

**EFFECTS OF RELOCATION ON THE CAREERS OF MILITARY  
WIVES**

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

Today's military is completely composed of volunteers, many of which are married men. This military service requires them to move every few years, typically taking their families with them. These multiple relocations can have detrimental effects on the careers of their wives in the form of fewer job opportunities, less training, and lower wages than their civilian counterparts. Increasing research has been conducted since the 1970's regarding the effects that military permanent changes of station have had on the careers of military wives. This research is increasingly relevant today given the current overseas contingency operations in which the military is involved, the current state of the economy, and the current importance of wives' earnings to the family financial situation. With active duty military members usually relocating every two to five years, typically with their families, working military wives must leave current positions and search for other employment in new locations just as often. Research indicates that the negative impacts take many forms including fewer military wives employed outside of the home, fewer training and job opportunities, and lower current wages and earnings over time compared to civilian wives. Suggestions have also been made that these negative effects of relocation can translate into the military member separating from service (versus staying in until retirement-eligible at 20 years of service) at the behest of his wife.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of permanent changes of station (PCS) of military members and their families on the careers of military wives.

### **Hypotheses**

#### *Null Hypothesis*

Permanent changes of station (PCS) of military members and their families will have no effect on the careers of military wives.

#### *Research Hypothesis*

Permanent changes of station (PCS) of military members and their families will have a negative effect on the careers of military wives.

### **Assumptions of the Study**

Participants will answer the survey questions regarding the effects of permanent changes of station (PCS) on their careers honestly.

The survey created and used will be a reliable and valid indicator of the effects of permanent changes of station (PCS) on the careers of military wives.

### **Delimitations**

The study will not look at the effects of relocation on the careers of husbands of female military members.

The study will only collect survey responses from military wives whose husbands are stationed at Fairchild Air Force Base, WA, and military wives stationed at other bases to which they forwarded the survey.

The study will only look at the effects of relocation on the careers of civilian wives of military members, not on wives who are also military members.

## CHAPTER 2

### Review of Literature

The lives of military wives are riddled with change, unpredictability, and uncertainty. These come as a result of being unsure of when their husbands will return from a deployment or training, uncertainty regarding when he will unexpectedly be called to duty, and not knowing where the next permanent change of station (PCS) will take them. Amidst all of this upheaval and ambiguity, many military wives wish to work outside the home, and many military wives do (Harrell, Lim, Castaneda, & Golinelli, 2004). As indicated by Lim and Golinelli (2006), “69 percent [of military spouses are] either employed or actively seeking work” (p. 1). However, the options available to them are not as promising as those available to civilian wives. Due to the few or undesirable job opportunities for military wives, many choose to remain unemployed (Lim & Golinelli, 2006). Cooke and Speirs (2005) found that military PCSs resulted in a 10 percent decrease in employment for military wives. For those who don’t choose to remain unemployed, a few military wives may be able to transfer within their company to a local location, but the majority will not.

Some wives may have the benefit of previously being a federal employee. Payne, Warner, and Little (1992) found that while only slightly more than 4 percent of civilian wives were employed by the federal government, 11 percent of military wives were federally employed. This previous federal employment

would allow them to register in the Military Spouse Priority Placement Program at their new duty station. However, this will not guarantee that the wife will receive a job offer at the new base. Executive Order 13473, which took effect September 11, 2009, allows military spouses moving with their spouse due to PCS orders, spouses of 100 percent disabled retired or separated service members, and widows of military members who haven't remarried to be non-competitively appointed to competitive civil service positions (Questions and Answers, n.d.). Individuals eligible under this authority are supposed to be able to apply to certain internal vacancy announcements, and those eligible due to PCS orders are supposed to be able to register in the Military Spouse Priority Placement Program. However, from this author's experience, implementation instructions are slow coming and not all affected agencies are on the same page regarding implementation, making taking advantage of this opportunity extremely difficult, if not impossible. Still, the majority will be required to start the job search process from the very beginning.

The limited number of job opportunities for military wives may be a result of the wives being unfamiliar with the area and the options available, which may greatly limit their possibilities from the very beginning. However, it may also be due to the number of employers willing to hire these transient workers. Some organizations may be averse to hiring military wives due to the finite amount of time that they will be in the local area (Booth, 2003). Others believe that military

wives only desire to work part-time. These beliefs can create a bias against hiring these wives, even though many military wives have the knowledge, skill, and drive to become highly productive employees.

For those organizations that do hire military wives, many do not wish to train them (Booth, 2003; Payne et al., 1992). Employers know that the military wives will only be in the area for a few years, and many are unwilling to put forth the time, effort, and money to train them to perform the duties they were hired to do, much less offer training for positions higher up in the organization. This affects not only the performance and ability in the current position, but also doesn't allow the wife to expand on her abilities and take new skills to the next duty station. In addition, "frequent moves might induce the wife to spend less time in job search and to seek jobs with short training periods" (Hosek, Asch, Fair, Martin, & Mattock, 2002, p. 82).

All of these factors together lead to the findings by Hosek et al. (2002) that "military wives with either a high school diploma or a college degree are less likely than their civilian counterparts to work full-time" (p. 35). These findings are evident in the statistics showing that while 93 percent of college educated civilian wives were employed, only 85 percent of college educated military wives were (Hosek et al., 2002). Also, while 90 percent of high school educated civilian wives were employed, only 81 percent of their high school educated military wife counterparts were employed (Hosek et al., 2002). All in all, the relocations of

military families have negative impacts on the training and employment possibilities of military wives compared to those of civilian wives.

A prominent area of research regarding the effects of relocation on military wives is the comparison of the current wages and earnings over time of a military wife to a civilian wife. Booth (2003) found that military wives earned 19 percent less than civilian wives. Studies by Hosek et al. (2002) found that the weekly earnings for college educated military wives were 16 percent lower than similar civilian wives and that the weekly earnings for high school educated military wives were 11 percent lower than for their civilian counterparts. Other studies have found that “the wage of the military wife is lower at every age than the wage of the civilian wife” (Hosek et al., 2002, p. 81). Much of this can most likely be attributed to the lack of seniority one is able to attain and the lack of training that employers are willing to provide to such short term employees (Payne et al., 1992). In addition, Cooke and Speirs (2005) found that military relocation resulted in “a four-hour decline in hours worked per week among civilian wives [of military members] who remain employed” (p. 1).

Another reason for the earnings gap could be the type of employment that the military wives are able to obtain. The types of employment that allow for the flexibility or part-time employment that some military wives need or desire tend to be in the services and retail sectors, which are typically characterized by low wages (Booth, 2003; Harrell et al., 2004; Payne et al., 1992).

Furthermore, studies have shown that the average time that it takes for a military wife to gain employment after a permanent change of station is approximately ten months, which further decreases the amount of time she spends in employment and the amount of money she is able to earn (Payne et al., 1992). The group of wives hit hardest by this wage difference is that of low ranking enlisted members. These wives typically have less education than their officer's wife counterparts, and their husbands earn less annually than their officer counterparts. This combination typically makes it more imperative that the wife work outside of the home, but less likely that she will be offered a high-paying position. This does not mean that their officer's wife counterparts needn't work outside of the home or are guaranteed to be offered a high-paying position. In fact, officer's wives typically earn less than their civilian wife counterparts (those with similar education, age, etc.) who typically earn more than the average civilian wife (Harrell et al., 2004). This would lead one to assume that military wives are less educated than civilian wives. However, studies have shown that while only 38 percent of civilian wives have some college education, over 50 percent of military wives have some college education (Payne et al., 1992). The one bright spot in wages for military wives are those related to federal employment, which, as stated earlier, is higher for military spouses. These wages were found to be from approximately 5 to 25 percent higher for military wives than for their civilian counterparts on both a weekly and annual basis (Payne et

al., 1992). Therefore, the relocations of military families have negative effects on the earnings of military wives, except for those who are federally employed.

The previously discussed issues faced by military wives when attempting to have a career of their own not only affect them and their families, but also the military as a whole. Recent research has indicated that wives dissatisfied with the career options available to them may encourage their military husbands to leave the service at the first available opportunity (Harrell et al., 2004). Studies have found that “spouse influence on military retirement or resignation decisions has increased with the rate of military spouses working outside the home” (Harrell et al., 2004, p. 2). This indicates that as long as the tendency of military wives to work outside of the home increases but the job opportunities available to them do not, a decrease in the number of military members can be expected. Considering that our armed services are completely volunteer-based, this does not bode well for the size of our military in the future.

In summary, this search of the literature has shown multiple negative effects of the relocations of military families on the career opportunities, training opportunities, and earnings potential of military wives. It indicates that not only do civilian wives of military members have greater difficulty finding jobs, but they also do not receive as much training or earn as much money (unless federally employed) as their civilian wife counterparts. It has also been indicated that these effects may result in the early withdrawal of the military member from military

service, possibly at the behest of a wife who is fed up with giving up her own career aspirations and opportunities to PCS with her husband.

### **Definition of Terms**

92<sup>nd</sup> Air Refueling Squadron (92<sup>nd</sup> ARS). The 92<sup>nd</sup> Air Refueling Squadron is one of two flying squadrons located at Fairchild AFB.

Enlisted Spouse's Club (ESC). The Enlisted Spouse's Club is a voluntary social organization for the spouses of enlisted military members.

Fairchild Air Force Base (Fairchild AFB). Fairchild Air Force Base is an Air Force base located just outside of Spokane, WA.

Military Wife. A military wife is a civilian (non-military) female married to a member of the United States armed forces (Air Force, Army, Marines, Navy, Coast Guard).

Officer's Spouse's Club (OSC). The Officer's Spouse's Club is a voluntary social organization for the spouses of military officers.

Permanent Change of Station (PCS). A permanent change of station is the relocation of a military member and his or her family to a new duty location, typically in a different state and possibly a different country.

Squadron. A squadron is an Air Force unit that is part of a larger group and contains more than two flights. All Air Force members stationed at a base are assigned to a squadron based on their job within the military.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Methods and Procedures**

The purpose of this study was to determine if the careers of military wives were affected by the PCSing that is required of their military husbands.

In an effort to determine this answer, a 21 question survey (Appendix A) was created and distributed to military wives whose husbands are stationed at Fairchild AFB, along with an informed consent release form (Appendix B). Distribution was accomplished through the following methods: emailed to the wives of the military members in the 92<sup>nd</sup> Air Refueling Squadron (92<sup>nd</sup> ARS), emailed to military wives that attend Webster University at Fairchild AFB, handed directly to military wives at home, and emailed to the Presidents of both the Officer's Spouses Club (OSC) and the Enlisted Spouse's Club (ESC) for dissemination to their members. Upon emailing this survey, several responses were received requesting permission to forward the survey to spouses at military bases other than Fairchild AFB. This permission was granted in an effort to gain as many responses as possible. The variety of distribution methods was used in an effort to obtain as much data as possible to increase the reliability and validity of the information gathered. Only returned surveys that were accompanied by a signed and dated informed consent form were used in data calculation (regardless of whether or not all survey questions were answered).

The data from the usable returned surveys were entered into an Excel spreadsheet in order for calculations to be made. The number of each response received for each question was entered into the spreadsheet, and a total was then figured for the number of responses. The percentage was then calculated for each answer to simplify comparisons, since some respondents indicated more than one answer per question and some questions were not answered. For simplicity, all percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Results**

The purpose of this study was to determine if the careers of military wives were affected by the PCSing that is required of their military husbands. The 21 question survey (Appendix A) that was developed to gather study-related data was completed and returned by 20 military wives, but only 18 were accompanied by a signed and dated informed consent form (Appendix B) and were therefore usable. The first five questions gathered the following demographic information. Of those surveyed 44 percent were ages 28-32, 28 percent were ages 23-27, and 28 percent were ages 33-37, yielding an age range of 23-37. The majority of the responding wives held a Bachelor's degree (61 percent), followed by those holding a Master's degree (28 percent), an Associate's degree (6 percent), and some college education (6 percent). In addition, 67 percent had been in their current marriage 3-6 years, 28 percent for 7-10 years, and 6 percent for 0-2 years. The length of their husband's military careers, in descending order, were 3-6 years (44 percent), 7-10 years (28 percent), 11-15 years (17 percent), 0-2 years (6 percent), and 16-20 years (6 percent). Of those that responded, 78 percent were officer's wives and 22 percent were the wives of enlisted members. In addition, question 10 asked how long ago the wives had PCSed to Fairchild AFB (their current location). Time lengths of 1 ½ years, 2 ½ years, and 3+ years each

received 22 percent of the responses. The 6 month time frame yielded 17 percent of the results, while 3 months, 9 months, and 1 year received 6 percent each.

The following charts display the percentage of respondents providing each answer to the survey questions. Percentages are used to simplify comparison, because some respondents marked more than one answer per question. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number for simplicity. Additionally, the questions below refer to the current home station as Fairchild AFB, which is exactly as they were presented in the survey, even though responses were received from military wives at other locations.

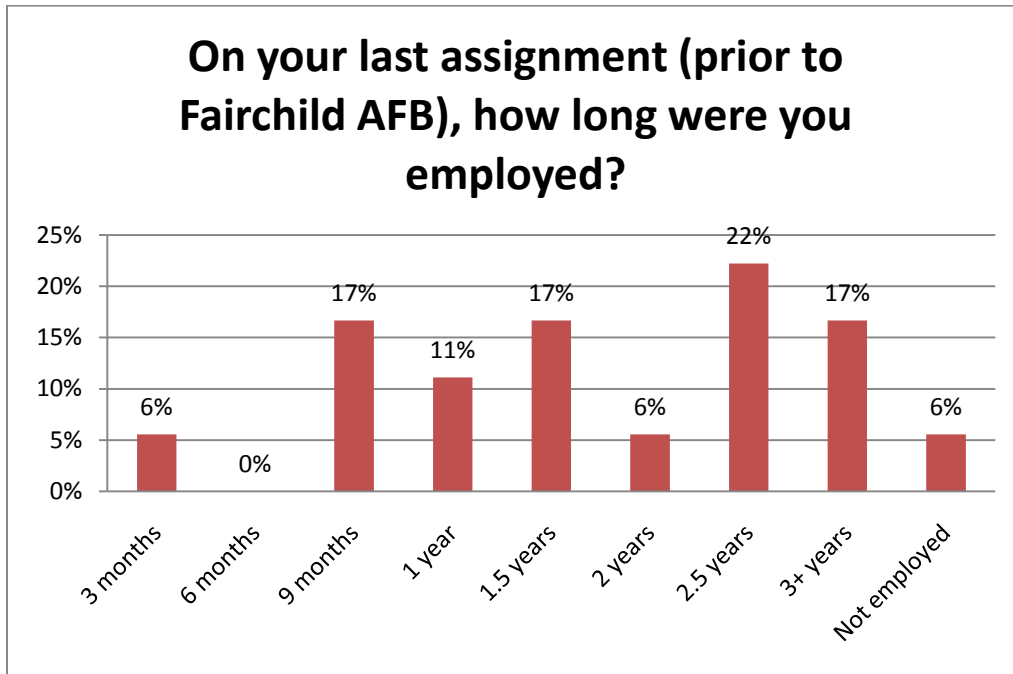
The following three graphs represent information gathered about the wives' employment at their prior station. Graph 1 shows that most of the wives surveyed (22 percent) were employed for 2 ½ years at their prior station. Seventeen percent each were employed for 9 months, 1 ½ years, and 3+ years. In addition, 11 percent were employed for 1 year, while 6 percent each were employed for 3 months, 2 years, or not employed at all. Of the 94 percent of the wives that were employed at their previous station (n=17), 53 percent were employed for 1 ½ years or less. This could contribute to the military wife being unable to earn as much annually or over a lifetime as a civilian wife, as well as not being able to move up within an organization.

Graph 2 shows that the job search for the majority (61 percent) of military wives surveyed lasted for 3 months at their previous station, while 22 percent

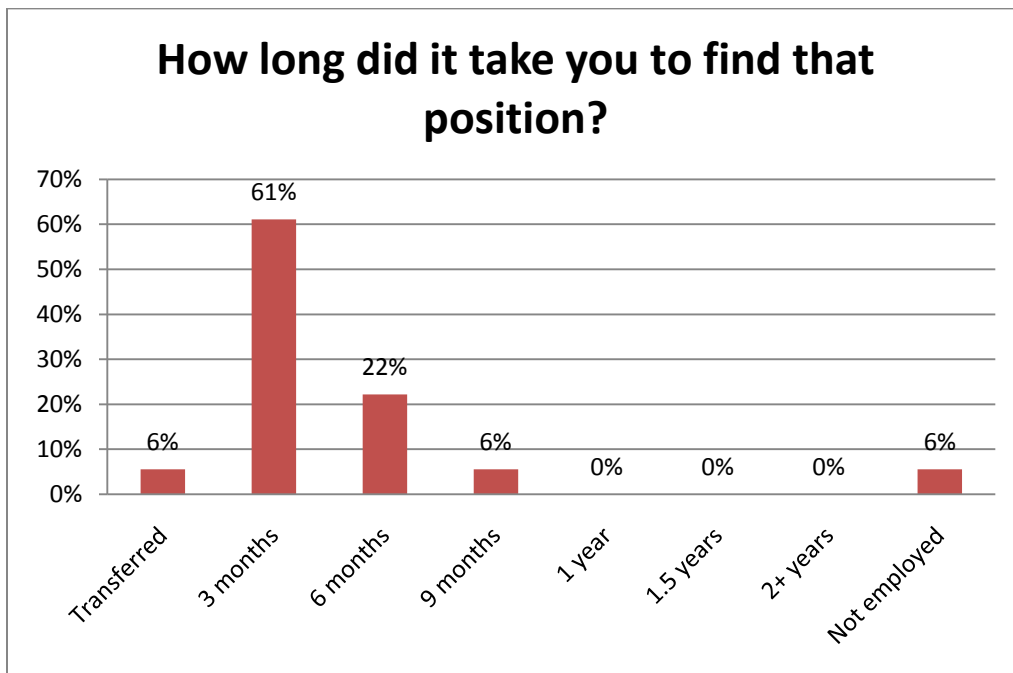
searched for 6 months. The longest search time for the wives was 9 months (6 percent), while another 6 percent were transferred, and yet another 6 percent were not employed. This question illustrated that, of those respondents that were employed and had to search for employment, 100 percent searched for 9 months or less. This contradicted the findings by Payne et al. (1992) that the average time that it takes for a military wife to gain employment after a permanent change of station is approximately ten months. However, any length of search is going to decrease the amount of time that a military wife is able to work at a station, since they will only be there for a finite period of time.

Graph 3 illustrates that most wives only worked for 1 (44 percent) or 2 (39 percent) organizations at their previous station. A smaller portion worked for 3 (11 percent) organizations, which was the highest number of organizations worked for. The 6 percent that indicated in the previous two questions (Graphs 1 and 2) that they were not employed was further supported by this question with 6 percent indicating that they had worked for 0 organizations at their previous station.

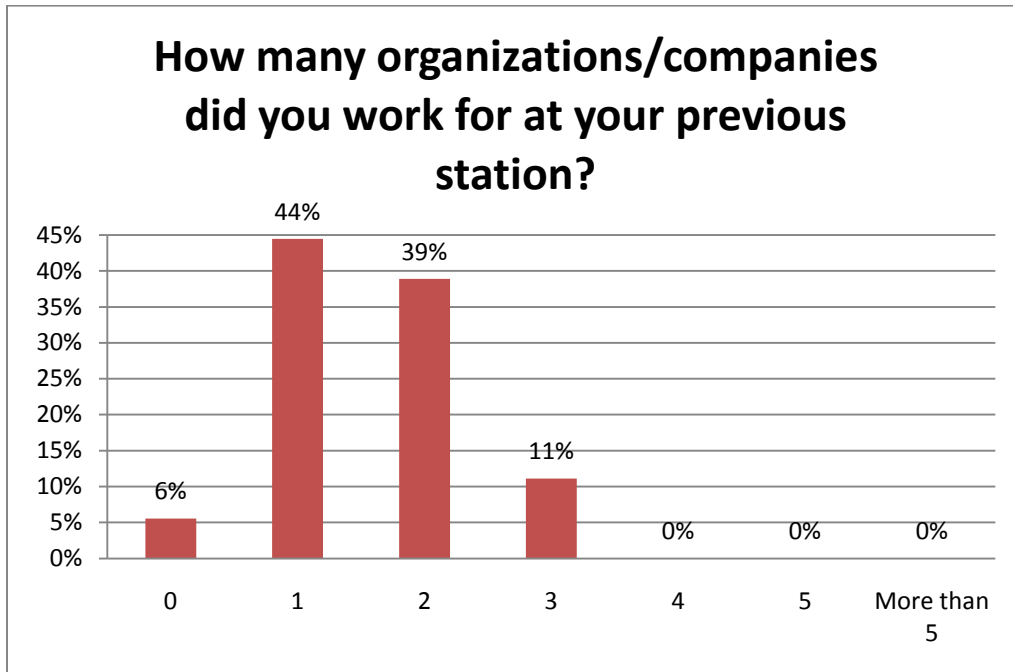
**Graph 1**



**Graph 2**

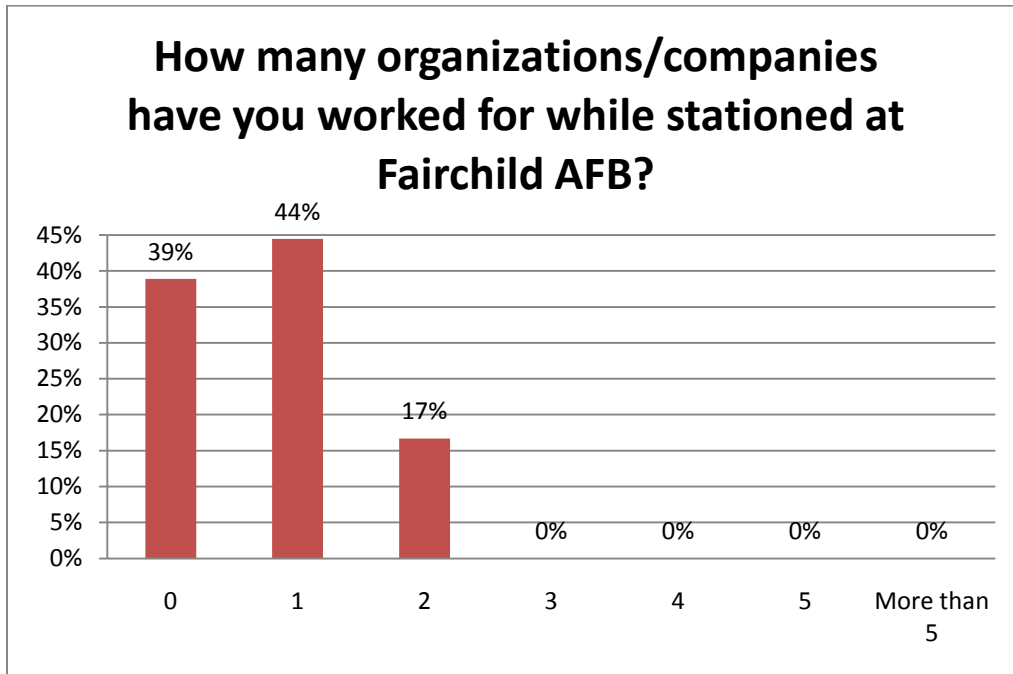


**Graph 3**



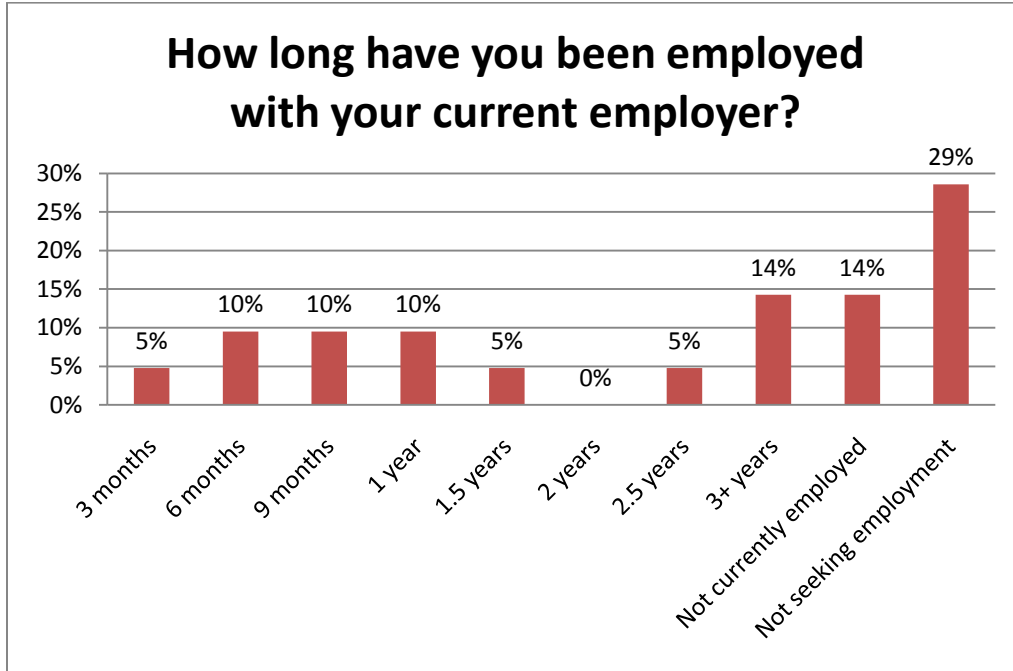
The following 10 graphs present the survey results from questions pertaining to the wives' employment at their current station. Below, Graph 4 shows that 44 percent of respondents had worked for one organization/company at their current location, while 39 percent hadn't worked for any organizations/companies, and 17 percent had worked for two organizations/companies. This supported Lim and Gollinelli's (2006) finding that many military wives choose to remain unemployed.

**Graph 4**

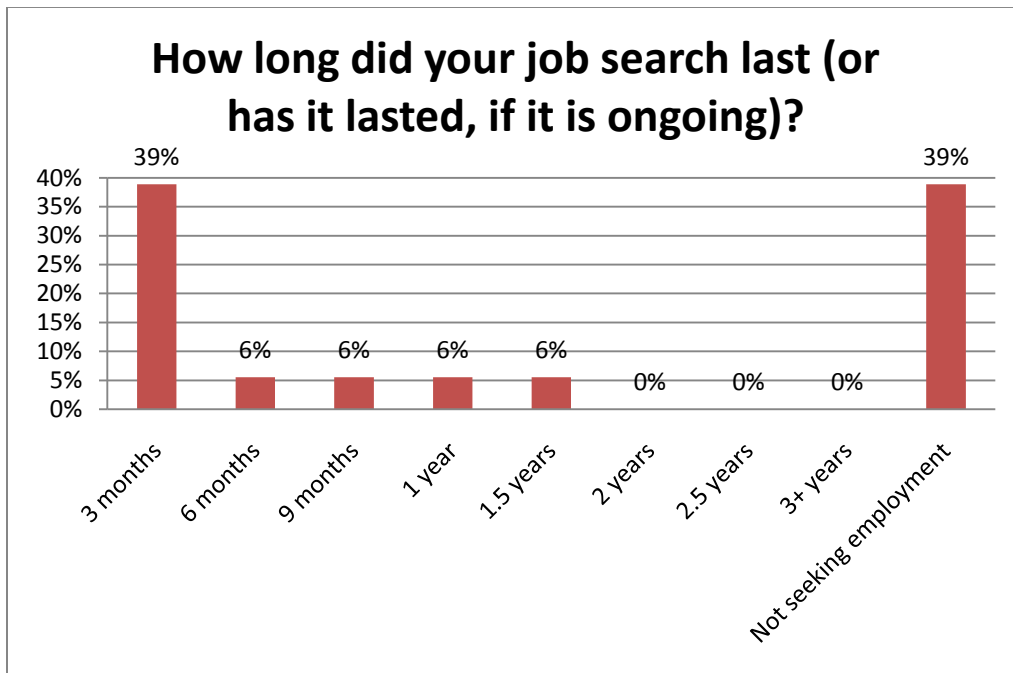


Graph 5 presents the length of time that the military wives have been employed with their current employer. Most of the wives that responded to this survey (29 percent) are not seeking employment, and 14 percent are not currently employed. While 14 percent indicated that they had been employed for 3+ years, 10 percent each indicated that they had been employed for 6 months, 9 months, and 1 year. Employment periods of 3 months, 1 ½ years, and 2 ½ years each received 5 percent of responses. Of those that indicated that they were currently employed (n=12), 58 percent were employed for 1 year or less, while the remaining 42 percent were employed for more than 1 year.

**Graph 5**



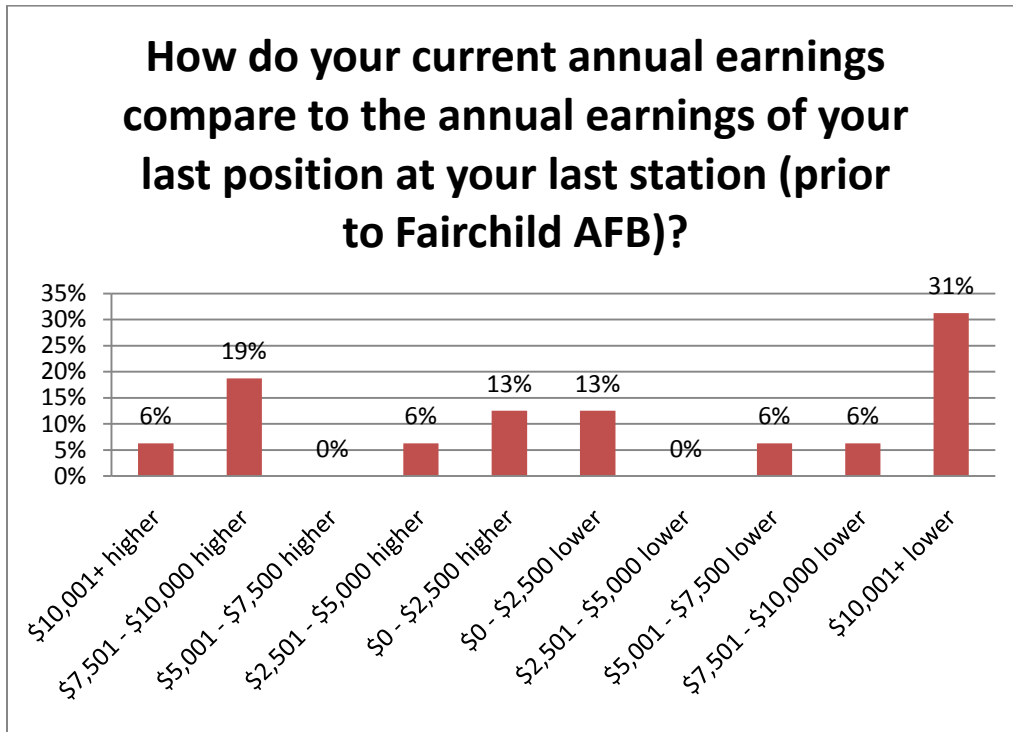
**Graph 6**



Above, Graph 6 shows that 39 percent of respondents were not seeking employment, and the search for another 39 percent lasted only 3 months. Search periods of 6 months, 9 months, 1 year, and 1 ½ years each received 6 percent of the responses. Of the respondents that sought employment (n=11), 82 percent searched for 9 months or less. The average search time was 6 months.

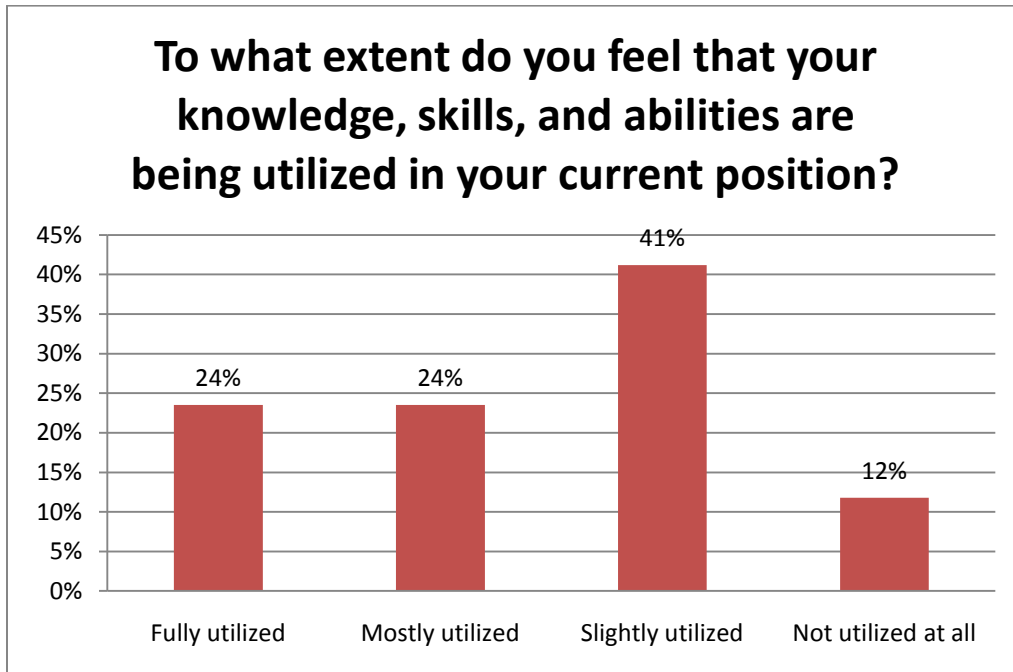
Graph 7, below, displays the differences in the wives' current earnings compared to their earnings of their last position at their last station. For 31 percent of respondents, their current earnings were \$10,001+ lower than their previous earnings. Conversely, 19 percent indicated that their current earnings were \$7,501-\$10,000 higher. Twenty-six percent of responses were divided evenly between \$0-\$2,500 higher and \$0-\$2,500 lower than previous earnings. Overall, the earnings of 44 percent were higher in their current position, while the earnings of 56 percent were lower. This could lead to the military wives earnings less annually and over their lifetime than civilian wives, which supported the findings of Hosek et al. discussed earlier (2002).

**Graph 7**

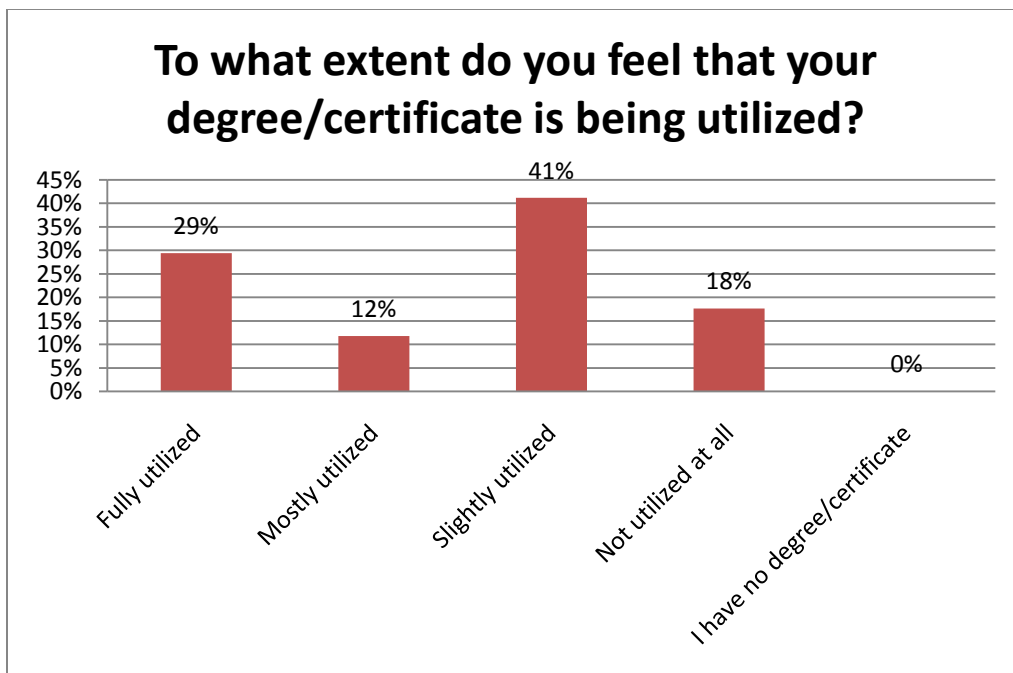


Below, Graph 8 shows the extent to which the respondents felt that their knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) were being utilized in their current positions. Forty-one percent felt that their KSAs were only slightly being utilized. Fully utilized and mostly utilized each received 24 percent of the responses, totaling 48 percent of responses. Twelve percent of respondents indicated that they felt that their KSAs were not being utilized at all in their current positions. Overall, 53 percent of respondents indicated that their KSAs were being utilized only slightly or not at all.

**Graph 8**



**Graph 9**

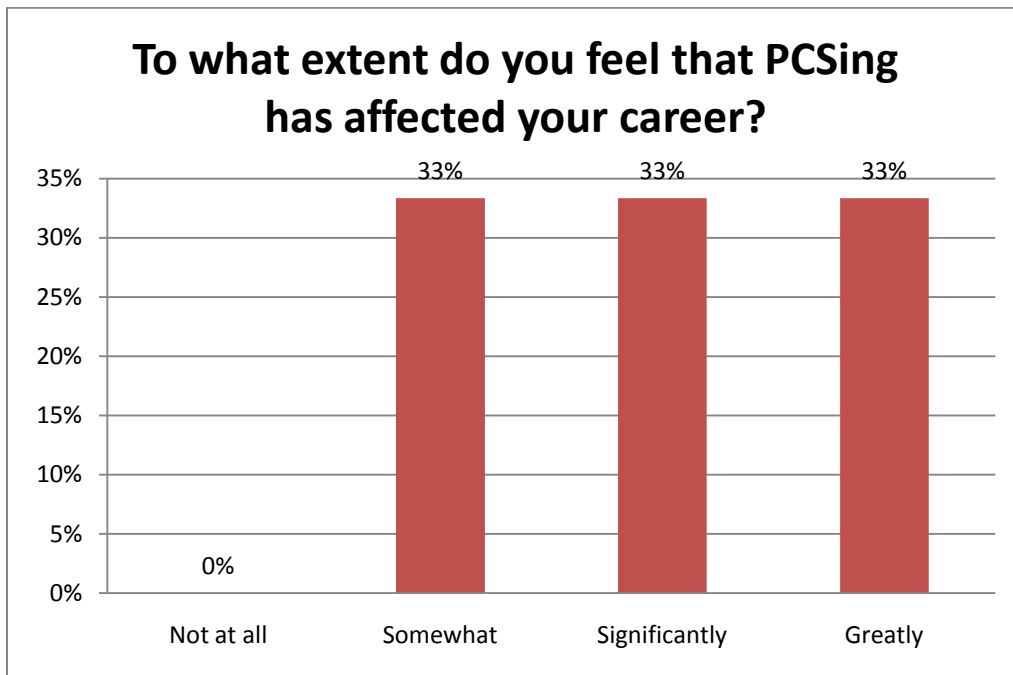


Graph 9 above presents the extent to which the respondents felt that their degree or certificate was being utilized in their current positions. Forty-one percent answered that they felt their degree or certificate was slightly utilized, while 29 percent felt that it was fully utilized. Eighteen percent answered that their degree or certificate was not being utilized at all, and 12 percent claimed that their degree or certificate was mostly utilized in their current position. Overall, 59 percent of respondents felt that their degree or certificate was only slightly being utilized or was not being utilized at all, while 41 percent felt that their degree or certificate was mostly or fully being utilized.

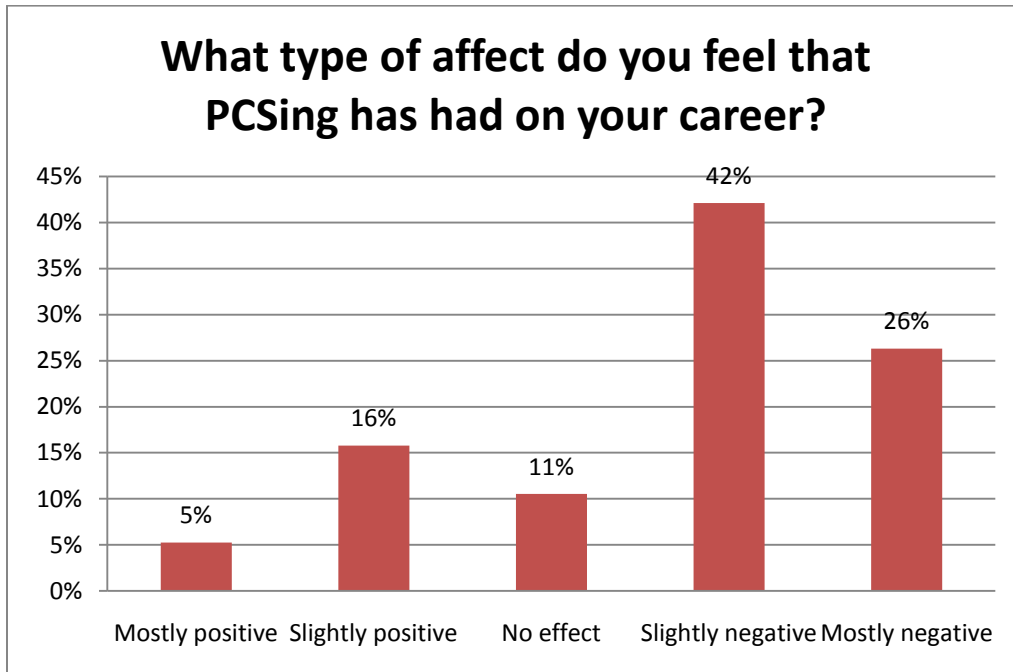
Below, Graphs 10 and 11 display the responses given for questions regarding the extent to which the military wives felt that PCSing had an effect on their careers and what type of an effect the PCSing has had. As shown in Graph 10, the responses to the question regarding the extent of the effect of PCSing on their careers were evenly distributed (33 percent each) among the answers of somewhat, significantly, and greatly. Graph 11 shows that 42 percent of respondents felt that PCSing had a slightly negative effect on their careers, and another 26 percent stated that the effect was mostly negative. Sixteen percent answered that the effect was slightly positive, 5 percent said mostly positive, and 11 percent said there was no effect at all. Overall, 68 percent responded that the effect of the PCSing was negative, compared to only 21 percent indicating that the effect was positive. The 11 percent that indicated that there was no effect

conflicts with the data from Graph 10, which shows that none of the respondents indicated that the PCSing had no effect at all on their careers.

**Graph 10**



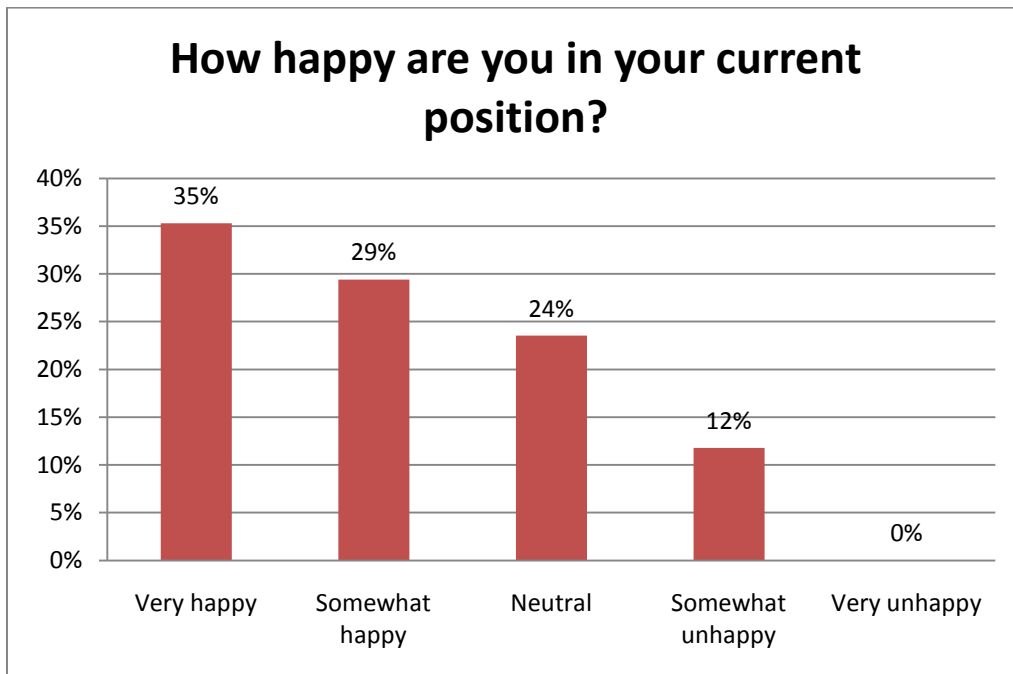
**Graph 11**



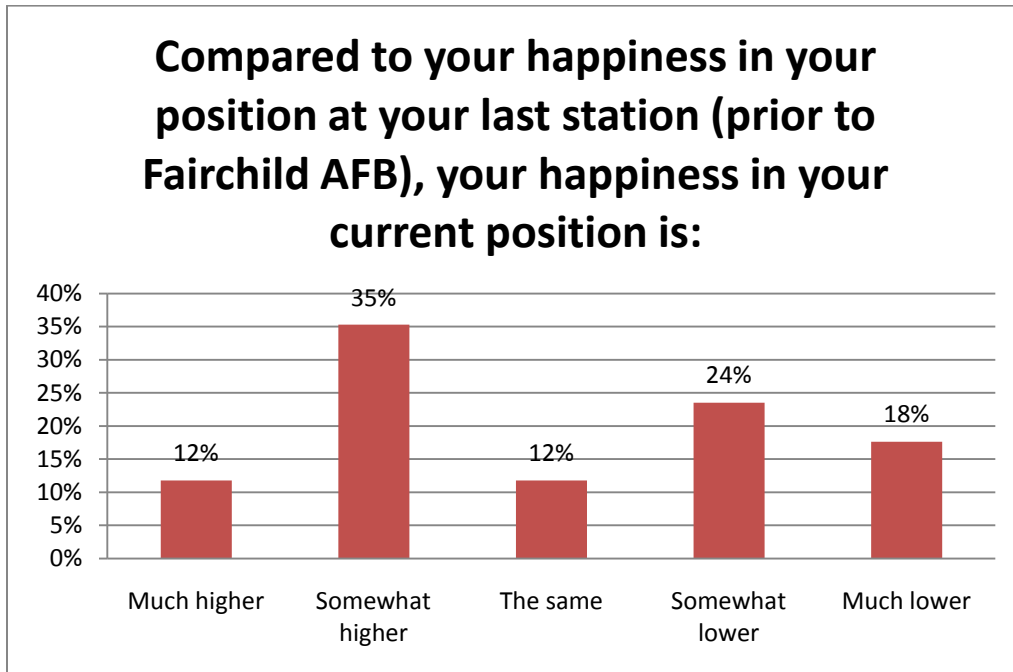
Graphs 12 and 13, below, present the data gathered from questions regarding the employment happiness of the military wives. Graph 12 shows the wives' happiness in their current position. Thirty-five percent indicated that they were very happy, 29 percent answered somewhat happy, 24 percent were neutral, and 12 percent were somewhat unhappy. Graph 13 illustrates the respondent's level of happiness in their current position compared to their happiness in their last position at their last station. It shows that the current happiness of 35 percent of respondents was somewhat higher, while 24 percent indicated that it was somewhat lower. Eighteen percent indicated that their current happiness was much lower, 12 percent said it was the same, and 12 percent said it was much

higher. Overall, 64 percent indicated that in their current position they are somewhat or very happy, while only 12 percent were unhappy. Additionally, 47 percent are happier in their current position than they were in their last position at their previous station, and 42 percent indicated that their current happiness level is lower.

**Graph 12**



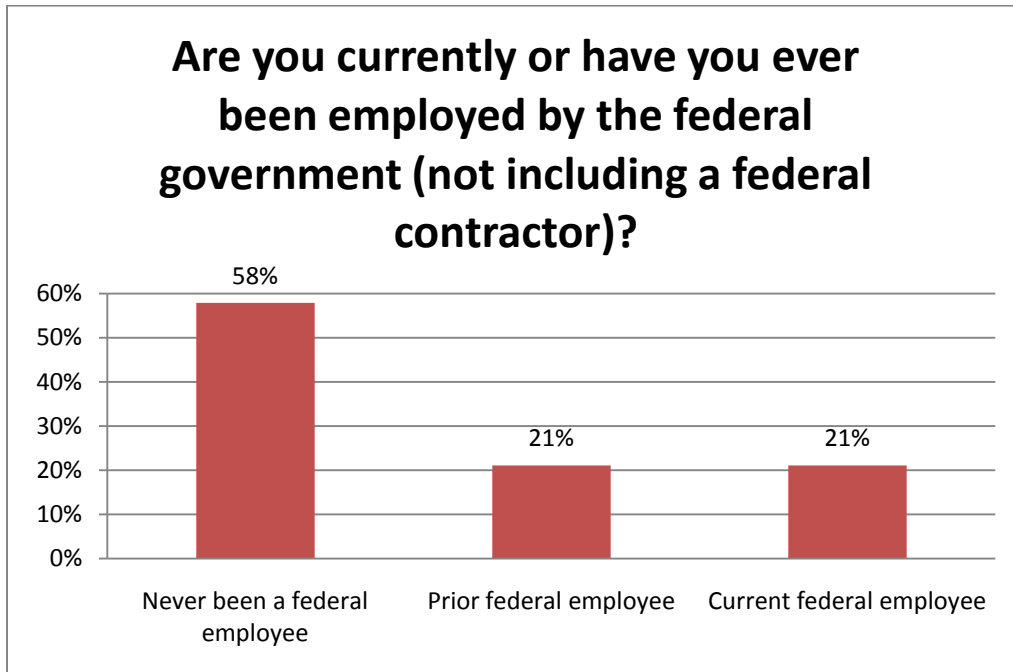
**Graph 13**



**Graph 14**



**Graph 15**



Graphs 14 and 15 above illustrate answers to questions regarding the wives' employment during their current marriage to the military member. Graph 14 displays the longest lengths of time that the wives have been employed by an organization/company since being married to their spouse. It shows that 32 percent had been employed for 3 years, 26 percent for 1 ½ years, 16 percent for 1 year, 11 percent for 2 ½ years, 11 percent for 9 months, and 5 percent for 6 months. Overall, 85 percent were employed for 1 year or more. Graph 15 illustrates the percentage of respondents who indicated that they were currently or had been employed by the federal government, not including as a federal contractor. The majority (58 percent) indicated that they had never been a federal

employee. Twenty-one percent indicated that they were currently a federal employee, and another 21 percent indicated that they were prior federal employees.

The null hypothesis for this study was that permanent changes of station (PCS) of military members and their families would have no effect on the careers of military wives. This hypothesis was not supported; however, no tests of significance were conducted.

The research hypothesis for this study was that permanent changes of station (PCS) of military members and their families will have a negative effect on the careers of military wives. The findings in this study were inconclusive, so the research hypothesis could not be supported nor rejected. The results from the survey questions regarding employment at the previous station were positive. Sixty-two percent of respondents were employed for 1 ½ years or more, with 39 percent employed for 2 ½ years or more (Graph 1). In addition, all of the respondents who were employed at their previous station searched for that position for 9 months or less, with 61 percent of respondents only searching for 3 months (Graph 2). Forty-four percent of respondents worked for only 1 organization at their previous station, while another 39 percent worked for 2 (Graph 3). The results from the survey questions regarding employment at the current station were mixed. Relatively positive results were gathered for the number of organizations worked for (Graph 4), the happiness level in their current

position (Graph 12), the happiness level in their current position compared to their position at their last station (Graph 13), and the longest length of time they have been employed by an organization since marrying their spouse (Graph 14). However, relatively negative results were gathered for the length of time employed by current employer (Graph 5); the comparison of current annual earnings to the annual earnings of their last position at their previous station (Graph 7); the extent to which they feel their knowledge, skills, and abilities are being utilized in their current position (Graph 8); the extent to which they feel their degree/certificate is being utilized (Graph 9); the extent to which they feel that PCSing has affected their careers (Graph 10); and the type of affect they feel that PCSing has had on their careers (Graph 11).

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the careers of military wives were affected by the PCSing that is required of their military husbands. Studies have found that the frequent relocation has a detrimental effect on their careers, and such findings are important today due to the current overseas contingency operations of the military and our country's current economic state.

The null hypothesis for this study was that permanent changes of station (PCS) of military members and their families would have no effect on the careers of military wives. This hypothesis was not supported; however, no tests of significance were conducted.

The research hypothesis for this study was that permanent changes of station (PCS) of military members and their families will have a negative effect on the careers of military wives. This study's findings were inconclusive, so the research hypothesis could not be supported nor rejected. The results from the survey questions regarding employment at the previous station were positive. However, the results from the survey questions regarding employment at the current station were mixed.

This study's findings regarding the education level of military wives supported those of Payne et al. (1992), which found that over 50 percent of

military wives had at least some college education. In this study, 100 percent of respondents had at least some college education.

There was an interesting contradiction in the survey results. While 11 percent of respondents indicated in question 16 that they felt that PCSing hadn't affected their careers (Graph 11), none of the respondents indicated in question 15 that the PCSing had no effect at all on their careers (Graph 10). The reason for this contradiction is unknown, but the wording of the questions may have been misinterpreted by some respondents.

Another interesting observation relates to some of the more subjective survey questions. Sixty-six percent of the respondents felt that PCSing had significantly or greatly affected their careers, and 68 percent felt that the effect was either slightly or mostly negative. However, 64 percent of respondents indicated that they were either somewhat or very happy in their current positions, and 47 percent indicated that their happiness in their current position is either somewhat or much higher than their happiness in their position at their previous station. While the exact reasoning for this is unknown, it could be due to an undesirable position held at their previous station.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While this study provided some useful information, it also had some limitations. One limitation was the number of wives who were able to access the survey due to known email addresses. In addition, the survey was held to 21

questions in an effort to elicit responses, but many more questions could have been asked, especially regarding training and the actual annual earnings amount, instead of simply a comparison to the previous earnings amount. This study did not compare responses of military wives to responses from a control group of working women who are not required to relocate often with their husbands, which could have provided more insight as to the effects of PCSing on their careers. In addition, results could be affected by the ability of the wives to recall such things as their happiness level or earnings amount at a previous location, especially if their most recent PCS occurred several years ago. Husbands of female military members were not included in this survey, because research is very limited in this area and female military members are still greatly outnumbered by male members.

### **Implications for Further Research**

It may be beneficial to conduct longitudinal studies in the future to determine the effects of PCSing on the military wife's career over the length of her husband's military career. However, this could be very difficult due to their frequent relocations. In addition, a study that compares survey results from military wives to those of civilian wives could shed more light on possible differences. Since more females are now joining the military, research on the effects of PCSing on the careers of military husbands would be beneficial. Such

research could then be compared to the research regarding the effects of PCSing on the careers of military wives to see if the effects were similar.

The research is a clear indication that the federal government should take steps to enhance the employment options available to military wives. This could be done through communication and cooperation with local businesses to encourage them to employ military wives through such incentives as tax credits and training assistance. While the federal government has taken some small steps toward making federal employment easier to apply for and obtain for all military wives in the way of policies, its attention now needs to turn to the implementation of those policies. As an extension, an overhaul of the online job posting program and application process may make civil service employment easier for military wives to attain, as the current system is not user-friendly. These small but important changes could have a great deal of effect on the level of satisfaction that military wives have for the military way of life, which may encourage them to support the continued military career aspirations of their husbands. The more experienced military members our country is able to retain, the better for our national defense and way of life.

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## Appendix A

### Survey

#### Demographics

1. Age:

18 – 22

23 – 27

28 – 32

33 – 37

38+

2. Education (highest level attained):

High school diploma or GED

Some college

Associate's degree

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctorate

3. How long have you been in your current marriage?

0 – 2 years

3 – 6 years

7 – 10 years

11 – 15 years

16+ years

4. How long has your husband been in the military?

0 – 2 years

3 – 6 years

7 – 10 years

11 – 15 years

16 – 20 years

20+ years

5. Husband:

Officer

Enlisted

**Prior Assignment**

6. On your last assignment (prior to Fairchild AFB), how long were you employed?

- 3 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 1 year
- 1.5 years
- 2 years
- 2.5 years
- 3+ years
- Not employed

7. How long did it take you to find that position?

- Transferred
- 3 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 1 year
- 1.5 years
- 2+ years
- Not employed

8. How many organizations/companies did you work for at your previous station?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- More than 5

**Fairchild AFB**

9. How long ago was your PCS to Fairchild AFB?

- 3 months
- 6 months
- 9 months

- 1 year
- 1.5 years
- 2 years
- 2.5 years
- 3+ years

10. How long have you been employed with your current employer?

- 3 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 1 year
- 1.5 years
- 2 years
- 2.5 years
- 3+ years
- Not currently employed
- Not seeking employment

11. How long did your job search last (or has it lasted, if it is ongoing)?

- 3 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 1 year
- 1.5 years
- 2 years
- 2.5 years
- 3+ years
- Not seeking employment

12. How do your current annual earnings compare to the annual earnings of your last position at your last station (prior to Fairchild AFB)?

- \$10,001+ higher
- \$7,501 – \$10,000 higher
- \$5,001 – \$7,500 higher
- \$2,501 – \$5,000 higher
- \$0 – \$2,500 higher
- \$0 – \$2,500 lower
- \$2,501 – \$5,000 lower

- \$5,001 – \$7,500 lower
- \$7,501 – \$10,000 lower
- \$10,001+ lower

13. To what extent do you feel that your knowledge, skills, and abilities are being utilized in your current position?

- Fully utilized
- Mostly utilized
- Slightly utilized
- Not utilized at all

14. To what extent do you feel that your degree/certificate is being utilized?

- Fully utilized
- Mostly utilized
- Slightly utilized
- Not utilized at all
- I have no degree/certificate

15. To what extent do you feel that PCSing has affected your career?

- Not at all
- Somewhat
- Significantly
- Greatly

16. What type of affect do you feel that PCSing has had on your career?

- Mostly positive
- Slightly positive
- No effect
- Slightly negative
- Mostly negative

17. How happy are you in your current position?

- Very happy
- Somewhat happy
- Neutral
- Somewhat unhappy
- Very unhappy

18. Compared to your happiness in your position at your last station (prior to Fairchild AFB), your happiness in your current position is:

- Much higher
- Somewhat higher
- The same
- Somewhat lower
- Much lower

19. How many organizations/companies have you worked for while stationed at Fairchild AFB?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- More than 5

**Overall**

20. What is the longest amount of time that you have been employed by a company/organization since being married to your spouse?

- 3 months or less
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 1 year
- 1.5 years
- 2 years
- 2.5 years
- 3 years
- More than 3 years

21. Are you currently or have you ever been employed by the federal government (not including a federal contractor)?

- Never been a federal employee
- Prior federal employee
- Current federal employee

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent

You are being asked to complete a survey regarding what effects, if any, military permanent changes of station (PCS) have on the careers of military wives.

The 21 question survey will take approximately 5 – 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time during completion of the survey.

All answers will remain confidential, as only my instructor and I will see them. You will not be asked to provide your name or any other identifying information on any form other than this one. The survey form will be numbered and kept separate from this consent form.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Ashley Savage  
509-981-9992  
[ashleysavage73@webster.edu](mailto:ashleysavage73@webster.edu)

If you would like to read the results of this study, you may do so at the following:

Webster University  
Fairchild AFB Extended Campus  
6 W. Castle Street, Room 214  
Fairchild AFB, WA 99011

**AUTHORIZATION:** I agree to participate in this study. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time during completion of the survey.

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C**

### **Survey Comments**

The following are comments, broken down by question, that some of the respondents wrote in next to some survey questions or at the end of the survey.

Of the 18 respondents, seven wrote in comments.

#### Survey Question 6

- No prior assignment, FAFB is our first base.
- I was engaged and lived in a different city during my husband's last assignment and it was easier for me to get a job there because I had connections. It was close to home. I think this makes a difference. This is my first PCS assignment as a spouse.
- I was employed for 3 years before getting married. Fairchild was our first assignment.

#### Survey Question 11

- Originally sought employment but no longer am. (about 3 months of looking)

#### Survey Question 12

- Past base – Independent contracting; Current base – salaried position
- Because I'm now a stay at home mom (after indicating that she is currently making \$10,001+ lower than at the previous station)

### Survey Question 15

- As an educator, there are no job guarantees as we move. In CO I was tenured, so having to move has caused me to apply for a job every year. Spokane has very limited numbers of continuing contracts, so I have been unemployed at the end of each school year. I have been blessed and lucky to get a new teaching position each year.

### Survey Question 16

- In that because we move I decided to go back to school online (after indicating that the effect PCSing has had on her career is slightly positive). I don't have the opportunity to "climb the ladder" persay (sic) in one company (after indicating that the effect was also slightly negative).

### End of Survey

- Comments:
  - Need flex-time, job share, part-time options
  - Need employment that challenges spouses (goal oriented, etc.)
  - Need internship opportunities (short time employment, but good networking)
  - Need more autonomy – able to work independently of AD spouse
- Notes: My husband and I married the weekend after our college graduation. He entered active duty, and fulfilled requirements for SUPT (Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training). However this has allowed us

to “visit” Maxwell, Tyndall, Pueblo, Columbus, Altus, and finally Fairchild in under 3 years. I do not believe this is the normal routine, and expect things to change now that he is “done” with training.