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Introduction

I have chosen the subject area of family an employment for my coursework.

The reason I have chosen this particular area of sociology is because due to equality in our current society, women are now having to rethink very carefully about what their priorities are in their life, children or their career?

These issues are important in Britain because women are now getting much better job opportunities and are forced into having less time away from the workplace, e.g. maternity leave.



Hypothesis

My hypothesis is that I predict that women will chose to have an established career before they start to think about starting a family.

Aims

The three aims of my coursework will be:

- *To find out whether or not women are having children later on in life.*
- *To see if it is mostly middle-class women who are being pressurised into having children later in life*
- *To find out if a woman's main priority in life is, now, their careers*

Research

I will use primary research to find out if women are choosing to have a career before starting a family and what type of job their have.

I will prove my hypothesis by completing primary research such as questionnaires to women.

I will use secondary research to find out if a woman's priorities have changed over the years.

I will look at sociologists who have completed work that is on the same topic as mine such as interviews with women on careers and the family.

I will define key sociological concepts such as family morals and sexism in careers.

Methodology

Having decided upon my research topic and hypothesis, the next stage of my coursework is to think about how I might conduct my primary research. There are several different methods I could use and part of my decision is to what type of data I want to collect.

There are two different types of data:

Quantitative: data in the form of numbers and statistics e.g. census data.

Qualitative: data in the form of a description rather than numbers e.g.

Diaries

Because of the topic of my research I have decided that I primarily want to collect qualitative data. This is because I need to know people's opinions on the subject and their reasons rather than just their opinions.

There are two main methods that I could use: interviews and questionnaires.

Interviews are meetings in which you are asked questions directly, face to face or by telephone.

They can be used to collect quantitative data if the questions used are closed questions. These are questions that only have a short answer e.g. yes or no. If the questions are open they collect qualitative data. Open questions are questions in which they have to write a reason.

The advantages of using an interview would be:

- That the interviewer is able to explain the questions and check the answers.
- There is a higher response rate than questionnaires.
- Respondents are able to put answers in their own words
- Have a high validity
- Can ask about more personal and difficult topics.

The disadvantages would therefore be:

- Needs considerable skills in interviewer
- Interview bias may affect answers
- Problem of how to record answers
- Takes a long time, so can not interview large numbers
- Cannot be checked for reliability.

The other option is to do a questionnaire. These can also be used to collect qualitative and quantitative data depending on the type of questions used.

Questionnaires can either be completed by the respondent or filled out by me the researcher.

The advantages of using a questionnaire are:

- Would have a high reliability rate
- Respondents can not be influenced in any way
- Can be distributed to a large population at any one time
- They are cheap to create

However there are also several disadvantages to consider:

- It has a very low validity rate
- They have a very low response rate.

Having fully considered these options I have decided to conduct a questionnaire. I feel that this would be the best for my chosen topic because it means I am able to distribute them to a large population quickly.

Next I need to think about how I will find my subjects. I need to select a representative sample. This means that I need to collect information from a range of ages, ethnic groups and both sexes. I will do this by distributing my pilot study to my friends and family at first to see if I get the right response, then I will distribute the questionnaires on to the street within a particular area.



Secondary research

To work out key issues and define relevant sociological words I will use sociological textbooks such as sociology in focus by Taylor and GCSE sociology by Blundell

These will tell me about past investigations that have taken place e.g. Sue Sharpe's and Sue Lee's investigations. I will use newspaper articles to try and find out the public's opinion on women priorities in life, how they have changed and if women are having children later in life.

I decided to use the internet to find out if any past investigations have taken place in the past.

I chose this method because more people are more likely to put their view onto the internet. Also I am able to find information that was published a few years ago. If I were to use newspapers, I would only be able to find current information.

This is related to my hypothesis because I will make it easier to find out about women and their careers and also women and their family lives.

Pilot study

The questionnaire

Question 1: what is your age?

Question 2: what do you think is the right age to start a family?

Question 3: what reason do you give for this age?

Question 4: what is your occupation?

*Question 5: do you think women are pressurised into starting a family
Later on in life?*

Question 6: what reason do you give for this?

Question 7: would you put your career before starting a family?

Question 8: what family members did you grow up with in your household?

Question 9: what are the top priorities in your life?

*Question 10: what % of pay would you lose if you were to go on maternity
Leave?*

*Question 11: would you make your partner go on paternity leave to stop you
From losing this money?*

Results of the pilot study

The data I got from my pilot study was both qualitative and quantitative.

I gave the questionnaire to 16 people. (See appendix 1 for copy of the pilot questionnaire).

I found that there were the following problems with my pilot study. With my pilot study I found that I did not get the right information I have needed to prove my hypothesis. This is because I didn't get people to explain their answers to my closed questions. Also from my questionnaire I could not prove my 2nd hypothesis.

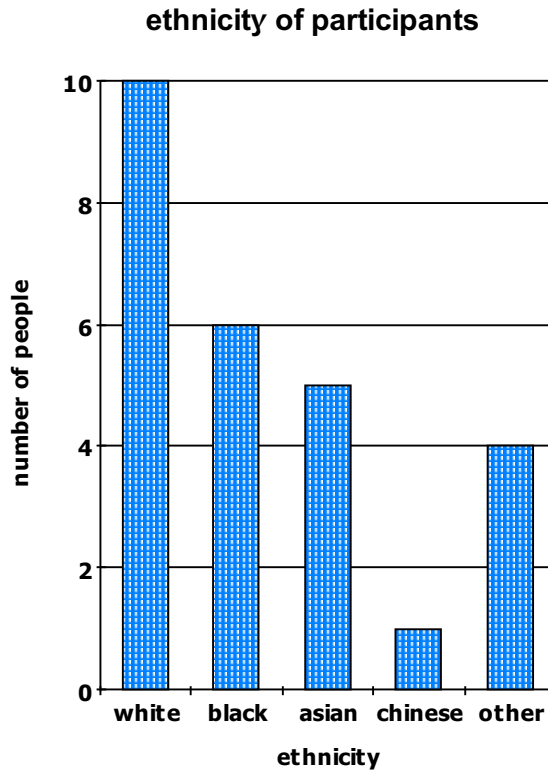
I decided to change some of my questions. This would improve my questionnaire as would enable me to retrieve the right information needed to prove my hypotheses.

Primary research results

Quantitative

*The number of people who responded to the questionnaire was 25, of these 50% were female and 50% were male
In terms of age, 60% of people asked were aged 15/16.*

This graph shows the ethnicity of the respondents.



The results of questionnaire were as follows.

64% of the participants said that women are pressurised into putting their careers before starting a family.

Qualitative results

The results of the open questions are as follows.

Here are some of the comments from the participants; most of the people asked said that they would make sure that they had an established career, had matured, found the right husband/partner and got a good education before starting a family.

Description of secondary results

Statistics

According to statistics the new role model for women are the 'ladettes' in society. These are young women who behave like lads, drinking beer, ogling the other sex and generally having fun.

This is clearly a relevant to my stated aims because it shows that women are having children later on in life, however it says that this is due to them going out and having fun and not their careers.

Textbooks

I have found some information by other sociologists about my topic; he states that by the mid 1990s there had been a big change in women's aspirations. Work and careers had become more important than family commitments.

This is clearly relevant to my stated aims because it shows that women are putting their careers before starting a family and therefore leaning it until later in life.

The media

Newspaper articles, such as A 1, suggest that it is mostly women of a managerial level that are choosing to have a professional career before children. The article also suggests that the reason for this is because some mothers don't believe in letting their children go to childminders. They feel that they are forced into this because of the number of hours they work and that their maternity leave is not long enough for them to care for their children at home.

This is relevant to my aims because it says that women are forced into not caring for their family as well as they would like too, due to their career priorities. Another reason it is relevant is because it tells of a certain level of people that this concerns.



Analysis

The primary data suggests that the majority, 64%, of people think that women are pressurised into choosing their careers over having children.

Also, the majority, 48%, feel that it is mostly feel that it is the middle class women that are pressurise the most.

This links to the aims of my research because it proves that women are being pressurised into having children later in life. And that it is mostly middle-class women that are pressurised into having children later in life.

The primary data was useful because it helped me to recognise whether or not my aims were reachable and if they were true or not.

However the data was at first problematic because my pilot study did not help me to come to a conclusion about my aims. This was because I was not receiving the right type of answers.

The secondary data suggests that many other sociologists believe that women are changing their priorities in life and that they are being pressurised into choosing their careers as their top priority in life.

This links to my research because it proves many women have to put their career before starting a family. Due to not being able to look after their children at home, instead they are being forced into leaving their children with a childminder.

The secondary data was useful because it helped me to prove my hypothesis and aims for my project. However the data was problematic because at first I was unable to find information on previous investigation that had taken place.

Evaluation

The hypothesis of my project has been proved.

I was able to reach this conclusion because my research all agreed with my hypothesis and helped me to prove it. My research methods were successful because after changing many questions in my pilot questionnaire I was able to collect the right information to prove my aims and hypothesis.

My hypothesis has been proved, but my research was limited because my research methods were weak in some areas, for example I would have liked to give my questionnaire to a wider population to get the best possible results. Also I think that one or two of my questions on my questionnaire could have been written in a better way to get a more detailed answer.

My research may have been biased because most of the people asked were from the same community and I think that if I had questioned a wider population my results may have differed depending on which environment the participants lived in.

In the future, I would improve the research by trying to get questions out to more people and to different communities.

In conclusion, my project has proved that women are indeed pressurised into choosing their career over starting a family and therefore women are having to choose to have children later on in their lives.

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Source URL: <http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2004/jun/04060204.html>

LifeSiteNews.com

Wednesday June 2, 2004

Study 'Discovers' Women Choosing Professional Careers over Motherhood

OTTAWA, June 2, 2004 (LifeSiteNews.com) - A recent survey has 'discovered' that women who work are having fewer children and are consciously choosing professional success over motherhood. The study of 281 professional and managerial working women, found that almost a third of female professionals and managers had no children and cited the importance of their work as a factor in that decision. Of the women interviewed, 28% had no children and of those who did have children, only 54% had more than two. The study found what pro-family activists have said for years; the declining birth rate represents a threat to economic and social stability.

However, the researchers at Carleton University's Sprott School of Business, instead of criticizing a culture that devalues women's traditional roles as wives and mothers, are blaming governments and organizations for failing to provide flexible work schedules and day care. Linda Duxbury, one of the study's authors said, "These professional women are making a conscious decision to limit family size because they know that organizations and government haven't responded... They used to have the kids and worry about the career later. Now, they're worrying about the work first."

The study points out also the implications for future economic stability in the seemingly unstoppable demographic spiral that woman's choices have started. Canada's birth rate at 1.5 children per couple is in line with that of most of the industrialized world. Even the most energetic modern economies are expecting disastrous long-term results from an aging population.

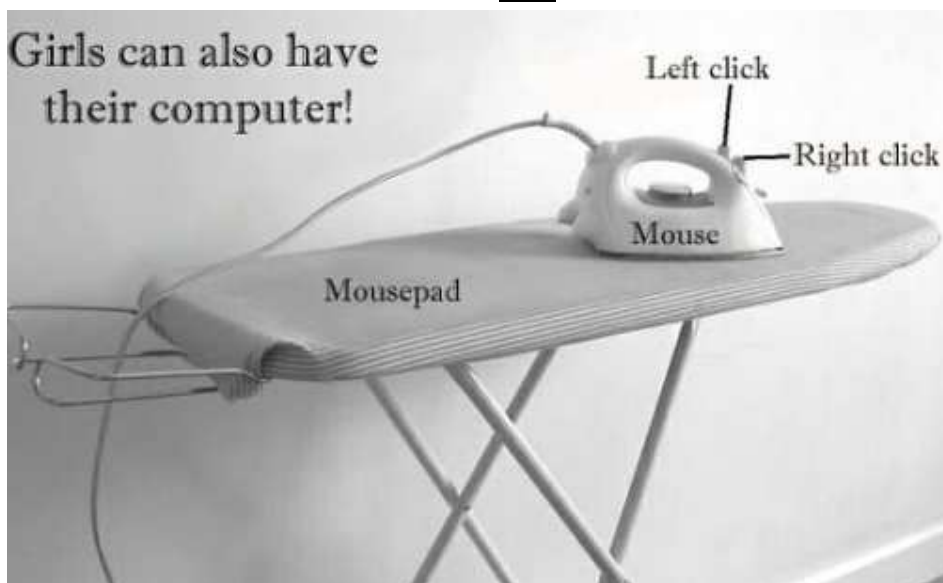
Proponents of the traditional family have long criticized the economic trend that is now effectively forcing women out of their homes. They point to the consequent disruption of the family to explain many disturbing modern social developments including high levels of divorce, teen depression and suicide.

Writer and long-time pro-life, pro-family activist, John Muggeridge, said that the two ideas: women working full time in professional positions and traditional marriage cannot be made to mesh. He said, "They've forgotten what marriage really is, its purpose is not simply to provide recreational activity for people in their off hours." Muggeridge said that the cracks in the social structure started showing at the very start of the feminist-driven social revolution, with women complaining that they were doing too much. "Now," he says, "they appear to have chosen and children have lost. Marriage is a full-time occupation. To attempt to take children out of the marriage equation and replace them with work is being married to your job rather than to your husband. It may sound chauvinistic, but it happens, unfortunately, to be true."

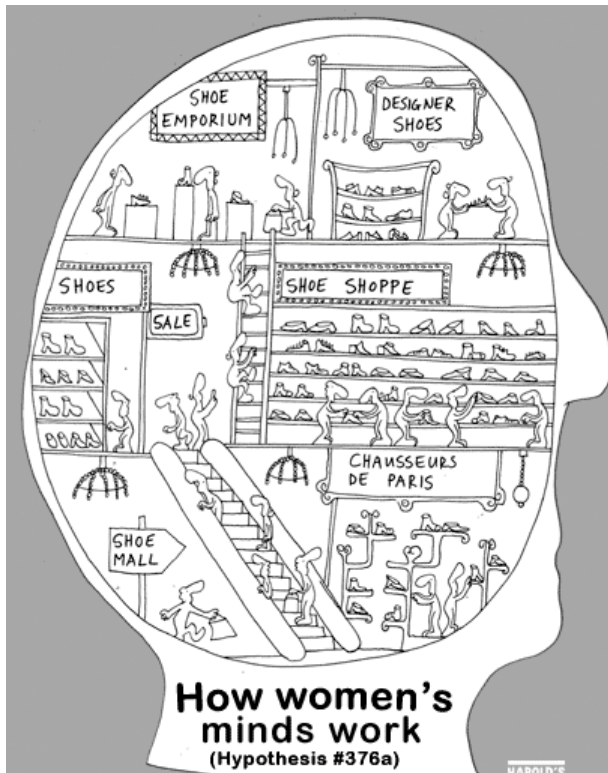
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<http://www.canada.com/search/story.html?id=f1bfb321-7f32-458...>

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http://www.haroldsplanet.com/daily/images/Card_HPxxx_shoes-women.gif

Male jokes on a woman's main role. This is one of the main reasons why women feel they have to work so hard to prove themselves and try to work the same amount of hours as men.