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Mary Janes: The Return of Innocence in a Postmodern Society

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Weight Perception and Weight Satisfaction of University Students

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Mary Janes: The Return of Innocence in a Postmodern Society
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Abstract:

Shoes can be a nonverbal way of signify to a viewer one's current involvement with fashion. An example of shoes are Mary Janes which have been a twentieth century standard for American children, particularly little girls, as well as adult females. They continue to be a fashion statement for this new century because of a retro appeal for times that had more well-defined values than today's postmodern society. A historical background on Mary Janes helps in better understanding its value to fashion.

Key Words: Mary Jane shoe, innocence, traditional values, fashion, postmodern society

Introduction

Courtney Love from her song "Doll Parts" states: "I am doll eyes, doll mouth, doll legs. I am doll arms, big veins, dog bait..." It is plain to see, considering this and other media that surrounds America, that dolls have more influence on the public than we might believe. Dolls in a symbolic way influence our culture in the way we as females dress, act, look, and measure our waistlines.

One of the most influential dolls ever sold in the United States was the Shirley Temple doll. She is still very popular today and can be bought, sold, and traded for high prices on the Internet. What is it about Shirley Temple that captivates our society so much? Could it be her towering innocence? Or is it her curly locks, her sweet smile, and those shoes? Shirley Temple wore Mary Janes in her very first film "Baby Burlesk" when

she was only three years old, and continued to wear them for the rest of her childhood film career.

Since Shirley Temple's time, Mary Jane shoes have continued in their popularity, leading to a few key questions about their beginnings and their importance within a post-modern society. To date, there are no journal articles written on the history or evolution of the Mary Jane shoe. This research for this paper focuses on the historical origins of the shoe in books published in the United States and Great Britain, and will discuss the following ideas: the definition and origin of the Mary Jane shoe and who wore the shoe. Discussion will also focus on if the shoe evokes a retro time of innocence, that in some measure is still desired by women, because it is reminiscent of a simpler time of sand boxes and sailor dresses, for the wearer.

Mary Janes have proven their popularity and staying power through the years and even centuries. What are Mary Janes? There are many definitions, especially since the shoes seem to reinvent themselves each fashion season by different designers. The original shoes generally pictured in our minds are the ones worn, and named after the child "Buster Brown" in the comic strip.

But the traditional criteria of Mary Janes are: a flat, single strap, blunt toed shoe that "signals a child's transition from baby to little girl or boy" (O'Keefe, 1996, p. 234). However, this definition is not all encompassing. Mary Janes have hundreds of variations from the traditional T-strap Mary Janes made of shiny black, red, white patent leather with basic variations to Calvin Klein's 1996 Mary Janes set on high, with a chunky heel and a thin strap (O'Keefe, 1996, p. 234) to slip-ons and mules with a T-strap. Mary Janes continue to reinvent themselves with each passing fashion season, never seeming to be out

of fashion, because they are able to adapt to the latest trend promoted by designers. Thus, this shoe has been around centuries to evolve into the shoe it is today.

History

Shoes have an extensive history. The oldest shoe on record is documented as early as 3500 B.C. (O'Keefe, 1996, p. 22). The Egyptians accomplished this by making "imprints of their feet in wet sand, molded braided papyrus into soles the same size and attached rawhide thongs to keep them on the foot" (O'Keefe, 1996, p. 22). From this time forward, every civilization has crafted their own designs to fit their individual needs. This adaptation of a shoe for a specific culture and time is true of Mary Janes, which, although they were officially named in 1902 and became popular at that time, were merely a reintroduction of the shoe to a new generation.

The Romans in 34 A.D. had a very similar shoe that was made of thick black leather and heavily decorated with hole-punched patterns (Wilson, 1969, p. 36). The Normans also had a similar shoe that was worn by the commoners in 1066-1154 A. D. (Wilson, 1969, p. 64).

But the most striking resemblance to a Mary Jane is the shoe worn by the Tudors in 1485-1558 A.D. (Wilson, 1969, p. 108). This shoe is the exact replica of the current Mary Jane, and for this time period was known as the "bar shoe." The description of this shoe was: "bar shoes with very square toes fashionable for both men and women. Fastened with a button with high-cut or low vamps and a strong sole. Plain, black, worn by the peasant classes; slashed with colored satin puffs, worn with varying toe-widths by the upper classes" (Wilson 1969, p. 108). The Elizabethan Tudors also had their own variation of

this “bar shoe” worn by country people in 1558-1603 A.D. which included a rough form of a buckle fastening (Wilson, 1969, p. 118).

Bar shoes have been documented at much earlier times than most would have imagined. However, they did not start out as a fashion for children. According to the History of Clothing website (<http://histoclo.hispeed.com>, 2001), “The style itself has ancient origins and a shoe with an open front and crossbar was widely worn in the Middle Ages by both men and women, it was not at the time, however, considered a child’s style” (p. 3). An interesting point about these “bar shoes,” or “Mary Janes,” is that when they were worn by children, they seem to have been not only worn by little girls, but also little boys. These shoes seem to become a children’s fashion in the seventeenth century (Young, 1938, p. 23). At this time period, it was unimportant to differentiate between girl and boy babies until they were at least five years old.

In the nineteenth century it was recorded that, “Dress for small boys of this period was very feminine. The customary style was a plaited wool skirt topped with frilly, starched, white-cotton blouse and a velvet Eton. At five years old, boys graduated from the skirt into short trousers; however, the top of the costume remained the same” (Young, 1938, p. 36-37) Children were supposed to look like replicas of adults. “To judge by the portraits of infants, the little ones, even boys, were impeded with long full petticoats, cramped with stiff stomachers, and weighted down with brocade” (Young, 1938, p. 25).

In artistic depictions of the Renaissance, it was very popular to have little boys and infants wearing dresses accompanied by what would appear to be Mary Jane shoes. “The extreme type of costume continues to be the vogue for children so long as it was the

accepted fashion for adults. In the first few years of life, boys were dressed in the long skirts of their sisters and the same style of shoes” (Young, 1938, p. 22-23).

Since Mary Janes have had a long history for men and women, boys and girls, of all social classes, it is not very difficult to see these fashions being depicted and worn in almost every century. An easily recognized figure is the Morton Salt Girl (1848) who wears her Mary Janes with her dress in the rain and has adorned our salt containers for decades. In the original book by Lewis Carroll, (1865) “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland,” Alice is depicted in the drawings as wearing black Mary Janes. “Lewis Carroll, 1865, Alice in Wonderland, dressed Alice in flat, ankle-strap shoes with rather square toes” (Ewing, p. 97). One historical evidence of these shoes in the 1800s is Little Lord Fauntleroy, who wore these popular “bar shoes” with his suits who is believed by many to be the forerunner of the current Mary Jane wore by today’s children. Christopher Robin in A. A. Milne’s short books, written and drawn in 1925, was another very popular boy who wore these shoes (www.just-pooh/milne.html).

Reasons for Popularity of Shoes

Why are Mary Janes so successful? Perhaps it is because they have evolved so much. Mary Jane’s are not only worn by children in the twentieth century; but are now worn by just about everyone: children women, men, celebrities, and models. This could be attributed to the ability of Mary Janes to lend themselves to an individual style. A perfect example is this woman who prides herself in establishing the “kinder-whore” fashion. Courtney Love “used this kiddy-based fashion to send an entirely different message. By reusing these little-girl images, she and other celebrities have turned them into an ironic symbol of post-feminist empowerment” (O’Keefe, 1996, p. 237).

Perhaps it is this type of anti-fashion sub-culture promoted by Courtney Love that has taken Mary Janes into its reincarnated state. "Isolated worlds have always given their styles to mainstream fashion...The marginal groups—blacks, Puerto Ricans, gays—are barred from conventional culture, and so they develop their own unique look. At that point you can say it's progressive, it's authentic, it has an historical edge" (Davis, 1992, p. 176). It would seem that Mary Janes have continued to be successful because all people can fit them into their wardrobe. They have been popular for little girls and boys, punk rockers, alternative dressers, the high fashion elite, the average stay at home mothers; and, in the gay community. Perhaps these shoes are so popular because any culture can adapt this look to the image they are trying to achieve and still maintain some sort of storybook innocence.

It could definitely be said that Mary Janes hold innocence about them, even when they are tweaked to achieve a certain image. "Isaac Mizrahi remembers wearing Mary Jane's 'as an infant, with suspender shorts and a jacket and white knee socks.' They figured prominently in his first shoe collection, which included two high-heeled versions as well as a traditional flat. 'I adore that there's this incredible innocence about them,' he explains. 'There are so few innocent things around that suddenly it's a big surprise'" (Harpers Bazaar, 1994, p. 82).

In the 1960's British designer Mary Quant reinvented the style of Mary Janes when she flaunted "Twiggy in an art smock and black tap shoes" (O'Keefe, 1996, p. 235). This was concurrent with the second wave of women's rights movement. Perhaps women traded in their bras for a pair of Mary Janes. "Now, Mary Janes in every variation—brown sueded, triple-strapped, Doc Martens-soled—are turning up everywhere: at Prada, Gucci, John Fluevog, Na Na, Michael Perry, J. Crew. And they are becoming fast sellers"□

(Harpers Bazaar, 1994, p. 82). Another reason for the Mary Janes' staying power could also be that they are so versatile. Pair them with anything from a baby doll dress to jeans, or leggings and leotards to tutus.

One of the most quintessential reasons for Mary Janes popularity is because it represents a value associated with yester-years, a time not so harried and stressed, where ideas, beliefs and values were well-defined and not blurred or deconstructed as in the current post-modern society. The shoe represents innocence of old. The Mary Janes are refreshing and yet nostalgic. Thinking of the pouty-faced, dimple-cheeked Shirley Temple reminds us of the "good old days" when girls were submissive, meek, and never domineering. Perhaps that is why it has become so popular to pair these shoes with anything extreme. It is because women today want to escape the male dominated society, while still keeping their innocence and femininity.

Women empower themselves by being anti-fashion, but at the same time despise being compared to Barbie; and paradoxically, set the new fashion trend for all women. Perhaps this is the reason that Barbies and dolls of any conventional sort have become so controversial. It is because women do not want to be compared to, or have to live up to the nonverbal cues that are given off by such a doll.

When one looks at a doll and its implied American perfection in dimensions, dress, and looks, these were all characteristics of the turn of the century when women were never supposed to show their legs or if they did, very little. During the 1940s and the 1950s females were meant to vacuum in a perfectly ironed dress and pearls. Taken from a 1950s Home Economics book, "...take 15 minutes to rest so you'll be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your makeup, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh looking. He has

just been with a lot of work weary people. Be a little gay and a little more interesting for him. His boring day may need a lift and it is one of your duties to provide it. Remember a good housewife always knows her place”

www.geocities.com/sunsetstrip/amitheatre/housewife.html.

Maybe in the above quote you see the innocence of the sweet little girl Shirley Temple. Women today are contradicting those images by pairing today's styles with the innocence and simplicity of the Mary Janes. Therefore, they are sending the message that they are no longer being repressed by yesteryear's female implications.

Perhaps women like the way that Mary Janes allow them to feel like a little girl again. “Mary Janes are the quickest way to telegraph a feeling best understood by little women: ‘I enjoy being a girl’” (Bazaar, March 1994, p. 82). Possibly women that wear Mary Janes feel compelled to wear them, because they are trying to send a message to the world. “Could it be that adults in Mary Janes are all sending the same message? With an emphatic stamp of their Mary Janed feet, they seem to be saying: Life's my party, and I'll wear pretty shoes every day if I want to” (Bazaar, 1994, p. 82).

Maybe the popularity of Mary Janes could be attributed to their unique way of making a woman feel like a little girl and allowing little girls to feel like grown ups. “If childhood is a cultural construct, then children's clothes offer a base from which to examine the role of children and the meaning of childhood today. Childhood is structured by a set of ideas supported by dress. In the course of western history particular concepts of childhood have been reflected in the clothes that children have worn. Style reflects expectations for children's behavior” (Rubenstein, 2000, p. 4).

Mary Janes in a nonverbal way create attributes often associated with the young: children, childlike, innocent/innocence, religious, straight, gentle, carefree. These same nonverbal cues seem to have the same effect on the adult women who wear these shoes that are associated with children. Perhaps they want to be treated more like a child, and have less expected of them. However, this creates an interesting paradox when one considers the fact that more women are currently dressing their babies like miniature adults, while they themselves are wearing Mary Janes to feel like little girls again. "Sales for children's clothes are growing faster than all other apparel categories" (Berner, 1997, p. 289). Children are no longer being dressed in just sleepers anymore. It has become a status symbol to have children that are "dressed to the nines." Perhaps the mothers are wearing the hand-me-downs now, topping the outfit off with a pair of Mary Janes.

It could be that Mary Janes are so popular among all types of women because of their ability to adapt to specific needs. "The basic theme of avoiding sexy shoes, especially open toed sandals, on the part of working women in the management realm has been pervasive in the advice of wardrobe consultants. This advice has been supported by some research indicating that sandals are perceived to be sexually attractive...a close-toed shoe such as a pump is considered to be more appropriate for a woman striving to climb the corporate ladder (Kaiser, Schutz, Chandler, 1987, p. 17). Mary Janes seem to have a mystical power about them which allow them to be non-offensive to men and to the work force, while still allowing women to feel incredibly feminine and pretty. It was not always in fashion for women to show their shoes at all. "Prior to the twentieth century, the female foot was a forbidden delight to the male eye; it was hidden beneath layers of inner and

outer skirts...Once the foot and leg were fully exposed in the twentieth century, shoes began to provide sexual interest" (Kaiser, Schutz, Chandler, 1987, p. 15).

Conclusion

It is plain to see that there are many reasons for the popularity and staying power of Mary Janes through the centuries. It would appear that they do represent a form of innocence to the wearer and to others who perceive the storybook image. Mary Janes have a surprisingly long history as part of western dress, and have been worn by all people: male, female, young, old, rich, and poor. They are a universal symbol of innocence and youth in a post-modern society that appears to not be losing any momentum. Mary Janes will always be on the fashion scene in some form for all ages to enjoy with hidden meanings to be interpreted by one's society.

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Weight Perception and Weight Satisfaction of University Students

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if weight satisfaction differs between Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) majors and non-majors, to document the prevalence of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with body weight, and to determine if a general education nutrition class impacts satisfaction/dissatisfaction with body weight. The sample (N=4152) included students enrolled at Southern Utah University between 1997 and 2001. The results suggest that while weight satisfaction was not significantly higher in FCS majors, the high incidence of weight dissatisfaction in university students is a concern. There are potential implications for educators and administrators as they plan curriculum for adolescents and young adults.

INTRODUCTION

Research has established that Americans are becoming increasingly obese (Poll, 2002). While a great deal of research has been conducted to document the constantly increasing girth of Americans (Obesity still on rise, 2002), less research has specifically addressed the issue of weight satisfaction and nutrition education as it relates to weight, particularly in the college setting. It has been suggested that general dissatisfaction with body weight may be higher among students majoring in Family and Consumer Sciences than in students in non-food and nutrition related majors (Crockett & Littrell, 1985, Larson, 1989). This may prove to be problematic in a student's future personal or professional life.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As students pursue college education many factors influence their choice of major. It has been suggested that one possible factor impacting choice of major may be general satisfaction/dissatisfaction with body weight. Although some researchers (Crockett & Littrell, 1985; Larson, 1989, Drake, 1989) have suggested that students who major in family and consumer sciences (FCS) have a higher incidence of anorexia-like behaviors than other students, not all researchers have arrived at the same conclusion (Johnson & Christopher, 1991).

Current statistics on weight in America and Utah

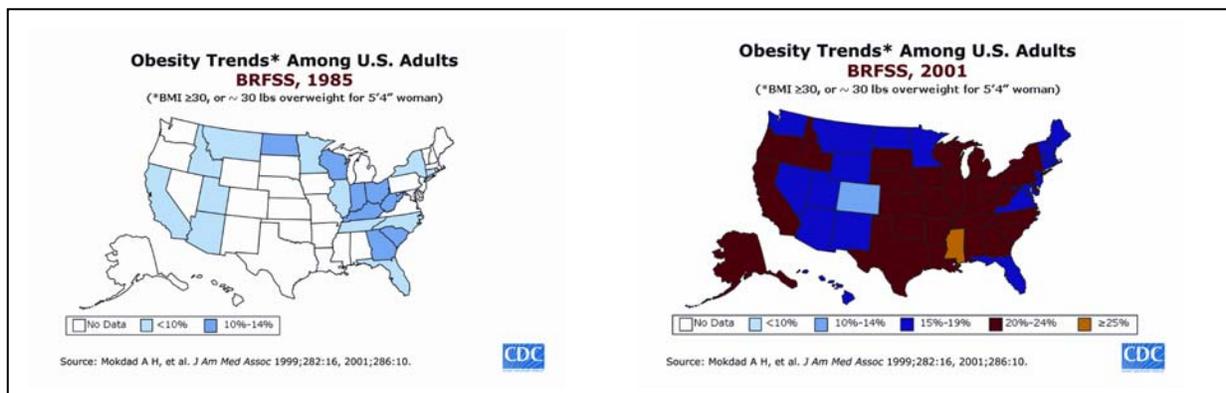
Americans' weight has increased steadily over the past several decades. According to a Harris Poll 80% of Americans over the age of 25 are overweight based on the body mass index (BMI). This is an increase from 58% in 1983, 64% in 1990, and 71% in 1995. The U.S. Surgeon

General, David Satcher (2001), proclaimed that obesity in the United States is reaching “epidemic proportions.” The Center for Disease Control confirms that obesity in the United States has risen at an epidemic rate during the past 20 years. Research indicates that the situation is worsening rather than improving (Poll, 2002).

An obesity epidemic within the U.S. population is vividly portrayed by the fact that in 1991 only 4 of 45 participating states had obesity rates of 15 to 19 percent and none had rates greater than 20 percent. By the year 2000, all of the 50 states except Colorado had rates of 15 percent or greater, with 22 of the 50 states having obesity rates as high as 20 percent or greater. The percentage of obese adults in Utah has grown from 9.7 in 1991 to 18.5 in 2000 (Figure 1, Obesity trends, 2001).

Figure 1

Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 1985 and 2001



Satisfaction with weight

While the percentage of Americans who are overweight has increased steadily over the past several decades, concern about weight has also increased. A 1972 survey found that only six percent of teenagers were concerned with their weight (Sternlieb & Munan) while a 1998 study revealed that over 80% of those surveyed were dissatisfied with their bodies (Kostanski & Gullone, 1998). Although this increased concern seems logical, a closer examination of the data shows that the concern is not limited to those who are overweight. Eisele, Hetsgaard and Light (1986) found that only 19% of survey respondents needed to lose weight while 78% of the sample wanted to lose weight.

Impact of nutrition course on satisfaction with body weight

Although multiple studies have been conducted using college students as subjects (O'Dea, 1999, Stuhldreher & Ryan, 1999, Schulken & Pinciario, 1997) few have focused on the impact of nutrition education on weight satisfaction. Research by Molarius et. al. (2001) revealed a relationship between BMI and educational levels with lower education associated with higher BMI.

PURPOSE AND HYPOTHESIS

The purpose of this study was to examine weight perception and its relationship to college major and nutrition education. Specifically, this study addressed the questions: (1) Does weight satisfaction differ between FCS majors and non-FCS majors? (2) Does a general education nutrition course impact weight satisfaction at Southern Utah University?

METHODS

Data was gathered through use of a questionnaire. Respondents provided data on nine variables: major, minor, year in school, age, gender, height, weight, satisfaction with body weight, desired weight change (if any), and grade point average.

Approval for this project was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at Southern Utah University (SUU). Completion of the survey instrument was voluntary and anonymous and completion of the survey was construed as consent to participate. Subjects consisted of students enrolled at SUU from 1997 and 2001. During winter quarter 1997, 587 students enrolled in general education classes at SUU participated in the study by completing a 10-item questionnaire. General education courses were used to establish a baseline for future comparisons. All subsequent quarters/semesters the questionnaire was administered in general education nutrition and other family and consumer sciences classes.

Subjects' self-reports of height and weight were used to calculate Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is an index of a person's weight in relation to height (determined by dividing weight in kilograms by the square of height in meters). A BMI *less than 20* is considered to be a low BMI. A low BMI may indicate underweight and may be associated with health problems. A BMI of *20-25* indicates a healthy weight. A BMI of *greater than 25* is considered to be high. This may indicate overweight or obesity and may increase the risk of developing health problems. Percent of ideal was calculated as actual weight/healthy weight X 100 (Whitney & Rolfes, 1996).

Data analysis included percentages, means, frequency distributions and chi square.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 4,193 students participated in the survey. Survey participants varied in age from 17 to 61 with the average age being 20.87. The majority students who participated in the survey were female (69.8%), freshmen (47.3%), non-FCS majors (90.8%), who were dissatisfied with their current weight (59.9%) in spite of the fact that their average weight was just 101.16% of their ideal weight (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1

Summary of selected descriptive statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Age	17	61	20.9	4.9
Year in school	1	6	1.9	1.1
Desired wt loss	0	150	15.9	15.6
Desired wt gain	0	50	13.0	7.4
BMI	14.7	51.6	23.1	4.0
Percent ideal wt	61	231	101.2	18.2

Table 2

Respondent characteristics

Characteristic	N	%
Gender		
Male	1265	30.2
Female	2928	69.8
Major		
FCS	385	9.2
Non-FCS	3803	90.8
Satisfied with current weight		
Yes		1673
39.9		
No	2519	60.1
Year in school		
Freshman	1982	47.3
Sophomore	1162	27.7
Junior	633	15.1
Senior	329	7.8
Graduate student	69	1.6

Does weight satisfaction differ between FCS majors and non-FCS majors?

The chi square values indicated that the relationship between gender and weight satisfaction was significant. Males were more likely than females to be satisfied with their weight (Table 3). Chi square analysis showed there was not a significant relationship between weight satisfaction and major. As expected, there is a significant relationship between gender and major when major was defined as a dichotomous variable (Table 4). At SUU FCS majors were no more likely to be dissatisfied with their weight than students majoring in any other discipline ($p = .537$). This is especially impressive since females were less likely to be satisfied with their weight and 97.4% of FCS majors were female.

Table 3

Weight satisfaction and gender

	N	Male	Female	Chi2	P
Satisfied	1673	661	1012		
Not satisfied	2519	1012	1916		
Total	4192			115.746	0.000

Table 4

Gender and major

	N	Male	Female	Chi2	P
FCS major	385	10	375		
Non-FCS major	3803	2553	2282		
Total	4193			152.972	0.000

There is a general dissatisfaction with body weight. Sixty percent of students who participated in this survey were dissatisfied with their current weight although only 27.2% were actually over/underweight.

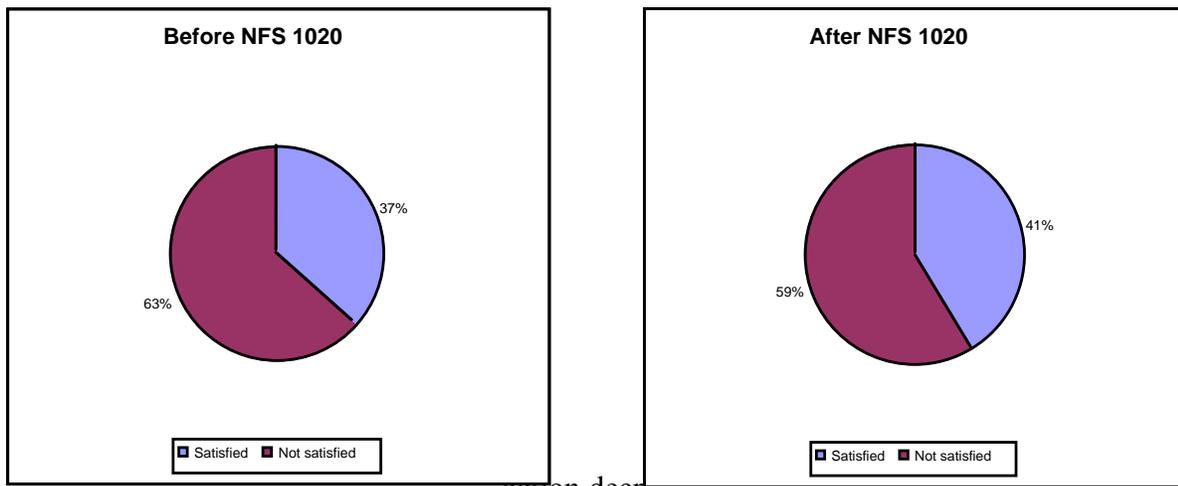
Does a general education nutrition course impact weight satisfaction at Southern Utah University?

Weight satisfaction increased over the course of the term (Figure 2) in spite of the fact that weight increased slightly (1.7 pounds). Although it may be argued that many confounding variables were not controlled, the fact remains that the increase in satisfaction occurred each

quarter/semester over 4 years. This researcher believes that NFS 1020 (a general education nutrition course) helped students to better understand the concept of weight in relation to health, thereby improving weight satisfaction levels.

Figure 2

Before and After NFS 1020 Weight Satisfaction Levels



action decreased. correlated with BMI, age, and gender (men were more likely to desire weight gain while females were more likely to desire weight loss). Students in this study had lower BMIs than those in the previous study (101% versus 110%) and were more satisfied with their weight (40.1% versus 28.9%).

IMPLICATIONS

This study shows that on the campus of Southern Utah University there is no relationship between choice of major (FCS vs. non-FCS) and weight satisfaction. In fact, the study shows that FCS majors are less likely than other females to be dissatisfied with their current body weight. One could conclude that nutrition education helps students to better accept their body weight. While this is gratifying, it does nothing to address the issue of the epidemic status of obesity in the United States. There are actually two issues at play here: weight satisfaction and obesity. This study addresses only the issue of weight satisfaction. Further research is required to determine if nutrition education has a long-term positive impact on actual body weight (obesity).

The results suggest that while weight satisfaction was not significantly higher in FCS majors, the high incidence of dissatisfaction in all females is a concern. FCS teachers should be aware of the potential influence they may have on students' attitude about weight and take the opportunity to counter the influence of culture and media. Emphasis should be placed on knowledge of appropriate BMI, proper weight loss/gain strategies, and self-esteem rather than on how to meet culture norms.

This paper has addressed one important aspect of weight problems in America, that of weight perception. Follow-up research is needed to determine if the long-term impact of nutrition education on university students to encourage them to lose weight.

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Single Parents' Time Use in Children's Human Capital Development

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Single Parents' Time Use in Children's Human Capital Development

Introduction

Currently, a great number of children under age 18 are living in one-parent families. Households headed by a single parent grew from just under 6.1 million in 1980 to nearly 7.8 million in 1999 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). In total, single-parent families with children under 18 accounted for 20 percent of family households in 1980 and 28 percent in 1999. There have been several studies comparing the economic status of single-parent and two-parent families focusing on income and expenditures. However, little is known about how single parents and two parents allocate their time differently in developing children's human capital. Using the most recent time use data, this study documents the total time single parents spend with their children. This study also examines the differences and similarities in time use behavior between single-parent and two-parent families, looking especially for time spent on developing children's human capital. This study further investigates the factors that influence parental time use with children under age 18.

Conceptual Framework

Human capital is viewed as the stock of resources existing in people—their acquired skills, experience, and knowledge gained through means such as formal schooling, market work, and household production (Becker, 1965). Within the household, children's human capital can be developed through the household production process in which the time, skills and knowledge of parents and others are combined with the child's time and goods purchased for the child (e.g., food, clothes, books, and other educational materials) (Bryant, 1992).

Household production theory (Bryant, 1992) suggests that if households allocate more time and money resources for children's human capital development in the present, the produced commodity (e.g., children's school achievement or market earnings in their adult life) in the future will be greater than that of households who are not actively involved in their children's human capital development. Along with the assumption that a critical factor in developing children's human capital and produced commodities (e.g., children's achievement, health, etc.) through the household production function is likely the time parents spend with their children (and that this would differ between single-parent and two-parent family parents), this study attempts to examine overall parental time use behavior with children. Actual time spent and time allocations towards specific activities are examined.

Robison and Godbey (1997) indicated that mothers heading single-parent families spend less of their home time in childcare than the average mothers in married-couple families. More recently, Sandberg & Hofferth (2001) found that children in two-parent families spent more time with their mothers and fathers in 1997 (31 hours a week) than children in two-parent families did in 1981 (25 hours a week). However, they indicated that children in one-parent families spent the same amount (21 hours a week) with their single parents in both 1981 and 1997. Therefore, in this study, because the overall number of hours spent with children is still lower in the single-parent homes it is hypothesized that single parents spend less time in children's human capital development than do married parents.

Data and Sample

Data for the study are drawn from the 1998-99 Family Interaction, Social Capital, and Trends in Time Use Study that was supported by the Survey Research Center, University of Maryland College Park. Among the total respondents (N=1,151), 43% of the sample (n=506) indicated they were parents and were able to report total time spent with their children. To document parental time use with children, 506 respondents were selected as a sample for this study.

Approximately 30% of the sample were single parents. Both single-parent and two-parent family parents had an average number of 13.9 years of educational attainment. The average number of children under 18 for all households was 2.0. The majority (70%) of the parents were full-time employed. While 37.5% of the parents had an income level between \$30,000 and \$50,000, 28.9% of the parents reported household income level between \$50,001 and \$75,000. In the sample, 37.5% of parents were between ages 30 and 39, while about 25% were under 30. The majority (74.3%) of the sample were Caucasians and about 12.1% were Black.

Statistical Analysis

Frequencies and means were performed on all variables to obtain the descriptive information on all parents in the sample. T-tests were conducted to compare means of total time spent with children and time spent in different activities with children (e.g., baby care, child care, helping teaching/reading, outdoor/indoor playing, medical care, travel with children, and attending school activities of their children) between single parents and married parents. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis was performed to identify the effect of family types on the total time spent with children and to investigate factors that influenced parental time use with children.

Variables

The dependent variable for the multivariate analysis was total time spent with children. The total time spent with children was obtained by respondents' time diary reports. The independent variables in the OLS regression model were: 1) family type (single parents, married parents); 2) time needs (number children, number of children squared, presence of children age 6 or younger, and total number of activities with children); 3) time constraints (parents' employment status); and 4) socio-economic characteristics (household income, parents' education, age, and race).

Results

The average time spent with children was 4.6 hours per day (about 32 hours per week) for the total sample. As expected, single parents spent significantly less time with their children than did married parents. While single parents spent an average 3.6 hours per day with children, married parents spent an average of 5 hours per day with their children. Results indicated that single parents spent less time on developing children's human capital by being less involved with children in activities such as helping, teaching, and reading than did married parents. Compared to married parents, single parents also spent less time with children in outdoor & indoor playing activities where children could accumulate knowledge and develop personal skills. In contrast, single parents significantly spent more time on attending school activities of their children than did married parents. The results of this study also indicated that single mothers spent significantly less of their home time in childcare and in helping and teaching children than did the mothers and fathers in married-couple families. However, single mothers spent significantly

more total time with children than did the fathers in married-couple families. This result might imply the impact of gender on the child-rearing role in households.

The results of OLS regression analysis indicated that the effect of family type was significant on parental time spent with children. Holding other factors constant, single parents spent significantly less time with children than did married parents. It is interesting to note that both number of children and the squared term of number of children show significant effects, but in different directions. The results imply that parental time spent with children increases at a decreasing rate as the numbers of children in the household increase. The economies of size might be one possible reason why parents could spend less than half the time with children as the numbers increase. This can be explained by considering that parents might invest less time in a second child or invest less per child.

As expected, it was found that the presence of children age 6 or younger was positively associated with the parental time spent with children. Similarly, when parents were involved in more numbers of activities with children, the total parental time spent with children increased. Also expected, the full-time employed parents spent less time with children than did the part-time employed or non-employed parents. Among the socioeconomic characteristics, only the household income showed a significant and negative effect on the parental time spent with children. Interestingly, as household income level increased, parental total time spent with children decreased.

Conclusion and Implications

This study elaborates the implications of the concept of human capital for family behavior as this relates to parental time use with children. The study shows single parents spent significantly less total time with children as well as the time for the children's human capital development than did married parents. Since the household production process utilizes inputs from both time and money resources, the produced commodity (e.g., children's human capital development) in single parent families might not reach the same level of the commodity produced in the married-couple families. While previous studies indicate the poor economic status of single-parent families, the finding of this study draws attention to the time constraints of single parenthood: single parents spent less time with children and had fewer activities with children. Single parenting itself is not an easy task, and time and money resource constraints might also limit parental motivation or concern over the human capital investments being made in their own children. Therefore, time constraints of single parents due to the multiple roles (parent, sole household manager, and market worker) and the development of children's human capital in single-parents families need to be ameliorated by public policy.

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