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**SURFACE WARFARE JUNIOR OFFICER RETENTION:
SPOUSES' INFLUENCE ON CAREER DECISIONS**

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6 SURFACE WARFARE JUNIOR OFFICER RETENTION:
SPOUSES' INFLUENCE ON CAREER DECISIONS

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most pronounced influence against a Navy career. Wives who were most supportive of a Navy career were most socially and emotionally involved in the career. Wives who worked outside the home were less supportive of a Navy career than were those who worked within the home. Wives who were teachers or Navy officers found relocations more difficult to accommodate and were more reluctant for their husbands to remain in the Navy than were wives in other types of jobs. Few Navy wives attended detailer field trip meetings, but those who did were more supportive of a Navy career than those who did not. The assistance of superior officers in helping wives adjust to new duty stations was rated most helpful, and Navy Family Services least helpful, indicating that COs and XO's should recognize their influence on officer retention, and that officers and their wives should be educated on the value and use of Navy Family Services to alleviate stresses of relocation and separation.

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FOREWORD

This research was conducted in response to a request from the Navy Military Personnel Command (NMPC-4) (then the Bureau of Naval Personnel (Pers-4)) to investigate factors affecting the retention of surface warfare junior officers (JOs).

This report is the third in a series to be issued on JO retention. The first report, NPRDC TR 79-29, provided a research plan designed to explore the factors or areas affecting JO retention. The second, NPRDC TR 80-13, focused on the role of the assignment process in determining JO career decisions. This report describes the influence of the wives of JOs on their career decisions and, conversely, the influence of JO careers on the attitudes and perceptions of their wives.

Appreciation is expressed to RADM J. F. Addams (formerly NMPC-41) and CDR F. Julian (formerly NMPC-412), for their critical support and assistance in this project, and to the JOs who participated in the study.

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SUMMARY

Problem and Background

Retention statistics show that the surface forces are experiencing increasing difficulty in meeting their junior officer (JO) retention goals. To address this problem, the Navy Personnel Research and Development Center is conducting a study on JO retention. The first report issued on this study described a research plan designed to explore the factors or areas affecting JO retention. Research questions were identified, and a questionnaire was developed to obtain answers to these questions. Subsequently, the questionnaire was administered to a sample of male surface warfare JOs. Plans were to analyze data provided by the questionnaire to determine how various factors affected JO retention. The first factor studied, which was described in the second report in this series, was the assignment process.

Objective

The purpose of this study was to determine how JOs perceive the experiences, attitudes, and opinions of their wives, and how they perceive that their career decisions are influenced by their wives.

Approach

The final sample, based on useable returned questionnaires, included 312 JOs, of whom 63 percent were married, 30 percent were single, and 7 percent were engaged. Responses to pertinent items were analyzed. The items assessing the extent to which a spouse participates in career decisions, the helpfulness of persons or groups of persons in helping a wife to adjust to relocations, and JO agreement on statements regarding aspects of a Navy career were analyzed to reduce the number of items to a manageable number. Variables or factors assessing groups of variables were correlated to identify any relationships.

Findings

1. JOs indicated that their wives had a major impact on their careers. The majority reported that their wives were supportive and cooperatively involved in decisions about future assignments.
2. The least favorable aspect of a Navy career, according to wives, was separations. Pay, benefits, and location changes were viewed as equal, somewhat positive factors.
3. Officers whose wives were supportive of a Navy career were more intent on remaining in the Navy than were those whose wives were neutral or antagonistic toward their career.
4. Wives who were supportive of a Navy career were more involved socially and emotionally in that career.
5. Wives of JOs with high career intent evaluated the benefits, location changes, and separations associated with Navy careers more positively than did wives of JOs with low career intent.

6. JOs whose wives did not work outside the home reported greater spouse support for a Navy career and a higher level of career intent than did those JOs whose wives worked outside the home.

7. Wives with larger families took longer to adjust to their new community after a change in geographic location.

8. Few wives had attended a detailer field trip meeting, but those who had attended were more supportive of Navy careers than those who did not.

9. Wives who found the JO's superior officers helpful in adjusting to a new location tended to be more supportive of a Navy career.

10. In general, social and community factors were seen as helpful in easing adjustment to new locations. However, of all the factors that might be helpful in easing readjustment, Family Services, the Navy's organization responsible for integrating Navy families into the community, was seen as least helpful. [Note: Family Services was included within the Family Service Centers in 1980.]

Conclusions

1. The influence wives exert on JO careers should be considered in retention plans. The amount of support a wife provides to her husband's career directly affects his career intent.

2. The positive relation between a spouse's evaluations of the various Navy life-style influences and her overall support for a Navy career indicates the importance of individual perceptions of Navy life on the spouse role.

Recommendations

1. More detailer field trip meetings with spouses should be scheduled and officers and their wives should be alerted to these meetings. The meetings should be carefully designed to focus on the career concerns of both the JOs and their wives. Since many spouses travel with their husbands to the Surface Warfare Officers School, Basic, this may be an appropriate time to schedule detailer meetings.

2. The superior officers of JOs can affect the attitudes of their wives by helping them adjust to a new community. This important responsibility of commanding officers and executive officers should be emphasized to ensure maximum effectiveness in this role.

3. JOs and their wives should be informed of the reasons for frequent separations and should receive help in preparing for and coping with the resulting stresses.

4. The range and availability of services provided through Family Services [now the Family Services Centers] should be explained to officers and their wives. It should be stressed that the services are not limited to enlisted families and can be used by officers without loss of prestige or status.

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INTRODUCTION

Problem

The surface warfare community is experiencing difficulty in meeting its retention goal of approximately 500 junior officers (JOs) each year. Retention studies show that the goal was missed by 29 percent in FY79 and by 36 percent in FY80.

In addition to problems associated with numerical losses, downward retention trends may lead to other negative effects. First, the overall quality of the remaining officer force may be lowered, either because of the loss of higher quality officers or the increased augmentation of those who would not have been accepted under more favorable circumstances. Second, a shortage of officers increases the difficulty in managing the inventory of available officers. Finally, unacceptable officer losses may indicate generalized attitudinal and operational problems that could impact negatively on operational readiness.

Several options are available to compensate for current and projected shortfalls of surface warfare JOs. Short-term options include (1) extending release from active duty (RAD) dates, (2) increasing the augmentation of reserve officers, and (3) increasing tour lengths. Long-term solutions include (1) increasing the number of new accessions, and (2) increasing the percentage of officers who desire to pursue a Navy career. All of these options, except for the last, address the problem indirectly. Further, they all have negative consequences that might further aggravate the problem.

Background

This is the third in a series of reports addressing the surface warfare JO retention problem. The first (Holzbach, 1979) provided background information and described three preliminary studies. Information obtained from these studies was used to develop a research plan. Research questions to guide the research approach and analyses were identified, and a questionnaire was developed and pretested as a means for obtaining answers to these questions. This questionnaire consists of seven sections: (1) Background, (2) Professional Qualifications, (3) Career Intentions, (4) Assignment History and Evaluation, (5) Assignment Process, (6) Decision Process, and (7) Supplemental Questions. Sections 1, 2, and 4 through 6 contain questions constructed specifically for this study. Section 3, Career Intentions, consists of only one question: "To what degree are you now certain that you will continue an active military career until mandatory retirement?" Respondents were to answer this question using the Military Career Commitment Gradient (MCCOG) developed by Bridges (1969). Finally, Section 7 contains questions modified for Navy use from the following psychological scales: (1) Job Involvement (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965), (2) Organizational Commitment (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1978), (3) Spouse Support Roles (Mar, 1974), and (4) Self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965).

In November 1978, the survey questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of 691 male surface warfare JOs, LT and below, who had not yet been assigned to the Department Head School. Twenty-seven of the questionnaires could not be delivered, leaving a potential sample of 664 officers. Of these, 359 returned the questionnaire, providing a response rate of 54 percent. However, 47 JOs were eliminated from the sample, primarily because of insufficient data. Thus, the final sample consisted of 312 officers, providing a return rate of 47 percent. Plans were to analyze data provided by completed questionnaires to determine how various factors affected JO retention.

The first factor to be studied was the assignment process (Holzbach, Morrison, & Mohr, 1980). In this effort, responses to pertinent questionnaire items were analyzed to identify JO experiences with and attitudes toward assignment process variables (e.g., assigned location, amount of notification time, etc.) and to determine whether these experiences and attitudes related to career interest and/or officer quality. Career intent was measured by responses to the MCCOG; and officer quality, by self-reported fitness report data.

Another factor identified as affecting JO retention was spouse influence and attitude toward the Navy. Although surveys of the attitudes and perceptions of Navy officers and enlisted personnel help determine their needs, desires, and experiences and provide information for improving the Navy's overall functioning, a spouse's influence on an individual's attitude, which can be crucial to his or her career decisions, is largely overlooked. The satisfaction or stress officers feel in their assignment can affect the attitude of their spouses toward that assignment, and the frequent geographic moves and the long periods of separation affect the entire family.

The way spouses feel about Navy life will determine the influence they exert on a Navy career, as well as the way they will participate in and support that career. Results of studies on the influence of wives on enlisted personnel tend to confirm the belief that Navy wives significantly influence Navy reenlistment decisions (Holoter, Bloomgren, Dow, Provenzano, Stehle, & Grace, 1973; Holoter, Stehle, Conner, & Grace, 1974). Grace, Holoter, and Soderquist (1976) used actual reenlistment behavior as the criterion and also concluded that the influence of wives is significant. Grace, Steiner, and Holoter (1976), who assessed the attitudes of 581 wives of career and noncareer enlisted men, concluded that Navy wives tend to influence reenlistment very strongly. Approximately half were willing for their husband to reenlist, and 62 percent said they would push reenlistment when the time arrived. Muldrow (1971), who conducted a survey to examine the attitudes of wives of Navy officers and enlisted personnel, found that 63 percent were happy that their husbands had chosen the Navy as a career, and only 5 percent looked forward to the day their husbands would leave the service.

A wife's attitude toward a Navy career for her husband is affected by whether or not she is employed outside the home and by the kind of job she has. Rapoport and Rapoport (1978) estimated that, in 1977, 50 percent of married women worked outside the home. Some of these women represented dual-career families, in which both men and women have a high degree of commitment and aspiration regarding their work (Fogarty, Rapoport, & Rapoport, 1971). Because of the numerous relocations experienced in a Navy career, Navy wives who are fully committed to their own work face problems unknown to noncareer wives. Aside from the problems of relocation, career wives are subjected to a different set of situations and problems than are noncareer wives. Further, in dual-career families, both husband and wife must cope with the problems of child care, parenting, home upkeep, and travel to and from separate jobs.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine how JOs perceive the experiences, attitudes, and opinions of their wives, and how they perceive that their career decisions are influenced by their wives.

APPROACH

Survey Questionnaire

A copy of the survey questionnaire was provided in Holzbach (1979). Those sections/items of the questionnaire of interest to this particular effort are provided in the appendix and described in the following paragraphs.

1. Section VI--Decision Process. Nine items (Nos. 16-24) from this section pertained to Navy spouses. They concerned the following topics:

- Spouse's evaluation of aspects of a Navy career.
- Spouse's attendance at detailer field trip briefing(s).
- Spouse's attitude toward JO's Navy career (degree of support).
- Extent to which spouse participates in career decisions.
- Spouse's type of employment.
- Extent to which relocations affect spouse's employment.
- Spouse's feelings about location of first sea duty assignment.
- Time needed for spouse to adjust to job/local community.
- Helpfulness of persons or groups of persons in helping spouse to adjust.

2. Section VII--Supplemental Questions. Item 2 of this section consisted of a list of 12 statements designed to measure how actively a spouse participates in her husband's career. Respondents were asked to indicate, on a six-point scale, how strongly they agreed or disagreed with these statements. This item represented a modification of the Spouse Support Roles scale developed by Mar (1974).

Analysis

Responses to items noted above were analyzed. Although most of these items required a single response, several asked for a number of responses: Thirteen questions assessed the spouse's evaluation of aspects of a Navy career (Item 16, p. A-1), ten questions assessed the helpfulness of persons or groups in easing spouse adjustment (Item 24, p. A-4), and 12 questions assessed the participation of the spouse in her husband's career (Item 2, p. A-5). The responses to each of these three multiquestion items were factor analyzed to identify those questions that assessed the same underlying concepts. Scale scores were then calculated by adding each officer's responses to the questions that comprised each factor identified. Subsequently, these scale scores and responses to other items were correlated to identify any relationships.

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that:

1. JOs would report that their spouses have considerable impact on their career and that, in general, spouses' support for Navy careers would be substantial. Further, because of the support spouses give to Navy careers, it was hypothesized that married JOs would express greater intent to remain in the Navy than would single JOs.

2. Spouses who are employed outside the home would be less supportive of JO careers than would those who do not work outside the home. This lack of support would be related to lower career intent on the part of JOs.

3. The location changes associated with a Navy career would be evaluated more negatively by spouses who are employed than by those who are not.

In addition to these specific hypotheses, an examination was made of (1) the relation between the attitudes of JOs and those of their spouses, (2) the manner in which spouses adjusted to changes in duty stations, and (3) the effects of marital status, length of marriage, and outside employment of the spouses on JO attitudes.

RESULTS

Sample's Marital Status

Table 1 provides respondent background characteristics by marital status. As shown, 195 (62%) were married, 101 (33%) were single, and 14 (5%) were engaged. Married officers had been married, on the average, for 4.36 years. Forty-seven percent had children, and 66 percent had spouses employed outside the home. In subsequent analyses, engaged JOs and several single JOs who indicated they were involved in long-term relationships were included with married JOs. This resulted in a total of 217 officers who completed the items pertinent to Navy spouses.

Effect of Spouses' Attitudes

As suggested by Hypothesis 1, the JOs tended to report that their spouses' attitudes toward their careers were favorable (Item 18, p. A-2), with 59.7 percent being moderately or completely supportive; and only 24.5 percent, antagonistic. As shown in Table 2, these estimates of the attitudes wives held toward Navy careers were independent of rank, commissioning source, and first-ship type. However, the wives of reserve officers who had completed their PQS (those with 1115 designators) were less supportive of Navy careers than were the wives of those with other designators ($F(4,208) = 2.54, p < .05$).

The opinions of wives about the geographic location of their husbands' first sea duty assignment were basically favorable (Item 22, p. A-3), with 15.2 percent disliking the location a little or very little, and 60.3 percent liking the location much or very much. These evaluations depended, however, on the specific location of the assignment. Wives of JOs assigned to the Atlantic Coast were less favorably impressed with their location than were those whose husbands had Pacific Coast or Western Pacific assignments ($F(2,195) = 7.92, p < .001$).

Respondents reported that, on the average, a wife needed 4 months to adjust to a new location, and 11 percent never did adjust (Item 23, p. A-3). Adjustment time was independent of the degree of support the wife gave the husband's career, the way she felt about the assignment location, and the assignment location. Officers, for their part, typically required 2 months to adjust to the new community, and 32 percent never did. Estimates of spouse and JO adjustment time were strongly related ($r = .54, p < .001$).

In examining the extent to which the officer and his wife shared the decision prerogative on future assignments (Item 19, p. A-3), an egalitarian picture emerged. None of the officers said that they deferred to their wife's opinion. However, 72 percent said they sought input from their wives to arrive at a mutually agreeable decision; and 27 percent, that they sought input but retained the decision prerogative. There was no relation between a wife's attitude toward a Navy career and the extent to which she participated in her husband's career decision ($F(2,213) = .86, ns$).

Table 1
Sample Characteristics by Marital Status

	<u>Married</u>		<u>Single</u>		<u>Engaged</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<u>Total</u>	195	62	101	33	14	5	310 ^a	100
<u>Rank</u>								
Ensign	26	42	34	55	2	3	62	20
LTJG	102	62	52	32	10	6	164	53
LT	67	80	15	18	2	2	84	27
Total	195		101		14		310	100
<u>Commissioning Source</u>								
USNA	55	65	27	32	3	4	85	27
NROTC(S)	47	52	39	43	5	6	91	29
NROTC(C)	7	58	3	25	2	17	12	4
OCS	42	59	27	38	2	3	71	23
NESEP	34	87	4	10	1	3	39	13
Other	10	83	1	18	1	8	12	4
Total	195		101		14		310	100
<u>Year Group</u>								
78	4	36	6	55	1	9	11	4
77	35	54	29	44	1	2	65	21
76	49	62	26	33	4	5	79	26
75	44	56	27	35	7	9	78	25
74	42	82	8	16	1	2	51	16
73	21	81	5	19	0	0	26	8
Total	195		101		14		310	100
<u>Ship Type (First Sea Tour)</u>								
Amphibious	26	51	22	43	3	6	51	16
Carrier	18	64	8	29	2	7	28	9
Cruiser	24	69	10	29	1	3	35	11
Destroyer	91	65	43	31	7	5	141	46
Service	27	66	14	34	0	0	41	13
Other	9	56	4	25	1	19	14	5
Total	195		101		14		310	100

Note. Some of the Ns in this table do not agree with those presented in Holzbach, Morrison, & Mohr (1980). The sample characteristics reported in Holzbach et al. reflect JOs' rank at the time the questionnaire was mailed. This table reflects JOs' status at the time the questionnaire was returned.

^aTwo questionnaires had missing data.

Table 2
Spouses' Attitude Toward Navy Career by
Demographic Variables

Variable	Mean ^a	S.L.	N	df	F
<u>Rank</u>					
Ensign	2.38	1.31	32	2,213	1.42
LTJG	2.54	1.31	112		
LT	2.21	1.56	72		
			216		
<u>Designator</u>					
1110	2.35	1.31	107	4,208	2.54*
1115	3.43	1.13	7		
1160	2.25	1.19	65		
1165	2.85	1.38	26		
Other	1.88	1.36	8		
			213		
<u>Commissioning Source</u>					
USNA	2.41	1.32	61	5,209	1.31
NROTC(S)	2.63	1.31	52		
NROTC(C)	1.67	.87	9		
OCS	2.48	1.30	48		
NESEP	2.11	1.21	35		
Other	2.50	1.51	10		
			215		
<u>First Ship Type</u>					
Service	2.52	1.45	29	4,201	.32
Carrier	2.43	1.24	23		
Cruiser	2.16	1.28	25		
Amphibious	2.36	1.16	28		
Destroyer	2.45	1.30	101		
			206		

^aBased on responses to a 5-point scale, where 1 = completely supportive, and 5 = completely antagonistic.

*p < .05

JOs were presented with a list of 13 aspects of a Navy career (Item 16, p. A-1) and asked to indicate, on a 5-point scale ranging from very negative to very positive, how their wives evaluated these aspects of their careers. From the varimax rotation factor analysis performed on this item, four factors emerged--Benefits, Separation, Compensation, and Location Changes--accounting for 59.6 percent of the variance (Table 3). The coefficient alpha reliabilities calculated for the scales developed from each factor ranged from .51 to .71. A one-way repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) ($F(3,489) = 492.47, p < .001$) and a subsequent Newman-Keuls' test revealed that, as expected, Separation was viewed significantly less favorably than were Compensation, Benefits, or Location Changes ($\bar{X} = 1.61$ vs. 3.40, 3.52, and 3.65 respectively). The latter three factors did not differ significantly.

From the factor analysis performed on the questions assessing the helpfulness of various people and groups in the adjustment of wives to the first duty-station location (Item 24, p. A-4), three factors emerged--Social/Community Groups, Superiors, and Peers--accounting for 60.8 percent of the variance (Table 4). Coefficient alpha reliabilities calculated for these three factors were .73, .57, and .49 respectively. A repeated-measures ANOVA ($F(2,142) = 9.85, p < .001$) and a subsequent Newman-Keul's test showed that, in contrast to the findings of Muldrow (1971), Superiors were seen as least helpful during times of adjustment, Social/Community Groups as most helpful, and Peers as moderately helpful ($\bar{X} = 2.96$ vs. 3.45 and 3.17).

The factor analysis performed on the questions concerned with a wife's participation in her husband's Navy career (Item 2, p. A-6) resulted in two factors--Social Involvement and Emotional Involvement--accounting for 47.2 percent of the variance (Table 5). The coefficient alphas for these factors were .75 and .38 respectively. A t-test between these two ($t(190) = 13.82, p < .001$) revealed that, although both types of involvement are high, wives were perceived as being more emotionally than socially involved in their husbands' careers ($\bar{X} = 5.08$ vs. 4.23).

Pearson product-moment correlations were computed between a wife's support of her husband's career and the factors emerging from the items assessing (1) the wife's evaluation of aspects of a Navy career, (2) helpfulness of persons/groups in easing her adjustment, and (3) her participation in her husband's career (Table 6). Wives who were described as supportive of their husbands' career were (1) more positive toward aspects of Navy careers, (2) more positive toward the helpfulness of their husbands' superiors (but not toward the helpfulness of their husbands' peers or social/community groups), and (3) more socially and emotionally involved with their husbands' career than were wives described as antagonistic or neutral.

Results of other correlations showed that the way a wife felt about the geographic location of her husband's first sea assignment (Item 22, p. A-3) was significantly related to her reaction to the periodic relocations experienced in a Navy career ($r = .20, p < .05$). Those who liked the first assignment location most were least concerned with location changes. There was no relationship between the first assignment location and spouse evaluations of Separation, however ($r = .10, ns$). Wives disliked separation whether or not they liked the assignment location.

Women who felt that their husbands' superiors and peers were very helpful in easing their adjustment took significantly less time to adapt to the local community following relocation (Item 27, p. A-3) than did other wives ($r = -.22$ and $-.20, p < .05$). Spouse adjustment time was not related to the helpfulness of social/community groups ($r = -.19, ns$).

Table 3
Principal Components Factor Analysis (Varimax Rotation) of Spouses'
Evaluations of Aspects of Navy Life

Aspect	Factor Loading ^a				h ²
	1 Benefits	2 Separation	3 Compensation	4 Location Changes	
Geographical location changes	--	--	--	.77	.60
Sea duty	--	.72	--	--	.64
Shore duty	--	--	--	.53	.51
Family separation	--	.81	--	--	.68
Overseas assignment, accompanied	--	--	--	.69	.56
Overseas assignment, unaccompanied	--	.75	--	--	.57
Job security	.48	--	--	--	.38
Pay	--	--	.80	--	.68
Health benefits	.80	--	--	--	.66
Commissary and exchange benefits	.83	--	--	--	.72
Retirement benefits	.53	--	--	--	.47
Standard of living	--	--	.84	--	.73
Effects on dependents	.44	.52	--	--	.53
Eigenvalue	3.40	2.14	1.19	1.01	
Percent of Variance	26.1	16.5	9.2	7.8	
	(Total 59.6)				

Note. Based on responses of 164 JOs.

^aFactor loadings of less than .40 are not reported.

Table 4
Principal Components Factor Analysis (Varimax Rotation) of
Helpfulness of Groups in Easing Spouse Adjustment

Variable	Factor Loading ^a			h ²
	1 Social/ Community Groups	2 Superiors	3 Peers	
CO	--	.85	--	.82
XO	--	.69	--	.61
Department Head	--	--	.74	.63
Other JOs	--	--	.76	.72
Spouse of CO/XO	--	.73	--	.68
Other Spouses	.58	.45	--	.55
Family Services	--	.41	--	.27
Friends in Area	.73	--	--	.66
Family/Relatives	.79	--	--	.66
Church/Community	.70	--	--	.50
Eigenvalue	3.26	1.60	1.22	
Percent of Variance	32.6	16.0	12.2	
	(Total 60.8)			

Note. Based on responses of 69 JOs.

^aFactor loadings less than .40 are not reported.

Table 5
Principal Components Factor Analysis (Varimax Rotation) of
Spouse Participation in Husband's Career

Variable	Factor ^a		h ²
	1 Social Involvement	2 Emotional Involvement	
Encourages you when things are not going well at work	--	.64	.54
Takes care of everything at home	.50	--	.30
Helps entertain people important to career	.72	--	.54
Works actively with other Navy spouses on Navy-related projects	.79	--	.63
Doesn't expect you to help around the home	--	--	.19
Willing to (offers to) discuss your work with you a lot	--	.72	.54
Has time to be involved in your career	--	.66	.43
Expresses pride in your career success	--	.73	.64
Is always willing to make sacrifices to help your career	.44	.51	.45
Is active in the community/social life	.72	--	.52
Exhibits high expectations of excellence in you	--	.55	.39
Projects a good image as a Navy officer's spouse	.59	--	.49
Eigenvalue	4.20	1.46	
Percent of Variance	35.0	12.2	
	(Total 47.2)		

Note. Based on responses of 190 JOs.

^aFactor loadings less than .40 are not reported.

Table 6

Correlation Between Spouse's Support of Husband's Career
and Factors Assessing Aspects of Navy Career, Helpfulness in
Spouse Adjustment, and Participation in Husband's Career

Topic/Factor	r	N
<u>Aspects of Navy Career</u>		
Benefits	.32**	199
Separation	.53**	194
Compensation	.15*	212
Location Changes	.50**	190
<u>Helpfulness in Spouse Adjustment</u>		
Peers	.08	150
Social/Community Groups	.15	81
Superiors	.15*	154
<u>Participation in Husband's Career</u>		
Social Involvement	.50**	191
Emotional Involvement	.38**	204

*p < .05.

**p < .01.

As indicated previously, career intentions of JOs were measured by responses to the 50-point Military Career Commitment Gradient. In analyzing these responses, it was determined that those who responded on the scale in the range from 1-23 were "leavers," those who responded on the scale in the 24-27 range were "undecided," and those who responded in the 28-50 range were "stayers." Holzbach et al. (1980) found that, of the overall sample of 312, 125 were leavers, 68 were undecided, 112 were stayers, and 7 did not respond. The average response was 24.32.

Officer career intent was compared among those who indicated their wives were supportive, neutral, and antagonistic toward their careers. As can be seen in Figure 1, a significant difference was found ($F(2,212) = 3.21, p < .05$). Officers whose wives were supportive of their careers expressed greater intent to remain in the Navy than did those whose wives were neutral or antagonistic toward their careers.

In the married/engaged sample, there were 85 leavers, 45 undecideds and 79 stayers. A series of one-way ANOVAs was performed to compare evaluations of the factors assessing aspects of Navy career, helpfulness in spouse adjustment, and participation in husband's career among these JO career intent groups. As shown in Table 7, the wives of JO stayers evaluated Navy Benefits, Separation, and Location Changes significantly more positively than wives of leavers and undecideds. The wives of the three career-intent groups did not differ in their attitudes toward helpfulness of superiors, peers, and social/community groups in easing adjustment to new locations. Finally, although emotional involvement was high and consistent across the career intent groups, the social involvement of spouses fell as career intent decreased.

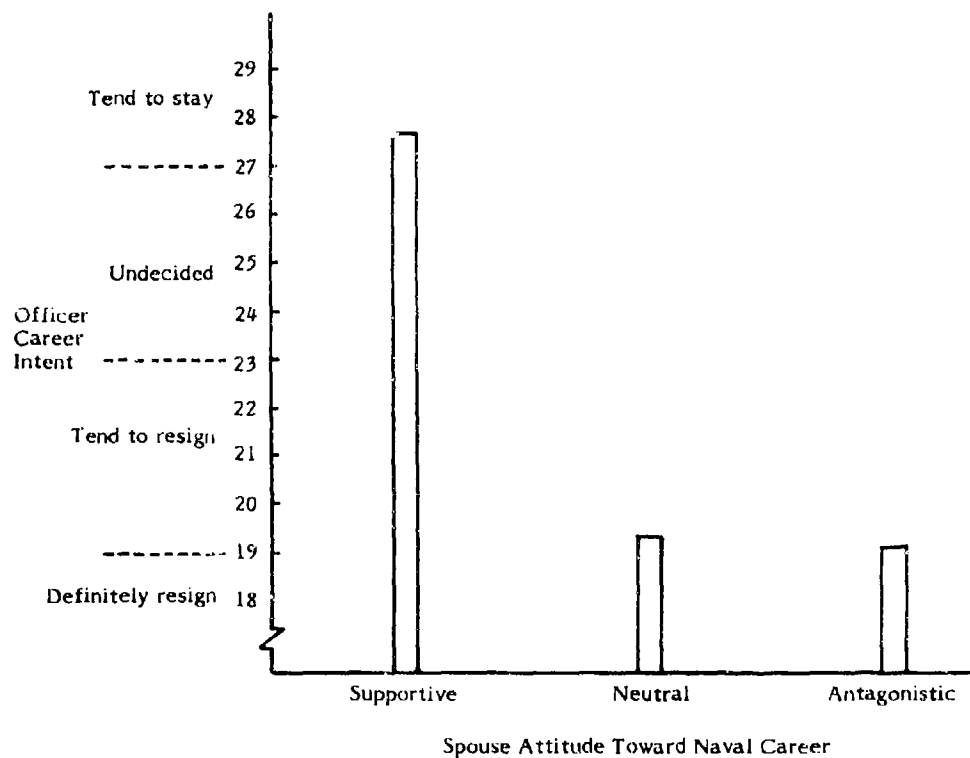


Figure 1. Spouse attitude and career intent.

Table 7

Results of ANOVAs Between JO Career Intent Groups and Factors
Assessing Aspects of Navy Career, Helpfulness in Spouse
Adjustment, and Participation in Husband's Career

Variable	Leavers			Undecided			Stayers			F
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	
<u>Aspects of Navy Career</u>										
Benefits	3.37	.68	77	3.49	.61	43	3.67	.70	76	3.69*
Separation	1.44	.42	83	1.53	.41	39	1.38	.56	71	13.55**
Compensation	3.43	.65	85	3.29	.70	45	3.45	.72	79	.86
Location Changes	3.50	.71	72	3.58	.63	42	3.90	.68	74	6.87*
<u>Helpfulness in Spouse Adjustment</u>										
Superiors of JO	2.87	.87	57	2.86	.85	34	3.18	.78	60	2.62
Social/Community Groups	3.68	.66	30	3.18	.88	19	3.60	.73	31	2.90
Peers of JO	3.26	.81	55	3.23	.86	33	3.24	.74	59	.03
<u>Participation in Husband's Career</u>										
Social Involvement	4.05	.89	75	4.24	.85	40	4.43	1.02	73	3.09*
Emotional Involvement	5.05	.64	82	5.03	.69	43	5.11	.77	76	.25

*p < .05.

**p < .001.

Effects of Marital Status

A series of analyses was conducted to determine whether a JO's marital status was related to officer quality, career intent, and other variables. Results are presented in Table 8, which shows that, contrary to Hypothesis 1, married officers had no greater intent to remain in the Navy than did single officers. The two groups did not differ in officer quality.

In examining the assignment process variables (see Holzbach et al. 1980), it was found that married officers reported less difficulty with the process of obtaining assignments and were more satisfied with the assignments they received than were single officers. No differences were found between the two groups as to satisfaction with detailers or with informal or formal notification time. Finally, the two groups did not differ as to adjustment variables.

Although married and single officers did not differ in their evaluation of Work, Stability, or Benefits associated with a Navy career, they viewed Separation differently. Married officers reported more negative attitudes toward separation factors (sea duty, overseas unaccompanied tours, and separation from family and friends) than did single officers ($t(288) = 9.27, p < .001$). Leaving a wife or family for extended periods of time appears to be more critical than leaving friends.

Table 8
Effect of Marital Status on Officer Quality,
Career Intent, and Other Variables

Variable	Unmarried			Married			t
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	
Officer Quality	6.57	2.39	89	6.89	2.00	171	-1.14
Career Intent	24.38	7.50	98	24.61	9.78	192	-.32
Notification Time ^a							
• Informal	3.43	2.75	42	3.58	3.17	100	-.27
• Formal ^b	2.38	3.28	42	2.05	2.25	101	.60
Satisfaction with Notification Time ^a							
• Informal ^c	2.44	1.14	45	2.28	1.10	103	.82
• Formal ^c	2.62	1.13	45	2.50	1.07	103	.60
Process of Obtaining Assignments ^{a,c}	3.00	1.41	40	2.59	1.17	98	1.74*
Satisfaction with Assignments ^a	3.36	1.24	47	3.89	1.10	114	-2.65**
Satisfaction with Detailers ^a	2.76	.81	43	3.01	.93	108	-1.52
Attractiveness of SWO Career ^d	2.79	1.08	96	2.66	1.21	190	.91
Navy Desires JO as Career Officer ^d	3.96	.97	99	4.08	1.01	193	-1.00
Comparability of Navy/Civilian Careers ^d							
• Benefits	4.45	1.00	95	4.38	.93	188	.64
• Work ^b	2.98	.95	98	2.91	.69	191	.68
• Stability	2.67	.86	88	2.72	.80	189	-.42
• Intrinsic Job factors	4.34	.99	97	4.26	.94	187	.66
Evaluation of Navy ^d							
• Changes ^b	3.92	.57	97	3.81	.72	194	1.41
• Work	2.63	.81	99	2.56	.78	192	.69
• Benefits	3.51	.60	97	3.54	.66	194	-.38
• Separation	2.71	.76	98	1.89	.69	192	9.27**
Time for JO to Adjust							
• Command	3.77	3.63	96	4.07	4.35	178	-.57
• Community	5.18	5.18	55	3.83	4.41	149	1.85
Help in Adjustment							
• Work Groups ^b	3.20	.56	67	3.27	.70	160	-.84
• Social/Community	3.34	1.09	41	3.29	.86	92	.30

^aDescribed in Holzbach et al. (1980).

^bDue to significant difference between sample variances, a separate variance estimate was used.

^cReverse scored.

^dTo be described in subsequent reports in this series.

*p < .05; one-tailed.

**p < .005; one-tailed.

Forty-seven percent of married officers had children and 86 percent of these had one or two children of preschool or grade-school age. To determine the influence of children on career intent, the responses of officers with and without children were compared. Results are presented in Table 9, which shows that the two groups did not differ as to career intent, the support shown by wives for a Navy career, or any of the other spouse attitude variables.

Examination of the effect the number of children had on career intent disclosed several significant facts. Although career intent was significantly correlated with the size of the family ($r = .37, p < .001$), family size was not related to the support a wife gave a Navy career ($r = .13, ns$). These results were unchanged when the length of marriage was controlled for career intent with number of children ($r = .34, p < .001$) and spouse support with number of children ($r = .11, ns$). Although officers with larger families were more intent on a Navy career than were those with fewer children, spouse support was not influenced by the number of children. Finally, a significant correlation was found between the number of children and the length of time wives needed to adjust to their new community ($r = .23, p < .05$). Women with fewer children required less adjustment time than did those with larger families.

Effects of Spouse Employment Status

Responses to the item on type of spouse employment (Item 20, p. A-3) showed that a large majority (65%) were employed outside the home. This is a slightly higher percent than the national average (50%) quoted by Rapoport and Rapoport (1978) and may be due to an age difference between the two samples. The effects of employment, in general, and the type of job, specifically, were examined within the sample. Results showed that, as hypothesized, spouse employment had a significant effect on career intent ($F(6,206) = 2.19, p < .05$). As shown in Table 10, husbands of housewives and clerical workers expressed the greatest career intent; and husbands of teachers or Navy officers, the least intent.

As shown in Table 11, a wife's employment status also had a significant effect on her support of her husband's Navy career. As predicted by Hypothesis 2, housewives were more supportive of their husbands' careers than were wives employed outside the home. Housewives were also significantly more emotionally and socially involved in their husbands' careers than were wives with jobs outside the home. Contrary to Hypothesis 3, however, those differences were not reflected in reactions to separations or to other aspects of the Navy career, the helpfulness of various groups in easing adjustment, and the time required to adjust to a new community following relocation.

Several important differences emerged when officers' own attitudes were compared. Officers whose wives worked outside the home found a Navy career less attractive than did those whose wives worked at home ($t(210) = 2.38, p < .01$). No significant differences were found between the two groups in their experiences with detailers or the assignment process. Although officers whose wives were employed outside the home were more critical of Navy benefits, opinions on family separation, location changes, and work factors did not differ with spouse employment status.

Officers were asked to estimate the extent to which their permanent change of station (PCS) moves to different locations cause difficulties for their wives' employment (Item 21, p. A-3). Fifty percent said that PCS moves caused considerable or extreme impact; and 24 percent, minimal impact. The effect of geographic location changes was significantly different for wives employed in different fields. As shown in Table 12, wives who were Navy officers or teachers were affected most, and clerical workers least. Thus,

Table 9
Influence of Having Children on Spouse Attitudes

Variable	No Children			Children			t
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	
Spouse Support for a Naval Career	2.35	1.37	104	2.37	1.21	90	-.11
Sharing of Decision Prerogative	2.66	.50	104	2.78	.44	90	-1.68
Effects of Moves on Spouse Job ^a	2.47	1.31	90	2.71	1.34	34	-.90
Spouse Evaluation of Location	3.77	1.16	100	3.87	1.05	86	-.62
Time for Spouse to Adjust to							
• Job	3.23	2.71	74	2.69	3.15	29	.87
• Community	4.08	5.05	89	4.36	4.64	77	-.38
Spouse Evaluation of Aspects of Navy Career							
• Benefits	3.47	.73	99	3.55	.67	83	-.78
• Separation	1.59	.53	87	1.56	.45	86	.49
• Compensation	3.35	.79	104	3.49	.59	88	-1.40
• Location Change	3.62	.70	93	3.79	.65	77	-1.60
Helpfulness in Spouse Adjustment							
• Social/Community Groups	3.57	.71	43	3.47	.84	36	.58
• Coworkers of JO	3.31	.79	78	3.15	.77	68	1.23
• Superiors of JO	2.96	.91	79	3.00	.77	70	-.31
Participation in Husband's Career							
• Social Involvement	4.14	.90	94	4.30	1.00	87	-1.17
• Emotional Involvement	5.04	.77	103	5.09	.65	87	-.51
Career Intent	24.64	8.39	101	24.57	11.16	91	.05
Officer Quality	6.73	1.92	94	7.08	2.09	77	-1.11

^aReverse scored.

Table 10
Effect of Spouse Employment on JO Career Intent

Spouse's Employment	Career Intent		N
	Mean	SD	
Clerical	26.43	7.13	21
Full-time housewife	26.32	11.45	73
Business/finance	24.59	3.87	22
Professional	21.87	9.58	38
Naval officer	19.63	11.59	8
Teacher	19.39	8.15	18
Other	24.48	9.63	33

Table 11
Effect of Spouse's Employment Status on Career Intent,
Officer Quality, and Other Variables

Variable	Housewife			Employed Outside Home			t
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	
Career Intent ^d	26.32	11.45	73	23.15	6.70	140	2.07*
Officer Quality	7.10	2.12	63	6.83	1.91	124	.88
Spouse Support for Naval Career ^b	2.16	1.28	74	2.53	1.29	142	-1.99*
Sharing of Decision Prerogative	2.68	.50	74	2.73	.46	142	-.73
Spouse Evaluation of First Assignment Location	3.81	1.13	73	3.70	1.16	131	.63
Time for Spouse to Adjust to Community	4.55	4.91	65	4.07	4.85	105	.61
Spouse evaluation of aspects of Navy career							
• Benefits	3.59	.63	69	3.48	.72	130	1.10
• Separation	1.65	.47	68	1.57	.55	126	1.12
• Compensation	3.51	.66	72	3.35	.71	140	1.60
• Location changes	3.74	.69	64	3.63	.71	127	1.02
Helpfulness in spouse adjustment							
• Social/Community Groups	3.46	.85	26	3.55	.72	55	-.50
• Superiors of JO	3.12	.84	58	2.91	.84	96	1.51
• Peers to JO	3.27	.86	56	3.24	.75	94	.21
Spouse participation in JO's Career							
• Social Involvement	4.55	.88	68	4.05	.94	123	3.59**
• Emotional Involvement	5.23	.64	70	4.99	.72	134	2.26*
JO Evaluations of the Navy ^c							
• Family Separation	1.90	.66	73	1.90	.69	141	.06
• Work	2.64	.77	74	2.54	.75	140	.93
• Benefits	3.64	.62	74	3.45	.66	141	2.06*
• Stability	3.71	.65	74	3.88	.72	142	1.63
Attractiveness of Career ^c	2.94	1.28	72	2.54	1.13	140	2.38**
Satisfaction with Detailers ^d	3.15	.92	45	2.96	.90	76	1.13
• Satisfaction with Assignments	4.04	.99	48	3.77	1.14	79	1.35
• Experience with Assignments ^b	2.67	1.32	43	2.47	1.10	66	.83
Notification Time ^d							
• Informal	3.29	1.99	42	3.65	3.58	69	.61
• Formal	1.93	1.47	42	2.15	2.58	71	.52
Satisfaction with Notification Time ^d							
• Informal ^b	2.40	1.14	43	2.29	1.05	73	.52
• Formal ^b	2.49	1.06	45	2.56	1.07	71	.37
Comparability of Navy/Civilian Careers ^c							
• Benefits	4.35	.98	71	4.34	.91	139	.07
• Work	2.94	.65	73	2.88	.71	139	.61
• Stability	2.88	.84	71	2.60	.78	140	2.39*
• Intrinsic Job Factors	4.50	1.04	71	4.14	.82	138	2.75*
Time for JO to Adjust							
• To Command ^d	5.15	5.74	67	3.45	3.20	131	2.25*
• To Community	4.00	4.69	60	3.76	4.08	101	.34

^dDue to significant difference between sample variances, a separate variance estimate was used.

^bReverse Scored: Lower values indicate more favorable responses.

^cTo be described in subsequent reports in this series.

^dDescribed in Holtzbach et al. (1980).

*p < .05.

**p < .001.

Table 12
Effect of Location Changes on Spouse's Employment
by Employment Type

Spouse Employment	Impact on Employment ^a		
	Mean ^b	SD	N
Teacher	1.56	.69	19
Naval officer	1.86	1.22	7
Business/finance	2.35	1.42	20
Professional	2.43	1.12	35
Clerical	3.33	1.24	21

^a $F(4,97) = 6.24; p < .001.$

^bMeans are based on a 5-point scale where 1 = extreme impact and 5 = insignificant impact.

the labor market appears to be a strong influence. Officers who reported that their wives liked their first location (Item 22, p. A-3) were more likely to report that PCS moves had slight or insignificant impact on their wives' jobs than did those whose wives disliked the location ($r = -.21, p < .05$). The length of time needed for a wife to adjust to a job following relocation did not differ by her type of employment ($F(4,81) = .58, ns$). Typically, spouses took 3 months to adjust to a new job.

Also, as shown in Table 13, spouse adjustment time was independent of her liking for the assignment location, the impact of moves on her job, her role in decisions, her support for her husband's Navy career, and the location of the first assignment. The officers, for their part, estimated they took 3 months to adjust to their job, command, or activity. The time required for a spouse to adjust to her job was significantly related to her adjustment time to the community ($r = .34, p < .05$) but not to the time her husband reported it took him to adjust to the new community ($r = .13, ns$).

Effects of Wife's Attendance at Detailer Field Trip Meetings

Responses to the item on wives' attendance at detailer field trip meetings (Item 17, p. A-2) showed that attendance was very low---only 9.3 percent. Excuses for nonattendance were: meeting not scheduled (47%), not aware of the meeting (26%), conflicting schedules (9%), not interested (3%), and other (6%).

The effects of attendance at detailer field trip meetings were assessed by comparing responses of wives who had attended with responses of those who had not. The most significant difference was found in spouse support of her husband's Navy career. As shown in Table 14, wives who had attended a detailer field trip briefing were significantly more supportive of their husbands' careers than those who had not attended, but a cause-effect relation was not demonstrated. No differences were found for officer career intent, spouse adjustment times, or the effects of moves on spouse employment. However, wives who had attended a briefing evaluated the location changes associated with Navy careers

Table 13
Effect on Spouse's Adjustment Time
(Months) of Other Variables

Variable	To Her Job			To Community		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
Liking for Assignment Location						
Little	3.20	1.97	15	6.75	8.79	16
Somewhat	3.41	2.81	22	4.11	3.42	36
Much	2.74	2.56	70	4.00	4.53	113
	(F(2,104) = .66, ns)			(F(2,162) = 2.25, ns)		
Impact of Move on Spouse's Job						
High Impact	3.39	2.93	61	4.64	5.62	64
Moderate	2.50	1.67	20	3.16	2.97	19
Slight Impact	2.74	3.05	23	2.74	2.81	27
	(F(2,101) = 1.01, ns)			(F(2,107) = 1.86, ns)		
Spouse's Role in Decisions						
JO Decisions	2.65	2.40	31	3.94	3.64	49
Mutual Decisions	2.34	2.91	80	4.40	5.29	121
	(F(1,109) = 1.01, ns)			(F(1,168) = .31, ns)		
Spouse Support of Navy Career						
Supportive	3.47	2.88	64	4.36	4.98	104
Neutral	2.42	2.82	19	4.33	5.97	27
Antagonistic	2.61	2.54	28	3.97	3.69	39
	(F(2,108) = 1.58, ns)			(F(2,167) = .09, ns)		
Location of First Assignment						
Atlantic Coast	3.51	3.06	49	4.35	5.26	82
Pacific Coast	2.98	2.71	46	4.34	4.80	65
WestPac	3.15	1.86	13	3.42	3.32	19
	(F(2,105) = 1.31, ns)			(F(2,163) = .30, ns)		

Table 14
Effect of Spouse's Attendance at Detailer Field Trip
Briefing on Career Intent, Officer Quality, and
Other Variables

Variable	Attended Briefing			Did Not Attend Briefing			t
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	
Career Intent	27.50	12.14	20	23.90	9.55	192	1.56
Officer Quality	6.95	2.24	18	6.91	1.96	168	.06
Spouse Support for Naval Career ^a	1.90	.85	20	2.46	1.32	195	-2.64*
Sharing of Decision Prerogative	2.65	.59	20	2.71	.47	195	-.56
Effects of Moves ^a	2.38	1.56	13	2.58	1.32	130	-.51
Evaluation of First Assignment Location	3.47	1.22	19	3.78	1.12	184	-1.13
Time for Spouse to Adjust to							
• Job	3.91	3.30	11	2.95	2.72	99	1.09
• Community	4.87	8.85	15	4.21	4.34	155	.50
Evaluation of Aspects of Navy Career							
• Benefits	3.44	.70	17	3.52	.69	182	-.47
• Separation	1.74	.51	19	1.58	.50	174	1.32
• Compensation	3.32	.71	19	3.42	.70	192	-.62
• Location Changes	4.02	.55	18	3.63	.71	171	2.24*
Helpfulness in Spouse Adjustment							
• Social/Community Groups	3.25	.99	8	3.55	.73	73	-1.07
• Superiors of JO	3.15	1.16	16	2.97	.80	138	.78
• Peers of JO	3.27	.75	15	3.25	.80	135	.09
Spouse Participation in JO's Career							
• Social Involvement	4.61	1.04	19	4.19	.93	172	1.86
• Emotional Involvement	5.09	.70	19	5.07	.70	184	.16
JO Evaluation of Navy Career ^b							
• Family	2.18	.67	20	1.87	.68	193	1.98*
• Work	2.60	.75	20	2.57	.76	193	.16
• Changes	4.20	.66	20	3.78	.70	195	2.61*
• Benefits	3.55	.76	20	3.52	.64	194	.22
JO Assignment Search Timing ^c	11.39	4.39	18	12.48	6.18	174	.96
Attractiveness of SWO Future ^b	2.75	1.16	20	2.67	1.21	191	.29
Knowledge of SWO Future ^b	5.68	4.08	19	6.91	5.73	179	1.19
Navy Desires JO as Career Officer ^b	3.95	1.15	20	4.08	1.00	194	.48

^aReverse scored.

^bTo be described in subsequent reports in this series.

^cDescribed in Holzbach et al. (1980).

*p < .05.

more positively than did others. There were no differences for evaluations of other aspects of Navy careers or for social or emotional involvement of the spouses in their husbands' careers.

JOs whose wives had attended a field trip meeting were more positive toward the location changes inherent in a Navy career and viewed family separations less negatively than did those whose wives had not attended. The two groups showed no differences in their evaluation of work factors, benefits, or the attractiveness of a Navy career.

Relation Between Spouse and JO Attitudes

In general, officers reported that their wives' attitudes toward aspects of Navy life were very similar to their own. A series of correlations, computed to determine the relation between JO and spouse evaluations, revealed consistently strong relations between responses of officers and those of their wives.

A similar pattern was found in the attitudes of JOs and their wives toward the assistance received from various groups in adjusting to new locations. A series of Pearson product-moment correlations revealed significant relations in the way officers perceived various aspects of Navy careers and the way they thought their wives viewed these variables.

Factor Intercorrelations

The model shown in Figure 2 was constructed to determine the interrelations of several of the factors studied. The variables used in constructing this model and their intercorrelations are shown in Table 15. Correlational and regression analyses were used to determine the strength of the relations of each subset of variables and all other variables and subsets (e.g., canonical correlations were used when two sets of variables were related; regression was used to relate a set of variables to a single variable).

While spouse characteristics are related to each of the other factors, their influence generally is not strong. They show stronger relations to attitudinal variables (e.g., evaluations of aspects of Navy career) than to spouse support of naval career or officer career intent. It appears that the effect of spouse characteristics on spouse support is mediated by the influence of other spouse-related factors (aspects of Navy career, help in adjustment, and spouse participation), which in turn, seem to have more impact on spouse support levels than on officer career intent. Spouse support, as perceived by the JO, however, is the most important influence on his intent to remain in the Navy. The effect of this variable is substantial--it accounts for 18 percent of the variance in career intent. All other relations, reflecting the combined effect of several factors, are not as strong.

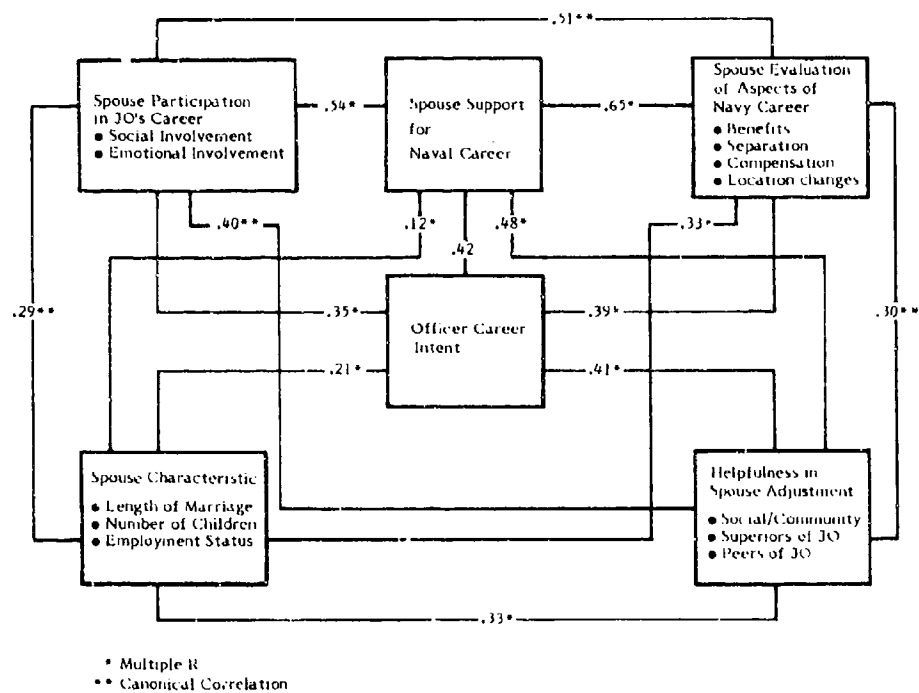


Figure 2. Model of the effects of various factors on spouse support and career intent.

Table 15
Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Spouse Support for Naval Career	—	.191	.182	.173	.192	.170	.79	.149	.146	.181	.190	.191	.194	.194
2. Officer Career Intent	.39**	—	.179	.172	.189	.168	.78	.146	.143	.178	.187	.189	.192	.191
3. Spouse Evaluation of Benefits	.31**	.19*	—	.164	.182	.163	.75	.140	.139	.170	.178	.179	.182	.182
4. Spouse Evaluation of Separation	.52**	.32**	.28**	—	.172	.154	.70	.132	.130	.162	.169	.171	.173	.173
5. Spouse Evaluation of Compensation	.12	-.07	.44*	.05	—	.170	.79	.149	.146	.179	.188	.189	.192	.192
6. Spouse Evaluation of Location Changes	.46**	.19*	.31**	.33**	.15*	—	.68	.132	.131	.158	.166	.167	.170	.170
7. Helpfulness in Spouse Adjustment: Social/Community Groups	.15	-.06	-.04	.00	.00	-.08	—	.71	.71	.73	.77	.78	.79	.79
8. Helpfulness in Spouse Adjustment: JO's Superiors	.17*	.11	.16*	.14	-.09	.03	.22*	—	.141	.141	.146	.147	.149	.149
9. Helpfulness in Spouse Adjustment: JO's Peers	.08	-.07	.05	.06	-.04	.09	.33*	.35**	—	.140	.144	.144	.146	.146
10. Spouse Involvement: Social	.49**	.19*	.18*	.38**	.04	.38**	.24*	.33**	.11	—	.181	.179	.181	.181
11. Spouse Involvement: Emotional	.39**	.05	.20*	.29**	.06	.39**	.18	.19*	.12	.52**	—	.188	.190	.190
12. Length of Marriage	.06	.19*	.00	.21*	.05	.04	.00	-.03	-.15*	.11	.11	—	.192	.191
13. Number of Children	.04	.15*	.07	.01	.10	.18*	-.09	-.02	-.17*	.09	.03	.47**	—	.194
14. Spouse Employment	-.11	-.12*	-.09	-.10	-.10	-.06	.06	-.13	-.03	-.27**	-.18*	-.28**	-.49**	—

Note. Correlations are reported below the diagonal; and sample sizes, above the diagonal.

*p < .05 (one-tailed).

**p < .001 (one-tailed).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The influence of a JO's wife on his career decisions is critical. Officers whose wives are most supportive are most intent on remaining in the Navy. Although a causal relation between these two issues could not be demonstrated in a cross-sectional, descriptive study like this, the strength of the relation and its position in officer career decisions are important. The wives of officers appear to be a logical and feasible focus for efforts to increase JO retention.

Although it was expected that the JO's wife's attitudes would affect his career intent, a comparison of responses from married and single officers showed that there was no difference in average career intent between the two groups. Thus, it may be possible that single officers find support from such sources as families and friends that is similar to that received by married officers from their wives. Alternately, single officers may be free from the conflict between career and family that married officers experience.

Even though this study used the unconventional technique of indirect responses (i.e., officers were asked to report on what they believed were the attitudes and reactions of their wives), its findings generally supported those of previous studies (Grace et al. 1976; Muldrow, 1971) that directly surveyed the wives. For example, this study, as well as previous studies, found that separation was considered the worst feature of a Navy career, followed by Navy pay. The close agreement of this study with more direct approaches validates the technique of using officer estimates of the attitudes of their wives and reduces the possibility that the responses from the officers were systematically biased or that second-hand opinions are less valid than direct responses. The reports by officers on what they perceived to be the attitudes of their wives appear to be accurate and serve to reinforce the findings of previous studies.

Not all the results of this study can be clearly explained. For example, although the results clearly showed that supportive wives can tolerate the stressful aspects of a Navy career better than can wives who are neutral or antagonistic toward their husbands' careers (including the major stress resulting from separation), the reason for these findings is unclear. Whether dissatisfaction with an officer's career choice leads to more critical evaluations of factors associated with that career, or whether spouse dissatisfaction with Navy life causes lack of support for a career, cannot be determined from this study. Regardless of the causal relation, however, the importance of the link between the two should not be ignored. Efforts to remove the dissatisfaction resulting from separation should be intensified, including preparation for imminent separation and help in enduring and adjusting to separation. Wives and officers alike should be prepared for the problems they will face during separation and should be made aware of the reasons behind these hardships.

An important finding of this study that should not be overlooked was the disclosure that only eight percent of the wives reported that Family Services had been helpful during the adjustment to a new location. [Note: Family Services was included within the Family Service Centers in 1980.] This widespread opinion of the Family Services program suggests that officers and their wives are unaware of the service or of its function, or, perhaps, that they feel that Family Services is oriented towards enlisted personnel and it is inappropriate for officers to use the services. If this feeling is prevalent among officers, steps should be taken to prove to them that Family Services can provide a valuable aid in dealing with issues of separation and relocation. If, however, officers continue to be reluctant to use the services as they now exist, increased awareness, in itself, will not change the situation. Officers must be made to realize that they may seek out these services with no loss in status or self-esteem. If this approach is not successful, a separate branch of Family Services may be required exclusively for officers.

Another Navy service that appears to be underutilized is the detailer field trip meeting for spouses, which is attended by less than 10 percent of the JOs' spouses. Since the majority of respondents indicated that either no meeting was scheduled or that they were not aware of the meeting, poor attendance is not the result of disinterest. This finding is consistent with the 95 percent attendance figures reported by NMPC-412 for spouses of officers at the Surface Warfare Officers School-Advanced Program.¹ In light of the positive effects on spouse support for a naval career and spouse evaluations of location changes, these meetings appear to be a worthwhile means of reaching the wives of JOs.

Another contributor to discontent with a Navy career that was brought out by this study concerned the career wife. Because dual careers, including dual Navy careers, are increasing both nationally and among Navy people, it is evident that the relation between spouse employment and JO careers will continue and probably will accelerate as a problem. The Navy has not thoroughly examined the effects of this situation on its officers and, although this study has provided some information on the issue, it in no way provides a detailed analysis of the dual-career subject. This study demonstrated clearly that single-career families are more conducive to officer retention because of spouse support that reinforces career intent. Special efforts should be made to reach the officers and wives of dual-career families with the aim of understanding their special problems and offering solutions. Only by addressing the issue directly can progress be made in efforts to retain these officers.

In summary, this study showed a consistent and impressive relation between JOs and their wives. Officers reported many areas in which their spouses play an important role in their careers and career decisions, and, conversely, in which their careers influence the attitudes and experiences of their wives. Many JOs at this stage of their lives are developing both their Navy careers and their families. Retention efforts should not overlook or ignore the important interrelations of the two.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. More detailer meetings with spouses should be scheduled and officers and their wives should be alerted to the meetings. The meetings should be carefully planned to focus on the career concerns of both JOs and their wives. Since many spouses travel with their husbands to SWOS Basic, this may be an appropriate time to schedule detailer meetings. The detailer field trip program developed and in use at SWOS-Advanced, Newport is attended by a large majority of officers wives. A similar program at SWOS Basic might effectively meet the needs of the wives of JOs.

2. Because wives of JOs who reported that their husbands' superior officers were helpful during the adjustment to a new community showed the greatest support for a Navy career, it is clear that superior officers play an important role in JO career decisions. Commanding and executive officers should be made aware of the importance of their assistance in easing spouse adjustments. Special emphasis must be given to developing methods to deal with problems of adjustment, and supervisors must be taught to increase their effectiveness in this area. The Department Head Course or LMET may be the appropriate place to introduce this subject.

¹Townes, J. Personal communication, 29 January 1981.

3. Because separations are reported as the worst aspect of a Navy career, the necessity of, and reasons behind, the frequent separations must be made clear to both officers and their wives. Acceptance of separation must be on a personal, rather than an abstract level. The support system that currently exists to help cope with separations should be augmented, and help in preparing for and coping with the problems and stresses associated with extended separations should be made available to Navy families. For example, a class in coping skills for wives and officers who are facing separation might deal effectively with the problem. JOs should be made aware of the effects such separations have on their spouses, and the sensitivity involved in the issue. Such awareness may help officers to assist their wives in preparing for separation and in dealing with resulting problems.

4. The potential benefits of Family Services [now included within the Family Service Centers] should be brought to the attention of officers and their wives. Reluctance of officers to use these services may be attributed to a misconception that such services are for enlisted families only and that there is a stigma attached to officers using the services. Efforts should be made to overcome these prejudices against Family Services, and the benefits the services provide should be publicized. Officers must be made aware that these services can be utilized without loss of prestige or status.

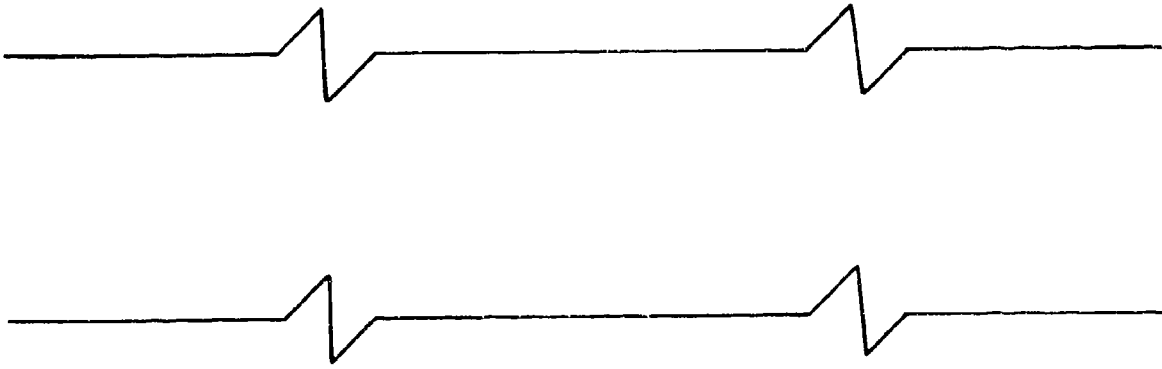
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APPENDIX
SURFACE WARFARE JUNIOR OFFICER
CAREER QUESTIONNAIRE (EXTRACT)

Section VI--Decision Process



Questions 16 through 24 should be answered if you are currently married or expect to be married shortly. If you expect to be married shortly check this box ☐ and read the word "spouse" in the following questions to mean the person to whom you will be married.

16. How does your spouse evaluate the following aspects of your Navy career:

	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Very Negative</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Very Positive</u>
a. Geographical location changes	☐	()	()	()	()	()
b. Sea duty	☐	()	()	()	()	()
c. Shore duty	☐	()	()	()	()	()
d. Family separation	☐	()	()	()	()	()
e. Overseas assignment, accompanied	☐	()	()	()	()	()

	<u>Don't know</u>	<u>Very Negative</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Very Positive</u>
f. Overseas assignment, unaccompanied	☐	()	()	()	()	()
g. Your job security	☐	()	()	()	()	()
h. Pay	☐	()	()	()	()	()
i. Health benefits	☐	()	()	()	()	()
j. Commissary & exchange benefits	☐	()	()	()	()	()
k. Retirement benefits	☐	()	()	()	()	()
l. Standard of living	☐	()	()	()	()	()
m. Effects on dependents	☐	()	()	()	()	()

17. Has your spouse attended a detailer field trip briefing for spouses and officers?

- () Yes
- () No - meeting not scheduled
- () No - not interested
- () No - not aware of meeting
- () No - conflicting schedule
- () No - other _____

18. How does your spouse feel towards your Navy career?

- () Completely supportive
- () Moderately supportive
- () Neutral
- () Moderately antagonistic
- () Completely antagonistic

19. Which of the following best describes the extent to which you and your spouse arrive at decisions regarding future assignments?

- ☐ Seek little or no input from spouse
- ☐ Seek input from spouse but retain decision prerogative
- ☐ Seek input from spouse with aim of arriving at a mutually agreeable decision
- ☐ Defer to spouse's wishes

20. How is your spouse employed?

- ☐ Full time housewife
- ☐ Naval Officer
- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Clerical
- ☐ Business/Finance
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Other _____

21. If your spouse is employed outside the home, to what extent do your PCS moves to different geographic locations cause difficulties with your spouse's employment?

- ☐ Extreme impact
- ☐ Considerable impact
- ☐ Moderate impact
- ☐ Slight impact
- ☐ Insignificant impact

22. How well does (did) your spouse like the geographic location of your first sea duty assignment?

VERY LITTLE LITTLE SOMEWHAT MUCH VERY MUCH

23. Approximately how much time (in months) did it take your spouse to feel that she "fitted in" with

- a. her job (if employed) _____ months
- b. local community _____ months

24. How helpful were the following people or groups in easing your spouse's adjustment to the geographic location of your first sea duty assignment?

	<u>N/A</u>	<u>Very Unhelpful</u>	<u>Unhelpful</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Helpful</u>	<u>Very Helpful</u>
a. CO	☐	()	()	()	()	()
b. XO	☐	()	()	()	()	()
c. Department Head	☐	()	()	()	()	()
d. Other JO's	☐	()	()	()	()	()
e. Spouse of CO/XO	☐	()	()	()	()	()
f. Other Spouses	☐	()	()	()	()	()
g. Family services	☐	()	()	()	()	()
h. Friends in the area	☐	()	()	()	()	()
i. Family/relatives	☐	()	()	()	()	()
j. Church/community	☐	()	()	()	()	()
k. Other _____	☐	()	()	()	()	()

End of "Spouse" Questions

Section VII--Supplemental Questions

2. How actively does your spouse participate in your Navy career?

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Slightly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Slightly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>
a. She encourages you when things are not going well at work.	()	()	()	()	()	()
b. She takes care of everything at home including calling a repairman.	()	()	()	()	()	()
c. She helps entertain people who are important to your Navy career.	()	()	()	()	()	()
d. She works actively with other Navy spouses on Navy-related projects.	()	()	()	()	()	()
e. She doesn't expect you to help around the home.	()	()	()	()	()	()
f. She is willing to (offers to) discuss your work with you a lot.	()	()	()	()	()	()
g. She is so involved in her home/education/career that she can't spare the time to get involved in your career.	()	()	()	()	()	()
h. She expresses pride in your career success, she has a strong source of motivation for you to achieve.	()	()	()	()	()	()
i. She is always willing to make sacrifices to help your career.	()	()	()	()	()	()
j. She is active in the community/social life.	()	()	()	()	()	()
k. She exhibits high expectations of excellence in you.	()	()	()	()	()	()
l. She projects a good image as a Navy officer's spouse.	()	()	()	()	()	()

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