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EFFECTS OF PARENTING ON MARITAL QUALITY:
A CAUSAL ANALYSIS

DISSERTATION

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By

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A theoretical model of eleven antecedents of marital quality (education, family life cycle, sex, work status, sex role attitude, social network, role accumulation, role conflict, parental competence, parental strain, and marital strain) was developed and tested using Path Analysis.

Subjects were 119 married couples (238 individuals) who had at least one child. They completed the Parental and Marital Interaction Questionnaire which had measures for each of the antecedent variables.

Marital strain, parental strain, and social network made the greatest contributions to the variance in marital quality. Marital strain and parental strain had a significant negative direct effect on marital quality. Social network had a significant positive direct effect on the same variable. Marital strain was positively affected by parental strain and inversely affected by sex role attitudes. Parental strain was positively affected by role conflict and inversely affected by parental competence, family life cycle, and sex. Role conflict was positively affected by role accumulation and education, as well as negatively affected by stage of the family life cycle. Role accumulation was inversely affected

by sex and stage of the family life cycle and positively affected by education, work status, and social network. Sex role attitudes were positively affected by education and inversely affected by stage of the family life cycle.

Two additional exploratory Path Analyses by sex were performed revealing that, for males, marital strain and social network made the major contribution to the variance of marital quality. For females, marital strain, parental strain, and sex role attitudes significantly contributed to the variance.

Discrepancy scores were calculated to measure the differences in husband and wife perceptions of their marital relationship. High and low levels of marital quality were significantly associated with larger discrepancies in marital strain, sex role attitudes, and husband participation at home. The discussion of these results focused upon the partial confirmation by this study of Theory of Marital Satisfaction of Parents (Burr, 1973; Rollins & Galligan, 1978).

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EFFECTS OF PARENTING ON MARITAL QUALITY:
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Reciprocal pathway influences within the family system have been studied recently by considering the effects of marital quality and parenthood on each other and on the child, as well as the child's influence on both. Recently, research has examined the direct and indirect pathways of interaction between the characteristics of the child, the mother/wife, the father/husband, and other adults who function in nonparental and nonmarital roles (Belsky, 1981). This approach goes beyond a unidirectional explanation of the relationship within the family system and directs its attention to bidirectional pathways of influence within the family and the complex ways in which the family may function.

Some research (Hobbs & Cole, 1976; Feldman, 1971) has documented changes that occur when the relationship of the husband and wife dyad is transformed into the mother-father-infant triad with the birth of the child. Those studies concluded that there are reciprocal influences between marital relationship and the parent-infant relationship. The birth of the child does more than create an additional relationship. It transforms the marital dyad into a complex family system composed of marital, parental, and child relationships.

In studying the family as a complex system composed of parental and marital roles, the main concern has been whether the addition of a first child creates a crisis for the marital dyad as it develops from a two-person to a three-person system. Although early research led some investigators (Dyer, 1963; LeMasters, 1957) to conclude that the transition to parenthood is a state of crisis, Hobb and his colleagues (Hobb & Cole, 1976; Hobb & Wimbish, 1977) have shown the gratifications and positive consequences of having a baby. Despite the contradictory results in the literature, there is a consensus that the presence of children negatively affects the marital relationship. This consensus has been derived from cross-sectional studies where no more than two variables have been chosen to correlate with a global measure of marital satisfaction. Unfortunately, few studies have been conducted to explain the variations among couples in their adjustment to parenthood, and its effects on marital quality (Steffensmeier, 1982). Within this context, Belsky, Spanier, and Robine (1983) indicated that although the overall quality of the marital relationship declined with the birth of the child, those couples who reported high or low marital satisfaction prior to the birth of a child exhibited little change after the baby was born.

In the literature concerning the relationship of parenthood and marital quality, most studies have addressed separately the effects of the presence of children on parental attitudes and on marital quality. There is no

evidence concerning the ways in which the marital relationship and parenting can both affect and be affected by one another. According to Belsky (1981), the lack of research on the interaction between parenting and marital relationships is due to the non-independence of measures of parenting and marital quality and to the limitation imposed by correlational research. An integrative framework in terms of causation is necessary to study the indirect and independent effects of the presence of children on marital quality through their effect on the parents.

One explanation of the effects of parenthood on marital quality has been given within a framework of role strain (Burr, 1973; Rollins & Cannon, 1974). The presence of children has been conceptualized as a cause of role strain on the parents and, consequently, as a factor which affects marital quality. The demands of the parental role are not fully compatible with and somewhat contradictory to the demands of the marital role which results in conflict between roles. Although role theory has been useful to explain the difficulties of parenthood, researchers should specify more carefully what the key dimensions in the related role areas are and how these dimensions change according to the economic, occupational, educational, parental, and marital experiences. Most studies have examined only the effects of a single linkage at a time, perhaps controlling for the effect of another variable. By contrast, this study attempted to examine a network of variables salient to marital quality

in such a way that their effects can be examined simultaneously, with each relationship held constant or controlling for the others.

Thus, the nature of the current study was primarily exploratory. An attempt was made to describe the effect of several antecedent variables on marital quality. Those antecedent variables were education, sex, family life cycle, work status, sex role attitudes, social network, task allocation, role accumulation, role conflict, parental competence, and role strain.

Definitions of Marital Quality. The quality of marital relationships has been a popular research area during the last two decades. However, in spite of the large number of studies, there has been little agreement on the definition of marital quality. One possible addition to the confusion has been that many terms have been used interchangeably (Burr, 1973). For example, Burr (1973), Miller (1975, 1976), and Rollins and his colleagues (Rollins & Feldman, 1970; Rollins & Cannon, 1974) have chosen the term "level of marital satisfaction," whereas Spanier and his colleagues (Spanier, 1976; Spanier, Lewis, & Cole, 1974) have chosen the term "marital adjustment." With each investigator defining and applying his/her terms differently, little comparison and generalization is possible across studies. As a result, a conceptual framework for the definition of marital quality has been neglected.

Within a sociological framework, Burr (1973) defined marital quality as the degree to which the desires of an individual are fulfilled in a marital relationship. This term was conceptualized either as satisfaction with the marriage situation as a whole, or satisfaction with specific aspects of the marital relationship such as satisfaction with sex or companionship. In addition, he described marital satisfaction as a subjective and intrapersonal phenomenon measured as a continuous variable ranging in degree from low to high satisfaction. Rollins and Galligan (1978) agreed that satisfaction is a subjective evaluation of marital quality by the partners themselves. According to Spanier, Lerner, and Aquilino (1980), this definition ignored the possibility that approximately equal amounts of satisfaction or dissatisfaction could arise from qualitatively different types of marriages with different patterns of social interactions.

Spanier and Cole (1976) asserted that marital adjustment is a process. The outcome of the marital adjustment process is determined by the degree of a) troublesome marital differences; b) interpersonal tensions and personal anxiety; c) marital satisfaction; d) dyadic cohesion; and e) consensus on matters of importance to marital functioning (p. 126-128). They also conceptualized marital adjustment as the qualitative evaluation of a state, and as developmental phenomena changing over time on a continuum.

Other investigators have tried to convey a generalized notion of "how well the marriage is going" (Lewis & Spanier, 1979). Marital quality was defined as the perceived evaluative outcomes in a marriage which are the result of reward minus cost in a marriage. It includes the entire range of terms (i.e., marital satisfaction, happiness, role strain and conflict, communication, integration, and adjustment) which have been the traditional dependent variables in marriage research (Lewis & Spanier, 1979). To Lewis and Spanier (1979) the range of evaluations of marital quality constitutes a continuum. Numerous characteristics of marital functioning and interaction are reflected in that continuum. They found high marital quality to be associated with an adequate level of communication, high levels of marital happiness and satisfaction with the relationship, as well as with high levels of adjustment and marital interaction.

In brief, this definition reflects one of the more significant developments in marital research in the seventies, recognizing that the quality of marriage is a multidimensional phenomenon (Spanier & Lewis, 1980).

Theories of Marital Quality. Most research on marital quality reported during the sixties was atheoretical. Early research was a descriptive search for variables relevant to the formation of theoretical frameworks (Hicks & Platt, 1970). In the seventies, theories of marital quality emerged. Two theories, the Symbolic Interaction Theory of Marital Satisfaction (Burr, 1973; Burr, Leigh, Day, & Constantine,

1979), and the Theory of Marital Satisfaction of Parents (Rollins & Galligan, 1978) are relevant to the proposed research.

Symbolic Interaction Theory of Marital Satisfaction.

Symbolic Interaction Theory was derived from sociological theories dealing with satisfaction in a social situation, role enactment, role strain, and role transition. Burr (1973) and later Burr with his colleagues (1979) identified four antecedents to marital satisfaction that function in an additive manner. The four variables were: a) quality of role enactment of salient marital roles as perceived by the self, b) quality of role enactment of salient marital roles as perceived by the spouse, c) consensus with spouse for salient marital roles, and d) consensus regarding relative deprivation in the enactment of marital roles. The relationships among the variables were expressed in four propositions. First, through a positive linear relationship the perceived quality of role enactment influences the satisfaction of individuals in the marital relationship. Second, the effect the quality of role enactment has on the individual's satisfaction varies with the importance she or he places on the relevant role expectations. Third, perceived self-deprivation in the performance of marital roles influences marital quality. Finally, marital satisfaction is influenced by the dyad's degree of consensus on relevant role expectation.

Two of the topics addressed by Burr's (1973) early theory concerned role strain and role transition. His definition of role strain was based on Goodes' (1960) theory. Role strain was the degree of difficulty an individual feels when he/she complies with the expectations associated with a set of roles. Burr argued that incompatibility between roles, lack of clarity about expected behaviors within roles, and role overload (a high total number of activities prescribed in an individual's entire set of roles) increase role strain. Furthermore, if one partner in a marriage experiences role strain, his or her spouse will be apt to experience role discrepancy. Role discrepancy was described as feelings of stress due to the partner's failure to comply with role expectancies. Burr noted that role strain and role discrepancy tended to increase with the absolute number of activities associated with the total set of social positions or roles occupied by an individual. Thus, a transition bringing new or increased activities to an individual may create role strain.

Burr, Leigh, Day, and Constantine (1979) reformulated Cottrell's (1969) theory of role strain. They argued that the degree of difficulty encountered when making role transitions is affected by several variables other than anticipatory socialization, role clarity, role conflict, and role strain. Although they did not identify those variables, Burr and his colleagues suggested that future research should focus on identifying them.

Burr, Leigh, Day, and Constantine (1979) pointed out that role conflict and role clarity have an indirect effect, while anticipatory socialization and role strain have a direct effect on role transition. These relationships were expressed in the following propositions: a) The more anticipatory socialization about a role, the better the role transition into a role, and b) The greater the perceived role strain that results from performing a role, the less ease in making the role transition into a role (Burr et al., 1979, p. 84-86).

Theory of Marital Satisfaction of Parents. Rollins and Galligan (1978) applied Burr's Symbolic Interaction Theory to parents. Their application primarily suggested that parents' marital satisfaction is a function of the presence, number, and age of the children. These factors were said to indirectly influence marital satisfaction by the impact of parent-child interaction on the quality of role enactment, on consensus with spouse about role expectations, and on deprivation for enactment of marital roles.

The construct role strain is the central concept in Rollins and Galligan's theory of marital satisfaction. They agreed with Goode (1960) and Burr et al. (1979) on the effects role accumulation has on role strain, suggesting that role strain tends to increase with increasing role accumulation. Within this theory, role accumulation is defined as the total rights and obligations of the entire set of roles enacted by one person which are associated with a

specific social position in the family. The roles vary in number and also vary in the number of activities prescribed for a role. In fact, Rollins and Galligan attempted to link role strain to children as an antecedent condition and concluded that family role accumulation is greatest at stages of the family when dependent children are at home. Thus, their theory proposes that the role accumulation of husband-fathers and wife-mothers varies with transitions over the family lifespan and influence role strain, which indirectly influences the couple's marital satisfaction.

Rollins and Galligan (1978) as well as Burr et al. (1979) identified four possible variables that would weaken the relationship between family role accumulation and family role strain. Those factors are rewards received for the enactment of roles, role delegation, ability of the parents to manage the enactment of family roles, and role integration.

Both theories have been criticized by Spanier, Lerner, and Aquilino (1980). They asserted that causal inferences between role strain and marital satisfaction have been considered unidirectional, without attention to the reciprocal influences of the relationships among the marital-parental-child triad.

Parenthood and Marriage. Hicks and Platt (1970), in an extensive review of the research conducted during the 1960's, reported that the most frequent conclusion concerning the effects of parenting on marital satisfaction was that

children negatively affect the quality of the marital relationship. In contrast, Spanier and Lewis (1980) reviewing studies from the 1970's reported contradictory results. They attributed the lack of consistent findings to the situational conditions of the parents which, they claimed, determine the degree of impact and the particular area of the marital relationship in which an impact is experienced.

Methodological problems may explain some of the inconsistency. Examples may be the absence of reasonable statistical control of such variables as socio-economic status, family size, or occupational involvement; the restriction to middle-class samples; and the absence of longitudinal information (Menaghan, 1982).

Feldman (1971) conducted one of the early longitudinal studies comparing marital satisfaction before and after the first child was born. She reported a decreased level of marital satisfaction with the arrival of the first child. Furthermore, the decrement in satisfaction was greater among those couples who reported the highest marital satisfaction prior to the child's birth. These results supported Luckey and Bain's (1970) hypothesis that high satisfaction with parenthood is associated with low marital satisfaction. Ryder (1973), using longitudinal data, found no differences in general marital satisfaction among couples who had a new child compared with a control group having no children. However, new mothers exhibited the lowest level of satisfaction with companionship experiences with their

husbands. This was true whether wives with infants were initially high or low in general marital satisfaction. Ryder concluded that the presence of children changed the wife's definition of satisfaction with the companionship aspect of the marriage.

Miller (1976) corroborated Ryder's findings. To Miller, companionship was the mediating variable between number of children and marital satisfaction. He found that a chain of variables affect marital satisfaction. For example, he pointed out that 1) length of marriage was positively related to number of children, 2) number of children was negatively correlated with companionship, and 3) companionship was positively associated with marital satisfaction. An interaction was found between number of children and companionship. Among the couples high in companionship, the number of children was positively related to marital satisfaction, whereas for those low in companionship this relationship was negative. In addition, Miller pointed out that only two antecedents, family role transition and frequency of companionship activities, directly influenced marital satisfaction. Antecedent variables such as social status, length of marriage, number and spacing of children had an indirect effect.

Hoffman and Manis (1978), reported positive as well as negative effects of children on marital quality. Independent of the quality of the relationship and social class of the parents, the first child means adulthood, new

responsibilities, new status in the community, and transformation from couple to family. Parents reported that although parenthood implied new responsibilities and restrictions, children brought them closer together because of sharing common goals. Indeed, parents reported that the restrictions imposed by the children decreased when they reached adolescence. These results have been criticized by Glenn and McLanahan (1982). They argued that due to social desirability, parents may have been reluctant to admit that children had adversely affected them. Consequently, the use of multiple techniques in measuring parental satisfaction was recommended to obtain an unbiased description of parental roles.

Glenn and McLanahan (1982) attempted to differentiate the characteristics of those who reported being happy with children from those who did not. They estimated the effects that the presence of children had on the parents' marital happiness from six national surveys conducted in the United States from 1973 to 1978. The results did not help specify the characteristics of husbands and wives whose marital happiness was likely to be decreased by the presence of children. The investigators pointed out that the negative effects of children on marital happiness was pervasive regardless of sex, religious preferences, and employment status. The only group identified in which the effects were not likely to be negative consisted of white persons who said that the ideal number of children for a family was four or

more. One possible explanation for the results was that when children are desired and planned, they have positive effects on marital satisfaction. This explanation has received some empirical support by studies showing the importance of choice in the transition to parenthood (Spanier & Lewis, 1980). More importantly, studies in the seventies, as reported by Spanier and Lewis (1980), have failed to find a direct relationship between number of children and marital satisfaction. However, it seems that the number of children indirectly affects marital quality through its effect on companionship (Miller, 1976). Within this context, Rollins and Galligan (1978) pointed out that the impact on the marital relationship of number and spacing of children as well as the arrival of the first child depends upon specific circumstances within the family. Thus, it seems that the desire for children in relation to other situational conditions of the parents is the determining factor in whether or not marital satisfaction is negatively or positively affected.

Another explanation of the negative effect children may have on marital happiness was posited by Gleen and McLanahan, 1982. Perhaps, the presence of children deterred many unhappily married couples from divorcing (Glenn & McLanahan, 1982). However, the divorce literature has refuted this hypothesis. For example, Cherlin (1977) found that divorce may be delayed because of the children, but probably not prevented. He reported that children's ages were relative to

divorce rates. For couples with a child younger than six, the probability of separation was only half what it was for families with children between six and seventeen.

A longitudinal study by Miller and Sollie (1980) compared personal and marital stress before and after the birth of the first child. They corroborated the earlier results concerning the negative effects of the infant on personal and marital stress. Both wives and husbands reported higher scores on personal stress measurements after they had become parents. Wives' personal stress scores during pregnancy were lower than their husbands' score. However, new mothers had higher personal stress in their marriages after the baby was born than before, and increasingly higher by the time the baby was eight months old. By contrast, new fathers' marital stress scores, remained the same across the duration of the study. This supports Ryder's (1973) finding concerning the lower levels of marital satisfaction reported by wives when compared with their husbands.

In an attempt to study both individual and group changes across the transition to parenthood, Belsky, Spanier, and Robine (1983) conducted a longitudinal study to assess marital satisfaction in response to the birth of a first-born or later-born infant. They found a linear decline in overall marital adjustment from the last trimester of pregnancy to three and then nine months postpartum. More interestingly, Belsky and her colleagues reported that individuals revealed

little change in the marital relationship. Those couples who reported high or low satisfaction before the baby was born did not change their perception of marital quality due to the presence of the infant.

More recently, attention has been focused on role strain in an attempt to explain the contribution of the child to family life. Some theorists (Burr, 1973; Rollins & Galligan, 1978) have proposed models in which role strain is the mediating factor between the arrival of the child and the change in the quality of the marital relationship. However, few studies have assessed the effects of role strain as a mediating construct (Spanier et al., 1980).

Steffensmeier (1982), following Burr's (1973) theory of role transition, studied the effects of perceived role conflict, role clarity, anticipatory socialization, education, and sex on the transition to parenthood of white married couples whose first child was three to five months old. The dependent variable was the degree to which new situations and relational changes accompanying the birth of the first child were perceived negatively by husband and wife. This variable was measured by three factors: parental responsibilities and restrictions, parental gratifications, and marital intimacy and stability. He found that the difficulty involved in the transition to parenthood was a multidimensional phenomenon composed of those three factors. In addition, Steffensmeier reported that the lower the role clarity, anticipatory socialization, and role conflict, the

greater the parental responsibilities and restrictions. The lower the level of education and the higher the role clarity, the greater the parental gratification. Finally, the higher the role clarity, the greater the marital intimacy and stability. An important conclusion that can be derived from this study was that a different set of variables should be used to explain the reduction of marital satisfaction and parental gratification than has been used to explain the transition difficulties associated with new responsibilities.

In summary, the presence of children apparently affects the marital relationship depending on the interaction of the following variables: a) situational conditions of the parents such as desire for children, level of marital satisfaction before the birth the child, and companionship; b) demographic variables such as educational level, number of years married before the child is born, and number of children; c) Role related variables such as role clarity, role accumulation, and role strain.

The effects of parenthood on the marital relationship also depends upon the index of change examined. If group measures are taken at a given point in time, the overall marital quality seems to decrease, but in measuring the same population at different points of time, individual spouses and couples remain unchanged, at least until nine months after the birth of their child. Belsky seemed to give some answers to the contradictory findings concerning the effects of the presence of children on marital quality. Future

research should focus on studying the characteristics of those couples who report high or low marital satisfaction before the baby is born and the situational conditions that could explain their evaluation of their marriage.

Work and Marital relationship. Strains resulting from the simultaneous management of job and family responsibilities may affect the marital relationship. Characteristics of the jobs, as well as husbands' and wives' attitudes toward their own work and the employment of their spouse, are important factors affecting the quality of the marital relationship (Baylin, 1970). The presence of small children, career involvement, and socio-economic factors may also be implicated. Orden and Bradburn (1969) reported that a woman's choice of employment strains the marriage only when there were preschool children in the family. They concluded that the woman's decision to work is associated with a high balance between satisfactions and strains for both partners. Bailyn (1970) found that an over involvement in professional careers by women was associated with lowered marital satisfaction. Also, Ryder (1973) reported that marital adjustment was highest when the husband had a higher occupational position than his wife.

Moen (1982) suggested that there may be a socio-economic class difference explaining the relationship between marital satisfaction and maternal employment. For example, in lower class families there is higher marital satisfaction when the wife is not working (Hoffman & Nye, 1974). Studies of middle

class families revealed no such differences; indeed, working couples may experience greater levels of marital satisfaction than do single-earner couples when the wife enjoys her work (Hoffman & Nye, 1974).

The marital relationship of dual career families may benefit from sharing the provider role. Weingarten (1978) reported that working couples were involved with each other as well as with their careers. Huser and Grant (1978) pointed out that university faculty couples were more flexible when compared with more conventional samples. Marital power is affected when the wife works. Scanzoni and Szinovacz (1980) pointed out that when the wife earns money, the family distribution of resources changes and her relative power in the marriage as well as family decision making also changes.

Role Strain in Dual-Provider Families. There has been little systematic study of the consequences for families having two providers (Moen, 1982). Most research has focused on mothers working outside the home and only recently has fatherhood been called to the attention of investigators.

Similarly, little attention has been paid to the possibility that life stages may affect the experience of conflict or strain in combining the roles of the mother and employee. Research has shown that working mothers with children experience more strain than do women who remain at home with their children. As children grow older, different responsibilities are expected from parents. Hoffman and Manis (1978) reported that after children go to school and mothers

go back to work, mothers experience fewer restrictions from parenthood and increase their marital power.

Recently attention has been focused on families in which both parents work. A significant feature of the dual-provider lifestyle is that it produces considerable stress (Moen, 1982). For employed couples, responding to multiple role demands--employee, homemaker, parent, and spouse--is a difficult challenge. Rapoport and Rapoport (1976) identified role overload as one of the sources that produce strain in working couples. Rapoport's research (1976) identified four factors which determine role overload: a) the degree to which having children and family life is salient; b) the degree to which the couple aspires to a high standard of domestic living; c) the degree to which there is satisfactory reallocation of tasks; and d) the degree to which the social-psychological overload compounds the physical overloads. They reported a positive relationship between factors a, b, and d and the degree of stress experienced. Factor c was used as a coping mechanism that helped to alleviate strain.

Robinson (1977) investigated the nature of role strain, a negative reaction to the accumulation of role demands, among working mothers and housewives. She found that employed mothers, especially those with preschool children, reported higher strain than did housewives. Strain also correlated highly with low marital adjustment among working wives and mothers, suggesting a complex interplay between marital adjustment and broader economic conditions. Adverse

effects of role overload are likely to be offset by the enhancement in self-esteem and by the husband's assistance and support (Lamb, 1982).

Because the body of knowledge in this area is small, Moen (1982) has emphasized the need to explore the effects of the conflict concerning family and work roles over the family cycle.

The presence of children has a negative effect on marital satisfaction in couples with higher education, socio-economic status (Miller, 1976), number of children, role accumulation, role conflict and role strain (Rollins & Galligan, 1978). Higher levels of marital satisfaction were reported when couples exhibited higher companionship (Miller, 1976), higher marital satisfaction before the baby was born (Feldman, 1971), higher social support (Tamir & Antonucci, 1981) and when both spouses worked outside the home (Hoffman & Nye, 1974). Also, these variables interacted producing a dynamic set of relationships which in turn affected marital quality. Thus, marital satisfaction is a multidimensional phenomenon explained by the interaction of historical, social, and psychological events.

Although family researchers have been interested in studying the significance of parenthood on marital quality for more than two decades, investigation in this area has met with numerous methodological and theoretical problems.

a. Most investigators have identified marital quality as a factor similar to marital satisfaction. However, this global approach has failed to include other relevant variables such as companionship and communication in the definition of marital quality. Although there has been the implicit recognition that quality of marriage is a multidimensional phenomenon (Spanier & Lewis, 1980), there is a dearth of research attempting to measure different factors that contribute to marital quality.

b. The main trend has been to relate only one or two variables to a single dimension of marital quality. This approach is severely limited because marital quality is explained by multiple antecedent factors.

c. The statistical analyses employed in most cross sectional and longitudinal studies generally reflect measures of central tendency. In both cases, a powerful multifactor method would have been more appropriate (Belsky, Spanier & Rovine, 1983).

d. Most research on marriage has focused mainly on the individual rather than looking at the couple as the unit of analysis. A system approach studying the interrelationships and reciprocal influences may be more useful at present.

e. Although role strain has been considered an important theoretical explanation of marital quality (Rollins & Cannon, 1974), little research has been conducted to study this relationship or the antecedents of role strain.

The present research was largely exploratory. First, an attempt was made to explain the variance of marital quality of both husbands and wives by using eleven predictors (education, family life cycle, sex, work status, sex role attitudes, social support, parental competence, role conflict, role accumulation, and role strain). Second, separate analyses for husbands and wives were performed to study the effects of those predictors on marital quality.

Another contribution of this research was to examine not only the individual but also the couple as the unit of analysis to determine any discrepancies in their perceptions of the marriage.

The specific hypotheses tested in this study were as follow (See Figure 1):

1. Demographic variables such as sex, education, occupation and family life cycle, will directly affect social support and sex role attitudes. Thus, couples with higher education and occupation as well as couples who have younger children will have higher social support and more egalitarian sex role attitudes than couples with lower education and occupation. Also, demographic variables will indirectly affect marital quality through their effects on sex role attitudes, social support, role conflict, parental strain, marital strain , role accumulation, and parental competence.

2. Sex role attitudes will directly affect social support and role accumulation, and will indirectly affect role accumulation, role conflict, role strain, and marital

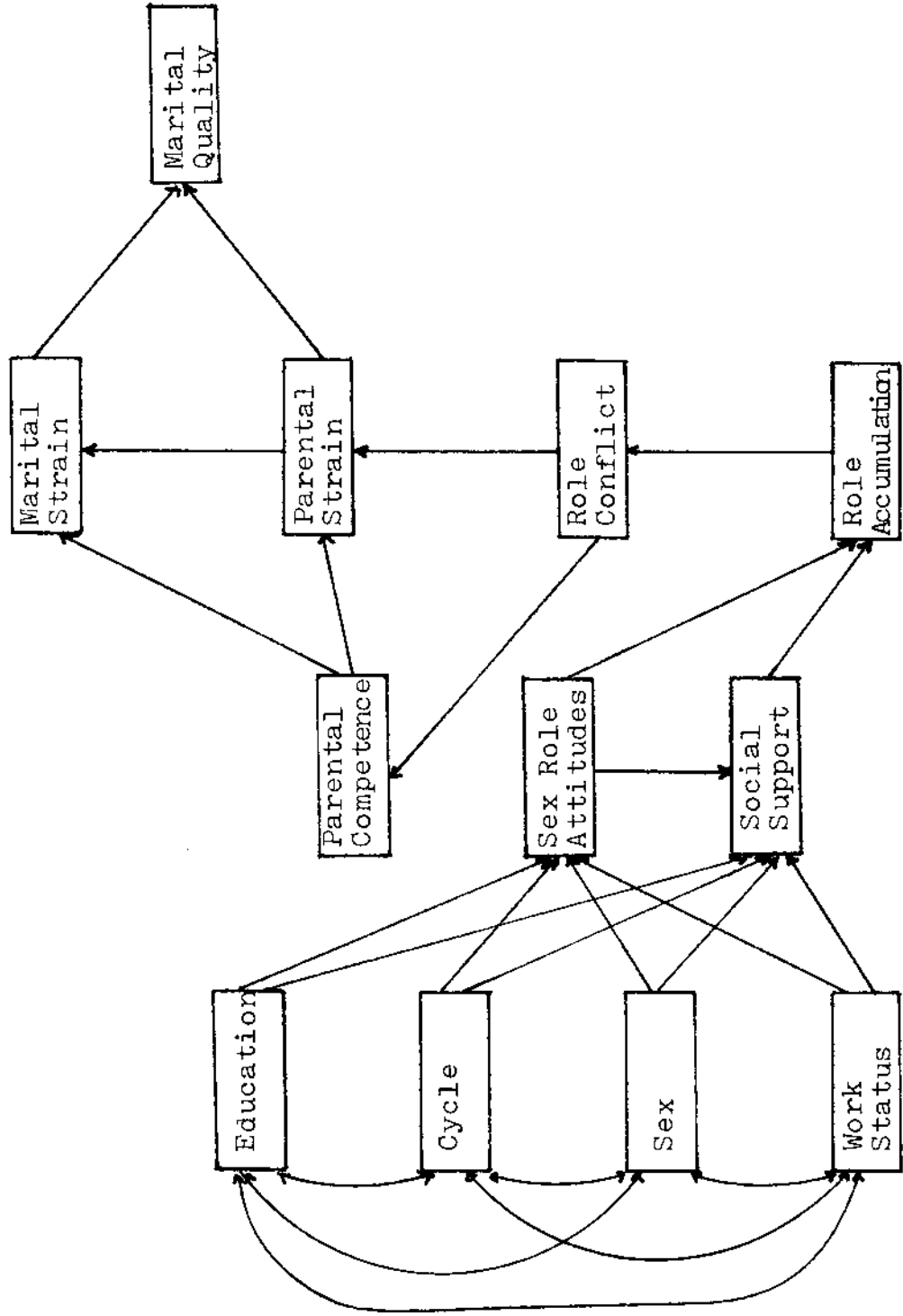


Figure 1. Hypothesized Path Diagram of the Variables Affecting Marital Quality

quality. Thus, controlling for the effect of the antecedent variables, couples with more egalitarian sex role attitudes will have higher social support, lower role accumulation, lower role conflict, lower role strain, and higher marital quality than couples with less egalitarian sex role attitudes.

3. Social support (social network and task allocation) will directly affect role accumulation and will indirectly affect role conflict and role strain. Thus, higher social support will lead to lower role accumulation and role conflict. Also, controlling for the effects of demographic variables and sex role attitudes, social support will indirectly affect marital quality through its effects on role accumulation, role conflict, and role strain.

4. Role accumulation will directly affect role conflict and indirectly affect role strain, parental competence, and marital quality. Thus, controlling for the effects of demographic variables, sex role attitudes and social network, higher role accumulation will lead to higher role conflict, higher role strain, lower parental competence, and lower marital quality.

5. Role conflict will directly affect role strain (parental strain and marital strain) and indirectly affect marital quality. Thus, controlling for the effect of the antecedent variables, higher role conflict will lead to higher parental strain, higher marital strain and decreased marital quality.

6. Role strain, (parental strain and marital strain), will directly affect marital quality. Thus, controlling for the effect of the antecedent variables, higher role strain will lead to decreased marital quality. The higher the parental and marital strain, the lower the marital quality. Moreover, parental strain will have an indirect effect on marital quality via marital strain.

7. Parental competence will have a direct effect on role strain and an indirect effect on marital quality. Thus, controlling for the effects of the antecedent variables, higher parental competence will lead to lower parental and marital strain, as well as to higher marital quality.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 119 married couples (238 individuals) who had at least one child and who responded voluntarily to a questionnaire. Couples were recruited from day care, home centers, community sponsored programs for churches, university and parents' organizations from Denton, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston. Selected couples met the following criteria: a) Currently married. b) Wife and husband living together. c) Wife and husband respond to their questionnaire separately.

Participants were given an informed consent form which explained that a) Participation in the study was voluntary; b) Subjects could drop out of the study at any time; c) Confidentiality of responses would be maintained;

d) Participants were assured of anonymity; and e) The study investigated "family relationships."

The modal participant was a white, middle class, protestant, first time married couple. This couple had lived together for 12 years. The couple had two children. The age of the oldest child was five and of the youngest two. Wives were 30 years old, had a bachelor's degree, were not working or had a part-time job and earned less than \$10,000. Husbands were 37 years old, had a master's degree or Ph.D., had a full-time job, and earned more than \$50,000.

Instrumentation

Demographic variables. The variables included within this category were sex, level of education completed, length of marriage, number of children, children ages, occupational status, family provider, and total family income.

Sex Role Attitudes. The Scanzoni Sex Role Scale (1980) consists of 30 items pertinent to the wife, husband, father, and mother roles. Items were derived from the work of Rossi (1970). This scale was composed of seven subscales: a) Traditional Wife Role, b) Self-Actualization, c) Problematic Husband Alterations, d) Institutionalized Equality, e) Traditional Husband Role, f) Traditional Mother Role, and g) Father Role. Subjects responded to each statement by rating themselves on a four-point Likert-Type scale.

Age of Oldest Child. The age of the oldest child determined the stage of the family life cycle. Thus, to describe the main transition experienced by the family, participants were asked to indicate transition points that most appropriately describe their family at the present time. The classification used (Duvall, 1967) was: oldest child less than seven years, oldest child seven to 12 years, oldest child 13 to 19 years, and oldest child over 20 years. Total number of children and ages of the children were also asked. The total number of children included the number of children that the couple had raised that had lived or were living with them. This variable ranged from one child to more than four children. The ages of the children were listed by participants.

Social Support. Social support as conceptualized included two sets of variables: social network and task allocation. The Tamir and Antonucci Social Network Scale (1981) was designed to assess the degree of familial and nonfamilial social relationships an individual has, as well as the degree of satisfaction with friendships. This scale included six areas of social network: neighbors known, visiting neighbors, friends/relatives free to talk with, frequency talking with friends/relatives, visiting friends/relatives, satisfaction with friends. Family task allocation was operationalized as the participation of the spouses in the following household tasks: outside help, food shopping, preparation of meals, special purchases, cleaning

the house, washing clothes, ironing, gardening, child care, disciplining of children, and finances. This instrument was based on the questionnaire used by Rapoport and Rapoport (1971).

Role Conflict. Role conflict emerges when an individual simultaneously needs to meet the demands of disparate and highly salient roles. The Role Conflict Scales developed by Holahan and Gilbert (1979) measures conflict between pairs of four major life roles. The six scales are: Professional vs. Spouse, Professional vs. Parent, Professional vs. Self, Spouse vs. Self, Spouse vs. Parent, and Parent vs. Self. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the six scales range from .75 to .88. The items for the scales were randomly interspersed and presented to all the subjects in the same order. Subjects were asked to respond to the items using a five-point scale ranging from one (causes no internal conflict) through three (causes some internal conflict) to five (causes high internal conflict). Thus, high scores were associated with greater role conflict.

Role Accumulation. Role accumulation was defined as the "total number of activities a person is expected to perform" (Goode, 1960). Role accumulation may occur when the role incumbent is expected to engage in several role behaviors, all of which may be mutually compatible in the abstract, within too short a time period. Role accumulation was measured by means of a Likert-type rating scale including some items adapted from Pearlin (1974).

Role Strain. Role Strain included two factors: marital strain and parental strain. Thus, role strain referred to the degree of difficulty an individual experiences when attempting to exhibit behaviors appropriate to the occupant of a social position in measuring up to the obligations and demands contained in the role expectations for all the roles associated with the position (Rollins & Galligan, 1978). As Burr (1973) has argued, incompatibility between roles, lack of clarity about expected behaviors within roles, and role overload are thought to increase role strain.

The Role Strain Scale from the Structure of Coping Scale (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978), was used to provide information about potential life strains in parental and marital roles, as well as emotional stress felt by individuals. The Role Strain Scale (Pearlin and Schooler, 1978) represents problems that frequently occur among individuals in their roles as marriage partner and parent. Pearlin and Schooler (1978) identified the strains from themes that surfaced repeatedly during unstructured interviews. Standardized questions about these strains were gradually developed, tested, and included in the final instrument. By subjecting the questions about life-strains to factor analysis, the items within each one of the four roles constitute separate pools of information. For the purpose of this research, only items concerning marital strain and parental strain were included.

The Steffensmeir Parental Responsibilities and Restrictions Subscale (1982) was used as another measure of parental strain. This instrument describes changes in both leisure and daily living arrangements due to the presence of children. This instrument was derived from previous studies (Hobb, 1965; Russell, 1974).

Marital Quality. As with social support, marital quality was conceptualized as involving primarily two factors: dyadic adjustment and companionship.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) was used to measure the degree of dyadic satisfaction, consensus, and expression among couples. This self-report instrument consists of 32 items concerning the quality of interaction with one's spouse. Items included in this scale were derived empirically. Each of the 32 items correlated significantly with external criterion of marital status (married and divorced samples). The correlation between the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale and the Dyadic Adjustment was .86 among married respondents, and .88 among divorced respondents. The reliability was .96. Higher scores indicated higher level of marital satisfaction.

Companionship referred to the frequency with which the couple has engaged in various companionate activities (Miller, 1976). The Miller Companionship Scale (1976) was derived from the previous work of Orden and Bradburn (1968). This eight item scale has factorial loadings superior to .42 and its Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is .75 (Miller, 1976).

Parental Competence. The Parental Sense of Competence Scale (Gibaud-Wallston & Wandersman, 1978) was used to measure self-esteem in the parenting situation. Self-esteem was conceptualized in terms of one's perceived ability to meet situational demands. The items for this measure were derived from the Sense of Job Competence Scale (Wagner & Morse, 1975), with the wording altered to make it appropriate for the parenting situation. The scale consists of seventeen statements about the respondent's self-perception as a parent. Respondents indicated the degree of their agreement or disagreement with each statement on a five-point scale. The scale has two subscales. The first, Skill/Knowledge, assesses parents' perceptions of the degree to which they have acquired the skills and understanding to be a good parent. The second, Valuing/Comfort, assessed the degree to which the individual values parenthood and is comfortable in that role. The combined score provides an overall appraisal by the person of his or her own functioning as a parent. The item analysis of the Parental Sense of Competence Scale yielded an alpha coefficient of .82 for Skill/Knowledge, 0.76 for Valuing/Comfort and 0.83 for the total score. Reliability ranges from 0.46 to 0.82, with 11 of the 17 values above 0.70. Correlations between the Parental Sense of Competence Scale and the Personal Feelings and General Well Being scales are moderate. Also, significant correlations of 0.62 and 0.54 for females and males are reported with the adult version of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory.

Social Desirability. A short version of the Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Strahan & Carrese, 1972) was administered. Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficients for the short version and the original scale are 0.70 and 0.83 respectively. Correlation between the short scale and the total scale is 0.90.

Procedure

Written invitations to participate in research about family relations were sent to churches, day care centers, and community sponsored programs. Couples with children who wanted to participate signed up in response to a call for volunteers. Those couples who volunteered to participate were given the questionnaires to return within two weeks by mail or personally by depositing the questionnaires in a sealed box to assure anonymity. Of the 350 questionnaires which were delivered to the application centers, 24 (66%) were returned. Of these, six sets of questionnaires were discarded because they were incomplete.

The participants were asked to complete the informed consent form and the "Parental and Marital Interaction Questionnaire" (PMIQ) which contained the eight scales previously described. All subjects were given the following instructions for filling in the PMIQ:

This questionnaire is designed to find out about your attitudes toward your marriage and family life. Your response's are an important contribution to achieving a better understanding of families. It is

necessary that you fill out your questionnaire without consulting your spouse. If you meet all of the following criteria, please complete the questionnaire. If you do not meet all the four conditions or prefer not to answer the questions, please return the questionnaire unanswered. Please respond to the questionnaire if you meet all of the following conditions.

Currently married.

You and your spouse living under the same roof.

You and your spouse each complete a questionnaire.

You and your spouse have at least one child.

When filling out this questionnaire, please answer all questions without skipping any. If you find that a question does not fit your situation or does not express your opinion exactly, look for the answer which most nearly expresses your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. Do not spend too much time on any question beyond giving a thoughtful answer as it occurs to you. Your answers are completely anonymous, so please feel free to respond to the statements in a sincere and open manner.

First, each subject was scored in the different scales after reflecting their items. Then, discrepancy scores for marital quality were calculated by taking the absolute value of the differences for each couple on each scale. Second,

on the basis of the total marital quality median score, subjects were assigned to one of two subgroups (high marital quality and low marital quality).

Results

The model outlined earlier (See Figure 1, page 24), taking the individual as the unit of analysis, was examined utilizing path analysis to study the direct and indirect effects on marital quality. It was assumed that the model was linear, additive, and recursive. That is the impact of each variable was assumed to be constant over all levels of all other variables and that the causal flow in the model was unidirectional. Thus, at a given point in time a variable could not be both a cause and effect of another variable. The assumptions underlying path analysis were checked. F-tests for nonlinearity and additivity were run with results indicating that the data were linear and additive. Direct effects of the four exogenous variables (Education, Family Life Cycle, Sex, and Work Status) on the endogenous variables were of initial interest in the present analysis. (An exogenous variable is one whose variability is assumed to be determined by causes outside the causal model.)

In the first stage of testing the model, the direct effects of all independent variables on each dependent variable were calculated using direct multiple regression equations. Moreover, the effect of those variables as antecedents were figured into each regression equation for the direct effects on the endogenous variables which appeared

later in the model. (An endogenous variable is one whose variation is explained by exogenous or endogenous variables in the system.) Relationships which were apparently unimportant were dropped if the resulting path coefficient had an F with a level of significance greater than 0.05. Then, multiple regression equations were again computed this time using a stepwise procedure without the variables which had the least powerful effect on a given dependent variable. Since it is almost never possible to account for the total variance of a variable, residual variables were introduced to indicate the effect of variables not included in the model. In Figure 2, " e " is the symbol for residual variables.

Unlike standard regression equations in which all independent predictors are entered simultaneously, the stepwise regression procedure enters predictor variables one at a time in single steps. The entry order is determined by the magnitude of each independent variable's contribution to the variance of the dependent variable which remaining unaccounted for at each step. Thus, the predictor variable with the greatest contribution to variance at the dependent variable is entered first, then the variable which makes the largest contribution to the remaining variance at the dependent variable is entered, then the third, and so on until either all predictor variables have been entered or the remaining variables fail to meet the criterion for entry. The criterion for entry was that the probability value of F for each predictor variable be less than or equal to 0.05.

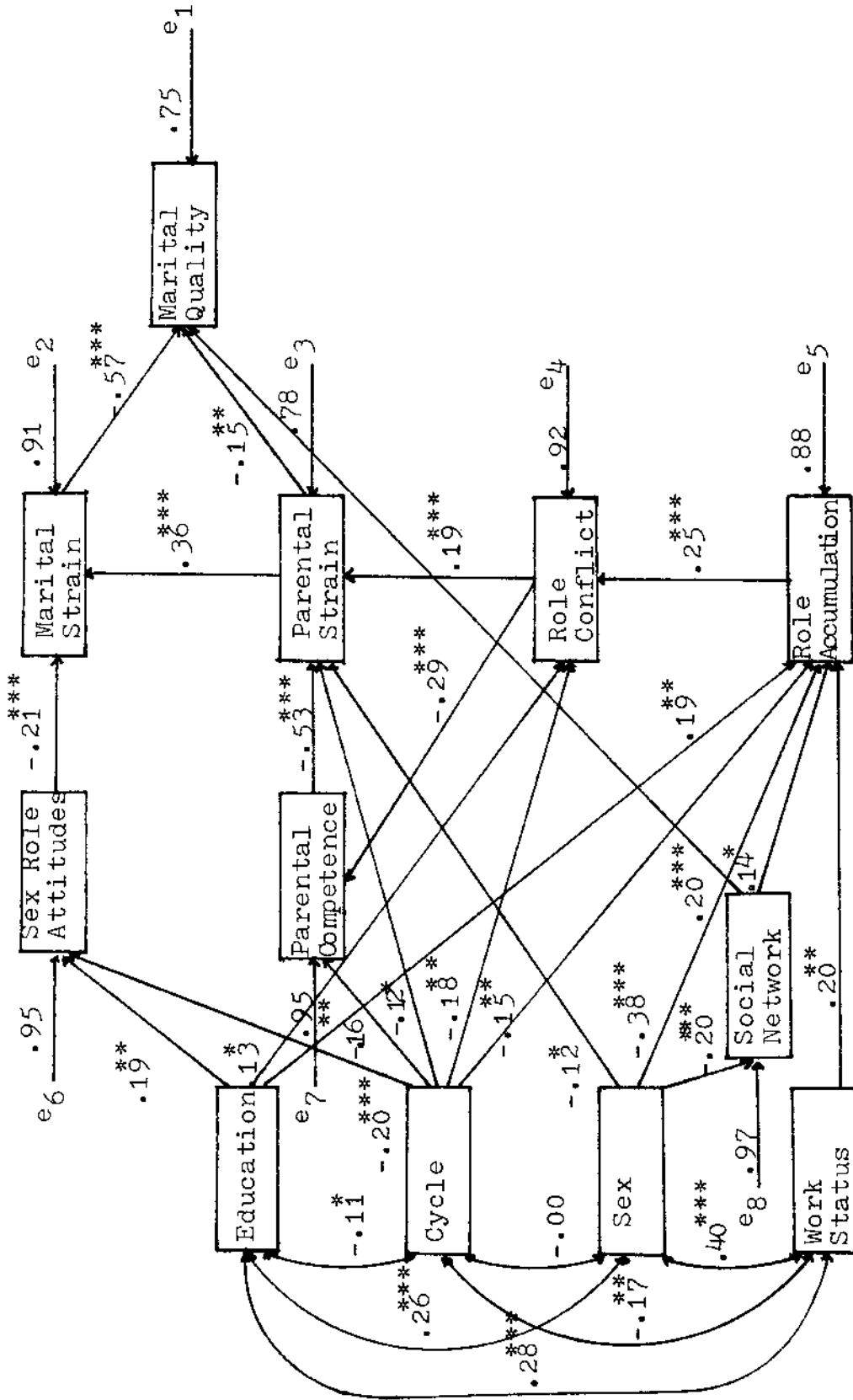


Figure 2. Path Diagram of Variables Affecting Marital Quality
 * p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

Because the main purpose of this research was to explain the amount of variance in marital quality by several independent variables which were measured in different units, and because the main interest was in assessing the overall effect of one variable over another in the same sample, standardized coefficients were used. Standardized betas (\underline{B}) were used because they are scale-free and can therefore be compared across different variables.

Figure 2 shows the path diagram resulting from the multiple regression analysis which explains 48.7% of the variance in marital quality. In order to calculate the path coefficients (\underline{B}) for the causal model depicted in Figure 2, it was necessary to do eight regression analyses. Also, a correlation matrix was calculated for the variables of the model (See Table 1, Appendix B).

First, marital strain, parental strain, and social network were regressed on marital quality. Since marital strain, parental strain, and social network had the highest zero-order correlation with marital quality ($\underline{r} = -.63$, $\underline{r} = -.35$, $\underline{r} = 0.24$, $\underline{p} < .001$, respectively), they were selected to enter the equation first. Figure 2 shows the calculated path coefficients for marital strain, social network, and for parental strain were $\underline{B} = -.57$, $\underline{p} < .001$, $\underline{B} = 0.19$, $\underline{p} < .001$, and $\underline{B} = -0.15$, $\underline{p} < .01$, respectively. The contribution to the variance of marital quality by these independent variables was 46.78%. Marital strain was the most important

variable contributing to the variance of marital quality (40.97%), followed by social network (3.85%), and parental strain (1.96%).

In the second step, parental strain and sex role attitudes were regressed on marital strain ($r = 0.35$, $p < .001$ and $r = -.19$, $p < .01$). The regression weight for parental strain was $B = 0.35$, $p < .001$, and for sex role attitude $B = -.21$, $p < .001$. The proportion of the variance in marital strain accounted for by both variables was 0.16%. Parental strain explained 12% of this variance and 4% was explained by sex role attitude.

In the third step, parental competence, ($r = -.56$, $p < .001$), family life cycle ($r = -.13$, $p < .05$), sex ($r = -.12$, $p < .05$) and role conflict ($r = 0.35$, $p < .001$) were regressed on parental strain. Parental competence had the largest effect on parental strain ($B = -.52$, $p < .001$), followed by role conflict ($B = 0.19$, $p < .001$), family life cycle ($B = -.12$, $p < .01$), and sex ($B = -.11$, $p < .001$). Moreover, the five variables together explained 39% of the variance in parental strain. The major percentage of this variance (31%) was explained by parental competence followed by role conflict (4.7%) and the other 3% was explained by the two variables remaining in the equation. These data confirmed hypotheses five and seven regarding the direct effect of role conflict on parental strain, as well as the direct effect of parental competence on parental strain.

In the fourth step, role conflict ($r = -.25, p < .001$) and family life cycle were regressed on parental competence ($r = -.09, p < .05$). Beta weights for role conflict were higher than those for family life cycle ($B = -.29, p < .001$ and $B = -.16, p < .01$, respectively). A small proportion of the variance (8%) of parental competence was explained by both variables. These data suggest that role conflict and stage of family life cycle cannot explain parental competence.

In the fifth step, role accumulation ($r = 0.31, p < .001$), family life cycle ($r = -.25, p < .001$) and education ($r = 0.19, p < .001$) were regressed on role conflict. Of the total variance in role conflict, 15% was explained by a linear combination of role accumulation (10%), family life cycle (3.5%), and education (1.5%).

Further, sex ($r = -.20, p < .001$), education ($r = 0.19, p < .01$), work status ($r = 0.19, p < .001$), family life cycle ($r = -.23, p < .001$), and social network ($r = 0.15, p < .01$) were regressed on role accumulation. Considering the relative importance of these variables in predicting role accumulation, it was found that sex had the largest effect ($B = -.38, p < .001$), followed by work status ($B = 0.20, p < .01$), by education ($B = 0.19, p < .01$), family life cycle ($B = -.15, p < .01$) and by social network ($B = 0.14, p < .05$).

These variables combined explained 21.7% of the total variance in role accumulation. The greatest proportion was explained by sex (8%), followed by education (6%), work status (3%), family life cycle (2%), and social network (2%).

Education ($r = 0.21$, $p < .001$) and family life cycle ($r = -.21$, $p < .001$) were regressed on sex role attitude. The corresponding path coefficients ($\underline{B} = 0.19$ and $\underline{B} = -.19$) were both statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The expectation that demographic variables (education and family life cycle) would directly affect sex role attitude was supported by the data to some extent. The amount of variance explained by those variables was low (8%); 4.8% explained by education and 3.6% by family life cycle.

Finally, sex was regressed on social network. A statistically significant negative relationship between sex and social network ($\underline{B} = -.20$, $p < .001$) resulted. These data showed a direct effect of sex on social network. Data also confirmed the expectation of an indirect effect of sex on role accumulation via social network. However, only a small proportion of the variance (4%) was explained by sex. Apparently other important variables are involved in the explanation of social network.

Direct and Indirect Effects.

The relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables was examined in terms of direct, indirect, and total effects (See Table 2, Appendix B). The direct effect of one variable on another is that part of its total effect

which is not transmitted via intervening variables. It is the effect which remains when intervening variables have been held constant. The indirect effect is obtained by the sum of all possible path coefficients that mediate the causal effect of one variable on another. Indirect effects are the proportion of a variable's total effect transmitted or mediated by intervening variables between the cause and effect of interest. The sum of the direct and indirect effects is the total effect. The total effect of one variable on another is the proportion of their total association which is not due to their common causes, to correlation among the causes, nor to unanalyzed correlation (Duncan, 1971). Thus, direct, indirect and total effects were calculated for all the endogenous variables of the model.

Effects on Marital Quality. The total effect of marital strain ($\beta = -.57$) on marital quality was larger than the effect of the other variables (Table 2, Appendix B). Parental strain was the second most important variable in explaining marital quality ($\beta = -.35$). Both variables had a large negative direct effect on marital quality. Thus, parents who reported high marital strain or high parental strain reported low marital quality. Similarly, 34.3% of the effect of parental strain on marital quality is a negative indirect effect via marital strain. Parents whose high parental strain was associated with high marital strain reported lower marital quality as compared to those parents

whose marital strain was not associated with marital strain. The most competent parents exhibited low parental strain, which led to low marital strain, which in turn was associated with high marital quality. Moreover, sex role attitude had a small indirect effect on marital quality via marital strain (Total effect = 0.12).

Effects on Marital Strain. The data revealed that the most important variables explaining marital strain were parental strain ($B = 0.35$), followed by sex role attitudes ($B = -.21$). Parental strain had a large positive direct effect on marital strain. Thus, traditional parents with high parental strain reported high level of marital quality, as compared to egalitarian parents with low parental strain. Parental competence had a negative indirect effect on marital strain via parental strain (Total effect = $-.18$). Also, indirect paths were found between role conflict and marital strain via parental competence and parental strain. This indirect path explained 48.28% of the total effect. Another 55.7% operated through marital strain which indicated a larger effect than via role conflict, parental competence and parental strain. Thus, parents with high role conflict have low parental competence, which in turn leads to high parental strain and low marital strain.

Effects on Parental Strain. The total effect of parental competence on parental strain (Total effect = $-.52$) was larger than the effect of role conflict (Total effect =

0.34), role accumulation (Total effect = 0.20), sex (Total effect = -.15), and family life cycle (Total effect = -.11).

Parental competence had a large negative direct effect on parental strain ($\beta = -.52$). Thus, parents who reported high parental competence also reported low parental strain. Of the total effect of role conflict on parental strain, 57.7% was a direct effect and 44.2% was a result of the indirect path via parental competence.

Another indirect path that goes from role accumulation to parental strain goes through role conflict and parental competence. This path accounted for 19.47% of the total effect. Thus, the former indirect path had the larger effect on parental strain.

Moreover, sex had a negative direct effect on parental strain that accounted for 77.7% of the total effect. Another 23.3% was a result of an indirect effect via role accumulation and role conflict. Thus, females had more parental strain and more role accumulation, which in turn led to higher role conflict and higher parental strain as compared to males.

Finally, there was a negative direct effect of family life cycle on parental strain that accounted for almost all (93.53%) the total effect. Thus, couples with young children reported higher parental strain than couples with older children.

Effects on Role Conflict. The results suggested a positive direct effect of role accumulation on role conflict

($\beta = -.25$). Thus, parents with high role accumulation reported high role conflict compared to parents with low role accumulation. Moreover, it was found that role accumulation was the most important variable in predicting role conflict, followed by family life cycle, education, sex, social network, and work.

Family life cycle had both a direct negative effect on role conflict that accounted for 83.17% of the total effect and an indirect negative path via role accumulation that accounted for 16.78% of the total effect. Thus, the direct path was more important than the indirect one. As a result, couples with young children reported higher role accumulation which led to higher role conflict as compared to couples with older children.

Education was the third important variable in predicting role conflict. Education had a positive direct effect on role conflict that accounted for 72.5% of the total effect. Also, an indirect path via role accumulation accounted for 27.94% of the total effect. Thus, the direct path seems more important in predicting role conflict than the indirect path. These results suggest that highly educated parents have more role conflict as compared to low educated parents. Consequently, the former group exhibited higher role accumulation which led to higher role conflict.

Further, sex, work status, and social network had smaller indirect effects on role conflict via role accumulation. Thus, mothers who work full time and who have

a larger social network reported higher role conflict as compared to husbands, than those who work part-time, and those who have a small social network.

Effects on Role Accumulation. As Table 2, Appendix B shows, sex was the most important variable to explain the variance in role accumulation. Then, the next important variables were work status, and education, followed by family life cycle and social network. The data did not confirm the paths between role accumulation and its antecedent variables.

Work status had a positive direct effect on role accumulation ($\beta = 0.20$) as well as education ($\beta = 0.19$), and social network ($\beta = 0.14$). Also, family life cycle had a small negative direct effect on role accumulation ($\beta = -.14$). Thus, parents who work or study full time, who are highly educated, who have young children, and who have a large social network reported higher role accumulation as compared to parents who have older children, who work or study part-time, who are less educated and have a small social network. Negative direct effects of task allocation as well as of social network were expected. On the contrary, positive direct effect of social network was found. Moreover, task allocation was left out of the model because its beta weight (β) did not reach the statistic criterion to be included ($p < .05$).

Sex had a negative direct effect on role accumulation ($\beta = -.38$) that accounted for 93.2% of the total effect. Sex also had an indirect negative effect on role accumulation via

social network. This effect accounted for only a small percentage of the total effect (6.8%). Thus, the direct path had a greater effect than the indirect one. As a result, mothers have more role accumulation than fathers. Also, contrary to expectations, mothers who have a larger social network reported higher role accumulation as compared to mothers with smaller social network.

Effects on Parental Competence. Total effects on parental competence were primarily explained by the negative direct effects of role conflict ($\beta = -.29$) and family life cycle ($\beta = -.16$). Thus, according to these results, parents whose oldest child is in the pre-school years have low role conflict and higher parental competence than parents of older children. Moreover, indirect paths were found from role accumulation via role conflict and from sex via role accumulation and role conflict. Another indirect path was found from family life cycle via role conflict. Thus, those parents who reported high role accumulation, also have high role conflict and low parental competence. Moreover, those parents who have older children reported low role accumulation, low role conflict, and less parental competence than parents of younger children.

Effects on Sex Role Attitudes. As predicted in hypothesis one, education had a positive direct effect on sex role attitudes ($\beta = 0.19$). Thus, highly educated parents have more egalitarian attitudes toward sex role than less educated parents. Moreover, parents with older children reported more

traditional attitudes than parents of younger children. A negative direct effect of sex on social network was found ($B = -.20$). Women reported larger social network than did men.

Four indirect paths from family life cycle to parental strain were observed. The first path was via parental competence. The second was via role conflict. The third was via role accumulation and role conflict, and the last one was via role conflict and parental competence to parental strain. Altogether these paths explained only a small proportion of the variance of parental strain.

Summary of Path Analysis. Marital strain, parental strain, and social network contributed significantly to marital quality. Thus, higher marital strain and parental strain as well as lower social network, were associated with lower marital quality. High marital strain was directly associated with more traditional sex role attitudes and high parental strain, and indirectly with low parental competence, high role conflict, and low educational levels. Parental competence, sex, and family life cycle had a negative direct effect on parental strain, while role conflict and role accumulation had a positive effect. Role accumulation was the most important variable in predicting role conflict, followed by family life cycle and education. Also, sex was the most important variable to contribute to role accumulation followed by occupation, education, life family cycle, and social network. Women with younger children, with a large social network, with high education, and with high

work status had higher role accumulation than did men. Finally, traditional sex role attitudes were associated with lower educational level and with older children in the family.

Gender Differences in the Path Analysis.

In an exploratory attempt to determine whether the model presented in Figure 1 changed due to gender differences, separate path analyses were performed for males and females. The same multiple regression equations that were performed for the general path analysis (See Figure 2), were performed separately for each sex to explore the contribution of each independent variable of the model to marital quality. A stepwise multiple regression procedure was performed for each sex separately.

The data showed (See Figures 3 and 4) that the path diagrams for males and females coincided in the direction of the effects, but varied in the contribution of each variable to the dependent variable. Similarly to the general path presented in Figure 2, marital strain had a negative direct effect on marital quality for both males and females ($\underline{B} = -0.62$, $p < .001$ for females, and $\underline{B} = -0.59$, $p < .001$ for males).

Both females' and males' path diagrams coincided on the the negative direct effect of sex role attitudes on marital strain ($\underline{B} = -0.20$, $p < .05$ and $\underline{B} = -0.20$, $p < .01$, respectively), as well as on their indirect effect on marital quality via marital strain. Also, education ($\underline{B} =$

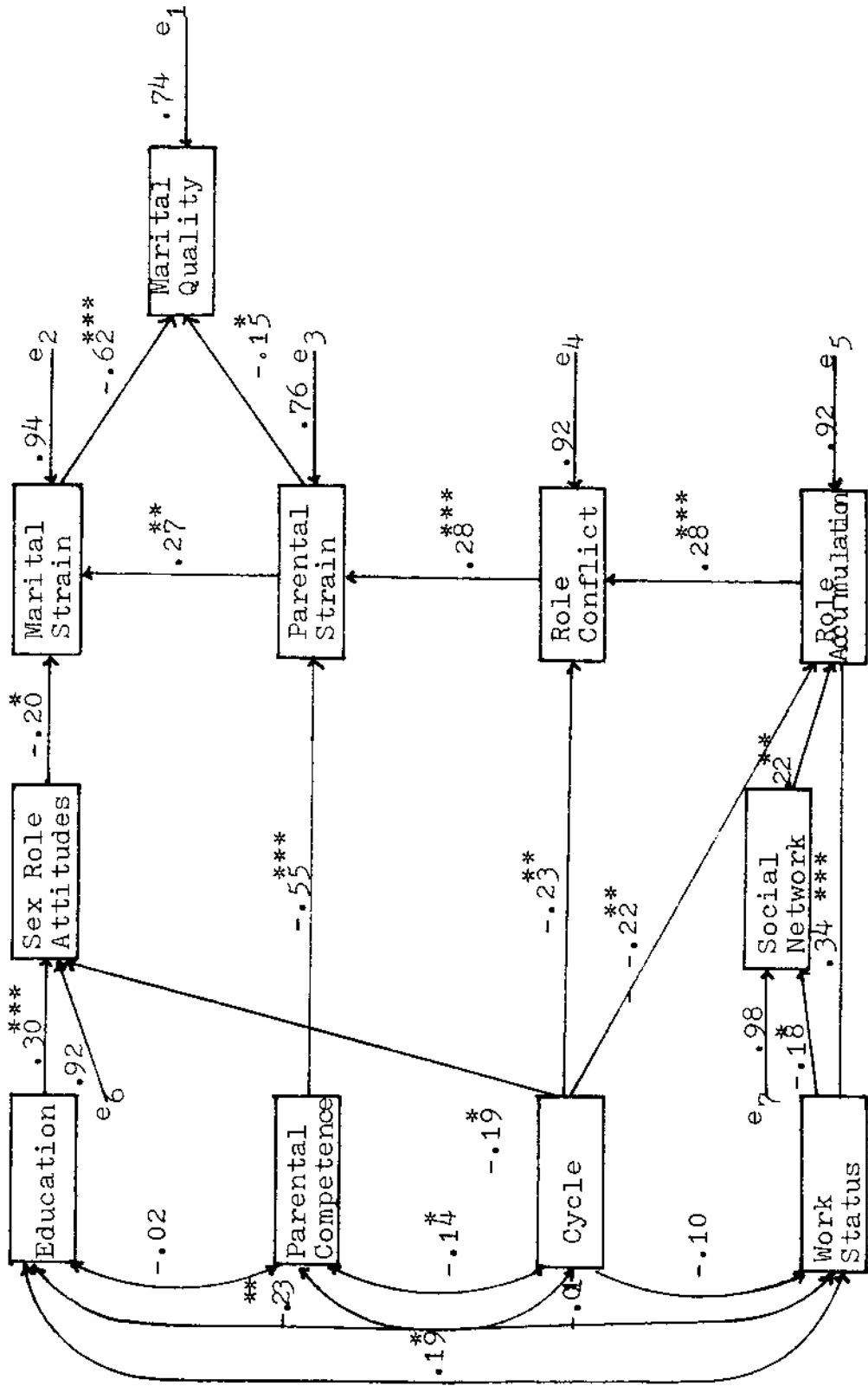


Figure 3. Path Diagram for Women of the Variables Affecting Marital Quality
 * p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

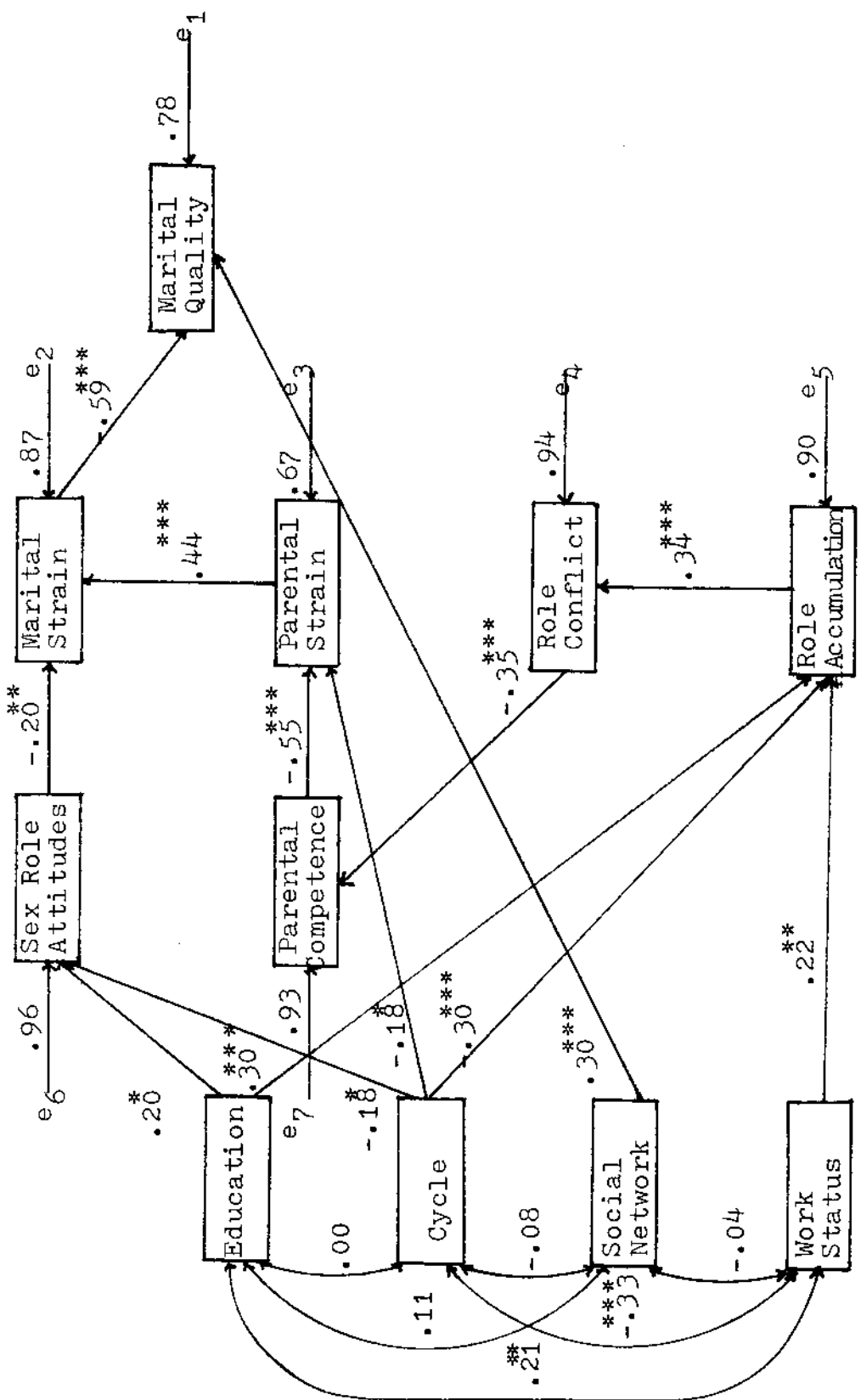


Figure 4. Path Diagram for Men of the Variables Affecting Marital Quality
 * p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

0.20, $p < .05$ for men and $\underline{B} = 0.30$, $p < .001$ for women) had a positive direct effect on sex role attitudes while family life cycle ($\underline{B} = -0.18$, $p < .05$ for men, and $\underline{B} = -0.19$, $p < .05$ for women) had a negative direct effect on sex role attitudes. Parental competence also contributed equally to parental strain for both males and females ($\underline{B} = -0.55$, $p < .001$). The direct contribution of parental strain to marital strain was in the same direction but greater for males than for females ($\underline{B} = 0.44$, $p < .001$ and $\underline{B} = 0.27$, $p < .01$, respectively).

Important differences emerged from both path diagrams. Social network had a positive direct effect on marital quality only for men ($\underline{B} = 0.30$, $p < .001$) while social network had a positive direct effect on role accumulation only for women ($\underline{B} = 0.22$, $p < .01$). Also, parental strain had a significant direct effect on marital quality only for women ($\underline{B} = -0.15$, $p < .05$). Thus, parental strain had a greater contribution to marital quality for women (Total effect = -0.33) than for men (Total effect = -0.25).

Another difference emerged from the direct effect of role conflict on parental strain. For females there was a positive direct effect ($\underline{B} = 0.28$, $p < .001$), while this direct effect was not found for males ($\underline{B} = 0.13$, $p < .10$). Instead, an indirect effect from role conflict to parental strain via parental competence was found. Interestingly, this indirect

path did not emerge for females. The direct effect of role conflict on parental competence was negative ($\underline{B} = -0.35, p < .001$) for the male path.

Another important difference between males' and females' paths was the slightly greater direct effect of role accumulation on role conflict for males as compared to females ($\underline{B} = 0.34, p < .001$ and $\underline{B} = 0.28, p < .001$, respectively).

Moreover, for females role accumulation was explained by work status ($\underline{B} = 0.34, p < .001$), social network ($\underline{B} = 0.22, p < .01$) and family life cycle ($\underline{B} = -0.22, p < .01$). For males role accumulation was explained by work status ($\underline{B} = 0.22, p < .05$), family life cycle ($\underline{B} = -0.30, p < .01$), and education ($\underline{B} = -0.30, p < .05$). Thus, beside work status and family life cycle, social network was as important for the females' path as education was for males'.

Finally, work status had a greater contribution to role accumulation for females than for males. Education had a greater contribution to sex role attitudes for females as compared to males ($\underline{B} = 0.30, p < .001$ and $\underline{B} = 0.20, p < .05$, respectively).

Summary of Gender Differences in the Path Analyses.

Important gender differences were found when comparing males and females' path diagrams. For males, marital strain and social network made the major contributions to marital quality (50%), while for females, marital strain, parental strain, and sex role attitudes explained 51% of such

variance. The effects of parental strain on marital quality were greater for females than for males. For females the effect of role conflict on parental strain was direct, while for males this effect was indirect via parental competence. Education made a negative direct contribution to males' role accumulation, while for females education only contributed direct and positively to sex role attitudes. For females work status made a major contribution to role accumulation than for males. Social network moderately affected women's role accumulation and men's marital quality.

Discriminant Function for Levels of Marital Quality.

To supplement the path analysis, a discriminant analysis was performed to statistically distinguish between the two groups of subjects who were in the low and high levels of marital quality in terms of their scores on marital strain, parental strain, parental competence, role conflict, role accumulation, social network, and sex role attitudes. By performing the discriminant analysis, a linear combination of the discriminant variables was formed. Once the discriminant function was derived, two objectives were pursued: to measure the success with which the variables discriminated when combined into the discriminant function and more importantly, to identify the variables which contributed most to the differentiation along the marital quality dimension.

A direct method was used to enter all the independent variables in the analysis. (Table 3, Appendix B). Only three of the eight original variables were significant. Those

variables were: Marital strain (Wilks's lambda = 0.796, $p < .001$), parental strain (Wilks' lambda = 0.944, $p < .001$), and social network (Wilks' lambda = 0.95, $p < .001$). The eight variables discriminated highly between individuals reporting high and low marital quality as indicated by the final Wilks' Lambda (0.74, $p < .001$) and the canonical correlation of 0.50 for the discriminant function.

Table 3, Appendix B shows the contributions of the eight variables to the discriminant function. These discriminant coefficients (\underline{d}) represent the relative contribution of the variables to the discriminant function. Thus, marital strain was about twice as important as social network ($\underline{d} = 0.83$, and $\underline{d} = -0.4$, respectively) followed by parental strain ($\underline{d} = 0.3$) and parental competence ($\underline{d} = 0.18$). Family life cycle, role accumulation, sex role attitudes, and role conflict were not significant in the discriminant function.

The classification function overall was able to identify 68.3% of the cases as members of the groups (high and low marital quality) to which they actually belonged. Of subjects who reported high marital quality, 77.30% were predicted correctly as compared with 59.6% of the low marital quality group.

Levels of Marital Quality.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed taking the two levels of marital quality (low and high) as the independent variable for each continuous variable of the model to test the hypothesis that different

levels of marital quality are associated with differences in parental strain, marital strain, parental competence, role conflict, sex role attitude, social network, task allocation, and role accumulation. The results did indicate a significant overall contribution to the dependent variables due to marital quality (Wilks's lambda = .7340, $F = 11.02$, $p < .001$). Because this analysis was significant, univariate analyses of variance were performed on the eight dependent measurements. These analyses are summarized in Table 4, Appendix B. The median marital quality score ($Mdn = 119$) was used to distinguish the subjects into high marital quality ($M = 127.81$, $SD = 6.84$) and low marital quality groups ($M = 108$, $SD = 10.58$). The difference in marital quality scores between these two groups was significant ($F(1,299) = 279.98$, $p < .001$).

As Table 4, Appendix B shows, individuals reporting low marital quality exhibited higher levels of marital strain ($F(1,228) = 58.17$, $p < .001$), parental strain ($F(1,227) = 15.1$, $p < .001$), and role conflict ($F(1,236) = 17.74$, $p < .05$). Thus, individuals reporting low marital quality had higher means on marital strain ($M = 24.11$), parental strain ($M = 35.5$), and role conflict ($M = 22.7$) than subjects reporting higher levels of marital quality ($M = 14.67$, $M = 29.00$, and $M = 19.36$, respectively).

The five factors involved in the measure of marital quality were significantly different for the high and the low marital strain groups. Thus, high marital strain was

significantly associated with low companionship ($F(1,229) = 10.05, p < .01$), low dyadic satisfaction ($F(1,229) = 3.37, p < .06$), low dyadic consensus ($F(1,229) = 45.99, p < .001$), low affectional expression ($F(1,229) = 11.40, p < .01$), and low dyadic cohesion ($F(1,229) = 23.07, p < .001$). Also these factors of marital quality were associated significantly with parental strain indicating that couples with high parental strain had low companionship ($F(1,228) = 7.66, p < .01$), low dyadic satisfaction ($F(1,228) = 3.58, p < .05$), low dyadic consensus ($F(1,228) = 18.15, p < .001$), low affectional expression ($F(1,228) = 2.87, p < .09$), and low dyadic cohesion ($F(1,228) = 8.66, p < .01$).

There were further differences associated with high and low marital quality. Wives had more responsibility for domestic tasks when marital quality was low ($M = 6.66$) than when subjects reported high levels of marital quality ($M = 5.68$). Thus, the more involved the wife was with domestic activities, the lower the marital quality ($F(1,229) = 8.25, p < .01$).

There was a significant difference in marital quality depending upon the life cycle of the family ($\chi^2 = 8.94, df = 3, p < .05$). Of those individuals who reported higher marital quality, 10.8% were in the first stage of the family life cycle (oldest child zero to six years), 8.2% were in the second stage (oldest child seven to 12 years), and 10.4% were in the third stage (oldest child 13 to 19 years), and 18.6% were in the fourth stage (oldest child 20 years or more). On

the other hand, of those reporting low marital quality, 13.9% were in the first stage, 15.6% were in the second stage, 10.4% were in the third stage, and 12.1% were in the fourth.

Summary of Levels of Marital Quality. There were a significant overall contribution to the dependent variables due to marital quality. Thus, individuals reporting low marital quality exhibited more parental and marital strain as well as more role conflict, role accumulation, and role strain. Also, low marital quality was relatively more associated with egalitarian sex role attitudes, with low social network, and with more responsibility for domestic tasks by wives. Similarly, all five factors of marital quality (companionship, dyadic satisfaction, dyadic consensus, affectional expression, and dyadic cohesion) were negatively affected by marital and parental strain. Finally, family life cycle was associated with marital quality.

Husband and Wife Discrepancies.

Couples appeared to differ on number of ratings. Consequently discrepancy scores were calculated to measure the differences between spouses in their perceptions of the marital relationship. A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed taking the two levels of marital quality (high and low) as an independent variable for each discrepancy score of role accumulation and conflict, parental and marital strain, parental competence, sex role attitude, social network, and task allocation (See Table 5, Appendix B). The analysis revealed a significant overall

effect of marital quality on the couple discrepancies (Wilks Lambda = .9218, $F = 1.8654$, $p < .05$). Because this analysis revealed a significant overall effect, one-way Analyses of Variance were performed using discrepancy scores for each of the above as dependent variables.

Results indicated that those reporting low marital quality had greater discrepancies in reports of the husbands' participation in domestic tasks ($F(1,228) = 5.42$, $p < .05$), their marital strain ($F(1,226) = 8.15$, $p < .001$), their marital quality ($F(1,226) = 8.15$, $p < .001$), and their sex role attitudes ($F(1,224) = 7.46$, $p < .01$). Thus, high marital quality was associated with lower marital quality discrepancies, less marital strain discrepancies, less husband participation discrepancies, and more traditional sex role attitudes.

Summary of Marital Quality Discrepancies. Different levels of marital quality (high-low) were associated significantly with marital strain, marital quality, sex role attitude, and husband participation discrepancies. The perception of the husband's participation in household chores was more similar in couples with higher marital quality. The perception of marital quality and marital strain was more similar in couples with higher marital quality. Sex role attitude discrepancies were associated with lower marital quality. The direction of the sex role attitude discrepancies was associated with wives perceiving themselves as more egalitarian than men.

Gender Differences.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed taking sex as the independent variable for the eight continuous variables of the model. The results showed significant effects on marital marital and parental strain, role accumulation and conflict, parental competence, social network, sex role attitudes, and task allocation due to gender differences (Wilks Lambda = .85, $F = 4.35$, $p < .001$). Univariate analyses of variance were next performed for the dependent variables. The results (See Table 6, Appendix B) indicating the significant contribution of sex to sex role attitude, social network, role accumulation, and husband and wife participation in household tasks.

Sex Role Attitudes. Women tended to be more egalitarian ($M = 63.81$) than men ($M = 58.13$; $F = 9.28$, $p < .01$). Women wanted more husband participation in the household chores and in the responsibilities of child care. Women also wanted equal participation in responsibilities of working as well as in the decisions and responsibilities involved with their children (See Table 7, Appendix B).

The results of the univariate two-way 2 (marital quality) x 2 (sex) Analysis of Variance for sex role attitudes yielded a significant marital quality by sex interaction for sex role attitudes ($F(1,219) = 3.86$, $p < .05$). Thus, for women ($M = 64.93$) egalitarian sex role attitudes were associated with low marital quality while for men ($M = 55.2$) traditional sex role attitudes were associated

with low marital quality. Moderate sex role attitudes were reported for males ($\underline{M} = 60.79$) and females ($\underline{M} = 62.94$) in the high marital quality group.

Task Allocation. Husbands and wives had different perceptions of their participation in household chores. Wives perceived themselves as doing more household chores than their husbands ($\underline{M} = 6.55$ and $\underline{M} = 5.70$, respectively, $\underline{F} (1,236) = 6.05$, $p < .01$). On the other hand, husbands perceived themselves as working more at home than their wives thought they did ($\underline{M} = 2.7$ and $\underline{M} = 2.19$, respectively, $\underline{F} (1,236) = 10.13$, $p < .001$).

Social Network. Wives reported having a significantly large social network than their husbands ($\underline{M} = 11.89$ and $\underline{M} = 10.38$, respectively, ($\underline{F} (1,236) = 10.73$, $p < .001$).

Role Accumulation. Wives reported having a significantly larger number of roles than their husbands ($\underline{M} = 41.32$ and $\underline{M} = 37.84$, respectively, $\underline{F} (1,234) = 9.76$, $p < .01$). Women have significantly higher participation in housekeeping activities than men ($\underline{M} = 4.45$, and $\underline{M} = 3.13$ respectively, $\underline{F} (1,236) = 166.88$, $p < .001$), as well as in parenting activities ($\underline{M} = 4.11$ and $\underline{M} = 3.4$, respectively, $\underline{F} (1,236) = 15.98$, $p < .001$). Men reported a higher frequency of activities in their wage earner role as compared to women ($\underline{M} = 4.33$, and $\underline{M} = 2.46$, respectively, $\underline{F} (1,236) = 102.8$, $p < .001$).

The measures of role accumulation included time pressure. Men had more difficulties than women finding time to spend with their families ($\underline{M} = 2.95$ and $\underline{M} = 2.61$, respectively, $\underline{F} (1,236) = 4.71$, $p < .05$). Time pressures were reported more by women ($\underline{M} = 3.45$) than men ($\underline{M} = 2.91$) in handling household tasks ($\underline{F} (1,236) = 13.23$, $p < .001$), and in not having free time for themselves ($\underline{M} = 3.29$ and $\underline{M} = 2.80$, respectively, $\underline{F} (1,236) = 11.78$, $p < .001$). Further, women expressed feeling more physically and mentally tired than did men ($\underline{M} = 3.20$ and $\underline{M} = 2.28$, respectively, $\underline{F} (1,236) = 7.06$, $p < .01$).

Summary of Gender Differences. There were no gender differences on the overall measure of marital quality. In general, significant gender differences were found on the overall measures of sex role attitudes, social network, and task allocation. Women showed significantly more egalitarian sex role attitudes, more social contacts with friends and relatives, and perceived themselves as being in charge of most of the household chores. On the other hand, men showed more traditional attitudes toward sex roles, had less social contacts, and perceived themselves as being more involved with domestic tasks. There was a marital quality by sex interaction for sex role attitudes. Thus, women tended to report relatively more egalitarian sex role attitudes while men tended to report relatively more traditional sex role

attitudes in the low marital quality group. However, the high marital quality group reported similar and moderate sex role attitudes.

Results did not show significant gender differences on the overall measures of marital and parental strain, role conflict, and parental competence.

Discussion.

The present research evolved from an exploratory attempt to find meaningful predictors of marital quality for couples who have children. The pattern of findings pointed to the importance of three variables: marital strain, parental strain and social network in explaining 46.78% of the variance of marital quality.

Comparing the theoretical and empirical models (Figures 1 and 2), the results partially supported Hypothesis One which predicted that demographic variables (education, sex, family life cycle, and work status) would directly affect social support and sex role attitudes. Thus, as proposed in the hypothesis, education had a positive direct effect on sex role attitudes, but did not affect social support. Education had an unexpected positive direct effect on role accumulation and role conflict. Consequently, more highly educated parents had more egalitarian sex role attitudes which led to lower marital strain. These results were similar to those reported by Safilios-Rothschild (1967) which indicated that well educated couples had more egalitarian relationships than low educated couples, and that education had a positive

effect on division of labor, communication between spouses, sexual relationships, and satisfaction with the marital relationship. Thus, it is likely that education moves the couple from what sociologists have called "asymmetrical" to "symmetrical relationships" in which both husbands and wives do not have conjugal role differences (Harper & England, 1981).

Also, a higher level of education was associated with high role accumulation and role conflict which led to low parental competence and high parental strain. Evidence suggests that highly educated parents experience more parental strain than parents with less education. Similarly, Miller (1976) reported that the higher the education of the parents, the lower the parental gratification and the less value of children. Perhaps these results could be explained by the fact that highly educated parents have high-status jobs and consequently are more involved with their careers (Hoffman & Manis, 1978). Therefore, highly educated parents would be more likely to have time allocation problems especially related to their occupational and parental roles.

Sex had a direct effect on social network. However, its direct effects on parental strain and on role accumulation were not expected. Thus, females had a larger social network, higher parental strain, and higher role accumulation compared to males. Results suggested that mothers had more contacts with friends and relatives than did fathers. Although, the direction of these effects was not predicted, sex differences

were expected. Due to the lack of research in this area, a clear explanation of these results cannot be given. However, it can be speculated that the type of social support is different between males and females. For example, fathers may seek and receive social support from their coworkers, while mothers derived their social support from friends and relatives.

Females had greater role accumulation and parental strain than did males. These results support Rapoport and Rapoport's findings (1971) in which women reported higher role accumulation and higher role conflict than their spouses since they were handling several roles simultaneously. Results were also consistent with studies done by Rapoport and Rapoport (1976) and Robinson (1977) in which higher levels of stress were reported by working mothers who had preschool children. Similarly, the present research corroborated Menaghan's (1982) findings in which parental strain was significantly higher for women and for parents who have younger children living at home.

Hypothesis One also predicted that family life cycle would indirectly affect role accumulation, role conflict, and role strain. Instead, direct effects were found on those variables. Results were consistent with previous studies (Hoffman & Manis, 1978; Rollins & Cannon, 1974) on the inverse relationship between stage of the family life cycle and role accumulation, role conflict, parental strain, and parental competence. Parents of young children felt more

stress than those at any other stage in the family cycle. However, these effects accounted for only a small proportion (less than 2%) of the variance. These results are somewhat consistent with Rollins and Cannon (1974), who reported that stage of the family cycle, defined according to Duvall (1967) as age of the oldest child, accounted for only 8% of the variance in marital satisfaction. Further, Anderson, Russell and Schumm (1983) using age of the oldest child, length of marriage, and number of children to define the stage of the family life cycle reported that combining these variables explained 12.65% of the variance in marital satisfaction. Age of the oldest child accounted for 8.4%, total number of children accounted for 2.25%, and length of marriage accounted for an additional 2% of the total variance. The amount of variance when combining age and length of marriage with age of the oldest child was not large. However, it was larger than the variance found in the present study. This would suggest that there is some utility in using more than one predictor in defining family life cycle. Thus, with so much variance left unexplained, it is obvious that predictors other than family life cycle play a central role in explaining marital quality, parental strain, role accumulation, role conflict, and parental competence.

Results did not support Hypothesis Two which predicted that sex role attitude would directly affect social support and role accumulation, as well as indirectly affect role conflict and role strain. Instead, negative direct effects

on marital strain and indirect effects on marital quality were found. Thus, parents with more egalitarian sex role attitudes reported lower marital strain which led to higher marital quality than that of traditional parents. Results were consistent with Baucum and Aiken (1984) who reported that for each sex, both masculinity and femininity were significantly correlated with self-reported marital satisfaction. The more androgenous or egalitarian both husbands and wives were, the higher their marital satisfaction. A possible explanation of these results could be that couples' ex role discrepancies is not as beneficial to the marital relationships as role congruity (Harper & England, 1981).

Surprisingly, social network led to greater role accumulation. These results were in the opposite direction to those expected in Hypothesis Three. This finding, could perhaps be explained by the instrument used. It is possible that the social network scale did not only measure outside help, but also social contact with friends and relatives. Thus, results implied that being involved in more social activities would lead to greater role accumulation, especially when parents are working full time. Because of the time limitations, interactions with friends and relatives are more difficult. Rapoport and Rapoport (1976) found that dual-career couples reported problems in sustaining the kind of interaction that their more conventional relatives and friends wanted. St. John-Parsons (1978) reported that kin

relationships deteriorated when working parents could not meet some of the expected social obligations. Moreover, it is likely that parents with larger social networks were more competent than parents with smaller social networks since they were handling several roles and possibly had more social contacts.

The proposed theoretical model did reasonably well in predicting the direct effect of role accumulation on role conflict, and its indirect effects on role strain and parental competence as was predicted in Hypothesis Four. However, unexpectedly, the indirect effect of marital accumulation on role strain was via role conflict, parental competence, and parental strain. Thus, role strain cannot be defined unidimensionally since its components were affected differently by the antecedent variables. Also, they produced differential effects on marital quality. As expected, role accumulation was the most important variable in the model in explaining role conflict, although its contribution was limited (10% of the variance). Other less important contributions came from family life cycle and education. As a result, parents who had high role accumulation reported high role conflict, high parental strain, and low parental competence. Also, parents with more education who had younger children reported higher role conflict as compared to less educated parents with older children. The effect of role accumulation on role strain and on marital quality is partly consistent with the Symbolic Interaction Theory of Burr

(1973) and with Rollins and Galligan's (1978) Theory of Marital Satisfaction of Parents. They indicated that the more activities individuals believe are prescribed for them, the greater is their role strain. The particular roles that both parents have (housekeeper, provider, child care giving, sexual role, recreational role, and socialization) demand extensive amounts of time and compete for this limited resource in either the parent-child or the marital dyad. Additional small contributions to the variance in role conflict were derived from the indirect effects of sex, work status, and social network. Thus, mothers who worked full-time and who had a large social network reported higher role conflict compared to husbands who worked part-time with a small social network.

As predicted in Hypothesis Four there was an indirect path from role accumulation to parental strain via role conflict, and another path that went via parental competence. The path via role conflict had the largest effect on parental strain. Thus, according to these results, the stress which derived from time pressures and from simultaneously handling several roles produced more parental strain than the stress associated with feelings of inadequacy in the performance of parental tasks. The direct effect of role conflict on role strain partly supported Burr's (1973) statement that the amount of role conflict directly influences the amount of role strain experienced.

As predicted in Hypotheses Five and Seven, parental strain was directly affected by role conflict and parental competence, respectively. Parents who reported higher role conflict and lower parental competence had higher parental strain. Lower parental competence in this research meant low self-esteem in the parenting situation. These feelings could be produced by inadequacies in knowledge and social skills, unrealistic standards of performance, perception of negative task performance, and inadequate emotional support from others. Perhaps, one possible explanation of these results is the lack of parenting experience. Feelings of parental incompetence were greater when parents had young children. These results corroborated Hoffman and Manis' (1978) and Menaghan's (1983) findings which showed the changing character of parental complaints as children mature. A variety of studies (Glenn & McLanahan, 1982) have discussed recent evidence that feelings of distress are common in parents. In contrast to nonparents, these authors suggested that parents as a group are characterized by less psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and overall happiness. Thus, identifying coping strategies that may reduce parental stress has an important potential for parents and also for their children.

The second major source of parental strain was role conflict. The possibility that greater role conflict occurs with the addition of roles suggests that higher parental strain is experienced by parents who have a full-time job.

Thus, it is more likely that higher parental strain involves conflict between parental and professional roles. However, in this study it was difficult to determine which role-conflict areas were more involved, since separate analyses of the role conflict subscales were not performed. Evidence (Holohan & Gilbert, 1979) suggests that for parents, high role conflict is associated with traditional attitudes, working more hours, unfavorable attitudes from spouse, lack of spouse support, and negative feelings from spouse about one's degree of career commitment.

As expected in Hypothesis Six, parental strain had a large positive direct effect on marital strain. However, the negative direct effect of sex role attitudes on marital strain was unexpected. These results confirmed Lamb's (1978) findings that the interaction between each parent and the child affects the relationship between spouses, and that the advent of the children moves the couple toward more traditional sex roles. Thus, higher marital strain was associated with higher parental strain and with traditional sex role attitudes. Two indirect paths were found. One path from role conflict to parental competence to parental strain and to marital strain, and the other from role conflict via parental strain to marital strain. The former indirect path had a larger effect than the latter. Thus, parents with higher role conflict reported lower parental competence, which in turn led to high parental strain and low marital strain. What those indirect paths that went to marital

strain through parental strain seem to indicate is that clear differences exist between parental and marital roles, and that part of the marital roles are explained by parental roles. However, as was suggested by Menaghan (1983), it is very likely that marital strain also affects parental strain. Further research should focus on the reciprocal interactions between parental and marital roles, since the model tested in the present research considered only unidirectional effects.

As predicted in Hypothesis Six, marital strain and parental strain both made a major contribution to marital quality. However, marital strain contributed twice as much to marital quality compared to parental strain. This means that strain derived from the marital relationship itself could have more effect on the marriage than the strain derived from being a parent. Thus, parents whose high parental strain was associated with high marital strain reported lower marital quality than those whose parental strain was not associated with high marital strain. Consequently, the problems of the parents with their children did not contribute to a low quality marriage as much as the preexisting problems between husband and wife. This conclusion seems contrary to much of the prevailing opinion that having children might be detrimental to the marriage of couples with low marital quality. On the other hand, this study partly supports the research of Belsky and his colleagues' (1983). They reported that couples' evaluation of marital quality did not change after the birth of their first child. Thus, there seem to

exist differences in the levels of marital quality that could better explain the adjustment of the parents to their children rather than the presence of the children per se. However, this conclusion is tentative since the study by Belsky et al (1983) covered a limited time span and this research utilizes a cross-sectional sample. Further research should consider other variables that could affect the parents' marital quality such as the child's developmental status, whether or not the spouses planned for the child, and the positive or negative value that parents place upon having children.

In this research, marital strain was the most important variable in predicting marital quality. Moreover, couples' discrepancies on marital strain were significantly associated with low marital quality. These results support the theory of Burr and his colleagues (1979) concerning marital satisfaction with regard to the direct effects that quality of role enactment and consensus with spouse for salient marital roles have on marital satisfaction. Findings in the present study supported earlier research. Marital strain was linearly associated with marital quality (Burr, 1971), role enactments of spouse were highly correlated with one's marital strain (Nye & McLaughlin, 1974), and the perceived consensus with spouse on marital roles had a positive correlation with one's own marital satisfaction (Rollins, 1961).

Surprisingly, social network was the third most important variable in explaining marital quality. It had a direct positive and moderate effect on marital quality. Thus, the larger the social network, the greater the marital quality of parents. Moreover, as predicted in Hypothesis Seven, indirect effects of parental competence on marital quality via parental strain as well as via marital strain were found. As a result, the more competent the parents were, the lower their parental strain and marital strain, and the higher their marital quality.

Further research should consider a different set of variables to account for the remaining unexplained variance since only marital strain, parental strain, and social network made a significant contribution to marital quality. More importantly, marital strain affected marital quality twice as much as did parental strain. Due to the fact that parental strain had common effects on both marital strain and marital quality, it is possible that the covariation between marital strain and marital quality could be partly due to sharing a common cause and partly due to the dependence of marital quality on marital strain.

Comparing the theoretical and empirical models of the variables explaining marital quality, the chain of relationships among them was partially confirmed. Of special interest was the confirmation to the causal chain from role accumulation to marital quality via parental strain and marital strain. This hierarchical order of factors gave

empirical support to Burr's (1973) and Rollins and Galligan's (1978) theories of marital satisfaction which stated that as family roles for the husband and the wife increase, each spouse is more likely to experience role strain. As role strain increases, his or her enactment of roles would be hampered, resulting in dissatisfaction with marriage. Significantly, this findings strengthens the argument that children indirectly affect the marital quality of parents through role related variables. Specifically, it seems that parental and marital strain were the most important variables mediating the effect of children on marital quality.

Important gender differences emerged when the male and female path analyses were compared. Interestingly, for females, work status was inversely related to social network, and social network was positively related to role accumulation. For males, these effects were not found. Instead, fathers' larger social network positively affected marital quality. Thus, mothers who work full-time had smaller social network and consequently, lower role accumulation than mothers who work part-time or who do not work. Being in contact with friends and relatives is a task that requires time. According to St. Johns-Parsons (1978), for working mothers, relationships with relatives are limited if they do not have relatives living in the home or nearby who share the burden of household and child care.

The findings that parental strain was higher for mothers than for fathers corroborated Menaghan (1983) who demonstrated that even with initial problem levels and coping effort held constant, mothers reported higher parental strain than fathers. The effect of role conflict on parental strain was different between the sexes. Females exhibited a large and direct effect of role conflict on parental strain while the effect for males was low and indirect via parental competence. Parental strain was especially high for mothers who work. For them, a high level of role conflict was associated with high parental strain. According to Beckman (1978), women feel that children limit their involvement in alternate roles and activities, including employment. Moreover, there exists abundant literature documenting the high normative expectations for women who continue performing domestic functions in addition to their career roles. Previous research has pointed out that conflict between professional and parental roles is especially stressful for the female spouse (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Johnson & Johnson, 1977). In the same way, Bernard (1974) has noted that men can combine a professional career and parenting more easily than women because less familial responsibilities are expected of men.

As in previous research, fathers in this study reported lower parental strain and lower role conflict than mothers. This may reflect the effects of the traditional division of roles in American families. In these families fathers are the

providers and are in charge of business outside the home while mothers take care of the children and household chores (Johnson & Johnson, 1980).

Additional analyses revealed that there was an interesting marital quality by sex interaction for sex role attitudes. Results showed that for women, more egalitarian sex role attitudes were associated with low marital quality whereas, for men, traditional sex role attitudes were associated with low marital quality. Thus, the low marital quality group reported greater discrepancies in sex role attitudes than did the high marital quality group. Among the latter group, men and women reported moderate sex role attitudes. These results are in concordance with the hypothesis that women hold egalitarian preferences more strongly than men (Scanzoni, 1976). In this study men were not as involved in the household as were women, a situation which had been observed also by Rapoport and Rapoport (1976).

In the present study, wives perceived themselves as working more at home than their husbands. Husbands reported that they participated more in household chores than wives perceived them as doing. The couples' discrepant perception of their domestic participation could be associated with the finding of significant discrepancies between the spouses concerning their task allocation at home. Significant discrepancies were also found concerning the couples' marital strain and sex role attitudes. These disagreements in role enactment were associated with low marital satisfaction.

Results confirmed Burr's (1973) statement that consensus with spouse in the enactment of marital roles, as well as the perceived quality of role enactment, influence the individual's satisfaction with their marital relationship. Nye and McLaughlin (1982) have noted that disagreements in role enactment explained 36% of the variance of wives' marital satisfaction and 9% of husbands' variance. In brief, the observed gender differences confirmed Bernard's (1972) statement that there are really two marriages in every union and that they do not always coincide.

The scope and generality of these findings is clearly limited. First, there may be within-sample generational differences due to age-heterogeneity in this study. Longitudinal studies examining patterns of change in different stages of the family life cycle would be useful; such would permit the time-related identification of antecedents of marital quality within a developmental framework. Second, all the measures were self-reports. Thus, responses could be distorted to conform to what the subject believes is socially desirable. Combining self-report and observational measures could further improve the validity of the measured constructs. Third, the geographic location possibly imposed cultural bias. Fourth, specific characteristics of the sample such as age, socioeconomic status, and educational level possibly determined the participants' response to the questionnaire. Finally, this research has focused on the unidirectional effects of

parenting on marital quality. Additional research needs to study the bidirectional effects between marital relationship and parental functioning to understand the way in which both variables may influence each other.

The issues raised in this research are important not only from a theoretical perspective of developing a model that explains which variables affect marital quality, but from an applied perspective. It is likely that parental and marital conflicts were not as obvious for past generations because of the relatively clear division of roles between husbands and wives. With the progressive influx of married women into the labor force there have been or probably will continue to be individual and social changes that affect the internal structure of the family. It seems that due to educational, social, and economic factors couples are moving from complementary and asymmetric relationships toward symmetrical relationships that imply less role differentiation. External and internal pressures faced by couples are reflected in their sex role attitudes, in their role accumulation and conflicts, and in their relationship with their children and partners. Thus, when couples shift away from traditional roles, their role clarity decreases. Consequently, their model of marriage is less clear and it is likely that their marital strain increases. According to Rapoport and Rapoport (1976) those dilemmas represent discontinuities between early internalized norms about the roles of men and women, and the couples' actual behavior.

Considering the practical implications for intervention, the clinician should be aware of the changes described earlier in which the family is a dynamic system that changes over time due to individual, historical, and cultural factors. With that awareness, clinicians could focus on the multiple antecedents that affect the couple's marital quality. For example, their interventions could be directed toward marital and parental strains, social, economic, and educational constraints to help couples improve their relationship. Working with the distribution of resources such as time allocation, role delegation, emotional, and instrumental support from the partner, friends, relatives, and community, as well as with parental and marital stress, coping strategies could reduce role strains and indirectly improve marital quality. Preventive intervention could be designed to facilitate the parenthood experience by improving the couple's anticipatory socialization and their supportive networks. Indeed, according to Belsky (1981), only by maintaining an integrative framework will it be possible to understand the complex and indirect patterns of influence that characterize the three person family system.

Appendix A

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

PARENTAL AND MARITAL INTERACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant:

This questionnaire is designed to find out about your attitudes toward your marriage and family life. Your response is an important contribution to achieving a better understanding of families.

It is necessary that you fill out your questionnaire without consulting your spouse. If you meet all of the following criteria, please complete the questionnaire. If you do not meet all the four conditions or prefer not to answer the questions, please return the questionnaire unanswered.

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE IF YOU MEET ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS.

1. Currently married.
2. You and your spouse living under the same roof.
3. You and your spouse complete the questionnaire.
4. You and your spouse have at least one child.

When filling out this questionnaire, please answer all questions without skipping any. If you find that a question does not fit your situation or does not express your opinion exactly, look for the answer which most nearly expresses your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. Do not spend too much time on any question beyond giving a thoughtful answer as it occurs to you. Your answers were completely anonymous, so please feel free to respond to the statements in a sincere and open manner.

Please return the completed questionnaire to your contact person or to:

Mrs. Regina Otero
North Texas State University
Dept. of Psychology
Denton, TX 76203

Thank you for your cooperation.

DIRECTIONS

1. All questions have a space in which to write your answer. For example, in the following question:

____ Sex
 1. Female
 2. Male

If you are a female, you would write 1 in the blank and if you are a male, you would write 2 in the blank.

2. Some questions require you to use a scale. For example,

____ I like classical music

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

If you strongly disagree with the statement, you would write 1 in the blank, if you are undecided, write 3 in the blank, and if you strongly agree with the statement, you should write 5, and so on. Numbered scales always mean different amounts or degrees of something.

3. PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.
4. Please write the last four digits of the husband's social security number on the first page of the questionnaire.
5. Please fill out your questionnaire without consulting your spouse.

QUESTIONNAIRE

____ Last four digits of husband's social security number

____ Sex:

1. Female
2. Male

____ Highest level of education completed:

1. Did not finish high school
2. High school
3. Some college
4. Bachelor's
5. Master's, Ph.D., M.D., J.D., etc.

____ Your total annual income (write 9 if you do not work):

1. Below \$10.000
2. \$10.001 - \$20.000
3. \$20.001 - \$30.000
4. \$30.001 - \$40.000
5. \$40.001 - \$50.000
6. Above \$50.000

Age of children:

- ____ 1st child
____ 2nd child
____ 3rd child
____ 4th child

____ Your age

____ Current occupation:

1. Professional
2. Managerial, governmental employee, or proprietor
3. Student
4. Sales, clerical
5. Machinery operators, military
6. Household service
7. Farmer, craftsman

____ Current work status (write all numbers that apply to you):

1. Never worked
2. Not currently working
3. Working part-time
4. Working full-time
5. Studying part-time
6. Studying full-time

____ Number of times married:

1. First and only marriage
2. Two marriages
3. Three marriages
4. Four marriages
5. More than four marriages

____ Number of years living with curreent spouse

Appendix A --

___ Is there anyone who lives with you (child, spouse, or other relative) who is physically handicapped?

1. No
2. Yes

___ Is there any one who lives with you (child, spouse, or other relative) who is currently receiving psychological help?

1. No
2. Yes

___ How often do you have domestic help/maid service?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often
1	2	3	4	5

___ About how many of your neighbors do you know well enough to visit?

None	A few	Several	Many
1	2	3	4

___ About how often do you visit with any of your neighbors, either at their homes or at your own?

Very rarely	About once a month	About once a week	More than once a week
1	2	3	4

___ Think of the friends and relatives you feel free to talk to about your worries and problems or can count on for advice or help. How many such friends or relatives do you have?

None	A few	Several	Many
1	2	3	4

_____ How often have you asked for advice or help from friends or relatives about your problems?

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often
1	2	3	4	5

_____ About how often do you get together with friends or relatives to visit or do things together? (for example to go to movies, bowling or out to eat).

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often
1	2	3	4	5

_____ How many friends do you feel you have?:

None	A few	Several	Many
1	2	3	4

Use this scale for the next set of questions. If you strongly disagree with the statement, you should write 1 in the blank, if you are undecided, write 3 in the blank, and if you strongly agree with the statement, you should write 5, and so on.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

_____ I often feel rushed, never having enough time for what I need to do.

_____ I often have more to do than I can handle.

_____ I often have too little time for household tasks.

_____ I often have no free time for myself.

_____ I wish I had more help for all the things I need to do.

_____ I often feel that I do not have enough time for my family.

_____ I often feel physically and mentally tired.

_____ I often feel under pressure to keep up with all that I have to do.

_____ I am often so busy that I do not have a moment to relax.

Here are some things that married couples sometimes do together. How often have you and your spouse done these things together in the past month.

Almost never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
1	2	3	4

In the past month, how often have you and your spouse:

___ Visited friends together

___ Gone out together to a movie, sporting event, or some other entertainment

___ Spent an evening just talking with each other

___ Entertained friends in your home

___ Had a good laugh together or shared a joke

___ Eaten at a restaurant together

___ Taken a drive or gone for a walk just for pleasure

___ Been warm and affectionate toward each other

___ The following numbers represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. In the blank, write the number which best describes the degree of happiness, of your relationship, all things considered.

Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate according to the following scale the approximate amount of agreement or disagreement between you and your spouse for each item on the list.

Always Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Fre- quently Disagree	Occa- sionally Disagree	Almost Always Agree	Always Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

___ Handling family finances

___ Matters of recreation

___ Religious matters

___ Demonstrations of affection

___ Friends

___ Sexual relations

___ Conventuality (correct or proper behavior)

___ Philosophy of life

___ Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws

___ Aims, goals, and things believed important

___ Amount of time spent together

___ Making major decisions

___ Household tasks

___ Leisure time interests and activities

___ Career decisions

___ Family planning

___ Child rearing

Use this scale for the next set of questions.

Never	Rarely	Occasion- ally	More often than not	Most of the time	All the time
1	2	3	4	5	6

___ How often have you considered divorce, separation or terminating your relationship?

___ How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?

___ How often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?

___ Do you confide in your mate?

___ Do you ever regret that you married?

___ How often do you and partner quarrel?

___ How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?

___ How often do you kiss your mate or show affection?

___ Write the number of the statement below which best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship?

1. My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.
2. It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
3. It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
4. I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
5. I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.
6. I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.

___ How often do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?

Never	Seldom	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
1	2	3	4	5	6

___ Have a stimulating exchange of ideas

___ Laugh together

___ Calmly discuss something

___ Work together on a project

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused a difference of opinion or a problem in your relationship during the past few weeks.

___ Being too tired for sex

1. No
2. Yes

___ Not showing love and affection

1. No
2. Yes

For each item write the number from the scale that best indicates how much you agree or disagree with the statement. If you strongly disagree with the statement, you should write 1 in the blank, if you are undecided, write 3 in the blank, and if you strongly agree with the statement, you should write 5, and so on.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- ___ I can't completely be myself around my spouse
- ___ My marriage doesn't give me enough opportunity for me to become the sort of person I'd like to be
- ___ My spouse appreciates me just as I am
- ___ My spouse seems to bring out the best qualities in me
- ___ I can really talk with my spouse about things that are important to me
- ___ My spouse appreciates the job I do as a wage earner or housekeeper
- ___ I can rely on my spouse to help with most family problems
- ___ My spouse is a good sexual partner
- ___ Generally I give in more to my spouse's wishes than he/she gives in to mine
- ___ My spouse insists on having his/her own way
- ___ My spouse usually acts as if he or she were the only important person in the family
- ___ My spouse is someone who is a good wage earner or housekeeper
- ___ My spouse is someone who spends money wisely
- ___ My spouse is someone who is affectionate toward me
- ___ My spouse usually expects more from me than he/she is willing to give back

Use this scale for the next two sets of questions.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Very
1	2	3	4

When you think of the pleasures and problems of your daily life with your SPOUSE:

- ___ How unhappy do you feel?
- ___ How bothered or upset do you feel?
- ___ How frustrated do you feel?
- ___ How worried do you feel?
- ___ How neglected do you feel?
- ___ How tense do you feel?
- ___ How bored do you feel?
- ___ How contented do you feel?

When you think of your experiences as a PARENT:

- ___ How frustrated do you feel?
- ___ How tense do you feel?
- ___ How worried do you feel?
- ___ How bothered or upset do you feel?
- ___ How unhappy do you feel?
- ___ How emotionally worn out do you feel?
- ___ How unsure of yourself do you feel?

There are many worries that come with having children to care for. Following, you will find a list of some things that have bothered other couples. For each item write the extent to which you have experienced it.

Not at all	A little bit	A fair amount	A great deal
1	2	3	4

In general, because of your children, how much time have you spent being:

- ___ Worried about being a good parent
- ___ Worried about the added responsibility of children
- ___ Worried about drifting apart from your spouse
- ___ Worried about not having enough time to spend with mate
- ___ Worried about sexual relations
- ___ Worried about changes in marital relationship
- ___ Worried about not giving spouse enough attention and affection
- ___ Worried about getting together with friends
- ___ Worried about keeping up with schedule at home

Following is a list of some things which parents may enjoy when they have children. Using the scale above, please write the extent to which you have experienced each of them.

- ___ A purpose in living
- ___ Feeling of fulfillment
- ___ Feeling closer to spouse
- ___ Satisfaction in continuing your name and family line
- ___ Companionship
- ___ Feeling important
- ___ Feeling happy

For the following sets of questions, please answer by selecting a rating from 1 to 4 for each item below.

Almost never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
1	2	3	4

How often do you have to correct your child(ren) for:

___ Failing to get along with others the same age

___ Poor school work

___ Poor use of time

___ Wrong kind of friends

___ Carelessness about personal appearance

___ Misbehaving in the house

How often do you wonder if your child(ren) are:

___ Trying hard enough to prepare for the life ahead of them

___ Practicing the moral beliefs that are important

___ Headed for the success you want for them

How often does it happen that your child(ren):

___ Ignore your advice and guidance

___ Do not treat you with proper respect

___ Are more demanding than you expected

___ Are sick more often than you expected

___ Do not learn as quickly as you expected

___ Seem to be more of a problem than you expected

How often do you feel that your child(ren):

Almost never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1	2	3	4

- Do not appreciate you
- Do not smile or are not as playful as you expected
- Seem to bother you
- Do not obey you as you expect
- How often do you feel that you would like to take a break away from your child(ren)

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to your personality. Put a (T) in the space next to the statement if you feel it is true or mostly true about you. Put a (F) in the space next to the statement if you feel it is false or mostly false about you.

- I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.
- I like to gossip at times.
- There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.
- I always try to practice what I preach.
- I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
- I never resent being asked to return a favor.
- I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
- At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.
- There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.
- I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

From the following scale choose the number which in your opinion indicates the amount of internal conflict you feel in each situation at the present time.

Causes no internal conflict 1	Slight internal conflict 2	Some internal conflict 3	Moderate internal conflict 4	High internal conflict 5
----------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

___ Putting yourself first in terms of your work versus your spouse putting him/herself first in terms of his/her work

___ Wanting to be recognized at a high level in terms of your work versus wanting to maximize your personal development

___ Networking your child's recreational activities versus spending time on your career development

___ Taking a long vacation with only your spouse versus being with your child

___ Attending social functions which support your spouse's career versus attending functions congruent with your own interests

___ Giving priority to your family versus giving priority to yourself

___ Spending most evenings on work-related activities versus spending most evenings with your family

___ Entertaining the colleagues of your spouse versus using your recreational time for your own needs

___ Devoting recreational time to yourself versus devoting recreational time to your child

___ Wanting to be alone versus your child wanting to be with you

___ Feeling it is more important for your spouse to succeed in his/her work versus feeling it is more important for you to succeed in your work

___ Hiring a child-care person so that you and your spouse can have uninterrupted time together versus being with your child

From the following scale choose the number which in your opinion indicates the amount of internal conflict you feel in each situation at the present time.

Causes no internal conflict	Slight internal conflict	Some internal conflict	Moderate internal conflict	High internal conflict
1	2	3	4	5

- ___ The life style you prefer versus the life style preferred by your spouse
- ___ Spending prime time developing and maintaining the relationship with your spouse versus spending prime time developing and maintaining the relationship with your child
- ___ Wanting to devote time to your work versus your spouse wanting you to spend time with him/her
- ___ Wanting your spouse to participate in household management versus your spouse wanting to devote his/her time to his/her own career development
- ___ Letting your work consume nearly all your time and energy versus devoting time to the development of outside interests
- ___ Your child's requesting that you spend time with him or her versus your following the routine of your usual work schedule
- ___ Wanting to be a "good" spouse versus being unwilling to risk taking time from your work
- ___ Advancing your career goals versus developing meaningful relationships
- ___ Doing what you know you need to do to advance in your work versus doing what you prefer to do in your work
- ___ Feeling burdened from child care responsibilities versus not trusting others to perform them

Please, use the following scale to indicate the approximate amount of time you spend doing activities which go with the roles listed below.

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost every day	Every day
1	2	3	4	5

___ Housekeeping inside and outside (cooking, cleaning, yard work, minor repairs, etc.).

___ Work outside the home (wage earner).

___ Companionship for spouse (talking to spouse, going out, spending time together without children).

___ Child care (playing, disciplining, socializing, custodial care and physical maintenance of the child).

___ Recreation (leisure activities done with spouse and children).

___ Social contact with friends and relatives (visiting, writing letters, calling).

___ Student (attending college).

___ Member of professional societies or other organizations (church, sports, professional, neighborhood organizations).

___ Family administration or organization (finances, contact with outside services like insurance, garage, utilities, planning vacations or other major things).

Please indicate according to the following scale the approximate amount of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

___ If being a parent of a child were only more interesting, I would be motivated to do a better job as a parent.

___ Being a parent makes me tense and anxious.

___ Being a good parent is a reward in itself.

Please indicate according to the following scale the approximate amount of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

___ The problems of taking care of a child are easy to solve once you know how your actions affect your child.

___ Even though being a parent could be rewarding, I am frustrated now with my child(ren).

___ I meet my own personal expectations for expertise in caring for my child(ren).

___ I do not know why it is, but sometimes when I interact with my child(ren) and I am supposed to be in control, I feel more like the one being manipulated.

___ I would make a fine model for a new mother/father to follow in order to learn what she/he would need to know in order to be a good parent.

___ My parents were better prepared to be parents than I am.

___ Being a parent is manageable, and any problems are easily solved.

___ Sometimes I feel like I am not getting anything done.

___ If anyone can find the answer to what is troubling my child(ren), I am the one.

___ I go to bed the same way I wake up in the morning, feeling I have not done the things a good parent should.

___ A difficult problem in being a parent is not knowing whether you are doing a good job or a bad one.

___ My talents and interests are in other areas, not in being a parent.

___ Considering how long I have been a mother/father, I feel thoroughly familiar with this role.

___ I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good mother/father to my child(ren).

Please indicate according to the following scale the approximate amount of agreement you have with each statement.

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
1	2	3	4

- ___ A married woman's most important task in life should be taking care of her husband and children.
- ___ She should realize that a woman's greatest reward and satisfaction come through her children.
- ___ If she works, she should not try to get ahead in the same way as a man does.
- ___ A wife should not have equal authority with her husband in making decisions.
- ___ If she has the same job as a man who has to support his family, she should not expect the same pay.
- ___ A wife should realize that, just as a woman is not suited for heavy physical work, there are also other kind of jobs she is not suited for, because of her mental and emotional nature.
- ___ A wife should give up her job whenever it inconveniences her husband and children.
- ___ If a mother of young children works, it should be only while the family needs the money.
- ___ Having a job herself should be as important as encouraging her husband in his job.
- ___ She should be able to make long-range plans for her occupation, in the same way her husband does for his.
- ___ If a woman's job sometimes requires her to be away from home overnight, this should not bother her husband.
- ___ If a child gets sick and his wife works, the husband should be just as willing as she to stay home from work and take care of the child.
- ___ On the job, men should be willing to work for female supervisors.
- ___ A married man should be willing to have a smaller family, so that his wife can work if she wants to.

Please indicate according to the following scale the approximate amount of agreement you have with each statement.

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
1	2	3	4

- ___ If his wife works, the husband should share equally in household chores such as cooking, cleaning, and washing.
- ___ If his wife works, he should share equally in the responsibilities of child care.
- ___ A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with children as a mother who does not work.
- ___ A parent gets more satisfaction when a son gets ahead in his occupation than when a daughter gets ahead in hers.
- ___ Marriage is incomplete without children.
- ___ A pre-school child is likely to suffer if the mother works.
- ___ A married man's chief responsibility should be his job.
- ___ The husband should be the head of the family.
- ___ If the wife makes more money than the husband, this should not bother him.
- ___ The father should be the main financial support of his children.
- ___ The father should spend as much time as the mother looking after the daily needs of his children.
- ___ The father has more responsibility than the mother to punish the children.
- ___ If he wants to, the father should be able to quit working and be a full-time parent.
- ___ The father has more of a responsibility than the mother to set an example to his sons of how to provide for their families.
- ___ The father has more of a responsibility than the mother to set an example to his sons of how to work hard and get ahead in the world.
- ___ The father has more of a responsibility than the mother to make and enforce rules for the children.

Appendix B

Table 1

Correlation Matrix Between the Scales Used

Scales	Parental Strain	Marital Strain	Parental Compet.	Role Confl.	Role Accumul.	Social Network	Sex Role
Marital Quality	-.35***	-.63***	.17**	-.19**	.01	.24***	.04
Parental Strain		.35***	-.56***	.35***	.22***	-.02	.03
Marital Strain			-.18**	.14**	.02	-.07	-.19**
Parental Competence				-.25***	-.09	.10*	.08
Role Conflict					.31***	-.01	.13*
Role Accumulation						.15**	.19***
Social Network							.04

Table 1 -- Continued

Scales	Cycle	Education	Children	Work-Study	Share Tasks
Marital Quality	.15**	.03	-.00	-.02	.20***
Parental Strain	-.13*	.02	.11*	.07	-.03
Marital Strain	-.11*	-.11*	-.04	-.07	-.14**
Parental Competence	-.09	.03	-.08	-.01	.08
Role Conflict	-.25***	.19***	-.13**	.17**	.01
Role Accumul.	-.23***	.19**	.02	.19***	.07
Social Network	.04	.03	.08	-.19**	.06
Sex Role Attitude	-.21***	.21***	-.13**	.09	.20***
Cycle		-.11*	.38***	-.16**	-.12*
Education			.03	.28***	.14**
Children				-.05	-.06
Work-study					.01

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Appendix B

Table 2

Decomposition of Effects in the Path Analysis:
Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects.

Variables	Direct	Indirect	Total
Marital Quality			
Marital Strain	-.5700	None	-.5700
Parental Strain	-.1497	-.2025	-.3523
Social Network	.1979	-.0042	.1936
Sex Role Attitude	None	.1198	.1198
Parental Compet.	None	-.0433	-.0433
Role Conflict	None	-.1223	-.1223
Role Accumulation	None	-.0310	-.0310
Marital Strain			
Sex Role Attitude	-.2102	None	-.2102
Parental Strain	.3554	None	.3554
Parental Competence	None	-.1867	-.1867
Role Conflict	None	.1234	.1234
Parental Strain			
Parental Compete.	-.5253	None	-.5253
Role Conflict	.1935	.1538	.3473
Cycle	-.1238	.0080	-.1158
Sex	-.1181	-.0339	-.1520
Parental Competence			
Role Conflict	-.2927	None	-.2927
Role Accumulation	None	-.0742	-.0742
Sex	None	.0285	.0285
Cycle	-.1610	.0645	-.0964
Role Conflict			
Role Accumulation	.2535	None	.2535
Cycle	-.1833	-.0370	-.2204
Sex	None	-.1047	-.1047
Education	.1255	.0487	.1742
Sex Role			
Education	.1928	None	.1928
Cycle	-.1957	None	-.1957

Table 2 -- Continued

Variables	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Total Effects
Role Accumulation			
Education	.1921	None	.1921
Sex	-.3850	-.0281	-.4131
Occupation	.2039	None	.2039
Cycle	-.1462	None	-.1462
Social Network	.1381	None	.1381

Note: The higher the standardized regression coefficients, the greater the contribution of the variable.

Appendix B

Table 3

Measures of the Discriminant Function to Predict
Marital Quality

Predictor	Wilks' Lamba	Standarized Discriminant Coefficients = <u>d</u>
Marital Strain	0.79 ***	0.83
Parental Strain	0.94 ***	0.30
Role Conflict	0.99	0.03
Role Accumulation	0.99	-0.09
Parental Competence	0.99	0.18
Social Network	0.95 ***	-0.40
Cycle	0.99	0.09
Sex Role Attitudes	0.99	0.04

Note: Wilks' Lambda is an inverse measure of the function. The larger the Lambdas are, the less information remaining. The larger the standarized discriminant coefficients, the larger the contribution of the function.

*** $p < .001$).

Appendix B

Table 4

Mean Scores on the Scales Used as a Function
Of Marital Quality: Univariate F-Tests

Scales	Marital Quality		
	Low	High	
Parental Strain	35.21	29.15	***
Marital Strain	24.08	14.61	***
Role Strain	59.29	43.76	***
Role Conflict	22.48	19.91	*
Social Network	10.38	11.90	**
Task Allocation Both	6.22	7.26	**
Sex Role Attitude	60.30	61.87	***
Task Allocation Wife	6.66	5.68	**

Note: Univariate F-Tests with (1,219) D. F.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

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Table 5

Mean Scores on the Discrepancy Scores Used as a
Function of Marital Quality: Univariate F-Tests

Discrepancy	Marital Quality		
	High	Low	
Parental Strain	10.60	10.70	
Marital Strain	7.80	9.74	**
Role Conflict	12.14	12.98	
Marital Quality Discrepancy	7.56	9.74	**
Social Network	3.43	3.05	
Task Allocation Both	2.42	2.10	
Role Accumulation	8.94	9.67	
Sex Role Attitude	10.71	14.68	**
Parental Competence	6.51	7.18	
Task Allocation Husband	0.78	1.12	*
Task Allocation Wife	1.90	2.01	

Note: Univariate F-Tests with (1,229) D. F.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

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Table 6

Mean Scores on the Scales Used as a Function
of Sex: Univariate F-Tests.

Scales	Sex		
	Male	Female	
Sex Role Attitudes	58.13	63.81	**
Social Network	10.38	11.89	***
Task Allocation Both	6.87	6.63	
Task Allocation Wife	5.70	6.55	**
Task Allocation Husband	2.70	2.19	***
Role Accumulation	37.84	41.32	**
Role Conflict	21.30	20.44	
Parental Strain	30.50	33.63	
Marital Strain	19.55	19.50	
Parental Competence	43.03	43.16	
Marital Quality	117.53	117.50	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Appendix B

Table 7

Mean Scores on the Sex Role Attitudes as a Function
of Sex Differences

Sex Role Attitudes	Female	Male	p	
A wife should not have equal authority with her husband in making decisions.....	3.63	3.39	*	R
A wife should realize that, just as a woman is not suited for heavy physical work, there are also other kind of jobs she is not suited for, because of her mental and emotional nature.....	3.37	3.13	*	R
If a woman's job sometimes requires her to be away from home overnight, this should not bother her husband.....	3.24	2.83	***	
If a child gets sick and his wife works, the husband should be just as willing as she to stay home from work and take care of the child.	3.28	2.97	**	
On the job, men should be willing to work for female supervisors.....	3.77	3.52	**	
If his wife works, the husband should share equally in household chores such as cooking, cleaning, and washing.....	3.61	3.31	***	
If his wife works, he should share equally in the responsibilities of child care.....	3.65	3.32	***	
A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with children as a mother who does not work.....	3.20	2.67	***	
A married man's chief responsibility should be his job.....	3.31	3.07	*	R
The husband should be the head of the family...	2.39	2.13	*	R
The father has more responsibility than the mother to punish the children.....	3.56	3.15	***	R
If he wants to, the father should be able to quit working and be a full-time parent.....	2.92	2.54	***	

Appendix B -- Continued

Sex Role Attitudes	Female	Male	p
The father has more of a responsibility than the mother to set an example to his sons of how to provide for their families.....	2.63	2.34	* R
The father has more of a responsibility than the mother to set an example to his sons of how to work hard and get ahead in the world..	2.81	2.53	* R
The father has more of a responsibility than the mother to make and enforce rules for the children.....	3.46	3.13	*** R

Note: The higher the mean score, the higher the agreement with the statement. R : Because the items were reflected, the higher the mean score, the higher the disagreement with the statement.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$.

Appendix C

Demographic Variables by Sex

Cross tabulation frequencies on the response categories for education, income, work, occupation, and task allocation by sex were calculated. Chi square (χ^2) statistics were computed to test the hypothesis that there are significant differences between males and females on each of the above variables.

Education. Results showed that there was a significant difference between males and females on the level of education attained ($\chi^2 = 19.03$, $df = 4$, $p < .0008$). The score distribution showed that the majority of subjects were on the high end of the scale. Of the 34.6% of subjects who reported having a Ph.D. or a master's degree, 68.3% were males and 31.7% were females. Of the 38.4% of the sample who reported having a bachelor degree, 44% were males and 56% were females. Of the 20.7% of the sample who had some college, 42.9% were males and 57.1% were females. A small percentage (6.3%) of the sample had only high school education. Of this group, 23.1% were males and 76.9% were females. Thus, greater percentages of females concentrated at the lowest level of the education scale while greater percentages of males concentrated at the highest level of the scale.

Income. Significant gender differences were found in the income levels of husbands and wives ($\chi^2 = 121.77$; $df =$

6, $p < .0008$). Of the 10% who earned less than \$10,000, 92% were females, compared to 8% of the males. The \$10,000 to \$20,000 range included 18.9% of the subjects. Of this percentage 80% were females, as compared to 20% males. In the categories including \$20,000 to \$50,000 and more, the pattern was reversed. Thus, of the 52.7% of the sample who fell in those categories, 82.2% were males, as compared to 17.8% females. Results showed that greater percentages of females were located on the lowest levels of the income scale, while greater percentages of males concentrated on the highest levels of the scale.

Work. There were significant gender differences concerning the participation of husbands and wives in the labor force ($\chi^2 = 78.82$, $df = 5$, $p < .001$). Of the 21.6% of the sample who reported not working, 80% were females and 19.6% of the sample were males. Another 16.1% were working or studying part-time. In this category, women were the majority (92.1%) and men were the minority (7.9%). With full-time employment or full-time study the pattern was reversed. Of the 54.7% who fell in the category working or studying full-time, 73.6% were males as compared to 26.4% females. Of the category that work and study part-time (2.17%), 60% were females, while 40% were males. Of those who work full-time and studied part-time (5.1%), the majority were males (75%), as compared to females (24%).

The results showed considerable differences between sexes regarding job and study distribution. In this sample the majority of the wives reported not working and if they did work, they had a part-time job. Women who reported attending school usually attended part-time. In contrast, men worked full-time, and when they studied, they did it part-time.

Occupation. Significant differences were observed in occupational status of husbands and wives ($\chi^2 = 89.65$, $df = 7$, $p < .001$). Of the 41.4% of the sample who fell in the professional category at the highest level of the occupational hierarchy, 69.4% were males and 30.6% were females. Males were also the majority in the managerial category (78.9%). On the other hand, as going down the occupational hierarchy, the number female workers increased. Of the 45.3% who were students, clerks, and housekeepers, 71.2% were females.

Task Allocation. Data shown in Table 8, Appendix D indicate that most subjects believed that household chores were undertaken by the wives. The activities which involved more participation by the wives were: cooking (79.4%), housecleaning (70.7%), laundry (78.5%), grocery shopping (59.2%), shopping for children (78.9%), washing dishes (56.4%) and taking care of children during illness (62.3%).

Activities shared by husbands and wives were: managing money (43.3%), making minor purchases (87.4%), family errands (52.5%), playing with children (90.3%), and disciplining children (87.7%). Husbands had responsibility for the maintenance of the car (85.2%), for small repairs (78.8%) and for taking out the garbage (47.4%).

Significant differences by sex in division of household chores were found on the following: making minor purchases ($X^2 = 6.56$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$), maintenance of the car ($X^2 = 5.86$, $df = 2$, $p < .05$) and taking out the garbage ($X^2 = 6.35$, $df = 2$, $p < .02$).

Appendix D

Table 8

Task Allocation as a Function of Sexual Differences

Task Allocation	Sex Differences		
	Wife	Both	Husband
Cooking	79.4%	19.3%	1.3%
Housecleaning	70.7%	28.4%	.9%
Managing Money	24.8%	43.3%	31.9%
Maintenance of Car	1.7%	13.1%	85.2%
Laundry	78.5%	18.6%	3.0%
Grocery Shopping	59.2%	34.0%	6.7%
Small Repairs	4.2%	16.9%	78.8%
Making Minor Purchases	29.0%	67.2%	3.8%
Making Major Purchases	3.4%	87.4%	9.2%
Shopping for Children	78.9%	20.3%	.9%
Family Errands	40.8%	52.5%	6.7%
Washing Dishes	56.4%	36.0%	7.6%
Taking Out Garbage	16.7%	35.9%	47.4%
Playing with Children	5.8%	90.3%	4.0%
Discipline of Children	9.7%	87.7%	2.6%
Care of child in illness	62.3%	37.3%	.1%

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