



2010-04-01

Rising to the Top (and Hitting Rock Bottom): A Look into the Relationship between Promotion and Depression

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Spence, Karen; Murphy, Cori; Torgerson, Blake; and Thompson, Jessica, "Rising to the Top (and Hitting Rock Bottom): A Look into the Relationship between Promotion and Depression" (2010). *FHSS Mentored Research Conference*. 220.

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Rising to the Top (and Hitting Rock Bottom)

A Look Into the Relationship Between Promotion and Depression

Department of Sociology

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Abstract

A job promotion or an increase in supervisory responsibility is typically seen as something to be congratulated; but could there actually be a dark side to it? Due to few previous studies regarding this topic in relation to women and mothers, the subject was of great interest to us. Our findings revealed that job change and increased supervisory responsibilities had a negative association with depression levels. Marriage, number of children, and dual-earner households were also negatively associated with levels of depression. Women with more children also had significantly lower levels of depression than men or women without children. Further research into the topic may reveal other hidden factors affecting depression levels that may still be lurking underneath the corporate ladder.

Hypothesis

We predict that those who receive promotions will experience more depression as they try to fulfill their responsibilities than those who do not get promoted and do not receive greater supervisory responsibilities. We also predict that women who are promoted will experience more depression than men who are promoted in the same positions. Furthermore, we predict that promoted women who are also mothers will experience even greater depression than men and childless women.

Analysis

Linear Regression

- **Main Independent Variable:** Position change and increased supervisory responsibilities
- **Main Dependent Variable:** Level of depression

Controls

- Sex
- Number of children
- Marital Status
- Hours per week worked
- Dual-earner household
- Income
- Race

Data

- National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) by United States Department of Labor
- A total of 12,686 male and female youth born between 1957 and 1964 qualified to participate as respondents in the survey and were continuously surveyed until 2006.
- We used the responses from the survey conducted in 2006, which gave us the most accurate snapshot of conditions in the population today.

Table 1. Linear Regression of Having an Increase in Supervisory Responsibilities on Respondent's Level of Depression, Controlling for Sex, Household Structure, Work Behaviors, Income, and Race in 2006 (NLSY79)

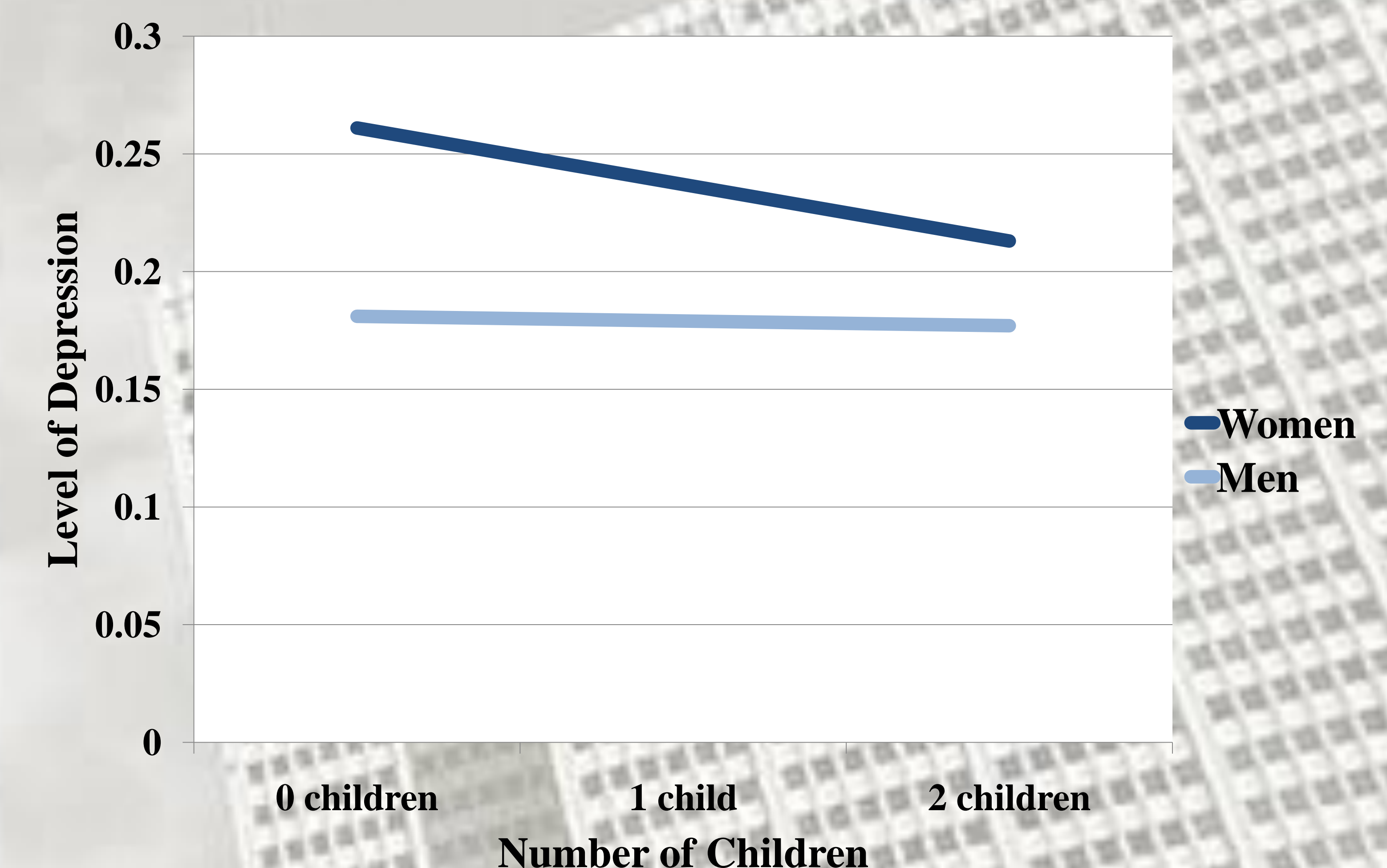
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Increase in supervisory responsibility	-.061*** (-.044)	-.052** (-.038)	-.006 (-.004)	-.006 (-.004)
Female		.084*** (.121)	.055*** (.079)	.080*** (.116)
Number of children		-.035*** (-.123)	-.014*** (-.047)	-.002 (-.007)
Married			-.074*** (-.107)	-.079*** (-.114)
Hours worked per week			-.002*** (-.107)	-.002*** (-.109)
Dual-earner household			-.050*** (-.072)	-.049*** (-.070)
Income			-8.220E-7*** (-.108)	-8.579E-7*** (-.112)
Black (vs. White)			.012 (.015)	.012 (.016)
Other race (vs. White)			.034* (.023)	.034* (.023)
Female * Number of children				-.022** (-.068)
Constant	.327	.322	.445	.438
Adjusted R ²	.002	.031	.096	.097

Data Source: National Longitudinal Study of Youth 1979 (NLSY79), 2006

Note: n=7,087. Unstandardized coefficients (standardized coefficients).

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed tests).

Figure 1. The Effect of Number of Children on Predicted Levels of Depression between White Married Men and Women in 2006 (NLSY79)



Primary Conclusions

- Women had a significantly greater increase in levels of depression than men.
- Those who were married had significantly lower levels of depression than those who were not married.
- Those who worked more hours per week had significantly lower levels of depression than those who worked less.
- Those in dual-earner households had significantly lower levels of depression than those who lived in single-earner households.
- Those who had lower incomes had significantly lower levels of depression than those who had higher incomes.
- Having children has a much stronger effect on levels of depression for women than for men.