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A socio-economic study of the marital status of teachers in Terre Haute and Vigo County

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A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY OF THE MARITAL STATUS OF TEACHERS
IN TERRE HAUTE AND VIGO COUNTY

by

H. W. Fontaine

Contributions of the Graduate School
Indiana State Teachers College
Number 234

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
in Education

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"Prima societas in ipso conjugio est;
proxima in libris; deinde una domus,
communia omnia."

The first bond of society is marriage; the
next our children; then the whole family
and all things in common.

Cicero.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It would be impossible to list the names of all those who have rendered assistance in the making of this study. The writer wishes, nevertheless, to extend due acknowledgment to all persons, known and unknown, who have in any way done so.

The committee was composed of J. R. Shannon, chairman, E. E. Ramsey and V. Dewey Annakin. To these men much credit is due for the success of this study.

Infinite appreciation is extended to City Superintendent George C. Carroll and County Superintendent Harold Moore and their respective staffs whose cooperation made this study possible.

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A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY OF THE MARITAL STATUS OF TEACHERS
IN TERRE HAUTE AND VIGO COUNTY

I. INTRODUCTION

A. GENERAL.

Besides meeting the requirements for a graduate degree, a thesis should be of some intrinsic value. It is the sincere hope of the writer that this study will have some such value. If this study will but cause a small ripple in the sea of selfsatisfaction surrounding this subject, the writer will have been sufficiently repaid and the study will not have been in vain.

1. Selection of the Subject. As a preliminary step in the selection of a subject, the writer carefully retraced his own education, picking out the flaws and mistakes and listing them under general terms. After listing the problems, the criteria were set by which the final selection should be made. These criteria were: (1) the frequency of the problem, (2) the seriousness of it, and (3) the bearing of it on modern society.

By the application of the chosen criteria to the difficulties, and using a process of elimination, those problems of a socio-economic nature remained as obviously being the most difficult to solve, and about which there was considerable available data. The subject selected therefore, was:

A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY OF THE MARITAL STATUS OF TEACHERS IN

TERRE HAUTE AND VIGO COUNTY.

2. Justification of the Study. During an early conference, the writer was asked to justify the study. In attempting to do so, much discussion pro and con took place, which, in itself, designated the field as one open to great possibilities. This problem, dealing as it does with human nature, is exceedingly difficult to handle. In the early stages, the individuals and groups involved were somewhat suspicious of the intent of the study, but careful explanation eventually dispelled these fears. Furthermore, there is precious little literature available which is of real value in solving this problem.

3. The Problem. Those individuals who have the great responsibility of guiding our youth have undoubtedly given some thought to this problem and have reached some very definite conclusions which may or may not be valid. Are these opinions based upon scientific facts or are they based upon personal views and possible personal benefits to be gained? Have the views of the young people been taken into consideration? Have the effects upon the social and economic world been considered? It is the aim of the writer to find, as nearly as is possible from the available data, just what the situation really is and to make suggestions for improvement if at all possible.

4. Method of Research. In order to obtain a more accurate supply of data, the writer refrained from the use of the questionnaire and made a direct study of the situation

instead. By the utilization of all available pertinent files of the county and city superintendents, the county and city records, and personal interviews with the people actually involved in the question, the writer is of the opinion that a comparatively valid amount of data has been gathered. It is admitted at once that there are some flaws in this method of research, but that point will be discussed in a later connection.

5. Planning the Attack. The next logical step was to plan the attack in order to obtain the answers to the problem questions. The questions which the writer desired to have answered in the light of the problem were:

1. How many married women teachers are employed in the range of this study?
2. What are the occupations of their husbands?
3. Do married women teachers have families?
4. How do the salaries of married men, single men, single women and married women compare?
5. How do the families of men teachers whose wives work outside of the home compare with the families of those whose wives do not?
6. What are the views of the husbands of the teachers?
7. Why do the married women continue to teach?
8. How many known teachers in the range of this study are unemployed?

6. Making the Attack. In order to circumvent any claims of "foul play" on either side, the writer had at

least one witness to accompany him on each visit, or, if this was impossible, a signed statement from the person interviewed was obtained. Special effort was made to eliminate all personal views and to this end and to make conditions as nearly uniform as possible, a short explanation was made which briefly explained the purpose of the investigation, asked for full and sincere cooperation, and pledged the security of the individual from any misuse of the data.¹

7. The Situation. Approximately five months were used in making a tabulation of the data, interviewing prominent and influential people, interviewing those interested or involved in the study, and in various conferences with administrative officials of several schools. After dispelling a few minor suspicions in the minds of some of the individuals involved, the entire matter progressed smoothly. With only one or two exceptions, the writer was met with nothing but courtesy, and sincere cooperation was accorded him whenever humanly possible. Since this study was made to include only the Terre Haute and Vigo County school systems, it would appear that the field is not representative. However, this is not the case as the pursuit of all the material for one case sometimes involves dozens of other individuals and several

¹See Appendix A, page for this statement.

localities. For this reason it would be impractical to attempt to limit the study to just the territory involved. The study was made on the basis of the total teacher strength of Terre Haute and Vigo County which is 642.

8. The Method. In practically every survey that has been made, there has been some one or some group who criticize either constructively or destructively in order to put the ensuing thesis in its best form and to insure validity, if at all possible. The writer's efforts have not been an exception to this rule. It is his desire only to present his reasons for using such a method and the passing of judgment will rest with the reader. The records of the civil city and county and those of the school systems were used for two reasons: (1) they were the best places to find the desired material; and (2) they are records which are checked and rechecked and their contents are, therefore, unusually valid. The interviews with the persons involved (both husband and wife) and interviews with those who are indirectly involved or not concerned at all were used in order to get the views of people from various angles. Every effort was put forward to keep the study fair and to do this, the writer refrained from interviewing either friends whose opinions were previously known or acquaintances whose opinions were only suspected. No statements were received from any other than practically absolute strangers.

9. Defense and Explanation. The writer has been accused, both bluntly and subtly, of evading the really im-

portant issue--the comparative efficiency of married and unmarried teachers. It is his desire to state definitely that the matter of efficiency is not pertinent to this question. This study is one of a sociological and economic nature meant to obtain data which may eventually lead to the correction of an unusual situation, not an agitating masterpiece, not the ultimate result of fancy mental gymnastics of a biased mind. Many men of great knowledge and understanding have refused to undertake the tremendous task of rating efficiency. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

B. PROBLEMS INVOLVED.

The problem questions of this study will possibly appear impertinent as regarding the subject of the study. In this chapter, it is the purpose of the writer to present the problem questions and explain them in the relation to the study proper. The problem questions and the relation of each to the study follow:

1. How many married women teachers are employed in the range of this study? The answering of this question will give the writer a foundation upon which to build the remainder of the study.
2. What are the occupations of their husbands?

This question is to aid in determining whether or not the husband is earning a suitable living, or if it is necessary for the wife to be employed.

3. Do married women teachers have families?

The answering of this question will be a great aid in arriving at some conclusion concerning the social aspect of the study.

4. How do the salaries of married men, unmarried men, unmarried women and married women compare? This question is closely related to the economic aspect of the study.

5. How do the families of men teachers whose wives are employed outside of the home, compare with those whose wives do not? Upon the answers to this question hang the ultimate conclusions of a social nature.

6. What are the attitudes of the husbands of the teachers, favorable or unfavorable? This question is used in order to discover the attitudes of the husband-- to discover whether the current flair for feminine industrialization is sanctioned by the "wage earning" half of the home.

7. Why do married women continue to teach?

This may be termed a curiosity question but it is also used in order to get the attitudes of the teachers involved.

8. How many known teachers in the range of this study are unemployed? This question serves to bring about a relationship between the number of unemployed teachers and the number of families with two salaries.

II. THE INVESTIGATION.

A. STATISTICAL.

1. General. The administrative department of every school system keeps records of the staff of teachers; license, salary, experience, etc. It was from these records that the bulk of the information was gathered.

2. Schools Included. This study embraces all the schools of Terre Haute and Vigo County, both elementary and secondary, white and negro. These schools in the county were:

1 Black Hawk	15 Hutton	28 Rankin
2 Bolton	16 Jackson Hill	29 Riley
3 Burnett	17 Lewis	30 Sandford
4 Concannon	18 Libertyville	31 Seelyville
5 District Number 3	19 Maple Avenue	32 Shanks
6 District Number 8	20 Maryland	33 Shepards
7 Fairview	21 Nevins	34 Shepardsville
8 Fayette	22 Otter Creek	35 Sugar Grove
9 Fort Harrison	23 Petri	36 Taylorville
10 Glenn	24 Pimento	37 Thornton
11 Glenn Home	25 Pittinger	38 Toadhop
12 Hays	26 Prairie Creek	39 Weldele
13 Highland	27 Prairieton	40 Whitcomb Heights
14 Honey Creek		41 Youngstown

The schools in the city were:

1 Collett	4 Davis Park	7 Fairview
2 Crawford	5 Deming	8 Garfield
3 Cruft	6 Fairbanks	9 Gerstmeyer

10 Greenwood	15 Montrose	19 Thompson
11 Lange	16 Rea	20 Warren
12 Lincoln	17 Sandison	21 Washington
13 McKeen	18 Sarah Scott	22 Wiley
14 McLean		23 Woodrow Wilson

3. Procedure. The acquired data of a statistical nature were thrown into frequency tables. Two tables were made for each aspect of the study--the social, and the economic -- one dealing with the masculine and the other with the feminine element. From these tables the median points were found when necessary for clarity.

Table I shows the number of married women teachers and records the occupation of their husbands.

Table II shows the number of married men teachers and lists the occupation of their wives.

Table III shows the size of the families of married women teachers and also records the occupation of their husbands.

Table IV shows the size of the families of married men teachers and also records the occupation of their wives.

TABLE I
NUMBER OF MARRIED WOMEN TEACHERS AND THE
OCCUPATIONS OF THEIR HUSBANDS

Occupation of Husband	Vigo County	Terre Haute	Total
1. Labor	15	1	16
2. Clerical	5	9	14
3. Salesman	5	7	12
4. Teachers	1	9	10
5. Contractor and Engineer	2	6	8
6. Business Operators	6	1	7
7. Political	3	2	5
8. Professional	1	3	4
9. Retired	0	1	1
10. Unemployed	3	2	5
11. Others	1	1	2
Total	42	42	84

Table I brings out several noteworthy facts. Primarily, it shows that, in only 5 cases out of a total of 84, or 5.95 per cent of the cases, where the married women teaches, there is no other means of support. Table I also brings out the astounding fact that three of the four leading occupations of the husbands are "white collar" positions, totalling 36, which is 42.83 per cent of the total. This table shows also that 93.75 per cent of the laborers are the husbands of the teachers employed in the rural schools while 69.44 per cent of those teachers employed in the above mentioned "white collar" jobs are husbands of teachers employed in the city system.

TABLE II
NUMBER OF MARRIED MEN TEACHERS AND THE
OCCUPATIONS OF THEIR WIVES

Occupation of Wife	Vigo County	Terre Haute	Total
1. Housewife	29	47	76
2. Clerical	2	3	5
3. Teachers	1	4	5
4. Professional	0	1	1
5. Others	0	1	1
Total	32	56*	88

*One teacher a widower and therefore omitted from the tabulation.

Table II shows a peculiar reversal of the results found in Table I. Table II indicates that 76 out of 88, or 86.36 per cent of the total number of cases, where the husband is employed as a teacher, the wife is a housewife. The generality of this is impressed by the fact that this is true in 90.62 per cent of the cases of the county and 83.93 per cent of the cases of the city.

TABLE III
FAMILIES OF MARRIED WOMEN TEACHERS
AND OCCUPATIONS OF HUSBANDS

Husband's Occupations	Vigo County		Terre Haute		Total
	With	Without	With	Without	
1. Labor	4	11	0	1	16
2. Clerical	1	4	0	9	14
3. Salesman	1	4	2	5	12
4. Teacher	0	1	4	5	10
5. Contractor and Engineer	0	2	0	6	8
6. Business Operators	1	5	0	1	7
7. Political	2	1	0	2	5
8. Professional	0	1	2	1	4
9. Retired	0	0	1	0	1
10. Unemployed	1	2	0	2	5
11. Others	0	1	0	1	2
Total	10	32	9	33	84

Table III shows that only 19 out of 84, or 22.61 per cent of the married women teachers have families. It also shows that only 8 of the 36 in the "white collar" group previously mentioned have families. This is 22.22 per cent and compares rather oddly with the 25 per cent of the laborer group which supports a family.

TABLE IV
FAMILIES OF MARRIED MEN TEACHERS
AND THE OCCUPATIONS OF WIVES

	<u>Vigo County</u>		<u>Terre Haute</u>		Total
	With	Without	With	Without	
Employed	0	3	3	6	12
Housewife	25	4	38	10	77
Total	25*	7	41	16	89

*One case in which the wife is deceased is listed under this group.

Table IV shows that in 81.81 per cent of the cases where the wife is a housewife there are children while in only 25 per cent of the cases where employed is this true.

B. STATEMENTS.

1. General. The statements used in this section were obtained from three sources: (1) the teachers involved or their families, (2) individuals not personally involved, and (3) statements found in previous studies.

2. Previous Studies. Commenting upon the professor of education from the University of Cincinnati, who said that there were "too many unhappy old maids" teaching school, the Butte (Montana) Post of July 17, 1930, says:

"That man got himself into a peck of trouble by making such a remark before 500 teachers. Not only did one member of the audience rise to the immediate defense of the unmarried, but a reporter took the question to the superintendent of a large school system. His views of the situation were all on the teachers' side. He said that they are as intellectually active as women in any other group--bookkeepers, executives, or even mothers. They go to summer school, carry extension courses, or travel to broaden their outlook educationally, socially and culturally. While there are examples to illustrate the professor's statement, it is also true that there are misfits in every walk of life. In the school room, there should be a love for the job, if the teacher, masculine or feminine, is to succeed. Fortunately, that is the more usual case."

In 1929, the school board of Monroe County, Tennessee, startled the educational world by a very unusual procedure. Many blue laws and regulations have been passed regarding teachers, but this Tennessee board went on record as passing the bluest of them all. A resolution had been introduced to

dismiss married women teachers at the end of the year. The board consisted of 4 men and 1 woman and a lively debate followed. The vote stood: 2 for; 2 against; and the balance of power was held by the woman! Seizing the opportune moment, she amended the resolution to include married men teachers!

TABLE V
COMMON LANGUAGE FREQUENCY TABLE
OF STATEMENTS OBTAINED

Interpretation	Frequency				Total
	Men Involved	Women Involved	Men Uninvolved	Women Uninvolved	
1. Married women should not be employed, as it tends to destroy the home.	10	1	6	7	24
2. Married women should not be discriminated against under any circumstances.	1	13	2	1	17
3. Married women should never be employed under any circumstances.	3	0	7	4	14
4. The employment of a married woman should only be temporary.	4	2	0	1	7
5. Married woman must be employed in order to maintain a home.	0	4	1	1	6
6. The home and family will not permit a career.	1	0	1	2	4
7. A career will not permit a family.	0	3	0	1	4
8. Neutral	5	0	1	2	8
Totals	24	23	18	19	84

3. Statements Received. As stated previously, the writer obtained signed statements from 84 individuals, 47 of whom were involved personally, while the remainder were not vitally interested in the question. Table V is a computation of the frequency in "common language" terms. This "common language" contains the writer's interpretation of the various statements received. No two statements were identical, although the meanings in many cases were the same. By means of the "common language" table, the writer has been able to put comparable points together, even when stated in varied terminology.

Typical statements listed under each point made in Table V follow. This will enable the reader to understand the purpose behind such a procedure.

(1) Married women should not be employed, as it tends to destroy the home.

(a) A prominent minister says, "There are altogether too many married women in the teaching profession today in this country. This tendency is generally detrimental to home building and the home is one of the stable institutions upon which the welfare of the future of our government depends."

(b) Then there is the classical statement which the writer received from a man who appeared to be somewhat embittered concerning the entire problem. He said, "Son, here's my advice to a single man: 'Don't ever marry a damned school teacher, you just can't live with them'."

(2) Married women should not be discriminated against

under any circumstances.

(a) A local salesman said, "Marriage is not an offense--no penalties other than those inherent in the bond should be imposed by society or its agent. Boards of education have no duties pertaining to such social problems as marriage unless it be to accept it and abide by it as a God-given institution so far unexcelled for the preservation of the race and the protection of childhood."

(b) These are the words of a Vigo County political worker, "Theoretically the best prepared teacher should always be selected regardless of her marital state, but due to the pull which married women often have in their own communities through their own relatives, the church, the lodge, and the women's clubs, she forces the hand of the management and takes the position."

(3) Married women should never be employed under any circumstances.

(a) "With the tremendous amount of unemployment existing we should not have one married teacher in this broad land of ours whose husband is also making a living wage. It cannot be defended at all."¹

(b) "If all married women now employed whose husbands are earning a living would stay at home, America's unemployment problem would be solved. Why have 10,000,000 homes with two salaries, and 10,000,000 men out of work?"²

¹Banker

²Manufacturer

(4) The employment of a married woman should only be temporary.

(a) "Neither my husband nor myself approve of married women being employed but I must hold my job to make both ends meet."¹

(b) "I married to have a family but conditions will not permit it. I have never given up hope yet."¹

(5) Married women must be employed in order to maintain a home.

(a) "In these economic times it is absolutely necessary for both the husband and wife to work. If they don't, they have a family and starve. If they do, they don't have a family, but they manage to live comfortably."²

(6) The home and the family will not permit a career.

(a) "I am happy in my home. Need I say more?"³

(b) "Any woman who has a family has all she can do. My boys are my career. I wouldn't change places with any woman."³

(7) A career will not permit a family.

(a) "I wouldn't know what to do with myself if I didn't have a job. I can't imagine myself with a family."⁴

¹Employed women

²Husband of a teacher

³Wives of teachers

⁴Employed woman

(8) Neutral.

(a) "My wife keeps the home and teaches equally well. I have no objection to that."¹

From the findings of Table V, the following high points are noteworthy. It shows that 14 out of 38, or 31.58 per cent of the women interviewed, do not believe that the "woman's place is in the home". It shows that 54.84 per cent of those interviewed (listed under points one and two in the table) favored the employment of women teachers, but it also showed that 76.24 per cent of the total of this group was made up of employed women. It also presents the astounding fact that, of all those opposed to the employment of married women, 66.67 per cent were men. This compares rather oddly with the fact that 4 women could not let a family interfere with their career while not one man took this view. The last fact which is rather unusual is the fact that of the 8 of a neutral frame of mind 6 were men.

The general conclusion drawn from this table is that the men show a more definite tendency to look forward to a home and family than do the women.

¹Husband of a teacher

III. CONCLUSIONS.

A. SUMMARY.

1. The current economic system of the educational world is unsatisfactory, bringing about a disintegration of the family.
2. The employment of married women in the educational field tends to reduce the size of the family.
3. It is not only the need for financial aid, but also the desire for a career and independence which motivates married women to teach.
4. The husbands of employed women do not sanction the action of their wives.
5. The husbands of teachers employed in the city systems hold better positions than the husbands of the teachers in the rural systems.
6. Employed married women care very little for a home.

IV. APPENDIX

A. FORM OF EXPLANATION.

This study is being made as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Science degree in education from Indiana State Teachers College.

The investigator would appreciate the cooperation of all those who, in any manner, could be of any assistance in making this study possible.

The investigator pledges that none of the material obtained will be used in any manner which will create misunderstandings of any sort, and that all names which are obtained will be omitted from this thesis proper.

Furthermore, the investigator pledges that all material will be treated as private property and no contributor's name will be made public without his or her written consent.