
- Rapoport, R. & Rapoport, R.N. (1976). Dual-Career Families Re-examined. New York: Harper and Row.
- Rice, D. (1975) . Dual-career marriage: Conflict and treatment. New York: The Free Press.
- Richardson, J.G. (1979) . Wife occupational superiority and marital troubles: An examination of the hypothesis. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 41 (1), 63-72.
- Rosen, B., Jerdee, T.R., & Prestwich, T.L. (1975). Dual-career marital adjustment: Potential effects of discriminatory managerial attitudes. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 37 (3), 565-572.
- Satir, V. (1983) . Conjoint family therapy. Palo Alto, CA: Science & Behavior Books.
- Schultz, J.B. & Henderson, C. (1985) . Family satisfaction and job performance: Implications for career development. Journal of Career Development, 12 (1), 33-47.
- Scott, J.W. (1982). The mechanization of women's work. Scientific American, 247 (1), 167-185.
- Shaklee, H. (1989) . Geographic mobility and the two-earner couple: Expected costs of a family move. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 19 (9), 728-743.

- Struick, R.R. (1974) . The two-city problem. Association for Women in Mathematics Newsletter 4 (6), 8-11.
- Super, D.E. (1957) . The psychology of careers. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Taylor, A.S. & Lounsbury, J.W. (1988) . Dual-career couples and geographic transfer: Executives' reaction to commuter marriage and attitude toward the move. Human Relations, 41 (5), 407-424.
- Wallston, B.S., Foster, M.A., & Berger, M. (1978) . I will follow him: Myth, reality, or forced choice - job seeking experiences of dual-career couples. Psychology of Women Quarterly 3 (1), 9-21.
- Young, D. & Shoun, S. (1981) . Equity in dual-career marriages. Journal of the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, 44, 7-12.