

PERCEPTIONS OF STRONG FAMILY MEMBERS CONCERNING  
THE DEGREE TO WHICH A STRONG FAMILY IS  
VALUED BY THEIR NEAR  
SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

By

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DEDICATION

To "My Strong Family"

My Mother and Daddy and my sisters, Claudette and Paulette.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of Problem

The family is a deeply rooted institution in the United States; it is by far the most favored group with which adults associate themselves (Cavan, 1969). The family is our accepted basis of mere living; it, and its outward expression, the home, are so universally assumed to be the only natural form of existence, that to continue on earth outside of "a family," without "a home," is considered unnatural and almost immoral. In this regard the family must be studied as ministering to the health, comfort, happiness, and efficiency of adult individuals (Rothman, 1972).

There is evidence that most people consider a strong, satisfying family life among their important goals in life. However, the guidelines concerning how one can achieve a successful, satisfying family life are few. Research in the area of strong families offers an opportunity to understand better the importance of family life. The need for this research is especially felt now that the divorce ratio in the United States has increased from one out of 12 in 1900 to approximately one out of three today. The U.S. Bureau of Census, 1973, reports that the total number of divorces for any one year just exceeded the one million mark for the first time in the United States.

A family constitutes its own world, which is not to say that it closes itself off from everything else but that it determines what parts of the external world are admissible and how freely. The family maps its domain of acceptable and desirable experience in its life space. The outer limits of life space for any family are fairly definite and reasonably well marked. There are signposts for goals and signals for danger. But these metaphors fail because the boundaries lie within



persons, and however firm they may be, there are always areas of inexperience not adequately charted (Hess and Handel, 1971).

One of the most important needs in our society today is strengthening family life. Family strengths have been defined by Otto (1975) as forces and factors in the relationship which encourage the development of personal resources and potentials of family members which make family life deeply satisfying and fulfilling to its members.

#### Need for Research

The majority of research done in the area of family has been placed in the pathology of the family (Otto, 1962, 1972); therefore, leaving a large gap in the research dealing with family strengths. Studies of well families can contribute in assessing the positive as well as the negative functioning of families (Otto, 1964).

There is evidence that the environment influences individual behavior and family interaction (Zimmerman and Cervantes, 1960). Surprising, however, little research has been conducted examining specific aspects of the near social environment surrounding the strong families. For example, no research has been reported concerning the extent to which the following aspects of environment surrounding strong families values a strong happy family life: (a) friends, (b) work associates, (c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community. This type of information would help provide greater insight into some of the external influences which may contribute to family strengths. It is the purpose of this research to obtain this information.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are to examine the perceptions of members of strong families concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life:

1. Friends
2. Work Associates
3. Church
4. Relatives

## 5. Community

The secondary purpose of this study is to examine the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between sex and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life:
  - a) friends
  - b) work associates
  - c) church
  - d) relatives
  - e) community
2. There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life:
  - a) friends
  - b) work associates
  - c) church
  - d) relatives
  - e) community
3. There is no significant relationship between the degree of religious orientation and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life:
  - a) friends
  - b) work associates
  - c) church
  - d) relatives
  - e) community
4. There is no significant relationship between the size of the community and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life:

- a) friends
- b) work associates
- c) church
- d) relatives
- e) community

#### Definition of Terms

Family Strengths: are those forces and dynamic factors in the relationship matrix which encourage the development of the personal resources and potentials of the family and which make family life satisfying and fulfilling to family members (Otto, 1975, p.16).

Strong Families: are those families whose members fulfill each other's needs to a high degree and whose members have a high degree of happiness in the husband-wife and parent-child relationship. The strong families in this study are intact with both parents present in the home.

Near Social Environment: refers to the social network surrounding the family, which for this study, included the following: friends, work associates, church, relatives, and the community.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Family Strengths

There is a limited amount of literature and research concerning family strengths. Among authors contributing to research dealing with family strengths are Otto (1962, 1963, 1964, 1966, 1967, 1972, and 1975), Zimmerman and Cervantes (1960), Reeder (1973), and Grams (1967).

In an early study by Otto (1962, 1966) there were 27 families who were asked to list what they perceived as their families' strengths. Mentioned most were the giving and receiving of love and understanding between spouses, parents, and children. Other important items considered for a strong family were doing things together as a family and sharing religious and moral convictions. Otto (1963) developed twelve components in which to identify family strengths:

- 1) The ability to provide for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of a family.
- 2) The ability to be sensitive to the needs of the family members.
- 3) The ability to communicate.
- 4) The ability to provide support, security, and encouragement.
- 5) The ability to establish and maintain growth-producing relationships within and without the family.
- 6) The capacity to maintain and create constructive and responsible community relationships in the neighborhood and in the school, town, local and state governments.
- 7) The ability to grow with and through children.
- 8) An ability for self-help, and the ability to accept help when appropriate.
- 9) An ability to perform family roles flexibly.

- 10) Mutual respect for the individuality of family members.
- 11) The ability to use a crisis or injurious experience as a means of growth.
- 12) A concern for family unity, loyalty, and interfamily cooperation.

Otto (1962) viewed family strengths as constantly changing elements within the family's subsystems which were at the same time interacting and interrelated. Each element can be identified as a separate strength but when viewed in their totality result in family strength.

Otto (1975) defines family strengths as:

are those forces, and dynamic factors in the relationships matrix which encourages the development of the personal resources and potentials of members of the family and which make family life deeply satisfying and fulfilling to family members (p. 16).

The strengths of a family would naturally be expected to vary throughout the family life cycle.

Blackburn (1967) reports that the strong family is the family that has a high degree of satisfaction with husband-wife and parent-child relationships. Within the family these relationships contribute to making a strong family. Strong husband-wife relationships exist where they have high feelings of mutual respect, affection and love for each other (Cutright, 1971). Individuals that help form strong families usually come from similar economic classes and backgrounds with similar goals and expectations. They are also compatible sexually (Barton, Kawash, and Cattell, 1972).

Successful parent and child relationships also tend to strengthen and bind the family as a unit. The marital dyad in many ways is affected by children. Several resources indicated that children actually weaken the family unit, but that the commitment the couple has to the children--to rear them to maturity and to send them out into the world with moral, ethical, spiritual, and religious values, seems to make the family stronger (Blackburn, 1967, and Figley, 1973).

In a study by Reeder (1973), it was hypothesized that certain family characteristics would aid problem solving behavior in families which included a mentally retarded child. The successful family:

(a) is integrated into society; (b) maintains an internal focus of authority, decision-making, and emotional investment; (c) has ties of affection and support among all members; (d) has open channels of communication; (e) has a centralized authority structure to coordinate problem-solving efforts; (f) has the ability to communicate and evaluate conflicting ideas according to their intrinsic merit rather than the status of their source; (g) is able to reach a consensus on family goals and related role allocations and expectations; (h) prefers specific value orientations ( p. 1758B).

Anthony (1969) reported that a family with a strong background responds to difficulties by pooling its resources and working out the most constructive solutions together.

Commitment is one factor contributed to the stability and strength of a strong family. Commitment has been defined as the process where individuals give their energy and loyalty to a central theme. Committed family members strongly believe in what the family stands for as they continue to demonstrate this commitment. Many of the social problems in our society are seen as stemming from a lack of commitment states Kanter (1968).

Strong families have good lines of communication which are open to all family members. Mature love relationships are also present. Most strong families are considered equalitarian in that all family members contribute to making decisions. The strong family is not afraid to reach out for help when it is needed. The weak family usually waits until it is too late to seek help. When stressful situations arise the strong family has the ability to cope and handle the situation. Religion has an important part in the lives of strong families. It functions to support and to make the family stronger (Figley, 1973).

The needs of men and women continue to be met by the American family. These needs range from providing shelter, protection, family development, affection, reproduction, emotional, educational, love, to meeting sexual needs (Barton, Kawash, Cattell, 1972). These needs being met is considered a strength of the family.

The ability of the family to provide companionship is another strength of the family. In the family a place is provided where members can turn and be accepted, loved and cared for. The family also provides fulfilling emotional and physical needs of its members.

Three main sources exist that support the family according to Grams (1967). One of these is the church. It supports the family structure internally and externally by strengthening the family structure (Crockett, Babchuk, and Ballweg, 1969, and Grams, 1967).

Another source of family strength is education. Through education, we become more aware of how to successfully live in families (Grams, 1967).

The ability of family members to live with priorities in perspective is the third source of family strength. Those families deciding together what things are most important and work together with these priorities in mind are strong families (Grams, 1967).

#### Marriage Success

A successful marriage occurs when both partners obtain at least the satisfaction that they anticipated from the marriage (Kirkpatrick, 1963). Success, while so important, can only be determined by those involved in the relationship. Spanier (1972) describes a successful marriage as being relatively free of conflict, the husband and wife being in relative agreement on major issues, enjoying the same leisure interests and participating in them together, and showing affection for one another. In order for a marriage to be successful, it is necessary, that the marital needs of individuals forming the relationship must be met. If these needs are not met, the relationship is often dissolved and/or family strength is not allowed to develop.

Premarital and postmarital factors associated with marriage success are numerous. One of the most important premarital factors to consider is the success or failure of the parent's marriage. If the parents were happily married then the couple has a greater chance of being happily married than if the parents were unhappy or divorced. Children tend to follow examples set for them. It is important that the example set for them is positive (Bowman, 1970).

Another important premarital factor considered to marital success is an individual's personal happiness in childhood. An individual who was happy in childhood is more likely to have a happy and successful marriage as an adult. This finding reemphasizes the importance of

good parent-child relationships. If the child is related to in a positive manner, he will probably relate to others positively, particularly a marriage partner (Kirkpatrick, 1963).

The length of acquaintance before marriage in relation to marital success is indicated by research. Those who knew each other for over one year are more likely to have a happy, successful marriage than those who knew each other for less than one year before marriage. The period of time between meeting and marriage is necessary in order to get to know such things as expectations of each other and goals that each have (Kirkpatrick, 1963).

Rollins and Feldman (1970), in their research have identified three keys to marital success. These are:

- 1) Personal readiness for marriage.
- 2) Compatible mate selection.
- 3) Early adjustment to marriage.

Important to a happy and adjusted marriage is the parental approval of one's mate (Kirkpatrick, 1963). The couple needs approval and support of persons close to them. This approval tends to reinforce positive feeling about the marriage.

Age at marriage, according to research, is another factor related to marital success. Those married at age 19 or younger have the highest divorce rate and the most problems of any other group. The reason for the high rate of divorce in this group might be contributed to things such as: small income, limited education, continued need for parental support and lack of emotional maturity (Kirkpatrick, 1963, and Burchinal, 1965).

Also important to the success of the marriage is the primary reason for getting married. The chance of marital failure or unhappiness is greater if the primary reason for the marriage was to escape an unhappy home life, or to alleviate loneliness. If the couple married because of genuine love or because they share common interests, then marital success and happiness will more likely be achieved (Kirkpatrick, 1963).

Marriage happiness has been associated with marriage success by Gurin (1960). This happiness stems from a good interpersonal relationship between husband and wife. Factors such as mutual respect, ex-



pression of appreciation and affection are important in contributing to marital happiness which in turn, affects marital success.

Stinnett, Collins, and Montgomery (1970) have identified four basic needs considered important in the marital relationships of all age groups: (a) love, (b) personality fulfillment, (c) respect, and (d) communication. The meeting of these needs by each spouse is positively associated with marital success.

In a successful marriage the lines of communication tend to be kept open. To develop effective communication patterns takes lots of work from both sides. Navran (1967) states that these effective patterns are: (1) talking to each other often, (2) understanding what is being said to them, (3) have a wider range of subjects available to them, (4) preserve communication channels and keep them open, (5) are sensitive to each other's feelings, (6) personalize their language symbols, (7) use nonverbal techniques of communication effectively.

Marriage success is also positively related to higher levels of income and income stability. Hicks and Platt (1970) report that even in marriages where there is a stable and adequate income, financial management is a major source of conflict. This finding emphasizes the conflicts that are caused by money management. In situations where goals and interests are not the same there is even more frustration concerning money management.

Another important influence on marital success is the occupation of both the husband and wife. According to Bernard (1966) marriage happiness and stability tend to be higher among the more stable and higher paid occupations. Marriage satisfaction tends to also be associated with job satisfaction which is also associated with a feeling of self worth (Ridley, 1973).

Orden and Bradburn (1969) noted that there was a lower degree of happiness within the marriage when the woman is not given a choice and is working due to necessity than when she chooses to work. Nye (1961) found a direct relationship between marital happiness and the wife's employment/unemployment and the attitude of the husband towards the wife's work status. Axelson (1963) also observed that marital satisfaction was poorer when the wife was employed full time as opposed to part time.

There is a positive association between religious participation and marriage success. There are fewer divorces among couples with strong religious orientation and participation than among nonreligious couples (Landis and Landis, 1973). In a study by Zimmerman and Cervantes (1960) it was found that divorce is four times more likely to occur in families with no religious orientation.

Children can greatly affect the success of a marriage, even before they are conceived (Meyerowitz, 1970, and Figley, 1973). Figley in his 1973 article also noted that the timing of the birth of the first child affects marriage success. Premarital and early postmarital conception have been found by Hurley and Palonen (1967) to be associated with a high divorce rate.

The more children there are within the family the less likely a divorce is to occur (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1973). These findings may be due to the couple not wanting to make a break while there are children in the home, which may be the reason for so many divorces before children are born and after the last child has been launched.

#### Influence of Environment on Family Life

Zimmerman and Cervantes (1960) in their presentation of qualities that contribute to successful families have reported:

- 1) Successful families have more intimate family friends and have more in common with their friends than do unsuccessful families.
- 2) The basic "social" family principle is that of common values. This unique, purposeful, common value principle begins with mating and extends through the life history of the family and outward in family friends.
- 3) In every city, in every degree of intimacy and in every measure of friendship similarity, the co-working of intimacy and similarity has been associated strikingly with success. The more friends are like each other, the more successful they are in avoiding divorce, desertion, juvenile arrest records and other phases of the breaking up of homes and domestic relations.
- 4) Having a child continue in high school is a positive function of child protection and of family success.

5. Parents with an ideal for their children, such as school continuance, can most thoroughly implement that ideal in the minds of the children by surrounding their household from the beginning with friends who also possess the same ideals.
- 6) The totality of all the impressions of life other than parental had been received by the children from members of friend families.
- 7) Friendship between similar minded adults living in proximity over a period of years results in its most basic or primary type. The friendship of this type is between equals, is voluntaristic, involves common experiences and is not primarily for the appetitive pleasure or political, economic or social gain.

Therefore, the families who were successful in their study allowed only those families who were like themselves into their homes and circle of friends. Zimmerman and Cervantes (1960) found that only a few reported no friends of the family at all (one per cent), while from 70 to 80 per cent claimed having approximately five or more intimate family-group friends. Depending upon the city, from three-tenths to almost half of the family-group friends were relatives. The family-group friends were not restricted to the one stage of family life cycle which enabled the family as a whole to be able to relate to a wide diversity of family types.

The family is usually considered the most important mechanism in value socialization (Bengtson, 1975). However, the influence of age-peers, of age-graded institutions outside the family such as the school, and of socio-historical events which impinge in special ways on youth, have increasingly been recognized in socialization theory as important and alternative-determinants of value orientation. The following factors were found to be true in most cases in this study:

- 1) The evidence in general points to considerable value similarity between generations.
- 2) Strong familial similarity in value orientations.

Geographic influences may be more reflective of the individual's unique personal biography, or of his or her response to socio-historical event, than of effects attributable either to family or generational factors (Bengtson, 1975).

According to a study reported by Gove, Gumm, Motz, and Thompson (1973) families from different social statuses hold and conform to different standards of living. Some of these standards bear on what the family holds to be essential in terms of consumer goods -- such as clothing, food, means of transportation, and type and location of residence. Other standards relate to what is felt to be necessary for children, such as cosmetic surgery or orthodontic care, private transportation, or college education. Social expectations also affect definitions of "necessity" in regard to travel, entertaining, or hobbies. In general, as one moves up in socio-economic status, and thus in income, the height of the pressure line due to social expectations also increases.

As indicators of involvement in community activities the membership records were examined in voluntary associations and participation in politics. Involvement increases as one moves up in socio-economic status. Childless couples are more politically active than middle class families with children. Middle class families with children were found to be less active in the community also (Gove, Gumm, Motz, and Thompson, 1973).

Several times the impact of industrialization upon other variables, such as the value system, the family and the existing class structure has been investigated. Batt (1971) reached the following conclusions: (a) family stability in traditional societies can be achieved by less privileged groups that accept the predominant value system, are instrumentally related to the more privileged groups, and possess a kinship structure having integrative functions, (b) complete family stability in industrial societies can hardly be achieved by less privileged groups. This is more so when underprivileged groups do not have ideological and instrumental relations with more privileged groups. (c) less privileged groups cannot achieve high levels of family integration in industrial society.

The family also exists in interaction with the larger society of which the family and its members are component parts. The status of the family in the neighborhood, its role as defined in the mores, in public opinion and by law, the changes in the family which result from the play of social forces in the community, are all illustrations of

the significance for the family and its members of interaction with society (Heiss, 1971).

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

#### Selection of Subjects

The 85 subjects of this study represent strong families. These subjects were obtained through recommendations of the Extension Home Economist in each of the 77 counties in Oklahoma. Cover letters were sent to approximately 180 families explaining the research study and assuring anonymity. Questionnaires were included for both the husband and wife. They were requested to complete the questionnaires separately and not to compare answers. A stamped, self-addressed return envelope was included with each questionnaire. The data were obtained in 1975 during the months of March, April, and May.

The Cooperative County Extension Service was utilized in collecting the sample. The Extension Home Economists were considered to be valid and reliable professionals to recommend strong families due to their training and competence in the area of home and family life, their degree of contact with families in their county, and their concern for strengthening family life.

The Extension Home Economist in each of the counties in Oklahoma were sent letters asking that they recommend two or more families in their county who they felt were strong families. They were provided with general guidelines for consideration in selecting these families.

The guidelines are listed below:

- 1) The family is intact with both parents present in the home.
- 2) The family must have at least one school age child, 21 years or younger, living at home.
- 3) The family members appear to have a high degree of happiness in the husband-wife and parent-child relationships.
- 4) The family members appear to fulfill each others needs to a high degree.

One additional criteria was that the respondent must rate their marital happiness and satisfaction in the parent-child relationship as satisfactory or very satisfactory on the questionnaire.

#### The Instrument

The questionnaire was compiled by Dr. Nick Stinnett, Associate Professor, Family Relations and Child Development Department, at Oklahoma State University. The questionnaire, which included several scales, was designed to measure various aspects of family life which a review of the literature indicated were possible components of family strength.

The questionnaire was presented to a panel of four judges, all of whom held advanced degrees in the area of family relations in order that they could rate the items in terms of the following criteria:

- 1) Does the item possess sufficient clarity?
- 2) Is the item sufficiently specific?
- 3) Is the item significantly related to the concept under investigation?
- 4) Are there other items that need to be included to measure the concepts under investigation?

There was a high degree of agreement among the judges that the items

met the four criteria. Suggestions made were incorporated into the final version of the instrument. A pre-test was done with 20 families and further modifications concerning the wording of questions and overall length of the questionnaire were made as a result of the pre-test.

For the present study data from the following sections of the questionnaire were used: (a) biographical information such as sex, age, and place of residence; (b) various perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life: 1) friends, 2) work associates, 3) church, 4) relatives, 5) community.

#### Analysis of the Data

Percentages and frequencies were used to analyze the background characteristics of the subjects and also to examine the respondent's perceptions concerning: (a) the degree to which friends value a strong family life, (b) the degree to which work associates value a strong family life, (c) the degree to which church values a strong family life, (d) the degree to which relatives value a strong family life, (e) the degree to which the community values a strong family life.

The chi-square test was used to examine the following hypotheses: There is no significant relationship between (1) sex, (2) socio-economic status, (3) the degree of religious orientation, (4) the size of the community and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life: (a) friends, (b) work associates,



(c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Description of the Subjects

A detailed description of the 85 subjects who participated in this study is presented in Table I. The sample consisted of 40 per cent males and 60 per cent females. Their ages ranged from 20 to over 50 years, with the greatest percentage (31.76) in the 36-40 range, followed by the 41-45 age range with 27.06 per cent. Eighty per cent of the sample was 31-45 years old.

The sample was 97.62 percent White. Most of the sample (81.93%) was Protestant with 12.05 per cent of the sample being Catholic. Most considered themselves to have a high or very high degree of religious orientation (68.23%), followed by 28.23 per cent who indicated degree of religion as moderate. As determined by the McGuire-White Index of Social Status (1955), the sample was primarily lower-middle (47.62%) and upper-middle (33.33%) socio-economic classes. The largest proportion of the respondents (48.23%) indicated a farm or rural area as their place of residence and another 34.12 per cent indicated their residence as a small town under 25,000 population. The majority of the respondents (69.41%) reported that the wife was not employed outside the home. The largest per cent (40.00) had three children, followed by 29.41 percent with two children.

TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EIGHTY-FIVE SUBJECTS

Variable	Classification	No.	Per Cent
Sex	Male	34	40.00
	Female	51	60.00
Race	White	82	97.62
	Black	1	1.19
	Indian	1	1.19
Age	20-25	1	1.18
	26-30	7	8.23
	31-35	18	21.18
	36-40	27	31.76
	41-45	23	27.06
	46-50	6	7.06
	over 50	3	3.53
Religion	Catholic	10	12.05
	Protestant	68	81.93
	Mormon	1	1.20
	None	4	4.82
Degree of Religious Orientation	Very Much	17	20.00
	Much	41	48.23
	Moderate	24	28.23
	Little	3	3.53
	Very Little	0	0.00
Socio-Economic Class	Upper	1	1.19
	Upper-Middle	28	33.33
	Lower-Middle	40	47.62
	Upper-Lower	15	17.86
	Lower-Lower	0	0.00
Size of Residence	On a farm or in country	41	48.23
	Small town under 25,000	29	34.12
	City of 25,000 to 50,000	8	9.41
	City of 50,000 to 100,000	4	4.71
	City over 100,000	3	3.53
Wife's Employment	Not employed outside home	59	69.41
	Employed full-time	26	30.59

TABLE I (Continued)

Variable	Classification	No.	Per Cent
Number of Children	1	3	3.53
	2	25	29.41
	3	34	40.00
	4	11	12.94
	5	5	5.88
	6	3	3.53
	7	2	2.35
	12	2	2.35
Number of Years Married	Under 5	0	0.00
	5-9	7	8.23
	10-14	18	21.18
	15-19	24	28.23
	20-24	24	28.23
	25-29	10	11.76
	30-34	2	2.35
	35 and over	0	0.00

Perception of Respondents Concerning the Degree to  
Which Various Aspects of Their Near Social  
Environment Value Strong Family Life

Perceptions Concerning the Degree to Which Friends  
Value a Strong Family Life

As shown in Table II, the majority of respondents (65.88%) reported values very highly as the degree to which their friends value a strong family life. The second most frequent response (30.59%) was that their friends value a strong family life highly. Only 1.18% reported that their friends valued a strong family life very little.

TABLE II

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE TO WHICH FRIENDS  
VALUE A STRONG FAMILY LIFE

Degree to Which Friends Value a Strong Family Life	No.	Per Cent
Values very highly	56	65.88
Values highly	26	30.59
Undecided	2	2.35
Values little	0	0.00
Values very little	1	1.18

Perceptions Concerning the Degree to Which Work  
Associates Value a Strong Family Life

As shown in Table III, the majority of respondents (50.65%) reported values very highly as the degree to which work associates

value a strong family life. The second most frequent response (37.66%) was that their work associates value highly a strong family life. Only 1.30% reported that their work associates valued a strong family life very little.

TABLE III  
PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE TO WHICH WORK  
ASSOCIATES VALUE A STRONG FAMILY LIFE

Degree to Which Work Associates Value a Strong Family Life	No.	Per Cent
Values very highly	77	50.65
Values highly	38	37.66
Undecided	6	6.49
Values little	4	3.90
Values very little	1	1.30

Perceptions Concerning the Degree to Which  
Church Values a Strong Family Life

As shown in Table IV, there were only three responses recorded. The most frequent response (79.76%) reported that their church values very highly a strong family life. The second response (19.05%) reported that their church values highly a strong family life. The least frequent response (1.19%) was that they were undecided as to whether their church valued a strong family life.

TABLE IV  
 PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE TO WHICH CHURCH  
 VALUES A STRONG FAMILY LIFE

Degree to Which Church Values a Strong Family Life	No.	Per Cent
Values very highly	84	79.76
Values highly	17	19.05
Undecided	1	1.19
Values little	0	0.00
Values very little	0	0.00

Perceptions Concerning the Degree to Which  
 Relatives Value a Strong Family Life

As shown in Table V, the most frequent responses reported (64.71%) were those stating that their relatives value very highly a strong family life. The second most frequent response (34.12%) was those reporting that their relatives value highly a strong family life. Only 1.18% were undecided as to the degree to which their relatives value a strong family life.

TABLE V  
 PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE TO WHICH RELATIVES  
 VALUE A STRONG FAMILY LIFE

Degree to Which Relatives Value a Strong Family Life	No.	Per Cent
Values very highly	55	64.71
Values highly	29	34.12
Undecided	1	1.18
Values little	0	0.00
Values very little	0	0.00

Perceptions Concerning the Degree to Which the  
 Community Values a Strong Family Life

As shown in Table VI, the majority of respondents (52.94%) reported values highly as the degree to which their community values a strong family life. The second most frequent response (34.12%) was that their community values a strong family life very highly. Only 2.35% reported that their community valued a strong family life very little.



TABLE VI  
 PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE  
 COMMUNITY VALUES A STRONG FAMILY LIFE

Degree to Which the Community Values a Strong Family Life	No.	Per Cent
Values very highly	29	34.12
Values highly	45	52.92
Undecided	5	5.88
Values little	4	4.70
Values very little	2	2.35

#### Examination of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life: (a) friends, (b) work associates, (c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community.

The chi-square test was used to examine this hypothesis. The results, as shown in Table VII, indicated that no significant relationship existed between socio-economic status and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life: (a) friends, (b) work associates, (c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community.

TABLE VII

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE TO WHICH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE RESPONDENT'S ENVIRONMENT VALUES A STRONG FAMILY LIFE

Aspects of the Respondent's Environment	Chi-Square	Level of Significance
Friends	10.22	n.s.
Work Associates	17.16	n.s.
Church	6.38	n.s.
Relatives	5.40	n.s.
Community	3.42	n.s.

Hypothesis II: There is no significant relationship between sex and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life: (a) friends, (b) work associates, (c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community.

As shown in Table VIII, the chi-square test indicated that no significant relationship existed between sex and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life: (a) friends, (b) work associates, (c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community.

TABLE VIII

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SEX AND PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE TO WHICH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE RESPONDENT'S ENVIRONMENT VALUES A STRONG FAMILY LIFE

Aspects of the Respondent's Environment	Chi-Square	Level of Significance
Friends	5.61	n.s.
Work Associates	2.40	n.s.
Church	0.70	n.s.
Relatives	4.72	n.s.
Community	1.02	n.s.

Hypothesis III: There is no significant relationship between the degree of religious orientation and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life: (a) friends, (b) work associates, (c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community.

According to the chi-square analysis as shown in Table IX, no significant relationship was found to exist between the degree of religious orientation and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life: (a) friends, (b) work associates, (c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community.

TABLE IX

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE DEGREE OF RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION AND PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE TO WHICH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE RESPONDENT'S ENVIRONMENT VALUES A STRONG FAMILY LIFE

Aspects of the Respondent's Environment	Chi-Square	Level of Significance
Friends	5.57	n.s.
Work Associates	15.43	n.s.
Church	30.33	n.s.
Relatives	37.97	n.s.
Community	7.57	n.s.

Hypothesis IV: There is no significant relationship between the size of the community and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life: (a) friends, (b) work associates, (c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community.

The chi-square test indicated that no significant relationship existed between the size of the community and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life: (a) friends, (b) work associates, (c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community. The results are presented in Table X.

TABLE X

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE SIZE  
OF THE COMMUNITY AND PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE  
TO WHICH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE RESPONDENT'S  
ENVIRONMENT VALUES A STRONG FAMILY LIFE

Aspects of the Respondent's Environment	Chi-Square	Level of Significance
Friends	9.52	n.s.
Work Associates	12.42	n.s.
Church	11.41	n.s.
Relatives	12.66	n.s.
Community	3.56	n.s.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of members of strong families concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life as perceived by the respondents: (a) friends, (b) work associates, (c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community.

The 85 respondents represented families which were recommended as strong families by Extension Home Economists in all counties in Oklahoma. The data were collected during the months of March, April, and May, 1975. The respondents had at least one child 21 years or younger, were primarily White, and predominately from rural areas and small towns.

Percentages and frequencies were used to analyze the background characteristics of the subjects and also to examine the respondent's perceptions concerning: (a) the degree to which friends value a strong family life, (b) the degree to which work associates value a strong family life, (c) the degree to which church values a strong family life, (d) the degree to which relatives value a strong family life, (e) the degree to which the community values a strong family life.

The chi-square test was utilized to determine if there were significant relationships between (a) sex, (b) socio-economic status, (c) the degree of religious orientation, (d) the size of the community and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life: (a) friends, (b) work associates, (c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community.

The results of the study were as follows:

- 1) The majority of respondents perceived their friends, work associates, church, and relatives to value very highly a strong family life.

- 2) The majority of respondents perceived their community to value highly a strong family life.
- 3) No significant relationships were found, when the chi-square test was utilized, between (a) sex, (b) socio-economic status, (c) the degree of religious orientation, (d) the size of the community, and perceptions concerning the degree to which each of the following aspects of the respondent's environment values a strong family life: (a) friends, (b) work associates, (c) church, (d) relatives, (e) community.

#### Discussion and Conclusions

The findings that the majority of respondents perceived their friends and relatives to value very highly a strong family life is in agreement with what Zimmerman and Cervantes (1960) identified in their study as qualities that contributed to successful families. Some of the qualities they had listed were:

- 1) Successful families have more intimate family friends and have more in common with their friends than do unsuccessful families.
- 2) The basic "social" family principle is that of common values. This unique, purposeful, common value principle begins with mating and extends through the life history of the family and outward in family friends.
- 3) In every city, in every degree of intimacy and in every measure of friendship similarity, the co-working of intimacy and similarity has been associated strikingly with success. The more friends are like each other, the more successful they are in avoiding divorce, desertion, juvenile arrest records and other phases of the breaking up of homes and domestic relations.
- 4) Parents with an ideal for their children, such as school continuance, can most thoroughly implement that ideal in the minds of the children by surrounding their household from the beginning with friends who also possess the same ideals.
- 5) The totality of all the impressions of life other than parental had been received by the children from members of friend families.
- 6) Friendship between similar minded adults living in proximity over a period of years results in its most basic or primary type. The friendship of this type is between equals, is voluntaristic, involves common

experiences and is not primarily for the appetitive pleasure or political, economic or social gain.

Therefore, the families who were successful in their study allowed only those families who were like themselves into their homes and circle of friends. Depending on the city, from three-tenths to almost half of the family-group friends were relatives.

The finding that the majority of respondents perceived their church to value very highly a strong family life supports the research by Figley (1973). Figley reports that religion has an important part in the lives of strong families. Religion functions to support and to make the family stronger. The church supports the family structure by strengthening it both internally and externally (Crockett, Babchuk, and Ballweg, 1969, and Grams, 1967).

The findings that the majority of respondents perceived their work associates to value very highly a strong family may be due to the nature of this sample being from smaller communities and rural areas. Geographic influences may be more reflective of the individual's perceptions rather than being attributable either to family or generational factors (Bengtson, 1975).

The finding that the majority of respondents perceived their community to value highly a strong family life may be due to the geographic location and the amount of influence that location has on the individual. The amount of actual involvement in community activities may also help influence the respondents perceptions. Involvement in the community increases as one moves up in socio-economic status. Childless couples are more politically active than middle class families with children. Middle class families with children were found to be less active in the community (Gove, Gumm, Motz, and Thompson, 1973).

#### Implications and Recommendations

One implication suggested by this study is the challenge to family counselors to widen their spectrum when counseling with a family to include their near social environment; such as friends, work associates, church, relatives, and community activities. According to the results of the analysis, the majority of respondents perceived their friends, relatives, work associates, and church to value very highly



a strong family life. This helps support the implication that the people that are included in an intimate circle have a strong influence on each others' behavior. Therefore, one recommendation to consider may be an action oriented research where counselors use more of the near social environment in family counseling.

The present results have strong implications that the church should be very much involved in family counseling. The church supports the family structure by strengthening it both internally and externally (Crockett, Babchuk, and Ballweg, 1969, and Grams, 1967). It is suggested that either the church include in its personnel a family counselor, or the personnel already involved with the church have more formal education in family counseling.

There is a need for more research on family strengths. Such information needs to be included in educational materials as well as in the classroom to help students develop concepts as to what they can do to build strong families. There are also implications for further research being useful to educators, clergymen, counselors, and social workers.

Further study on family strengths should be broadened in order to meet the needs of more people. The following recommendations are suggested for studies concerning family strengths:

- a) a study including a national sample,
- b) a study including a larger number of ethnic groups,
- c) a study including a more distributed number of persons representative of all socio-economic levels, and
- d) a study involving the measurement of family strengths over the family life cycle.

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## APPENDIXES




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**OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY • STILLWATER**


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 Department of Family Relations & Child Development  
 (405) 372-6211, Ext. 6084

74074

August 12, 1975

Dear Friend:

You and most other Americans may have often wondered, "How can family life be made stronger and more satisfying?". The Department of Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University is conducting a state-wide research project which is attempting to find answers to this question. You have shown an interest in improving your family life by the fact that you have chosen to gain greater understanding of your family situation through counseling. Because of this we thought you might be interested in this research project.

We would like to ask you to participate in this research by completing the enclosed questionnaire. There is a questionnaire for you and one for your spouse. If possible, would you both complete the questionnaires (please answer them separately and do not compare answers) and return them in the self-addressed, pre-paid envelope as soon as possible. If for some reason one of you can not assist with the research, we would greatly appreciate it if the other would send his or her questionnaire to us separately.

Your answers are anonymous and confidential since you are asked not to put your name on the questionnaire. Please answer each question as honestly as you can. We are not interested in how you think you should answer the questions, but we are interested in what you actually feel and do in your family situation.

It is expected that the information gained from this research will be of benefit to families and also of benefit to persons in the helping professions such as teachers, ministers, and counselors.

We appreciate your participation in this research. It is only through the contribution of persons such as you that we can gain greater understanding of marriage and family relationships.

Thank you,

Sincerely yours,

 Nick Stinnett, Ph.D.  
 Associate Professor  
 Department of Family Relations and Child Development

NS/jg

Enclosures

Oklahoma State University  
Division of Home Economics

Department of Family Relations  
and Child Development

Your cooperation in this research project is greatly appreciated. Your contribution in a research project of this type helps us to gain greater knowledge and insight into family relationships.

Please check or fill in answers as appropriate to each question. Your answers are confidential and anonymous since you do not have to put your name on the questionnaire. Please be as honest in your answers as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. Family Member: Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Father \_\_\_\_\_
2. Race:
  1. White \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Black \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Indian \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Oriental \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What church do you attend?
5. Who earns most of the income for your family?
  1. Husband \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Wife \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Other \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the educational attainment of the husband?
7. What is the educational attainment of the wife?
8. Husband's Occupation:
9. Wife's Occupation:
10. Major source of income for the family:
  1. Inherited savings and investments \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Earned wealth, transferable investment \_\_\_\_\_



3. Profits, royalties, fees \_\_\_\_\_
4. Salary, Commissions (regular, monthly, or yearly) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Hourly wages, weekly checks \_\_\_\_\_
6. Odd jobs, seasonal work, private charity \_\_\_\_\_
7. Public relief or charity \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. Residence:

1. On farm or in country \_\_\_\_\_
2. Small town under 25,000 \_\_\_\_\_
3. City of 25,000 to 50,000 \_\_\_\_\_
4. City of 50,000 to 100,000 \_\_\_\_\_
5. City of over 100,000 \_\_\_\_\_

12. Indicate below how religious your family is: (Rate on the 5 point scale with 5 representing the highest degree of religious orientation and 1 representing the least.)

1 2 3 4 5

## 13. How long have you been married to your present spouse? \_\_\_\_\_

## 14. If this is not your first marriage was your previous marriage ended by:

1. Divorce \_\_\_\_\_
2. Death of spouse \_\_\_\_\_

## 15. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

## 16. What are their ages? \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer all the items in this questionnaire pertaining to parent-child relationships as they apply to your relationship (and your spouse's relationship) with your oldest child living at home.

17. Indicate the degree of closeness of your relationship with your child (oldest child living at home) on the following 5 point scale (with 5 representing the greatest degree of closeness and 1 representing the least degree)

1 2 3 4 5

18. Indicate the degree of closeness of your spouse's relationship with your child (oldest child living at home) on the following 5 point scale with 5 representing the greatest degree of closeness and 1 representing the least degree).

1 2 3 4 5

19. Please rate the happiness of your marriage on the following 5 point scale (5 represents the greatest degree of happiness and 1 represents the least degree of happiness.) Circle the point which most nearly describes your degree of happiness.

1      2      3      4      5

20. Please rate the happiness of your relationship with your child on the following 5 point scale (5 represents the greatest degree of happiness and 1 represents the least degree of happiness.) Circle the point which most nearly describes your degree of happiness.

1      2      3      4      5

21. What would you most like to change about your marriage relationship?
22. What do you feel has contributed most to making your marriage satisfying?
23. What do you feel has contributed most to making your relationship with your child strong?
24. What would you most like to change about your relationship with your oldest child living at home?

25. Now we would like to find out how satisfied you are with your mate's performance of certain marriage roles at the present time. Please answer each question by circling the most appropriate letter at the left of each item.

Circle VS if you feel very satisfied; circle S if you feel satisfied; circle U if you feel undecided; circle US if you feel unsatisfied; and VUS if you feel very unsatisfied.

How satisfied are you with your mate in each of the following areas?

- |   |    |   |   |    |     |
|---|----|---|---|----|-----|
| 1. Providing a feeling of security in me.                 | VS | S | U | US | VUS |
| 2. Expressing affection toward me.                        | VS | S | U | US | VUS |
| 3. Giving me an optimistic feeling toward life.           | VS | S | U | US | VUS |
| 4. Expressing a feeling of being emotionally close to me. | VS | S | U | US | VUS |
| 5. Bringing out the best qualities in me.                 | VS | S | U | US | VUS |
| 6. Helping me to become a more interesting person.        | VS | S | U | US | VUS |

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 7. Helping me to continue to develop my personality.                                     | VS S U US VUS |
| 8. Helping me to achieve my individual potential (become what I am capable of becoming). | VS S U US VUS |
| 9. Being a good listener.  | VS S U US VUS |
| 10. Giving me encouragement when I am discouraged.                                       | VS S U US VUS |
| 11. Accepting my differentness.  | VS S U US VUS |
| 12. Avoiding habits which annoy me.  | VS S U US VUS |
| 13. Letting me know how he or she really feels about something.                          | VS S U US VUS |
| 14. Trying to find satisfactory solutions to our disagreements.                          | VS S U US VUS |
| 15. Expressing disagreement with me honestly and openly.                                 | VS S U US VUS |
| 16. Letting me know when he or she is displeased with me.                                | VS S U US VUS |
| 17. Helping me to feel that life has meaning.  | VS S U US VUS |
| 18. Helping me to feel needed.   | VS S U US VUS |
| 19. Helping me to feel that my life is serving a purpose.                                | VS S U US VUS |
| 20. Helping me to obtain satisfaction and pleasure in daily activities.                  | VS S U US VUS |
| 21. Giving me recognition for my past accomplishments.                                   | VS S U US VUS |
| 22. Helping me to feel that my life has been important.                                  | VS S U US VUS |
| 23. Helping me to accept my past life experiences as good and rewarding.                 | VS S U US VUS |
| 24. Helping me to accept myself despite my shortcomings.                                 | VS S U US VUS |
26. Some people make us feel good about ourselves. That is, they make us feel self-confident, worthy, competent, and happy about ourselves. What is the degree to which your spouse makes you feel good about yourself? Indicate on the following 5 point scale (5 represents the greatest degree and 1 represents the least degree)

1      2      3      4      5

27. (a) What exactly does your spouse do that makes you feel good about yourself?

(b) What exactly does your spouse do that makes you feel bad about yourself?

28. Indicate on the following 5 point scale the degree to which you think you make your spouse feel good about himself/herself. (5 represents the greatest degree and 1 represents the least).

1            2            3            4            5

29. What exactly do you do that makes your spouse feel good about himself/herself?

30. Indicate on the following 5 point scale the degree to which your child makes you feel good about yourself. (5 represents greatest degree and 1 represents the least).

1            2            3            4            5

31. What exactly does he/she do that makes you feel good about yourself?

32. Indicate on the following 5 point scale the degree to which you think you make your child feel good about himself/herself. (5 represents the greatest and 1 represents the least).

1            2            3            4            5

33. What exactly do you do that makes them feel good about himself/herself?

34. How would you rate the degree of commitment of:

	Very high	High	Average	Low	Very Low
1. Your spouse to you.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. You to your spouse.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Your child to you.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. You to your child.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

35. Rate the degree to which:

	Very high	High	Average	low	Very low
1. Your spouse stands by you when you are in trouble.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. You stand by your spouse when he/she is in trouble.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

- |  | Very high | High  | Average | Low   | Very low |
|--|-----------|-------|---------|-------|----------|
| 3. Your spouse is concerned with promoting your welfare and happiness.   | _____     | _____ | _____   | _____ | _____    |
| 4. You are concerned with promoting your spouse's welfare and happiness.   | _____     | _____ | _____   | _____ | _____    |
| 36. Rate the degree of appreciation expressed by:  |           |       |         |       |          |
|  | Very high | High  | Average | Low   | Very low |
| 1. Your spouse to you.   | _____     | _____ | _____   | _____ | _____    |
| 2. You to your spouse.   | _____     | _____ | _____   | _____ | _____    |
| 3. Your child to you.  | _____     | _____ | _____   | _____ | _____    |
| 4. You to your child.  | _____     | _____ | _____   | _____ | _____    |
| 37. Rate the degree to which:  |           |       |         |       |          |
|  | Very high | High  | Average | Low   | Very low |
| 1. Your spouse respects your individuality (that is, respects your individual interests, views, etc.)  | _____     | _____ | _____   | _____ | _____    |
| 2. You respect your spouse's individuality.  | _____     | _____ | _____   | _____ | _____    |
| 3. Your child respects your individuality.   | _____     | _____ | _____   | _____ | _____    |
| 4. You respect your child's individuality.   | _____     | _____ | _____   | _____ | _____    |
| 38. Rate your degree of determination to make your relationship with your spouse satisfying: (rate on following 5 point scale with 5 representing <u>greatest</u> degree of determination and 1 representing the <u>least</u> degree.) |           |       |         |       |          |
|  | 1         | 2     | 3       | 4     | 5        |
| 39. Rate your degree of determination to make your relationship with your child satisfying: (5 representing the <u>greatest</u> degree and 1 representing the <u>least</u> ).  |           |       |         |       |          |
|  | 1         | 2     | 3       | 4     | 5        |
| 40. Rate your spouse's degree of determination to make your marriage relationship satisfying: (5 representing the <u>greatest</u> degree and 1 representing the <u>least</u> ).  |           |       |         |       |          |
|  | 1         | 2     | 3       | 4     | 5        |
| 41. Rate your spouse's degree of determination to make relationship with child satisfying: (5 representing the <u>greatest</u> degree and 1 representing the <u>least</u> ).   |           |       |         |       |          |
|  | 1         | 2     | 3       | 4     | 5        |

42. Please indicate below how you and your family usually participate in each of the following:

	Individ- ually	Husband and wife together	Child Alone	One parent with child	Both par- ents with child
1. Recreational Activities (such as movies, card games)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Vacations	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Sports (bowling, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Holidays and Special Occasions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Church Activities	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Eating meals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Decisions affecting family	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Some people make us feel comfortable. That is, we feel secure, unthreatened, like we can be ourselves when we are with them. We would like to find out how comfortable people feel with their marriage partners. Please rate questions 43 through 54 on the 5 point scale with 5 meaning the greatest degree of comfortableness and 1 meaning the least degree.

43. Rate how comfortable you and your spouse were with each other during your engagement:

1      2      3      4      5

44. Rate the degree to which you feel comfortable in sharing your problems with your spouse:

1      2      3      4      5

45. Rate the degree to which you think your spouse feels comfortable in sharing his/her problems with you:

1      2      3      4      5

46. Rate the degree to which you think your child feels comfortable in sharing his/her problems with you:

1      2      3      4      5

47. Rate the degree to which you think your child feels comfortable in sharing his/her problems with your spouse:

1      2      3      4      5

48. Rate how comfortable you now feel with your spouse:

1      2      3      4      5

49. Rate how comfortable you think your spouse now feels with you:

1      2      3      4      5

50. Rate how comfortable you now feel with your child:

1      2      3      4      5

51. Rate how comfortable you think your child now feels with you:

1      2      3      4      5

52. Indicate below how much conflict (serious disagreements) you experience with your spouse:

1      2      3      4      5

53. Indicate below how much conflict you experience with your child:

1      2      3      4      5

54. Indicate below how much conflict your spouse experiences with your child:

1      2      3      4      5

55. Please indicate how often you and your spouse respond to conflict situations in each of the following ways: (5 represents very often; 1 represents very rarely).

	You					Your spouse				
1. Is specific when introducing a gripe.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Just mainly complains.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Sticks to one issue at a time.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. Is intolerant.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. Is willing to compromise.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. Calls others names (such as neurotic, coward, stupid, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	You					Your spouse				
7. Brings up the past.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. Uses sarcasm.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. Checks to be sure he/she correctly understands the other persons feeling about the disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. Respects right of other person to disagree.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

56. Rate the degree to which you are satisfied with the communication pattern between you and:

1. Your spouse

Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
 Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
 Uncertain \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_

2. Your child

Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
 Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
 Uncertain \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_

57. If the communication pattern between you and your spouse is good, what do you think has made it good? (If unsatisfactory, what do you think has made it unsatisfactory?)

58. If the communication pattern between you and your child is good, what do you think has made it good? (If unsatisfactory, what has made it unsatisfactory?)

59. How often do you and your spouse talk together?

60. How often do you and your child talk together?

61. How often does your spouse and child talk together?

62. Indicate the degree to which each of the following behaviors describe you and your spouse: (5 indicates the behavior is very common and 1 indicates the behavior is very rare).

	You					Your spouse				
1. Is judgemental toward others.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5



- |  | You |   |   |   |   | Your spouse |   |   |   |   |
|--|-----|---|---|---|---|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| 2. Does not try to control other's behavior.   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Uses strategy (psychological games) to get others to do what he/she wants them to do. | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Acts disinterested in others.   | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Does not act superior toward others.  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Is open minded to the ideas of others.  | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
63. How often do you and your spouse do things together (rate on the following 5 point scale, with 5 representing very often and 1 representing very rarely)?
- 1    2    3    4    5
64. What are two things which you most enjoy doing together?
65. How often do you do things with your child (rate on the following 5 point scale, with 5 representing very often and 1 representing very rarely)?
- 1    2    3    4    5
66. What are two things which you most enjoy doing with your child?
67. How often does your spouse do things with your child (rate on the following 5 point scale, with 5 representing very often and 1 representing very rarely)?
- 1    2    3    4    5
- Many families today experience the pressure of having to do many different things in day to day living.
68. How much of a problem is today's busy pace of life for your family? (Rate on the following 5 point scale with 5 indicating it is a great problem and 1 indicating it is little or no problem).
- 1    2    3    4    5
69. What things do you do to prevent this problem from hurting your family life?

70. Following are some proverbs and sayings about life. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each by circling the appropriate letter. The response code is: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree.

- |   |    |   |   |   |    |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. A wise way to live is to look on the bright side of things.                              | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 2. For every problem that arises there is usually a solution.                               | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 3. People rarely get what they want in life.  | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 4. When all is said and done we really have little control over what happens to us in life. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 5. To a large degree we are the "captains of our own fate."                                 | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 6. Whether we are happy or not depends upon the kinds of things that happen to us in life.  | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 7. There is a higher power (God) that operates in the daily lives of people.                | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 8. God answers prayer.  | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 9. There is no power higher than man.   | SA | A | U | D | SD |

71. Please rate the degree to which you think each of the following persons or groups values a good, strong family life:

	Values Strongly	Values	Undecided	Values Little	Values very Little
1. Your friends.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. The people you work with.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Your church.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Your community.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Your relatives (your parents, in-laws, brothers and sisters, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

72. How often does your family see your:

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| 1. Parents   | _____ |
| 2. Spouse's parents                                      | _____ |
| 3. Other relatives<br>(brothers, sister, aunts,<br>etc.) | _____ |

For each statement below, decide which of the following answers best applies to you. Place the number of the answer in the box at the left of the statement. Please be as honest as you can.

1. usually    2. often    3. sometimes    4. occasionally    5. rarely    6. never

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. I try to be with people.  | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. I try to include other people in my plans.                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. I let other people decide what to do.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. I let other people control my actions.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. I join social groups.   | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. I try to have people around me.                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. I try to have close relationships with people.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 12. I try to get close and personal with people.               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. I tend to join social organizations when I have an opportunity. | <input type="checkbox"/> 13. When people are doing things together I tend to join them. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. I let other people strongly influence my actions.               | <input type="checkbox"/> 14. I am easily led by people.                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. I try to be included in informal social activities.             | <input type="checkbox"/> 15. I try to avoid being alone.                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8. I try to have close, personal relationships with people.        | <input type="checkbox"/> 16. I try to participate in group activities.                  |

For each of the next group of statements, choose one of the following answers:

1. most people    2. many people    3. some people    4. a few people    5. one or two people    6. nobody

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17. I try to be friendly to people.                         | <input type="checkbox"/> 23. I try to get close and personal with people.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18. I let other people decide what to do.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 24. I let other people control my actions.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19. My personal relations with people are cool and distant. | <input type="checkbox"/> 25. I act cool and distant with people.                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20. I let other people take charge of things.               | <input type="checkbox"/> 26. I am easily led by people.                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21. I try to have close relationships with people.          | <input type="checkbox"/> 27. I try to have close, personal relationships with people. |

For each of the next group of statements, choose one of the following answers:

1. most people    2. many people    3. some people    4. a few people    5. one or two people    6. nobody

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 28. I like people to invite me to things.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 35. I like people to act cool and distant toward me.               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 29. I like people to act close and personal with me.        | <input type="checkbox"/> 36. I try to have other people do things the way I want them done. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30. I try to influence strongly other people's actions.     | <input type="checkbox"/> 37. I like people to ask me to participate in their discussions.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31. I like people to invite me to join in their activities. | <input type="checkbox"/> 38. I like people to act friendly toward me.                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 32. I like people to act close toward me.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 39. I like people to invite me to participate in their activities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 33. I try to take charge of things when I am with people.   | <input type="checkbox"/> 40. I like people to act distant toward me.                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 34. I like people to include me in their activities.        |   |

For each of the next group of statements, choose one of the following answers:

1. usually    2. often    3. sometimes    4. occasionally    5. rarely    6. never

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 41. I try to be the dominant person when I am with people. | <input type="checkbox"/> 48. I like people to include me in their activities.               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 42. I like people to invite me to things.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 49. I like people to act close and personal with me.               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 43. I like people to act close toward me.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 50. I try to take charge of things when I'm with people.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 44. I try to have other people do things I want done.      | <input type="checkbox"/> 51. I like people to invite me to participate in their activities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45. I like people to invite me to join their activities.   | <input type="checkbox"/> 52. I like people to act distant toward me.                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 46. I like people to act cool and distant toward me.       | <input type="checkbox"/> 53. I try to have other people do things the way I want them done. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 47. I try to influence strongly other people's actions.    | <input type="checkbox"/> 54. I take charge of things when I'm with people.                  |

VITA

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Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: PERCEPTIONS OF STRONG FAMILY MEMBERS CONCERNING THE DEGREE TO WHICH A STRONG FAMILY LIFE IS VALUED BY THEIR NEAR SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

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