

ABSTRACTS

Working mothers: their problems and coping strategies -- An exploratory study. *Sycip, L.* (Dept. of Psychology, University of the Philippines) Research Report, 1990.

In order to better understand the situation in which many working mothers find themselves today, an exploratory survey-type study was conducted to investigate the various problems facing the working mother, as well as the different coping strategies used in facing such problems. The respondents consisted of seventy-three working mothers and twenty-nine full-time housewives working or residing in the Greater Manila area. The sampling procedure used was highly purposive and selective in nature since the respondents had to have certain characteristics. A self-administered questionnaire was used to facilitate the gathering of data.

It was found that the working mothers and the housewives were most frequently bothered by economic concerns (rising prices and low wages), domestic concerns (taking charge of household duties and the difficulty of finding good help who would stay for some time), and concerns involving the health of their children. In comparison with the housewives, the working mothers appeared to exercise more independent and critical thinking in the selection of their coping strategies. Housewives were more prone to engage in escapism, or to depend on others to help them out of their difficulties. More housewives also reported having problems with their husbands, although for both groups, the percentage reporting such problems was relatively low. The working mother reported slightly more difficulties than the housewives, and they also gave slightly higher stress ratings to their problems. The differences, however, did not appear to be significant. Working mothers and housewives reported approximately the same number of somatic disorders although the working mothers were much less prone to develop such disorders as a result of their problems. A much stronger relationship was found between the number of problems reported and the Psychosomatic (PS) score for the full-time housewives. It was hypothesized that working mothers may have simply been more susceptible to developing somatic disorders because of their hectic schedules which left them little time to care for themselves, although such disorders were not really being employed as a means of dealing with their tensions, unlike in the case of the full-time

housewives. Both the housewives and the working mothers appeared to be generally happy with their present situations in life. The most frequently mentioned rewards for both groups included children, and having an understanding and good husband. The most commonly cited reasons for working by the working mothers included supplementing the family income or being able to have an income of one's own, being able to put one's training to use, and for professional advancement and growth. For the housewives, on the other hand, the most frequently cited reasons for not working involved mainly restrictions which their present lifestyles had imposed on them (i.e., having no one to look after the children and lacking the necessary training to get a good job). A majority of the housewives said that they would, or would probably, work in the future once their children were all in school and depending on their economic needs then.

Due to the difficulty of finding comparable groups of working mothers and housewives, the working mothers turned out to have higher educational attainments and they were from higher income brackets than the housewives. These difference in background characteristics may have accounted for the differences observed between the two groups. The highly selective nature of the sample of working mothers used might also place important limitations on the results of the study. Be that as it may, much useful information was unearthed and the following recommendations were made based on the results: a) a reassessment of the prevailing value systems within society today so that the guidelines for decision-making can be clarified and the tensions associated with having to make such choices minimized; b) professionalization of domestic services which the working mothers rely heavily on to enable them to meet their multiple-role demands; c) equalizing the distribution of economic opportunities for both men and women; d) reassessing the present tax scheme wherein working couples are unfairly penalized for having two sources of income; and e) making women aware that they must take a more active role in the resolution of their problems rather than falling into their prescribed role of the understanding and accepting female.

Sources of stress and coping mechanisms among Filipinas in West Germany and Holland. *Samonte, E.* (Dept. of Psychology, University of the Philippines) Monograph, 1990.

This paper describes the various problems and difficulties of Filipinas living in West Germany and Holland. It also presents the different coping mechanisms used by these Filipinas. It discusses

the problems and coping mechanisms in the light of the Filipina's socio-cultural background.

Data gathering was done through participant observation, newspaper articles, interview with key persons in the community, and a questionnaire.

Sources of stress identified were: a) socio-cultural b) financial c) physical environment d) family life e) legality of stay f) work opportunities and working conditions g) personal expectations of family in the Philippines h) competition, distrust, rumor-mongering among Filipino community.

Coping mechanisms and strategies and were: problem-solving (language learning, learning and adopting cultural norms of foreign country, working, etc.), cognitively-mediated (self-reminders regarding objectives), spiritual (prayer, trust in God), social (maintaining strong linkages to friends and family in the Philippines, seeking out co-nationals, organizing or joining social networks), maintaining Filipino values and practices, distancing from co-nationals, and defense mechanisms.

Filipino-Japanese Couples: Communication Variables and Marital Satisfaction. *Samonte, E.* (Dept. of Psychology, University of the Philippines) Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, March 1986.

Communication is a critical variable in dyadic relationships. For individuals coming from the same culture, but more so for those coming from different cultures, an interpenetration of perspectives is deemed necessary for promoting understanding and harmonious relationships. Perspectives, however, are influenced by cultural context which include norms, values, role expectations, and the like. Given the greater differences in cultural context, cross-cultural marriages are faced with the challenge of dealing with more differences in perspectives.

To effect some degree of satisfaction in a cross-cultural marriage, marital partners must learn to cross cultural boundaries. Self-disclosure is one means by which this can be done. It has been underscored as one of the most important processes that contributes positively to marital satisfaction. Concomitant with disclosure, proficiency in a common language by which marital partners can communicate their perceptions, expectations and values is also important.

It was hypothesized that the greater the difference in various communication variables, the lower the marital satisfaction. The variables investigated were language proficiency, expectations (of

an ideal communication), perceptions (of own disclosure and spouses's disclosure). Differences between marital partners were measured using the discrepancy index. Discrepancy indices for these variables were obtained and correlated with satisfaction in various aspects of marital life.

Data was obtained from Filipino-Japanese couples in the Philippines and in Japan. However, due to the smaller number of such couples in the Philippines, the study focused on those in Japan. The study group consisted of 15 FJ couples (Filipino wives and Japanese husbands). A comparative group of 32 JJ couples (Japanese wife and Japanese husband) was used.

Indirect (observation, asking around) as well as direct measures (interview and questionnaire) were used to gather data. Three languages (English, Tagalog, and Japanese) were used by the researcher in the interviews and questionnaire; various situations were employed for collecting data (home and office visits, afternoon tea, meals, parties).

Results showed similarities between FJ husbands and wives in some communication variables: 1) overall choice of language (Japanese) for daily usage, 2) emphasis on an honest type of communication, and 3) the value placed on talking about children. However, there were differences, and where they differed, husbands' marital satisfaction was more adversely affected than that of the wives. Differential ability to cope with differences and the resource theory of power were offered as possible explanations. The possibility of real satisfaction in terms of economic security and stability gained from the marriage was also offered as an explanation for the positive correlations found between discrepancy indices and marital satisfaction of FJ wives.

There were differences between husbands and wives which reflected differences in sex role expectations that cut across nationalities. This was clearly seen in the differential perception between husbands and wives of discussion of husbands' problems. This was a common denominator for FJ wives' and JJ wives' marital dissatisfaction. FJ and JJ husbands were comparatively more reticent than their wives.

The study's implications for understanding cross-cultural interaction, both on the micro-level (cross-cultural marriages) and the macro-level (diplomatic relations) were considered. Areas for further research were identified: 1) the intrapersonal aspect of marital satisfaction 2) concept of marriage 3) explicit role expectations 4) meanings of dimensions of self-disclosure 5) reasons for reported marital satisfaction 6) demographic and personality variables.