Gender Differences: The Impact of Hours Worked on Marital Satisfaction

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Gender Differences:  
The Impact of Hours Worked on Marital Satisfaction  
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Hypotheses
As work hours increase, marital satisfaction decreases. For married females, we hypothesize that when work hours increase over 40 hours per week, marital satisfaction decreases. We further hypothesize that as work hours increase over 60 hours per week for married males, marital satisfaction decreases.

Methods
- We used the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), collected and published for public data use by the University of Wisconsin.
- We utilized the first wave of interviews, collected in the years 1987-88.
- Our specific sampling frame consisted of currently married respondents and their spouses, totaling 6,877 couples.
- Respondents' hours worked served as our key independent variable; marital satisfaction from a Scale of 1 to 7 served as our dependent variable. Sex of respondent served as our moderator. Our control variables included age, race, annual income, and number of children.

Literature Review
- Women have increased work participation in the labor force and men have increased the length of hours worked.
- Marital satisfaction can be defined as an individual’s interactions, experiences, and expectations of his or her married life based on his or her emotional state of being.
- Many factors contribute to marital satisfaction, such as age, educational attainment, number of children, and many other things.
- Many factors dealing with employment has been found to be effecting marital satisfaction.
- Gender differences lead to different expectations for time spent at work and time spent at home.

Results
- As male work hours increase to full time, over time, and overkill, marital satisfaction for him increases .178 (p<.05), .208 (p<.05) and 1.159 (p<.01) respectively.
- Our results indicate that as work hours increase to full time, over time, and overkill, marital satisfaction for females decreases .165 (p<.01), .302 (p<.001), 1.314 (p<.01) respectively.
- On average, women who worked more than 60 hours a week rated their marital satisfaction almost a point and a half less than women those who worked 40 hours or less.
- One of the control variables that we tested was age of the respondent. Age turned out to be significant at the .001 level with an unstandardized coefficient of .005. This is consistent with the current literature.
- On average, Blacks rated their marital satisfaction, 206 less than their White counterparts, statistically significant at p<.001. Hispanics and other races rated their marital satisfaction the same as whites.
- Respondents’ annual income had no influence on how men and women rated their marital satisfaction.
- For every child in the household, marital satisfaction decreased .045 units (p<.001).
- Our model explains 1.3% of the variation in marital satisfaction.

Conclusion
- Our research was to examine the effect of hours worked on marital satisfaction, controlling for age, race, income, and number of children, with our moderator as sex of currently married respondents. The results of the regression analysis revealed that there is a negative relationship between marital satisfaction and hours worked. However, the negative effect is more pronounced for women than for men.
- One reason for this difference in relationship may be due to gender roles and expectations. Many women do not expect to work over time or more. This failed expectation could be that they are unable to fulfill their gender role which could lead to less marital satisfaction. Another possibility could be a reflection of the husband’s dissatisfaction with the fact that his wife is working too much.