

SEX-ROLE ATTITUDES AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS AS PREDICTORS OF PERCEIVED LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG MARRIED WOMEN IN KOREA

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This study investigates the relationships among women's sex-role attitudes, employment status, and overall life satisfaction, controlling for some selected background characteristics. Data were collected from currently married women living in Seoul. Women's sex-role attitudes were unrelated to employment status, and no significant relationship was observed between women's sex-role attitudes and satisfaction with marriage, family, work and overall life. However, controlling for women's employment status, sex-role attitudes were related to work satisfaction, but only among full-time housewives. Women's employment status had a significant influence on satisfaction with work and with overall life, but not with marriage and family life. Controlling for a woman's voluntariness in her choice of working, significant differences in marital satisfaction (MSAT), work satisfaction (WSAT), index of general affect (IGA), and index of well-being (IWB) between working and nonworking women were found. A woman's educational attainment was positively related to her sex-role attitudes, but not with her employment status. Father's and husband's education had negative impacts on a woman's employment status. Husband's socioeconomic status also negatively influenced a woman's likelihood of employment. However, mother's working experience and parents' encouragement for a woman to work were positively related to woman's work status. Parents' encouragement also significantly influenced woman's sex-role attitudes.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1970 various issues concerning the life of women in a changing society have been discussed by scholars and policy-makers in many countries. Especially momentous was the establishment of Women's Year by the United Nations in 1975 in order to affirm that institution's commitment to improving women's status in social, economic, and political spheres all over the world. Since then women's issues became increasingly global. In 1985, women's international conference showed great enthusiasm about the improvement of women's status. In spite of all these global efforts, however, women's status in the less developed countries is still very low.

In Korea, as in other less developed countries, the traditional view of the woman as wife and mother is dominant. But there has been growing recognition that women should have a right to be self-actualized within and outside

the home (Choi 1966). Especially since the early 1960s, Korean society has rapidly transformed from a traditional society to an industrialized, urbanized society, and women rapidly entered the labor force during the 1970s and the early 1980s. Accordingly, attitudes toward women's roles have changed among both men and women (Noh *et al.* 1986). But while significant changes have occurred in the sex composition of the labor force, and in the kinds of occupations women hold, there have been relatively few studies of the interrelated aspects of women's work and life in general, because in Korean society work is still assumed to be central to the man's life, but not to the woman's life. However, as more women enter the labor market, the relationship between family life and work has received much attention; therefore, the relationship between employment and the overall well-being of married women deserves attention too.

Significance of the Study

For most of human history, the family has been the basic social unit in both the productive and the reproductive systems. Especially in agricultural societies, the family was closely intertwined with work, and was the main source of life satisfaction. However, since the Industrial Revolution, family and work have become separate domains, and each had developed its own institutional norms and behaviors. In fact, the differentiation and separation of work from family roles has long been recognized as a fundamental feature for the evolution of contemporary society (Rapoport and Rapoport 1965; Lenski and Lenski 1982). As a result, the source of life satisfaction for both men and women is more likely to be found in either work or family, rather than in the combination of both areas. Moreover, scholarly studies of the family were largely unconcerned with problems of the workplace. As a result, the source of life satisfaction for both men and women is more likely to be found in either work or family, rather than in the combination of both areas. Moreover, scholarly studies of the family were largely unconcerned with problems of the workplace. As Rapoport and Rapoport (1965) stated, the relation between work and family life has seldom been studied explicitly, because specialists in family studies, industry, or psychology have tended to treat each of these domains as distinctly closed systems.

Over the past decade, a growing number of scholars have studied the relationships among work, family, and life satisfaction (Rapoport and Rapoport 1965; Kanter 1977). It has been noted that work and the family are interdependent, in spite of their institutional and spatial separation.¹ Thus

¹Due to advances in technology, the spatial separation of work and the family may end. For example, with the introduction of micro-computers, people can work at home, although the proportion of the entire labor force that works at home will probably be very small.

“the myth of separate world”, as Kanter (1977) suggested, becomes less and less true, and the relationship between work and the family has become more and more reciprocal. However, different patterns of relationships have been observed between gender roles and the social environment. For example, the family tends to be detrimental to employment outside the home (Feldberg & Glenn 1979). Also work is seen beneficial for men, while it has negative consequences for women and children (Brofenbrenner and Crouter 1982). Some researchers have even attempted to develop different models for men and women regarding the relationship between work and the family, namely, the work model for men and the gender model for women (Feldberg and Glenn 1979). Despite recent efforts to establish the same conceptual framework for the study of the linkages of work and the family for men and women (Mortimer and Sørensen 1984), there has been insufficient empirical research to support the synthesized model.

Sex-role Attitudes, Employment Status and Life Satisfaction

Despite the traditional view that the workplace is for men, and family responsibilities are for women, the question arises: why is it that some women choose to work and some women do not? One of the strongest predictors of labor force participation for married women is assumed to be the attitudes toward sex roles held by women in a given society (Dowdall 1974; Molm 1978; Huber and Spitze 1981). Based on studies of married women working in professional occupations in Poland, Piotrowsky (1971) found a significant relationship between activities and attitudes; that is, the attitudes of working wives were more liberal than nonworking wives. Dowdall (1974) investigated the structural and attitudinal variables influencing female labor force participation in the U.S., and discovered that attitudes were more closely related to employment status than were any of the structural factors. Spitze and Spaeth (1976) also investigated the relationship between sex-role attitudes and women's employment status. Based on longitudinal data, their analysis showed that an attitude at time 1 (1964) strongly affected employment at time 2 (1968). However, some studies find no relationship between sex-role attitudes and women's employment status (Bielby & Bielby 1984). In a study by Yi (1980) of 616 married women in Korea, the effect of women's work status on sex-role attitudes was found to be statistically insignificant. The major purpose of the present investigation is to reexamine the conflicting results of the above studies, focusing on the relationship between sex-role attitudes and the employment status of married women in Korea.

A secondary purpose of this study is to explore the effects of women's sex-role attitudes and employment status on their life satisfaction. Concerning

to the relationship between sex-role attitudes and life satisfaction, many feminists have argued that women experience psychological and emotional stress by holding traditional attitudes toward women's roles and by staying at home. Women with traditional attitudes are more likely to be isolated at home and to feel separated from the larger society (Gove and Tudor 1973; Volgy 1976; Arvey and Gross 1977). On the other hand, several studies have not found that nontraditional sex-role attitudes have a positive effect on life satisfaction (Gump 1972; Vigilanti 1980). Alspach's study (1982) revealed that women with traditional sex-role attitudes were more satisfied with their lives than were women with nontraditional attitudes. This finding lends support to the notion that the "traditional" women do not feel undervalued in the housewife role.

Although there have been many studies of the effect of work on the overall life satisfaction of men, relatively few studies have been done on women. Research on the characteristics of the working versus homemaking women yields conflicting results. In some studies, career-oriented women appear to be less satisfied with their life than are housewives (White 1969), while other studies showed that career- or job-oriented women are more mature, well adjusted, and happier than housewives (Nye and Hoffman 1963; Gump 1972; Ferree 1976). Some other studies have found no relationship between maladjustment or life satisfaction and the employment status of women (Angrist 1970; Weaver and Holmes 1975; Wright 1978; Veroff *et al.* 1981).

Due to conflicting findings of various empirical studies, our study is rather exploratory, based on the following research questions: (1) what is the relationship between a married woman's sex-role attitudes and her employment status? (2) What is a relationship between a married woman's sex-role attitudes and her satisfaction with marriage, family and work, as well as with life in general? (3) To what extent does a woman's employment status affect her satisfaction with marriage, family, and work, as well as life in general? The effects of some selected background characteristics on sex-role attitudes and employment status are also examined.

DATA AND METHOD

Data for this study are from a survey of currently married women, both working and nonworking. Because of the exploratory nature of this study, the sample is limited to the city of Seoul, Korea. Subjects were selected through the multistage cluster sampling. A total 480 households were selected at the final stage. Out of 480 households, 418 married women were interviewed and used for the analysis.

The concept of sex-role attitudes is defined as a respondent's cognitive judgment on the appropriate roles of women in society. Spence and Helmreich's (1972) Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS) is used to measure sex-role attitudes. Since the AWS is an attitude measure, not a role-preference measure, it is not concerned with any gender-related stereotypical traits.

Life satisfaction refers to the respondent's levels of satisfaction with life in general and with satisfaction in specific spheres of life, such as work, marriage, and family. Three measures of satisfaction are used. One question was asked to get a general sense of satisfaction with life (ALLSAT). But this single item question does not tap the constituent factors which influence life satisfaction and thus limits the responses of the subject to a very superficial level.² We still need to discriminate between those who feel really satisfied from those who say reluctantly they are satisfied. Therefore, the index of general affect (IGA) is introduced. This index consists of the semantic differential scales, developed by Osgood *et al.* (1957).

The facet-free job satisfaction scale by Quinn and Staines (1979) is used to measure satisfaction with work, because it is constructed to fit both the paid work and the nonpaid housework.

The woman's employment status is measured by asking, "Are you now working or not?" Working and nonworking women are further categorized in terms of their voluntariness in the choice of work.

Background Characteristics of the Respondents

The average ages of the respondents and their husbands are 37.2 and 41.5 years, respectively. Almost 80 percent of the respondents and more than 60 percent of their husbands are aged between 26 and 44 years. Compared to the country as a whole, our sample has a relatively low percentage of the age groups of 18-24 years and 55 years and over. Thus, the sample is biased toward the middle-aged group.

Fewer than 45 percent of the women had some college education or higher degree, while almost 70 percent of their husbands had at least some college or higher education. In Korea people still believe men should be more highly educated than women, although equal opportunity for education for men and women is institutionally maintained. The overall educational attainment of nonworking women is higher than that of working women in our sample.

²This tendency is especially true in Korea. It is unusual for people to say openly that they are unhappy. In fact, the interviewers were instructed to be very careful to ask these kinds of questions; for example, the interviewers could make sure that the results of the interview would not be used beyond this study.

The average number of children is 2.1, and 62 percent of the respondents have one or two children. There is little difference in the average number of children between working and nonworking women. The average length of marriage for the respondents is 13 years.

Out of 418 respondents there were 177 working women and 241 nonworking women. Almost 40 percent of the employed women are in sales and services occupations with relatively low pay and little job training. The percentage of women working in manual labor amounts to 12.9 percent. Only 5.1 percent of the employed women are administrative and managerial workers.

With regard to childcare arrangements among working women, 36 percent rely on their relatives (including parents or parents-in-law) to take care of their children, whereas 48 percent have no problems with difficulty in child-caring, because their children are old enough to stay by themselves. Concerning the help that working women get with their housework, almost half of working women (48 percent) answered that there were no help from others. Only one-fifth of working women relied on paid helpers on either a full-time or a part-time basis.

Out of 418 respondents, 27 percent were born in Seoul, while 73 percent were born outside the city.

RESULTS

Sex-role Attitudes and Employment Status

General findings from previous studies suggested that there is a positive relationship between women's sex-role attitudes and their employment status, indicating that women with liberal sex-role attitudes are more likely to work. But our results do not support this finding. On the contrary we find that women's sex-role attitudes are independent of their employment status.

Further, when the respondents are divided into four groups in terms of their willingness to work, it is observed that the group of women who work involuntarily have the most conservative sex-role attitudes, while the group of women who are involuntarily nonworking shows the most liberal (see Table 1).³

Controlling for educational background, there is no significant difference in the sex-role attitudes of working and nonworking women (see Table 2).⁴

³Note that the number of involuntary working women is only 14, which may be low to warrant the comparison.

⁴The low level of education includes women who have never been to school, or who have ever been to a primary school and a middle school. The medium level of education refers to women

TABLE 1. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF AWS SCORE FOR FOUR GROUPS OF WOMEN

	Mean	S.D.	N
Voluntary Working	44.776	7.721	163
Involuntary Working	41.571	6.858	14
Voluntary Nonworking	43.008	6.456	118
Involuntary Nonworking	46.211	7.442	123

TABLE 2. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF AWS SCORE FOR WORKING AND NONWORKING GROUPS BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

	Working			Nonworking		
	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N
Low	40.725	7.027	40	42.667	6.980	45
Medium	43.075	6.175	67	44.270	7.064	89
High	47.914	8.104	70	45.785	7.130	107

Among women with less than college education (low and medium groups), the mean score on AWS is higher for nonworking than for working women, while among the women with higher educational background (at least college background) the mean score on AWS for working women is higher than the score for nonworking women.

Sex-role Attitudes and Life Satisfaction

The relationship between women's sex-role attitudes and life satisfaction is examined in this section. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 3.

The result does not support the view that liberal women are more satisfied with their lives. Little relationship is observed between sex-role attitudes and overall satisfaction. None of the three components of life satisfaction, that is, marriage, family and work, shows a significant relationship to sex-role attitudes. However, controlling for the employment status, the relationship between sex-role attitudes and work satisfaction is statistically significant among full-time housewives ($p < 0.01$). Full-time housewives with conservative sex-role attitudes express more satisfaction with their housework than do those with liberal sex-role attitudes. The former may enjoy their housekeeping because they find their work to be rewarding and valuable. Socialization process based on the Confucian ideology may also reinforce the traditional belief that

with at least some high school education. The high level includes women who had at least a college education.

TABLE 3. CORRELATION MATRIX FOR AWS, MSAT, FSAT, WSAT, ALLSAT, IGA, IWB: ENTIRE SAMPLE

	AWS	MSAT	FSAT	WSAT	ALLSAT	IGA
AWS	1.000					
MSAT	-0.075	1.000				
FAST	-0.014	0.506	1.000			
WSAT	-0.067	0.263	0.386	1.000		
ALLSAT	-0.057	0.510	0.453	0.394	1.000	
IGA	-0.034	0.439	0.527	0.403	0.517	1.000
IWB	-0.059	0.541	0.559	0.452	0.877	0.864

homemaking is the more desirable role for woman to pursue.

On the contrary, housewives holding liberal sex-role attitudes may never be satisfied with their traditional role of homemaker. Although they may want to do something else in reality, they may not have any alternative. The discrepancy between a woman's desire and her objective circumstances may cause higher degree of dissatisfaction among housewives with nontraditional sex-role attitudes than among housewives with traditional attitudes. In the same context, working women with traditional sex-role attitudes may experience some dissatisfaction with their positions as workers, while working women with liberal attitudes may feel happy with being a worker outside the home despite the burden of multiple roles. The congruence of women's attitudes and their actual roles has a greater influence on women's life satisfaction than does their sex-role attitudes.

Employment Status and Life Satisfaction

The mean satisfaction scores for working and nonworking women are presented in Table 4. In all six variables, the mean scores are reported to be higher for working women than for nonworking women. According to the one-way analysis of variance, significant differences in WSAT, IGA, and IWB are observed between working and nonworking groups, indicating that working women are more satisfied with work and overall life than are nonworking women. On the other hand, there is not statistically significant difference between working and nonworking women in their satisfaction with marriage and family life. In other words, women's employment status increases work and overall life satisfaction, but does not affect satisfaction with marriage and family life.

The interrelationships among specific aspects of life can be examined by computing separate correlation matrices for working and nonworking women (Table 5 and Table 6). The correlation coefficient between MSAT and

TABLE 4. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF VARIOUS SATISFACTION SCORES FOR WORKING AND NONWORKING WOMEN

	Working			Nonworking		
	Mean	S.D	N	Mean	S.D.	N
MSAT	14.136	2.904	177	14.075	2.943	241
FSAT	22.196	3.132	143	21.851	3.433	201
WSAT	17.333	5.292	177	14.826	4.808	241**
ALLSAT	4.316	0.966	177	4.212	1.049	241
IGA	5.295	0.978	177	4.817	1.118	241**
IWB	10.050	1.806	177	9.450	1.953	241**

**p < 0.01

TABLE 5. CORRELATION MATRIX AMONG MSAT, FSAT, WAST, AND IWB FOR WORKING WOMEN (N = 143)

	MSAT	FSAT	WSAT	IWB
MSAT	1.000			
FSAT	0.430	1.000		
WSAT	0.117	0.319	1.000	
IWB	0.452	0.472	0.386	1.000

TABLE 6. CORRELATION MATRIX AMONG MSAT, FSAT, WSAT, AND IWB FOR NONWORKING WOMEN (N = 201)

	MSAT	FSAT	WSAT	IWB
MSAT	1.000			
FSAT	0.561	1.000		
WSAT	0.375	0.436	1.000	
IWB	0.621	0.611	0.482	1.000

WSAT is 0.117 for working women, and 0.375 for nonworking women. The higher coefficient for nonworking women indicates that marital satisfaction is related to the satisfaction with housework among housewives, while it is not necessarily influenced by outside work among working women. In other words, a working woman could still enjoy her work even if she is not very satisfied with her marriage, whereas a housewife could not be satisfied with her work at home if she is not satisfied with her marriage. The correlation coefficients between MSAT and IWB, and between FSAT and IWB are also much higher for nonworking than for working women. This finding confirms the idea that marriage and the family might be two central aspects of life to

nonworking women, whereas working women could have other sources of psychological gratification.

Contrary to what is expected in view of the strong prevalence of traditional Confucian values in Korea, our finding reveals that working women are more satisfied with their lives than are nonworking women. The Confucian ethic postulates a wise wife, good mother image for women to pursue, and this is often the reason why working women are frustrated with their employment outside the home. So, why do working women express more satisfaction with their life than nonworking women? Intervening variables such as education and occupation might have greater effect than employment status. Volgy (1976) suggested the importance of psychological conflict and situational determinants in women's subjective well-being. One of the intervening variables introduced in the present study is the woman's willingness to work. The means and the standard deviations of the satisfaction variables for four groups of women, categorized by the willingness to work, are shown in Table 7.

The voluntary working women show the highest scores on WSAT, IGA, and IWB, and the voluntary nonworking women manifest the highest scores on MSAT and FSAT. But involuntary nonworking women show the lowest scores on IGA and IWB.

This finding indicates that willingness to work, along with employment status has an important influence on overall life satisfaction. It is noteworthy that the involuntary working women show the least satisfaction with marriage and work, although the relatively small size of the sample makes this finding somewhat tentative.

The discrepancy between women's sex-role attitudes and their work status appears to produce the highest dissatisfaction with both work and marriage. The involuntary nonworking women showed the lowest score on IGA and

TABLE 7. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF SATISFACTION VARIABLES FOR FOUR GROUPS

	Voluntary Working (N = 163)		Involuntary Working (N = 14)		Voluntary Nonworking (N = 118)		Involuntary Nonworking (N = 123)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
MSAT	14.258	2.867	12.714	3.074	14.449	2.890	13.715	4.000
FSAT	22.277	3.065	21.385	3.776	22.582	3.425	21.155	3.310
WSAT	17.693	5.142	13.143	5.405	15.627	4.741	15.057	4.765
IGA	5.307	0.981	5.164	0.973	4.969	1.066	4.672	1.151
IWB	10.118	1.801	9.250	1.722	9.817	1.820	9.098	2.018

IWB, while they had the highest score on AWS. A possible explanation for this result could be as follows: Involuntary nonworking women who hold very liberal sex-role attitudes may have been forced to stay at home, whereas these women believe that they are able to achieve something outside the home. They would never consider homemaking as important and rewarding, so they are more likely to rate their life as empty, dull, and meaningless, and accordingly are not satisfied with just staying at home.

Our findings support Rodgers' study (1977) of the relationship between a woman's job status and her quality of life. Rodgers found that a woman's motivation to work outside the home has an important effect on her subjective quality of life.

Effects of Background Characteristics on Sex-role Attitudes and Employment Status

Several background characteristics are examined here as determinants of women's sex-role attitudes and employment status. These characteristics include woman's age and educational attainment, parent's educational attainment, husband's income, parent's encouragement for a woman to work, husband's socioeconomic status, mother's working experience, and urban/rural origin.

The multiple regression analysis of background variables contributing to the sex-role attitudes is presented in Table 8. The majority of previous studies indicated that education is the single best predictor of sex-role attitudes, with the most highly educated women being the least traditional (Mason *et al.*

TABLE 8. SUMMARY OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR THE CONTRIBUTION OF BACKGROUND VARIABLES TO SEX-ROLE ATTITUDES

Variable (N = 418)	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	Std. Regression Coefficients
Intercept	37.658	2.249	0.000
Education	0.669	0.214	0.179*
Father's Ed	1.082	0.816	0.090
Mother's Ed	-0.447	0.847	-0.034
U/R Origin	-0.235	0.309	-0.038
Encouragement	1.255	0.278	0.225**
Age	-0.031	0.076	-0.034
Mother's Job	-0.266	0.765	0.017
R ²	0.132		

*p < 0.05. **p < 0.01.

1976; Thornton *et al.* 1983; Morgan and Walker 1983). If a woman gets more education, she is likely to have more alternatives to being a housewife and thus can be free from sex-bound attitudes. In this manner, educational attainment contributes to the formation of egalitarian views of women's roles. Our data support the view that education significantly influences women's sex-role attitudes.

The variable with the strongest effect on women's sex role attitudes is parent's encouragement for a woman to work. Our data indicate that the influence of parent's encouragement seemed to be strong enough for their daughter to hold nontraditional sex-role attitudes. In sum, parental influences (through encouragement to work) strongly determine a daughter's attitudes toward women's role. The daughter of parents who strongly encouraged their daughter to work may grow up in a family where the sex-stereotyped division of labor within the household is somewhat rejected and a woman's commitment to a career is highly valued. On the other hand, a woman raised in a family with very traditional parents (especially a traditional father) is more likely to hold traditional attitudes. This is particularly true in a country like Korea, where a head of the family still exerts strong influences on their children.

The effects of background characteristics on women's employment status are also examined in Table 9. In the present study, while a woman's educational attainment has a positive effect on her sex role attitudes, it has little relationship to her employment status. However, woman's educational attain-

TABLE 9. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF SELECTED BACKGROUND VARIABLES FOR WORKING AND NONWORKING WOMEN

	Working Women (N = 177)		Nonworking Women (N = 241)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S. D.
Age	38.192	8.649	36.963	7.610
Education	5.469	2.111	5.685	1.869
Father's Ed	3.751	2.149	4.237	2.471*
Mother's Ed	2.537	1.537	2.772	1.703
Husband's Ed	6.537	1.937	6.913	1.712*
Husband's Income	57.802	48.456	68.282	41.344*
Duncan's SEI	62.569	20.820	68.129	18.451**
U/R Origin	2.977	1.039	2.809	1.146*
Encouragement	3.356	1.320	3.228	1.324*
Mother's Job	0.390	0.489	0.249	0.433**

*p < 0.05. **p < 0.01.

ment is negatively related to her employment status among less than college-educated women, and positively among college-educated women. One explanation for the possible negative effect of education on women's employment status would be the lack of opportunity for woman to choose a job. Most of the jobs available to women in Korea involve unskilled manual labor, while women with higher education have a very limited choice in the labor market where they are at a disadvantage competing against men. The unemployment rate for different educational levels suggests that education does not function well as an employment qualification for women. For example, the unemployment rate for women with no formal schooling is reported to be only 3.6 percent, whereas the rate for women with more than college-education is increased to 8.6 percent (Kim and Shim 1984). Thus, women with higher education and nontraditional sex role attitudes may not be able to work due to difficulty in finding appropriate jobs for them, which resulted from structural situations in the labor market.

Another reason may be that, in Korea, women try to get higher education, not to pursue a career, but to become better qualified in the marriage market. Due to the relatively higher incomes of their husbands, compared to the incomes of less-than-college-graduated men, most college-educated women do not feel any necessity or strong motivation to work. This finding is in line with the observations of Bielby and Bielby (1984), who found that while women from high-status (or affluent) families held more egalitarian views about women's roles, they tended to be less committed to employment.

However, it should be noted that more women with college education participated in the labor force than did women with only a high school background, although the labor force participation rate for college graduates (23.5 percent) is still low compared to that of women with no or only primary education (55.7 percent and 51.7 percent, respectively). The relatively higher labor force participation rate of college-educated women versus high school-graduated women might be due to the fact that college-educated women in Korea could get higher positions than high school-graduated women, although they could not compete against men. In addition, college education itself might help women become more aware of job opportunities outside the home. Therefore, even while education has certainly a positive effect on men's employment status in Korea, it does not always have the same effect on women's employment chances. In other words, education alone does not provide women with a strong enough incentive to work outside the home.

Father's educational attainment has a negative effect on women's employment status. In Korea, as in other countries, education is a strong indicator of socioeconomic status. A woman with parents having higher education may come from a more affluent family, and her well-to-do parents may not let her

work outside even before marriage. In the past, it was not desirable for a daughter to participate in the labor force. Even ten years ago, a working girl was not valued as a marriage partner, because it was believed that she would not be a good wife.

Husband's income for nonworking women is shown to be significantly higher than that for working women. The negative effect of husband's income on wife's employment has been previously demonstrated in several studies (Noh *et al.* 1986; Kim and Shin 1984; Smith and Fisher 1982). Husband's educational attainment also has a negative effect on wife's employment, which would be expected, since husband's income is closely related to his educational attainment. Using Duncan's SEI, the same result is obtained: Husband's socioeconomic status is higher for nonworking women than for working women. It can be concluded that a woman is less likely to have a job if her family is not in great economic need, as a result of her husband's high income. This finding suggests that the female labor force represents a "reserve army" for the family.

In Table 9 women's employment status is significantly related to parents' encouragement, indicating that women who have encouragement from their parents are more likely to have jobs outside the home. The relationship between women's employment status and mother's working experience is also significant, indicating that women whose mothers worked are also more likely to work. Woman's birth place is slightly related to the employment status. Women born in urban areas are more likely to work outside home than women born in rural areas.

LISREL Analysis

Based on the results of previous analyses, a structural model linking life satisfaction with sex-role attitudes, employment status, and some selected background variables is constructed and presented in Figure 1. This model (Model A) is specified and modified using LISREL VI. LISREL VI produces a range of "goodness of fit" measures to evaluate a particular model.

Our original model (Model A) has a chi-square of 70.61 with degrees of freedom 30 (p less than 0.000), which indicates a poor fit. Another model (Model B) is proposed that hypothesizes reciprocal relationships among marital satisfaction, family satisfaction, and work satisfaction (indicated by the perforated arrows). This model B (see Figure 2) is modified based on theoretical reasoning and modification indices. The criteria of a fitting model are goodness-of-fit chi-square, significant t-values, Q-plot and locations of residuals. Since our data do not satisfy chi-square goodness-of-fit, t-values, and Q-plot simultaneously, a model with a good fit and significant t-values is

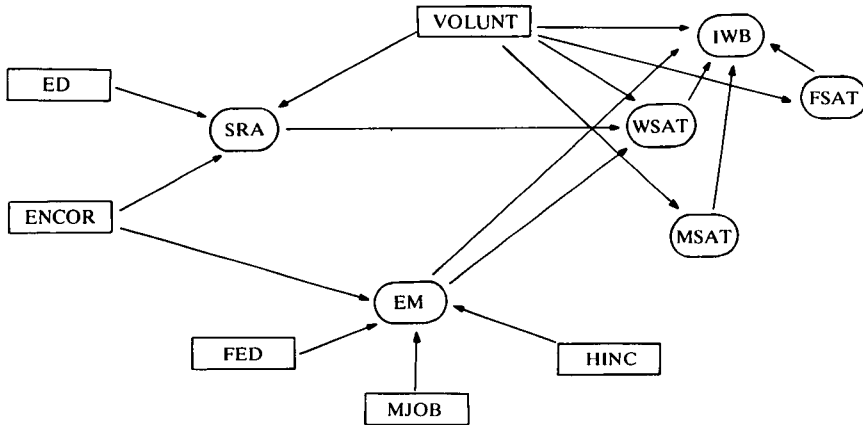


FIGURE 1. CAUSAL MODEL A OF SEX-ROLE ATTITUDES, EMPLOYMENT STATUS, AND LIFE SATISFACTION

- Notes: 1) The variables in circles are endogenous variables.
 2) The variables in squares are exogenous variables.
 3) Description of the variables shown in the figures:

ED: Respondent's education
 FED: Father's education
 MJOB: Mother's working experience
 ENCOR: Parents' encouragement for women to work
 VOLUNT: Woman's voluntarism toward working
 HINC: Husband's income
 EM: Woman's employment status
 SRA: Woman's sex-role attitudes
 WSAT: Work satisfaction
 MSAT: Marital satisfaction
 FSAT: Familial satisfaction
 IWB: Index of well-being (overall life satisfaction)

first examined. Finally, the best-fitted model based on the goodness-of-fit chi-square and significant t-values is presented in Figure 3 (model C). For Model C, the chi-square indicates a reasonable fit. The LISREL coefficients and standard errors for Model C are presented in Table 10.

Since Model C produces a poor Q-plot, another model with a good Q-plot is suggested. In order to get another model with the best fitted Q-plot, some of the fixed LISREL coefficients with high normalized residuals (i.e., greater than 1.000) are relaxed to be estimated. The loosened Model C is presented in Figure 4. The Q-plot for loosened Model C indicates a better-fitted model. The Q-plots for Model C and loosened Model C are shown in Figure 5. The LISREL coefficients and standard errors for loosened Model C are presented in Table 11. As shown in Table 11, some of LISREL estimates are insignifi-

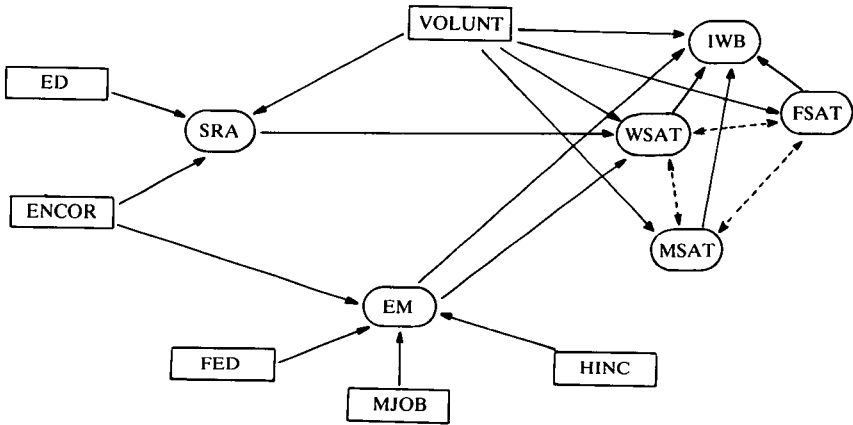


FIGURE 2. CAUSAL MODEL B OF SEX-ROLE ATTITUDES, EMPLOYMENT STATUS, AND LIFE SATISFACTION WITH RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP

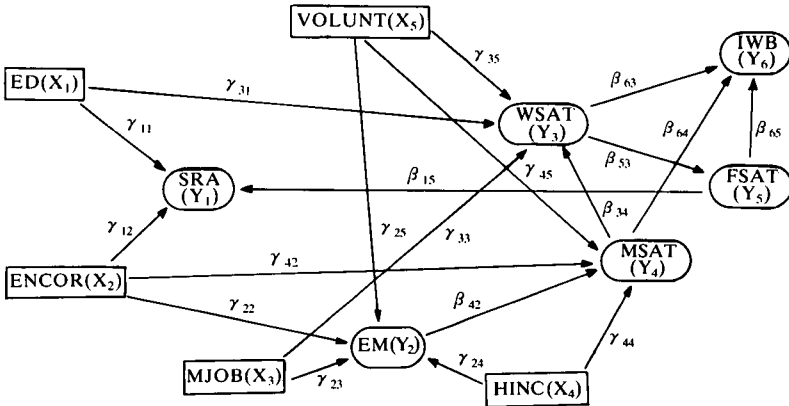


FIGURE 3. CAUSAL MODEL C OF SEX-ROLE ATTITUDES, EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND LIFE SATISFACTION

cant, and these insignificant estimates are the ones relaxed in order to get a better-fitted Q-plot.

The final model (loosened Model C), based on LISREL, is compared with Model A, which is based on regression analyses. For example, neither Model A nor loosened Model C showed any link between sex-role attitudes and employment status, indicating the absence of a relationship between these two variables. Model A showed that a woman's sex-role attitudes influenced her work satisfaction, while work satisfaction influenced sex-role attitudes in loosened Model C. However, loosened Model C indicated that this rela-

TABLE 10. LISREL COEFFICIENTS FOR OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION -MODEL C-

Coefficients		Coefficients	
β_{15}	-0.104(0.046)	γ_{11}	0.203(0.049)
β_{34}	0.411(0.045)	γ_{12}	0.238(0.049)
β_{42}	0.161(0.053)	γ_{22}	0.088(0.044)
β_{53}	0.541(0.042)	γ_{23}	0.125(0.044)
β_{63}	0.333(0.050)	γ_{24}	-0.090(0.043)
β_{64}	0.161(0.043)	γ_{25}	0.445(0.043)
β_{65}	0.283(0.046)	γ_{31}	0.124(0.044)
		γ_{33}	0.146(0.044)
		γ_{35}	0.101(0.045)
		γ_{42}	0.096(0.047)
		γ_{44}	0.127(0.047)
		γ_{45}	0.196(0.052)

$X^2(32) = 40.12$
($p=0.153$)

Notes: 1) Figures in parentheses are standard errors.
2) All coefficients are significant at 0.05 level.

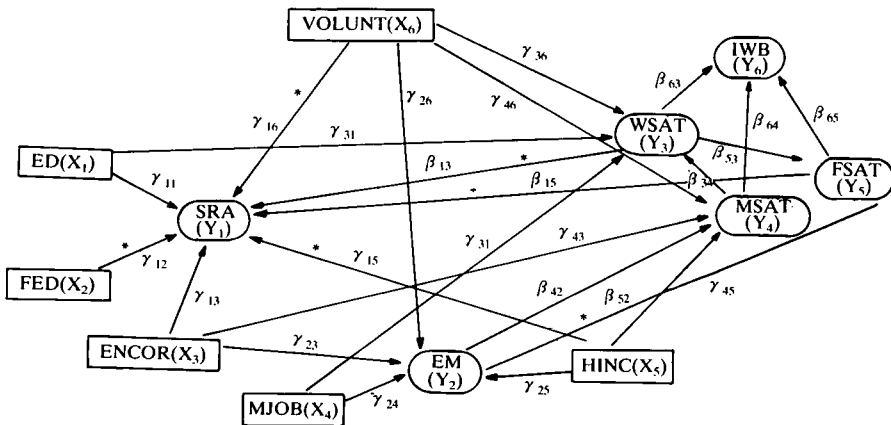
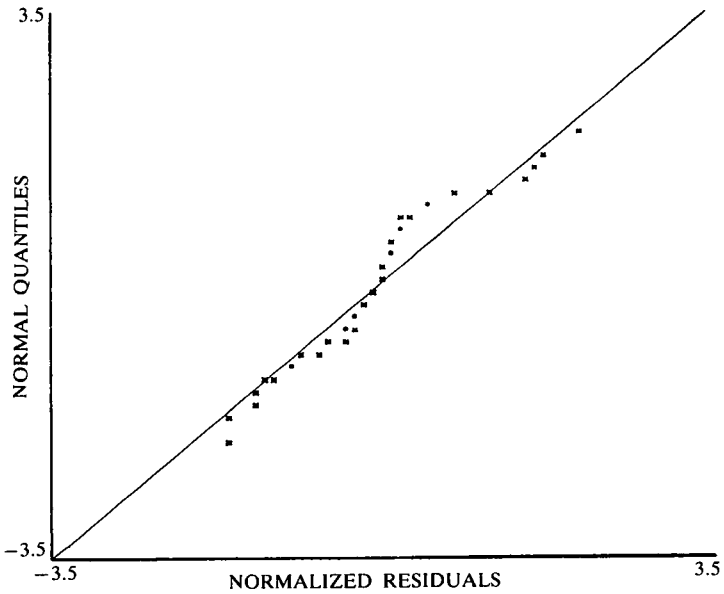


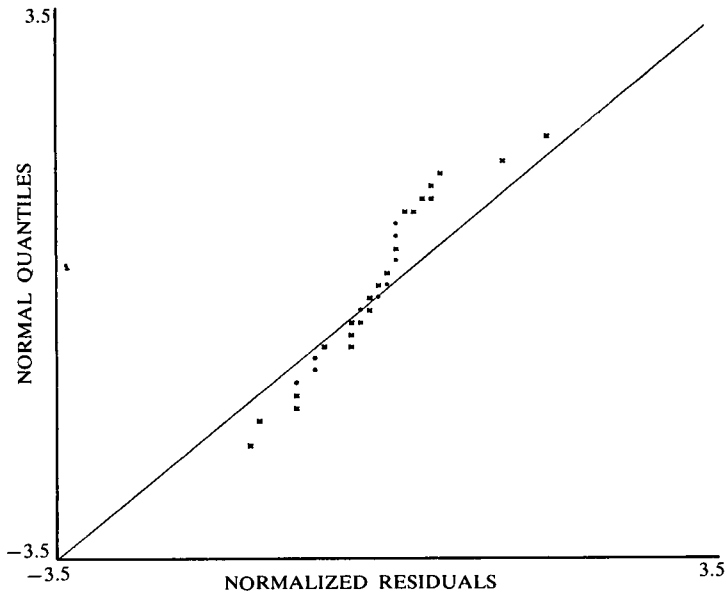
FIGURE 4. LOOSENED MODEL C OF SEX-ROLE ATTITUDES, EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND LIFE SATISFACTION VARIABLES

Note: *Represents insignificant links.

tionship between work satisfaction and sex-role attitudes was statistically insignificant. In connection with sex-role attitudes, the links of father's educational background, a woman's voluntariness, a husband's income, and work satisfaction were all shown to be statistically insignificant in loosened Model C; In fact, these links were the ones relaxed in order to obtain a better



Model C



Loosened Model C

FIGURE 5. Q-PLOTS FOR MODEL C AND LOOSENED MODEL C

TABLE 11 LISREL COEFFICIENTS FOR OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION -LOOSENED MODEL C-

	Coefficients		Coefficients
β_{13}	-0.025(0.055)	γ_{11}	0.192(0.057)
β_{45}	-0.072(0.054)	γ_{12}	0.068(0.053)*
β_{34}	0.411(0.045)*	γ_{13}	0.227(0.049)
β_{42}	0.161(0.053)*	γ_{15}	-0.067(0.048)
β_{52}	0.072(0.042)	γ_{16}	0.080(0.047)
β_{53}	0.542(0.042)*	γ_{23}	0.088(0.044)*
β_{63}	0.333(0.050)*	γ_{24}	0.125(0.044)*
β_{64}	0.161(0.043)*	γ_{25}	-0.090(0.043)*
β_{65}	0.283(0.046)*	γ_{26}	0.445(0.043)*
		γ_{31}	0.124(0.044)*
		γ_{34}	0.146(0.044)*
		γ_{36}	0.101(0.045)*
		γ_{43}	0.096(0.047)*
		γ_{45}	0.127(0.047)*
		γ_{46}	0.196(0.052)*

Note: Figures in parentheses are standard errors.

*Indicates that coefficients are significant at the 0.05 level.

Q-plot. Thus, if all the insignificant links were dropped, the overall relationships among sex-role attitudes, employment status, and life satisfaction as well as background variables in loosened Model C are very similar to those in Model A.

CONCLUSIONS

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships among sex-role attitudes, employment status, and life satisfaction, and thus, to improve our understanding of the quality of life of married women in Korea. Based on 418 married women living in Seoul, Korea, four research questions were examined using various statistical techniques. The major findings from our study are as follows:

1) Women's sex-role attitudes were not related to their employment status. Controlling for their willingness to work or not work, a significant relationship was observed, indicating that women holding nontraditional attitudes were more likely to work than were women with traditional attitudes among the voluntary working group. Controlling the educational attainment, no significant relationship of sex-role attitudes and employment status was observed.

2) No significant relationship was found between women's sex-role attitudes

and satisfaction with marriage, family, work, and overall life. However, when the sample was divided into working and nonworking groups, the relationship between sex-role attitudes and work satisfaction was significant only among nonworking women.

3) Women's employment status had significant relationships with work satisfaction (WSAT), index of general affect (IGA), and index of well-being (IWB), but not with marital satisfaction (MSAT) and family satisfaction (FSAT). Controlling for a woman's voluntariness in her choice of working, significant differences in MSAT, WSAT, IGA, and IWB were observed between working and nonworking women, indicating that women who worked voluntarily were more satisfied with marriage, family, work, and overall life than were women who did not work. Marital satisfaction and family satisfaction were more closely related to overall life satisfaction among nonworking women than among working women.

4) A woman's educational attainment and parents' encouragement to work were found to be the most important factors influencing a woman's sex-role attitudes. Specifically, women were liberal if they received higher education and were encouraged by their parents to work outside the home. On the other hand, a woman's educational attainment had no relationship with her employment status. Husband's socioeconomic status was higher for nonworking women than that for working women. Working women were more likely to have working mothers and to be encouraged by their parents to work.

5) The initial LISREL model was not fitted, and thus, modified based on criteria such as chi-square goodness of fit, t-values, and Q-plot. The final model (loosened Model C) was similar to the model based on the regression analyses, once insignificant links among variables were dropped.

Results obtained from this study are limited in terms of their generalizations to other situations. It is quite possible that different results would be obtained using subjects selected from other regions in Korea or from other countries.

Since there are few studies of the quality of life of married women, relating this variable to their sex-role attitudes and employment status in Korea, it is difficult to corroborate or refute the results reported here. However, our study, as an exploratory study, may provide some guidelines for future research.

Some improvements are suggested for future study. For example, the AWS scale and FSAT scale were not highly reliable. In the future study, a reliability test with these scales should be performed. Since there have been some controversies over the causal relationship between sex-role attitudes and the employment status, an additional suggestion is that longitudinal data should be analyzed, so that causal inferences can be made about the relationship

between sex-role attitudes and employment status, and how this relationship may vary across time.

It is also recommended that more specific variables be used in an attempt to uncover the possibility of significant findings among different groups of women based on socioeconomic backgrounds. The possible influence of husband's sex-role attitudes on a woman's employment status may be included for further research, along with the congruence of sex-role attitudes of the spouses.

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