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A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG  
LIFE SATISFACTION, STATUS INCONSISTENCY,  
AND SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the  
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Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

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By

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The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationships among life satisfaction, status inconsistency, marital status, sex, race, and age. Status inconsistency is determined through a comparison of the status indicators of education, occupation, and income. Life satisfaction is determined by the responses to five areas of satisfaction which are presented in the 1976 General Social Survey conducted annually by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC). The five satisfaction variables are factor analyzed to assure the appropriateness of their use in the construction of the life satisfaction index.

Analysis of the data consists of the use of chi-squares, Cramer's V, and Kendall's tau-b. Findings are reported and suggestions are presented for future research.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The following variables are investigated in this study: life satisfaction, status inconsistency, marital status, sex, race, and age. It is suggested that, because various aspects of status affect the individual self-image (24), which may be reflected in life satisfaction, the combination of these variables is useful in illuminating the relationships between them. Both status inconsistency and life satisfaction have previously been studied in relationship to marital status, race, sex, and age. However, conflicting findings have been reported. One purpose of this study is to expand on the existing research and to explore the relationship between life satisfaction and status inconsistency, which apparently has been neglected by investigators as an area of research.

#### Review of Literature

During the past thirty years, researchers have extensively investigated status inconsistency. Only in the past decade have they begun to examine life satisfaction. However,

for the same period, only one study of the relationship between these two variables has been found (3).

### Status Inconsistency

Over the years, there has been an abundance of studies dealing with status consistency and status inconsistency. (Status refers to an individual's position or ranking within a particular social group.) From the earliest study of Warner in 1949 (33) to the present, focus has been centered on various measures of " 'social class': income, education, occupation, home ownership, or some status hierarchy of religious affiliation, or some combination of any or all of these indices" (11, p. 198). Schnore stated that "measures of income, education, and occupation [are] the three traditional variables employed in [the] sociological analysis" of positions occupied in status hierarchies (29, p. 73).

Studies of status consistency have ranked individuals simultaneously on a variety of different status hierarchies and examined the extent to which the individual's rankings were consistent. For instance, similar rankings on three variables (e.g., high-high-high or low-low-low) showed status consistency, while dissimilar rankings (e.g., high-low-high or low-low-medium) showed status inconsistency.

Various components of status consistency have been examined in the literature. For example, Jackson (16),



Jackson and Burke (17), and Lenski (20) considered the principal components of status to be income, ethnicity, and education. Kenkel (18) used occupation, education, rental value of dwelling, and dwelling area prestige to define the vertical hierarchies of status.

Various combinations of occupation, education, and income have been used as status components. Cutler (9) examined only occupation and education, while Clemente and Sauer (8) studied only education and income. A number of researchers have combined the three variables of education, occupation, and income in their measurements of status and status inconsistency. They include Bauman (3), Goffman (15), Rush (27), and Segal (30). Others have investigated only occupational status as it is related to a variety of extraneous variables, such as sex, race, age, marital status, and/or religious preference. These researchers include Broom and Jones (6), Gibbs and Martin (14) and Lenski (22).

Different roles and expectations are attached to the particular status an individual holds in regard to his position within various groups. In many cases an individual ranks consistently in the different statuses attached to occupation, education, and income because these three dimensions are highly interrelated (5). For example, individuals having high educational status often attain high occupational status and, consequently, a high income status. Individuals with high

status roles usually acquire positions which demand responsibility and afford privilege. As status increases so does responsibility and privilege. The problem arises when an individual has conflicting roles and expectations. For example, an individual may have a high educational status and a low occupational status--e.g., the college graduate who is employed as a laborer. Here the individual may expect certain rights and privileges because of his high educational status and yet may receive very few privileges because of his low occupational status. When this occurs, the individual is said to be status inconsistent and discrepancies occur between expected and actual roles and privileges.

Numerous studies have been done on status inconsistency. They indicate that people who manifest status inconsistencies often have negative self-images (4, 12, 15) and have high rates of mental disorders (10, 16, 17, 19, 23). Other correlates of status inconsistency are political liberalism (13, 15, 20, 27, 28), preferences for and attempts to change the social order (4, 15, 20), a high degree of social isolation (13, 14, 21), and prejudice (13). Treiman, on the other hand, argues that even though an individual may experience status inconsistency, "there is no guarantee that structurally deviant positions will give rise to the socially pathological conditions that engender strain" (32, p. 653).

### Life Satisfaction

During the last decade, there has been an increase in the number of studies of various areas of life satisfaction. Most of the research in this area has been rather limited in the measurement of satisfaction. Alston and Dudley (1) and Robinson and Shaver (26) used only one question to measure satisfaction with life. In defense of using a single question to measure life satisfaction, Robinson and Shaver (26) reported a Kendall's tau of .59 in one test-retest situation and a tau of .43 in another, indicating considerable reliability. Spreitzer, Snyder, and Larson (31) used three indicators to measure life satisfaction. Four dimensions of satisfaction were used to create indexes of life satisfaction by Alston, Lowe, and Wrigley (2) and Clemente and Sauer (8).

Many of the studies dealing with life satisfaction which have investigated the effects of age, race, sex, and marital status have reported conflicting results. Clemente and Sauer (8) indicated a direct relationship between age and life satisfaction, while Bradburn and Caplovitz (5) suggested an inverse relationship. Quinn, Staines, and McCullough (25) reported a curvilinear relationship. But, Cameron (7) concluded that there is no relationship between age and life satisfaction. Alston and Dudley stated that "females feel that life becomes more routinized at an earlier age than men" (1, p. 59). However, Spreitzer, Snyder, and Larson concluded

that there was "no clear linear relationship between age and life satisfaction for either sex" (31, p. 238). Bradburn and Caplovitz (5) reported that single females experience higher rates of satisfaction than married females while married males reported higher rates of satisfaction than single males. A decade later, Cameron (7) reported that married males and married females were happier than single males and single females, who, in turn, were happier than people who were divorced, separated, or widowed. Clemente and Sauer (8) and Robinson and Shaver (26) found that blacks had lower life satisfaction scores than whites.

#### Status Inconsistency and Life Satisfaction

Only one study has been found which actually investigated the relationship between status inconsistency and life satisfaction. In exploring the relationship between status inconsistency and community dissatisfaction, Bauman (3) concluded that status-inconsistent individuals had more satisfying social contacts than status-consistent individuals. This finding contradicts his hypothesis, as well as previous inconsistency research. Therefore, he called for further investigation of these variables.

#### Summary and Conclusion

Status inconsistency has been shown to affect the individual's self-image, political views, and social interactions.

Reports on life satisfaction have shown little agreement regarding the effects of marital status, sex, race, and age.

It is suggested that life satisfaction is influenced by status inconsistency and that further illumination of the relationship between these variables is needed.

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## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology utilized in this research. First, the research question and hypotheses are posed. Next, the source of data is identified and the research sample is described. Then, the variables are operationally defined. Finally, the methods of analysis are explained and the limitations and basic assumptions are presented.

#### Research Question and Hypotheses

The primary question of this study is what are the relationships among life satisfaction, status inconsistency, marital status, sex, race, and age? The following propositions are offered for testing through a secondary analysis of the 1976 NORC (National Opinion Research Center) General Social Survey.

H<sub>1</sub> Life satisfaction is higher among status-consistent individuals than status-inconsistent individuals.

This hypothesis is suggested by Fenchel, Monderer, and Hartley (8) and Goffman (9) who reported that status inconsistency resulted in a negative self-image. Quinn, Staines,

and McCullough (12) suggest that underemployment results in job dissatisfaction, which may be related to life satisfaction. Underemployment may be related to status inconsistency since it involves a discrepancy between level of education and level of occupation. Further support for this hypothesis comes from Bauman (2) and Robinson and Shaver (13) who also suggest that the relationship between these variables has not been adequately investigated.

H<sub>2</sub> Life satisfaction is directly related to each of the indicators of status--education, occupation, and income.

This hypothesis is derived from the conflicting reports in the literature. Bauman states that "inconsistency may be salient only when occupation is out of line with one or more of the other statuses" (2, p. 52). Edwards and Klemmack feel that income is the "single most important variable in explaining reported satisfaction" (7, p. 501). Laumann and Segal maintain that "the main effects of education on attitudes and social participation...[are] higher than the main effects of income or occupation" (10, p. 39). Further support for this hypothesis is gleaned from the statement by Mitchell that "we should first understand individual indicators before combining them into complex indices" (11, p. 325).

H<sub>3</sub> Life satisfaction is the same among females as among males

Although Cameron (4) stated that females more often reported moods of happiness and satisfaction than did males, Wilson (14) reported no relationship between life satisfaction and sex.

H<sub>4</sub> Life satisfaction is higher among individuals who are married than among single, separated, divorced, or widowed individuals.

Support for this hypothesis is suggested by the findings of Bradburn and Caplovitz (3) and Cameron (4), who noted that married people are generally happier and more satisfied than those who are divorced, separated, widowed, or never married.

H<sub>5</sub> Life satisfaction is higher among whites than among blacks.

Support for this hypothesis is indicated in the studies of Clemente and Sauer (5) and Robinson and Shaver (13). Both studies have shown that whites have higher satisfaction scores than blacks.

H<sub>6</sub> Life satisfaction is inversely related to age.

Support for this hypothesis is suggested by Alston and Dudley (1) and Bradburn and Caplovitz (3), who related that younger respondents tended to report higher satisfaction rates

than did older respondents. Alston and Dudley, and Quinn, Staines, and McCullough identified younger respondents as those under 30 years of age (1, p. 59, 12, p. 12). Quinn, Staines, and McCullough identified older respondents as those over 50 years of age (12, p. 12).

#### Source of Data

The data utilized in this research were made available to the North Texas State University Computer Center by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. The data for the Spring 1976 General Social Survey, National Data Program for the Social Sciences, were originally collected by James A. Davis, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, and were distributed by Roper Public Opinion Research Center, William College (6).

#### Variable Definitions and Measurements

The following variables are utilized in this study: (1) life satisfaction, (2) education, (3) occupation, (4) income, (5) status inconsistency, (6) sex, (7) race, (8) marital status, and (9) age. Life satisfaction is the dependent variable, and the remaining eight variables are the independent variables.

### Dependent Variable

The operational definition of life satisfaction is measured by five variables. Life satisfaction refers to the respondent's satisfaction with (1) place of residence; (2) non-working activities; (3) family life; (4) friendships; and (5) health and physical condition. It is measured by recoding and combining NORC variables 97 through 101. Each variable is recoded to reflect a range of zero (no satisfaction) to six (a very great deal of satisfaction), still retaining all of the responses in the original questionnaire. See Appendix A, questions 2 through 6 for recode information. The life satisfaction index is created by taking the sum of the individual indicators and collapsing the resultant scores into three levels of satisfaction: high (25.0 to 30.0), medium (15.0 to 24.0), and low (6.0 to 14.0). Missing data are coded as a nine. See Appendix A, question 7.

### Independent Variables

Education refers to the highest level of education which has been completed by a respondent. It is measured by a recoding of NORC variable 48. The recoding collapses the itemized education levels into three levels of education: high (some college, or more), medium (high school), and low (less than high school). See Appendix A, question 8, for full recode information.

Occupation refers to a respondent's general occupation category. It is measured by a recoding of NORC variable 31. The recoding collapses the general categories into three occupational levels: high (Professional and managerial); medium (sales, clerical, and craftsmen), and low (labor, farm, and service). See Appendix A, question 9, for full recode information.

Income refers to a respondent's personal income in 1975. It is measured by a recoding of NORC variable 80. The recoding collapses the itemized income into three levels of income: high (\$15,000 or more), medium (\$4,000 through \$14,999), and low (\$3,999 or less). See Appendix A, question 10, for recode information.

Status inconsistency refers to the inequality of levels of education, occupation, and income. It is measured by the three independent variables of education, occupation, and income. If these three variables do not equal one another, statuses are considered to be inconsistent. The following combinations are possible and are treated as indicated:

1. Inconsistency (either none of the variables are equal or only two variables are equal).

0. Consistency (all of the variables are equal).

See Appendix A, question 11, for full coding information.

The above recodings give variables 8, 9, and 10--education, occupation, and income--each a range from one (low)

to three (high) with a missing data code of nine for "refused answers", "don't knows", "no answers", and "inappropriates". Variable 11--~~status inconsistency~~ has a range from zero (consistency) to one (inconsistency). These codings facilitate the investigation of the independent variables and are consistent with previous research.

Sex of Respondent refers to whether a respondent is male or female. It utilizes NORC variable 83. No recoding is necessary for this variable. See Appendix A, question 12.

Race of Respondent refers to whether a respondent is white, black, or other. It utilizes NORC variable 84. No recoding is necessary for this variable. See Appendix A, question 13.

Marital status refers to whether a respondent is married, divorced, widowed, separated, or never married. It is measured by NORC variable 24. No recoding is necessary for this variable. See Appendix A, question 14.

Age of Respondent refers to the respondent's age in ten-year intervals. It is measured by recoding NORC variable 234. This recoding collapses the respondent's actual age into ten year intervals to facilitate handling of the data. See Appendix A, question 15.

### The Research Sample

The primary sample consisted of 1,499 respondents in the 1976 General Social Survey collected annually by NORC. The

respondents were non-institutionalized adults, eighteen years of age and older, who lived within the continental United States, and were a representative cross-section of the total population. For the primary study, NORC used a multi-stage modified probability sample with quotas at the block level.

The secondary sample consists of 825 respondents. The remaining 674 respondents are excluded from this research because of a lack of information on one or more of the independent variables of education, occupation, and income. An investigation of both samples shows that the mortality was particularly from among those respondents who were married housewives with no personal income for 1975. A description of the distribution of the samples with respect to the independent variables may be found in Table I.

TABLE I

## CHARACTERISTICS OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SAMPLES

Variable	Primary Sample	Secondary Sample
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	669	495
Female	<u>830</u>	<u>330</u>
Total	1499	825



TABLE I--Continued

Variable	Primary Sample	Secondary Sample
<u>Race</u>		
White	1361	755
Black	129	64
Other	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>
Total	1499	825
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Married	974	555
Widowed	169	37
Divorced	98	71
Separated	51	25
Never married	<u>207</u>	<u>137</u>
Total	1499	825
<u>Age</u>		
18 through 19	42	24
20 through 29	346	240
30 through 39	299	197
40 through 49	199	141
50 through 59	222	135
60 through 69	201	69
70 through 79	132	14
80 through 89	52	2
99 (missing data)	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	1499	825

TABLE I--Continued

Variable	Primary Sample	Secondary Sample
<u>Education</u>		
Low	259	77
Medium	782	419
High	452	329
Missing data	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	1499	825
<u>Occupation</u>		
Low	672	395
Medium	372	199
High	308	231
Missing data	<u>147</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	1499	825
<u>Income</u>		
Low	219	217
Medium	448	447
High	161	161
Missing data	<u>671</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	1499	825
<u>Status</u>		
Consistency	173	173
Inconsistency	652	652
Missing data	<u>674</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	1499	825

Table I indicates a decrease of 174 males and 500 females from the primary sample to the secondary sample. Of the 174 males, 99 are married, 23 widowed, 10 divorced, 6 separated, and 36 never married. Of the 500 females, 320 are married, 109 widowed, 17 divorced, 20 separated, and 34 never married. Further inspection of Table I shows a decrease of two persons in the low income category (both are females) and one person in the medium income category (male). Because the majority of the missing data which reduced the primary sample came from the income category, the distribution was fairly consistent throughout the other variables. Thus, while the secondary sample may still be considered representative, it is suggested that the secondary sample is representative only of employed persons.

### Methods of Analysis

The data utilized in this research are analyzed in two stages. The first stage describes the general characteristics of the secondary sample. Also included in the first stage is a factor analysis of the five variables used to create the life satisfaction index: (1) satisfaction with place of residence; (2) satisfaction with non-working activities; (3) satisfaction with family life; (4) satisfaction with friendships; and (5) satisfaction with health and physical conditions.

The second stage of analysis utilizes measures of associations and their tests of significance to determine whether or not statistically significant relationships exist. Bivariate tables are utilized to calculate chi-square, a test of statistical significance, to determine whether or not relationships exist between the dependent variable of life satisfaction and the independent variables of occupation, education, income, status inconsistency, marital status, sex, race, and age. Chi-square is used to test the significance of the differences between the observed frequencies and the expected theoretical frequencies.

For statistically significant chi-squares, measures of association are employed to determine the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable and the nominal independent variables. The nominal independent variables are status inconsistency, marital status, sex, and race. Cramer's V is an often used measure of association for nominal data which are cross-classified in a larger than 2X2 table (two rows and two columns). It has a range of zero (no association) to one (perfect association). For ordinal data, the preferred measure of association is Kendall's tau. Tau-b is used since it takes ties into account in expressing the degree of association between variables. Depending on the direction of the association, tau-b has clearly defined upper (+1.0) and lower (-1.0) limits. Tau is also selected because the sampling distribution of tau under the null hypothesis is known and,

therefore, is subject to testing the significance of the association between variables. The ordinal variables are occupation, education, income, and age.

The preferred test of significance with tau is the "z" test. The resultant z scores are interpreted through the use of a z table which gives the sampling distribution of the normal curve. The sampling distribution is comprised of all the possible outcomes and their associated probabilities.

#### Limitations and Basic Assumptions

Even though the wording of the original NORC questions and response categories is not ideal, there are several advantages in using secondary analysis of national data. The cost in both time and dollars for primary data collection, especially at the national level, is prohibitive. Secondary analysis of this particular dataset provides the researcher with Type I, "clean", data and affords access to a national sample. It is assumed that, since this research is conducted with data collected in a national probability sample, the results are generalizable to the entire population of the continental United States.

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## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS

The analysis and description of the findings of this research are presented in this chapter. First, the general characteristics of the research sample are given. Then, the factor analysis used in the creation of the life satisfaction index is explained. Finally, the results of the data analysis are presented and the research hypotheses are accepted or rejected according to the interpretation of the test statistics.

#### General Characteristics of the Research Sample

Stage one of the analysis of the data involves two steps: (1) a description of the frequency distribution of the research sample, and (2) a factor analysis of the five variables used to create the life satisfaction index. The five variables include the respondent's satisfaction with: (1) place of residence; (2) non-working activities; (3) family life; (4) friendships; and (5) health and physical condition.

A description of the frequency distribution of the research sample may be found in Table II. Table II lists all



of the independent and dependent variables and their associated response categories. The response categories are described by absolute frequencies (the total number of responses per category) and relative frequencies (the percentage, per category, of the total responses).

TABLE II

## FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE\*

Variable	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	495	60.0
Female	<u>330</u>	<u>40.0</u>
Total	825	100.0
<u>Race</u>		
White	755	91.5
Black	64	7.8
Other	<u>6</u>	<u>0.7</u>
Total	825	100.0
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Married	555	67.3
Widowed	37	4.5
Divorced	71	8.6
Separated	25	3.0
Never married	<u>137</u>	<u>16.6</u>
Total	825	100.0

TABLE II--Continued

Variable	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
<u>Education</u>		
Low	77	9.3
Medium	419	50.8
High	<u>329</u>	<u>39.9</u>
Total	825	100.0
<u>Occupation</u>		
Low	395	47.9
Medium	199	24.1
High	<u>231</u>	<u>28.0</u>
Total	825	100.0
<u>Income</u>		
Low	217	26.3
Medium	447	54.2
High	<u>161</u>	<u>19.5</u>
Total	825	100.0
<u>Status</u>		
Consistency	173	21.0
Inconsistency	<u>652</u>	<u>79.0</u>
Total	825	100.0

TABLE II--Continued

Variable	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
<u>Life Satisfaction</u>		
Low	33	4.0
Medium	463	56.1
High	319	38.7
Missing data	<u>10</u>	<u>1.2</u>
Total	825	100.0

\* Chapter II contains discussion of the operational definitions of the variables.

#### Factor Analysis of Life Satisfaction Items

A concomitant part of the description of the variables is the factor analysis of the variables used to construct the life satisfaction index. Factor analysis is a method of analysis which enables the researcher to examine a set of interrelated variables and determine whether or not there is an underlying factor or dimension which is common to all of the variables. Factor analysis can be used as an exploratory tool in searching for patterns of variation or it can be used as a means of hypothesis testing to confirm anticipated commonalities.

Factor analysis requires two basic assumptions or postulates in order that the findings may be meaningfully

interpreted: (1) factorial causation, and (2) parsimony (1, pp. 9-10). The postulate of factorial causation means that the researcher must assume that the variables are linear combinations of some underlying causal variable (i.e., an unobserved factor which is common to all of the variables.) The postulate of parsimony involves the selection of a minimum number of common factors which could produce the observed covariance structure.

This factor analysis involves five variables which are hypothesized to be interrelated:

1. Satisfaction with place of residence
2. Satisfaction with non-working activities
3. Satisfaction with family life
4. Satisfaction with friendships
5. Satisfaction with health and physical condition

The factor analytic process involves four steps: (1) construction of a correlation matrix; (2) extraction of the initial factors; (3) rotation to a terminal solution; and (4) interpretation of factor results.

The first step, construction of the correlation matrix, shows the relationship between the variables. The correlation coefficients indicate the degree to which variation in one variable is related to the variation in another variable. Table III shows the correlation coefficients for the five variables in the upper right triangle. The squared correlation coefficients shown in the parentheses of the lower left

triangle can easily be interpreted by multiplying each by 100 to get the percentage of variation the variables share in common. For instance, the percent of common variation for the data on two variables, X2 and X4, is 15 percent.

TABLE III

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS OF SATISFACTION VARIABLES  
(SQUARED CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS)

	X1*	X2	X3	X4	X5
X1	1.00000	.30128	.26402	.33317	.18334
X2	(.09)	1.00000	.34566	.38428	.24014
X3	(.07)	(.12)	1.00000	.45605	.30681
X4	(.11)	(.15)	(.21)	1.00000	.29021
X5	(.03)	(.06)	(.09)	(.08)	1.00000

\*X1 - satisfaction with residence; X2 - satisfaction with non-working activities; X3 - satisfaction with family life; X4 - satisfaction with friendships; X5 - satisfaction with health and physical condition.

The second step involves the extraction of the initial factors. In this case, the correlation between the five variables is found to be based solely on one factor (F1). Table IV shows the factor loadings and the communalities for each variable. The factor loadings give the correlations between the factor and the variables and they are interpreted just like the correlation coefficients. Each factor loading is squared (the result is called the communality) and

multiplied by 100. This squared communality multiplied by 100 shows the percentage of variation in each variable which is explained by the common factor. For instance, the common factor explains the largest proportion of variation in satisfaction with friendships (X4)--.48776 or approximately 49 percent.

TABLE IV  
FACTOR LOADING AND COMMUNALITY  
OF SATISFACTION VARIABLES

Variable	Factor 1	Communality
X1*	.46482	.21606
X2	.56522	.31948
X3	.63544	.40378
X4	.69840	.48776
X5	.43349	.18791

\*X1 - satisfaction with residence; X2 - satisfaction with non-working activities; X3 - satisfaction with family life; X4 - satisfaction with friendships; X5 - satisfaction with health and physical condition.

Step three would ordinarily involve the rotation of the factor axes in order to find the best linear combination of the variables--that combination of variables which would account for more of the variation of the data as a whole than any other combination. Here the purpose would be to reduce

the number of dimensions or factors found to be common to the variables. In this case, this step is omitted since all of the variables loaded on one factor.

Step four involves the interpretation of the factor. The hypothesized interrelationship between the five satisfaction variables is supported by the fact that all of these variables loaded on the same factor. The original correlation matrix (Table III) had a determinant of correlation of .4725, which means that the covariance of the variables is just under 48 percent. The eigenvalue of the single factor is 1.6149. Dividing the eigenvalue by the number of variables - five - gives us a result of .3229, which is the proportion of variance in the variables explained by the common factor. Thus, we can see that the variance explained by the common factor accounts for almost 70 percent of the covariance among the variables. The final task, then, is to give an appropriate label to the common factor. The label attached is "life satisfaction" since the five variables deal with satisfaction with various subjective dimensions of life.

#### Measures of Association and Tests of Significance

Stage two of the data analysis utilizes univariate tables to calculate the mode, a measure of central tendency, of the life satisfaction scores of the independent variables.

Bivariate tables are utilized to calculate chi-square, a test of statistical significance, to determine whether or not relationships exist between life satisfaction (the dependent variable) and status inconsistency, education, occupation, income, sex, age, race, and marital status (the independent variables). Table V gives a listing of each of the independent variables by the mode life satisfaction score, and the chi-square calculated for each pair of variables (independent variable by the dependent variable). The last column of Table V shows the associated probability of the calculated chi-squares.

TABLE V

DISTRIBUTION OF LIFE SATISFACTION SCORES,  
CHI-SQUARES AND ASSOCIATED PROBABILITIES

Variable	Mode Scores Life Satisfaction	Chi-square	df	p.
<u>Status Inconsistency</u>				
Consistency	22.7	.00	2	.9993
Inconsistency	23.1			
<u>Education</u>				
Low	21.4	14.58	4	.0057
Medium	22.8			
High	23.6			



TABLE V--Continued

Variable	Mode Scores Life Satisfaction	Chi-square	df	p.
<u>Occupation</u>				
Low	22.7	16.14	4	.0028
Medium	22.8			
High	23.6			
<u>Income</u>				
Low	22.5	7.59	4	.1078
Medium	22.9			
High	23.8			
<u>Sex</u>				
Male	23.0	1.08	2	.5837
Female	22.9			
<u>Age</u>				
18 through 19	22.0	11.79	14	.6234
20 through 29	23.2			
30 through 39	23.1			
40 through 49	22.9			
50 through 59	22.8			
60 through 69	22.1			
70 through 79	25.3			
80 through 89	21.5			

TABLE V--Continued

Variable	Mode Scores Life Satisfaction	Chi-square	df	p.
<u>Race</u>				
White	23.1	14.29	4	.0064
Black	21.3			
<u>Marital Status</u>				
Married	23.6	44.99	8	.0000
Widowed	22.9			
Divorced	21.4			
Separated	21.7			
Never married	21.7			

Examination of Table V reveals that there are definite trends in the modal distribution of life satisfaction scores. Status-inconsistent individuals scored higher (23.1) on life satisfaction than did status-consistent individuals (22.7). The life satisfaction scores increased over each of the low-medium-high categories of the education (21.4, 22.8, 23.6), occupation (22.7, 22.8, 23.6), and income (22.5, 22.9, 23.8) variables. There was only a very slight difference in the scores of males (23.0) and females (22.9), and whites scored quite a bit higher than blacks (23.1 vs. 21.3). The life satisfaction scores for married individuals (23.6) was higher

than any other category of marital status--those who are widowed scored the next highest (22.9) of these other categories, while the divorced (21.4), separated (21.7), and never married individuals (21.7) scored relatively similar.

The different age categories show that the distribution of life satisfaction scores is rather mixed. The three lowest categories are the age groups 18 through 19 (22.0), 60 through 69 (22.1), and 80 through 89 (21.5). The intervals between age 20 and 59 are fairly consistent with a slow decline in the satisfaction scores over time. The distribution of life satisfaction scores are as follows: age 20 to 29, 23.2; age 30 to 39, 23.1; age 40 to 49, 22.9; and age 50 to 59, 22.8. The modal distribution is almost curvilinear if the low scores at each extreme of the age distribution are excluded.

Further investigation of Table V indicates that there are only four relationships which are shown to be statistically significant at the .05 level: (1) education and life satisfaction; (2) occupation and life satisfaction; (3) race and life satisfaction; and (4) marital status and life satisfaction. The relationships between life satisfaction and the remaining independent variables are determined to be not significant because the associated probability of the chi-square is greater than .05. Therefore, the following hypotheses, as discussed in Chapter II, are rejected: ( $H_1$ ) Life satisfaction

is higher among status-consistent individuals than among status-inconsistent individuals; and ( $H_6$ ) Life satisfaction is inversely related to age.

The next step in this second stage of analysis is to determine the strengths of the relationships which are said to be statistically significant according to the chi-squares. Cramer's V, as discussed in Chapter II, is the measure of association employed to determine the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable of life satisfaction and the nominal independent variables of race and marital status. A Cramer's V of .09 and .17 are reported for the respective relationships of life satisfaction and race, and life satisfaction and marital status. Even though these values indicate that the relationships are weak, the following hypotheses, as discussed in Chapter II, are accepted: ( $H_4$ ) Life satisfaction is higher among individuals who are married than among single, separated, divorced, or widowed individuals; and ( $H_5$ ) Life satisfaction is higher among whites than blacks. Since there is no difference between the scores of males and females, as hypothesized in Chapter II,  $H_3$  (Life satisfaction is the same among females as among males) is also accepted.

Kendall's tau-b, another measure of association discussed in Chapter II, is employed to determine the strength of the statistically significant relationships between the dependent

variable of life satisfaction and the ordinal independent variables of education and occupation. A tau-b of .093 and .095 are reported for the relationships of life satisfaction and education, and life satisfaction and occupation, respectively. Both of these taus are significant at the .05 level of significance (.003 and .002, respectively). Therefore, the following hypothesis, as discussed in Chapter II, is accepted: (H<sub>2</sub>) Life satisfaction is directly related to each of the indicators of status - education, occupation, and income. However, the relationship between life satisfaction and income has a chi-square of 7.59 with 4 degrees of freedom, which is not statistically significant at the .05 level.

### Summary

The following hypotheses are accepted: (H<sub>2</sub>) Life satisfaction is directly related to each of the indicators of status - education, occupation, and income; (H<sub>3</sub>) Life satisfaction is the same among females as among males; (H<sub>4</sub>) Life satisfaction is higher among individuals who are married than among single, separated, divorced, or widowed individuals; and (H<sub>5</sub>) Life satisfaction is higher among whites than blacks. The remaining two hypotheses are rejected: (H<sub>1</sub>) Life satisfaction is higher for status-consistent individuals than for status-inconsistent individuals; and (H<sub>6</sub>) Life satisfaction is inversely related to age.

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## CHAPTER IV

### INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter compares the present research findings with previous research findings, poses possible explanations for any differences, and offers suggestions for future research. To facilitate the explanations and suggestions, each hypothesis is discussed in sequence.

#### Hypothesis-1

The predicted relationship between life satisfaction and status inconsistency was not supported in this research. This finding was contrary to previous research which showed that status inconsistency is inversely related to a great many personal attitudes and subjective dimensions of an individual's life. Previous studies indicated that status inconsistency often promoted negative self-images (3, 11, 14, 24), psychological disorders (9, 15, 16, 18, 23), dissatisfaction with social order (3, 14, 20), political liberalism (12, 14, 20, 27, 28), social isolation (12, 13, 21), and prejudice (12).

Although this hypothesis was not supported, it is posited that dichotomization limited variation. The status inconsistency variable was dichotomized (inconsistency-consistency).

Perhaps the various levels of status inconsistency, rather than the dichotomy, should have been examined. A preliminary investigation of this possibility revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in life satisfaction scores among the various levels of status inconsistency. In the preliminary investigation, partial and total inconsistency were treated in the following manner:

1. Low inconsistency (two of the status indicators being high and the third indicator being either medium or low).
2. Medium inconsistency (two of the status indicators being medium and the third indicator being either low or high).
3. High inconsistency (two of the status indicators being low and the third indicator being either medium or high).
4. Total inconsistency (all three of the status indicators being of different value).

The preliminary investigation indicated an inverse relationship between life satisfaction and the levels of status inconsistency. The totally inconsistent individuals had lower life satisfaction scores than did those individuals with only partial inconsistencies.

### Hypothesis 2

Support was indicated for the predicted relationship between life satisfaction and the individual indicators of status (education, occupation, and income). Although income



was not found to be significantly related, education and occupation were directly related to life satisfaction.

Previous research has shown conflicting evidence regarding the particular salience of any one of these three status indicators as opposed to various combinations of them (2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22, 27, 29).

It is suggested that further refinement of the levels of categories within each of the three status indicators might aid future research. There is a need for clearer distinctions between the categories of the indicators, especially income and education. For instance, it is posited that there should be separate categories of education for individuals with a bachelor's degree and individuals who have obtained graduate degrees. This is particularly important in today's society when so many individuals are completing graduate degrees and then filling occupational positions which require only a bachelor's degree. There also needs to be additional categories for upper levels of income. For example, a clinical physician who earns, say, \$20,000 a year might be considered status-inconsistent when compared with his/her counter-part in private practice who earns, say, \$50,000 per year.

### Hypothesis 3

Life satisfaction was the same among females as among males. This hypothesis supported the contention that there was no relationship between sex and life satisfaction (31). Life satisfaction scores were slightly higher among males than among females, but the difference was not statistically significant.

### Hypothesis 4

The predicted relationship between life satisfaction and marital status was supported by the research. As hypothesized, married individuals scored significantly higher on the life satisfaction index than did those individuals who had never been married, or were separated, divorced, or widowed. This supported the previous research of Bradburn and Caplovitz (4) and Cameron (6).

### Hypothesis 5

Life satisfaction was higher among whites than among blacks. This supported hypothesis confirmed the previous research of Clemente and Sauer (7) and Robinson and Shaver (26), who also reported that whites demonstrated higher levels of happiness and satisfaction than did blacks.

### Hypothesis 6

The predicted inverse relationship between age and life satisfaction was not supported by this research. If anything, the relationships uncovered clearly add to the already conflicting and confusing reports (1, 4, 6, 7, 25, 30).

It is suggested that perhaps future researchers should accept the fact that age might not be a reliable indicator of life satisfaction. If we take as a given, however, that researchers are not likely to forego this area of investigation, then the following age categories, based upon the findings of this investigation, are suggested for future research: (1) age 19 or less - "pre-career oriented" - in this group, life satisfaction scores were very low; (2) ages 20 through 59 - "career oriented" - in this group, life satisfaction scores started out fairly high and decreased steadily; (3) ages 60 through 69 - "retirement oriented" - in this group, life satisfaction scores plunged to the low of the "pre-career oriented" individuals; (4) ages 70 through 79 - "life oriented" - in this group, life satisfaction scores surged to a new high which was experienced only by these individuals; and (5) age 80 and over - "post-life oriented" - in this group, life satisfaction scores plummeted to an all-time low. The labels supplied for these categories are provided as thought-provokers, and are not irrationally or irreverently suggested. It is

hoped that future researchers will discover a key to the trends uncovered in this particular investigation.

While most of the findings of this investigation are consistent with previous research, it is believed that emphasis should be placed on those findings which neither confirm nor deny the previous investigations. Further research is definitely called for in the area of life satisfaction and status inconsistency. If the levels of inconsistency are examined in future studies, it is possible that illumination will be provided. Serious consideration is needed in the area of life satisfaction and age. Although the relationship between age and satisfaction has been studied, the nature of the relationship is still unclear.

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## APPENDIX A

### CODEBOOK

The general format for this codebook is as follows: the left-hand column contains the new variable number and description as it is utilized in this secondary analysis. The right-hand column contains the original NORC variable number and description, as well as the question(s) asked to obtain the listed responses in the primary study.

Secondary Variable	Primary Variable
V01. Respondent ID Transferred directly from the NORC dataset	0002. Respondent Identification Number
V02. Satisfaction with place of residence 0. None 1. A little 2. Some 3. A fair amount 4. Quite a bit 5. A great deal 6. A very great deal 9. Don't know No answer	0097. Satisfaction with place of residence Q.48. For each area of life I am going to name, tell me the number that shows how much satisfaction you get from that area. Q.48A. (how much satisfac- tion from) the city or place you live in? 1. A very great deal 2. A great deal 3. Quite a bit 4. A fair amount 5. Some 6. A little 7. None 8. Don't know 9. No answer



APPENDIX A--Continued

Secondary Variable	Primary Variable
V03. Satisfaction with non-work activities 0. None 1. A little 2. Some 3. A fair amount 4. Quite a bit 5. A great deal 6. A very great deal 9. Don't know No answer	0098. Satisfaction with non-work activities. Q.48B. (how much satisfaction from) your non-work activities -- hobbies and so on? 1. A very great deal 2. A great deal 3. Quite a bit 4. A fair amount 5. Some 6. A little 7. None 8. Don't know 9. No answer
V04. Satisfaction with family life 0. None 1. A little 2. Some 3. A fair amount 4. Quite a bit 5. A great deal 6. A very great deal 9. Don't know No answer	0099. Satisfaction with family life. Q.48C. (how much satisfaction from) your family life? 1. A very great deal 2. A great deal 3. Quite a bit 4. A fair amount 5. Some 6. A little 7. None 8. Don't know 9. No answer
V05. Satisfaction with friendships 0. None 1. A little 2. Some 3. A fair amount 4. Quite a bit 5. A great deal 6. A very great deal 9. Don't know No answer	0100. Satisfaction with friendships Q.48D. (how much satisfaction from) your friendships? 1. A very great deal 2. A great deal 3. Quite a bit 4. A fair amount 5. Some 6. A little 7. None 8. Don't know 9. No answer

APPENDIX A--Continued

Secondary Variable	Primary Variable
V06. Satisfaction with health and physical condition 0. None 1. A little 2. Some 3. A fair amount 4. Quite a bit 5. A great deal 6. A very great deal 9. Don't know No answer	0101. Satisfaction with health and physical condition Q.48E. (how much satisfaction from) your health and physical condition? 1. A very great deal 2. A great deal 3. Quite a bit 4. A fair amount 5. Some 6. A little 7. None 8. Don't know 9. No answer
V07. Life Satisfaction Index This variable is obtained by obtaining a sum of V02 to V06. 1. Low (6.0 - 14.0) 2. Medium (15.0 - 24.0) 3. High (25.0 - 30.0) 9. Missing data	There is no corresponding NORC variable
V08. Education Level 1. Low - less than high school 2. Medium - high school 3. High - more than high school 9. Don't know No answer	0048. Respondent's level of education completed Q.17A. What is the highest grade in elementary school or high school that you finished or got credit for? Q.17C. Did you ever complete one or more years of college for credit - not including schooling such as business college, technical or vocational school? (If yes) how many years did you complete?

APPENDIX A--Continued

Secondary Variable	Primary Variable
	0048. Continued
	00. No formal schooling
	01. 1st grade
	.
	.
	12. 12th grade
	13. One year of college
	.
	.
	20. Eight years or more of college
	98. Don't know
	99. No answer
V09. Occupation level	0031. Respondent's occupation: general category
1. Low (NORC response 6 - 9)	Q.11A. What kind of work do you (did you normally) do? That is, what (is/was) your job called?
2. Medium (NORC response 3 - 5)	1. Professional, technical and kindred workers
3. High (NORC response 1 - 2)	2. Managers and adminis- trators (except farm)
9. No answer Inappropriate Disabled	3. Sales workers
	4. Clerical and kindred workers
	5. Craftsmen and kindred workers
	6. Operatives (except transport)
	7. Transport equipment operatives; Laborers (except farm)
	8. Farmers, farm managers, farm laborers and farm foremen
	9. Service workers (includ- ing private household)
	10. No answer; Inappropriate - retired or housewife or student; disabled

APPENDIX A--Continued

Secondary Variable	Primary Variable
V10. Income Level	0080. Respondent's level of income
1. Low - less than \$3,999	Q.35. Did you earn any income in 1975?
2. Medium - \$4,000 - 14,999	Q.35A. (if yes) in which of these groups did your earnings for last year (1975) fall? That is, before taxes or other deductions.
3. High - more than \$15,000	01. A under 1,000
9. Inappropriate	02. B 1,000 to 2,999
	03. C 3,000 to 3,999
	.
	08. H 8,000 to 9,999
	09. I 10,000 to 14,999
	10. J 15,000 to 19,999
	11. K 20,000 to 24,999
	12. L 25,000 or over
	13. Refused
	98. Don't know
	99. No answer
	00. Inappropriate - none
V11. Status inconsistency	There is no corresponding NORC variable
This variable is obtained by comparing V08 and V09 and V10.	
0. Consistency (V08=V09=V10)	
1. Inconsistency (V08≠V09≠V10)	
or (V08≠V09=V10)	
or (V08=V09≠V10)	

APPENDIX A--Continued

Secondary Variable	Primary Variable
V12. Sex of Respondent  This variable is transferred in-tact.	0083. Sex of respondent Q.38. Sex of respondent?  1. Male 2. Female
V13. Race of Respondent  This variable is transferred in-tact.	0084. Race of respondent Q.39. What race do you consider yourself?  1. White 2. Black 3. Other
V14. Marital status  This variable is transferred in-tact.	0024. Respondent's marital status Q.9. Are you currently married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?  1. Married 2. Widowed 3. Divorced 4. Separated 5. Never Married
V15. Age of Respondent  1. 18 to 19 2. 20 to 29 3. 30 to 39 4. 40 to 49 5. 50 to 59 6. 60 to 69 7. 70 to 79 8. 80 to 89 9. No answer	0234. Respondent's age Q.103. What is your date of birth?  18. 18 years 19. 19 years . . . 89. 89 years 99. No answer

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