ATTITUDES TOWARD WORKING SINGLE PARENTS:
INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF A MEASURE

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Three studies describe the development and refinement of a measure designed to assess Attitudes Toward Working Single Parents (AWSP). Study 1 consisted of content validation of items written to assess respondent attitudes regarding the effect of single parenthood on two dimensions viewed as most central to the life experiences of single parents: work and family. Study 2 involved exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis of the scores on the target measure. Finally, in Study 3, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to evaluate scale dimensionality, and discriminant, convergent, and subgroup validity coefficients were examined. The final scale may prove useful in guiding future research aimed at understanding the unique challenges faced by working single parents.

Keywords: attitudes; measure development; single parents; working parents

As the composition of the American workforce diversifies, human resource professionals are tasked to understand and serve individuals with a variety of different life experiences and backgrounds, many of whom face unique challenges in managing their work and family lives. The new employee population is not only made up of more women and minorities but also individuals living in diverse family structures. For example, in 1998, the 11.9 million single parent families composed 27% of the family households.
with children (U.S. Census Bureau, 1998). In addition, 23% of all employees are single parents (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000), and though single parent status is often a transitory state, projections indicate that as many as one third of employees may experience a period of single parent status during their careers (Burden, 1986). These trends suggest that the single parent family is an important family structure within society and that single parent employees are a growing and substantial segment of the labor force. As such, research is needed to understand the unique organizational experiences of single parent employees.

One important area of research involves addressing and understanding stereotypical and potentially discriminatory attitudes toward single parents in the context of their work and family roles. The primary focus of past research relating to single parents has been on the negative effect that parenthood has on work and family outcomes (e.g., Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994; Eagle, Icenogle, Maes, & Miles, 1998; Etaugh & Kasley, 1981; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Hilton & Devall, 1998; Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985; Mueller & Cooper, 1986; Mulkey, Crain, & Harrington, 1992). The implicit presumption behind this research is that the “traditional” family (i.e., two-parent family with a working father and a stay-at-home mother) is the standard, which, by default, relegates single parent family structures to a deficit status (Rothausen, 1998). This deficit status reflects society’s generally negative attitudes about single parents (“Family Friendly Jobs Hurt Non-Parents,” 2000; Levine, 1993). Specifically, beliefs that single parents are neither committed, productive employees nor effective parents need further investigation to determine the extent to which these perceptions are widely shared. Because no existing measure assesses attitudes toward working single parents, the current study attempts to construct a measure that captures others’ perceptions of this growing segment of the population.

The Effect of Single Parenthood on Work and Family

Although anecdotal evidence suggests that single parent status may lead to deleterious consequences for both organizations and children (“Family Friendly Jobs Hurt Non-Parents,” 2000; Levine, 1993), little direct empirical research on the topic exists. However, although the conclusions reached are often mixed, related research can be extrapolated to provide information about the likely attitudes toward single parents. For example, research examining the effect of maintaining multiple life roles has implications for single parents. Because single parents are the sole parent and the only source of household income, the strains associated with their organizational and family experiences may not be mitigated by the presence of a significant other or strong support system. As such, single parents may experience greater work-
family conflict than two-parent households; and work-family conflict is related to lowered job satisfaction and productivity and increased absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Pleck, 1985; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). In contrast, Burden (1986) demonstrated that, though single female parents experience higher role strain than their married counterparts, they display equivalent levels of job motivation, job performance, and absenteeism while reporting higher levels of job satisfaction.

Similar conflicting results have been found during investigations of the effect of single parenthood on children. Research in this area has demonstrated that single mothers and single fathers report more behavior problems from their children than do married parents (Hilton & Devall, 1998). In addition, children with only one parent have been shown to have more behavioral problems and lower reading and math scores than children from two-parent families (Downey, 1994; Teachman, Day, Paasch, Carver, & Call, 1998). However, Barber and Eccles (1992) stated that the small differences between children of divorce and children of intact families in cognitive ability and adjustment are frequently eliminated when confounding and mediating variables are controlled. Also, children of divorce may benefit from removal from a contentious home environment and may develop greater self-esteem and personal responsibility (Barber & Eccles, 1992). Furthermore, though parental divorce generally lowers the well-being of children, the effects of divorce are weak and seem to be getting smaller in recent years (Amato & Keith, 1991).

Some prior research exists that demonstrates the pervasiveness of negative perceptions of single parenthood. Empirical research with 5- to 7-year-olds revealed the prevalence of the "child of divorce" stereotype (Hoffman & Avila, 1998). Children in this study were more likely to indicate that a child from a divorced (single parent) family was a liar, unintelligent, and bad. The presence of these attitudes in such young children indicates how pervasive negative attitudes toward single parent families may be in society. Furthermore, Fuller (1986) indicated that teachers of elementary school children were more likely to attribute positive school behaviors (e.g., responsible, happy, mature, good grades, well groomed) to children from intact homes while attributing negative school behaviors (e.g., acting out, tardy, requires special services, shy and withdrawn) to children from single parent homes. In addition, never-married parents and divorced parents were described by undergraduate participants as being more likely to have poor family relations and poor parenting skills and to be irresponsible, selfish, and impatient than married parents (Bennett & Jamieson, 1999). The presence of such biased attitudes toward single parents and their children demonstrates the need to have a measure of attitudes toward working single parents that produces valid and reliable scores. However, no published measure exists that assesses attitudes toward single working parents. The current study attempts to fill that

Overview of Method

Three studies were conducted for the creation, refinement, and validation of a measure to assess Attitudes Toward Working Single Parents (AWSP). The initial study was conducted to generate and assess items that seemed to adequately capture the two primary domains of interest: (a) single parenthood’s effect on work and (b) its effect on children. For Studies 2 and 3, 527 individuals completed the newly developed AWSP along with additional measures to establish discriminant and convergent validity. The second study consisted of scale refinement and involved reliability analysis and exploratory factor analysis. Study 3 involved confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm subscale dimensionality and initial attempts to establish convergent, discriminant, and subgroup validity of the scores obtained.

Study 1: Item Generation and Content Validation

Stage 1: Item Generation

The purpose of this phase of the study was to define and then adequately capture the content domains that would best reflect contemporary attitudes toward single parents. An examination of the life events of working, single parents determined that the two most central roles in the lives of single parents are their roles as employees and their roles as parents (Ferber, O’Farrell, & Allen, 1991). As such, two theoretical domains of interest guided the development of items for the measure: (a) the effect of single parent status on work and (b) the effect of single parent status on children. Three of the researchers in cooperation wrote 20 items (9 items written to reflect the effects on work and 11 items written to reflect the effects on children) to capture these two distinct content domains (see Table 1). Items were written such that higher scores indicated more negative attitudes toward single parents, with 4 items being reversed scored.

Stage 2: Content Validation

SAMPLE

Twenty-nine working adults evaluated the 20 items generated by the researchers. The sample consisted of 10 males and 19 females between the ages of 18 and 63 years ($M = 33.9, SD = 11.56$). The recommended guidelines outlined by Schriesheim, Powers, Scandura, Gardiner, and Lankau
Table 1

Analysis of Variance for Content Analysis of Attitudes Toward Working Single Parents (AWSP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source—Effect on Work</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>η²</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being a good employee is a lower priority for single parents.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>103.705</td>
<td>.649</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A single parent can be just as productive of an employee as anyone else (R).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>182.084</td>
<td>.765</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents can be among the most dependable employees because they really need a job (R). a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>280.942</td>
<td>.834</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents are too distracted by family concerns to be productive at work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>73.448</td>
<td>.567</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult for single parents to devote adequate energy to their work. b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>147.549</td>
<td>.725</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent employees are a liability to an organization.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>101.769</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent employees value their jobs more than other employees (R). a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>138.879</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents make either good parents or good employees but not both. c</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.833</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents often have high absenteeism from work because of their kids. b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>73.731</td>
<td>.568</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source—Effect on Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A child is more likely to struggle in life if raised by a single parent.</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>η²</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children of single, working parents have to learn to do without a lot of things.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>243.559</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of single, working parents often feel neglected.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>188.880</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of single, working parents must be self-sufficient.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>214.667</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is almost impossible for a single, working parent to raise a child as effectively as two parents.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>83.422</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising a child in a single parent household is asking for trouble. b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>154.592</td>
<td>.734</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents who work don’t have enough time to spend with their kids.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55.855</td>
<td>.499</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be well adjusted, a child needs two parents (a mom and a dad) who both live at home. b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48.915</td>
<td>.466</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents, who also work, do not get to spend sufficient time with their children.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>333.638</td>
<td>.856</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working, single parents are overloaded at home. b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>62.039</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents and their children develop closer relationships than children with two parents (R). a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>208.769</td>
<td>.788</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R = reverse-scored item.

a. Item deleted at reliability analysis stage.
b. Item deleted at exploratory factor analysis stage.
c. Item deleted at content validity stage.
(1993) were followed in selecting our participants. According to these guidelines, the content validity study requires a sample of participants that have the cognitive ability to read and understand each item and to indicate the extent to which items fit various categories (in this case, effects on work and effects on children). As such, the majority of participants were recruited at a regional library, whereas some were recruited among the graduate student and college professor population at a large southeastern university. For all those involved, participation was voluntary and confidential. Forty-five percent of the sample was single, 97% Caucasian, and 96% spent the majority of their childhood in a two-parent home. A variety of occupations were represented, including homemaker, contract negotiator, college professor, and graduate student.

PROCEDURE

Hinkin and Tracey’s (1999) approach to content validation was used whereby participants rated the extent to which they thought each item represented each of the two content domains using a scale ranging from 1 (none, or hardly refers to effect on work [children]) to 5 (completely refers to effect on work [children]). Analysis of variance was used to identify items that were not rated as statistically significantly different across the two content domains (construct convergence) and to determine if items that were rated as statistically significantly different across content domains fit their a priori dimension (construct discrimination). The content domain (e.g., effects on work and effects on children) served as the independent variable, and scores on each item served as the dependent variable (see Table 1). Items were deleted if participants did not differentiate the dimensions or if they did not fit into the a priori dimension. Two items were deleted during this process, yielding an 18-item measure (see Table 1).

Study 2: Scale Refinement

Stage 1: Reliability Analysis

SAMPLE

To use independent samples to examine the issues of interest in Studies 2 and 3, data were collected from 527 undergraduates and randomly split into two subsamples (263 for Study 2 and 264 for Study 3). Undergraduates were chosen because they represent the workforce of the future and are likely to encounter single parents as coworkers, subordinates, managers, and customers. Thus, we believe that understanding the attitudes of college-educated young adults is important and relevant to workplace issues. Furthermore, research on attitudes toward individuals on the basis of demographic (e.g.,
sex, race) and family status (e.g., marital status, parental status) variables routinely use college student populations (e.g., Bridges & Etaugh, 1994, 1995; Eagly & Mladinic, 1989; Etaugh & Hoehn, 1995).

The 263 participants in Study 2 had an average age of 19.3 (SD = 1.46) and 62% were female. Eighty-eight percent were Caucasian, 5% were African American, 5% Hispanic, <1% Asian, and 2% other. Eighty-two percent of the participants were raised in a two parent home, and 61% had mothers who worked full time during the majority of their childhood. Finally, of the Study 2 sample of participants, 42% were currently employed in either a full-time or a part-time position.

PROCEDURE

Participants were asked to complete a 150-item survey within which the target 18-item AWSP scale was embedded. Additional measures were included in the survey to provide scores to establish convergent and discriminant validity and to serve as distractor measures to mask the purpose of the study. A description of these additional measures can be found in Study 3.

Participants responded to the survey items using a 5-point Likert-type scale with the scale anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Participants also provided information on their socio-demographic characteristics and were assured that their responses would be kept confidential.

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

The purpose of a reliability analysis is to produce a revised scale made up of items that are highly intercorrelated. Because the focus of the current investigation was the construction of a measure that captured two specific content domains, the reliability analysis was conducted separately for the scores on each subscale using Cronbach’s alpha as a measure of internal consistency. An item was deleted if (a) it had a corrected item-total correlation that was less than .30 or (b) deletion of the item resulted in an appreciable increase in the subscale alpha coefficient.

The reliability analysis resulted in the deletion of three additional items; two from the Effects on Work (EW) subscale and one from the Effects on Children (EC) subscale (see Table 1). The beginning and ending Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients for the scores on the EW subscale were .61 and .73, respectively. The scores on the EC subscale had a beginning Cronbach’s alpha of .81 and an ending coefficient of .85.

Stage 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis

The next step in Study 2 was to conduct a parallel analysis (PA) using principal components analysis on the correlation matrix to determine the number
Parallel analysis involves simulating random data that has the same characteristics as the original data and subjecting the random data to a factor analysis. The premise is that meaningful components extracted from sample data will have larger eigenvalues than components extracted from randomly created data of equal size and containing the same number of variables. Thus, the criterion for the number of factors to retain is the number of eigenvalues from the real data that are greater than the eigenvalues from the random data (cf. Horn, 1965). The results of the parallel analysis suggested the retention of two factors (a summary of these analyses is available from the first author). To contribute to an accurate assessment of the number of factors to be retained, a scree test was also conducted. The scree test involved the examination of a plot of eigenvalues for noticeable gaps or divisions and confirmed the emergence of two factors from the data (Kachigan, 1982).

Next, an exploratory factor analysis of the correlation matrix using principal axes extraction and oblique rotation was conducted to determine the factor structure underlying the data and to ascertain if additional items needed to be deleted. Common factor analysis was chosen as it is more appropriate when examining variables that are proposed to be related to unmeasured or latent variables (Ford, MacCallum, & Tait, 1986). In addition, an oblique method of rotation was chosen as the scores on the unrefined subscales were correlated at .46 and a correlation between the latent variables under examination was expected (Ford et al., 1986).

The factor pattern and structure matrices of the two-factor solution were examined. Items with pattern coefficients greater than or equal to .40 were considered for retention (Ford et al., 1986). Three items did not satisfy this criterion and were deleted. An additional item with less than a .15 difference between pattern coefficients was considered to be a cross-loaded item and was deleted from further analyses. Table 2 presents the pattern and structure coefficients from this exploratory factor analysis, whereas Table 1 illustrates the items deleted at this phase of the scale development. At this phase, two additional items from both the EW and EC subscales were deleted. Factor 1 explained 22% and Factor 2 explained 16% of the variance in the data.

A final reliability analysis was then conducted on the scores on the four-item EW subscale and the eight-item EC subscale. The reliability analysis of the scores on each subscale indicated that the scores on the EC subscale had an alpha of .81 whereas the scores on the EW subscale had an alpha of .69. Moreover, the final reliability coefficient for the scores on the combined AWSP scale was .81. Generally, the final reliabilities for the scores on the EC subscale and the overall scale were acceptable. Although the scores on the EW subscale yielded a lower alpha of .69, the lower reliability is due in part to the relatively few items that survived the scale purification process. The two subscales of the AWSP were moderately correlated ($r = .51$), which, in con-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>EW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A child is more likely to struggle in life if raised by a single parent.</td>
<td>.688</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of single, working parents often feel neglected.</td>
<td>.666</td>
<td>-.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of single, working parents have to learn to do without a lot of things.</td>
<td>.634</td>
<td>-.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of single, working parents must be self-sufficient.</td>
<td>.571</td>
<td>-.257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be well adjusted, a child needs two parents (a mom and a dad) who both live at home.</td>
<td>.522</td>
<td>.210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is almost impossible for a single, working parent to raise a child as effectively as two parents.</td>
<td>.508</td>
<td>.325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents, who also work, do not get to spend sufficient time with their children.</td>
<td>.421</td>
<td>.284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising a child in a single parent household is asking for trouble.</td>
<td>.464</td>
<td>.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents, who also work, do not get to spend sufficient time with their children.</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>.393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents are too distracted by family concerns to be productive at work.</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent employees are a liability to an organization.</td>
<td>-.089</td>
<td>.626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A single parent can be just as productive of an employee as anyone else (R).</td>
<td>-.112</td>
<td>.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a good employee is a lower priority for single parents.</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult for single parents to devote adequate energy to their work.</td>
<td>.337</td>
<td>.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents often have high absenteeism from work because of their kids.</td>
<td>.262</td>
<td>.333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post-rotation eigenvalues for retained items: 2.378, 1.755
Percentage variance explained for retained items (postrotation): 21.6, 16.0

*Note. Primary factor coefficients are in bold. R = reverse-scored item; EC = Effect on Children; EW = Effect on Work.*
junction with the results from the EFA, suggests some distinctiveness between the two subscales.

Study 3: Scale Validation

Stage 1: CFA

Sample

The subsample used in Study 3 had 264 participants with an average age of 19.5 (SD = 2.20). Sixty-eight percent were female, and 88% were Caucasian, 6% were African American, 1% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 3% other. Eighty-four percent of the participants spent the majority of their childhood in a two-parent home, and 55% had mothers who worked full time. In addition, 40% of the Study 3 subsample currently was employed at either a full-time or a part-time position. Participants in this sample followed the same procedure as those in Study 2.

CFA

CFA was conducted to cross-validate the two-factor structure that emerged from Study 2. LISREL 8.52 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2002) was used to validate the target model and to explore an alternate theoretically plausible model. The covariance matrix was used as input for the CFA, and the two factors were allowed to correlate in the analysis. Multiple goodness-of-fit indices were examined to determine the adequacy of the target model. First examined was the chi-square goodness-of-fit index. However, debate regarding the sensitivity of the chi-square test to sample size (Marsh, Balla, & McDonald, 1988) led to the examination of other fit indices such as the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMSR), and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI, or nonnormed fit index) (Bentler & Bonnett, 1980; Hu & Bentler, 1998, 1999).

The target model was not a very good fit to the data. The chi-square test was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 152.97, p < .001$), but evaluation continued using the strategy and cutoff values suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999). The SRMSR for the target model was below the established cutoff with a value of .07; this was an indication of a moderately good fit to the data. However, an examination of supplementary fit indices did not definitively support the conclusions implied by the SRMR and suggested the two-factor model was a marginal fit to the data (see Table 3). For example, the TLI and CFI indices were close but did not reach desired cutoffs. However, the pattern coefficients for each of the subscales were greater than .40, and the correlation between the two factors in this subsample was .51. To determine if a one-
factor model was better suited to the data, an additional CFA was conducted. Results of this CFA will be discussed below as evidence of discriminant validity.

Stage 2: Convergent, Discriminant, and Subgroup Validation

To demonstrate construct validity for the scores on the two subscales of the AWSP, evidence was provided for convergent, discriminant, and subgroup validity. Each of the measures used to determine convergent and discriminant validity will be described below. Before their use in validity evaluation, the scores on all of the measures were subjected to a reliability analysis using criteria for item deletion similar to that described above.

PHASE 1: CONVERGENT VALIDITY

Scores on a measure have convergent validity when they correlate with scores on other measures evaluating similar constructs or with which they are theoretically related (Trochim, 2000). An examination of theoretically related constructs was undertaken to establish convergent validity as other measures of attitudes toward single parents were unavailable. Three measures were used to establish convergent validity for the scores on each subscale. The measures used to establish convergent validity for the scores on the EW subscale include Sex Role Attitudes (Vanyperen & Buunk, 1991) and two Life Role Salience scales (Amatea, Cross, Clark, & Bobby, 1986): Parental Role Reward Value (PRRV) and Occupational Role Reward Value (ORRV). In addition, the Sex Role Attitudes scale (Vanyperen & Buunk, 1991) and the Life Role Salience scales of PRRV and Marital Role Reward Value (MRRV) (Amatea et al., 1986) were utilized to establish convergent validity for the scores on the EC subscale of the AWSP.

The Sex Role Attitudes scale (Vanyperen & Buunk, 1991) is a 17-item scale designed to assess participant attitudes regarding “traditional” sex roles, and high scores indicate more conservative sex role attitudes. Based on the reliability analysis, 5 items were deleted, yielding a final coefficient alpha of .76. A sample item from this scale is, “It is acceptable for a woman to have

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SMSR</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>$\Delta\chi^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta df$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td>152.97*</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common factor</td>
<td>209.46*</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>56.49*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Null</td>
<td>1,666.06*</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,513.09*</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SRMSR = standardized root mean square residual; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = comparative fit index.
*p < .001.
a career, but marriage and family should come first.” Because the Sex Role Attitudes scale measures an individual’s tendency to adhere to traditional sex role stereotypes, it was hypothesized to relate positively to both the EW and EC subscales of the AWSP. Specifically, individuals who maintained more conservative sex role attitudes should view single parent status as having a more negative effect on work performance and childcare responsibilities. As predicted, the correlations between scores on the Sex Role Attitudes scale and scores on the EW subscale \( r = .28 \) and the EC subscale \( r = .38 \) were moderate and positive (see Table 4).

The Life Role Salience scales assess individuals’ expectations regarding role involvement in four important life domains: occupational, marital, parental, and home care (Amatea et al., 1986). The five-item scales were designed to be equally applicable to both men and women. As such, three scales were selected from the role reward value dimension of the Life Role Salience Scales: PRRV, ORRV, and MRRV.

All five items were retained on the PRRV scale after the reliability analysis yielded a coefficient alpha of .75. A sample item from the PRRV scale is “It is important to me to feel I am (will be) an effective parent.” Because the PRRV scale measures the extent to which an individual feels the parental role is instrumental in defining the self, it was expected that individuals who strongly value the role of a parent would view working single parents less positively in both life domains, perhaps due to expectations of role conflict or role overload. Contrary to our expectations, the correlation between scores on the PRRV scale and the scores on the EW subscale were negative and small \( r = -.18 \). Furthermore, whereas the direction of the correlation between the scores on the PRRV scale and the EC subscale was as hypothesized, the size of the effect was small \( r = .11 \) (see Table 4).

As a result of the reliability analysis on the scores on the ORRV scale, one item was deleted and a final coefficient alpha of .71 was established. A sample item from the ORRV scale is “It is important to me that I have a job/career in which I can achieve something of importance.” The ORRV scale seemed most closely aligned with the EW subscale of the AWSP. As such, individuals for whom the occupational role was instrumental in the definition of self should be sensitive to the potentially negative effect of a single parent’s dual roles at work. Therefore, the ORRV scale was hypothesized to be positively related to the EW subscale. Contrary to the prediction, the small correlation between the scores on the ORRV scale and the scores on the EW subscale of the AWSP was negative \( r = -.13 \) (see Table 4).

Finally, all five items were retained after the reliability analysis of the scores on the MRRV scale yielded a coefficient alpha of .77. A sample item from this scale is “Having a successful marriage is the most important thing in life to me.” As such, the MRRV scale seemed conceptually linked to the EC subscale of the AWSP. It was posited that individuals for whom the mari-
Table 4  
*Correlation Between Study Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Composite scale</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Effect on Work subscale</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Effect on Children subscale</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sex Role Attitudes</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Parental Role Reward Value</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Occupational Role Reward Value</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Marital Role Reward Value</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Impression Management subscale</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Self-deception subscale</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sex</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Childhood home</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* On-diagonal elements in bold = α values. Higher scores on *Attitudes Toward Working Single Parents* (AWSP) and two subscales indicate more negative attitudes toward single parents. Higher scores on *Sex Role Attitudes* indicate more conservative sex role attitudes. Higher scores on all *Role Reward Value* scales indicate higher salience of the life role associated with the scale. Sex was coded as 1 = male and 2 = female. Childhood home was coded as 1 = two-parent home and 0 = other.
tal role was central to the establishment of the self-concept and for personal satisfaction would be more likely to believe that single parent status has a negative effect on children. Therefore, a positive relationship was predicted between MRRV and the EC subscale. Consistent with this prediction, the small correlation between the scores on the MRRV and the scores on the EC subscale was positive ($r = .16$) (see Table 4).

**PHASE 2: DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY**

Evidence for discriminant validity is provided when scores on a measure have low correlations with theoretically distinct measures (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Trochim, 2000) or when other theoretically plausible factor models are shown to fit worse to the data than the target model under investigation (Lance & Vandenberg, 2002). Discriminant validity of the scores on the AWSP subscales was tested in three ways. First, constructs theoretically unrelated to the overall AWSP scale were evaluated. Second, constructs theoretically unrelated to individual AWSP subscales were examined. Third, the superiority of the theoretical model as compared to two other theoretically plausible models was investigated.

The Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR) was designed to detect the prevalence of socially desirable responding among questionnaire respondents. It is divided into two dimensions, impression management and self-deception (Paulhus, 1984). The Impression Management (IM) subscale contains items intended to assess the extent to which an individual consciously fabricates while responding. A sample item is “I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget” (reverse coded). In contrast, the items on the Self-Deception (SD) subscale are intended to capture the extent to which a respondent is unconsciously engaging in positive self-presentation. A sample item is “I never regret my decisions.” The reliability analysis of the scores on each subscale of the BIDR resulted in 3 items deleted from the IM subscale, yielding a final coefficient alpha of .76, and 10 items deleted from the SD subscale, resulting in a final alpha of .69.

Because the IM subscale was intended to measure the extent to which a participant intentionally manipulates responses for positive self-presentation, correlations between the IM subscale and either AWSP subscale would reflect response bias from participants. As such, it was predicted that scores on the IM subscale would not be related to scores on either subscale of the AWSP. Consistent with these predictions, the correlation between the IM subscale and both EW and EC approached zero ($r = .07$ and $r = -.02$, respectively) (see Table 4). Likewise, it was predicted that scores on the two subscales of the AWSP would be unrelated to scores on the SD subscale. As predicted, the scores on the SD subscale approached zero ($r = .07$ and $r = -.04$ for EC and EW) (see Table 4).
As described in the convergent validity section, scores on the MRRV were not considered theoretically related to the EW subscale scores. Although valuing the marital role seemed conceptually related to perceptions of the influence of single parenthood on children, it did not conceptually relate to perceptions of the influence of single parenthood at work. Specifically, the overlap between these concepts is in the family domain and not in the organization domain. Therefore, it was predicted that the MRRV scale would be unrelated to the EW subscale. In line with this prediction, the correlation between scores on the EW subscale and MRRV scale approached zero ($r = -0.07$) (see Table 4).

Though the ORRV scale was viewed as conceptually related to the EW subscale, it was predicted to be unrelated to the EC subscale. Because the ORRV scale focuses exclusively on occupational role salience, there did not seem to be a theoretical link between the concepts of occupational role salience in the formation of the self-concept and perceptions of single parenthood's effect on children. Contrary to this prediction, the correlation coefficient between the scores on the ORRV and the scores on the EC subscale was small and negative ($r = -0.14$) (see Table 4).

As another indicator of discriminant validity, two alternative confirmatory factor analytic models were tested, a common factor model and a null model. Because of the theoretical plausibility of the alternative models, they offer evidence of discriminant validity if it can be shown that the theoretical model under investigation fits the data better than the alternative models.

The more parsimonious, common factor model was specified such that all items loaded on a single factor. This model proposed that the two a priori factors of the AWSP are not conceptually or statistically distinct. This alternate model showed a poorer fit to the data than the target model (see Table 3). As is demonstrated in Table 3, the comparison of the target model to the common factor model across fit indices reveals the target model to be a better fit to the data. In addition, the chi-square difference test indicates the superiority of the target model as compared to the common factor model ($\Delta \chi^2 = 56.49, df = 1, p < .001$). The significance of the chi-square difference test indicates that it is highly unlikely that the common factor model is correct and provides additional support for the subscale dimensionality of the AWSP measure.

Though a null model is expected to have a poorer fit to the data than a target model, it can establish discriminant validity if shown to fit significantly worse statistically than the target model. As such, a null model was tested that proposed that each item on the AWSP is a single factor. As is revealed in Table 3, the target model again had a superior fit to the data. A chi-square difference test indicates the superiority of the target model as compared to the null model ($\Delta \chi^2 = 1,513.09, df = 12, p < .001$). These results offer supplementary evidence of the existence of the two a priori dimensions of the AWSP measure.
PHASE 3: SUBGROUP VALIDITY

Subgroup validity is demonstrated when groups whose scores are expected to differ on a measure do so in the hypothesized direction (Hinkin, 1995). In the current study, participant sex and type of childhood home were expected to differentiate individuals on the two subscales of the AWSP. Gender was dummy coded with 1 = male and 2 = female, and childhood home was coded as 1 = two-parent home and 0 = other.

Sex. Because women typically have, and are perceived as having, the role of single parents in society, it was posited that gender would differentiate attitudes toward single parents in both the work and family domains. Specifically, it was predicted that women would demonstrate less negative views toward single parents on both subscales. Consistent with this prediction, the correlation coefficients between gender and the scores on both the EW ($r = -.24$) and the EC ($r = -.16$) subscales were small in magnitude but in the hypothesized direction (see Table 4).

Childhood home. Individuals raised in a two-parent home were expected to demonstrate more negative attitudes toward single parents because of their lack of personal exposure to different family structures. In effect, these individuals may be more likely to rely on commonly held assumptions about single parents when responding to the EW and EC subscales. Therefore, it was proposed that individuals raised in a two-parent home would have more negative attitudes toward single parents on both subscales of the AWSP. As predicted, individuals who spent the majority of their childhood in a two-parent home were more likely to report negative attitudes regarding the effect of single parent status on work ($r = .19$) and on children ($r = .17$) (see Table 4).

Discussion

The “traditional” family is rapidly losing ground as the most prevalent family structure in the United States; diverse family structures are growing in number and influence in society (Rothausen, 1998). A measure of attitudes toward individuals in nontraditional family structures is noticeably absent, whereas the potential effects of these attitudes on individual employees becomes increasingly relevant. Inconsistent results from empirical research combined with society’s generally negative attitudes toward single parents served as the basis for the development of a measure to assess the negative stereotypes faced by working single parents.

Content validation of the items developed to capture the two dimensions of single parenthood’s effect on children and on work was conducted in Study 1 using methods suggested by Hinkin and Tracey (1999). Results of the scale refinement in Study 2 confirmed the reliability of the scores on the
EC and EW subscales. An exploratory factor analysis provided initial support for the two-factor model, with most of the items loading on the theoretically posited factor. Finally, in Study 3, construct validation of the scores on the two subscales of the AWSP was assessed with CFA as well as convergent, discriminant, and subgroup validity evidence. The CFA results were marginally acceptable and the validity results were generally consistent with a priori predictions, providing initial support for two dimensions of attitudes towards single parents in the context of the employee and parent roles.

The CFA provided tentative verification of the two-factor model. Values for several of the goodness-of-fit indices were approaching traditional cutoff values (Bentler & Bonnett, 1980, Hu & Bentler, 1998, 1999), and although the two-factor model did not demonstrate superlative fit to the data, the comparison of the model to another theoretically conceivable model offers initial evidence of the plausibility of the two-factor model. Specifically, examination of a nested, one-factor model demonstrated a worse fit to the data than the less parsimonious target model. This indicates that, compared to the nested models, the theoretically postulated model is the preferred, most useful model (Lance & Vandenberg, 2002).

Evidence for discriminability of the EW and EC subscales was established in several ways. First, better fit of the data to the two-factor model than either the one-factor or the null model helps establish discriminability between EW and EC. Support for the one-factor model would have indicated that respondents’ views of effects of single parent status were undifferentiated across the two life domains. However, respondents’ attitudes varied by life domain. In addition, individuals who valued the marital role as fundamental to happiness and self-fulfillment were more likely to view single parent status as an impediment to succeeding as a parent, a key responsibility subsumed within the marital role. In contrast, valuing the marital role was virtually unrelated to attitudes toward single parenthood’s effect on work, a domain that is not directly relevant to success achieved in the domestic sphere.

The results from our convergent, discriminant, and subgroup validation efforts provide some limited support for the newly developed measure. Specifically, 11 of the 14 predictions were supported, albeit weakly. The positive correlations found between the scores on the measure of Sex Role Attitudes and the scores on the EW and EC subscales indicate that participants who perceived sex roles from a traditional perspective were more likely to view single parenthood as negatively affecting both work and children. This suggests that individuals who adhere to more traditional sex role attitudes may be more likely to view the traditional family structure as critical to the success of both a career and family. In addition, the very small magnitudes of the relationships of the scores on the IM and SD subscales of the BIDR contributed to discriminant validity. In short, there was no evidence that partici-
pants were consciously or unconsciously distorting their responses to the AWSP measure.

Some support was also found for our predictions regarding subgroup differences in attitudes toward single parents. As expected, women’s responses indicated a less negative view of the effect of single parenthood on children and work. As the majority of single parent households are headed by women (Parents Without Partners, 2001), it is not surprising that women would be less negative about the effects of single parent status. However, it should be noted that these correlations were small in magnitude, indicating that there is not a large difference in attitudes between men and women. Also consistent with our expectations, individuals raised in a two-parent household demonstrated more negative views toward single parents due to their familiarity with the more “traditional” family structure. Without having experienced life in a single parent household, respondents from two-parent households may base their responses on commonly held, negative stereotypes of single parents. Again, the correlations between type of childhood home and the EW and EC subscales were small, suggesting that, whereas childhood home environment may have an effect on attitudes, other factors likely contribute.

With respect to the salience of various life roles, some support was found for our predictions, yet contradictory findings also emerged. Contrary to expectation, respondents who valued rewards inherent to an occupational role expressed attitudes that reflected positive effects of single parent status on both subscales (we only predicted a positive relationship with the EW scale). One possible explanation for this is that participants who viewed the occupational role as critical to life success did so for both themselves and single parents. In effect, perhaps they viewed the occupational role as so vital to an individual’s self-concept that they perceived it as having only positive relationships with other life domains, even among single parents. Another interesting finding was that valuing the parental role was somewhat related to more negative attitudes toward single parenthood’s effect on children as predicted but was also related to more positive attitudes toward single parenthood’s effect on work, which was not predicted. In this way, the salience of the parental role to defining an individual’s self-concept might result in views that parenting would be compromised by the time and energy required by work. In contrast, the importance placed on the parental role combined with an awareness of the financial necessity of an occupational role might have resulted in the more positive attitudes toward single parenthood’s effect on work.

As with all scientific research, the current study has a number of limitations. First, the research design, though psychometrically stringent, utilized self-report items to measure all variables in the study and is therefore vulnerable to the potential difficulties caused by common method variance (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Doty & Glick, 1998). Constancy in the method of
data collection could serve as an artifact that inflates the covariances among the variables (Crampton & Wagner, 1994). There are many perspectives on why this consistency may occur, including socially desirable responding and similarity in the wording or format of the items (Crampton & Wagner, 1994; Doty & Glick, 1998). We addressed the issue of common source/common method variance in two ways. First, separate samples were used for scale development and for construct validation. The use of different samples helps control for bias by reducing the potential systematic error variance (Doty & Glick, 1998). Second, social desirability was measured using the BIDR (Paulhus, 1984) and was not notably related to the variables of interest (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Future research might build on our efforts by using multitrait-multimethod data as a more stringent test of construct validity.

In addition, the college student sample limits generalizability of the study results. However, the purpose of the current study was to develop and begin the validation of scores from a psychometrically sound measure of attitudes. As such, the use of a college student sample provided an accessible population of study who presumably had minimal interactions with single parents in an employment context. A lack of exposure to single parents in an employment context was beneficial as it provided a sample whose attitudes reflected societal influences and stereotypical beliefs rather than direct knowledge of the behaviors of these employees. An important next step is to replicate the present study with an employee population to determine its potential utility in an organizational context. Such efforts should target white-collar and blue-collar professional employees because their attitudes toward working single parents may differ.

An additional limitation is the relative lack of work experience of our sample. However, it is important to note that the AWSP is not designed to measure whether individuals have accurate perceptions of single parents (e.g., we are not assuming that single parents can be classified as high or low on productivity or dependability). Rather, the nature of individuals’ perceptions is of particular interest because individual differences in perceptions of single parents may represent an important explanatory construct for future research on this population. For example, perhaps individuals who believe that single parents have difficulties at work tend to engage in overt exclusionary or discriminatory behavior toward them (e.g., prefer not to have them as a co-worker, overlook them when making decisions about whom to promote or offer a developmental assignment to). Likewise, if individuals hold negative attitudes with respect to how single parenthood affects children, they may be more likely to hold conservative views about governmental support for this group (e.g., tax credits for single parents). Moreover, it is not clear why work experience per se would be important in shaping individuals’ attitudes toward single parents, unless one knew that such work experience was exposing
them to single parents. Furthermore, it seems as if the nature of this experience (i.e., working with a highly competent single parent versus one who has performance problems) would be more important in shaping beliefs about this group than general experience in the workforce. To explore this issue, t tests were conducted to see if there were mean differences in attitudes as a function of work experience. Results indicated that work status did not effect scores on the EW subscale, \( t(262) = -1.725, p = .086 \) (two-tailed). In contrast, people working full or part time reported more negative attitudes toward single parenthood’s effect on children \( (M = 2.79, SD = 0.66) \) than did participants who were not working \( (M = 2.98, SD = 0.64) \), \( t(262) = -2.315, p = .021 \) (two-tailed). Future research with a sample of working adults that assesses amount of experience working with single parents might help clarify these relationships.

Furthermore, attitudes are typically considered to be composed of three components: behavioral, affective, and cognitive (Breckler, 1984). The behavioral component of attitudes reflects an individual’s behavioral intentions or overt actions. The affective component reflects an individual’s feelings, mood, or emotional responses to an attitude object. The current study focused exclusively on the cognitive component of attitudes or the thoughts and perceptions of an attitude object. Future research should explore the behavioral and affective components of individuals’ responses to single parents as well as how the three components interact. This information would be useful in determining how negative cognitions about single parents manifest in individuals’ behaviors toward them.

Future research should continue to explore the psychometric properties of the AWSP. For example, additional research should compare the use of this measure as a stand-alone versus intact instrument to verify that the psychometric properties are similar to the initially developed instrument. In addition, future research should also test the criterion-related validity of the scores on the AWSP to determine if they are predictive of organizational behaviors. For example, evidence that the scores on the AWSP are related to lower performance appraisal ratings or reduced opportunities for relocation for single parents would be appropriate evidence of criterion-related validity.

Finally, the diversity of the single parent family structure (e.g., divorced, widowed, never married) is not always captured in research. Often researchers focus exclusively on one type of single parent family (e.g., divorced families) or subsume multiple forms under a global concept of a single parent family (Burden, 1986; Downey, 1994; Gringlas & Weinraub, 1995). The extrapolation of results from these studies should be done with care as they neglect the varied experiences of children and heads of households from all types of single parent families. To better understand the experiences of members of diverse family structures, a more context-specific examination should occur. The antecedents and consequences of single parent status on work and
family may differ across the specific manifestations of the single parent family. These differences warrant further investigation.

In sum, past research and commonly held views about single parents suggest that they may experience difficulty establishing credibility as both parents and employees. The current study offers a preliminary tool for use in understanding one source of these difficulties, attitudes held by individuals toward single parents. The AWSP attempts to fill a gap in the literature examining the perceptions of individuals in nontraditional family structures by examining attitudes as they relate single parents in the dual roles of parents and employees. Measurement instruments like AWSP should pave the way for future research relating to the unique challenges faced by members of this growing segment of the population. Based on the current results, the AWSP shows promise as an assessment tool, but it should undergo additional scale refinement and validation before extensive use in the literature.

References


Family friendly jobs hurt non-parents. (2000, May 8). *USA Today*, p. 18A.


