PATTERNS OF DEALING WITH CONFLICT IN STRONG

FAMILIES

By

ARLINDA KAY MCCUMBER

Bachelor of Science
Southwestern Oklahoma State University
Weatherford, Oklahoma
1971

Master of Science
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
1972

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Thesis Approved:

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Thesis Adviser

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Dean of the Graduate College

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Conflict appears to be an integral part of any intimate relation-
ship, such as marriage, and learning how to handle conflict in positive,
effective ways is of vital importance in achieving and maintaining
successful marital and family relationships.

There is very limited research on how successful strong families
deal with conflict. More knowledge about how members of strong, suc-
cessful families deal with conflict could be very beneficial in provid-
ing positive models for dealing with conflict and could also be benefi-
cial to counselors, ministers, family life educators and other pro-
fessionals working with families.

Most Americans still assume that a good marriage is one in which
there is no open conflict; overt expression of hostility is considered
evidence of marital problems which need to be resolved so that there
will be no more conflict (Fullerton, 1972).

Conflict is not always dysfunctional for the relationship within
which it occurs; often conflict is necessary to maintain such a relation-
ship. Without ways to vent hostility toward each other, and to express
dissent, group members might feel completely crushed and might react by
withdrawal. By setting free pent-up feelings of hostility, conflicts
serve to maintain a relationship. Fullerton (1972) believes the ability
to express, channel, and discharge tensions in a marriage is as

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important as the ability to express affection.

Many professionals working in the area of family mental health were consulted regarding their philosophies applying to family conflict.

> I don't try to prevent family fights. The notion that family arguments in themselves must be either bad or good is expressed by people who haven't thought the subject through. The problem isn't that family members argue. What's important is whether problems are solved and decisions are reached which lead to change (Roalman, 1969, p. 55).

Miss Jeanette Hanford, Director of The Family Service Bureau of United Charities of Chicago, has 35 years of experience in counseling families. "It is amazing," she says, "how often it is necessary for a married couple to have a good fight before they really begin to communicate with one another" (Roalman, 1969, p. 55). Bettie M. Stride, casework director, Family Service Association, adds: "There isn't a couple in the world that doesn't disagree. It's how they handle the disagreement that is important. If argument clears the air, if some decision is reached, this is constructive argument" (Roalman, 1969, p. 55). Paul Popenoe, Director of the American Institute of Family Relations, defines a destructive quarrel as one in which an attempt is made to damage the other person. "A constructive quarrel," he explains, "is one in which the hostility is directed toward an issue, a condition, a situation. Most of us are not civilized enough to quarrel imper- sonally" (Roalman, 1969, p. 55).

It is one of the self-evident truths of American culture that it is good for a husband and wife to express affection toward each other. Many American husbands and wives have sought through some form of therapy to learn to express their affection more easily and freely; only recently have they also begun to seek (through encounter groups and

similar experiences) to learn to express hostility toward each other in constructive ways (Fullerton, 1972).

The truth is that most really intimate married people do fight, although many will not admit it. What is more, the marriage without quarrels may be faltering from emotional starvation. Contrary to folklore, the existence of hostility and conflict is not necessarily a sign that love is waning. Indifference to a partner's anger and hate is a surer sign of a deteriorating relationship. In other words, if you care, you probably fight (Bach and Wyden, 1971). Some couples admit that disputes will occur, then form rules for arguing their differences through to a conclusion (Bach and Wyden, 1971).

One of the most important needs in our society today is strengthening family life. Certainly if family life is going to be strengthened, American families are going to have to adopt a pattern for dealing with conflict that can be classified as a family strength rather than a weakness. Family strengths have been defined by Otto (1975) as forces and factors in the relationship which encourage the development of personal resources and potentials of family members which make family life deeply satisfying and fulfilling to its members. Developing patterns which lead to constructive rather than destructive modes of conflict should be the goal of American families.

What are the patterns of dealing with conflict among strong families? Very little research has been conducted to examine this question. Such information could provide more objectivity to many of the clinical impressions concerning conflict and could also provide greater insight into more positive, effective ways of dealing with conflict.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are: (1) to use criteria established by Bach (1969c) in developing the Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale; (2) to examine the perceptions of husbands and wives of strong families concerning how often their spouses respond to conflict situations in each of the following ways: (a) is specific when introducing a gripe, (b) just mainly complains, (c) sticks to one issue at a time, (d) is intolerant, (e) is willing to compromise, (f) calls others names (such as neurotic, coward, stupid, etc.), (g) brings up the past, (h) uses sarcasm, (i) checks to be sure he/she correctly understands the other person's feelings about the disagreement, (j) respects the right of other person to disagree; (3) to examine the perceptions of individuals of strong families concerning the rate at which each individual sees himself/herself responding to conflict situations in each of the ten ways mentioned above.

A further purpose of this study is to examine the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and sex.

2. There is no significant relationship between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and (a) socio-economic status, (b) age, (c) number of years married, and (d) degree of religious orientation.

3. There is no significant correlation between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and Marital Need Satisfaction Scale scores.

4. There is no significant correlation between <u>Patterns of</u>

<u>Dealing With Conflict Scale</u> scores and number of children.

These hypotheses were studied using 85 subjects from strong families residing in Oklahoma. Level of significance was established at the 0.05 level.

Definition of Terms

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

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

<u>Marital Need Satisfaction</u> is the extent of satisfaction within the marital relationship which a husband or wife expresses concerning the fulfillment of certain basic psychological needs by his/her spouse (love, personality fulfillment, respect, communication, meaning in life, and integration of past life experiences).

<u>Constructive Conflict</u> is taking a specific issue and arguing it through to a settlement, keeping the partner's character out of the debate (Bach and Wyden, 1971).

<u>Destructive Conflict</u> is the "gloves-off variety," in which the participants specialize in scathing criticism aimed at destroying their partner's ego (Bach and Wyden, 1971).

The variables sex, socio-economic status, age, number of years married, number of children and degree of religious orientation were analyzed in this study. These specific variables were analyzed because the available literature suggested that these variables are important in determining marital satisfaction.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Family Strengths

The literature and research concerning family strengths is quite limited. Otto (1962, 1963, 1964, 1966, 1967, 1962 and 1975), Zimmerman and Cervantes (1960), Reeder (1973), and Grams (1967) are among the authors contributing to research dealing with family strengths.

Otto (1962, 1966) in an early study in which 27 families were asked to list what they perceived as their family strengths revealed that the affective aspects of family living provided the greatest source of family strength. The giving and receiving of love and understanding between spouses, parents, and children were mentioned the most. Other items considered important for a strong family were doing things together as a family and sharing religious and moral convictions.

In a somewhat later study, Otto (1967) revealed that families have latent strengths or capacities which they are not using. Families tend to be more aware of problem areas and difficulties than of capacities and potentials. Otto (1963) finds that family strength is the end product of a series of ever-changing related components. He identifies these twelve components which result in family strength:

(1) The ability to provide for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of a family.

(2) The ability to be sensitive to the needs of the family members.

(3) The ability to communicate.

(4) The ability to provide support, security, and encouragement.

(5) The ability to establish and maintain growth-producing relationships within and without the family.

(6) The capacity to maintain and create constructive and responsible community relationships in the neighborhood and in the school, town, local and state governments.

(7) The ability to grow with and through children.

(8) An ability for self-help, and the ability to accept help when appropriate.

(9) An ability to perform family roles flexibly.

(10) Mutual respect for the individuality of family members.

(11) The ability to use a crisis or injurious experience as a means of growth.

(12) A concern for family unity, loyalty, and interfamily cooperation.

Results of Truitt's (1976) study suggest that the following are characteristics of strong families: have a high belief in God, are highly optimistic, are having their needs for love met, and have a great sense of meaning and purpose in life. Blackburn (1967) reports that the strong family is the family that has a high degree of satisfaction with husband-wife and parent-child relationships. These relationships within the family also contribute to making a strong family. Strong husband-wife relationships exist where they have high feelings of mutual respect, affection and love for each other (Cutright, 1971). The individuals comprising strong families usually come from similar

economic classes and backgrounds with similar goals and expectations. They are also compatible sexually (Barton, Kawash, and Cattell, 1972). Truitt (1976) found that a positive relationship exists between marital need satisfaction and sex with the husband having a greater amount of satisfaction than the wife. This suggests that his expectations are not as high as hers.

Walters and Stinnett (1971) report that couples without children tend toward extremes in adjustment being either extremely unhappy or extremely happy while those with children approached average in happiness. Few studies have been done that compare exact number of children with marital happiness.

One factor central to the stability and strength of a strong family is commitment. Commitment has been defined as the process where individuals give their energy and loyalty to a central theme. Committed family members strongly believe in what the family stands for as they continue to demonstrate this commitment. Kanter (1968) states that many of the social problems in our society are seen as stemming from a lack of commitment. A study by Stevenson and Stinnett (1976) found that marital need satisfaction was significantly and positively related to degree of family commitment.

Strong families have good lines of communication which are open to all family members. Ball (1976) found that satisfactory interfamilial communication was a characteristic of strong families. The factors that contribute to satisfying communication include: (a) talking out problems together, (b) honesty (openness), (c) listening, and (d) talking together.

Most strong families are considered equalitarian in that all family

members contribute to making decisions. The strong family is not afraid to ask for help when it is needed. A weak family waits until it is too late to seek help. The strong family has the ability to cope and to handle stressful situations that arise (Figley, 1973).

Sauer (1976) reported that strong families were characterized by: (a) mutual respect and understanding, (b) expressions of appreciation among family members, (c) parental expressions of interest in their children and their activities, and (d) that religious convictions are important to their life style. Figley (1973) supports this finding when he states that religion plays an important part in the lives of strong families. It functions to support and to make the family stronger.

One strength of the American family is that it continues to meet the needs of men and women. These needs range from providing shelter, protection, family development, affection, reproduction, emotional, educational, love, to meeting sexual needs (Barton, Kawash, Cattell, 1972).

According to Minuchin (1974), one of the main functions of any family is to support its members. Research shows that members of strong families are unusually supportive of each other. When a member is stressed, the other family members feel the need to accommodate to his changed circumstances. Truitt (1976) found that strong families are having needs met within the family relationships to such a large degree that there is not a strong inclination to develop relationships and loyalities outside the family structure.

Hirschberg (1969) evaluated today's family in terms of what he viewed as family strengths and weaknesses. Strengths of the family:

(1) increased tendency for giving and taking between husband and wife,
(2) increased independence for children, and (3) increased health.
Weaknesses of the family: (1) waning convictions with no strong sense
of purposefulness beyond that of self-protection, (2) families today
operate as isolated units, and (3) inability to cope with changing
family roles.

Hill (1970) undertook a study to determine what makes a successful
family and he concluded that it is not just luck that enables some
families--about one-fourth of those he studied--to manage well.
Successful families have discovered certain ways of handling their
time, talents and money, regardless of how much they have, so as to gain
the things in life they want most. Such families, Hill believes, are
thoughtfully organized, with good lines of communication between husband
and wife and between parents and children, and are efficient in steward-
ing resources.

For better family management, Hill (1970) recommends that families
and young people about to marry follow these guidelines: (1) Do not be
in a rush to marry, (2) Have fewer children, (3) Be prepared to cope
with the unexpected, (4) Discuss decisions freely, (5) Choose the
decision-maker wisely, and (6) Rely on relatives.

It is true that almost every aspect of family living is being sub-
jected to criticism. Extreme pessimists believe that the family as it
exists in our culture may be doomed. Others emphasize the urgent need
to shore up our contemporary versions of marriage and family life.
According to Mead (1970), the development of new designs for living is
one of our most urgent needs today.

In the past Americans were willing to work very hard for a better

life for their children. Significantly, the forms that the better life should take seldom were spelled out. Instead, people concentrated on creating the conditions in which a better life was possible and on rearing children who could make innovations in the style of living appropriate to their own generation. This still should be our goal. We need to look ahead and plan for ways in which families can live that are more in accord with the changes emerging in our society (Mead, 1970).

At a time when many radical theorists regard the family as a dying or unnecessary institution, Reuben Hill is reasonably optimistic about its future,

> If anything, our three-generational study increased my respect for the family's resiliency and its capacity for survival and growth. It was a real surprise in our study to find that the youngest generation was most in favor of keeping in touch with in-laws, parents and grandparents, and most against the idea that each generation should go its own way. Obviously, the young believe in the family and close kin as essential to their needs (Bloom, 1973, p. 124).

Stinnett (1976) in his research of strong families, found the following five factors characterized the strong families: (a) they express a great deal of appreciation and positive psychological strokes to each other, (b) they spend a lot of time together and do many things together, (c) they have established good communication patterns, (d) they have a high degree of religious orientation, and (e) they express a high degree of commitment to each other and to the family unit.

Ammons (1976) concluded that strong family members and also those strong family members who had a high degree of vital-total marital relationship expressed high levels of personality needs which tend to

contribute to successful interpersonal relationships. For example, the respondents expressed high levels of need for intraception (need to understand, to analyze and empathize), affiliation (need for people to form strong attachments), nurturance (to give help, support, kindness to others), and succorance (to receive help, encouragement); each of these needs tends to promote supportiveness in relationships and specifically would increase the likelihood of the husband and wife mutually reinforcing each other's positive self-concept and giving each other psychological strokes. The respondents also indicated a high level of need for achievement (ambition, to succeed) and endurance (perseverance, tenacity). It is logical that these needs would contribute to successful marriage and family relationships in that they reflect a desire to accomplish a goal (a successful marriage and family life) and the perseverance and determination to continue working toward that goal.

Truitt (1976) found that a positive relationship exists between marital need satisfaction and the degree of optimism, indicating that those respondents having their marital needs met to a high degree also have a high degree of optimism.

Summary

The review of literature concerning family strengths suggests the following:

(1) Although most people consider a satisfying family life as a very important goal in life, there are few guidelines concerning the achievement of a satisfying family life.

(2) Items positively associated with marriage and family success

are the presence of such aspects as love, understanding, sharing a high degree of religious orientation and a sharing of moral convictions.

(3) Factors identified as strengths resulting in family strength include the ability to provide for and be sensitive to each family member's needs in order to establish and maintain growth-producing relationships within and without the family.

(4) Children, while positively associated with marriage stability, affect the marital relationship before they are born and continue to influence the degree of happiness in the marital relationship until they are successfully launched.

(5) Communication channels must be left open, couples must talk more and understand what is being said by the other, and be more sensitive to each other's feelings if couples are to be happily married.

(6) Employment of the wife outside the home has been shown to not have an adverse affect upon the marriage if the wife wants to work and is not working because of financial necessity, if the husband approves, or if she is only working part time.

(7) Personality characteristics such as emotional maturity, self control, ability to demonstrate affections, considerateness, and ability to overcome feelings of anger have been associated with marriage success and strong families.

Conflict in Strong Families

Although some conflict normally occurs in families, it is not inevitable, and it can be minimized. Because of differences in values,

couples will not agree on everything, and mature couples will not expect to always agree. Couples who disagree have a choice as to whether their disagreements will produce conflict. Each of us is aware that some conflict in an intimate relationship like marriage is normal and can be expected. To make our relationships as good as possible, it is important to learn how to deal with conflict effectively.

Coser (1956) points out that there are essentially two kinds of conflict: (1) realistic conflict, which is a means to a set goal and is directed toward the object or person impeding achievement of that goal, and (2) nonrealistic conflict, which is essentially a release of aggression and tension and thus an end in itself. In nonrealistic conflict there is no choice of means--only a choice of victim. It is conflict itself which is wanted; it is not a means to some end, but an end in itself. Jealousy is a basic form of nonrealistic conflict.

Paul Popenoe, Director of the American Institute of Family Relations, uses the terms destructive and constructive when describing conflict. Popenoe defines a destructive quarrel as one in which an attempt is made to damage the other person. A constructive quarrel is one in which the hostility is directed toward an issue, a condition, a situation, not a person (Roalman, 1969).

Kiern, Dianne, Henton and Marotz (1975) state that conflict often serves the useful purpose of aiding precise identification of what the marital problem actually is. Conflict can contribute to the real issues being brought out into the open. Herman and Snyder (1969) affirm this and further state that when the actual problem is identified, both partners think more clearly about the situation and the chances of resolving difficulties greatly increase.

Herman and Snyder (1969) state that conflict offers a very positive benefit if it results in a couple developing a greater understanding of each other. A greater appreciation for each other's past experiences and values often result from conflict situations. They also state that conflict produces a beneficial by-product if it renews a couple's appreciation of their marriage relationship.

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of any relationship marked by health and growth. No matter how close and loving we are, daily family life is bound to give rise to differences of opinion, and to problems and issues which lead to discord (Brenton, 1973).

Minuchin (1974) feels there are many phases in a family's own natural evolution that require the negotiation of new family rules. In this process, conflicts inevitably arise. Ideally, the conflicts will be resolved by negotiation of transition, and the family will adapt successfully. These conflicts offer an opportunity for growth by all family members. However, if such conflicts are not resolved, the transitional problems may give rise to further problems.

Blood (1969) writes that one way couples may solve conflict is by concensus and compromise or one partner may concede to the other or if neither partner wants to give in, a couple may decide on accommodation. Accommodation is each partner going his or her separate way.

Any emotional relationship is characterized by both love and hate-- two extreme emotions, in whose natural flow we are always caught. It is the tensions between these two opposing forces that make a close rela- tionship durable, enabling the two partners to join together in intimacy (Brenton, 1973).

There are couples who say, "We never fight." They do not fight

about sex or about anything else. On the surface, at least, they have no conflicts. Such couples usually do not go on to say, "We never make love," but this very often seems to be the case. Professionals who work with troubled families often find a strong connection between lack of fighting and lack of sex; these couples do not show much passion in any facet of their relationship (Brenton, 1973, p. 46).

"Aggression, conflict and hostility are very much a part of being human," says family counselors Carmi and Clara Harari (Davis, 1969, p. 97) of New York City. "We feel there is a secret parents do not tell their children: that quarreling is normal and not necessarily a sign of an unhappy marriage." Couples who can not let themselves go enough to quarrel have essentially, a problem in communication, and improved communication can save a deteriorating marriage or strike a new spark—more warmth, intimacy, joy—for a tired but stable union (Davis, 1969, p. 97).

Blood (1969) in dealing with reasons for conflict, states that one of the most basic reasons for marital conflict is the intimacy involved in the marriage relationship. Schmidt and Kochan (1972) also consider a reason for conflict to be when couples have goals that are incompatible.

Brenton (1973) feels that persons often hold back saying unpleasant things that need to be said because they fear the other person will not be able to take the criticism. Yet the end result of holding back, on things that should be said, can be the very outcome that was feared—less closeness and intimacy, closed communication, and a build-up of resentment.

Blum (1974) feels that when parents quarrel, children do not want

to listen; they do not want to watch; they do not want to know. Not because they hate the yelling or the angry words—but because they fear they are the ones who are really to blame for the conflict.

According to the research carried out by Edwards and Brauburger (1973), an exchange system does exist between parents and their adolescent children in middle-class families. When a family communication exchange system breaks down, conflict results.

The problem is not that family members argue. What is important is whether problems are solved and decisions are reached which lead to change. Roalman (1969) feels that professionals should be concerned not about family arguments but about what is behind repetitious arguments.

Bach, who teaches the art of fair fighting in his California clinic, says in domestic conflict, as in most things, there is a right way and a wrong way to proceed. The best way to get constructive results from marital fighting is to do battle by appointment only (Bach and Wyden, 1969a). The more calmly and deliberately an aggressor can organize his fights before an engagement, the more likely it is that his arguments will be persuasive; that the fight will be confined to one issue instead of richocheting; and that the opponent will feel compelled to become the calm, constructive counterpart. It is like negotiating a labor dispute well before the deadline, not after the union has voted to strike.

There are two major types of conflict—destructive and productive. Destructive conflict is the "gloves-off variety," in which the participants specialize in scathing criticism aimed at destroying their partner's ego. "You're no man," the wife may shout. To which he replies, "If you were only a lady . . . ." Frequently, such negative

bickering flares into white heat only to sputter out pointlessly, leaving behind more wounds than ever before (Bach and Wyden, 1971, p. 26).

Advocates of successful quarreling advise, "Get it off your chest, but do it fairly." Have a specific issue and argue it through to a settlement, keeping your partner's character out of the debate (Bach and Wyden, 1971, p. 26).

Beck (1966) states that marital conflict generally follows a well-ordered pattern. There are certain stages within this pattern however, if the couple cannot resolve the conflict then the nature of it is serious. Conflict may escalate through all the stages. The stages are: (1) the latent stage, (2) the trigger stage, (3) the clash stage, (4) the increase-of-conflict stage, (5) the search-for-allies stage, (6) the search-for-alternate-sources-of-gratification stage, and (7) the dissolution stage.

Research with couples experiencing a moderately high degree of marital conflict shows that we can learn how to successfully deal with conflict. Patterson, Gerald, Hops, and Weiss (1975) report that couples were taught the following skills in a series of training sessions: (1) to stop responding to each other in a destructive, hostile manner, (2) to increase the number of pleasant, supportive responses to each other, and (3) to develop negotiating skills (for example, learning to specify exactly what they would like to change in the relationship, each person agreeing to alter some aspect in his or her behavior in exchange for changes in the behavior of the other). A follow-up study of these couples one to two years after their training sessions had terminated found that most of the couples resolved conflicts more

successfully, experienced fewer conflicts, and reported a higher degree of marriage happiness.

Often intimates displace their own fights onto other people. Most parental fights about children, for example, are not about children at all. The disagreement is between the parents; the child is only the battleground (Bach and Wyden, 1969c).

Barry (1970) reports that happily married couples more often discuss conflict situations, whereas unhappily married couples tend to avoid the issue. The research evidence indicates depressed hostility and conflict often are a greater threat to the relationship. Also, other studies show that there is less residual hostility among individuals who communicate their negative feelings to the person causing their frustration.

Raush, Barry, Hurtel, and Swain (1974) write that the avoidance pattern attempts to deal with marital conflict by refusing to acknowledge or be involved in it. By using the avoidance of conflict pattern, they keep conflict and tension underground. Satir (1967) in viewing the avoidance pattern of dealing with marital conflict, feels it to be unhealthy, creating a major barrier to effective communication between the marriage partners over a period of time.

Bach and Deutsch (1971) in their book, Pairing, recommends some basic principles for dealing with conflict. These recommendations are based on Bach's research:

1. Be specific when you introduce a complaint.

2. Do not just complain: ask for a reasonable change that will make the situation better.

3. Give and receive feedback of the major points, to make sure you

are understood; to assure your partner that you understand the issue.

4. Try tolerance. Be open to your own feelings and equally open to your partner's.

5. Consider compromise.

6. Do not allow counter demands to enter the picture until the original demands are clearly understood, and there has been a clear-cut response to them. Deal with one issue at a time.

7. Do not mind rape.

8. Attack the issue and not each other.

9. Forget the past. Stay with the issue at hand.

10. Do not burden your partner with grievances.

11. Think about your real thoughts and feelings before speaking.

12. Remember that there is never a winner in an honest intimate fight. Both either win more intimacy or lose it.

Bach and Wyden (1969a) caution trainees that in intimate relationships "winning" can be more costly than "losing." In a boxing match between strangers, there is only a short-term goal: quick victory, preferably a knockout. For battles between intimates, totally different rules apply. After all, a constructive verbal fight should be (even though it often is not) just one link in a chain of steps to help intimates arrive at solutions for their inevitable conflicts. The goal for them is anything but a knockout. It is, instead, an attempt to improve the long-run give-and-take of marriage.

To "win" an engagement with an intimate enemy may turn out to be downright dangerous. Winning may discourage the loser from leveling in future fights and may make him needlessly pessimistic or even

despairing about the prospects of his marriage. It may turn him into a more devious, camouflaged fighter or give him an exaggerated idea about the importance of a particular fight issue in the mind of the "winning" partner. It sound paradoxical, but if a "win" results in such aftereffects, then both partners wind up losers (Bach and Wyden, 1969a).

Jetse (1971) has developed a conceptual framework for the use of the conflict approach toward the study of family process. Conflict management, it is asserted, demands on the one hand the ability to negotiate, bargain, and cooperate, i.e., a range of behavioral skills, and on the other hand the motivation to continue. It is argued that it is the increased vulnerability to unresolved, i.e., unmanaged, conflict which provides the major motivation toward negotiation, re-negotiation and cooperation, within marriages and families.

There are a number of possible factors contributing to family arguments--financial problems; sexual incompatibility of the marriage partners; hostility toward a spouse's relatives, particularly live-in relatives; jealousy of friends, neighbors, pre-marriage acquaintances, and especially of one's own children; frustration over life plans and nonattainment of goals. No single factor by itself can create repeated arguments; usually, many forces are at work in an argumentive family (Roalman, 1969).

Bach and Wyden (1971) report on a study carried out at the University of Pennsylvania where researchers asked 300 couples to rate their conflicts in order of frequency. The top ten were:

1. finances

2. household management

3. personality disagreements

4. sexual adjustment

5. sharing household tasks

6. children

7. recreation

8. husband's mother

9. personal habits

10. jealousy

Summary

There are constructive fights, destructive fights and all degrees
in between (Davis, 1969). An approach which has merit is for couples to
admit that disputes will occur, then form rules for arguing their
differences through to a conclusion.

Experts who have studied family conflicts offer the following
suggestions aimed at making inevitable arguments more constructive:
(1) The main goal in a disagreement should be to reach a settlement
which is mutually agreeable. (2) Disagreements should be discussed as
calmly as possible between those in opposition. (3) Some compromise
should be reached between participants in the argument. (4) If agree-
able compromise cannot be reached, consider outside help. (5) If one
of the partners gives in, he or she should not bring up the subject of
the argument again. (6) Disagreements involving only the parents
should be discussed privately between them. (7) Limit the argument.
Too often, arguments, like fires, start small and spread rapidly. If an
argument begins, find the core issue and solve it. Forget about side
issues. (8) Limit emotional involvement. When emotions rise in an

argument, participants tend to look for any convenient verbal weapon that will help them to victory. (9) Once an argument ends in a decision, act on it quickly (Roalman, 1969).

If there is any doubt whether or not a particular fight has been constructive, try the afterward test: both people feel much better after a really constructive quarrel. The air has been cleared, something has been settled. There are no lingering grievances, no lasting scars (Davis, 1969).

A bad quarrel develops when husband or wife--or both--consistently resort to unfair tactics (Davis, 1969). For example: (1) The power grab--some people quarrel to dominate, (2) The righteous fighter--the person who has a compulsive need to be right, (3) Fights that aren't allowed to end, (4) Character assassination, (5) Calling in reinforcements, and (6) Quarrels killed in their prime and never completed.

In summary Bach and Wyden (1971) offer these guidelines to avoid unfair tactics when dealing with conflict: (1) Is this fight necessary? (2) Pick a specific time and place to discuss the conflict, (3) Get to and stick to the point, (4) Draw the line and keep taboo topics, for example educational differences, out of the quarrel, (5) Make-up, no fight is really over until the combatants have made up.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Selection of Subjects

The 85 subjects of this study represented 55 strong families.
These subjects were obtained through recommendations of the Extension
Home Economist in each of the 77 counties in Oklahoma. Cover letters
were sent to approximately 180 families explaining the research study
and assuring anonymity. Questionnaires were included for both the hus-
band and wife. They were requested to complete the questionnaires
separately and not to compare answers. A stamped, self-addressed return
envelope was included with each questionnaire. The data were obtained
in 1975 during the months of March, April and May.

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

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

The guidelines were:

(1) The family is intact with both parents present in the home.

(2) The family must have at least one school-age child, 21 years or younger, living at home.

(3) The family members appear to have a high degree of happiness in the husband-wife and parent-child relationships.

(4) The family members appear to fulfill each other's needs to a high degree.

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

Description of Instrument

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

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

(1) Does the item possess sufficient clarity?

(2) Is the item sufficiently specific?

(3) Is the item significantly related to the concept under investigation?

(4) Are there other items that need to be included to measure the

concepts under investigation?

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

For the present study the following sections of the questionnaire were used:

(a) items designed to obtain background information such as sex, age, place of residence, and socio-economic status;

(b) the Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale;

(c) the Marital Need Satisfaction Scale (Stinnett, Collins and Montgomery, 1970).

The Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale and the Marital Need Satisfaction Scale will be described in detail below.

The Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale

The Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale is a ten-item Likert-type scale which is designed to obtain information about the respondents' patterns of dealing with conflict and the perceptions of the respondent concerning the manner in which the spouse responds to conflict. Each item has five degrees of response and the responses are scored in such a way that the highest numerical value (5) is given to the response representing the most positive, effective pattern of dealing with conflict. The lowest numerical value (1) is given to the response representing the least positive, effective pattern of dealing

with conflict.

The items in the Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale are based
upon a review of the literature and represent ten specific patterns of
response which the literature indicates are of major importance in deal-
ing with conflict.

Marital Need Satisfaction Scale

The Marital Need Satisfaction Scale (MNSS) was developed by
Stinnett, Collins, and Montgomery (1970) to measure marital need satis-
faction. It is a Likert-type scale which consists of 24 items. There
are five degrees of response ranging from "very satisfied" to "very un-
satisfied" allowed for in the scale. The 24 items represent six basic
needs in the marital relationship: (a) love, (b) personality fulfill-
ment, (c) respect, (d) communication, (e) finding meaning in life, and
(f) integration of past life experiences.

All items in the scale were found to be significantly discriminat-
ing at the 0.001 level of significance (Stinnett, et al., 1970). Two
indications of the validity of the MNSS which were noted are: (a) that
the first four need categories were conceptualized in final form on the
basis of a factor analysis, and (b) the findings that husbands and
wives who perceived their marriages as improving received significantly
higher scores on the MNSS than did those who perceived their marriage
as being unhappy. In this study socio-economic status was determined
by the McGuire-White Index (1955).

The MNSS was further developed in a recent study by Stevenson and
Stinnett (1976) of family strengths and marital satisfaction among hus-
bands and wives who were parents of children in day care centers and

preschools. In this study it was found that each item in the MNSS significantly differentiated between husbands and wives expressing the highest degree of marital satisfaction and those expressing the lowest degree of satisfaction on the basis of MNSS scores. A split-half reliability coefficient of 0.97 was obtained in determining an index of the reliability of the items in the MNSS.

Analysis of the Data

The questionnaire section "conflict" for 85 subjects was analyzed separately. Data was studied in three steps: (1) a percentage and frequency count was used to analyze certain background characteristics of the subjects; (2) a percentage and frequency count was also used to analyze the perceptions of husbands and wives of strong families concerning how often the respondent and the respondent's spouse respond to conflict in each of the following ways: (a) is specific when introducing a gripe, (b) just mainly complains, (c) sticks to one issue at a time, (d) is intolerant, (e) is willing to compromise, (f) calls others names (such as neurotic, coward, stupid, etc.), (g) brings up the past, (h) uses sarcasm, (i) checks to be sure he/she correctly understands the other person's feelings about the disagreement, (j) respects the right of the other person to disagree. This is depicted in the Tables in Chapter IV; (3) relationship of certain demographic characteristics to scores on Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale; and (4) relationship of Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores to Marital Need Satisfaction Scale scores.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine the following hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between Patterns of

Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and sex.

The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the following hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and each of the following: (a) socio-economic status, (b) age, (c) number of years married, and (d) degree of religious orientation.

The Spearman rank correlation coefficient was used to examine the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant correlation between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and Marital Need Satisfaction Scale scores.

2. There is no significant relationship between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and number of children.

The chi-square test was used in an item analysis of the Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale as a measure of the validity of the items in the scale. As an index of the reliability of the Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale, the split-half method utilizing the Spearman-Brown correction formula was used.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Characteristics of the Subjects

A detailed description of the 85 subjects who participated in this study is presented in Table I. Primarily, the sample was composed of white, Protestant, middle-class individuals residing in small cities or rural areas. Ninety-seven percent of the sample was white. The majority, 81.93 percent, of the sample was Protestant and 12.05 percent of the sample was Catholic. Most of the sample considered themselves to have a high or very high degree of religious orientation (68.23%). As determined by the McGuire-White Index of Social Status (1955), the sample was primarily from lower-middle (47.62%) and upper-middle (33.33%) socio-economic classes. Specifically, 82.35 percent designated their residence as either farm (48.23%) or small town under 25,000 population (34.12%).

The sample consisted of 60 percent females and 40 percent males. Their ages ranged from 20 to over 50 years. The majority of the sample were between the ages of 36 and 45 (58.82%). Most of the sample (87.64%) had been married between 15 and 25 years. The majority of the respondents (43.52%) reported that the wife was not employed outside the home. Regarding family size the majority of the sample (40%) had three children, followed by 29.41 percent with two children.

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TABLE I

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

Variable	Classification	No.	Percent
Sex	Male	34	40.00
	Female	51	60.00
Race	White	82	97.62
	Black	1	1.19
	Indian	1	1.19
Age	20-25	1	1.18
	26-30	7	8.23
	31-35	18	21.18
	36-40	27	31.76
	41-45	23	27.06
	46-50	6	7.06
	Over 50	3	3.53
Religion	Catholic	10	12.05
	Protestant	68	81.93
	Mormon	1	1.20
	None	4	4.82
Degree of Religious Orientation	Very Much	17	20.00
	Much	41	48.23
	Moderate	24	28.23
	Little	3	3.53
	Very Little	0	0.00
Socio-Economic Class	Upper	1	1.19
	Upper-Middle	28	33.33
	Lower-Middle	40	47.62
	Upper-Lower	15	17.86
	Lower-Lower	0	0.00
Size of Residence	On a Farm or in Country	41	48.23
	Small Town Under 25,000	29	34.12
	City of 25,000 to 50,000	8	9.41
	City of 50,000 to 100,000	4	4.71
	City Over 100,000	3	3.53
Wife's Employment	Not Employed Outside Home	37	43.52
	Employed Full-Time	13	15.29

TABLE I (Concluded)

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

The Item Analysis

In order to determine if the items in the Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale were significantly discriminating between those respondents whose total scores fell in the top quartile and those respondents whose total scores fell in the lowest quartile, the chi-square test was used in an item analysis. Two separate item analyses were conducted. The first item analysis was done on the basis of the respondent's self-rating concerning the Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale, in which it was found that all of the items were significantly discriminating as indicated in Table II. The second item analysis was done on the basis

TABLE II

ITEM ANALYSIS BASED ON COMPARISONS OF THE UPPER
AND LOWER QUARTILES OF TOTAL PATTERNS OF
DEALING WITH CONFLICT SCALE SCORES
(SELF-RATING)

Item	df	X^2	Level of Sig.
Please indicate how often you respond to conflict situations in each of the following ways:			
Am specific when introducing a gripe	5	11.37	.04
Just mainly complain	5	31.73	.0001
Stick to one issue at a time	5	25.42	.0001
Am intolerant	5	22.75	.0004
Am willing to compromise	5	17.01	.005
Call others names (such as neurotic, coward, stupid, etc.)	5	15.97	.01
Bring up the past	5	18.53	.002
Use sarcasm	5	18.63	.002
Check to be sure that I correctly understand the other person's feelings about the disagreement	5	14.18	.01
Respect right of other person to disagree	5	23.18	.0003

of the respondent's spouse rating concerning the <u>Patterns of Dealing</u> <u>With Conflict Scale</u> in which it was found that all of the items except one were significantly discriminating as indicated in Table III.

The split-half reliability coefficient was calculated in order to obtain an index of the reliability of the items in the <u>Patterns of Deal-</u><u>ing With Conflict Scale</u> scores. A split-half reliability coefficient, based on the combined self-rating and rating of spouse scores, of 0.91 was obtained.

<center>Responses to Items on the Patterns of Dealing</center>
<center>With Conflict Scale</center>

Specific responses to items in the <u>Patterns of Dealing With Con-</u><u>flict Scale</u> were analyzed in two parts: (a) self-rating responses (reported in Table IV) and (b) spouse-rating responses (reported in Table V). The results of these responses are presented below. The self-rating responses are discussed first.

<u>Self-Rating Responses</u>

According to the self-rating responses of the subjects, 36 percent said they <u>very often</u> respect the right of the other person to disagree. Approximately 39 percent said they check to be sure that they correctly understand the other person's feelings about the disagreement. The majority (73%) reported they <u>very rarely</u> bring up the past. Calling others names (such as neurotic, coward, stupid, etc.) was <u>very rarely</u> used by 70 percent of the respondents. Sarcasm was <u>very rarely</u> used by 52 percent, and 51 percent <u>very rarely</u> are intolerant. At least 28 percent are specific when introducing a gripe, and 31 percent stick to

TABLE III

ITEM ANALYSIS BASED ON COMPARISONS OF THE UPPER
AND LOWER QUARTILES OF TOTAL PATTERNS OF
DEALING WITH CONFLICT SCALE SCORES
(SPOUSE-RATING)

Item	df	X^2	Level of Sig.
Please indicate how often your spouse responds to conflict situations in each of the following ways:			
Is specific when intro-ducing a gripe	5	6.55	.26
Just mainly complains	5	15.46	.01
Sticks to one issue at a time	5	29.20	.0001
Is intolerant	5	25.61	.0001
Is willing to compromise	5	24.64	.0002
Calls others names (such as neurotic, coward, stupid, etc.)	5	14.10	.02
Brings up the past	4	15.89	.003
Uses sarcasm	5	22.10	.0005
Checks to be sure that he/she correctly under-stands the other person's feelings about the disagreement	5	27.96	.0001
Respects right of other person to disagree	5	34.66	.0001

TABLE IV

RESPONSES TO ITEMS IN THE PATTERNS OF DEALING WITH
CONFLICT SCALE (SELF-RATING)

Items	Very Often		Often		Moderate		Rarely		Very Rarely	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Please indicate how often you respond to conflict situations in each of the following ways:										
Am specific when introducing a gripe	18	21.96	22	26.51	23	27.71	9	10.84	11	13.25
Just mainly complain	4	4.88	9	10.98	16	19.51	17	20.73	36	43.90
Stick to one issue at a time	24	30.77	21	26.92	22	28.21	2	2.56	9	11.54
Am intolerant	10	12.35	11	13.58	9	11.11	10	12.35	41	50.62
Am willing to compromise	29	35.37	30	36.59	17	20.73	3	3.66	3	3.66
Call others names (such as neurotic, coward, stupid, etc.)	3	3.66	2	2.44	8	9.76	12	14.63	57	69.51
Bring up the past	2	2.38	2	2.38	12	14.29	7	8.33	61	72.62
Check to be sure he/she correctly understand the other person's feelings about the disagreement	18	21.43	22	26.19	33	39.29	6	7.14	5	5.95
Respect right of other person to disagree	30	35.71	23	27.38	24	28.57	3	3.57	4	4.57

TABLE V

RESPONSES TO ITEMS IN THE PATTERNS OF DEALING WITH
CONFLICT SCALE (SPOUSE-RATING)

Items	Very Often		Often		Moderate		Rarely		Very Rarely	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Please indicate how often your spouse responds to conflict situations in each of the following ways:										
Is specific when introducing a gripe	15	18.07	20	24.10	23	27.71	10	12.15	15	18.07
Just mainly complains	2	2.41	8	9.64	12	14.46	17	20.48	44	53.01
Sticks to one issue at a time	29	37.18	18	23.08	18	23.08	6	7.69	7	8.97
Is intolerant	9	10.98	9	10.98	8	9.76	12	14.63	44	53.66
Is willing to compromise	34	41.46	24	29.27	19	23.17	2	2.44	3	3.66
Calls others names (such as neurotic, coward, stupid, etc.)	2	2.44	4	4.88	4	4.88	9	10.98	63	76.83
Brings up the past	1	1.22	4	4.88	6	7.14	6	7.14	68	80.95
Uses sarcasm	1	1.22	3	3.66	13	15.85	9	10.98	56	68.29
Checks to be sure he/she correctly understands the other person's feelings about the disagreement	18	21.43	27	34.14	29	34.52	5	5.95	5	5.95
Respects right of other person to disagree	34	40.48	20	23.81	19	22.62	7	8.33	4	4.76

one issue at a time; while 44 percent <u>very rarely</u> just complain.
Thirty-seven percent are willing to compromise as indicated in Table IV.

Spouse-Rating Responses

When reporting on their spouses, 28 percent said their spouses
were specific when introducing a gripe and 37 percent felt their spouses
did stick to one issue at a time. Forty-one percent felt their spouses
were willing to compromise and 35 percent felt their spouses checked to
be sure that he/she correctly understood the other person's feelings
about the disagreement. At least 40 percent felt their spouses re-
spected the right of the other person to disagree. The past was <u>rarely</u>
brought up by 81 percent, and 77 percent said their spouses <u>very rarely</u>
called others names (such as neurotic, coward, stupid, etc.). Sarcasm
was seldom used by 68 percent, and 53 percent felt their spouses <u>very</u>
<u>rarely</u> were intolerant or just mainly complained. Overall the subjects
tended to feel their spouses' patterns of dealing with conflict were
more positive than their own methods of dealing with conflict as indi-
cated in Table V.

Examination of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I

<u>There is no significant relationship between Patterns of Dealing
With Conflict Scale scores and sex.</u>

When the Mann-Whitney U test was applied to this hypothesis, a
Z Score of -0.91 was obtained. As illustrated in Table VI, the Z value
indicates that no significant relationship existed between <u>Patterns of</u>

<u>Dealing With Conflict Scale</u> scores and sex.

TABLE VI

Z VALUES REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PATTERNS OF
DEALING WITH CONFLICT SCALE SCORES
ACCORDING TO SEX

Variable	No.	Mean Score	Z	Level of Sig.
Sex:				
Male	34	78.06		
Female	51	75.35	-0.91	n.s.

Hypothesis II

There is no significant relationship between Patterns of Dealing
With Conflict Scale scores and (a) socio-economic status, (b) age,
(c) number of years married, and (d) degree of religious orientation.

Hypothesis II(a)

There is no significant relationship between Patterns of Dealing
With Conflict Scale scores and socio-economic status.

When the Kruskal Wallis one-way analysis of variance was used to
examine this hypothesis, no significant relationship was found to exist
between <u>Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale</u> scores and socio-

economic status. Socio-economic status was determined by the McGuire-White Index of Social Status (1955). According to Table VII, an H score of 0.70 was obtained which was not significant.

TABLE VII

H VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PATTERNS OF
DEALING WITH CONFLICT SCALE SCORES
ACCORDING TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Variable	No.	Mean Score	H	Level of Sig.
Socio-Economic Status:				
Upper-Middle	28	75.96		
Lower-Middle	40	77.35	0.70	n.s.
Upper-Middle	15	80.00		

Hypothesis II(b)

There is no significant relationship between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and age.

When the Kruskal Wallis one-way analysis of variance was used to examine this hypothesis, no significant relationship was found to exist between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and age. According to Table VIII, an H score of 2.22 was obtained which was not significant.

TABLE VIII

H VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PATTERNS OF
DEALING WITH CONFLICT SCALE SCORES
ACCORDING TO AGE

Variable	No.	Mean Score	H	Level of Sig.
Age:				
26-30	7	75.57		
31-35	18	72.33		
36-40	27	79.04	2.22	n.s.
41-45	32	78.61		
46-50	6	67.00		

Hypothesis II(c)

There is no significant relationship between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and number of years married.

When the Kruskal Wallis one-way analysis of variance was used to examine this hypothesis, no significant relationship was found to exist between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and number of years married. According to Table IX, an H score of 1.87 was obtained which was not significant.

Hypothesis II(d)

There is no significant relationship between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and degree of religious orientation.

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TABLE IX

H VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PATTERNS OF
DEALING WITH CONFLICT SCALE SCORES
ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF YEARS
MARRIED

Variable	No.	Mean Score	H	Level of Sig.
Number of Years Married:				
5-9	7	76.43		
10-14	18	76.72		
15-19	24	75.29	1.87	n.s.
20-24	24	78.29		
25-29	10	74.00		

When the Kruskal Wallis one-way analysis of variance was used to examine this hypothesis, no significant relationship was found to exist between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and degree of religious orientation. According to Table X, an H score of 1.52 was obtained which was not significant.

Hypothesis III

There is no significant association between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and Marital Need Satisfaction Scale scores.

When the Spearman rank correlation coefficient was applied to this hypothesis, a significant, positive association was found between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and Marital Need

Satisfaction Scale scores. As Table XI illustrates, a Spearman rank correlation coefficient of 0.38 was obtained which is significant at the 0.0003 level. These results indicate that the higher Marital Need Satisfaction Scale scores, reflecting a higher degree of marital satisfaction, were associated with higher Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores, reflecting more favorable patterns of dealing with conflict. This finding is an indication of the construct validity of the Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale.

TABLE X

H VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PATTERNS OF
DEALING WITH CONFLICT SCALE SCORES
ACCORDING TO DEGREE OF RELIGIOUS
ORIENTATION

Variable	No.	Mean Score	H	Level of Sig.
Degree of Religious Orientation:				
Very Much	17	80.71		
Much	41	74.44	1.53	n.s.
Moderate	24	77.79		

TABLE XI

SPEARMAN RANK CORRELATION COEFFICIENT REFLECTING
ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PATTERNS OF DEALING WITH
CONFLICT SCALE SCORES AND MARITAL NEED
SATISFACTION SCALE SCORES

Variable	Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient, Marital Need Satisfaction Scale Scores	Level of Sig.
Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale Scores	0.38	0.0003

Hypothesis IV

There is no significant association between Patterns of Dealing
With Conflict Scale scores and number of children.

When the Spearman rank correlation coefficient was applied to this
hypothesis, no significant association was found between Patterns of
Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and number of children. A Spearman
rank correlation coefficient of 0.10 was obtained which is non-
significant.

TABLE XII

SPEARMAN RANK CORRELATION COEFFICIENT REFLECTING
ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PATTERNS OF DEALING WITH
CONFLICT SCALE SCORES AND NUMBER OF
CHILDREN

Variable	Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient, Number of Children	Level of Sig.
Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale Scores	0.10	n.s.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the responses of

strong families to the Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale; to

examine the perceptions of husbands and wives of strong families con-

cerning how often they themselves and their spouses respond to conflict

in each of several specific ways and to determine if there is a

relationship between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and

Marital Need Satisfaction Scale scores for spouses of strong families.

The 85 respondents represented families which were recommended as

strong families by Extension Home Economists in all counties in Okla-

homa. They also indicated on the questionnaire that they rated their

husband-wife and parent-child relationships as "satisfactory" or "very

satisfactory." The data were collected during the months of March,

April, and May, 1975.

The following parts of the questionnaire were utilized for this

study: (a) questions designed to secure background data, (b) the MNSS

which measured the degree of need satisfaction in the marriage relation-

ship, and (c) the Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale which measured

how often each spouse reacted to conflict in one of several specific

ways.

Percentages and frequencies were used to analyze the respondent's

background characteristics. Percentages and frequencies were also used

to analyze the perceptions of husbands and wives of strong families concerning how often each responded to conflict in a specific way.

The Mann-Whitney U test was utilized in determining if patterns of dealing with conflict differed significantly according to sex.

The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance test was utilized to determine if patterns of dealing with conflict differed according to socio-economic status, age, number of years married, or degree of religious orientation.

The Spearman rank correlation coefficient was utilized in determining if there were significant relationships between patterns of dealing with conflict and number of children.

The Spearman rank correlation coefficient was also utilized in determining if there were significant relationships between patterns of dealing with conflict and marital need satisfaction.

The results of the study were as follows:

1. When the Mann-Whitney U test was utilized, it was determined that there was no significant relationship between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and sex.

2. When the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance test was utilized, it was determined that there was no significant relationship between Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and socio-economic status, age, number of years married, and degree of religious orientation.

3. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient indicated that Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and Marital Need Satisfaction Scale scores were significantly related at the 0.0003 level of significance.

4. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient indicated that there was no significant relationship between <u>Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale</u> scores and number of children.

Conclusions and Discussion

The major conclusion of this study is that one of the important strengths of the families studied was their ability to deal with conflict in a positive manner. Families studied tended to deal with conflict in a very positive way avoiding sarcasm, bringing up the past and calling others names. Very few persons in the study were intolerant or just mainly complained. The families were specific when introducing a gripe and stuck to one issue at a time. A high percentage of the respondents were willing to compromise and respected the right of the other person to disagree. Most of the family members studied checked to be sure that he/she correctly understood the other person's feelings about the disagreement.

A positive association was found between <u>Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale</u> scores, which reflected more favorable patterns of dealing with conflict, and <u>Marital Need Satisfaction Scale</u> scores, which reflected a higher degree of marital satisfaction. This finding very logically suggests that spouses who feel the marital relationship is satisfactorily meeting their needs find acceptable patterns for dealing with conflict when it does arise. Blackburn (1967) reports that the strong family is the family that has a high degree of satisfaction with husband-wife and parent-child relationships. If individuals in the family unit perceive the unit to be satisfactorily meeting their needs,

then for all practical purposes the family unit is meeting the needs of those individuals.

When family members perceive the family unit as satisfactorily meeting their needs, they tend to become committed to the preservation of that unit. Commitment has been defined as the process where individuals give their energy and loyalty to a joint goal (preservation of the family unit). Few things are more important in building gratifying human relationships than the sincere commitment of one person to another (Stinnett and Walters, 1977). A study by Stevenson and Stinnett (1976) found that marital need satisfaction was significantly and positively related to degree of family commitment. Adams (1951) reported that the greatest single factor promoting marital success is the mutual determination, or commitment, of the couple to make the marriage work. If a high degree of commitment to the preservation of the family unit exists, then family members may be more likely to work together to find acceptable patterns of dealing with conflict. Couples who are committed to one another and determined to endure in spite of temporary unhappiness during certain stages of their marriage may, in the long run, achieve greater happiness in life than those couples who decide to terminate their marriages because they find themselves in an unhappy period (Stinnett and Walters, 1977).

One way families can work toward the development of acceptable patterns of dealing with conflict is by striving to establish open lines of communication. Ball (1976) found that satisfactory inter-familial communication was a characteristic of strong families. The benefits of open lines of communication can also be sited in Barry's (1970) research which found that happily married couples more often

discuss conflict situations, whereas unhappily married couples tend to avoid the issue, thus creating a major barrier to effective communication between the marriage partners over a period of time. Lack of communication is one of the greatest barriers to dealing successfully with marriage problems. Many problems are prevented and many resolved when husband and wife maintain good communication patterns (Chapman, 1974). Open lines of communication includes the ability to express negative feelings. According to Stinnett and Walters (1977), open expression of negative feelings and conflict is sometimes noisy and very intense for a period. However, it can benefit the marriage relationship by reducing resentment.

An interesting finding of this study was the fact that respondents tended to rate their spouse's patterns of dealing with conflict more positive than they rated their own patterns of dealing with conflict. This finding could possibly be due to a halo effect which could have been created for the respondents by identifying them as a strong family. This finding is also consistent with other research findings that suggest a high correlation between marital need satisfaction and patterns of dealing with conflict. It is logical that respondents would rate their spouses higher than themselves due to the high degree of satisfaction with which their spouses meet their needs.

The background characteristics of socio-economic status, age, number of years married, number of children, and degree of religious orientation were not found to be significantly related to the Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores; this finding is perhaps in large part due to the homogeneity of the sample. All families in the study were homogeneous in terms of being identified as strong, happy families.

These findings may also be related to some degree of homogeneity due to the procedures by which the sample was selected. The sample was selected through the assistance of the Cooperative Extension Service. For the most part families identified to participate in this study were members of 4-H youth groups and extension homemaker groups, and it has been observed that certain types of individuals and certain types of families are more likely to participate in the groups organized by the extension service. It has been reported by extension personnel that most of the families participating in extension programs are Caucasion, middle-class, middle-aged, and have children who are very active in school activities.

Had the sample been composed of families representing a wider range of racial and religious backgrounds, the findings might have been quite different. According to writers in the field of sociology, families exhibit great cultural differences based on race; and it is possible that these cultural differences would promote different approaches to dealing with conflict based on cultural training. For example, the husband-wife relationship and expected roles have been observed to be quite different for Caucasion, Black and Indian families. The Indian wife has been observed as being the most passive and sub-missive and the Black wife as being the most aggressive and dominant (Burr, 1971). These cultural differences in husband-wife relationships could not help but affect the families' approaches to dealing with conflict.

In this study the degree of religious orientation was found to be non-significant in affecting Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores. However, the non-significance was probably due to the

homogeneity of the sample. Almost 70 percent of the sample rated their degree of religious orientation as much or very much which made the sample so homogeneous that the variable became non-significant.

Sex was found to be non-significant in terms of differences in Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores; this perhaps was due to the lack of clarity that has evolved regarding expected and accepted male and female roles. With less emphasis on what was once believed to be "instinctive" or "biological" differences between males and females, behavioral differences based on sex are found to be less significant. Otto (1963) found that the ability to perform family roles flexibly, regardless of sex, was found to be a family strength.

Age was found to be not significantly related to Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores. This finding may be related to the fact that over half of the sample was between the ages of 36 and 45 years of age. Had the study measured differences in Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores for husbands and wives in a wider variety of age groups, perhaps greater differences would have been identified between generations.

Socio-economic status was found to also be non-significant in this study in terms of differences in Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores. However, over 80 percent of the sample fell in the middle-class according to the McGuire-White Index of Social Status (1955). If families representing a wider range of income levels had been involved in the study, it is quite possible greater differences would have been found in their patterns of dealing with conflict.

Differences in Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores and number of years married were found to be non-significant in this study.

However, almost 90 percent of the respondents in this study had been married between 15 and 25 years; this fact alone suggests that the respondents had been married a sufficient length of time to try out and adopt patterns of dealing with conflict that were successful for them and their families. If more younger marriages, five years or less, had been included, greater differences in ways of dealing with conflict might have been identified, based on length of marriage. It is logical that through the years the older couple may have developed a greater degree of understanding, acceptance, better communication patterns and also more satisfactory patterns of dealing with conflict. This possibility is supported by the study of Fried and Stern (1948) in which it was found that with age many couples seem to become better adjusted and tend to see themselves as less demanding, less temperamental, less egotistical, and less irritable.

Number of children was not found to be significantly related to Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale scores in this study. This finding is probably due to the nature of the sample in that all families studied were identified as strong families. Although it is often assumed that children are gratifying, several studies have shown an association between having children and lower marital satisfaction. Renne (1970) found that people who were rearing children were more likely to report low marital satisfaction than were those who had never had children or whose children had left home, regardless of race, age, or income level. The results of this study suggest that age, sex, number of years married, number of children, socio-economic status and degree of religious orientation are not significant factors in determining how strong families deal with conflict.

Recommendations

In conclusion, it should be recommended that family life educators, ministers, counselors, social workers and other persons working with families spend more time studying and analyzing affective aspects of family life rather than background and demographic characteristics. Affective aspects such as the giving and receiving of love, open lines of communication, supportiveness, sharing of important goals and values and the establishment of commitment seem to be the elements most essential for creating a family unit that is capable of meeting the needs of the individuals in the unit. Therefore, when the needs of the individuals in the unit are being met, a strong family tends to evolve.

The <u>Patterns of Dealing With Conflict Scale</u> could be very beneficial for family life educators when working with pre-marriage couples, family workshops, seminars and other educational programs for families. This scale could also be useful as an evaluation tool for counselors working with couples who are having problems.

There is a need for more research on family strengths. It is suggested that further study on family strengths be broadened to include:

(a) a study including a larger sample,

(b) a study including a larger number of racial groups,

(c) a study more representative of various religious groups,

(d) a study including a more distributed number of persons representative of all socio-economic levels,

(e) a study including families representing a wider range of age levels,

(f) a study utilizing a selection procedure that produced a less homogeneous sample,

(g) a study involving the measurement of family strengths over the family life cycle,

(h) a national sample, and

(i) more research dealing with families other than strong families.

The results of this study yield findings that are valid for strong families but may or may not be valid for working with families in general. More research needs to be done involving all types of families, especially divorced or weak families.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY · STILLWATER

Department of Family Relations & Child Development   74074
(405) 372-6211, Ext. 6084

August 12, 1975

Dear Friend:

You and most other Americans may have often wondered, "How can family life be made
stronger and more satisfying?". The Department of Family Relations and Child Develop-
ment 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 under-
standing of your family situation through counseling. Because of this we thought you
might be interested in this research project.

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

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

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

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

Thank you,

Sincerely yours,

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

NS/jg

Enclosures

Oklahoma State University
Division of Home Economics

Department of Family Relations
and Child Development

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

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

1. Family Member: Mother _____   Father _____

2. Race: 1. White _____
                2. Black _____
                3. Indian _____
                4. Oriental _____
                5. Other _____

3. Age: _____

4. What church do you attend?

5. Who earns most of the income for your family?
                1. Husband _____
                2. Wife _____
                3. Other _____

6. What is the educational attainment of the husband?

7. What is the educational attainment of the wife?

8. Husband's Occupation:

9. Wife's Occupation:

10. Major source of income for the family:
                1. Inherited savings and investments _____
                2. Earned wealth, transferable investment _____

3. Profits, royalties, fees   _____

4. Salary, Commissions (regular, monthly, or yearly)   _____

5. Hourly wages, weekly checks   _____

6. Odd jobs, seasonal work, private charity   _____

7. Public relief or charity   _____

11. Residence:

      1. On farm or in country   _____

      2. Small town under 25,000   _____

      3. City of 25,000 to 50,000   _____

      4. City of 50,000 to 100,000   _____

      5. City of over 100,000   _____

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

           1   2   3   4   5

13. How long have you been married to your present spouse?_____

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

      1. Divorce _____

      2. Death of spouse _____

15. How many children do you have? _____

16. What are their ages? _____

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

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

           1   2   3   4   5

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

           1   2   3   4   5

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

                    1   2   3   4   5

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

                    1   2   3   4   5 .

21. What would you most like to change about your marriage relationship?

22. What do you feel has contributed most to making your marriage satisfying?

23. What do you feel has contributed most to making your relationship with your child strong?

24. What would you most like to change about your relationship with your oldest child living at home?

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

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

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

    1. Providing a feeling of security in me.   VS S U US VUS

    2. Expressing affection toward me.   VS S U US VUS

    3. Giving me an optimistic feeling toward life.   VS S U US VUS

    4. Expressing a feeling of being emotionally
       close to me.   VS S U US VUS

    5. Bringing out the best qualities in me.   VS S U US VUS

    6. Helping me to become a more interesting
       person.   VS S U US VUS

7. Helping me to continue to develop my
   personality.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

8. Helping me to achieve my individual pot-
   ential (become what I am capable of be-
   coming).   VS   S   U   US   VUS

9. Being a good listener.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

10. Giving me encouragement when I am
    discouraged.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

11. Accepting my differentness.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

12. Avoiding habits which annoy me.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

13. Letting me know how he or she really feels
    about something.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

14. Trying to find satisfactory solutions to
    our disagreements.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

15. Expressing disagreement with me honestly
    and openly.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

16. Letting me know when he or she is displea-
    sed with me.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

17. Helping me to feel that life has meaning.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

18. Helping me to feel needed.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

19. Helping me to feel that my life is serving
    a purpose.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

20. Helping me to obtain satisfaction and
    pleasure in daily activities.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

21. Giving me recognition for my past accomplish-
    ments.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

22. Helping me to feel that my life has been
    important.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

23. Helping me to accept my past life exper-
    iences as good and rewarding.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

24. Helping me to accept myself despite my
    shortcomings.   VS   S   U   US   VUS

26. Some people make us feel good about ourselves. That is, they make us
    feel self-confident, worthy, competent, and happy about ourselves. What
    is the degree to which your spouse makes you feel good about yourself?
    Indicate on the following 5 point scale (5 represents the greatest degree
    and 1 represents the least degree)

            1   2   3   4   5

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

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

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

          1   2   3   4   5

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

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

          1   2   3   4   5

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

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

          1   2   3   4   5

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

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

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

35. Rate the degree to which:

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

	Very high	High	Average	Low	Very low
3. Your spouse is concerned with promoting your welfare and happiness.	___	___	___	___	___
4. You are concerned with promoting your spouse's welfare and happiness.	___	___	___	___	___

36. Rate the degree of appreciation expressed by:

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

37. Rate the degree to which:

	Very high	High	Average	Low	Very low
1. Your spouse respects your individuality (that is, respects your individual interests, views, etc.)	___	___	___	___	___
2. You respect your spouse's individuality.	___	___	___	___	___
3. Your child respects your individuality.	___	___	___	___	___
4. You respect your child's individuality.	___	___	___	___	___

38. Rate your degree of determination to make your relationship with your spouse satisfying: (rate on following 5 point scale with 5 representing greatest degree of determination and 1 representing the least degree.)

$$1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5$$

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

$$1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5$$

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

$$1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5$$

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

$$1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 5$$

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

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

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

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

              1   2   3   4   5

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

              1   2   3   4   5

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

              1   2   3   4   5

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

              1   2   3   4   5

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

          1   2   3   4   5

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

          1   2   3   4   5

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

          1   2   3   4   5

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

          1   2   3   4   5

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

          1   2   3   4   5

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

          1   2   3   4   5

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

          1   2   3   4   5

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

          1   2   3   4   5

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

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

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

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

1. Your spouse

   Very satisfied _____

   Satisfied _____

   Uncertain _____

   Dissatisfied _____

   Very Dissatisfied _____

2. Your child

   Very satisfied _____

   Satisfied _____

   Uncertain _____

   Dissatisfied _____

   Very Dissatisfied _____

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

	You	Your spouse
2. Does not try to control other's behavior.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Uses strategy (psychological games) to get others to do what he/she wants them to do.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Acts disinterested in others.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. Does not act superior toward others.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6. Is open minded to the ideas of others.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

63. How often do you and your spouse do things together (rate on the following 5 point scale, with 5 representing very often and 1 representing very rarely)?

        1   2   3   4   5

64. What are two things which you most enjoy doing together?

65. How often do you do things with your child (rate on the following 5 point scale, with 5 representing very often and 1 representing very rarely)?

        1   2   3   4   5

66. What are two things which you most enjoy doing with your child?

67. How often does your spouse do things with your child (rate on the following 5 point scale, with 5 representing very often and 1 representing very rarely)?

        1   2   3   4   5

Many families today experience the pressure of having to do many different things in day to day living.

68. How much of a problem is today's busy pace of life for your family? (Rate on the following 5 point scale with 5 indicating it is a great problem and 1 indicating it is little or no problem)

        1   2   3   4   5

69. What things do you do to prevent this problem from hurting your family life?

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

1. A wise way to live is to look on the bright side of things.   SA   A   U   D   SD

2. For every problem that arises there is usually a solution.   SA   A   U   D   SD

3. People rarely get what they want in life.   SA   A   U   D   SD

4. When all is said and done we really have little control over what happens to us in life.   SA   A   U   D   SD

5. To a large degree we are the "captains of our own fate."   SA   A   U   D   SD

6. Whether we are happy or not depends upon the kinds of things that happen to us in life.   SA   A   U   D   SD

7. There is a higher power (God) that operates in the daily lives of people.   SA   A   U   D   SD

8. God answers prayer.   SA   A   U   D   SD

9. There is no power higher than man.   SA   A   U   D   SD

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

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

72. How often does your family see your:

1. Parents   _____

2. Spouse's parents   _____

3. Other relatives (brothers, sister, aunts, etc.)   _____

APPENDIX B

PATTERNS OF DEALING WITH CONFLICT SCALE

PATTERNS OF DEALING WITH CONFLICT SCALE

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

		You	Your Spouse
1.	Is specific when introducing a gripe	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2.	Just mainly complains	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3.	Sticks to one issue at a time	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4.	Is intolerant	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5.	Is willing to compromise	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6.	Calls others names (such as neurotic, coward, stupid, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7.	Brings up the past	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
8.	Uses sarcasm	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
9.	Checks to be sure he/she correctly understands the other person's feelings about the disagreement	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
10.	Respects right of other person to disagree	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

VITA

Arlinda Kay McCumber

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: PATTERNS OF DEALING WITH CONFLICT IN STRONG FAMILIES

Major Field: Higher Education

Minor Field: Family Relations and Child Development

Biographical:

   Personal Data: Born in Vici, Oklahoma, August 24, 1949, the
        daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Guy Boyd; married November 30, 1968,
        to Michael L. McCumber of Sacramento, California. One son,
        Michael Sean McCumber, born October 15, 1972.

   Education: Graduated from Vici High School, Vici, Oklahoma,
        May 17, 1967; received Bachelor of Science degree from South-
        western Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma, with
        a major in Home Economics Education in May, 1971; received
        Master of Science degree from Oklahoma State University,
        Stillwater, Oklahoma, with a major in Family Relations and
        Child Development in May, 1972; completed the requirements for
        Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University,
        Stillwater, Oklahoma, in July, 1977.

   Professional Organizations: American Home Economics Association,
        Oklahoma Home Economics Association, National Association of
        Extension Home Economists, Oklahoma Association of Extension
        Home Economists, National Alliance for Family Life, National
        Association of Extension 4-H Agents, Omicron Ni, Gamma Delta
        Kappa, Oklahoma State University Association of Higher Learn-
        ing, and American Association of University Women.