

Psychology assignment-work for pay and work at home



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Running Head: INTERVIEWS Work for Pay and Work at Home By of On July 5, 2007, I interviewed a couple, John and Jane Smith (alternative names for anonymity), who have been married for eleven years and have an eight year old son. Both of these individuals work outside the home, and I interviewed each individually at their home.

Interview with Jane

Age: 35 years old.

Sex: Female.

Occupation: Junior high school teacher.

On average, how many hours per week do you work: Probably 35 to 40.

How old is your child: He is eight.

How have you and your partner divided up the household (chores, cooking, etc...): We try to divide the chores up evenly, but I end up doing the bulk of the housework.

How have you and your partner divided up the yard work: No, I don't enjoy yard work and don't have a green thumb, so he does all of the yard work.

What arrangements have you and your partner made for household repairs (plumbing, painting, etc...): John is pretty handy around the house, so we don't usually call a repairman unless he can't fix what is broken.

What arrangements have you and your partner made for childcare (supervision, feeding child, etc...): I am the one who has gotten our son into after school daycare, and I take the lead when it comes to our son and his school and childcare.

If your child is sick and unable to attend daycare or school, who would be more likely to stay home from work with the child: I am usually the one who stays home with our son if he is sick.

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Who is responsible for keeping track of social responsibilities and engagements (birthdays, anniversaries, etc...): I keep track of all the important dates, like anniversaries and birthdays. John has trouble remembering dates.

Do you rely on hired help for any of the household chores mentioned (nanny, housekeeper, etc...): If we could afford it, I'd love to hire a housekeeper, but since we can't, we don't rely on anyone else. As I said, I do most of the chores in the household.

How did the two of your work out your arrangement, and divide the work needing to be done: Unfortunately, we don't really have an arrangement, and maybe that is part of the problem.

What adjustments, if any, did you make regarding these tasks when you became parents: I have taken on the caretaker role, so my workload doubled when I became a mother. Not only do I feel responsible for the chores, but also when our son was born, I became the primary caregiver for him.

What seems to work best about this arrangement and does it work well: This arrangement works only because I keep everything in order. I think if I didn't, the family would fall apart with disorganization and couldn't function properly.

On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with these arrangements: I would rate this arrangement as a 4 because I feel overworked and stressed.

Interview with John

Age: 38 years old.

Sex: Male.

Occupation: Office manager at a large industrial company.

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On average, how many hours per week do you work: I work over 50 hours a week.

How old is your child: My son is eight years old.

How have you and your partner divided up the household (chores, cooking, etc...): Jane does most of the chores, but that's because I work more hours than she does. So it's pretty even.

How have you and your partner divided up the yard work: Jane doesn't like to work in the yard. I enjoy tinkering in the yard, so I've taken on that responsibility.

What arrangements have you and your partner made for household repairs (plumbing, painting, etc...): I do all the household repairs. I can fix just about anything and I'm not going to pay a plumber or someone else to do the work when I can do it just as well as they can.

What arrangements have you and your partner made for childcare (supervision, feeding child, etc...): Our son is school aged, and then goes to a community daycare after school. Jane takes care of all of that kind of thing. If your child is sick and unable to attend daycare or school, who would be more likely to stay home from work with the child: I am responsible for running a large office and if I'm not at work, the office comes to a halt. I just can't stay at home, so Jane usually does or if one of our parents can help us out, they do.

Who is responsible for keeping track of social responsibilities and engagements (birthdays, anniversaries, etc...): Jane is good with dates and events, so she takes care of remembering all of that type of thing.

Do you rely on hired help for any of the household chores mentioned (nanny, housekeeper, etc...): No, we do fine without hired help.

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How did the two of you work out your arrangement, and divide the work needing to be done: We divided the household work by looking at the amount of hours each of us works outside the home. Since I usually work more hours at my job than Jane does at hers, she does more of the housework and chores.

What adjustments, if any, did you make regarding these tasks when you became parents (assuming they are both the parents in the household): I don't think much changed when we became parents, except that we both became responsible for another life.

What seems to work best about this arrangement and does it work well: I think our arrangement is great and keeps the household running smoothly.

On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with these arrangements: I'd say about an 8 because I'm pretty satisfied with our arrangement.

Summary of Interviews

The classification of this domestic partnership is a marriage because the couple was legally married under the laws of the state. This couple does not appear to have an equitable division of labor between the two of them. Jane is stuck in a "second shift", which refers to "women who not only work a paid shift during the day, but they also come home to a second shift of childrearing and housework in the evening" (citing Hochschild, 1989, 1997; Edley, 2001, p. 30). After Jane has put in a full days work as a teacher, she then comes home, does housework, and tends to their child. The couple's child has created even more work for Jane and therefore an even larger

inequity in the division of labor between she and John. John does not appear
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to take any responsibility for the care giving of their child.

Although many of the chores appear to be divided by gender, they are also divided by perceived competence. For instance, John enjoys the yard work, so he is responsible for all of it. However, chores such as childcare, cooking, and cleaning are divided by traditional gender lines as Jane is responsible for this type of labor within the home. John perceives his employment as much more demanding than Jane's position as a teacher, therefore, he justifies their division of labor in the home with this belief. Unfortunately, Jane has a different view and believes she works hard as well, but is doing the bulk of work in the home.

One factor appears to be a major problem in the division of labor for this couple is that John and Jane do not appear to be communicating effectively regarding their chore arrangement. John appears to be quite content with the arrangement, and Jane feels very overwhelmed by the situation. John did not indicate that he was aware of Jane's dissatisfaction, and Jane did not mention whether she was aware of John's position on their division of labor arrangement. Until this couple can communicate to one another their thoughts and feelings about the division of labor in the household, the behaviors of each will continue, and Jane will become even more dissatisfied to the detriment of the relationship and the family.

References

Edley, Paige P. (2001). Technology, Employed Mothers, and Corporate Colonization of the Lifeworld: A Gendered Paradox of Work and Family Balance. *Women and Language*, 24(2), 28+.