

RELATIONSHIP PATTERNS OF STRONG FAMILIES

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of Problem

The stability of society as well as the individual has been traditionally dependent upon the family. In a continuum the family system is placed in the middle between the extreme ends of the individual and society. Unlike most subsystems, the family, serves a variety of needs and functions most of which are unspecified (Zimmerman, 1972). The concept, family strengths, implies that the stronger family is more desirable for the stability of society (Grams, 1967) and it has been noted that

societies with strong family systems tended to recuperate rapidly from conditions of adversity whereas the opposite types recovered only with great difficulty (Zimmerman, 1972, p. 325).

It is therefore important not only for the individual members within the family unit but also for society as a whole to have healthy families.

A study of strong families offers an opportunity to understand better the unique assets and potentials of family life. Such research is especially desirable since the divorce ratio in the United States has increased from one out of 12 in 1900 to approximately one out of three today. The total number of divorces for any one year just exceeded the one million mark for the first time in the United States

(U. S. Bureau of Census, 1976). There are a large number of couples who remain married today but who are very unsatisfied with their marriages. There is evidence that most people consider a strong, satisfying family life among their more important goals in life. There are, however, few guidelines concerned with how one can achieve a successful, satisfying family life.

#### Need for Research

A major reason for the lack of instruction concerning how to have a successful family life is the scarcity of research dealing with family strengths. Most research done in the area of family has placed its emphasis on the pathology of the family (Otto, 1962, 1972). It is particularly important to expand our understanding of what makes a strong family healthy so that the family therapist would be better able to aid families in developing their strengths, resources, and potentials. Studies of well families can make a contribution to the therapist in assessing the positive as well as the negative functioning of families (Otto, 1964). Literature dealing with the selection of foster parents has noted that:

if child placement is to proceed on the basis of complementary needs, what the family has to offer (the pattern of family strengths) is an important criterion in the placement process (Kinter & Otto, 1964, p. 361).

The prevention of serious emotional problems through the strengthening of family life is considered to be of primary importance (Joint Commission on Mental Health of Children, Inc., 1969). The need to determine what is actually meant by the term family strengths has become apparent from a survey of family life education and other professional journals. Gabler and Otto (1964) have noted that there is a

definite need for a better theoretical framework of family strengths. To gain greater understanding and knowledge of family strengths it is necessary to obtain information about the perceptions of the husbands and wives of strong families concerning what has contributed most to making their husband-wife and parent-child relationships satisfying. Such research could contribute to a greater awareness of the resources and potentials of positive family life, and would also be a needed contribution to the teaching of marriage and family living courses. Hopefully, such research would contribute to the expertise of the family therapist and others who work with families and create an atmosphere whereby more families could seek help in developing their potentials. Unfortunately, research concerned with family strengths is very limited. To the author's knowledge, Herbert Otto, has done more writing than anyone else in the specific area of family strengths. The present research was designed to provide increased knowledge and understanding of family strengths.

#### Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of high strength families concerning their family interactions. The specific purposes of this study were to:

1. Determine the perceptions of husbands and wives of high strength families concerning the following: (a) what has contributed most to their marital satisfaction, (b) what they would most like to change about their marital relationship, (c) what has contributed most to making their relationship with their child strong, (d) what they would

most like to change about their parent-child relationship, (e) what they do that makes their child feel good about self, (f) what their child does that makes them feel good about self, (g) what their spouse does that makes them feel good about self, (h) what the respondent does that makes spouse feel good about self, (i) the degree to which the respondent makes their spouse feel good about self, (j) the degree to which the spouse makes the respondent feel good about self, (k) the degree to which the respondent makes their child feel good about self, (l) the degree to which their child makes the respondent feel good about self.

2. Determine if there is a significant difference in each of the 12 perceptions listed on page three according to sex.
3. Determine if there is a significant difference in each of the 12 perceptions listed on page three according to socio-economic status.
4. Determine if there is a significant difference in each of the 12 perceptions listed on page three according to the wife's employment status.

#### Definition of Terms

Family Strengths: "are those forces, and dynamic factors in the relationship 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" (Otto, 1975, p. 16).

Strong Families: are those families whose members have a high degree of happiness in the husband-wife and parent-child relationships and whose members fulfill each others needs to a high degree: the family is also intact with both parents present in the home.

#### Description of Procedure

The questionnaire used in this study was designed by Dr. Nick Stinnett, Associate Professor, Family Relations and Child Development, to measure various marital, parental, and family interaction patterns. The sample was composed of 157 husbands and wives representing 99 families. The husbands and wives were requested to complete the questionnaire and return it separately. Therefore, the sample does not always contain responses from both husbands and wives from the same family.

For this present study, data were examined concerning 12 questions. Eight of the questions were open ended which gave the respondents the opportunity to answer the questions in their own words. Categories were developed by the investigator from their responses. A second person (a family life specialist and experienced researcher) reviewed the categorization process. A percentage and frequency distribution was used to analyze the responses of the open ended questions. Four questions were fixed alternatives and dealt with the degree the strong family members made each other feel good about self. The chi-square test was used to analyze these questions according to sex, socio-economic status, and the wife's employment status.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature concerning family strengths is quite limited. The review of available literature reported here is concerned with perceived family strengths and also marital stability, marital satisfaction, and parent-child relationships as they relate to the total family system.

#### Family Strengths

Little research has been conducted concerning what makes a strong family. Otto (1962, 1963, 1964, 1966, 1967, 1969, 1972, 1975), Zimmerman and Cervantes (1960), and Reeder (1973) are among the authors who have contributed to this area of research.

In a study by Otto (1962, 1966) in which 27 families were asked to list what they perceived as their family strengths, it was found that the affective aspects of family life, specifically the giving and receiving of love and understanding between spouses and parent-child, were the greatest source of family strength. In addition it was also found that doing things together as a family and sharing religious convictions/moral values were important for a strong family.

Otto (1963, 1975), in developing a framework in which to view family strengths, included the following criteria:

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 interfamily cooperation.
12. The ability to use crisis or seemingly injurious experience as a means of growth.

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. Family strengths as defined by Otto (1975):

are those forces, and dynamic factors in the relationship 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).

Variations in the strengths of a family would naturally be expected throughout the family life cycle.

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. In terms of the families' friends, Zimmerman and Cervantes (1960), found that only a few reported no friends 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.

In a longitudinal study of high risk marriages conducted by deLissovoy (1973) certain factors were discovered to help sustain the marriage. They were a kin network of economic and psychological support and church activities. Solomon (1972) states that there is a positive correlation between emotional stability and a good family identity. Family identity is determined by a person's attitude toward their surname.

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.

#### Marital Stability

Levinger (1965) developed a theory of marital cohesiveness and feels that:

the strength of the marital relationship is a direct function of the attractions within and barriers around the marriage, and an inverse function of such attractions and barriers from other relationships (p. 19).

He identifies three factors that relate to marital stability. They are affectional rewards, barrier strength, and alternate attractions.

Cuber and Harroff (1963) have stated that a stable marriage does not necessarily mean that it is a happy or satisfying relationship.

They state that a:

. . . 'stable' married pair may, on the one hand be deeply fulfilled people, living vibrantly, or at the other extreme entrapped, embittered, resentful people, living lives of duplicity in an atmosphere of hatred and despair (p. 141).

From their study they suggested that a major reason for the stability of marriages in which the partners feel are not satisfying is the lack of attractive acceptable alternatives. The spouses therefore settle for permanence rather than happiness and although their intrinsic needs are not being met the instrumental needs are.

In a study done of divorce applicants (Levinger, 1966) it was found that middle class spouses were more concerned with the psychological and emotional support factors of the relationship while the lower class spouses expressed greater concern in relation to financial matters and unstable physical actions of their partner. It appears then that spouses can not be deeply concerned with the psychological aspects of the marital relationship until the instrumental needs are met.

In a study done by Mercer (1967) in North Carolina there were significantly: (1) more intact families among Whites than Non-whites; (2) more nuclear families intact than extended; (3) more stable families living in towns than in the country. Several research studies

show that marriage happiness and stability is significantly higher among those families who have a high degree of religious orientation (Zimmerman & Certantes, 1960; Bowman, 1974). In a study done by Crockett, Babchuk, and Ballweg (1969) it was found that religious homogeneity between spouses is related to family stability for both Protestants and Catholics.

### Marital Satisfaction and Happiness

#### Husband-Wife Role Perceptions

Luckey (1960a, 1960b, 1960c) and Stuckert (1963) found that marital satisfaction is related to the agreement of the husband's self concept and that held of him by his spouse. The corresponding relationship for the wife, that the husband accurately perceive his wife's self concept, was found to not be important for marital happiness. Hurvitz (1965) noted that there was a significant relationship between marital satisfaction and the degree to which wives conform to the husbands' expectations. It was also observed that men do not conform as much as do women within the marital relationship.

Katz, Goldstein, Cohen, and Stucker (1963) noted that there exists a positive relationship between marital happiness and the favorableness of the husbands' self-description. The higher the husband's status, prestige, or social standing in the community the greater the wife's satisfaction with the marital relationship (Blood & Wolfe, 1960). Black persons and those persons who have low incomes and little education are more likely to become unhappy in their marriages (Renée, 1970). The association between marital satisfaction and socioeconomic status is greater for Blacks than for Whites (Blood & Wolfe, 1960;

Gurin, Veroff, & Feld, 1960; Levinger, 1966). Conventional life styles and a high degree of involvement in family activities were found to be positively related to a high degree of marital adjustment by Whitehurst (1968). Lee (1974) stated that there was a positive relationship between normlessness and marital dissatisfaction.

#### Effect of Women's Employment

Some investigators have found a lesser degree of marital adjustment when the wife worked than when she was not employed (Axelson, 1963; Hicks & Platt, 1970). 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. 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 chose to work. They also found that there was no apparent difference in the level of marital adjustment among wives who worked by choice and those who were not employed, however, women who worked part time rather than full time or who remained at home had a slightly higher degree of marital adjustment.

In a study done by Ridley (1973) results indicated that when either spouse became highly involved in their jobs, it tended to have an adverse effect upon the marriage relationship. He also found a positive, significant relationship between job satisfaction and marital adjustment for men. A high degree of marital adjustment was found to exist when wives received little satisfaction from their jobs and their

spouses received much job satisfaction.

### Affectional Needs and Communication

Navran (1967) found that married couples who reported themselves as happy had better verbal and nonverbal communication than did unhappy couples and that good verbal communication was more positively associated with a couples' satisfactory relationship than was good nonverbal communication. He also observed that there were significant differences when happily married couples were compared with unhappily married couples. The happily married couple:

- (a) talked more to each other, (b) convey the feelings that they understand what is being said to them, (c) have a wider range of subjects available to them, (d) preserve communication channels and keep them open, (e) show more sensitivity to each other's feelings, (f) personalize their language symbols, and (g) make more use of supplementary nonverbal techniques of communication (p. 182).

Mathews and Milhanovich (1963) noted in their study of married couples that the unhappily married couples:

1. Experienced more conflict than happily married couples.
2. Are neglected, receive little affection, understanding, appreciation, or companionship.
3. Feel that their self respect is attacked.
4. Feel that their faults are magnified by spouse.
5. Feel worthless, belittled, and falsely accused by spouse.

Levinger (1964) found that both spouses placed a higher value on the affective aspects of task performance than on instrumental aspects.

In a study of married undergraduates, Chilman and Meyer (1966), discovered that "love and companionship in marriage received a far higher rating . . . than sex satisfaction, living conditions, and academic

pursuits" (p. 75).

#### Effect of Children on the Marital Dyad

Rollins and Feldman (1970) in a study of 799 married couples noted that marital satisfaction of both partners is associated with the stage of the family life cycle. The spouses reported that there was a definite decline from the beginning of the marriages to the preschool stage in the number of positive companionship experiences and that there then occurred a leveling off for the remainder of the family life cycle. Gurin, Veroff, and Feld (1960) discovered that there was a curvilinear trend with decreasing marital satisfaction during the first stages of the family life cycle, a leveling off, and an increase during the last stages. Rollins and Cannon (1974) in reevaluating the relationship of marital satisfaction and the stages of family life cycle supported the U-shaped trend. They also found that there was no difference between the responses of husbands and wives. A corresponding decrease in marital communication and adjustment during the child-rearing period was found by Figley (1973).

Renée (1970) found that those persons who were raising children were more likely to be dissatisfied with their marital relationship than were couples who had never had children or whose children were no longer living at home. The greater the ratio of children per years of marriage, the lower the satisfaction of the spouses within the marital dyad (Hurley & Palonen, 1967). Luckey (1966) found that the relationship between the number of children and the degree of marital satisfaction was not significant. Luckey and Bain (1970), however, noted that children were reported as the main and usually the only

source of satisfaction by unhappily married couples.

### Parent-Child Relationships

#### Children's Identification and

#### Orientation to Life

Elder (1963) in examining the pattern of role modeling among adolescents noted that parents who are democratic are more likely to have their adolescents model their behaviors than parents who are authoritarian or permissive.

A study concerning the degree of religiosity of adolescents reported that parental supportiveness had a greater impact on the adolescents' degree of religiosity than did parental control (Wiegert, 1968). The amount of religious behavior of undergraduates was studied by Cooke (1962) who noted that the strongly religious respondents tended not only to view themselves more like both of their parents but also liked their parents better than those respondents who said they had a low degree of religious convictions. The level of religious feelings of the students was directly and positively related to the perceived level of the mother's religiosity.

Results of several research studies indicate that there is a definite association between occupational choice and the parent-child relationship. Children who experience their family life as warm and accepting tend to choose occupations which are person-oriented while children who perceive their home life as unsatisfactory generally choose occupations which are nonperson-oriented (Green & Parker, 1965; Schneider, 1968).

In a study done with low income families, Stinnett and Walters (1967) found that adolescents who reported a low evaluation of the family were more likely to be peer-oriented than those students who reported a high evaluation of family. Brittain (1967) in a study of adolescent girls noted that when a choice is thought by adolescents to be of great importance to peers that they tend to be peer-compliant, however, when the choice is thought to be important to the parents, the adolescent tends to be parent-compliant. In addition it was noted that when a choice was important to both groups, parents and peers, the adolescent's choice was parent-compliant and when a decision was considered to be of little importance to either group the adolescent tended to be peer-compliant. Condry and Siman (1974) found that adult-oriented children receive greater support from both parents than peer-oriented children. They further stated that children who became peer-oriented and conformed to socially undesirable peer subcultures had experienced parental rejection and neglect.

#### Children's Achievements

Norris (1968) noted that the child's ability to achieve basic skills, school grades, and positive teacher comments for pre-adolescent boys was associated with the degree of parental satisfaction and understanding of the child. Morrow and Wilson (1961) in a study of family relationships of high-achieving and under-achieving high school boys discovered: (a) high-achievers' parents shared family recreation, confidences, and ideas more often than under-achievers' parents; (b) high-achievers had parents who were more approving, trusting, affectionate, and more encouraging of achievement than under-achievers.



Esty (1968) who investigated the difference between leaders and nonleaders among college students noted that the parents were perceived as less neglecting, rejecting, overprotective, and more loving by the student leaders than the nonleaders. Female college freshmen who scored high on tests of creative thinking recalled their parent-child relationships as significantly less rejecting and more loving than those who scored low (Richardson, 1965).

Siegelman (1965) reported in his study concerning the effect of early parent-child relationships upon personality characteristics of college students found that those students who were extroverts remembered their parents as loving and students who were considered introverts recalled their parents as rejecting. In comparing levels of anxiety, those students who reported low levels of anxiety stated that they remembered their parents as loving and students who stated that they experienced high levels of anxiety reported their parents as being rejecting.

### Juvenile Delinquency

A review of backgrounds of juvenile delinquents almost always reveals an ineffective or missing mother during the formative early years. The disruptive relationships among parents and other relatives may result in a lack of security and disorientation in children. Mauch (1970) states that the best barrier against juvenile delinquency is the family in which each person has their place. Socioeconomic and sociocultural conditions can have either a preventative or contributive nature in relation to juvenile criminality (Lebovici, 1973). In a study of middle class boys, Gallenkamp (1968) found that parents of

delinquents are more sanctioning of antisocial behavior than parents of nondelinquents. Delinquent boys have more negative attitudes toward their parents than do nondelinquents, with the greatest difference being the attitudes towards the father (Andry, 1960; Medinnus, 1965). Harris (1973) in a recent study which compared a group of 16 year old boys with a study of the same group 10 years earlier, reports that delinquency could be predicted at age six with 84 per cent accuracy. The factors which predicted the occurrence of delinquent behavior included: (a) inconsistent discipline of the child; (b) lack of parental supervision; and (c) lack of family cohesiveness and affection.

#### Parental Supportiveness

Stinnett, Talley, and Walters (1973) stated that Black families experience more mother-oriented environments than White families. They observed that while Black subjects were less likely to have both parents present at home that they had closer parent-child relationships than White subjects.

The quality instead of the absence or presence of the parents in the home seems to be of greater importance in a study done of adolescent boys (Ahlstrom & Havighurst, 1971). They also noted that there was a definite contrast between the adaptive and maladaptive boys in terms of the degree of affection and mutual support present in the family system.

Studying the relationships among parent's attitudes and behaviors in child rearing and the child's self concept in school, Mote (1967) observed that the parents' satisfaction with the child's learning was significantly and positively associated with the child's self concept.

In addition, a supportive family was conducive to the development of high ability, achievement, and creativity. The cohesive family was found to be more significantly associated with late adolescent adjustment (Ahlstrom & Havighurst, 1971).

Clapp (1967) in a study of four year old male children's competence and dependence found that competent children had parents who tended to treat them more like children and less like adults. The parents were also significantly more permissive, less restrictive, warmer, and less hostile in their relationships with their child than those parents of children who expressed dependence.

Chalkin and Frank (1973) found that in successful families there is a corresponding accuracy in self-other perceptions which is related to good child adjustment. Tracey (1971) noted that when the relationship between parent-child improved, that the ability to meet and deal with stress resulting from other relationships is also improved.

Leonard, Rhymes, and Solnit (1966) stated that people in the medical field have recognized the "failure to thrive" syndrome which is defined as a lack of physical development with a corresponding lack of any organic reason. They further state that "failure to thrive" appears to be caused by problems in the parent-child relationship. In a study done by Bullard, Glaser, Heagerty, and Pivchick (1967) concerning these children, they found that in most instances that children who were neglected by their parents, came from homes in which there was a severe marital conflict, erratic living habits, and an inability of the parents to maintain employment or provide financial support for the child's care.

### Summary

The review of literature concerning family strengths suggests the following:

1. Most people consider a satisfying family life as one of their more important lifetime goals yet there are few guidelines concerning how such a goal can be achieved.
2. Marriage and family success are strongly associated with various affective aspects of family interaction such as the presence of love and understanding, participation in family activities, a high degree of religious orientation, and the presence of intimate family friends of similar values.
3. Marital satisfaction is dependent on a variety of variables of both the affective and instrumental nature.
4. A satisfying marital relationship has been found to be related to the agreement of the husband's self concept and that held of him by his wife. A similar relationship was not found to be important for the wife.
5. The employment of women has been reported to not necessarily be a disruptive factor in the family and marital relationships. Women who work part time rather than full time or who remain at home have a higher degree of marital adjustment.
6. A high degree of job involvement tends to have an adverse effect upon the marriage relationship and couples who reported a high degree of marital adjustment also reported that the wives received little job satisfaction while their spouses received a greater degree of job satisfaction.

7. Happily married couples when compared to unhappily married couples have better communication patterns in that they talk to each other more often, understand what the other is saying, show sensitivity to the other's feelings, and make more use of nonverbal cues.
8. Couples who are unhappy experience more conflict, feel neglected, receive little affection or appreciation, and feel that their self respect is attacked when compared to happily married couples.
9. The increasing importance of meeting others emotional/affectional needs as evidenced by recent research indicates that the marital relationship may be becoming more of a companionship relationship.
10. A review of literature dealing with parent-child relationships reveals that there is a positive correlation between support, warmth, and acceptance by parents and the development of emotional, social, and intellectual growth of children.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

#### Selection of Subjects

The 157 subjects representing 99 families of this study were obtained throughout the 77 counties in Oklahoma. Cover letters (see Appendix) explaining the research study and assuring anonymity, were sent to approximately 180 families. Questionnaires were included for both husband and wife. They were requested to complete the questionnaires separately and not to compare answers. Therefore, the sample does not always contain responses from both members of the same family. A stamped, self-addressed return envelope was included with each questionnaire. The data were obtained during the months of March, April, and May, 1975.

The cooperation of the Cooperative County Extension Service was utilized in collecting the sample. 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 Economists in each of the 77 counties in Oklahoma were sent letters requesting that they recommend two or more

families in their county whom 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 satisfactory or very satisfactory on the questionnaire.

#### The 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 a review of the literature indicated were important 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. 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 utilized including 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 of the questionnaire (see Appendix) were used: (a) biographical information such as sex, age, and place of residence; (b) various perceptions of what has contributed to making the respondents' husband-wife and parent-child relationships satisfying; (c) the degree and the actions of their spouse which makes the respondent feel good and the degree and the actions of the respondent which make their spouse feel good; (d) the degree and actions of their child which makes the respondent feel good and the degree and actions of the respondent which make their child feel good. The questions used to obtain the above information were fixed alternative and open ended.

#### Analysis of the Data

A percentage and frequency count was used to analyze the respondents' perceptions of the following: (a) what has contributed most to their marital satisfaction, (b) what they would most like to change about their marital relationship, (c) what has contributed most to making their relationship with their child strong, (d) what they would most like to change about their parent-child relationship, (e) what they do that makes their child feel good about self, (f) what their child does that makes them feel good about self, (g) what their spouse



does that makes them feel good about self.

The percentage and frequency count was used to determine if there was a significant difference in each of the eight perceptions listed above according to: (a) sex, (b) socio-economic status, (c) the wife's employment status.

The chi-square test was used to determine if there was a significant difference in the degree to which the spouse makes the respondent feel good about self, the degree to which the respondent makes their spouse feel good about themselves, and the degree which their child makes respondent feel good about self, and the degree which the respondent makes their child feel good about self according to: (a) sex, (b) socio-economic status, (c) the wife's employment status.

Categories were developed for the open ended questions by the investigator from the responses given. A second person (a family life specialist and experienced researcher) reviewed the process of categorization.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Description of the Subjects

A detailed description of the 157 subjects who participated in this study is presented in Table I. The sample consisted of 40.12 per cent males and 59.88 per cent females. Their ages ranged from 24 to over 50 years with the greatest percentage (30.57%) in the age group of 36-40 years.

Ninety-four per cent of the sample was White. Most of the sample (81.29%) was Protestant. As determined by the modified McGuire-White Index of Social Status (1955), the sample was primarily from upper-middle (41.03%) and lower-middle (39.10%) socio-economic classes. The largest proportion of the respondents (48.41%) indicated a farm or rural area as their place of residence and another 36.94 per cent indicated their residence as a small town under 25,000 population. An even higher proportion of the respondents (78.80%) reported that the wife was not employed outside the home.

#### Perceptions of Strong Family Members Concerning

#### Their Family Relationships

Percentage and frequency count was used to examine the perceptions of husbands and wives regarding various aspects of their family relationships. The results concerning each of these perceptions is now presented.

TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

Variable	Classification	No.	Per Cent
Sex	Male	63	40.12
	Female	94	59.88
Race	White	147	94.23
	Black	6	3.85
	Indian	3	1.92
Age	20-25	2	1.27
	26-30	12	7.64
	31-35	33	21.02
	36-40	48	30.57
	41-45	44	28.03
	46-50	8	5.10
	over 50	10	6.37
Religion	Catholic	22	14.19
	Protestant	126	81.29
	Mormon	1	0.65
	None	6	3.87
Degree of Religious Orientation	Very Much	31	20.00
	Much	73	47.09
	Moderate	46	29.67
	Little	5	3.22
	Very Little	--	---
Socio-Economic Class	Upper	7	4.49
	Upper-middle	64	41.03
	Lower-middle	61	39.10
	Upper-lower	21	13.46
	Lower-lower	3	1.92
Place of Residence	On a farm or in country	76	48.41
	Small town under 25,000	58	36.94
	City of 25,000 to 50,000	11	7.01
	City of 50,000 to 100,000	9	5.73
	City over 100,000	3	1.91
Wife's Employment	Not employed outside home	119	75.80
	Employed full-time	38	24.20

Perceptions Concerning What Has Contributed

Most to Making the Marital Relationship

Satisfying

As shown in Table II, the three areas which had the highest rate of response were mutual respect and understanding (21.43%), religious convictions (15.38%), and mutual love (12.64%). The least frequently mentioned responses were children (2.75%) and trust (2.75%).

TABLE II

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT HAS CONTRIBUTED MOST TO  
MAKING THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIP SATISFYING

Factor Contributing Most to Marriage Satisfaction	No.	Per Cent
Mutual respect and understanding	39	21.43
Religious Convictions	28	15.38
Mutual love	23	12.64
Communication	17	9.34
Flexibility	14	7.69
Emotional closeness	15	8.24
Mutual interests	12	6.59
Similar attitudes and beliefs	12	6.59
Children	5	2.75
Trust	5	2.75
Other	12	6.59

Perceptions Concerning What They Would Most

Like to Change About Marital Relationship

The greatest proportion of responses (34.51%) stated nothing, that they did not want to change anything about their marital relationship. Table III indicates that the next largest percentage (21.13%) felt that they would like to have more time to spend together.

TABLE III

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THE RESPONDENT WOULD MOST  
LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT THEIR MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

Factor Wanted to Change in Marital Relationship	No.	Per Cent
Nothing	49	34.51
Have more time to spend together	30	21.13
Improve communication	13	9.15
To be more understanding	12	8.45
Share more interests	6	4.23
Spouse to show more affection/ improve sexual relationship	5	3.52
Spouse to be more assertive	4	2.82
Do more things together	4	2.82
Spouse to show more interest in family and home life	3	2.11
Other	16	11.27

Perceptions Concerning What Has Contributed  
Most to Making Their Relationship With  
Child Strong

As Table IV illustrates, the majority of responses were distributed in five categories. The five most frequently mentioned responses were mutual love (16.67%), doing things together (15.15%), communication (13.13%), participating in religious activities with child (11.62%), and participating in the child's activities (11.62%).

TABLE IV

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT HAS CONTRIBUTED MOST TO MAKING  
 THE RESPONDENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILD STRONG

Factor Contributing Most to Strong Relationship with Child	No.	Per Cent
Mutual love	33	16.67
Doing things together	30	15.15
Communication	26	13.13
Religious activities	23	11.62
Participating in child's activities	23	11.62
Respect for child as an individual	18	9.09
Trust	15	7.58
Respect for parents and others	9	4.55
Discipline	9	4.55
Mother staying at home (not employed)	3	1.52
Other	9	4.55

Perceptions Concerning What They Would Most

Like to Change About Their Parent-Child

Relationship

The greatest proportion of the responses (33.33%) stated they wanted to change nothing about their parent-child interaction. The second and third most frequently given responses as illustrated by Table V were to be more understanding/tolerant of each other (15.97%) and better communication (14.58%).

TABLE V

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THE RESPONDENT WOULD MOST LIKE  
TO CHANGE ABOUT PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

Factor Most Desired to Change in Parent-Child Relationship	No.	Per Cent
Nothing	48	33.33
To be more understanding/tolerant	23	15.97
Better communication	21	14.58
More time together	14	9.72
Control anger	9	6.25
Child to take more responsibility at home/ show more interest in home life	7	4.86
Mutual respect for differences	5	3.47
Other	17	11.81

Perceptions Concerning What They Do That  
Makes Their Child Feel Good About  
Himself/Herself

Table VI reveals that the largest percentage (40.41%) of the responses indicated that they made their child feel good by the giving of compliments and expression of appreciation. The next three categories totalling 39.24 per cent can be grouped together as being supportive of the child.

TABLE VI

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THE RESPONDENT DOES THAT  
 MAKES CHILD FEEL GOOD ABOUT HIMSELF/HERSELF

Factor That They do that Makes Child Feel Good	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	77	41.40
Provides encouragement and support	30	16.13
Express interest in them/participate in their activities	23	12.37
Let them know they are loved	20	10.75
Respect them	16	8.60
Listen to them	11	5.91
Other	9	4.84



Perceptions Concerning What Their Child Does  
That Makes the Respondent Feel Good About Self

Table VII shows that the respondents are made to feel good about themselves most often by their child's compliments and expressions of appreciation (26.22%). The next largest percentage (18.90) of responses indicated that their child tells them or shows them that they are loved. The asking of advice and talking to parents was reported as a major source of good feelings by 15.85 per cent of the parents.

TABLE VII

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THE RESPONDENT'S CHILD DOES  
 THAT MAKES THE RESPONDENT FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF

Factor That Makes Parent Feel Good About Self	No.	Per Cent
Compliments me and expresses appreciation	43	26.22
Tells/shows me that I am loved	31	18.90
Asks advice/talks to me	26	15.85
Is obedient/shows respect	23	14.02
Behaves in a socially appropriate manner	23	14.02
Child wants parents to be with him/her	9	5.49
Other	9	5.49

Perceptions Concerning What Their Spouse

Does That Makes Them Feel Good About Themselves

Nearly half of the responses, 46.20 per cent, reveals that their spouse made the respondent feel good by giving compliments and expressing appreciation. Table VIII also shows that giving me self confidence (21.05%) was reported frequently.

TABLE VIII

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT SPOUSE DOES THAT  
MAKES THE RESPONDENT FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF

Factor That Spouse Does Which Makes Respondent Feel Good About Self	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	79	46.20
Gives me self confidence	36	21.05
Shares his/her life with me	20	11.70
Lets me know that I am loved	18	10.53
Doesn't put me down in front of others	5	2.92
Shows pride for our family life	2	1.17
Other	11	6.43

Perceptions Concerning What They Do To Make  
Their Spouse Feel Good About Himself/Herself

Table IX indicates similar results as in Tables VI, VII, and VIII. Compliments and expressing appreciation (51.52%) was stated as the way the respondents make their spouses feel good by slightly more than half of the total response.

TABLE IX  
PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THE RESPONDENT DOES  
TO MAKE SPOUSE FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF

Factor That Makes Spouse Feel Good About Self	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	85	51.52
Let spouse know that he/she is loved	31	18.79
Provide encouragement and support	18	10.91
Let spouse know that his/her viewpoint is important	12	7.27
Share interests, decisions, and problems	11	6.67
Other	8	4.85

Perceptions Concerning the Degree That  
the Respondent Makes Their Spouse Feel  
Good About Self

As shown in Table X more than one-half, 59.35 per cent of the respondents reported that they make their spouses feel good much of the time. No one reported that they made their spouse feel good very little of the time.

TABLE X

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE THAT THE RESPONDENT  
 MAKES SPOUSE FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF

Degree that Respondent Makes Spouse Feel Good About Self	No.	Per Cent
Very much	15	9.68
Much	92	59.35
Moderate	46	29.68
Little	2	1.29
Very little	--	---

Perceptions Concerning the Degree That Their

Spouse Makes the Respondent Feel Good

About Self

The greatest proportion of respondents (47.29%) stated that their spouse made them feel good much of the time. As Table XI indicates only 0.68 per cent of the respondents stated that their spouse made them feel good very little of the time.

TABLE XI

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE THAT SPOUSE  
MAKES THE RESPONDENT FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF

Degree That Their Spouse Makes Respondent Feel Good About Self	No.	Per Cent
Very much	55	37.16
Much	70	47.29
Moderate	21	14.19
Little	1	0.68
Very little	1	0.68

Perceptions Concerning The Degree That the  
Respondent Makes Their Child Feel Good  
About Self

Table XII indicates a majority of the respondents believed that they made their child feel good much of the time (56.29%). There were no responses in the very little category.

TABLE XII  
PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE THAT THE RESPONDENT  
MAKES CHILD FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF

Degree Which Respondent Makes Child Feel Good	No.	Per Cent
Very much	35	23.18
Much	85	56.29
Moderate	30	19.87
Little	1	0.66
Very little	--	---

Perceptions Concerning the Degree That Their  
Child Makes the Respondent Feel Good  
About Self

Table XIII reveals that one-half of the respondents, 50.00 per cent, reported that their child makes them feel good about themselves much of the time. The degree, very much, was reported by another

31.82 per cent.

TABLE XIII  
PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE DEGREE WHICH CHILD  
MAKES THE RESPONDENT FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF

Degree Which Child Makes Respondent Feel Good	No.	Per Cent
Very much	49	31.82
Much	77	50.00
Moderate	25	16.23
Little	3	1.95
Very little	--	---

#### Examination of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I. There is no marked or significant relationship between sex and perceptions of strong family members concerning each of the following: (a) what has contributed most to their marital satisfaction, (b) what they would most like to change about their marital relationship, (c) what has contributed most to making their relationship with their child strong, (d) what they would most like to change about their parent-child relationship, (e) what they do that makes their child feel good about self, (f) what their child does that makes them feel good about self, (g) what their spouse does that makes them feel good about self, (h) what the respondent does that makes spouse feel good about self, (i) the degree to which the respondent makes their

spouse feel good about self, (j) the degree to which the spouse makes the respondent feel good about self, (k) the degree to which respondent makes their child feel good about self, (l) the degree to which the child makes respondent feel good about self.

Hypothesis I(a): There is no marked relationship between sex and perceptions of strong family members concerning what has contributed most to marriage satisfaction.

As shown in Table XIV, husbands and wives placed the three areas which had the highest rate of response in the same descending order. The top three responses were mutual respect and understanding (26.47% male and 18.42% female), religious convictions (16.18% male and 14.91% female), and mutual love (11.76% male and 13.16% female). Only women responded that children (4.49%) was a contributing force to marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis I(b): There is no marked relationship between sex and perceptions of strong family members concerning what they would most like to change about their marital relationship.

Almost twice as many males (48.21%) stated that they desired to change nothing about their marital relationship as women (25.58%). Table XV indicates that another major difference was the desire for improved communication where the women (13.95%) were more desirous for change than the men (1.79%). Women were the only respondents to indicate a desire for their spouse to be more assertive (4.65%).



TABLE XIV  
DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT HAS CONTRIBUTED  
MOST TO MARRIAGE SATISFACTION ACCORDING TO SEX

Factor Contributing to Marriage Satisfaction	Husbands		Wives	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Mutual respect and understanding	18	26.47	21	18.42
Religious convictions	11	16.18	17	14.91
Mutual love	8	11.76	15	13.16
Communication	8	11.76	9	7.89
Flexibility	6	8.82	8	7.02
Emotional closeness	6	8.82	9	7.89
Mutual interests	2	2.94	10	8.77
Similar attitudes and beliefs	3	4.41	9	7.89
Children	-	--	5	4.39
Trust	1	1.47	4	3.51
Other	5	7.35	7	6.14

TABLE XV  
DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THE RESPONDENT  
WOULD MOST LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT MARITAL RELATIONSHIP  
ACCORDING TO SEX

Factor Wanted to Change in Marital Relationship	Husbands		Wives	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Nothing	27	48.21	22	25.58
Have more time to spend together	10	17.86	20	23.26
Improve communication	1	1.79	12	13.95
To be understanding	2	3.57	10	11.63
Share more interests	3	5.36	3	3.49
Spouse to show more affection/ improve sexual relationship	3	5.36	2	2.33
Spouse to be more assertive	-	--	4	4.65
Do more things together	-	--	4	4.65
Spouse to show more interest in family and home	2	3.57	1	1.16
Other	8	14.29	8	9.30

Hypothesis I(c): There is no marked relationship between sex and perceptions of strong family members concerning what has contributed most to making their relationship with child strong.

As Table XVI illustrates, husbands and wives responded similarly in three categories. These three categories were mutual love (14.67% male and (17.21% female, communication (13.33% male and (13.11% female, and participating in children's activities (10.67% male and (12.30% female. The greatest difference was found to exist in the category of doing things together with twice as many males (22.67%) as females (10.66%) responding.

TABLE XVI

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT HAS MADE  
THE RESPONDENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILD  
STRONG ACCORDING TO SEX

Factor Contributing to Strong Parent-Child Relationship	Husbands		Wives	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Mutual love	11	14.67	21	17.21
Doing things together	17	22.67	13	10.66
Communication	10	13.33	16	13.11
Religious activities	11	14.67	12	9.84
Participating in child's activities	8	10.67	15	12.30
Respect for child as an individual	4	5.33	14	11.48
Trust	5	6.67	10	8.20
Respect for parents and others	2	2.67	7	5.74
Discipline	5	6.67	4	3.28
Mother staying at home (not employed)	-	--	3	2.46
Other	2	2.67	7	5.74

Hypothesis I(d): There is no marked relationship between sex and perceptions of strong family members concerning what they would most like to change about their parent-child relationship.

Table XVII reflects divergent opinions between parents in several categories. A greater proportion of fathers (43.86%) than mothers (26.44%) felt that nothing should be changed about their parent-child interaction. Mothers, however, (19.54%) more often than fathers (10.53%) believed that there was a need to be more understanding/tolerant. Better communication was reported by both mothers (14.94%) and fathers (14.04%) equally. The greatest difference, four times as much, was found to exist concerning the need for more time together which fathers reported 17.54 per cent and mothers 4.60 per cent respectively.

TABLE XVII

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THE RESPONDENT  
WOULD MOST LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT PARENT-CHILD  
RELATIONSHIP ACCORDING TO SEX

Factor Most Desired to Change in Parent-Child Relationship	Husbands		Wives	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Nothing	25	43.86	23	26.44
To be more understanding/tolerant	6	10.53	17	19.54
Better communication	8	14.04	13	14.94
More time together	10	17.54	4	4.60
Control anger	--	---	9	10.34
Child to take more responsibility at home/show more interest in home life	3	5.26	4	4.60
Mutual respect for differences	2	3.51	3	3.45
Other	3	5.26	14	16.09

Hypothesis I(e): There is no marked relationship between sex and perceptions of strong family members concerning what they do that makes their child feel good about self.

Both mothers (41.88%) and fathers (40.58%) responded similarly that the giving of compliments and expression of appreciation was the major way by which they make their child feel good. Table XVIII shows that twice as many fathers (8.70%) as mothers (4.27%) felt that listening to the child was an important way to make the child feel good about self.

TABLE XVIII

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT RESPONDENT DOES THAT MAKES CHILD FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF ACCORDING TO SEX

Factor That Respondent Does That Makes Child Feel Good	Husbands		Wives	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	28	40.58	49	41.88
Provide encouragement and support	9	13.04	21	17.95
Express interest in them/ participate in their activities	11	15.94	12	10.26
Let them know that they are loved	7	10.14	13	11.11
Respect them	5	7.25	11	9.40
Listen to them	6	8.70	5	4.27
Other	3	4.35	6	5.13

Hypothesis I(f): There is no marked relationship between sex and perceptions of strong family members concerning what their child does that makes them feel good about self.

The greater percentage of mothers (29.44%) than fathers (20.97%) indicated that their child makes them feel good about self by giving compliments and expression of appreciation. Table XIX reveals that the parents responded in similar proportions in the other categories.

TABLE XIX

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT CHILD DOES THAT MAKES RESPONDENT FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF ACCORDING TO SEX

Factor That Child Does That Makes Respondent Feel Good	Husbands		Wives	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	13	20.97	30	29.44
Tell/shows me that I am loved	9	14.52	22	21.57
Asks advice/talks to me	11	14.74	15	14.71
Is obedient/shows respect	10	16.13	13	12.75
Behaves in a socially appropriate manner	7	12.29	16	15.69
Wants parents to be with him/her	5	8.06	4	3.92
Other	7	11.29	2	1.96

Hypothesis I(g): There is no marked relationship between sex and perceptions of strong family members concerning what their spouse does that makes them feel good about self.

The greatest difference in Table XX was found to exist in the category, compliments and expresses appreciation; the wives account for 56.00 per cent of the responses in this category while the husbands accounted for 37.70 per cent. Twice as many husbands (18.03%) than wives (9.00%) reported that their spouse made them feel good by sharing their life with them.

TABLE XX

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT SPOUSE DOES  
THAT MAKES THE RESPONDENT FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF  
ACCORDING TO SEX

Factor That Spouse Does Which Makes Respondent Feel Good	Husbands		Wives	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	23	37.70	56	56.00
Gives me self-confidence	12	19.67	14	14.00
Shares his/her life with me	11	18.03	9	9.00
Lets me know I am loved	6	9.84	12	12.00
Doesn't put me down in front of others	1	1.64	4	4.00
Shows pride for our family life	-	--	2	2.00
Other	8	13.11	3	3.00

Hypothesis I(h): There is no marked relationship between sex and perceptions of strong family members concerning what respondent does that makes their spouse feel good about self.

Table XXI indicates almost equal differences in two categories, compliments and expresses appreciation and let spouse know that he/she is loved. A greater percentage of wives (53.92%) than husbands (47.62%) indicated compliments and expression of appreciation, while a greater percentage of males (22.22%) than females (16.67%) reported that they let their spouse know that they are loved.

TABLE XXI

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT RESPONDENT  
DOES THAT MAKES SPOUSE FEEL GOOD ABOUT  
SELF ACCORDING TO SEX

Factor That Respondent Does That Makes Spouse Feel Good About Self	Husbands		Wives	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Compliment and expresses appreciation	30	47.62	55	53.92
Let spouse know that he/she is loved	14	22.22	17	16.67
Provide encouragement and support	4	6.35	14	13.73
Let spouse know that their viewpoint is important	4	6.35	8	7.84
Share interest, decisions, and problems	5	7.94	6	5.88
Other	6	9.52	2	1.96

Hypothesis I(i): There is no significant relationship between sex and the degree to which the respondent makes their spouse feel good about self.

No significant differences were found to exist concerning the degree the respondent makes their spouse feel good about self according to sex. The chi-square value was 5.49.

Hypothesis I(j): There is no significant relationship between sex and the degree to which the spouse makes the respondent feel good about self.

The chi-square value was determined to be 2.56, therefore, no significant relationship was found between sex and the degree that the spouse makes the respondent feel good about self.

Hypothesis I(k): There is no significant relationship between sex and the degree to which the respondent makes their child feel good about self.

A chi-square value of 5.72 indicated that a significant relationship did not exist between sex and the degree to which the respondent makes the child feel good.

Hypothesis I(l): There is no significant relationship between sex and the degree to which their child makes the respondent feel good about self.

No significant relationship exists between sex and the degree to which their child makes the respondent feel good about self according to the chi-square analysis.



Hypothesis II. There is no marked or significant relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions of strong family members concerning each of the following: (a) what has contributed most to their marital satisfaction, (b) what they would most like to change about their marital relationship, (c) what has contributed most to making their relationship with their child strong, (d) what they would most like to change about their parent-child relationship, (e) what they do that makes their child feel good about self, (f) what their child does that makes them feel good about self, (g) what their spouse does that makes them feel good about self, (h) what the respondent does that makes spouse feel good about self, (i) the degree to which the respondent makes their spouse feel good about self, (j) the degree to which the spouse makes the respondent feel good about self, (k) the degree to which the respondent makes their child feel good about self, (l) the degree to which the child makes respondent feel good about self.

Hypothesis II(a): There is no marked relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what has contributed most to marriage satisfaction.

Slightly more than twice as many of the lower-middle class respondents (28.38%) as the upper-middle (13.33%) reported that mutual respect and understanding had contributed to marriage satisfaction. The upper-lower class reported a percentage of 19.05 per cent. The importance of religious convictions in terms of marital satisfaction as indicated by Table XXII was in descending order as the socio-economic status became lower (21.33 per cent, 12.16 per cent, and

TABLE XXII

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT HAS CONTRIBUTED MOST  
TO MARITAL SATISFACTION ACCORDING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS\*

Factor Contributing to Marriage Satisfaction	Upper-middle		Lower-middle		Upper-lower	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Mutual respect and understanding	10	13.33	21	28.38	4	19.05
Religious convictions	16	21.33	9	12.16	2	9.52
Mutual love	10	13.33	8	10.81	5	23.81
Communication	10	13.33	5	6.76	2	9.52
Flexibility	3	4.00	5	6.76	3	14.29
Emotional closeness	7	9.33	6	8.11	2	9.52
Mutual interests	3	4.00	7	9.46	2	9.52
Similar attitudes and beliefs	5	6.67	6	8.11	1	4.76
Children	4	5.33	-	---	-	---
Trust	1	1.33	2	2.70	-	---
Other	6	8.00	5	6.76	-	---

\* The upper and lower-lower classes of socio-economic status were not included due to few responses in these two categories.

9.52 per cent, respectively). It is interesting to note that only the upper-middle class (5.33%) stated that children had contributed to marriage satisfaction.

Hypothesis II(b): There is no marked relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what they would most like to change about their marital relationship.

Table XXIII shows that the majority of responses regardless of the socio-economic status felt satisfied with their marriage as the upper-middle (32.73%), lower-middle (34.55%), and upper-lower (50.00%) most often reported that they desired nothing to change. The lower-middle class (29.09%) stated twice as frequently a concern about having more time together than did the upper-middle (14.55%) or the upper-lower (15.00%).

Hypothesis II(c): There is no marked relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what has contributed to making their relationship with child strong.

Similar responses were recorded in two categories, mutual love and participation in child's activities. As Table XXIV indicates a greater proportion of upper-middle (19.28%) than lower-middle (12.82%) or upper-lower (18.18%) responses indicates mutual love as making their parent-child relationship strong. Two other categories, doing things together and communication, showed marked differences. The upper-lower stated more frequently (22.73%) that doing things together was important for a strong parent-child relationship than did the upper-middle (9.64%). Communication was felt to be an important aspect

TABLE XXIII

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THE RESPONDENT WOULD MOST LIKE TO  
CHANGE ABOUT MARITAL RELATIONSHIP ACCORDING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS\*

Factor Most Desired to Change in Marital Relationship	Upper-middle		Lower-middle		Upper-lower	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Nothing	18	32.73	19	34.55	10	50.00
Have more time to spend together	8	14.55	16	29.09	3	15.00
Improve communication	6	10.91	5	9.09	1	5.00
To be more understanding	7	12.73	4	7.27	1	5.00
Share more interests	4	7.27	2	3.64	-	--
Spouse to show more affection/ improve sexual relationship	2	3.64	2	3.64	1	5.00
Spouse to be more assertive	-	--	2	3.64	-	--
Do more things together	1	1.82	-	---	1	5.00
Spouse to show more interest in family and home	1	1.82	2	3.64	-	--
Other	8	14.55	3	5.36	3	15.00

\* The upper and lower-lower classes of socio-economic status were not included due to few responses in these two categories.

TABLE XXIV

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT HAS MADE THE RESPONDENT'S  
RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILD STRONG ACCORDING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS\*

Factor Contributing to Strong Parent-Child Relationship	Upper-middle		Lower-middle		Upper-lower	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Mutual love	16	19.28	10	12.82	4	18.18
Doing things together	8	9.64	13	16.67	5	22.73
Communication	11	13.25	13	16.67	1	4.55
Religious activities	10	12.05	11	14.10	1	4.55
Participating in child's activities	9	10.84	10	12.82	3	13.64
Respect for child as an individual	6	7.23	8	10.26	3	13.64
Trust	7	8.43	5	6.41	2	9.09
Respect for parents and others	3	3.61	2	2.56	2	9.09
Discipline	6	7.23	3	3.84	-	--
Mother staying at home (not employed)	2	2.41	1	1.28	-	--
Other	5	6.02	2	2.56	1	4.55

\* The upper and lower-lower classes of socio-economic status were not included due to few responses in these two categories.

of parent-child interaction almost four times as often by the lower-middle class (16.67%) than by the upper-lower class (4.55%).

Hypothesis II(d): There is no marked relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what they would most like to change about their parent-child relationship.

The greatest proportion of the responses as is indicated in Table XXV responded that they desired nothing to change in their parent-child relationship. The percentages were 35.48 per cent for upper-middle, 31.48 per cent for lower-middle, and 29.41 per cent for upper-lower classes. The greatest difference was found in the category to be more understanding/tolerant which was mentioned twice as often by the upper-lower class (35.29%) as compared to the upper middle (16.13%) and lower-middle (11.11%) classes. The upper-middle class (4.84%) when compared with the other socio-economic classes less often indicated having more time together was a major problem in their parent-child interactions.

Hypothesis II(e): There is no marked relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what they do that makes their child feel good about self.

As shown in Table XXVI a large number of the responses indicated that compliments and expressions of appreciation were most effective in making their child feel good about self. The upper-middle class mentioned this 41.77 per cent of the time, the lower-middle class 38.36 per cent, and the upper-lower class 39.13 per cent for this

TABLE XXV

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THE RESPONDENT WOULD MOST LIKE TO CHANGE  
ABOUT PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP ACCORDING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS\*

Factor Most Desired to Change in Parent-Child Relationship	Upper-middle		Lower-middle		Upper-lower	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Nothing	22	35.48	17	31.48	5	29.41
To be more understanding/tolerant	10	16.13	6	11.11	6	35.29
Better communication	9	14.52	10	18.52	2	11.76
More time together	3	4.84	8	14.81	2	11.76
Control anger	6	9.68	3	5.56	-	---
Child to take more responsibility at home/show more interest in home life	5	8.06	1	1.85	-	---
Mutual respect for differences	2	3.23	2	3.70	-	---
Other	5	8.06	7	12.96	2	11.76

\* The upper and lower-lower classes of socio-economic status were not included due to few responses in these two categories.

TABLE XXVI

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT RESPONDENT DOES THAT MAKES CHILD  
FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF ACCORDING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS\*

Factor That Respondent Does that Makes the Child Feel Good	Upper-middle		Lower-middle		Upper-lower	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	33	41.77	28	38.36	9	39.13
Provide encouragement and support	12	15.19	12	16.44	5	21.74
Express interest in them/participate in their activities	9	11.39	10	13.70	3	13.04
Let them know that they are loved	9	11.39	8	10.96	2	8.70
Respect them	7	8.86	7	9.59	2	8.70
Listen to them	6	7.59	5	6.85	-	---
Other	3	3.80	3	4.11	2	8.70

\* The upper and lower-lower classes of socio-economic status were not included due to few responses in these two categories.



category. In the remaining five categories similar responses were noted for all three socio-economic groups with the exception of listening to the child as there were no responses for the upper-lower class.

Hypothesis II(f): There is no marked relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what their child does that makes them feel good about self.

Compliments and expressions of appreciation was again the most frequent responses to the question what does your child do that makes you feel good about self as Table XXVII illustrates. This response was more frequently given by those in the upper-lower socio-economic group.

Hypothesis II(g): There is no marked relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what their spouse does that makes them feel good about self.

Table XXVIII illustrates that the giving of compliments and expression of appreciation is the most frequently mentioned response. Differences between the upper-middle and lower-middle classes is apparent in the next three categories although there is little difference in these categories between the lower-middle and the upper-lower classes. Upper-middle (23.88%) reported more than twice the emphasis on giving the respondent self confidence as a source of good feelings than the lower-middle (9.68%). When comparing the category of sharing his/her life with the respondent the upper-middle class reported only 8.96 per cent while the lower-middle reported 16.13 per cent.

TABLE XXVII

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT CHILD DOES THAT MAKES RESPONDENT  
FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF ACCORDING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS\*

Factor That Child Does Which Makes Respondent Feel Good	Upper-middle		Lower-middle		Upper-lower	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	15	23.08	16	24.62	7	35.00
Tells/shows me that I am loved	11	16.92	14	21.54	5	25.00
Asks advice/talks to me	11	16.92	11	16.92	1	5.00
Is obedient/shows respect	12	18.46	9	13.85	1	5.00
Behaves in a socially appropriate manner	10	15.38	9	13.85	3	15.00
Wants parents to be with him/her	4	6.15	1	1.54	2	10.00
Other	2	3.08	5	7.69	1	5.00

\* The upper and lower-lower classes of socio-economic status were not included due to few responses in these two categories.

TABLE XXVIII

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THEIR SPOUSE DOES THAT MAKES THE  
RESPONDENT FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF ACCORDING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS\*

Factor That Spouse Does Which Makes Respondent Feel Good	Upper-middle		Lower-middle		Upper-lower	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	34	50.75	29	46.77	9	45.00
Gives me self confidence	16	23.88	6	9.68	3	15.00
Shares his/her life with me	6	8.96	10	16.13	3	15.00
Lets me know I am loved	5	7.46	10	16.13	2	10.00
Doesn't put me down in front of others	2	2.99	2	3.23	1	5.00
Shows pride for our family life	-	---	1	1.61	-	---
Other	4	5.97	4	6.45	2	10.00

\* The upper and lower-lower classes of socio-economic status were not included due to few responses in these two categories.

Hypothesis II(h): There is no marked relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what the respondent does that makes their spouse feel good about self.

As shown in Table XXIX, the respondents most frequently rated compliments and expresses appreciation as the way they make their spouse feel good about self regardless of socio-economic status (upper-middle reported 54.41 per cent; the lower-middle 42.62 per cent; and the upper-lower 62.50 per cent). Letting the spouse know that he/she is loved reflected greater difference, however, as twice as many lower-middle (22.95%) and nearly three times as many upper-lower (29.17%) than the upper-middle (11.76%) selected this response.

Hypothesis II(i): There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and the degree to which the respondent makes their spouse feel good about self.

The chi-square value was determined to be 8.95, therefore, no significant relationship was found to occur between the socio-economic class and the degree the respondent makes their spouse feel good about self.

Hypothesis II(j): There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and the degree to which the spouse makes the respondent feel good about self.

No significant differences were found to exist concerning the degree that the spouse makes the respondent feel good about self and socio-economic status. The chi-square value was 5.84.

TABLE XXIX

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT RESPONDENT DOES THAT MAKES  
SPOUSE FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF ACCORDING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS\*

Factor That Respondent Does That Makes Spouse Feel Good About Self	Upper-middle		Lower-middle		Upper-lower	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Compliment and expresses appreciation	37	54.41	26	42.62	15	62.50
Let spouse know that he/she is loved	8	11.76	14	22.95	7	29.17
Provide encouragement and support	10	14.71	7	11.48	-	---
Let spouse know that their viewpoint is important	4	5.88	6	9.84	1	4.17
Share interests, decisions, and problems	6	8.82	3	4.92	1	4.17
Other	3	4.41	5	8.20	-	---

\* The upper and lower-lower classes of socio-economic status were not included due to few responses in these two categories.

Hypothesis II(k): There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and the degree to which the respondent makes their child feel good about self.

No significant relationship exists between socio-economic status and the degree to which the respondent makes their child feel good about self according to the chi-square analysis.

Hypothesis II(1): There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and the degree to which their child makes the respondent feel good about self.

A chi-square value of 3.60 indicated that a significant relationship did not exist between socio-economic status and the degree to which the child makes the respondent feel good about self.

Hypothesis III. There is no marked or significant relationship between the wife's employment status and perceptions of strong family members concerning each of the following: (a) what has contributed most to their marital satisfaction, (b) what they would most like to change about their marital relationship, (c) what has contributed most to making their relationship with their child strong, (d) what they would most like to change about their parent-child relationship, (e) what they do that makes their child feel good about self, (f) what their child does that makes them feel good about self, (g) what their spouse does that makes them feel good about self, (h) what the respondent does that makes spouse feel good about self, (i) the degree to which the respondent makes their spouse feel good about self, (j) the degree to which the spouse makes the respondent feel good about self, (k) the

degree to which the respondent makes their child feel good about self, (1) the degree to which the child makes respondent feel good about self.

Hypothesis III(a): There is no marked relationship between the wife's employment status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what has contributed most to marriage satisfaction.

Those who indicated that the wife was employed (13.64%) reported twice as often as did those indicating the wife was unemployed (6.52%) that emotional closeness was a major factor contributing to marriage satisfaction. An almost equal difference was found in two categories, mutual respect and understanding and mutual love. A larger percentage of the respondents who reported that the wife was employed (25.00%) than unemployed (20.29%) indicated that mutual respect and understanding had contributed to marital satisfaction. The category mutual love as Table XXX shows had a similar 5.00 per cent difference.

Hypothesis III(b): There is no marked relationship between the wife's employment status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what they would most like to change about their marital relationship.

Table XXXI indicates that the wife's employment status had little influence over what is most desired to change in the marriage relationship as both the unemployed and employed responded nothing 34 per cent of the time. A need for more time together was mentioned more often by the employed group (25.71%) than by the unemployed group (19.63%).

TABLE XXX

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT HAS CONTRIBUTED MOST TO  
MARITAL RELATIONSHIP ACCORDING TO THE WIFE'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Factor Contributing to Marriage Satisfaction	Unemployed		Employed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Mutual respect and under- standing	28	20.29	11	25.00
Religious convictions	23	16.67	5	11.36
Mutual love	16	11.59	7	15.91
Communication	14	10.14	3	6.82
Flexibility	11	7.97	3	6.82
Emotional closeness	9	6.52	6	13.64
Mutual interests	9	6.52	3	6.82
Similar attitude/beliefs	9	6.52	3	6.82
Children	3	2.17	2	4.55
Trust	5	3.62	-	--
Other	11	7.97	1	2.27

TABLE XXXI

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THE RESPONDENT WOULD MOST  
LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP ACCORDING TO THE  
WIFE'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Factor Most Desired to Change in Marital Relationship	Unemployed		Employed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Nothing	37	34.58	12	34.29
Have more time to spend together	21	19.63	9	25.71
Improve communication	9	8.41	4	11.43
To be more understanding	10	9.35	2	5.71
Share more interests	5	4.67	1	2.86
Spouse to show more affection/ improve sexual relationship	4	3.74	1	2.86
Spouse to be more assertive	2	1.87	2	5.71
Do more things together	4	3.74	-	--
Spouse to show more interest in family and home	1	0.93	2	5.71
Other	14	13.08	2	5.71



Hypothesis III(c): There is no marked relationship between the wife's employment status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what has contributed most to making their relationship with child strong.

Few differences were found to exist. Mutual love was most frequently mentioned by the unemployed group (17.45%) while the employed group placed doing things together and religious activities (16.67%) as the most important way of making their relationship with their child strong. As Table XXXII shows the remaining categories have similar rates of response.

TABLE XXXII

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT HAS MADE  
THE RESPONDENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILD STRONG  
ACCORDING TO WIFE'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Factor Contributing to Strong Parent-Child Relationship	Unemployed		Employed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Mutual love	26	17.45	6	12.50
Doing things together	22	14.77	8	16.67
Communication	20	13.42	6	12.50
Religious activities	15	10.07	8	16.67
Participating in child's activities	17	11.41	6	12.50
Respect for child as an individual	12	8.05	6	12.50
Trust	14	9.40	1	2.08
Respect for parents/others	6	4.03	3	6.25
Discipline	8	5.37	1	2.08
Mother staying at home (not employed)	3	2.01	-	--
Other	6	4.03	3	6.25

Hypothesis III(d): There is no marked relationship between the wife's employment status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what they would most like to change about their parent-child relationship.

Table XXXIII reveals that more than half (51.52%) of the employed group indicated nothing in comparison to 27.93 per cent of the unemployed. The unemployed also indicated a higher percentage, 16.22 than did the employed (9.09%) concerning better communication.

TABLE XXXIII

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THE RESPONDENT WOULD MOST LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP ACCORDING TO THE WIFE'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Factor Most Desired to Change in Parent-Child Relationship	Unemployed		Employed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Nothing	31	27.93	17	51.52
To be more understanding/ tolerant	17	15.32	6	18.18
Better communication	18	16.22	3	9.09
More time together	12	10.81	2	6.06
Control anger	8	7.21	1	3.03
Child to take more re- sponsibility at home	5	4.50	2	6.06
Mutual respect for differences	4	3.60	1	3.03
Other	16	14.41	1	3.03

Hypothesis III(e): There is no marked relationship between the wife's employment status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what they do that makes their child feel good about self.

A greater proportion of the unemployed group (43.57%) than employed (34.78%) perceived compliments and expression of appreciation as the most used way of making the child feel good about self. Table XXXIV illustrates that similar differences were found in two other categories, express an interest in them/participate in their activities and respect them. More employed (13.04%) than unemployed (7.14%) reported respecting the child.

TABLE XXXIV

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT RESPONDENT DOES THAT MAKES CHILD FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF ACCORDING TO THE WIFE'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Factor That Respondent Does That Makes Child Feel Good	Unemployed		Employed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	61	43.57	16	34.78
Provide encouragement and support	23	16.43	7	15.22
Express interest in them/participate in their activities	16	11.43	7	15.22
Let them know that they are loved	15	10.71	5	10.87
Respect them	10	7.14	6	13.04
Listen to them	8	5.71	3	6.52
Other	7	5.00	2	4.35

Hypothesis III(f): There is no marked relationship between the wife's employment status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what their child does that makes them feel good about self.

A change in earlier reported patterns is found in Table XXXV. A larger proportion of the unemployed group indicated compliments and expressions of appreciation (29.17%) as compared with the employed group (18.18%). Approximately three times as many of the employed group report is obedient/shows respect as the action of the child which makes the parent feel good about self.

TABLE XXXV

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT THE CHILD DOES THAT MAKES RESPONDENT FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF ACCORDING TO THE WIFE'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Factor That Child Does Which Makes Respondent Feel Good	Unemployed		Employed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	35	29.17	8	18.18
Tells/shows me that I am loved	21	17.50	10	22.73
Asks advice/ talks to me	21	17.50	5	11.36
Is Obedient/shows respect	11	9.17	12	27.27
Behaves in a socially appropriate manner	17	14.17	6	13.64
Wants parents to be with him/her	8	6.67	1	2.27
Other	6	5.00	2	4.54

Hypothesis III(g): There is no marked relationship between the wife's employment status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what their spouse does that makes them feel good about self.

Table XXXVI indicates very little relationship between perceptions of the wife's employment status and what their spouse does that makes them feel good. Nearly half of the respondents in both employment groups listed compliments and expresses appreciation as the main factor which makes them feel good.

TABLE XXXVI

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT SPOUSE DOES THAT MAKES THE RESPONDENT FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF ACCORDING TO THE WIFE'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Factor That Spouse Does Which Makes Respondent Feel Good	Unemployed		Employed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	62	49.21	17	48.57
Give me self confidence	20	15.87	6	17.14
Shares his/her life with me	15	11.90	5	14.29
Lets me know that I am loved	13	10.32	5	14.29
Doesn't put me down in front of others	3	2.38	2	5.71
Shows pride in our family life	2	1.59	-	---
Other	11	8.73	-	---

Hypothesis III(h): There is no marked relationship between the wife's employment status and perceptions of strong family members concerning what the respondent does that makes their spouse feel good about self.

Letting the spouse know that his/her viewpoint is important was reported four times as frequently by the employed (16.13%) than the unemployed group (4.10%). As Table XXXVII shows equal differences were found in the first two categories. A greater proportion of unemployed (54.92%) than employed (41.86%) responses indicated compliments and expresses appreciation, while the employed (23.26%) more often than the unemployed (17.21%) mentioned let spouse know that he/she is loved.

TABLE XXXVII

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHAT RESPONDENT DOES  
THAT MAKES SPOUSE FEEL GOOD ABOUT SELF ACCORDING TO  
THE WIFE'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Factor That Respondent Does That Makes Spouse Feel Good	Unemployed		Employed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Compliments and expresses appreciation	67	54.92	18	41.86
Let spouse know that he/she is loved	21	17.21	10	23.26
Provide encouragement and support	15	12.30	3	6.98
Let spouse know that their viewpoint is important	5	4.10	7	16.31
Share interests, decisions, and problems	7	5.74	4	9.30
Other	7	5.74	1	2.33

Hypothesis III(i): There is no significant relationship between the wife's employment status and the degree to which the respondent makes their spouse feel good about self.

A chi-square value of 0.65 indicated that a significant relationship did not exist between the wife's employment status and the degree to which the respondent makes the spouse feel good about self.

Hypothesis III(j): There is no significant relationship between the wife's employment status and the degree to which the spouse makes the respondent feel good about self.

No significant relationship exists between the wife's employment status and the degree to which the spouse makes the respondent feel good about self according to the chi-square test.

Hypothesis III(k): There is no significant relationship between the wife's employment status and the degree to which the respondent makes their child feel good about self.

No significant differences were found to exist concerning the degree to which the respondent makes the child feel good about self according to the wife's employment status. The chi-square value was 1.31.

Hypothesis III(l): There is no significant relationship between the wife's employment status and the degree to which their child makes the respondent feel good about self.

The chi-square value was determined to be 2.56, therefore, no significant relationship was found between the wife's employment status and the degree which the child makes the respondent feel good about self.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of strong family members concerning various aspects of their marital, parental, and family relationships.

The respondents were 157 husbands and wives from Oklahoma. The respondents were members of strong family units as determined by previously mentioned criteria, had at least one child 21 years or younger, were primarily White, and predominately from rural areas and small towns. The data were collected during the months of March, April, and May, 1975.

Percentages and frequencies were used to analyze the respondents' perceptions concerning eight different aspects of their family relationships.

The chi-square test was used to examine four questions concerning the degree to which the respondent and other family members made each other feel good about themselves. The results of this study were as follows:

1. The five most frequently given responses to the question what has contributed most to your marriage satisfaction were respectively mutual respect and understanding, religious convictions, mutual love, good communications, and flexibility. Similar results were obtained when the question was analyzed according to sex. The men placed a

greater emphasis on mutual respect and understanding than did the women. It is interesting to note that only women responded with the answer children (4.39%) and in terms of socio-economic status only the upper-middle class reported children as a source of marital satisfaction. The upper-middle class most mentioned religious convictions as the most important source of marriage satisfaction, while the lower-middle class reported the greatest source to be mutual respect and understanding, and the upper-lower class indicated mutual love. When comparing the differences in responses to marital satisfaction and the employment status of the respondents' wives, mutual respect and understanding was again the most frequently responded answer. The top five categories are in the same order for the unemployed and the total response but the the order for the employed is as follows: mutual respect and understanding, mutual love, emotional closeness, flexibility, and religious convictions. All of the just mentioned categories received a percentage of no less than 11 per cent and no greater than 25 per cent.

2. The greatest proportion of the total responses (over one-third) indicated that they wanted to change nothing about the marriage relationship. The second most frequent response was that they would like to have more time together. Nearly twice the proportion of males to females indicated that they wanted to change nothing and again the second response was the same. The greatest difference between the sexes occurred over the desire for improved communication where the women indicated eight times the response of the men. The majority of the respondents regardless of socio-economic status felt satisfied with their marriage and reported they desired to change nothing.

To have more time together was the next most frequently mentioned, with the lower-middle class indicating a greater concern than the other two groups in this category. The wife's employment status appeared to have little influence on the rate of response as the respondents indicated similar responses to the total response.

3. The majority of total responses to what has contributed to making the parent's relationship with child strong were distributed in five categories which were mutual love, doing things together, good communication, participating in religious activities with child, and participating in the child's activities. Twice as many of the responses by fathers than mothers indicated that doing things together was an important strengthening force in their parent-child relationship. Similar percentage levels were found between parents on all the above mentioned categories except religious activities which more men mentioned than did women. In comparing socio-economic status definite differences were found to exist. The first and second most frequent response according to socio-economic class were mutual love and communication for the upper-middle, doing things together and communication for the lower-middle, and doing things together and mutual love for the upper-lower. Communication was not indicated as a major source of strong parent-child interaction by the upper-lower status. Similar responses were again found when the wife's employment status was compared. The greatest difference was six per cent where the employed indicated a greater frequency of religious activities with child than the unemployed.

4. The greatest proportion of response (nearly half) concerning what the parent would like to change about parent-child relationship was nothing. The next two most frequently mentioned categories were to be more understanding/tolerant and better communication, respectively. Fathers more frequently responded to the first two categories than did mothers and both parents were of similar opinion on communication. It is interesting to note that fathers mentioned four times as often the need for more time together than did mothers. In reference to socio-economic status the upper-middle and lower-middle groups both responded that they desired to change nothing while the upper-lower most frequently mentioned the second category, to be more understanding/tolerant. A major difference between the classes was the need for more time together as the upper-middle indicated that this was not a major problem but did concern the lower-middle and upper-lower classes. The wife's employment status revealed two interesting differences. First, nearly twice as many of the employed as unemployed responded nothing, indicating a desire for no change in the parent-child relationship and secondly, almost twice as many of the unemployed as employed reported a need for improved communication.

5. The most frequent response to what do you do that makes your child feel good was compliments and expresses appreciation. The next three responses whose total percentage equals the first can be collectively grouped as supportive behavior toward the child. Similar responses were found regardless of sex, socio-economic status, and the wife's employment status.

6. What the child does that makes the respondent feel good about self was answered most frequently with the phrase compliments and

expresses appreciation. The second and third most frequently given responses were tells/shows me that I am loved and asks advice/talks to me. A greater percentage of mothers than fathers indicated that their child gives them compliments and expresses appreciation. Parents responded similarly in the remaining categories. The results for socio-economic status mirrored the results of the total response. A change in earlier patterns was found when the wife's employment status was compared. While the unemployed reflected the earlier total results the employed reported that the most frequent response is is obedient/shows respect. The second category remained the same and compliments and expresses appreciation was ranked third.

7. Again the most frequent response concerning what their spouse does that make the respondent feel good was compliments and expresses appreciation. Both husbands and wives placed compliments and expresses appreciation as the top category according to sex. Twice as many husbands as wives reported that their spouse made them feel good by sharing their life with them. In reference to socio-economic status the upper-middle class reported more than twice the emphasis on giving the respondent self confidence as a source of good feelings than the lower-middle. The lower-middle class reported twice the emphasis on sharing his/her life with the respondent than did the upper-middle class. Few differences in perceptions according to the wife's employment status and what their spouse does that makes them feel good were observed.

8. Fifty per cent of the responses to what do you do that makes your spouse feel good about self was compliments and expresses appreciation. Both husbands and wives placed compliments and expresses

appreciation as the top category according to sex. A greater percentage of males than females stated that they let their spouse know that they are loved. The respondents all rated compliments and expresses appreciation as the way they make their spouse feel good about self regardless of socio-economic status. Letting the spouse know that he/she is loved, however, was different as twice as many lower-middle and nearly three times as many upper-lower than indicated by the upper-middle. A greater proportion of those respondents who reported that the wife was unemployed than those reporting that the wife was employed responded with compliments and expresses appreciation, while the employed group more often than the unemployed group mentioned let spouse know that he/she is loved.

9. No significant differences were found to exist between the degree to which the respondent makes their spouse feel good about self, the degree to which the spouse makes the respondent feel good about self, the degree to which the respondent makes their child feel good about self, and the degree to which the child makes the respondent feel good about self according to sex, socio-economic status or the wife's employment status.

#### Discussion and Conclusions

The strong families in this study indicated that mutual respect and understanding was the most important factor which had contributed to marriage satisfaction. This finding is similar to Otto's report (1962) that mutual respect and understanding were listed as major sources of family strength. This response is supported by research which indicates that respect was the characteristic of a successful marriage

most often reported by older husbands and wives (Stinnett, Carter, & Montgomery, 1972). That respect was so frequently mentioned by these strong families is also consistent with other research (Mathews & Milhanovich, 1963; Hicks & Platt, 1970) which indicates that unhappily married individuals feel that their self-respect is attacked and depreciated by their spouse.

That the greatest proportion of respondents wished to change nothing about their marital relationship is in part an indicator of the validity of the study since the sample was composed of families classified as strong who reported a high degree of marital satisfaction. It is not surprising that twice the proportion of males to females indicated a desire to change nothing about their marital relationship as research from various cultures indicate that males tend to report higher marriage satisfaction scores because they tend to hold more conservative expectations than do women (Stinnett, Collins, & Montgomery, 1970).

The parents in these strong families revealed a pattern of expressing appreciation and giving compliments to their children, spending time with them, participating in their activities and in general exhibiting a pattern of expressing a strong interest in their children. These findings are consistent with research evidence suggesting that parental support, warmth and acceptance are related to positive emotional, social, and intellectual development of children (Walters & Stinnett, 1971). The findings that twice the proportion of fathers to mothers reported that doing things together was an important factor in strengthening their parent-child relationship may be in part explained by traditional sex roles as in the majority of

families only the father was gainfully employed thus the opportunity to share experiences together with their children would be reduced in comparison to the mother's opportunity for such sharing experiences. Therefore sharing activities with their children may take on a greater significance for the father with respect to developing good parent-child relationships. That communication was not indicated as a major source of strengthening parent-child interaction by the upper-lower class may to some degree be explained by reports that lower socio-economic couples tend to be less verbal in their interactions with other family members (Komarovsky, 1967). Previous research also indicates that couples in lower socio-economic classes do not consider communication as important to family interaction as do higher socio-economic classes (Komarovsky, 1967).

The finding that nearly half of the responses concerning what the parents would most like to change about the parent-child relationship was nothing reveals that these strong families are satisfied not only with the husband-wife relationship but also with the parent-child relationship and express few dissatisfactions with family interactions. This finding is another indicator of the validity of this study since the sample was composed of family members who reported a high degree of satisfaction with the parent-child relationship. It is interesting to note that fathers mentioned four times as often the need for more time with their children than did the mothers. This may in part be explained by the consideration of traditional sex role patterns as in the majority of these families only the father worked and therefore the amount of time he would have to be with the children would be less than the mothers. It is also interesting that approximately three



times as many lower-middle and upper-lower family class members mentioned having more time with their children than did the upper-middle class as an aspect of parent-child relationships they would most like to change. It is possible that more parents in lower socioeconomic groups work longer hours or perhaps have two jobs in order to meet family financial needs.

A major finding in this survey was that members of strong families enhance each other's self-esteem primarily by complimenting and expressing appreciation to each other. The need for appreciation is basic to emotional health and positive relationships. The lack of appreciation is a frequent complaint among couples and families receiving counseling. There is also empirical evidence that unhappily married persons feel neglected and that they receive little appreciation from their spouses (Mathews & Milhanovich, 1963). These findings are also related to the suggestion by Johnson (1968) that one task of marriage counselors is to assist the couple in decreasing a negative pattern of reinforcing each other's fears or negative self-concepts and develop a positive pattern of reinforcing each other's positive self-concepts.

An interesting difference was found to exist when comparing what the child does that makes the parent feel good about self according to the wife's employment status. This difference was that the employed wife group responded most frequently with is obedient/shows respect. This response may be a reflection of the lesser amount of time that the parents can spend with their children in a family where both parents work and the increased pressure to maintain both job excellence and household maintenance. The children as a result may be expected to

take responsibilities at home more serious and thus there may be more emphasis on being obedient and respectful.

That these families indicated a high degree of religious orientation is consistent with several research studies showing that marriage happiness is positively associated with religion (Bowman, 1974). This may be explained by the fact that religion has traditionally been concerned with promoting strong families. Religion also emphasizes values such as commitment, respect, mutual support and responsibility for the needs and welfare of others which contribute to positive interpersonal relationships. Another aspect of religious involvement which may contribute to family strength is that church attendance is for many families an activity they can share together and there is evidence that joint activity, if it is mutually rewarding and pleasant, strengthens the family (Blood, 1969).

#### Implications and Recommendations

Four characteristics that emerge from the strong families in this study were: (a) mutual respect and understanding are important factors that support marriage satisfaction, (b) the expression of appreciation to other family members enhances self-esteem, (c) the parents express an active interest in their children and share many activities with them, and (d) that religious convictions are important to their life style.

One implication suggested by this study is the challenge to family life education to emphasize the importance of appreciation in developing positive interpersonal relationships and to help individuals learn how to more effectively express sincere appreciation to others. Perhaps

more use could be made of such techniques as the Multiple Strengths Perceptions Method (Otto, 1975) in which a particular family member (under the direction of a group leader) is asked to list what he sees as his major strengths, after which every other family member is asked to mention strengths of that person; this procedure is followed for each person in the family. Otto (1975) reports that this technique is ego supportive and has very positive effects upon the family relationships. Certainly similar techniques could be developed for use in the classroom to assist students in developing skills in expressing appreciation and in learning to focus upon the strengths rather than weaknesses of others. Such experiences could also provide an opportunity for observing the positive effects of concentrating upon the strengths of others.

The present results have additional implications for family life education specialists. As basic as the need for appreciation is in promoting good relationships, it is a concept which has been largely ignored in family life textbooks as well as in the classroom. For example, a survey of 25 leading marriage, family, and child development texts showed that the topic of appreciation was not even listed in the index of any of the books. In view of the importance these strong families attribute to the expression of appreciation, there seems to be merit in placing more emphasis upon this concept in family life educational experiences.

There is a need for more research on family strengths. Studies such as this can provide a profile of characteristics of strong families which can be helpful to a variety of persons such as family life educators, counselors, social workers, and clergymen. Greater

emphasis on family strengths can give more balance in family life education between examining the problems and potentials of family relationships. Specific information on what makes for a strong family relationship can be used in the classroom as a way to help students explore what they can do to make their families stronger, as a therapeutic device to help families identify and develop strengths rather than concentrating upon problems and by counselors for both diagnostic and treatment purposes.

It is suggested that studies of family strengths be conducted among a more heterogeneous sample so that information on upper and lower-lower classes could be studied and among families who come from urban and inter-city areas. A combination of techniques using questionnaires, personal interviews, and the audio-visual tapings of assigned tasks would gather additional in depth information on relationship patterns of strong families. Future research could also be conducted among families having serious relationship problems through the development of a training program where they might be assisted to internalize relationship skills and qualities found to be important among strong families.

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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

February 27, 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 by March 25. 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/dw  
 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. 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

14. 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

15. What would you most like to change about your marriage relationship?
16. What do you feel has contributed most to making your marriage satisfying?
17. What do you feel has contributed most to making your relationship with your child strong?
18. What would you most like to change about your relationship with your oldest child living at home?
19. 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

20. (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?
21. 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

22. What exactly do you do that makes your spouse feel good about himself?
23. Indicate on the following 5 point scale the degree to which your child makes you feel good about himself. (5 represents greatest degree and 1 represents the least).
- 1        2        3        4        5
24. What exactly does he/she do that makes you feel good about yourself?
25. 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).
26. What exactly do you do that makes them feel good about himself/herself?



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VITA

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Master of Science

Thesis: RELATIONSHIP PATTERNS OF STRONG FAMILIES

Major Field: Family Relations and Child Development

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