

An Untraditional Life: Male Spouses of Female Military Personnel

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(ABSTRACT)

Military wives continue to represent the majority of military spouses and as a result, most research on military spouses has focused exclusively on them. Utilizing data from the 1999 Survey of Active Duty Spouses, one goal of this study was to address this gap in the literature by examining how male and female military spouses differ. The results indicated that military husbands were more likely to have military experience themselves than military wives. Military husbands were also more likely to be older than female spouses and less likely to have children. Men were also more likely to indicate that their employment was not a concern during the family's last permanent change of station move.

The primary goal of this study was to examine the influence of gender on military spouses' support for their active duty spouses' retention in the U.S. Military. Previous research has indicated that spousal support plays an important role in military personnel's retention decisions. Other factors that were considered for their influence on spouse support for retention included age, race/ethnicity, education, children, personal military experience, employment concerns during the family's last move, the hours worked per week by the active duty spouse, the rank of the active duty spouse, and the military spouse's satisfaction with the military lifestyle. The results of this regression analysis indicated that military husbands are less supportive of their active duty spouses' retention than military wives. Satisfaction with the military lifestyle was found to be the most significant predictor of military spouses' support for their active duty spouses' retention in the U.S. Military. Of the other factors, age, race/ethnicity, education, the hours worked per week by the active duty spouse, and the presence of children in the family were also found to be significant predictors of spouse support for retention.

As satisfaction with the military lifestyle was demonstrated to be a significant influence on spouse support for retention, this study also involved an examination of gender differences in satisfaction with the military lifestyle. Gender was not found to be a significant influence on satisfaction with the military lifestyle. Factors that were found to significantly influence satisfaction included the military spouse's age, race/ethnicity, concerns about employment, hours worked per week by the active duty spouse and the rank of the active duty spouse. Concerns about employment during the family's last move and the hours worked per week by the active duty spouse were both found to have a negative influence on military spouses' satisfaction with the military lifestyle.

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