

THE MANNER IN WHICH STRONG FAMILIES
PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES WHICH
COMPRISE A LARGE SEGMENT OF
POTENTIAL FAMILY
INTERACTION TIME

By

ROBERT MICKEY WRIGHT

Bachelor of Arts

University of Kansas

Lawrence, Kansas

1975

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
May, 1977

Thesis
1977
W952m
Cop. 2



THE MANNER IN WHICH STRONG FAMILIES
PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES WHICH
COMPRISE A LARGE SEGMENT OF
POTENTIAL FAMILY
INTERACTION TIME

Thesis Approved:

Nick Stinnett

Thesis Adviser

Atten Wright

Julia L. M. Hale

Norman M. Wubben

Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express gratitude to all who have helped to make this study possible.

A personal thanks goes to Dr. Nick Stinnett, Associate Professor, Department of Family Relations and Child Development, who made this study possible. His inspiration and guidance promoted the completion of this study.

Heartfelt appreciation is expressed to Dr. Julia McHale and Dr. Althea Wright for their critical reading and suggestions in the preparation of this study.

Recognition is extended to Iris McPherson for her help in the data analysis and Velda Davis for typing the manuscript.

To my wife, Cami Wright, and my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Wright, goes special appreciation for their understanding and encouragement throughout this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Statement of Problem | 1 |
| Need for Research | 2 |
| Purpose of the Study | 6 |
| II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE | 8 |
| Family Strength | 8 |
| Family Solidarity | 11 |
| Leisure Related to Working Groups | 13 |
| Television as Leisure | 15 |
| Vacations | 15 |
| Religion and the Family | 17 |
| III. PROCEDURE | 19 |
| Selection of Subjects | 19 |
| Description of Instrument | 20 |
| Analysis of the Data | 21 |
| IV. RESULTS | 23 |
| Description of the Subjects | 23 |
| Perceptions of Strong Family Members Concerning Styles of Family Participation in Selected Activities | 26 |
| Examination of Hypothesis and Discussion of Results | 29 |
| V. SUMMARY | 36 |
| Conclusions and Discussion | 38 |
| Recommendations | 42 |
| A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY | 44 |
| APPENDIX | 47 |

LIST OF TABLES

| Table | Page |
|---|------|
| I. Characteristics of the Subjects | 24 |
| II. Perceptions of Strong Family Members Concerning Styles of Family Participation in Selected Activities | 27 |
| III. Chi-Square Values Reflecting Differences in the Manner in Which a Family Usually Par- ticipates in Each of the Seven Areas of Family Activities According to Socio- Economic Status, Religious Preference, Age, and Number of Years Married | 30 |
| IV. Z Values Reflecting Relationships Between the Number of Children and the Manner in Which a Family Usually Participates in Recreational Activities, Sports, Church Activities, and Decisions Affecting the Family | 34 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Zimmerman (1972) has observed that a society with a strong family system is more likely to overcome adverse condition than a weak family structure. The family system is the connecting link between the individual and society; the family has historically been the stabilizing factor of society and the individual. A healthy family unit becomes important for the individual and society.

Certain activities--leisure and recreational activities, eating meals, holidays and special occasions, church activities, and decisions affecting the family--comprise a large segment of a family's potential interaction time. The fact that evidence indicates families are becoming more individualistic and fragmented (Stinnett and Birdsong, 1977), suggest that such activities are being engaged in by the whole family together as a unit to a lesser extent than in the past. If families are participating in such activities together as a family unit less frequently, are the effects detrimental to family life? Little research has been conducted examining the relationship between marriage success or family strength and the manner in which family members

participate in such activities (individually, husband and wife together, child alone, one parent with the child, or both parents with the child). This type of research could provide greater insight into family strength and the role which family togetherness may or may not play in contributing to family strengths.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of research concerning strong families primarily because the focus in the literature and research has been on family pathology (Otto, 1975). Much more research needs to be conducted on the concept of family strengths, particularly in view of the rising divorce rate and the fact that the number of divorces recently surpassed the one million mark for the first time (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1976).

Most individuals believe that a strong, satisfying family life is considered a top priority in their life. Along with this popular belief, are those couples who divorce or remain married in a destructive relationship. These conditions persist because there are no set standards that determine the needs and functions of a successful family.

Need for Research

The manner in which a family participates in activities comprising a large segment of a family's potential interaction time (such as leisure and recreational activities, eating meals, holidays and special occasions, church activities, and decisions affecting the family), has not been

fully researched. By having more research on how strong families participate in these types of activities, we might gain understanding into the relational patterns of families and also the role which companionship and togetherness play in strengthening families. This type of research seems to be particularly needed in view of the prediction that the American family will experience more leisure time in the future and will become more individualistic in nature.

The conceptions of leisure have changed as well as an increase in the opportunities for using free time. "The latest meaning of leisure for most people is that you do a thing that you want to do, at your own pace" (Carisse, 1975, p. 191). For some, the connotation of family activity, whether individual or together, ranges from skiing on a snow-filled mountain, to basking in the sun, or playing tennis. Since some companies have shortened the normal work week, an increasing amount of time is left for a person or family to do what they desire.

Leisure has usually been thought of as an individual behavior and has not been collectively thought of, especially involving the family. If play is considered an active component of leisure, we must have an adequate understanding of leisure in order to understand companionship, togetherness, and play within the family. With this, we may be able to better understand the saying, "The family that plays together, stays together" (Orthner, 1975b, p. 91). Leisure is seen as helping to establish the outcome of marital and family

happiness. Yet, little is known about the relational satisfaction of families during leisure.

There may be an unequal distribution of leisure, (usually more for the youth and adult males) along with the increasing attitude of non-work, causing conflict within the family. If the family cannot be seen as a source of positive input during certain family activities, youth turn to other means. Implications found by Gunter and Moore (1975) concerning youth have shown that there has been a movement of activities from within families to outside sources. There is "competition with peers, mass media" (p. 202), and the divergent philosophies of universities. Sometimes, parental self-concept is such that they turn to their offspring to capture their diminishing identity. Youth seek out new forms of experimentation while some desires are cut short due to age. If the family cannot be seen as a source of strength when engaged in family activities, youth turn to other means. "Family strength implies that strength is a value to be sought, that strong families are preferred to weak ones" (Grams, 1967, p. 4).

The dearth of research in this area explains some of the misunderstanding and lack of material written concerning leisure and family adjustment. ". . . we know more about what people are doing in their free time, how many people are participating in the various activities, and how much they spend for leisure than we know about how it affects

their lives, and those with whom they interact" (Orthner, 1975b, p. 92).

How do strong families participate in activities such as leisure and recreational activities, eating meals, holidays and special occasions, church activities, and decisions affecting the family? Do they participate with only certain members, together as a total family, or individually? Does the activity such as vacations or sporting events, determine how the family participates? We can learn more about the importance of family activities if we find out how strong families participate in certain major activities. Gaining this type of information could give us additional insight into family strengths.

The focus of this study is to examine the perceptions of strong families concerning the use of family activities including how each member interacts within the family during different family activities. Strong family as used here was determined by the following guidelines. They are:

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

In addition, the respondents must have rated their marital happiness and satisfaction in the parent-child relationship as very high on the questionnaire.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To examine the perceptions of members of strong families concerning the manner in which a family usually participates individually, husband and wife together, child alone, one parent with the child, both parents with the child, in each of the following:
 - (a) Recreational Activities
 - (b) Vacations
 - (c) Sports
 - (d) Holidays and Special Occasions
 - (e) Church Activities
 - (f) Eating Meals
 - (g) Decisions Affecting the Family
2. To examine the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the manner in which a strong family usually participates (individually, husband and wife together, child alone, one parent with the child, both parents with child), in each of the areas mentioned above according to: (a) socioeconomic status, (b) religious

preference, (c) age, (d) number of children,
(e) number of years married.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Family Strength

We know very little about the concept of family strengths. Otto (1962, 1963, 1964, 1966, 1967, 1972, 1975) defined family strength as being a continual process. The criteria he used in developing a framework for family strengths consists of the following:

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. A concern for family unity, loyalty, and inter-family cooperation.
12. The ability to use crisis or seemingly injurious experience as a means of growth.

Otto (1962) viewed family strengths as containing identifiable elements which the individuals within the family are encouraged to develop. The result is a totalness termed family strength.

A strong family as defined by Blackburn (1967) is viewed as mutual role fulfillment and satisfaction within the parent-child and husband-wife dyads. Within this context a family may perform certain activities that produce a strengthening affect on the totalness of the family.

Zimmerman and Cervantes (1960) observed that successful families have developed more intimate family friends and have more in common with their friends than do unsuccessful families. Families who develop such friendships noticeably reduce the likelihood of injurious home and domestic relationships.

deLissovoy (1973) conducted a study involving high risk marriages. He noticed a kin network of economic, psychological support and church activities which helped to

sustain a marriage.

Reeder (1973) constructed a model of family characteristics which would aid families in solving problems with 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, and (h) prefers specific value orientations.

Ball (1976) noticed that satisfactory interfamilial communication was a characteristic of strong families. The components contributing to satisfying communication included: (a) talking out problems together, (b) honesty (openness), (c) listening, and (d) talking together.

Sauer (1976) reported that strong families were characterized by: (a) mutual respect and understanding, (b) expressions of appreciation among family members, (c) parental expressions of interest in their children and their activities, and (d) that religious convictions are important to their life style.

Ammons (1976) reported that couples among strong families expressed the following significant complementary

need relationships:

1. Nurturance-Exhibition. The wife's need to give help was connected with the husband's need for attention.
2. Succorance-Affiliation. The wife's need to receive help, and encouragement, was associated with the husband's need for people.
3. Intracception-Succorance. The wife's need to empathize and understand was connected with the husband's need to receive help, as encouragement.
4. Affiliation-Dominance. The wife's need for people is associated with the husband's need to persuade others.
5. Endurance-Nurturance. The wife's need to finish a project was connected with the husband's need to give help and sympathy.
6. Affiliation-Sex. Husband-wife need for strong attachments was associated with the mate's need for sex.

Family Solidarity

Activities that a family engages in may be considered an element of the totalness of family strength. In part, the success of husband-wife and parent-child subsystems may depend on the strengthening aspects of certain family activities. Family activities have been thought to be that which we choose to do or do not have to do. Free time and leisure

time are not to be considered the same. Free time has been taken up by more work whereas the purpose of leisure is to help people restore themselves in order to keep on producing. On a yearly basis, Carisse (1975) noticed "we can say that free time has increased from 16 to 23 percent, depending on the social class you belong to" (p. 193). Social standards change the use of leisure time or fill potential leisure time. A study by Orthner (1975a) observed that parents greatly influence their children as to whether they will be oriented towards work or laziness and whether the children will take responsibility or evade responsible behavior.

The main problem appears to be that many families have not learned ways to enhance and reinforce within their own family system the creative uses of family activities. Orthner (1976) has noticed that the type of marital interaction a couple chooses is reinforced by the activities that are chosen to accompany their leisure patterns. "...the greater the frequency of interaction in the leisure activities selected by the respondents, the greater the shared communication in the marriage" (p. 105). "A high proportion of time spent in individual activities has been found to be negatively related to marital satisfaction. On the other hand, "joint" activities, those which require interaction, are most likely to be associated with family solidarity" (Orthner, 1975a, p. 177). This solidarity, aided by planning and preparation, can help to bring about better family

cohesiveness and interpersonal understanding. Kelly (1974) sees the most important resources of leisure as being "health, time, money, and skill" (p. 189). Those parts that seem to influence leisure decisions possibly depend more on the situation than the social placement.

Since no two individuals are alike, we can assume that husbands and wives will not be alike as to their view in the use of activities for the family. Orthner (1975b) was concerned with husband and wife interaction during "individual", "joint", and "parallel" forms of leisure and marital happiness. Individual forms were related negatively to marital happiness (more for the wives than husbands). Parallel activities were viewed as more positive with joint activities being the highest in relation to marital satisfaction. The critical period of leisure in determining marital satisfaction is twofold:

(1) the first years of marriage when the dyadic formation process is crystallizing in marital adjustment, and (2) after 18 to 23 years when the marital relationship is re-establishing itself and new dyadic adjustment becomes necessary (Orthner, 1975b, p. 101).

Leisure Related to Working Groups

Technological advances has altered the leisure possibilities considerably and the time we choose to dedicate towards leisure is partly defined by society. Noe (1974) found that styles of leisure life among lower-middle classes hold to entertainment and sporting events, while the upper

and upper-middle class moves towards fine arts, associations, and deeper experiences with their culture and life.

Those involved in the professional work, as found by Lansbury (1974), announced that work and leisure extended over into each other and those in advanced fields of management felt pressured to keep up on the current trends outside of work. Line managers were more home oriented separating work and leisure (working around the house, do-it-yourself projects). The social participators (careerist orientated) leisure activities were outside the home and moderately separated work and leisure. The operational researchers (academic oriented) were bound for cultural interests viewing work and leisure as interrelated. High prestige groups in the study by Bishop and Ikeda (1970), felt superior about the fact they did not own or hardly watched TV. Their activities included attending concerts, plays, adult classes, reading and physical activities with quick body motions making up for the inactivity of their profession. Low-prestigious groups involved themselves in gardening, bowling, hunting, arts and crafts, and other related interests. Assuming the emphasis is on the cultural, traditional image of masculine or feminine occupational roles, we find that masculine physical occupational people participated in masculine leisure, as hunting and fishing, while feminine jobs preferred feminine-like leisure, as playing cards or arts and crafts.

Television as Leisure

Television is increasingly becoming a major source of family entertainment. The American family as noticed by Rue (1974) "views television some 6.12 hours per day, representing one-fourth of a lifetime; or well over one-third of all one's waking hours" (p. 73). When a major portion of family time is spent watching TV, the family tends to be parallel or individual-oriented rather than interactive. Not only is TV used as entertainment and escape, but it restructures leisure time behavior, diminishes a child's play period, and the more possibility of parent-child conflict is brought about by arguing over choice of program watched or neglecting of household duties. The effect of television operation as observed by Rosenblatt and Cunningham (1976) could manufacture tension and frustration by quarreling over programs, noise or distraction. TV can be used as a form of escape or possible coping mechanism. This study suggested that "the relationship between family tension and television watching is due more to the use of television watching in order to avoid tense interaction than to television set operation as a source of frustration" (Rosenblatt and Cunningham, 1976, p. 109).

Vacations

The study done by Rosenblatt and Russell (1975) felt that families are usually better protected at home from problems than on a vacation. Separateness can originate

from outside the family involving individual activities as meetings, recreation, etc. This separation reduces a confrontation of moods and conflicts. Vacations provide more family togetherness yet involves a great deal of risk and conflict. A nuclear family traveling together will experience less frustration than friends traveling together. If children are involved, necessary adjustments are made even to the point of making them scapegoats. Children as noted by Chandler (1971) feel a need to decide on leisure activities not only during free time but also in child-parent discussions. Children desire recreation that involves the family, yet some feel such leisure is a one-way ticket to nowhere.

Being jerked out of expected roles and idealizing the vacation may also cause dissatisfaction. The most remarkable finding "was that people who experienced bad weather on vacations experienced less anger and tension than people who had good weather" (Rosenblatt and Russell, 1975, p. 214). The weather could be blamed for disappointments and fewer decisions had to be made. Clark and Kempler (1973) found that therapeutic camping gives a family an opportunity to observe hidden behaviors, receive consultation, explore new ways of interacting, use other families as models, and to obtain feedback.

Intimate communication as seen by West and Merriam (1970) during outdoor family recreation determines whether cohesiveness jells in a family or not. This study suggested

that "summer activity was related to fall cohesiveness more than spring cohesiveness was to summer activity, suggesting that activity affects cohesiveness more than cohesiveness affects activity" (p. 255). Vacations could be considered an activity that produces cohesiveness within a family. Cohesiveness may be determined more by the wife's values on family activities concerning outdoor recreation.

Religion and the Family

The study by Otto (1966) found that if "working and playing together" and "sharing specific recreational activities are combined, it will be found that doing things together as a family is experienced as a major strength ranking" (p. 22). This is also noticed as being equivalent with shared faith, religious and moral values. Stinnett and Walters (1974) state that couples who have strong religious involvement and beliefs, tend to experience a higher rate of marital success and happiness along with less divorce.

Burchinal (1957) observed that "persons who are church members and who attend church regularly report slightly greater adjustment or satisfaction in marriage than persons who are not church members or who attend church infrequently or not at all" (p. 309). Burchinal (1957) agrees with Stephens (1968) that religious people may be sociable, conforming-conventional people who may be less prone to admit marital dissatisfaction or seek divorce. Yet, Stinnett and Walters (1974) acknowledge that the last 40 years have

produced studies indicating a positive association between religious involvement and marriage success.

Walters, Parker, and Stinnett (1972) found the church as having the greatest impact upon the formation of marital attitudes. If we define religious activity as church attendance, those families that are involved in religious activities have a lower divorce rate than nonreligious families. This could be due to the idea that the church helps to instill the concept of love in marriage and the family (Blood, 1969).

Stinnett and Walters (1977) suggest four possible reasons for the positive relationships between religious orientation and marital success. They are:

1. Major religions emphasize values that contribute to a successful marriage and family life. Such values include abiding love, commitment, respect, mutual support and responsibility of others, service, forgiveness, patience, and fidelity.
2. Church attendance is a rewarding joint activity which strengthens the family and provides a source of joy and companionship for family members.
3. Religious participation puts a couple in contact with other couples who have a high commitment for interpersonal interaction.
4. The awareness of God provides a corporate bond between family members.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Selection of Subjects

The 85 respondents (which comprised 30 couples and 25 individuals whose spouses did not respond to the questionnaire), representing 55 families, were obtained through the cooperation of the Extension Home Economist in each of the 77 counties in Oklahoma. Approximately 180 families received cover letters which explained the research study and the confidentiality of those being researched. Both husband and wife received individual questionnaires and were requested to fill out the form separately and not to exchange answers. A stamped, self-addressed return envelope was included with each questionnaire. The data was obtained during the months of March, April, and May, 1975.

The sample collected was obtained in cooperation with the Cooperative County Extension Service. The Extension Home Economists were considered to be reliable professionals to recommend strong families due to their training and competence in the area of home and family life, the degree of contact with families in their county, and their concern for (as well as the tradition of Home Economics) strengthening family life.

The Extension Home Economist in each of the 77 counties in Oklahoma were sent letters requesting that they recommend two or more families in their county who they felt were strong families. They were provided with guidelines for consideration in selecting these families. The general guidelines were:

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

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

Description of Instrument

The questionnaire was designed by Dr. Nick Stinnett, Associate Professor, Family Relations and Child Development Department, at Oklahoma State University. The questionnaire was designed to measure various aspects of family life which in this study leisure was indicated as a component 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. They were asked to 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 by the judges were incorporated into the final version of the instrument. A pre-test was also done with 20 families. 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 were used: (a) background information such as socioeconomic status, religious preference, age, number of children, and number of years married, (b) perceptions concerning the manner in which the family participates in: recreational activities, vacations, sports, holidays and special occasions, church activities, eating meals, and decisions affecting the family.

Analysis of the Data

Percentages and frequencies were used to examine the

background characteristics of the respondents such as: race, socioeconomic status, religious preference, age, number of children, and number of years married. Percentages and frequencies were also used to analyze the response of the respondents concerning the manner in which their family participates (individually, husband and wife together, child alone, one parent with child, both parents with child) in each of the following areas: recreational activities, vacations, sports, holidays and special occasions, church activities, eating meals, decisions affecting the family.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the manner in which the family participates in each of the areas mentioned above and the following variable: number of children. The reason for the selection of the Mann-Whitney U test, will be explained in Chapter V.

The chi-square test was selected to examine the hypothesis that there are no significant relationships between the manner in which the family participates in each of the areas mentioned above and each of the following variables: socioeconomic status, religious preference, age, and number of years married.

The level of significance which was used to determine if significant relationships existed was .05.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Description of the Subjects

A descriptive examination of the 85 respondents, representing 55 families, who were involved in this study is presented in Table I. The sample was comprised of 60.00 percent females and 40.00 percent males. The families' ages ranged from 20 to over 50 years, with the largest percentage (31.76%) in the 36-40 category, followed by the 41-45 age range with 27.06 percent. Approximately 80 percent of the subjects were 31-45 years old. The sample was 97.62 percent white. The majority of the sample (81.93%) was Protestant with 12.05 percent of the sample being Catholic. Most considered themselves to be highly religious (68.23%), followed by 28.23 percent who denoted a moderate degree of religion. Almost half of the respondents (48.23%) specified a rural or farm area as their residence and another 34.12 percent indicated they lived in small towns under 25,000 population.

The McGuire-White Index of Social Status (1955), determined that the sample was mainly from lower-middle (47.62%) and upper-middle (33.33%) socio-economic classes. The majority of the respondents (69.41%) voiced that the wife was not

TABLE I
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

| Variable | Classification | No. | Percent |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----|---------|
| 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. | Percent |
|----------------------------|----------------|-----|---------|
| 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 |

employed outside the home. The largest percent (40.00%) had three children, followed by 29.41 percent with two children.

Perceptions of Strong Family Members
Concerning Styles of Family
Participation in Selected
Activities

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of family members concerning participation (individually, husband and wife together, child alone, one parent with the child, both parents with the child), in each of the following:

- (a) Recreational activities
- (b) Vacations
- (c) Sports
- (d) Holidays and special occasions
- (e) Church activities
- (f) Eating meals
- (g) Decisions affecting the family

The results of the examinations concerning these perceptions are presented below. A detailed description of these results are found in Table II.

Recreational Activities

The majority of the respondents (65.06%) reported that their style of participation in recreational activities was both parents with a child. The second most frequent response

TABLE II

PERCEPTIONS OF STRONG FAMILY MEMBERS CONCERNING STYLES OF
FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN SELECTED ACTIVITIES

| Activity | Style of Family Participation | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|-----------------|-------|-------|------|--------------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| | Individually | | Husband Wife | | Child | | One Parent with Child | | Both Parents with Child | |
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Recreational Activities | 2 | 2.41 | 22 | 26.51 | 1 | 1.21 | 4 | 4.82 | 54 | 65.10 |
| Vacations | | | 2 | 2.50 | | | | | 78 | 97.50 |
| Sports | 4 | 4.94 | 5 | 6.17 | 3 | 3.70 | 14 | 17.28 | 55 | 67.90 |
| Holidays and Special Occasions | | | 1 | 1.77 | | | 1 | 1.77 | 83 | 97.65 |
| Church Activities | 3 | 3.57 | 2 | 2.38 | 3 | 3.57 | 12 | 14.29 | 64 | 76.19 |
| Eating Meals | 2 | 2.35 | 2 | 2.35 | | | 5 | 5.88 | 76 | 89.41 |
| Decisions Affecting the Family | 2 | 2.35 | 35 | 41.18 | | | | | 48 | 56.47 |

was husband-wife (26.51%). Only 2.41 percent indicated they participated in individual activities.

Vacations

The great majority of the respondents (97.50%) indicated the manner in which they took vacations was both parents with a child. The remainder of the respondents (2.50%) indicated their style of vacation participation was husband-wife alone.

Sports

The largest proportion of the subjects (67.90%) reported their style of sports participation as both parents with a child. The next most frequently given response was one parent with a child (17.28%).

Holidays and Special Occasions

The majority of the respondents (97.65%) reported their style of family participation during holidays and special occasions as both parents with a child. The remaining respondents were evenly distributed between the styles of husband-wife (1.18%) and one parent with a child (1.18%).

Church Activities

The great majority of the respondents (76.17%) reported their style of participation in church activities as both parents with a child. The second most frequent response was

one parent with a child (14.29%).

Eating Meals

The major percentage of respondents (89.41%) reported their style of participation was both parents with a child. Only 5.88 percent indicated a response of one parent with a child. An even smaller percentage of the respondents (2.35%) reported eating meals individually or husband-wife alone.

Decisions Affecting the Family

The greatest proportion of the sample reported their style of making decisions affecting the family as both parents with a child (56.47%) and husband-wife alone (41.18%). Only 2.35 percent of the respondents reported making decisions individually.

Examination of Hypothesis and

Discussion of Results

Hypothesis I. There is no significant difference in the manner in which a family usually participates (individually, husband and wife together, child alone, one parent with child, both parents with child), in each of the seven areas of family activities according to: (a) race, (b) socio-economic status, (c) religious preference, (d) age, (e) number of years married.

As Table III indicates no significant differences were

TABLE III

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN THE MANNER
IN WHICH A FAMILY USUALLY PARTICIPATES IN EACH OF
THE SEVEN AREAS OF FAMILY ACTIVITIES ACCORD-
ING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, RELIGIOUS
PREFERENCE, AGE, AND NUMBER OF
YEARS MARRIED*

| Variable | df | χ^2 | Level of Significance |
|---|----|----------|-----------------------|
| <u>Socio-Economic Status</u> | | | |
| Recreational Activities Vacations | 4 | 4.98 | N.S. |
| Sports Holidays and Special Occasions | 4 | 2.53 | N.S. |
| Church Activities | 4 | 2.46 | N.S. |
| Eating Meals | 2 | 3.23 | N.S. |
| Decisions Affecting the Family | 2 | 3.65 | N.S. |
| <u>Religious Preference</u> | | | |
| Recreational Activities Vacations | 2 | 4.65 | N.S. |
| Sports Holidays and Special Occasions | 2 | 3.19 | N.S. |
| Church Activities | 2 | 1.50 | N.S. |
| Eating Meals | 1 | 2.48 | N.S. |
| Decisions Affecting the Family | 1 | 2.32 | N.S. |
| <u>Age</u> | | | |
| Recreational Activities Vacations | 8 | 4.69 | N.S. |
| Sports Holidays and Special Occasions | 8 | 5.32 | N.S. |
| Church Activities | 8 | 5.06 | N.S. |
| Eating Meals | 4 | 4.89 | N.S. |
| Decisions Affecting the Family | 4 | 4.09 | N.S. |
| <u>Number of Years Married</u> | | | |
| Recreational Activities Vacations | 8 | 6.23 | N.S. |
| Sports Holidays and Special Occasions | 8 | 5.48 | N.S. |

TABLE III (Continued)

| Variable | df | χ^2 | Level of Significance |
|--------------------------------|----|----------|-----------------------|
| <u>Number of Years Married</u> | | | |
| (Continued) | | | |
| Church Activities | 8 | 6.29 | N.S. |
| Eating Meals | 4 | 3.74 | N.S. |
| Decisions Affecting the Family | 4 | 1.62 | N.S. |

*For the activities of Vacations, as well as Holidays and Special Occasions, there was not enough variation (practically all of the responses were in the category, both parent with child) in responses to conduct a Chi-Square test.

found to exist in the manner in which a family usually participates (individually, husband and wife together, child alone, one parent with child, both parents with child), in each of the seven areas of family activities according to: (a) socio-economic status, (b) religious preference, (c) age, and (e) number of years married.

The primary reason no significant difference was found to exist was due to the responses being clustered in the category both parents with child.

Hypothesis II. There is no significant difference in the manner in which a family usually participates involving (both parents with child and participation involving only part of the family), in each of the four areas of family activities (recreational activities, sports, church activities, and decisions affecting the family), according to number of children.

Due to the heavy concentration of responses in the category, both parents with child, this analysis compared only two categories, both parents with child and participation involving only part of the family (representing a combination of all other categories).

The other three activities (vacations, holidays and special occasions and eating meals), were not included in the analysis because there was not enough variation in the responses. The results of this hypothesis are presented below.

Hypothesis II (a). There is no significant difference in the manner in which a family usually participates involving (both parents with child and participation involving only part of the family), in recreational activities according to the number of children.

As Table IV indicates, a Z score of $-.11$ was obtained indicating there was no significant relationship between the manner in which a family participates in recreational activities and the number of children.

Hypothesis II (b). There is no significant difference in the manner in which a family usually participates involving (both parents with child and participation involving only part of the family), in sports according to the number of children.

No significant difference was found to exist in the manner in which a family usually participates in sports according to number of children. As Table IV illustrates, a Z score of $-.29$ was obtained.

Hypothesis II (c). There is no significant difference in the manner in which a family usually participates involving (both parents with child and participation involving only part of the family), in church activities according to the number of children.

When the Mann-Whitney U was applied, a Z score of $-.75$ was obtained. As Table IV indicates, this value reflects

TABLE IV
 Z VALUES REFLECTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE NUMBER
 OF CHILDREN AND THE MANNER IN WHICH A
 FAMILY USUALLY PARTICIPATES IN
 RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, SPORTS,
 CHURCH ACTIVITIES, AND DECISIONS
 AFFECTING THE FAMILY

| Activity | Z Value | Level of Significance |
|-----------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| Recreational Activities | -.11 | N.S. |
| Sports | -.29 | N.S. |
| Church Activities | -.75 | N.S. |
| Decisions Affecting the Family | -.78 | N.S. |

that no significant difference existed in the manner in which a family usually participates in church activities according to the number of children.

Hypothesis II (d). There is no significant difference in the manner in which a family usually participates involving (both parents with child and participation involving only part of the family), in decisions affecting the family according to the number of children.

Table IV illustrates a Z value of $-.78$ which was obtained when this hypothesis was examined by means of the Mann-Whitney U. The test indicated that no significant difference existed in the manner in which a family participates in decisions affecting the family according to the number of children.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The purposes of this study were to examine the perceptions of members of strong families concerning the manner in which a family usually participates (individually, husband and wife together, child alone, one parent with the child, both parents with the child), in each of the following:

- (a) Recreational Activities
- (b) Vacations
- (c) Sports
- (d) Holidays and Special Occasions
- (e) Church Activities
- (f) Eating Meals
- (g) Decisions Affecting the Family

The 85 subjects, representing 55 intact families, were recognized and selected as strong families by the Extension Home Economist in each of the 77 counties in Oklahoma. Guidelines were developed for specifying these families as strong. A second criteria for selection as a strong family was that the husband and wife had to rate themselves as having a high degree of marital happiness and a high degree of satisfaction of parent-child relationship. The data were collected during the months of March, April, and May, 1975.

Frequencies and percentages were employed to obtain background information and to investigate the respondents' perceptions concerning the styles of family participation in each of the seven areas of activities.

The respondents indicated that the most frequent style of participation in the various activities was both parents with child. The percentages of respondents who reported their style of participation in the various activities as both parents with child were as follows: recreation (65.10%), vacations (97.50%), sports (67.90%), holidays and special occasions (97.65%), church activities (76.19%), eating meals (89.41%), and decisions affecting the family (56.47%).

The chi-square test was selected to examine the hypothesis that there are no significant relationships between the manner in which the family participates in each of the areas mentioned above and each of the following variables: socio-economic status, religious preference, age, and number of years married.

The results of the chi-square test indicated that no significant relationships existed between the manner in which the family participates in each of the areas mentioned above and each of the following variables: socio-economic status, religious preference, age, and number of years married.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the manner in which a family usually participates involving

(both parents with child and participation involving only part of the family), in each of the four activities (recreational, sports, church, decisions affecting the family), according to number of children. Due to the heavy concentration of responses in the category, both parents with child, this analysis compared only two categories, both parents with child and participation involving only part of the family (representing a combination of all other categories).

The Z values indicated that no significant differences existed in the manner in which a family participates in each of the four areas mentioned above according to the number of children.

Conclusions and Discussion

The finding that the largest majority of the respondents rated their style of participation as being both parents with child in each of the seven activities, supports Orthner's (1975b) thesis that joint family activities are commensurate with family solidarity. The current findings are consistent with the research of Stevenson (1976) who found that joint family activities were associated with a high degree of family commitment. The results of Orthner (1975b) are harmonious with the present findings that individual activities are considered negatively related to family solidarity, supporting joint family activities.

The findings tie in with Cuber and Haroff (1965)

concerning the vital and total marriage where most all aspects of life are shared together and participated in enthusiastically. A study presented by Searls (1966) observed that those married 12 years or longer, indicated greater leisure activity. The report also found that less frequent household aid during chores was associated with low family activity and more frequent togetherness in household chores was associated with high total leisure activity.

Religion connects with the findings of Otto (1966) where shared religious values is equivalent to sharing recreational activities. Stinnett and Walters (1977) agree with findings that church attendance can be a joint activity which provides companionship and is a source of strength. Religious family activities as seen by Walter, Parker, and Stinnett (1972), helps to provide the concept of love which is a strengthening factor for a family.

The findings suggest that Vacations (97.50%) and Holidays and Special Occasions (97.65%) were the areas that received the largest proportion of respondents rating their family participation as both parents with child. These results are directly congruent with Orthner's (1976) report that the nature of interaction a marital dyad chooses is buttressed by the activities they choose for their leisure model.

Risk and conflict during vacations are acknowledged by Rosenblatt and Russell (1975) as being a part of vacations itself; yet a sense of family togetherness and solidarity is

often provided by taking vacations together. Family growth during a weekend camping experience, as reported by Bowman (1976), is a process involving transactions with each member of the family. If an atmosphere of affirmation and strength is provided, a family may find it easier to strive towards certain goals. Bowman (1976) identified six goals families could move towards in strengthening the family. These goals are:

1. Experience activities that involve the total family.
2. Discover and bolster strengths already present in the family unit.
3. Share work, play, and creative activities as a family.
4. Talk individually and collectively with skilled family life leaders.
5. Reflect on experiences as a family member among a group of families.
6. Have a good time (p. 170).

Decisions Affecting the Family was the area in which the lowest percentage of respondents (56.47%) indicated participation by both parents with child. However, the majority of these respondents indicated the entire family was involved in the decision making process. This suggests that parents have ascertained the need for children to be involved in the decision making process which supports a study by Chandler (1971). The husband-wife response constituted 41.18 percent of the responses concerning the manner of participation in decisions affecting the family.

The findings that the respondents, representing strong

families, in this study overwhelmingly indicated their manner of participation in activities comprising a large segment of potential family interaction time was both parents with child, are concomitant with the report by Abel (1976) who questioned the view that the family is disintegrating as a mediator of outside influences such as TV. Abel (1976) suggested that parents who stress strong interpersonal family relations did continue to act as mediators and were sensitive to each others preferences along with some parental control on the viewing behavior of their children. The findings of the present study suggest that there are families who continue to maintain a high degree of involvement with each other despite the fragmented, fast-paced life style of the twentieth century. According to this study, a high degree of participating in activities as a family is a prominent characteristic of strong families.

These findings suggest that shared family activities and participation may contribute to family strengths by promoting time for interaction to develop a sense of family identity and increase understanding and communication.

An important implication of this study is that those in the helping professions such as family life educators, counselors, teachers, clergy, social workers, and anyone related to the helping professions might help families explore their own possibilities for joint family activities as one means of strengthening families.

Perhaps family life educators and others in the helping

professions can help to strengthen families by specifically assisting families in identifying joint family activities which are mutually enjoyable and which as a consequence will help contribute more of a "fun" atmosphere within the family. Creating a "fun" atmosphere within the family interaction through mutually enjoyable joint family activities, was a goal which was rather successfully achieved in an action oriented project by Bowman (1976).

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for future study:

1. This study could be replicated using a national sample with a greater representation of urban families and various ethnic groups.
2. More action oriented research needs to be conducted in which families are helped to identify and participate in mutually enjoyable joint family activities and to determine the effects on family interaction over a period of time.
3. More action oriented research also needs to be conducted in which families are assisted in exploring ways of creating a more "fun" atmosphere within their family units.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abel, John D. "The Family and Child Television Viewing." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 38 (1976), 331-335.
- Ammons, Paul W. "Vital-total Marital Relationships Among Strong Families and Their Association With Selected Demographic and Personality Variables." (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, 1976.)
- Ball, O. L. "Communication Patterns in Strong Families." (Unpublished master's thesis, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, 1976.)
- Bishop, Doyle W., and Masaru Ikeda. "Status and Role Factors in the Leisure Behavior of Different Occupations." Journal of Sociology and Social Research, 54 (1970), 190-208.
- Blackburn, C. W. "What Is a Strong Family?" International Journal of Religious Education, 3 (1967), 35-36.
- Blood, Robert O. Marriage. New York: The Free Press, 1969.
- Bowman, Ted. "Developing Strengths in Families." Family Coordinator, (1976), 174-179.
- Burchinal, Lee. "Marital Satisfaction and Religious Behavior." American Sociological Review, 22 (1957), 306-310.
- Carisse, Colette B. "Family and Leisure: A Set of Contradictions." Family Coordinator, 24 (1975), 191-197.
- Chandler, B. A. "The White House Conference on Children, A 1970 Happening." Family Coordinator, 20 (1971), 73-81.
- Clark, Jonathan, and Hyman L. Kempler. "Therapeutic Family Camping: A Rationale." Family Coordinator, 22 (1973), 437-442.
- Cuber, John F., and Peggy B. Harroff. Sex and the Significant Americana. New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1965.

- deLossovoy, V. "High School Marriages: A Longitudinal Study." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 35 (1973), 245-255.
- Grams, J. "Sources of Family Strength." International Journal of Religious Education, 43 (1967), 4-5; 41.
- Gunter, B. G., and Harvey A. Moore. "Youth, Leisure, and Post-Industrial Society: Implications for the Family." Family Coordinator, 24 (1975), 201-207.
- Kelly, John R. "Socialization Toward Leisure: A Developmental Approach." Journal of Leisure Research, 6 (1974), 181-194.
- Lansbury, Russell. "Careers, Work and Leisure Among the New Professionals." The Sociological Review, 22 (1974), 385-400.
- Noe, F. P. "Leisure Life Styles and Social Class: A Trend Analysis 1900-1960." Journal of Sociology and Social Research, 58 (1974), 286-293.
- Orthner, Dennis K. "Familia Ludens: Reinforcing the Leisure Component in Family Life." Family Coordinator, 24 (1975a), 175-183.
- Orthner, Dennis K. "Leisure Activity Patterns and Marital Satisfaction Over the Marital Career." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 37 (1975b), 91-101.
- Orthner, Dennis K. "Patterns of Leisure and Marital Interaction." Journal of Leisure Research, 8 (1976), 98-111.
- Otto, H. A. "What Is a Strong Family?" Marriage and Family Living, 24 (1962), 77-81.
- Otto, H. A. "Criteria for Assessing Family Strength." Family Process, 2 (1963), 329-339.
- Otto, H. A. "The Personal and Family Strength Research Projects--Some Implications for the Therapist." Mental Hygiene, 48 (1964), 439-450.
- Otto, H. A. "The Minister and Family Strengths." Pastoral Psychology, 17 (1966), 21-28.
- Otto, H. A. "How Can a Family Deliberately Build Strengths?" International Journal of Religious Education, 43 (1967), 6-7; 40-41.
- Otto, H. A. "Has Monogamy Failed?" In Carr, G. B. (Ed.), Marriage and Family in a Decade of Change. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1972.

- Otto, H. A. The Use of Family Strength Concepts and Methods in Family Life Education: A Handbook. Beverly Hills, California: The Holistic Press, 1975.
- Reeder, D. A. "A Model of Family Characteristics for Problem Solving Behavior in Families With a Mentally Retarded Child." Dissertation Abstracts, 1973, 34B, 1758B.
- Rosenblatt, Paul C., and Michael R. Cunningham. "Television Watching and Family Tensions." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 38 (1976), 105-111.
- Rosenblatt, Paul C., and Martha G. Russell. "The Social Psychology of Potential Problems in Family Vacation Travel." Family Coordinator, 24 (1975), 209-215.
- Rue, Vincent M. "Television and the Family: The Question of Control." Family Coordinator, 23 (1974), 73-81.
- Sauer, K. H. "Relationship Patterns of Strong Families." (Unpublished master's thesis, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, 1976.)
- Searls, Laura G. "Leisure Role Emphasis of College Graduate Homemakers." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 28 (1966), 77-82.
- Stephens, William. Reflections of Marriage. New York: Thomas Y. Corwell Co., 1968.
- Stevenson, Paul W. "Family Commitment, Functionality, and Marital Need Satisfaction." (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, 1975.)
- Stinnett, Nick, and Craig Birdsong. The Family and Alternate Life Styles. Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1977.
- Stinnett, Nick, and James Walters. Relationships in Marriage and Family. New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1977.
- Stinnett, Nick, and James Walters. Together in Marriage and the Family (Unpublished Manuscript, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, 1974.)
- U. S. Bureau of Census. Statistical Abstracts of the United States 1975. 96th ed. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1976.
- Walter, James, Karol K. Parker, and Nick Stinnett. "College Students Perceptions Concerning Marriage." Family Perspective, 7 (Fall, 1972), 43-49.

West, Patrick C., and L. C. Merriam, Jr. "Outdoor Recreation and Family Cohesiveness: A Research Approach." Journal of Leisure Research, 2 (1970), 251-259.

Zimmerman, C. C. "The Future of the Family in America." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 34 (1972), 323-333.

Zimmerman, C. C., and L. F. Cervantes. Successful American Families. New York: Pageant Press, Inc., 1960.

APPENDIX

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 sources 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. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 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 greatest degree of determination and 1 representing the least degree).

1 2 3 4 5

39. Rate your degree of determination to make your relationship with your child satisfying (5 representing the greatest degree and 1 representing the least).

1 2 3 4 5

40. Rate your spouse's degree of determination to make your marriage relationship satisfying (5 representing the greatest degree and 1 representing the least).

1 2 3 4 5

41. Rate your spouse's degree of determination to make relationship with child satisfying (5 representing the greatest degree and 1 representing the least).

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 Parents 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 |

| | You | | | | | Your Spouse | | | | |
|---|-----|---|---|---|---|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| 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 |
| 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 judgmental toward others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 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 (brothers, sisters, aunts, etc.) | _____ |

VITA

Robert Mickey Wright

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE MANNER IN WHICH STRONG FAMILIES PARTICIPATE IN
ACTIVITIES WHICH COMPRISE A LARGE SEGMENT OF
POTENTIAL FAMILY INTERACTION TIME

Major Field: Family Relations and Child Development

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in McPherson, Kansas, March 15,
1950, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Wright.
Married in 1977 to Camilla R. Austin.

Education: Graduated from Wichita East High School,
May, 1968; attended the University of Kansas,
Lawrence, Kansas, 1968-75, with a Bachelor of Arts
in Psychology and Human Development and Family
Living. Completed requirements for the Master of
Science degree at Oklahoma State University in
May, 1977.

Professional Organizations: Student member of the
American Association of Marriage and Family
Counselors; student member of the American Associ-
ation of Sex Educators, Counselors, and
Therapists; Omicron Nu.