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Better to Have It All?: Employment, Motherhood and Women's Psychological Well-Being

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Abstract

While there have been dramatic increases in the labor force participation among women with minor children, our understanding about their psychological consequences is limited. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979, this study addresses a question of how employment and motherhood are associated with women's psychological well-being. It also assesses variations in the associations by occupational characteristics and age of children. Results show that the positive effects of employment on women's psychological well-being are contingent upon family status by providing partial support for the work and family conflict perspective. While the overall association between motherhood and psychological well-being is neither exacerbated nor ameliorated by employment, unemployed women who either never married or childless married women report lower levels of psychological well-being. Variations in the relationship between employment and motherhood associated with psychological well-being by age of children and work characteristics are also found.

Along with increases in women's labor force participation, research on women's roles in work and family has substantially grown in recent decades. According to recent statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2007), about 43 percent of women aged 16 and older were in the labor force in 1970, this proportion, however, has increased to about 59 percent in 2006. This increase is due largely to growing number of working women with children. The labor force participation rate of mothers with minor children was 47 percent in 1970 but it was 71 percent in 2006 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). Reflecting the dramatic changes in women's labor force participation rate, several aggregate level studies argued that recent institutional changes rendered it easier to combine responsibilities of family and of work than in the past (Billari & Kohler, 2004; Brewster & Rindfuss, 2000; Kohler, Billari & Ortega, 2002; Rindfuss, Guzzo & Morgan, 2003).

Despite the increases in employment rates among women with children and institutional changes in recent decades, empirical studies, however, suggest that working women seem likely to experience difficulties balancing their work and their family demands. For instance, previous studies reported that mothers work shorter hours than women without children and that parenthood increases the probability of women's exits from jobs, partly because women tend to prioritize family obligation over work efforts compared to men (Kaufman & Uhlenberg, 2000; Koenigsberg, Garet & Rosenbaum, 1994; Maume, 2006). In addition, although it is known that unemployment is stressful and has harmful effects upon well-being, being employed is not always beneficial, especially for women (Aneshensel, 1986). Employed women often experience greater trade-offs and tensions from balancing work and family by experiencing greater role strains while men benefit from work (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003).

While there are good reasons to expect that the positive effects of employment on psychological well-being are contingent upon other roles one holds among women, it is less clear how employment and motherhood are associated with psychological well-being. Is employment positively linked to psychological well-being among mothers as well as childless women? Or, do mothers not benefit from employment in terms of their psychological well-being? This study aims to determine whether employment is beneficial or harmful to women with maternal role taken into account. After exploring the effects of employment on the association between motherhood and psychological well-being, this study further considers work characteristics and age of children to account for possible variations in the association between role statuses and psychological well-being. Because marriage is an important confounding factor for employment status, parental status and individual's psychological well-being, I also incorporate marital status into analysis.

Theoretical Background and Empirical Evidence

Employment provides financial rewards, access to a social network and a wider set of identities, which in turn enhance the levels of psychological well-being (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003; Pavalko, Gong & Long, 2007; Pearlin et al., 1981). However, the link between employment status and psychological well-being associated with parental status among women is less well understood. Previous literature provides two major approaches to explain the effects of role combinations on psychological consequence: the work and family conflict perspective and the work and family facilitation perspective. I outline the relative benefits and negative influences that can be suggested by these perspectives in regard to performing multiple roles including as a mother as well as a paid employee and review previous research.

Work and Family Conflict Perspective. Drawn from the scarcity approach of the multiple role theory that views time and energy as scarce resources, the work and family conflict perspective emphasizes that demands of work and family are incompatible in some respect (Moore, 1963). For example, the role performance as a mother is more difficult if woman participates in paid labor force because both being employed and rearing a child require a high level of devotion and commitment in terms of priority and timing as well as various types of work in two different domains. While various types of predictors of work-family conflict have been indicated in previous research, they largely represent two types of predictors: time-related predictor and strain-related predictor (Frone, 2003; Frone, Yardly & Markel, 1997; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Parasuraman et al., 1996; Williams & Alliger, 1994). First, time-related predictor is based on the amount of time devoted to roles in work and family. It is expected that performing roles in work and family leads for mothers to have less time for self care. And even if mothers prioritize a parenting role and a paid worker role over taking care of themselves, the number of hours devoted to either work or family is positively associated with level of work and family conflict. As more time is devoted to one role, it would be expected that it leaves less time available to perform another role (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Second, strain-related predictor refers to the degree of individual's psychological involvement in work and family roles. Even if individuals value their roles in work and family as important to their self-concept, excessive psychological involvement in one role often interferes with another role in a different domain (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Voydanoff, 2004). High level of psychological involvement in one role may lead one to be mentally preoccupied with the role, making it difficult to perform another role well (Frone, 2003).

Although few studies directly tested the time-related predictors and strain-related predictors, several suggest that there is a negative linkage between work and family associated with psychological well-being. Mothers who also are in the paid labor force tend to report stress from time constraints and over workload more frequently than those who are not employed (Cooke & Rousseau, 1984; Erdwins et al., 2001; Mirowsky & Ross, 2003; Ross & Mirowsky, 1988). Mothers who cannot commit large amounts of time to work have lower chances of being successful or earning a promotion resulting in that they often continue to lag behind men in career development and success, even among the college educated (Apter, 1995; Becker & Moen, 1999; Goldin, 2004). Therefore, working mothers are often somewhat forced to leave their job entirely to care for their children, unless they reduce or restructure their commitment to paid work (Blair-Loy, 2003; Stone, 2007). Furthermore, even if women manage to maintain both roles as a mother and a worker, they often experience feelings of guilt over not spending enough time with their children at home (Erdwins et al., 2001; Guendoouzi, 2006). Feelings of time deficit with children increase the levels of psychological distress (Aneshensel, 1986; Nomaguchi, Milkie & Bianchi, 2005). It all reflects that work and family are less likely to be compatible and combining paid employment with domestic and childrearing roles may be associated with increases in role conflicts among women. The increased role conflicts and feelings of guilt while performing roles as a mother and paid worker may lead to the negative psychological consequences.

Work and Family Facilitation Perspective. As opposed to the work and family conflict perspective, the work and family facilitation perspective postulates that the human resources of energy and time are flexible because energy potential are abundant and expansible (Marks, 1977).

While the work and family conflict perspective focuses on role conflicts between incompatible roles, the work family facilitation perspective provides a form of synergy in which resources from one role help performing the other role (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Voydanoff, 2004, 2005).

According to the work and family facilitation perspective, there may be a positive spillover from domain(s) which makes it easier to participate or to enhance performance in the other domain. For example, mothers may extend their self-identities from employment outside the home, which give guidance to behavior as sources of existential meaning and purpose in life (Thoits, 1983, 1992). Maternal employment may also provide psychological benefits, while it leads to develop role privileges that increase overall status security and personal gratification (Sieber, 1974). People who participate in paid labor force may have wider social connections and more accesses to resources compared to those who do not. Social connections may directly enhance the role performance as a mother as women with children may get information or advices regarding to childrearing from their colleagues. As another direct mechanism that may alleviate the role demands in childrearing, financial rewards from work are important in that they may offset increased economic hardship involved with childrearing. Additionally, previous research also noted that employment often provides mothers a temporal relief from the domestic work and child care responsibility, which are often characterized as repetitive, tedious and burdensome on daily basis (Glass & Fujimoto, 1994; Martikainen, 1995).

While the work and family facilitation approach provides theoretical mechanisms for a salutary relationship between work and family associated with psychological well-being, few explored the prevalence, predictors, and outcomes of work and family facilitations (Frone, 2003; Grywacz & Marks, 2000; Voydanoff, 2004). Even among a few existing studies, research on the

effects of employment status on the association between motherhood and psychological well-being using a probability sample is even more sparse, while most of existing studies focused on women who have a professional occupation, or with at least college education based on community samples (Blair-Loy, 2003; Goldin, 2004; Grzywacz, Almeida & McDonald, 2002; Stone, 2007). Although these studies using a focus group delineated the individuals' specific processes of the events and their consequences in their emotions, the results still cannot be generalized for the national population.

Variations in the Work and Family Relationship. To assess the relationship between work and family and its impacts on psychological well-being, there are several important factors including age of children and work characteristics to be considered. For instance, age of children is expected to affect the work and family relationship. Children create child care demands, which are often unpredictable (i.e. arranging child care or caring for a sick child), and the demands are higher when children are younger. However, the demands decrease as the age of the youngest child increases (Higgins, Duxbury & Lee, 1994; Hochschild, 1989; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987). As children get older, the decreased demands would result in less stress from parenting. Thus, the level of role conflicts among mothers with a paid job should be lower when children are older.

In addition to age of children, it should also be considered whether or not the association between parenting role and psychological well-being varies by work characteristics. There are wide ranges in experiences of employment in terms of work characteristics, work schedules and hours committed to work. For instance, occupational privilege might be associated with degree of work autonomy that can possibly facilitate meeting familial demands. Because it would be more difficult to arrange child care and to find time to spend with family if a job requires

irregular work schedules, the work shift may also affect psychological well-being by altering the work and family relationship. Number of hours spent at work may directly relate to the level of role conflicts. The fewer hours of work might enable to spend more time for family role leading to better mental health. However, the excessive hours of work and less time for family role might result lower levels of psychological well-being.

Research Goals and Hypotheses

The primary goal of this study is to address issues concerning the effects of roles from work and family on women's psychological well-being. To answer this question, the current study tests the following hypotheses.

1. According to the work and family conflict perspective, it is expected that, although employment itself is generally associated with higher levels of psychological well-being, conflicts between work and family inhibit those benefits for mothers. This relationship would be more salient among single mothers compared to married mothers.
2. From the work and family facilitation perspective, it is expected that mothers might be advantaged in terms of their psychological well-being when they also participate in the labor force and this pattern would be salient among married women.
3. Based on the view of time-related stressors from the work and family conflict perspective, it is expected that those who have young children might experience higher levels of role strains when they are also active in the labor force. Therefore, mothers of young children in the labor force might experience lower levels of psychological well-being and this negative effect would be stronger among single mothers who do not have support from their spouse.

4. In regard to the role combinations of work and family by occupational characteristics, from the work and family conflict perspective, non-professional jobs, excessive hours of work and irregular work schedules might lead to even lower levels of psychological well-being for mothers who also participate in labor force. Yet, from the work and family facilitation perspective, professional jobs, fair (or less) amount of work hours and regular daytime schedule might lead to higher levels of psychological well-being for employed mothers.

Data, Measures and Methods

Data. Data came from the 2004 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 79 Cohort (NLSY79). The NLSY79 is designed to collect information on important life events with a nationally representative sample of 12,686 young men and women who were 14-22 years old when they were first interviewed in 1979. They were interviewed annually through 1994 and biennially until 2004. Among 21 rounds of the NLSY79, the measures of psychological well-being, which is the main dependent variable in this study, are included in the surveys which were conducted in 1992, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2004. Using these six panels of survey data, I constructed three waves of measures of psychological well-being. The first and second waves are based on the 1992 and 1994 surveys. Because the respondents answered a series of health questions only once from 1998 to 2004 interviews, I synthesized from the 1998 to 2004 interviews to construct the third wave. In 1998, the NLSY79 asked health related questions only if the respondent had reached age 40 and then the NLSY79 asked the questions thereafter those who newly reached age 40 or those who had not answered these questions since 1998.

Because of the inherent diversity and normative ambiguity in the context of adopting a child, parents who have only adoptive children (n=13) are not considered in this study. After excluding those who are missing on the outcome variable (n=30) and those who are in active military service (n=17), the current analytic sample includes 3,695 cases. The sample attrition from the initial survey at 1979 is 41 percent. A substantial proportion of the attrition (59 percent) is due to cases dropped either from the 1984 survey or from the 1990 survey, which excluded military sub-sample and the members of the supplemental economically disadvantaged, non-black/non-Hispanic sub-sample. As the sample of the NLSY79 is based on those who were born 1957 to 1965, the sample attrition due to respondent's death is very small (5.6 percent). All analyses presented here are weighted to adjust for the sample attrition that occurred since the initial survey.

To take full advantages of the longitudinal data, I further pooled the data. Similar to the analytical strategy employed by studies by Williams and her colleague (Williams, 2003; Williams & Umberson, 2004), I constructed data with two time points of measures. In doing so, I created two sub-samples to control for marital status as well as marital transitions during the time interval. For instance, the first sub-sample is for those who were never married since the baseline and the second sub-sample is for those who stayed in their first marriage throughout the follow-up period. For the first sub-sample, I selected those who were never married at Wave 2 (n=789) and Wave 3 (n=579) and pool them generating 1,368 cases. For the second sub-sample, I pooled those who stayed in their first marriage at Wave 2 (n=1,790) and Wave 3 (n=1,357) resulting 3,147 cases.

This analytic strategy provides several advantages. First, it effectively increases the sample size and therefore reduces the probability that I may fail to observe existing effects of employment on psychological well-being associated with parental status due to a lack of statistical power. Second, the pooled data provides variations in the follow-up periods between Time 1 and Time 2 allowing me to examine if the effects of the role combinations of work and family on psychological well-being change over time. As described above, while Wave 1 and Wave 2 are based on the 1992 and 1994 interviews resulting two years of period between the interviews, Wave 3 is combined with the interviews from 1998 to 2004. Thus, the pooled data provides variations in the period between Time 1 and Time 2, ranging 2 to 10 years. Additionally, variations in the follow-up period decrease multicollinearity problems by reducing the correlation between depression scores at Time 1 and Time 2. I computed robust standard errors which adjust for the clustering in the data.

Measures. Psychological well-being is measured using the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression (CES-D) Scale that the NLSY79 asked since the 1992 interview. This scale measures how often respondents experienced a series of symptoms of depressions. It discriminates between clinically depressed individuals and others, and highly correlated with other depression rating scales (Radloff, 1977). Although the original 20 items of the CES-D scale were asked in the 1992 interview, the numbers of the items asked vary across the surveys. For example, the 1998 and 2000 surveys collected a reduced set of seven items. This same set of seven items was also included in the 1994 survey but it is increased to nine items in 2002 and 2004 survey. To avoid potential measurement errors, I created the psychological well-being variable using the following seven items that were included consistently throughout the interviews. The NLSY79

asked how often in the past: you did not feel like eating; you had trouble keeping your mind on what you were doing; you felt depressed; you felt that everything you did was an effort; your sleep was restless; you felt sad; and you could not get going. Respondents answered 0 for rarely/none of the time/1 day, 1 for some/a little of the time/1-2 days, 2 for occasionally/moderate amount of the time/3-4 days, and 3 for most/all of the time/5-7days. I computed the average score of the frequency of depressive symptoms with higher scores indicating lower levels of psychological well-being. The alpha coefficients for the internal consistency among the seven items at Time 1 and Time 2 are 0.85 and 0.86, respectively.

Parental status is a dichotomous variable, indicating whether or not a respondent had had a birth as of Time 1 (1=mother; 0=non-mother). Additionally, I created a variable indicating whether or not childless women at Time 1 became a mother since Time 1 to adjust a change in parental status between Time 1 and Time 2. Because work demands in child care are closely related to age of children, I also created four dichotomous variables after categorizing age of children into four groups: preschoolers (0-4); school aged children (5-12); teen-agers (13-17); and adult children (18 and older). That is, 1 is for those who had any preschoolers and 0 is for those who did not have any preschoolers, and so forth.

In order to estimate how the role combination of work and family affects psychological well-being over time, an employment status variable indicates whether or not women are employed at Time 1 and a labor force status variable indicates whether or not women are in the labor force either by being employed or looking for a job. To account for variations in experience of labor force participation, a number of variables for occupational characteristics are also examined. For instance, based on three digit occupational codes, I created a series of

dichotomous variable indicating if a woman's occupation is 'professional,' 'non-professional,' or 'not employed.' The category for 'professional' includes professional or technical kindred occupation, managers, officials or proprietors. 'non-professional' occupations include any occupations that are not included in 'professional' category such as sales workers or clerical kindred, craftsmen or foremen kindred, operatives or laborers kindred, farmers, or service workers. Whether or not respondents work during regular daytime is also considered in the analysis. In addition to the work shift, models also include work hours assessing hours per week in last week. Although work hours ranged from 1 to 96 among the employed, the majority of women reported either fewer than 35 hours (12-22 percent) or 35 to 50 hours (40-47 percent) across marital status. Thus, four categories were created: '1-35 hours'; '35-50 hours'; '50 hours or more'; and 'not employed.'

The current analysis also involves demographic predictors, such as age and race and ethnicity. I included age measured in years after centering on the mean values at each wave to facilitate interpretations of other coefficients. Race and ethnicity is coded 1 for non-Hispanic Whites and 0 for 'others'. 'Others' category includes Hispanic, Native American, Asian or Pacific Islander as well as non-Hispanic Black. In regard to socioeconomic controls, educational attainment is measured in years based on highest grade completed as of Time 1 and is centered on 12. To control for respondents' economic hardship, I also included family poverty status variable in the analysis. It is calculated using the Poverty Income Guidelines (PIG), provided by the U.S. Department of health and Human Services. The PIG uses one person as a base and an increment is added to that figure for each single person increase in family size (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007). Respondents are determined to be in poverty if their total household income for

the last fiscal year for the family size is below the PIG. I coded the variable dichotomously indicating 1 for those who are in poverty and 0 for otherwise. To protect against confounding due to effects of physical limitation on employment status, I created a variable indicating the physical limitation status.

In addition to these individual's resources and physical limitation, I also included family background information in the analysis. I created a variable indicating whether or not respondents lived with both biological parents until age 18. It is coded 1 for those who lived with both biological parents; and 0 for those who did not live with their biological parents at some point before age 18. Another variable is for mother's completed years of education centered on 12. Five percent of the respondents who are missing on mother's education were assigned the mean value. I also include an additional variable coded 1 for those who didn't know their mother's education and 0 for those who knew.

Methods. I used ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models to estimate subsequent level of psychological well-being associated with the role combinations of work and family at the baseline. That is, the dependent variable was the depression score at Time 2, and the role statuses and most controls were measured at Time 1. Two-way interactions between parental status and employment are included in the models to test the hypotheses indicated earlier. The models also contain a number of controls including demographic information, family background, individual's resources and any changes in the physical limitation over the time interval.

To evaluate variations in the associations between the role combinations and psychological well-being by age of children and occupational characteristics, I present four additional sets of regression models in this study. The first set of models assesses to what extent

the relationship between work and family associated with the psychological well-being varies by age of children with other conditions adjusted. Interactions between labor force status and four variables of age of children are tested. The second set of models estimates variations by occupational privilege with interactions between parental status and two categories of occupational status (i.e. professional or non-professional). Similarly, the third and fourth set of models assess interactions between parental status and work shift (i.e. working during regular daytime or working at other schedules) and interactions between parental status and work hours per week, respectively.

All the analyses presented here proceed separately by two sub-samples: one is for the never married over the time interval and the other is for those who stayed in their first marriage throughout the follow-up period. This approach allows me to control for possible various paths of marital transitions occurred during the follow-up period while it still enables to estimate the effects of employment and parental status conditioned by marital status without three-way interactions among work, marriage and maternal role.

Results

Role Combinations of Work and Family Associated with Psychological Well-Being. While it is known that employment is positively linked to psychological well-being in general, coefficients in Table 1 show that the magnitude of the effect of employment varies by marital status. Results also prove that this positive link between employment and psychological well-being is contingent upon parental status.

(Table 1 about here)

More specifically, employment predicts a significant decline in the depression score over the follow-up period for the never married women, especially among those who did not have a child. The coefficient of 'employed' among the never married (-0.1472) indicates that employment predicts lower levels of psychological distress and this effect is statistically significant. Although the negative coefficient of 'employed' for the continuously married (-0.1322) also suggests that there might be some declines in the depression score, the coefficient does not appear statistically significant. On the other hand, unemployment does not always increase the depression score. In fact, unemployment appears to improve the levels of psychological well-being among married mothers. The coefficient of 'having a child' for the continuously married (-0.1562) indicates that, among the married, unemployed mothers have significantly lower levels of psychological distress at Time 2 compared to those who did not have a child. Both coefficients of interaction terms for the never married as well as the continuously married are positive. Although they are not statistically significant, the positive coefficients suggest that combining the roles from work and family might decrease the levels of psychological well-being over time.

Role Combinations of Work and Family Associated with Psychological Well-Being by Age of Children. To further evaluate variations in the effects of employment and parental status on psychological well-being, additional models assess the effects of labor force participation on psychological well-being by age of children and the results are presented in Table 2.

(Table 2 about here)

Coefficients in Table 2 provide clear evidence that labor force participation improves an individual's psychological well-being across marital status after controlling for age of children. Both coefficients of 'in labor force' for the never married and continuously married are negative,

indicating that those who were in the labor force experience declines in the level of psychological distress. Because the difference in the coefficients between -0.2630 and -0.1025 is statistically significant (the results of the significance test are not shown), it appears that the declines in the depression score are greater for the never married compared to the continuously married. With respect to age of children, while the married with either preschoolers or school-aged children at the baseline experience declines in the depression score, this pattern is not found among the never married women. Instead, the never married with adult children at Time 1 experience increases in the depression score at Time 2 suggesting that the never married women do not appear to experience relief from parental responsibilities even as their children age if they are out of the labor force. Moreover, being out of labor force has more harmful impacts on psychological well-being when their children age to adulthood.

Several coefficients of the interaction terms are statistically significant in the models. For instance, the positive coefficients of the interaction term between 'in labor force' and 'any preschoolers' for both the never married and the continuously married indicate that performing two roles, as a mother as well as a paid worker, increase the level of psychological distress regardless of women's marital status. However, this negative impact is greater for the never married (the results of the significance test of the difference between 0.3073 and 0.0930 are not shown). It is probably because support from spouse buffers a portion of the detrimental effects of work demands for the married women. The adverse consequence of role combinations from work and family still is found for the married with school-aged children, yet it is not found for the never married.

Role Combinations of Work and Family Associated with Psychological Well-Being by Occupational Characteristics. Experience in the paid labor force often involves wide ranges of variations by occupational privilege, work shift or number of hours committed to work. To account for any possible variations in the relationship between employment and parenthood associated with psychological well-being, another set of models estimate women's psychological well-being by occupational status, work shift and work hours, and their interactions with parental status. The results are presented in the following Tables 3 to 5.

(Tables 3 to 5 about here)

First, in Table 3, the coefficient of 'professional' for the never married shows that women holding a professional occupation experience higher levels of psychological well-being compared to unemployed women. However, the effect of having a professional occupation does not appear to lead to higher levels of psychological well-being for the continuously married women. In addition, as none of interaction terms show significant effects, there does not seem to be any substantial variations in work and family conflicts (or facilitations) by occupational status. The similar pattern is found in Table 4. The never married women are psychologically advantaged at Time 2 if they were working during regular daytime at Time 1. On the other hand, the continuously married women with a child at Time 1 have enhanced levels of psychological well-being at Time 2; however, they do not appear to receive psychological benefits from having regular work schedules. In regard to the effects of work hours, from Table 5, working part time predicts declines in the psychological distress for the married, the never married, however, experience declines at Time 2 if they were working a full time load at Time 1. Additionally, Table 5 also provides evidence that the level of psychological well-being has improved among

married mothers since Time 1, while that does not appear to be the case for single mothers. Supporting for the work and family conflicts hypothesis, the coefficient of the interaction term between 'having a child' and 'less than 35 hours per week' indicate that mothers who were working for part time experience increases in their depression scores regardless of marital status.

Conclusions and Future Directions

This study explores the association between women's major roles and psychological well-being using a nationally representative longitudinal data. For the purpose of analysis, this study tested the work and family conflicts perspective and the work and family facilitation perspective, as they concern women's psychological well-being. While the results do not support the work and family facilitation perspective, they reveal partially supportive evidence for the work and family conflict perspective. Variations in the relationship between work and family associated with subsequent level of psychological well-being by sub-samples and work characteristics are also found.

For instance, it appears that employment predicts declines in psychological well-being for the never married women who do not have a child. However, the married women are not psychologically advantaged from employment. On the other hand, although being a parent does not appear to be beneficial for the never married women, it is for the married women. Employment provides psychological benefits especially for the never married, while motherhood enhances the levels of psychological well-being among the continuously married. However, performing two roles at the same time appears neither beneficial nor harmful to psychological well-being for both married and never married women.

While the role combination of work and family does not appear to increase the levels of psychological well-being among women, there are variations by age of children as well as work characteristics across marital status. For instance, the married women benefit from labor force participation after adjusting for age of children, even though the positive effect of labor force participation is smaller for the married compared to that of the never married. More specifically, the married women with school-aged and younger children at the baseline experience increases in the levels of psychological well-being over time while mothers of teen-agers and older do not. It suggests that the married women have emotional benefits from being a mother but the emotional benefits decrease as children age to adulthood. Yet, the negative effects of motherhood on subsequent level of psychological well-being still persist among the never married mothers. The results also provide some evidence for the work and family conflicts perspective. The level of psychological well-being is significantly lower for mothers of young children who are also in labor force; this negative association is more salient for the never married.

The results indicate that whether women have a professional occupation or work during regular daytime do not appear to alter the work and family relationship predicting psychological well-being as none of interactions have significant effects. Instead, having a regular work shift is beneficial to psychological well-being for the never married, and being a mother increases the level of psychological well-being for the married who do not work for pay. Interestingly, however, the results also show that while professional occupation contributes to higher levels of psychological well-being for the never married, the psychological advantages of being a mother among the married do not appear significant after adjusting for the occupational privilege. It

implies that the complementary relationship between being a mother and psychological well-being among the married women might somewhat selectively apply for middle class women with a professional occupation.

Although occupational status and work shift do not have significant effects to modify the work and family relationship, the quantitative characteristics of work provide some evidence that time-related factors are important to predict whether or not multiple roles create conflicts in fulfilling the roles. The results show that employment is beneficial to psychological well-being even among married women if they work less than 35 hours per week. It suggests that the roles in work and family substitute with each other for married women's psychological well-being. For childless married women, part time employment provides social identity to cope with absence of children, while not interfering with family roles. However, benefits from part time employment (either psychological or material) do not appear to be substantial enough to offset role strains created by motherhood. Mothers employed part time have higher levels of psychological distress in the cases both of married and of never married women.

This study is one of the few empirical studies that estimated the effects of work and family on psychological well-being based on longitudinal data of a probability sample. It provides several important findings to further clarify how family roles and employment status are associated with psychological well-being among women from young adulthood to midlife. This study also suggests directions for future research. First, it will be important to evaluate the findings in the present study using other samples to see whether or not the same patterns from this study are consistently found. Further, given the increases in the proportions of cohabiting as well as non-marital childbearing from cohabiting couples (Casper & Bianchi, 2002; Raley, 2001;

Ventura & Bachrach, 2000), it should be examined if the influences of combining a mother role with a worker role on psychological well-being differ between the married and cohabiting couples. Similar analysis also should evaluate the role of presence of an intimate partner among unmarried individuals. Additionally, there are other conditions that may affect the relationship between multiple roles and psychological well-being including social support from friends or community (Thoits, 1983). Although this study did not address the characteristics of social support affecting women's psychological well-being, future study should further explore these factors to identify the mediating mechanisms for the interface between work and family and its influence on women's mental health.

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Table 1. Depression Score
Regressed on Parental Status, Employment Status and their Interaction

Variable	Never Married		Continuously Married	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Intercept	0.4872 ***	0.1018	0.5108 ***	0.0964
Parental status (no child)				
Having a child	0.0381	0.0907	-0.1562 †	0.0913
Employment status (not employed)				
Employed	-0.1472 †	0.0865	-0.1322	0.0934
Interaction				
Having a child × Employed	0.0812	0.1053	0.1330	0.0962
Change in parental status since T1				
Became a parent	0.1740	0.1220	-0.0458	0.0528
Demographics				
Age, centered on 32	0.0021	0.0082	-0.0079 †	0.0041
Non-Hispanic White (others)	0.0144	0.0476	0.0155	0.0199
Family background				
Mother's years of schooling, centered on 12	-0.0065	0.0070	0.0021	0.0039
Mother's education unknown (mother's education known)	0.0333	0.0937	0.0471	0.0497
Lived with two biological parents until age 18? (No)	-0.0160	0.0421	-0.0438 †	0.0226
Individual's resources				
Completed years of education, centered on 12	-0.0216 *	0.0092	-0.0198 ***	0.0048
In poverty? (not in poverty)	-0.0287	0.0557	0.1693 **	0.0550
Changes in physical limitation since T1 (no change)				
Don't have limitations any more	-0.1571 *	0.0760	-0.0742	0.0474
Start having limitations	0.1445 †	0.0860	0.2774 ***	0.0604
Depression score at T1	0.4042 ***	0.0445	0.3915 ***	0.0243
Years elapsed between T1 and T2	-0.0002	0.0067	-0.0111 **	0.0037
R-Square	0.2231		0.2046	

Note: The categories in parentheses serve as reference categories. † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test)

Table 2. Depression Score
Regressed on Labor Force Status, Age of Children and their Interaction

Variable	Never Married		Continuously Married	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Intercept	0.5999 ***	0.0917	0.4689 ***	0.0686
Parental status (no child)				
Having a child	-0.0071	0.0746	-0.0105	0.0395
Labor force status (out of labor force)				
In labor force	-0.2630 ***	0.0791	-0.1025 †	0.0557
Age of children				
Any preschoolers?	-0.1201	0.0837	-0.1217 **	0.0453
Any school-aged children?	-0.0450	0.0900	-0.0852 *	0.0419
Any teen-agers?	-0.0889	0.0900	0.0300	0.0651
Any adult children?	0.3191 †	0.1662	0.1547	0.1792
Interactions				
In labor force × Any preschoolers	0.3073 **	0.1098	0.0930 †	0.0512
In labor force × Any school-aged children	0.1315	0.1027	0.0930 †	0.0499
In labor force × Any teen-agers	0.1784	0.1168	-0.0285	0.0761
In labor force × Any adult children	-0.3293	0.2027	-0.2223	0.2022
R-square	0.2365		0.2093	

Notes: All models also include information on change in parental status since T1, age, race, family background variables, education, poverty status at T1, information on change in physical limitation since T1, depression score at T1 and years elapsed between T1 and T2. The categories in parentheses serve as reference categories. † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test)

Table 3. Depression Score
Regressed on Occupational Status, Parental Status and their Interaction

Variable	Never Married		Continuously Married	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Intercept	0.4833 ***	0.1000	0.4876 ***	0.0933
Parental status (no child)				
Having a child	0.0347	0.0885	-0.1293	0.0877
Occupational status (not employed)				
Professional	-0.1678 †	0.0902	-0.0654	0.0935
Non-Professional	-0.1309	0.0859	-0.1360	0.0947
Interaction				
Having a child × Professional	0.2029	0.1663	0.0643	0.0966
Having a child × Non-Professional	0.0481	0.1052	0.1348	0.0981
R-Square	0.2248		0.2049	

Notes: All models also include information on change in parental status since T1, age, race, family background variables, education, poverty status at T1, information on change in physical limitation since T1, depression score at T1 and years elapsed between T1 and T2. The categories in parentheses serve as reference categories. † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test)

Table 4. Depression Score Regressed on Work Shift, Parental Status and their Interaction

Variable	Never Married		Continuously Married	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Intercept	0.4854 ***	0.1019	0.5114 ***	0.0964
Parental status (no child)				
Having a child	0.0380	0.0905	-0.1550 †	0.0912
Work shift (not employed)				
Working during regular daytime	-0.1738 *	0.0877	-0.1295	0.0945
Working at other schedules	-0.0730	0.1002	-0.1484	0.1046
Interaction				
Having a child × Working during regular daytime	0.0880	0.1099	0.1212	0.0974
Having a child × Working at other schedules	0.0539	0.1344	0.1678	0.1107
R-Square	0.2258		0.2049	

Notes: All models also include information on change in parental status since T1, age, race, family background variables, education, poverty status at T1, information on change in physical limitation since T1, depression score at T1 and years elapsed between T1 and T2. The categories in parentheses serve as reference categories. † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test)

Table 5. Depression Score Regressed on Work Hours, Parental Status and their Interaction

Variable	Never Married		Continuously Married	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Intercept	0.5042 ***	0.1049	0.5195 ***	0.0968
Parental status (no child)				
Having a child	0.0464	0.0904	-0.1658 †	0.0915
Hours woman works (not employed)				
<35 hrs per week	-0.1488	0.1060	-0.2459 †	0.1289
35-50 hrs per week	-0.1564 †	0.0906	-0.1213	0.0920
More than 50 hrs per week	-0.0922	0.1151	-0.0324	0.1695
Interaction				
Having a child × <35 hrs per week	0.2676 †	0.1615	0.2312 †	0.1324
Having a child × 35-50 hrs per week	0.0208	0.1084	0.1182	0.0960
Having a child × More than 50 hrs per week	-0.1987	0.1487	0.0606	0.1777
R-Square	0.2362		0.2034	

Notes: All models also include information on change in parental status since T1, age, race, family background variables, education, poverty status at T1, information on change in physical limitation since T1, depression score at T1 and years elapsed between T1 and T2. The categories in parentheses serve as reference categories. † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test)