The relationship of decision-making and division of household labor to relationship satisfaction

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The relationship of decision-making and division of household labor to relationship satisfaction

by

Tara Danielle Dekkers

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

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Iowa State University
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Abstract

The influence of the division of household labor and decision making on relationship satisfaction was examined. Equality in income and education between partners was also taken into consideration. Participants of this study consisted of 63 couples recruited from a community in the Midwest. The study used the Family Responsibility Index to measure the division of household labor, the Marital Decision Making Scale to measure decision-making, a subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale to measure relationship satisfaction. The hypotheses were tested using correlations and regressions. Overall results suggest that equality in the division of household labor was found to have significant effects on relationship satisfaction.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

For years, researchers have attempted to uncover the secret to marital and relationship happiness. However there are frequent confusions and mixed messages in relation to such happiness and satisfaction. Researchers have looked at gender ideologies and how they are connected to different relational and personal characteristics. Some studies have been done considering how relationship satisfaction is tied to the ways individuals think about gender roles and ideologies. Other studies have looked at spouses’ similarity in their ideas about gender roles and the effect this has on relationship satisfaction.

The current study also considers areas of a relationship that could be equal or imbalanced. Specific areas of a relationship considered in this study are decision making and the division of household labor. Nearly every study done with the division of household labor has found that women generally put more time and effort into household labor tasks. Decision making is one form of power within relationships while the division of household labor could be another measurement of power. It seems important to discover how relationship satisfaction is affected by the individual perceptions of who makes decisions that involve both partners. It is difficult to make generalizations about these topics in relation to relationship satisfaction because of the fact that division of household labor, decision making, and relationship satisfaction have not been consistently measured or defined in the same way.

There has been an emphasis given to feminist issues along with equality within relationships for some time. Equity theory, social exchange theory, and feminist theory all contribute to our understandings of the variables tested in this study. No research to date has
specifically looked at the perceptions of equality in relation to the satisfaction with the division of household labor, decision making, and the level of relationship satisfaction.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Shift from Traditional Ideologies

Even though women still give more time and effort to household labor than men, it seems as though there has been a shift in recent decades toward less traditional gender-roles. Traditionally women worked with children in the home and did the majority of the work within the home. Men were expected to be the bread-winners and to have the final say in the household. There seems to be a shift in this way of thinking. For example, it was discovered that when women work outside the home, men put more time and effort into household responsibilities than when women do not work outside the home (Hiller & Philliber, 1986) and that as a woman’s earnings increase, her partner’s effort toward household labor also increases (Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane, 1992). In contrast, the more hours a man works, the less he participated in household labor (Greenstein, 1996).

Theoretical Positions

Equity theory and feminist theory. Therapists often face challenges when they encounter couples who have different levels of power and influence in relationships. Often one of the goals of feminist therapists is to gain equality within the relationship and thereby lessen tensions. This is thought to be tied to the notion of equity theory. Equity theory provides a structure for resolving conflict. The first idea is to consider how roles are determined and upheld within society and to then determine specifically what a couple can do to overcome inequalities. Gaining fairness in roles and responsibilities is one of the main goals that equity theory would prescribe to. Gaining fairness may be maintained only if couples are willing to compromise and to be flexible in their roles and ideas (Rachlin, 1987). Equity theory also suggests that when partners experience more equality, marital satisfaction
is at its highest (Pina & Bengtson, 1993). Unequal relationships in relation to unequal decision-making were found to create an environment where individuals became distressed and experienced higher levels of depression (Zvonkovic, Schmeige, & Hall, 1994). Some have suggested that spouses might have the perception that their power within a relationship is balanced when in reality it is not balanced. According to the theory of equity, it is the perception of imbalance that leads to distress within couples’ relationships (Margolin, Fernandez, Talovic, & Onorato, 1983).

*Social exchange theory.* Along with equity theory is social exchange theory. This theory suggests that the role of one person has an impact on another and that each person is interdependent on the others around them. The overall idea of exchange theory is that in romantic relationships, individuals attempt to balance their roles by considering the balances between the costs and the benefits derived from those roles within the relationship (Tomlinson, 1987). Social exchange theory would also suggest that when an individual experiences benefits outweighing costs of a relationship, he/she will be less depressed (Zvonkovic et al., 1994) and experience less distress (Pina & Bengtson, 1993).

**Contributors to Relationship Satisfaction**

*Gender roles and ideologies.* For years researchers have attempted to explore power, decision-making and relationship satisfaction differences between males and females. There seem to be some gender differences in the levels of satisfaction within marriages. For example, there seem to be differences in relationship satisfaction based on gender roles and ideologies (Bowen & Orthner, 1983; Sherman, 1988; Yogman & Bragelton, 1986). Traditional gender ideologies include the idea that women should do the majority of childcare responsibilities and housework; men are expected to do the outdoor work, make the
money, have the final say in decisions, and take care of maintenance. Women find their identity in the home and in doing housework whereas men find their identity in work and are able to maintain power over their families. Non-traditional, egalitarian, or modern gender ideologies are more concerned with equal division of labor, child-care, and decision-making (Hochschild, 1989).

Feminist ideology. A feminist ideology suggests that marriages may be arranged in a way which is stereotypical and this is known as a traditional marriage. The major push of feminist ideology is to openly point out the oppressive nature of society based solely on gender including the economic and emotional sacrifices that women have been forced to endure (Blaisure & Allen, 1995). The feminist perspective would also suggest that since women’s careers are not as valued, women are forced to work a “second shift”. After working a job outside the home, women also take on the additional responsibility of domestic and childcare responsibilities which is known as the “second shift” (Hochschild, 1989). This non-traditional ideology suggests and men and women place their identities equally into family, home, and work life (Hochschild, 1989).

Feminist ideas suggest that these narrow points of view be expanded so that men do not dominate over women and so that women are not oppressed by men or pressured to do all of the child-rearing and household responsibilities. These tasks are often undervalued as can be seen by the fact that these responsibilities go unpaid and often underappreciated (Margolin et al., 1983). Feminism also makes the assertion that when power relations are unbalanced the person with more power tends to make more of the decisions and tends to be more satisfied with the relationship than the person with less power (Zvonkovic et al., 1994).
Some believe that wives benefit when their husbands participate in household work. Many women perceive the contribution by their husbands, however limited, as an expression of love or support (Pina & Bengtson, 1993). Feminists and feminist theory has therefore encouraged increased male participation in caring for children and household responsibilities (Margolin et al., 1983). Hochschild (1989) proposes that men might help out in the home if asked. A woman having to ask for her husband’s participation shows that there is an imbalance simply because she makes a request. Often this request can create tension which many would rather avoid. Therefore a woman often does the job because she would rather have a happy cohesive relationship (Hochschild, 1989).

The findings examining the link between relationship satisfaction and gender ideologies have been somewhat mixed. Bowen and Orthner (1983) found that men who held a modern view of marriage where roles were more similar had higher levels of relationship satisfaction, whereas women who held traditional views of marriage had higher levels of relationship satisfaction (Bowen & Orthner, 1983; Zvonkovic et al., 1994). Conversely, other studies have found that relationship satisfaction decreases in women who are part of traditional couples (Tomlinson, 1987; Yogman & Bragelton, 1986). Women who held to traditional gender ideologies were found to have lower levels of satisfaction after the birth of their first child when compared to non-traditional women and to men (Tomlinson, 1987). This may be because the traditional woman perceives her duties as being the sole provider for her child’s needs. When the demands of being a full-time mother become overwhelming, she may feel inadequate in other roles such of being a wife and having a career. Levels of relationship satisfaction also decreased when husbands of traditional wives attempted to participate in household labor and child care (Yogman & Bragelton, 1986).
Power and influence. Power and influence has been heavily studied and has been found to have some effects on relationship satisfaction. Gray-Little, Baucom, and Hamby (1996) for example assessed couples for domination in the marriage. They instructed couples to talk about a problem area and to come up with a solution. Domination was determined by which resolution was accepted or if there was a compromised resolution. They found that couples who made joint decisions and were more egalitarian were more satisfied with their marriages than couples in which one spouse dominated the other or in which both spouses tried to dominate the relationship.

Similarly, other studies suggested that balanced spousal roles in relation to equal divisions of household labor (Rachlin, 1987) and equal contributions to child-rearing (Yogman & Bragelton, 1986) led to higher levels of relationship satisfaction; Tsang and colleagues (2003) as well as Marks and colleagues (2001) also concluded that when both spouses were employed full-time, relationship satisfaction was increased (Marks, Huston, Johnson, & Macdermid, 2001; Tsang, Harvey, Duncan, & Sommer, 2001).

Division of Household Labor

The division of household labor is often not something that is shared equally between partners. Most studies find that women give more time and effort toward household labor than men (Coltrane & Ishii-Kuntz, 1992; Stevens, Kiger, & Riley, 2001) even when they are employed outside the home (Demo & Acock, 1993; Gjerdingen & Chaloner, 1994; Hochschild, 1989). Hochschild (1989) refers to this extra time and effort as “the second shift” which essentially adds up to an extra month of work in a year’s time for women. This may be because of the traditional gender-role expectations that women feel they should live up to and that men expect from their wives. It comes as no surprise then that women
generally feel more overloaded and under-benefited by household tasks than men and that men feel more advantaged by this unequal division of household labor (Hochschild, 1989; Rachlin, 1987). Hochschild (1989) suggests that even when men do contribute to household labor, they put more time into the more enjoyable tasks, such as taking the children to the park, rather than duties such as scrubbing the floors and cleaning the bathrooms.

It was also discovered that women who were depressed were more likely than women who were not depressed to be dissatisfied with the division of household labor (Whisman & Jacobson, 1989). There may even be health benefits for couples with an equitable division of household labor. For example, Gottman (1991) reported that men are physically and emotionally healthier if they participate in household labor. Additional health benefits include fewer feelings of stress (Rachlin, 1987). The division of household labor has been tied to other variables— one is the idea that both men and women report fewer social supports when they are dissatisfied with the division of household labor and when the division is unequal (Van Willigen & Drentea, 2001).

Despite these findings, Hiller and Philliber (1986) found that only 38 percent of couples expected that household duties traditionally thought to be feminine should be a shared endeavor. Although 58% of men report that housework should be equally divided between spouses, the fact was that less than one-third of husbands actually contributed to household responsibilities (Hiller & Philliber, 1986). This could be due to the obvious fact and most women do not get paid for completing household duties. However because the duties involved in household labor are not particularly valued, men who do not hold egalitarian beliefs are therefore not likely to request or volunteer to participate in household responsibilities (Hiller & Philliber, 1986).
The division of household labor is one way of measuring levels of equity within relationship relationships. Couples generally report that equitable relationships are more beneficial to them than traditional relationships. According to feminist theory, equitable relations improve the experience and quality of marriage for women because gender injustices are overcome and a woman has the ability to pursue personal endeavors and goals. Couples who chose equitable marriage relationships were able to convey in public ways their commitment to maintaining equality. Couples also considered equitable relationships to be more beneficial because they felt that both partners could be equally involved at the emotional level and each could give and receive equal emotional support. Men felt that their equitable marriage allowed them to be able to try and better understand where their partners were coming from and empathize better with their partners. When men and women were able to share the feminist ideology as a couple, individuals demonstrated more support and acceptance of one another. Admittedly, obtaining and maintaining these equitable roles requires frequent compromise and negotiations. Therefore constant contemplation of equality and emotional engagement between partners is most helpful for gaining and maintaining equality (Blaisure & Allen, 1995).

It has been suggested that traditional beliefs about gender roles may make these role negotiations easier because there is already a standard or example of who is to do certain chores or tasks (Zvonkovic et al., 1994). Maintaining an equitable relationship involves increased amounts of intimacy because reaching decisions where both individuals are in agreement takes a certain period of time as well as open emotional and verbal sharing from one another. One study determined that couples in egalitarian relationships desired fewer changes in their partners when compared to couples who did not have egalitarian
relationships (Gray-Little et al., 1996). Women who held non-traditional gender ideologies were found to be more contented when their husbands participated in household labor (Pina & Bengtson, 1993).

Many other studies have tied the division of household labor to child-rearing and child-care. For instance, there seems to be a positive correlation between the number of hours devoted to household labor and the number of hours devoted to childcare (Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane, 1992). A number of studies have concluded that women desire more help from fathers (Blaisure & Allen, 1995, Gjerdingen & Chaloner, 1994; Hanson, 1990) and that men desire this as well (Hanson, 1990; Hiller & Philliber, 1986). Hiller and Philliber (1986) found that most couples believed child care should be a shared responsibility--yet a number of hurdles stand in the way of men contributing equally to the care of their children. Some of these hurdles include assumptions about men not being sensitive enough, men not being able to properly care for children, men being pushed away because child-care is primarily considered a woman’s duty, and men lacking an interest in children (Russell & Radojevic, 1992).

Children benefit when their fathers are more involved in their lives (Russell & Radojevic, 1992). Gjerdingen and Chaloner (1994) found that husbands initially contribute to child care in the initial stages of a child’s life but over the course of the year and as the child grows the contribution lessens. Husbands also contribute more if they have more free time away from work and related commitments (Broderick & O’Leary, 1986). The more children men have, the more they contribute to the care of children; however, the time spent on household responsibilities appears to lessen (Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane, 1992).
Satisfaction with the Division of Household Labor

The satisfaction with the division of household labor could be determined by a person’s gender ideology. Those with traditional gender ideologies seem to be more satisfied with the division of household labor than those who have non-traditional gender ideologies (Klute, Crouter, Sayer, & McHale, 2001). This is explained by the extent that beliefs match with the roles that are in place (Klute et al., 2001). As a whole, men seem to be more satisfied than women with the division of household labor (Benin & Agostinelli, 1988; Gjerdingen & Chaloner, 1994). Women, however, are most satisfied when husbands participate in “feminine” responsibilities such as cleaning the floors, cooking, washing dishes, cleaning the bathroom, and doing laundry. Women are also more satisfied when she is responsible for the work which relates to family relationships (Benin & Agostinelli, 1988). This could be because taking care of the family and the children is seen as more important and rewarding than the other “feminine” tasks. Gjerdingen and Chaloner (1994) also found that women were satisfied with the division of household labor the more men contributed.

Women were also more satisfied with the division of household labor when they were employed outside the home. This could be because of the fact that men contribute more to the household when their wives work outside the home (Pina & Bengtson, 1993). This finding is contradictory to what Hochschild (1989) found. In this instance, men did not increase their amount of time spent in household responsibilities despite women working outside of the home (Hochschild, 1989).

Decision-Making in Close Relationships

Making decisions in close and spousal relationships is another way to assess for egalitarian relationships. The partner who makes more decisions is thought to have more
power or say in the relationship (Godwin & Scanzoni, 1989; Marks et al., 2001; Sherman, 1988). As previously mentioned, maintaining equity is very difficult to obtain even though it is often desired.

**Influence as decision-making.** Some studies assess for levels of influence that partners have on one another. Zvonkovic and colleagues (1994), for example, considered the differences between wives’ and husbands’ attempts at direct or indirect influence on each other; overall, they found that spouses use similar ways to influence one another. They also found that traditional individuals tended to use more direct influences such as giving a reward or bargaining with one’s spouse whereas non-traditional individuals tended to employ indirect influences such as use of emotions or another person’s opinion to influence their spouse (Zvonkovic et al., 1994).

Godwin and Scanzoni (1989) did a study on decision-making and power levels between couples. They found that when spouses did not attempt to coerce or control their partners, decision-making was more equal. A related finding was that higher scores of consensus and cooperation coincided with more equal spousal decision-making. More feelings of love and commitment toward one’s partner were related to more equality in decision-making (Godwin & Scanzoni, 1989).

**Role balance as decision-making.** Other studies looked at decision-making power in terms of the role balance between spouses. Couples perceived more equality in their roles and in decision-making when women worked outside of the home and when she spent less time with her children. Men, in contrast, felt that the roles were more balanced when they spent more time with their wives and their children (Marks et al., 2001). Women who had higher levels of both income and education were much more likely to use direct influence on
their partners than women who had lower incomes and lesser levels of education (Zvonkovic et al., 1994). This related to another finding which suggested that when economic resources are equal between partners, equal decision-making is more likely (Godwin & Scanzoni, 1989). However this could be due, in part, to lessened financial strain if both partners are working outside the home or that more money balances out spousal roles (Marks et al., 2001). At the same time, working too many hours outside the home leaves spouses feeling unbalanced in their levels of decision making (Marks et al., 2001). However, when women work outside of the home, men’s relationship satisfaction was found to decrease (Sherman, 1988). Women also face difficulties with working outside the home if their husbands do not support them in this endeavor. One study found that only 60% of men would support their wives working outside of the home (Hiller & Philliber, 1986).

*Household labor as decision-making.* The division of household labor (Van Willigen & Drentea, 2001) as well as relationship with children may be tied to decision making (Marks et al., 2001). Van Willigen and Drentea (2001), for example, suggested that decision making power could be measured by the way that the household labor was divided. This is based on the idea that the division of household labor is related to the power and control that one or both partners have in the relationship. Equitable relationships are a result of a perceived equitable arrangement of fairness or in the form of actual work which each individual puts forth. If one person perceives the division of household labor as unfair, the division may not necessarily shift but they may have the power to decide to make it equal, and be able to sustain a relationship which is more equitable. Van Willigen and Drentea (2001) also determined that spouses who share in household responsibilities have more supportive relationships.
Childcare as decision-making. There may also be links between decision-making power and children. Marks and colleagues (2001) found that when both spouses had higher levels of attachment with their children, spouses felt like there was more balance in their roles and in decision making. They also found that when women spent less free time with her children and men spent more free time with their children, spouses perceived that there was more equality in both their roles and in their balanced decision-making practices (Marks et al., 2001). This might be related to their shift in traditional gender roles and responsibilities and an effort to be more egalitarian.

Methodological Critique

Sampling. Many of the studies done in regard to decision-making and division of household labor examine couples who are married (Benin & Agostinelli, 1988; Blaisure & Allen, 1995; Bowen & Orthner, 1983; Broderick & O’Leary, 1986; Coltrane & Ishii-Kuntz, 1992; Cox et al., 1989; Gjerdingen & Chaloner, 1994; Godwin & Sconzoni, 1989; Gottman, 1991; Gray-Little et al., 1996; Greenstein, 1996; Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane 1992; Klute et al., 2001; Marks et al., 2001; Rachlin, 1987; Sherman, 1988; Stevens et al., 2001; Tomlinson, 1987; Whisman & Jacobson, 1989; Zvonkovic et al., 1994). Other studies have considered individuals (Tsang et al., 2003) or just one gender such as women (Pina & Bengtson, 1993) or men (Russell & Radojevic, 1992).

The present study considers married couples and cohabiting couples as a part of the sample. There may be differences in married versus cohabiting couples. Cohabiting couples may be less attached to their roles and have more flexibility in maintaining egalitarian relationships if they are not in a committed relationship. Cohabiting couples may also be less traditional and hold to less traditional ideologies thereby permitting more freedom in
individual and partner roles. This study considers both partners’ perceptions which will assist in assessing relationship satisfaction in general. Therefore the study includes both genders but runs analyses on genders separately.

*Household labor.* There are variations in the measuring of household labor; these definitions are often not consistent across studies. Zvonkovic and colleagues (1994) suggested that household labor consisted of making decisions, raising children, and housekeeping and was measured by each individual’s perception of these divisions. In this case, decision-making was included on the same scale as the division of household labor.

Pina and Bengtson (1993) asked a single question about how satisfied wives were with the help they received from their husbands in relation to household labor. The division of household labor has also been measured by the number of hours each person contributes to household labor which includes cooking, doing dishes, cleaning, outdoor maintenance, vehicle maintenance, bills, and driving family members to their commitments (Greenstein, 1996; Pina & Bengtson, 1993). Rachlin (1987) considered the division of household labor to include roles of being the contributor, the house cleaner, the person to care for children, the person who is concerned with social matters, or the person who stays in contact with relatives. It is therefore difficult to make generalizations about household labor with dissimilar concepts of household labor.

The present study separates the division of household labor and decision-making as the two topics are not the same. In separating these topics we can attempt to discover levels of power. Perhaps one person does all of the household labor but has very little influence in decision-making. Additionally, this study considers a variety of forms of household labor.
including indoor, outdoor, domestic, manual, and monetary responsibilities but looks at all of them together to assess for overall levels of the division of household labor.

**Decision-making.** Godwin and Scanzoni (1989) have suggested that research in the area of relationship power as well as the area of couple decision-making has been disordered in relation to its theoretical basis. Confusion also remains in relation to power and decision-making regarding definitions and testing of such concepts (Godwin & Scanzoni, 1989).

There are also differences in the definitions made by those considering decision-making. Zvonkovic and colleagues (1994) suggested that decision-making could be measured by asking participants to consider their perceptions and satisfaction with decision-making. Godwin and Scanzoni (1989) measured decision-making by asking each person whose conclusion was accepted at the end of a discussion about a topic in which the partners did not initially agree (Van Willigen & Drentea, 2001).

The present study considers the perception of who makes the final decision in a number of areas rather than overall decision-making. This allows for a more accurate picture of which person carries more power in relation to making of decisions in the household. Inclusion of a number of decisions is important to consider because only considering decision-making over one topic may not give an accurate portrayal of actual levels decision-making within the relationship. All decisions were considered together to look at overall equity within relationships which is similar to what has been done in previous studies (Godwin & Scanzoni, 1989; Marks et al., 2001; Sherman, 1988).

**Egalitarian relationships.** Numerous studies have considered egalitarian relationships but few actually define egalitarian relationships in the same way. For instance, Margolin and colleagues (1983) suggest that equality is not having equal roles but that each role that a
person takes on is giving equal status and importance to roles. Tomlinson (1987) measured relationship equity as each individual’s perception of equality within the romantic relationship. The term egalitarian as referred to in relationships also has various explanations. Rachlin (1987) determined that couples were considered egalitarian if household tasks were considered to be equal or if neither partner was responsible for the majority of the tasks at hand. She measured equality by assessing the perceived levels of each person’s contribution and productivity, along with their perceived levels of equality between themselves and their partners (Rachlin, 1987). The present study addresses equality by considering many types of household labor as well as numerous kinds of decisions made. These topics are combined to come up with an overall level of equality within the relationship.

In contrast to the present study, few studies have closely considered perceived decision-making in relation to relationship satisfaction. Marks and colleagues (2001) found that more liberal ideas about gender roles led to couples being dissatisfied with the set-up of their current relationship. This may be because their ideologies did not match their current reality. The perception of equality in relation to gender roles and decision making may be more important than the actual equality within the marital relationship (Tsang et al., 2003). Marks and colleagues (2001) also found that those who did have truly egalitarian relationships were more satisfied with their marriage and their roles in making decisions.

Purpose and Hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to extend research on the contributors to relationship satisfaction in the particular areas of decision-making and division of household labor. There remains a question as to whether or not these factors together influence relationship satisfaction. This study brings together previous definitions in a holistic way by considering a
variety of decisions to be made as well as a variety of labor within the home and then considering how relationship satisfaction is thereby influenced.

Three hypotheses are made based on previous research: 1) It is hypothesized that the perception of equal decision-making increases levels of relationship satisfaction; 2) more equality in the division of household labor would lead to higher levels of relationship satisfaction; and 3) equality in decision-making and household labor would lead to higher levels of relationship satisfaction, even after controlling for education and income. It is also hypothesized that there will be differences between men and women. Therefore analyses will be run separately for gender.
Participants

The study consisted of 65 couples recruited via newspaper advertisements and advertisements posted on bulletin boards throughout the community. The original study pertained to the investigation of the relationship of demand/withdraw patterns and conflict management on couples’ relationship satisfaction. Interested couples were asked to contact the investigators directly by phone or e-mail. Couples came into a lab setting and filled out a packet of questionnaires. Those that participated were paid $60 for a video-taped session in which they each discussed, for 10 minutes, an area of contention in their relationship.

Sixty-three females and 63 males participated in the study. Two homosexual couples were dropped for purposes of the present investigation. Female ages ranged from 23 years to 76 years with a mean age of 37.89 years and a standard deviation of 12.27 (see Table 1 for all descriptive statistics). Male ages were between 22 years to 79 years, with a mean age of 39.43 years and a standard deviation of 13.81. Ethnicity for women consisted of 92.1% Caucasian, 1.6% Asian, 1.6% Hispanic, 3.2% were other, and 1.6% did not report their ethnicity. The men’s group, with regard to ethnicity, were also predominantly Caucasian (84.1%), 1.6% Black, 12.7% were other, and 1.6% did not report their ethnicity. A majority of men reported being married (85.7%); with a range of 0 to 53 years, a mean length of marriage of 11.52 years and a standard deviation of 12.20. The majority of women were also married (85.7%); with a range of 0 to 52 years, a mean length of marriage of 11.73 years and a standard deviation of 12.03. The mean relationship satisfaction was 41.11 for men with a standard deviation of 4.75 and a range of 21 to 48; women had a mean relationship
satisfaction score of 40.92 with a standard deviation of 5.31 with a range of 20 to 49. Women therefore reflected slightly lower levels of overall relationship satisfaction than men.

The percentage of people reporting annual household incomes of over $70,001 was 29.4%, 22.2% reported annual incomes between $50,001-70,000, 33.3% reported annual incomes between $30,001-50,000, 12.7% reported annual incomes between $10,001-20,000, and 2.4% reported annual household incomes of less than $10,000. Most females (68.3%) reported earning less than their partner, 11.1% reported earning equal to what their partner makes and 20.6% reported earning more than their partner. Most men (69.8%) reported earning more than their partner while 15.9% reported earning less than their partner and 14.3% reported earning the same as their partner.

In terms of education, 47.6% of women reported having more education than their partner, while 28.6% of women reported having less education than their partner and 23.8% of women reported having the same amount of education as their partner. Fewer men reported having more education than their partner (25.4%) while 36.5% reported having equal education as their partner and 38.1% reported having more education than their partner.
Table 1. 
*Demographic and Descriptive Statistics for Couples (N = 126)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Summary Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age in Years (range)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22-79</td>
<td>39.43</td>
<td>13.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23-76</td>
<td>37.89</td>
<td>12.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Length in Years (range)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0-53</td>
<td>11.52</td>
<td>11.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0-52</td>
<td>11.73</td>
<td>12.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Reported</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic non-white</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Reported</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not married</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,001 or Greater</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001-70,000</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,001-50,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,001-20,000</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Summary Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than partner</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal to partner</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than partner</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than partner</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal to partner</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than partner</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than partner</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal to partner</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than partner</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than partner</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal to partner</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than partner</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making (range)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td>1.48 - 3.87</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td>2.18 - 5.00</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of Household Labor (range)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td>1.85 - 3.58</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td>2.53 - 4.43</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Satisfaction (range)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td>21 - 48</td>
<td>41.11</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td>20 - 49</td>
<td>40.92</td>
<td>5.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedure

In the original study, participants were asked to fill out a packet of questionnaires independent of each other. The packet included topics such as relationship satisfaction, division of household labor, demand/withdraw characteristics, decision-making, partner
agreement, and personality types, along with a demographics form. In addition they were asked to select a problematic issue to discuss based on a list of possible topics; the participants were allowed to add topics if they so desired. The participants were randomly assigned as to whose topic would be discussed first, then they were asked to discuss that topic for 10 minutes.

Measures

Income and education. A measure of income was taken in terms of whether or not the individual had an income that is greater than, equal to, or less than the partner. The measurement of income equity was used rather than total income based on Godwin and Scanzoni’s (1989) findings that equal economic resources led to more equal decision-making. If data was missing the response of the partner was entered for income. Similarly, education was measured as greater than, equal to, or less than the partners’ education. There were no missing cases here. If partners had conflicting answers, the individual’s personal response was used since measures were self-reported.

Decision-making. Decision-making was assessed using the Marital Decision-Making Scale (MDMS; Beach & Anderson, 1993). Possible responses included n/a if the question did not apply, as well as a 1 to 5 Likert-type scale. Participants who circled a one indicated that they make the decision, those who circled a three indicated that decisions were made equally between partners, and those circling a five indicated that the partner makes the decision. The scale consists of 24 questions asking who makes the final decision regarding different topics. The questions included the following topics (with an example): vocation, “How many hours you work”; family, “How many children there should be in our family”; recreation, “Which friends to see”; religion, “How to follow or practice religion at home”; finances, “How to
spend money on small purchases”; and sex, “How to have sex” (Beach & Anderson, 1993). Separate totals were calculated for each gender. The final score was determined by summing the responses given, with a range from 24 to 120, and dividing by the number of non-n/a responses in order to obtain an average. Final scores which were closer to five indicated that the person’s partner made more decisions, scores closer to one indicated that the respondent made more decisions with three indicating that decisions were made equally. Answers for men and women were separately analyzed because the measure was a sample of each person’s perspective of decision-making. If there was missing data, the mean of the corresponding gender was entered. For questions involving children, if the person reported having no children, then n/a was entered, otherwise the mean was used. Missing data accounted for less than 1.5% of the data on this measure. Reliability tests showed that the MDMS in this study was reliable with a Cronbach’s alpha of .81.

The mean decision-making score was 3.07 for men with a standard deviation of 0.36 and a range of 1.48 to 3.87. Women had a mean decision-making score of 3.05 with a standard deviation of 0.46 and a range of 2.18 to 5.00. On average, both men and women reported making decisions relatively equally although the ranges suggest that some women reported that their partners made more decisions than the men.

Division of labor. The division of household labor was determined using the Family Responsibility Index (FRI; Alley, 1984). The scale consisted of 52 household items. The following was asked for each question: “During a typical working week, who is responsible for each of the following tasks?” Possible responses were n/a which meant that the particular item did not apply to the household, and a 1 to 5 Likert-type scale, with the following meanings: one “my partner always”, two “my partner more”, three “my partner and me
equally or both”, four “me more”, or five “me always”. Household labor included a variety of tasks including (the number of questions with an example): seven yard-work tasks, “mow lawn”; four car care tasks, “decide when the car needs servicing and take to the garage”; four family business tasks, “pay bills”; three laundry tasks, “wash clothes”; eight housecleaning tasks, “dust furniture”; five heavy housecleaning tasks, “wash walls”; three kitchen clean-up tasks, “clean stove”; two preparing meals tasks, “plan meals/buy food”; eleven family care tasks, “discipline children”; and six house care and upkeep tasks, “outdoor painting”. The reliability of this measure in past research ranged from .79 and .82 (Alley, 1984). The measure in this study was reliable with a Cronbach’s alpha of .88 for the FRI. Validity was also found to be high for the Family Responsibility Index (Alley, 1984). The scores were averaged to determine who was perceived to do more of the household labor. Once again, separate scores were taken for each gender. If there was missing data, the mean of the corresponding gender was entered. For questions involving children, if the person reported having no children than n/a was entered, otherwise the mean was used. Missing data accounted for less than .02% of the data.

The mean division of household labor was 2.79 for men with a standard deviation of 0.34 and a range of 1.85 to 3.58 and women had a mean of 3.36 with a standard deviation of 0.43 and a range of 2.53 to 4.43. This suggests that women reported doing more than half of the household responsibilities and men also reported that women did more than half of the household responsibilities.

Relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was measured using the satisfaction subscale of the DAS (Hunsley, Pinsent, Lefebvre, James-Tanner, & Vito, 1995). This scale consists of 10 questions taken from Spanier’s (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale.
The subscale was found in previous research to have an $\alpha$ of .82 (Hunsley et al., 1995). The subscale was therefore determined to be internally consistent. The range of possible scores of the satisfaction subscale is from 0 to 50 with higher scores indicating a higher level of relationship satisfaction (Hunsley et al., 2001). Furthermore, Hunsley and colleagues (1995) determined that the satisfaction subscale of the DAS yielded similar values as the entire DAS. They proposed that the satisfaction subscale could be used as a short form of the DAS. The subscale was also determined to reproduce similar variances that were present with the entire DAS (Hunsley et al., 1995). The satisfaction score was determined by summing all of the satisfaction responses. There were no missing data for the satisfaction scores. Reliability tests showed that the measure was reliable with a Cronbach’s alpha, $\alpha = .86$ for the satisfaction subscale of the DAS in the current study.

**Data Analyses**

The first hypothesis states that the perception of equal decision-making increases levels of relationship satisfaction with differences between men and women. A correlation was run to measure this difference and the extent to which relationship satisfaction was affected by the perceived level of decision-making. This was done by setting the equality of decision-making as measured by the MDMS (Beach & Anderson, 1993) as the predictor variable regressed on the outcome variable of relationship satisfaction as measured by the DAS satisfaction subscale (Hunsley et al., 2001). The second hypothesis stated that more equality in the division of household labor would lead to higher levels of relationship satisfaction. As with the first hypothesis, the second was assessed using a correlation to measure the impact on relationship satisfaction. The division of household labor as measured
by the FRI (Alley, 1984) was the predictor variable regressed on the outcome variable of relationship satisfaction as measured by the DAS satisfaction subscale (Hunsley et al., 2001).

The third hypotheses stated that equal levels of education and equal levels of income would be associated with equal divisions of household labor and equal decision-making, which in turn should contribute to higher relationship satisfaction. This was measured using a hierarchical linear regression. Income and education served as control variables and were thus entered in the first block, followed by household labor and decision-making entered as the second block, regressed on relationship satisfaction as the outcome variable. This analysis was run separately for men and women.
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Decision-Making and Relationship Satisfaction

The first hypothesis stated that the perception of equal decision-making would be associated with an increase in relationship satisfaction, and that this relationship would be different for males and females. Correlations suggest that relationship satisfaction was not significantly related to perceived levels of equality for females, ($r(63) = .03, p = .84$) or for males, ($r(63) = -.16, p = .22$; see Table 2).

Table 2.

*Correlations for Males and Females*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males (n = 63)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Decision Making</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Relationship Satisfaction</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td>.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Division of Labor</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females (n = 63)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Decision Making</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Relationship Satisfaction</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Division of Labor</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, **p < .01
Division of Household Labor and Relationship Satisfaction

The second hypothesis stated that the perception of equal division of household labor would be associated with an increase in relationship satisfaction, and that this relationship would be different for males and females. Correlations suggest that the relation between relationship satisfaction and division of household labor was significant for females, \( r(63) = -.35, p < .05 \) and for males, \( r(63) = .26, p < .05; \) see Table 2). It should be noted that the more household work women reported, the lower her relationship satisfaction was. However, the more household labor men reported doing, the higher his level of relationship satisfaction. Overall, women reported that their household responsibilities were 3.36 whereas men reported 2.78 indicating that in general genders agreed with the amount of time that they and their partner put forth in household labor. Both genders agreed that women did more of the household labor and men did less.

Analyses Accounting for Relationship Satisfaction

The third hypothesis stated that equal levels of decision-making and household labor would lead to higher levels of relationship satisfaction after controlling for education and income. A hierarchical regression was run with income and education in the first block and decision-making and division of household labor in the second block. The variables were dummy coded to set up two comparisons each for income and education. Zero served as the baseline and meant that income and education were equal in both of the comparisons. Income and education were not significant predictors of satisfaction scores for males \( F(4, 58) = .43, p = .79 \) or for females \( F(4, 58) = .50, p = .74 \) regardless of whether or not the division of household labor and decision-making were included for males \( F(6, 56) = 1.12, p = .36 \) or females \( F(6, 56) = 1.66, p = .15 \). Overall the model for men suggests that the relationship
between household labor and satisfaction disappears when income and education are included. Whereas the overall model for women suggests that the relationship between household labor and satisfaction is still present even after income and education are included ($t = -2.81$, $p < .05$). See Tables 3 and 4 for a visual depiction of the results for men and women, respectively.
Table 3.  
Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting  
Relationship Satisfaction in Males (N = 63)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income: Male earns more</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income: Female earns more</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Male has more</td>
<td>-1.76</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Female has more</td>
<td>-1.33</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income: Male earns more</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income: Female earns more</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Male has more</td>
<td>-1.29</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Female has more</td>
<td>-.45</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making</td>
<td>-1.94</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of labor</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R² = .03 for Step 1; R² = .11 for Step 2; no significance was found.
Table 4.

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Relationship Satisfaction in Females (N = 63)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income: Female earns more</td>
<td>-1.58</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>-.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income: Male earns more</td>
<td>-2.75</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>-.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Female has more</td>
<td>-.83</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Male has more</td>
<td>-.57</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income: Female earns more</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income: Male earns more</td>
<td>-.73</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Female has more</td>
<td>-1.94</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Male has more</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of labor</td>
<td>-4.54</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R² = .03 for Step 1; R² = .15 for Step 2. **p<.01
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

Major Findings

One major finding of this investigation is that equality in the division of household labor might lead to higher relationship satisfaction for both men and women. Equality in levels of decision-making, however, did not appear to have an influence on relationship satisfaction.

Income and education. The results of the current investigation suggest that as a whole, neither income nor education were significant predictors of relationship satisfaction for females or males. This study did not look at couples who were considered to be in poverty since very few participants had incomes below the poverty line. Only around 15% of the participants in this study reported incomes of less than $20,000 while over half of the participants reported an income of over $50,000. The upper limit of income reported was $70,000 or greater which did not allow for higher answers to be given. It might be that the higher a couples’ income was, the lower their marital satisfaction might be (Tsang et al., 2003).

The present study did not consider all ranges of income in that the upper limit reported by participants was $70,000 or greater. It might be beneficial to assess for differences in the relationship between division of labor, decision-making, and relationship satisfaction in persons in lower, middle, and upper classes. This study did not account for levels of difference in the income and education between partners beyond that the individual had more, equal, or less education and income than the partner. Past research has determined that as the income and hours worked by the woman increases, the roles between partners become more balanced (Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane, 1992; Marks et al., 2001). Future research
might quantify these differences and measure the levels of difference between partners. According to the equity theory, more equality in relationships leads to higher levels of relationship satisfaction (Pina & Bengtson, 1993; Zvonkovic et al., 2004). Therefore a person who has significantly higher income and/or education than her/his partner may experience dissatisfaction in the relationship. For example an individual who has a doctoral level education who is in a relationship with a partner who has an education only through the eighth grade may experience more differences and conflict in the relationship than if she/he was married to someone with a masters degree. Both of these people have less education than the partner yet the differences are not quite as obvious. The same might be true for income.

**Decision-making.** The findings suggest that men and women did not appear to differ on their scores of decision-making. Overall women reported that their decision-making score was 3.05 whereas men reported 3.06 indicating that both genders agree that decisions are made either together or in a balanced way. The responses in the questionnaire used by this study may have produced bias. It is often viewed as desirable to have egalitarian relationships in this culture. Most individuals do not want to convey that they make all the decisions and dominate another person but most individuals probably do not want to be seen as weak or passive either. The responses given may have conveyed the ideal rather than the actual way decisions are made. As Margolin and colleagues (1983) pointed out, it may be that one’s perception does not match reality within relationships. When one perceives the decision-making to be unbalanced, individuals have been found to be distressed (Zvonkovic et al., 1994) and depressed (Whisman & Jacobsen, 1989). Therefore perceiving balance in decision-making might be a protective factor and might work to increase relationship satisfaction.
The study did not consider the importance of the decision being made. Decisions that are made may differ in importance to each individual. For example, one person might make all of the career-related decisions without his/her partner which may greatly influence the partner. The other partner might make all of the decisions about how to discipline the children which might not directly influence the other person. It might also be the case that some of the decisions would be less enjoyable to make than other decisions. As Hochschild (1989) discusses, the decisions made in relationships may appear to be relatively equal but one partner may choose to make decisions which are more enjoyable. For example it might be enjoyable to decide when and where to take a vacation as opposed to deciding how to discipline the children. Yet the way that this study measured decision-making was in a way that gave equal weight to every decision being made regardless of influence on the partner, amount of time it takes to make the decision, and level of enjoyment by the individual(s) involved in making the decision.

*Division of household labor.* The division of household labor seems to be a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction for females and males. The findings were significant for males and for females indicating that equality in the division of household labor could be an important indicator of relationship satisfaction for both sexes.

As a woman does more in the way of household labor, her relationship satisfaction generally decreases, whereas when a man does more in regards to household labor, his relationship satisfaction scores typically get higher. This supports the finding that women typically take on more household responsibilities than men (Coltrane & Ishii-Kuntz, 1992; Greenstein, 1992; Hochschild, 1989; Stevens et al., 2001) and that as women do less and as men do more, the division of household labor gets closer to equal. This suggests that my
hypothesis is confirmed that equality in the division of household labor increases relationship satisfaction for males and for females.

Women and men in this study both tended to agree that women had more household responsibilities than men. Past research suggests that even when couples report equality in the division of labor it is most often the case that the woman still does more and that men tend to over-estimate the effort put into the division of labor (Blaisure & Allen, 1995). Perceptions of equality are often important although actual equality in the division of labor often differs from perception. Persons may perceive their effort as being equal especially when the man does more feminine-like tasks when the reality is that the woman still does more (Benin & Agostinelli, 1988). Distress is thought to occur when a person perceives a mismatch between his/her ideology of the way things should be and the perceived way that things are (Zvonkovic et al., 1994). Blaisure and Allen (1995) asserted that women often excuse these differences and rationalize the mismatch in perception and practice and men tend to overestimate their effort in household labor (Blaisure & Allen, 1995).

Perception vs. reality. Few studies report actual or perceived levels of decision-making. Actual decision-making levels might be different than perceived levels of decision-making. The fact remains that just because a person holds to a particular ideology or frame of thinking does not mean that she/he will put this ideology into practice (Greenstein, 1996; Hochschild, 1989). For instance, Greenstein (1996) determined that the gender ideology a husband prescribed to has little to do with the actual household duties he would perform. The current study fails to consider the gender ideology of the participants. It also does not take into consideration that reality of the division of household labor or decision-making but simply considers the perceived and reported measures given by the individuals.
Spousal similarities. This study did not directly consider the similarities between spouses in relation to their ideology and in relation to their reported division of labor and decision-making practices. Many researchers suggest that as a whole, relationship satisfaction is best determined by spousal similarity in regards to gender roles (Bowen & Orthner, 1983; Yogman & Bragelton, 1986) and that relationship satisfaction is higher when gender-role beliefs match the actual behaviors and roles that are in place (Sherman, 1988). The present study might have partially supported this notion. Women and men agree that women do more household labor and when women report doing more, her relationship satisfaction decreases while the opposite is true for men; when men do more household labor, their relationship satisfaction increases which might suggest that when both spouses agree to try to have an equitable division of labor, their relationship is more satisfactory.

Relationship satisfaction seems to be positively correlated with the division of household labor (Pina & Bengtson, 1993; Stevens et al., 2001) even if the divisions are not equal (Stevens et al., 2001). Therefore, despite the actual divisions of household labor, power balance, or contributions to child-rearing, the beliefs that each partner holds to are more important than the actual equality in these areas of contention. If satisfaction is high with these differences, then whether or not the gender ideologies of each partner matches, the actual divisions between partners in relation to household duties or child rearing responsibilities becomes irrelevant. The current investigation is limited by failing to take into account perceived equality versus actual equality.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are several limitations of this study. First, the sample size was rather small; it might be helpful to gather information from a more diverse sample with a broader range of
backgrounds, religions, and ethnicities. It may be helpful to see if there are cultural
differences in the importance of gaining equality in the particular areas of household labor
and decision-making. The size of this study did not allow for an account of differences in
length of time together, differences between married and cohabiting couples, or the influence
of children. It would be interesting to look at differences between married and cohabiting
couples in the areas of decision-making and the division of household labor. Children might
also influence the division of household labor and the way that decisions are made. A larger
sample size is needed to be able to account for such differences.

This study was also limited by the recruitment method used. Participants responded to
newspapers and posters around town. Therefore, those who agreed to participate probably
placed high value on education and research. Participants were also likely to be in relatively
stable relationships if they agree to be in a study about their relationship; this was reflected in
the high relationship satisfaction scores. The population who responded to the advertisements
was probably not distressed as might be seen in other settings such as counseling agencies.

Another limitation of this study might be the fact that it is viewed as more desirable to
have an egalitarian relationship. So even if couples do have major differences in decision-
making and household labor, it may not have been reported. Hochschild (1989) noted that
just because a couple holds to a feminist ideology does not mean that equality within the
marriage will actually be practiced. Future research might consider looking at ideas about
equality in a relationship and whether the actual equality is more important or if the level
idea of what should be equal is most important to relationship satisfaction. The responses
may therefore have been influenced by what a person wishes their relationship was like
rather than what it actually is.
In addition to considering the match of gender ideology, it might be beneficial to look at the pressures and difficulties among couples whose ideologies do not match. It might be helpful to consider how relationship components such as decision-making change when a couple gets married as opposed to when they were unmarried.

There a number of areas for future research that relate to this topic. One area that could be addressed in the future involves looking at specific areas of household labor that contribute more or less to relationship satisfaction. It may be helpful to break the categories of household labor down in order to try and determine if equality within specific areas of household labor contribute more to relationship satisfaction.

Another area of consideration for future research might be the question of whether decision-making contributes to relationship satisfaction based on the type of decision being made. The study might look at the level of influence that the decision has on the other person. Some decisions impact the partner directly while other decisions made around the house do not have major influences.

A related area of research that might be interesting would be to consider how the roles around the division of labor and decision-making are reached between partners and amount of agreement between partners concerning these roles. If these roles are close to equal it may be interesting to consider how the couple came to the conclusion to have equal roles and how those roles were negotiated.

A broader topic for future research might be to look at whether or not income and education influences power within relationships when wider ranges in education and income exist between partners. It may be that the person with more education or more earning
potential tends to make more decisions and does less in terms of household labor because he/she is perceived as having more power than the partner.

Implications and Conclusions

There are some obvious implications for therapists based on the findings of the current investigation. Marriage and family therapists might consider focusing on the equality of different areas of the relationship. Some couples could benefit from an evaluation of differences in the division of labor.

This study suggests that consideration of equality in the division of household labor predicts higher relationship satisfaction while the equality in decision-making did not. This is not to say that if partners point out that the lack of equality in decision-making is a problem that the issue should not be addressed. Perhaps in this situation it would prove to be helpful to therapists to focus on assisting a couple with gaining more equality. The evidence of this study, however, suggests that it may be important for therapists to focus on promoting equality within the division of household responsibilities by encouraging women to give up responsibilities and encouraging men to take on more household responsibilities or even assist in negotiating such roles.

Another implication for therapy is that even in the therapy room, it is important to assess for power and equality. It could be that the power displayed in the therapy room may or may not be similar to the power displayed at home or outside of the therapy room. Therapists should therefore assess for power inequality in the home and consider the needs and wants of each individual rather than assuming that when a couple comes in for therapy that they both desire to accomplish the same goals.
References


APPENDIX 1

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Concepts and Main Hypothesis:

The similarity-complimentarity hypothesis proposes that individuals choose partners who are similar to themselves in regards to looks, spirituality, education levels, and age. This hypothesis assumes that similarity contributes to couples’ levels of stability over the course of their life and relationship. The assumption that is made for this article has to do with the idea that partners pick one another in part because they have comparable ideas of gender roles and that those who are similar in their sex-role expectations are more satisfied with their relationships on the whole.

The main purpose of this study was to consider gender role contributions within heterosexual, loving relationships. They sought to find whether couples were with partners who conveyed gender characteristics that were either like one another or were complimentary of one another and they sought to discover the impact of these similarities or differences on marital satisfaction. They hypothesized that partners would be more similar to each other than different, that those who are more similar will have higher marital adjustment scores, and that attitude generally influence sex-role interests as well as importance of complimentarity of marital satisfaction.

Methods:
The study used 92 heterosexual couples, who were married or living together for 2 months or more in a longitudinal format. The surveys were sent to couples and than again at 15 months to test for replication. Measures used included a demographics questionnaire based on (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983), Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973), Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974, a Short-Form Sex-Role Behavior Scale (Orlofsky & O’Heron, 1987), and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976).

**Conclusions:**

Women scored higher than men on expressive traits whereas men scored higher than women on instrumental traits. They also found that in regards to gender-related characteristics, individuals chose couples who were similar to one another. They also concluded that the length of the relationship did not reveal that couples were more or less similar to one another. They discovered that similarity towards women scale was the only significant predictor of mean scores of marital satisfaction with increased similarity of partners’ attitude indicative of higher marital satisfaction (based on the DAS). Couples found to be traditional in their roles were most often paired with another who displayed similar traditional ideals of gender roles. When couples are more similar in their traditional gender-role expectations, they are more satisfied in their relationships than couples who were not similar in this respect.

2) **Citation:** Benin, M. H., & Agostinelli, J. (1988). Husbands’ and wives’ satisfaction with the division of labor. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 50*, 349-361.

**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**
The purpose of this study was to consider the three models of the division of labor: minimal participation, equity, and exchange theories. Hypotheses were that several things cause arguments in the division of labor, either the women or the man’s unhappiness with how household labor is divided will cause arguments, and that employment and earning differences would account as control variables.

Methods:

The sample consisted of 138 couples in which both partners were employed at a university at least on a part-time basis. Number of hours in household labor was taken, the perception of each spouses difference from their partner was taken into consideration. Hours spent in work vs. hours spent in household labor were taken and the differences noted. The satisfaction with the division of household labor was asked as was the frequency of arguments over the division and general attitudes in regards to household responsibilities.

Conclusions:

These researchers discovered that as a whole, men seemed to be more satisfied with equitable divisions of labor but this was only more the case when their time spent in household duties and family work was small (his absolute contribution determined satisfaction). Wives appear to be satisfied when she was given most of the family work responsibilities, and when husbands participate in stereotypically feminine-type duties. Her satisfaction did not seem to be related to the number of hours contributed to divisions of labor. Levels of disagreement over the division of labor were not agreed upon by spouses. Women felt that they argued more often when husbands were unhappy or when specific household duties are shared whereas men felt that they argued more often when they are unhappy with the division of labor. Overall, the exchange model was supported for wives’
satisfaction but the equity model was supported for husbands’ satisfaction. Both are most happy and satisfied when division of labor approaches equality.


Concepts and Main Hypothesis:

Many couples may suggest that their relationships are equal when in reality there remains incongruence between talk and behavior. The idea of distributive justice looks at reasons why women do not consider the imbalances in power to be inequitable (Thompson, 1991). This study considers couples who both desire an equitable relationship.

Methods:

This was a qualitative study which included 10 couples, married for five or more years and included spouses who prescribed to a feminist ideology in order to gain equality within their marriages. Interviews were conducted with the couple as well as with each individual to determine routines, interaction patterns, feminist beliefs, and to allow individuals to elaborate without the presence of their spouse.

Conclusions:

Some of the couples in this study were found to actually have equitable relationships but many did not despite suggesting that they did. Every individual interviewed said that they were content with father involvement even though shared parenting was rare. A few women suggested that they would like their husbands to increase their participation in parenting.

Each person suggested that they felt their marriages were offering them something more than what a traditional marriage would have; this meant that women could engage in fulfilling their own identities and men could be more closely connected with the family. The
overall suggestion is that marriages formed around “a feminist ideology upgrades marriage for women” (p. 16). This is thought to be accomplished by employing five different methods: evaluating sex inequities, openly showing taking action to show equality, supporting the women in developing personal interests, openly reflecting on the relationship levels, and obtaining high levels of emotional connection to one another. Basically equitable marriages require constant negotiations and compromises.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

This study attempted to measure the similarities between spouses and their attitudes about gender roles and how this similarity influenced the satisfaction levels of the couple. The main hypothesis of this study was that couples with similar ideas about gender-roles would exhibit higher levels of marital quality than couples who had different ideas about gender roles. This is due to the idea that couples with similar ideas bout marital roles would be working towards a similar goal.

**Methods:**

Couples were asked to participate and consisted of 331 couples with one member being a part of the Air Force. Interviews were conducted with each of the couples. To measure marital quality, researchers developed an extension of the DAS (Spanier, 1976) known as the Marital Quality Scale. This study considered marital quality scores as one measure between both partners of a relationship rather than each individual’s assessment of the marital quality. The family’s social standing was measured by the ranking officer of the spouse who was involved with the air force. The place in the family life-cycle was also
considered and was measured by the age of the oldest child. Researchers also considered the employment status of the wife.

Conclusions:

Authors concluded that similarities between gender attitudes did affect the quality of the marital relationship but only to a certain extent. When men had a modern view of sex-roles and women had a traditional view of sex-roles, there were not found to be significant differences in the marital quality which was reported.


Concepts and Main Hypothesis:

This study is done from the perspective of the exchange theory. The idea behind this in relation to marital satisfaction is the finding that marital satisfaction was shown to be lower when couples held to an exchange orientation (Murstein, Cerreto, & MacDonald, 1977). The purpose of this study was to look at the relationship between daily spousal interactions and three components of marital satisfaction including: commitment level, positive feelings about the partner, and exchange orientation. High levels of commitment levels and positive feelings were predicted to increase marital satisfaction whereas exchange orientation was predicted to lower marital satisfaction.

Methods:

Thirty couples from a marriage clinic and 25 community couples participated in the study. Community couples were mailed questionnaires and clinic couples were given theirs at their sessions. The researchers used the Lock-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (Locke &
Wallace, 1959), the Feelings Questionnaire (O’Leary, Fincham, & Turkewitz, 1983), the Broderick Commitment Scale, the Exchange Orientation Scale (Murstein et al., 1977), and an adapted version of the Daily Checklist of Marital Activities.

**Conclusions:**

Hypotheses were confirmed in the predicted directions. The more positive feelings that a spouse has toward their partner, the higher their marital satisfaction is likely to be. In other words both the attitude and the affective states of a person affect marital satisfaction levels but have also been shown to influence the outcome of marriage therapy in a positive way. Therefore, behavioral factors can only partially explain marital satisfaction.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

Past work has shown that couple who delay child bearing tend to be more financially secure, have higher education levels, and have more time available than those who have children when they are younger. Additionally, men are more likely to be involved with their children if child bearing is put off (Daniels & Weingarten, 1982). The purpose of this study was to consider how the birth of the first child affected how much work men put forth toward the family and whether or not there were other causal factors that contributed to this. The research question they were hoping to discover was whether division of household labor, gender-role beliefs, and available resources would be evenly influential for both groups of fathers.

There were four hypotheses. The first was that the more resources a man has, the less housework he will do. Second was the idea that higher levels traditional gender-role beliefs
would lead to less shared housework responsibilities. Third, the higher the levels of career demands, the less that spouse would share in housework. Lastly, if there are high child-care needs, the husband will be more likely to contribute to household chores.

**Methods:**

The researchers split men into two groups consisting of first-time fathers under and over the age of 28. Couples who were in their first marriage and had a child under the age of 18 were included using a subsample of a dataset including 17,000 contacts. Men’s housework was assessing using a gender equity guide consisting of contributions made in meal preparation, meal clean-up, shopping, laundry, and house cleaning. Relative resources were measured by income contributions to the family. Ideology was measured using a 5-question questionnaire considering traditional role expectations. Time availability was measured using an estimate of the number of hours worked during the week. Finally, child care demand was measured using the age of the youngest child since younger children demand more attention.

**Conclusions:**

Overall, men contributed 8.6 hours of household work. The older group of men contributed 21% to the total household responsibilities while the younger group contributed 18%. When husbands worked fewer hours, they contributed more to household labor. There were some factors which led to men’s increased participation in household tasks and they included becoming parents earlier, having fewer traditional beliefs by the wife and in turn the wife having more resources, and higher levels of child-care requirements. In older fathers it seems as though their own traditional beliefs as well as having more time together had more of an effect on their levels of giving towards household work. In essence, the resources and
influence have a greater influence on young fathers while beliefs and social systems have a greater influence on older fathers.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The purpose of this study was to consider the marriage and the parenting subsystems. They hypothesized that the marital relationship would have effects on the resulting parenting interactions and relationships.

**Methods:**

Researchers used a variety of methods to test measures including interviews, tests, observations, and questionnaires. There were 38 couples involved in the study all with new infants. The first visit occurred during the second trimester of pregnancy to measure feelings about the anticipated birth of a child. The couples were interviewed again at three months after the birth of the child. During this 2 week process, 3 different meetings took place.

Measures used included measuring how close couples were to one another and the intimacy they experienced in their communication before the birth of a child and this was done both by individual as well as conjoint interviews. A number of measures were used to check for mental health of each individual. At 3 months after birth, couples were again interviewed and included questions regarding the parents’ attitudes about parenting and feelings they had toward their child. An observation took place with graduate students observing the parental interaction with the child using the Global observation rating (Ainsworth, undated; Egeland & Farber, 1984). In this, they observed for warmth of the parents and measured how sensitively a parent would respond to their child.
Conclusions:

Researchers found that mothers and fathers whose marriages were close and connected interacted more warmly and sensitively to their children. They conclude therefore that the marital relationship contributes to the mothers’ relationship to her child and perhaps to the attachment and development of that child. They suggest that partners in good marital relationship are having their own needs met and are therefore more likely to be sensitive to the needs of their children.

The researchers also found that both parents were more responsive to their sons however the significance was not reached in the case of the father. The suggestion here is that having a son as a firstborn may be a buffer against bad marital relationships or that daughters are affected more by her parents’ negative interactions.


Concepts and Main Hypothesis:

Social referencing in this context refers to when an individual tries to attain emotional or instrumental cues from others to help them know how to understand or act in a certain situation. It seems as though the relationship between father-child and levels of social referencing has contributed to levels of satisfaction within the marriage (Parke & Tinsley, 1987). The researchers hypothesized that men who were dissatisfied with their marriages would distance themselves physically and emotionally from both their wives and children. The father therefore becomes less of a social reference to be utilized by the infant. The infant may therefore look to the mother more often when a marriage is deemed unhappy.

Methods:
The study evaluated 40 children who were around 11 months of age and included their parents in the study with both parents being together and were contacted via newspaper birth announcements. Each child was observed by researchers twice within a week’s time. Social referencing was measured by a child’s look at a stranger and then immediately looking toward a parent; this would occur when a stranger entered the room and intruded between the parents (who were sitting on the side) and the child. Infant sociability was also accounted for based on an assessment created by Thompson and Lamb (1982). Background information and the Locke-Wallace Marital Satisfaction Inventory (Locke & Wallace, 1959) were given to each parent.

**Conclusions:**

On average, children were found to make references equally to fathers and to mothers suggesting the importance of both parents in a child’s development. The researchers also discovered that the marital satisfaction of the fathers was positively correlated with the child’s number of references made toward the father but had not relation between the mother’s marital satisfaction and number of references made toward her. This supports past literature which finds that the parenting levels of fathers depends positive marital relationships. Young children are sensitive to the levels of marital satisfaction.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The authors make a case for the idea that women in general spend a greater amount of time and exert more effort in household responsibilities than men do and this becomes more
of the case after a couple has a child. The purpose of this study was to look at whether the traditional feminine and masculine gender-roles are displayed in couples where the wife is employed outside of the home. It also considered ways in which couples changed in regard to emotional support of one another as well as changes in their division of labor in the home. It also considered how content women were with their husband’s contribution to their work done within the home.

**Methods:**

The study included 436 Caucasian, married, employed, first-time mothers of one child. The women were to have given birth within the past year and were to have had a job during the time of their pregnancy. Questionnaires included demographics and a general health questionnaire, Occupation and Career Importance (Bojean, Hill, & McLemore, 1967), Chronic Health Problems and Obstetrical Complications. These three questionnaires were given every 3 months for a year to women who participated. Other questionnaires included Household responsibilities (taken from Bird et al., 1984; Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Eriksen et al., 1979), Satisfaction with Husband’s Contribution to Housework (1-5 scale), Social Support (taken from Schaefer et al., 1981; Blake & McKay, 1986), Mental Health, Mother and Baby’s Illnesses, and a Miscellaneous questionnaire.

**Conclusions:**

After the first month, it was found that women experienced significant decline in the number of social supports. Women also held more responsibility in traditional female-oriented household duties. It was also found that women who returned to work after a month experienced more help from their partner in household tasks than those who stayed at home. However as the year progressed, women took on more of the traditional responsibilities over
time in all areas. Yet in general, women did more of the household duties and over the course of the post-partum year, the levels of the mother increased even more. Therefore, they also found that women’s satisfaction with their husband’s contribution to the household duties decreased over the year.

Some factors seemed to predict a woman’s satisfaction with her husband’s contribution to household work. The first one was whether a husband expressed care for his wife, if this was done, the level of household work by the man did not matter because the wife reported being satisfied with the contribution. These women either recognize or induce care by their partners.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The purpose of this study was to discover the process of decision-making between couples, and to find out the process and outcomes that occur through the interactions of the couple using the resource theory. Authors hypothesized that coerciveness would decrease when love, cooperativeness, and commitment were high. A wife and husband can have more power when cooperativeness is high, inequity is in the individuals’ favor, personal coerciveness is low, role preference is less traditional, commitment is higher, and partner’s coerciveness is lower. The final hypothesis was that consensus perceptions in making decisions would increase the spouse’s perceived levels of decision-making when cooperativeness, economic resources are in the wives’ favor or equal, spouse’s coerciveness is low, and their control over decision-making is high.
Methods:

The sample consisted of 188 married couples who were interviewed in their homes. Measured included decision-making in five important areas, levels of love, levels of cooperativeness during arguments, levels of commitment, gender-role preference, and equity of resources, communication coerciveness, control attempts in conversations, and the outcome was measured by the perceived level of consensus after a conflict resolution.

Conclusions:

Couples with higher levels of consensus conveyed husbands who were generally cooperative, had more equal economic resources, had wives who were less coercive, increased levels of love and commitment was shown to decrease coercion and control tactics.


Concepts and Main Hypothesis:

This seemed to be a presentation given by Gottman at the AAMFT conference about the predictors of a long marriage. He cited some studies done by him and others as to the contributing factors of a healthy and lasting marriage. He cited studies having to do with physiological reactions, conflict, stonewalling. He talked about a study conducted looking at the levels of involvement husbands had in housework.

Methods:

Couples filled out a number of questionnaires: a parallel lives scale, a questionnaire about contributions to housework (filled out by the wife), levels of loneliness, the length of problems, the amount of intensification of a problem, and the levels of avoidance within a conflicting relationship.
**Conclusions:**

When the husband stonewalled, and the wife was contemptuous, couples were more likely to divorce. Another interesting finding that he cited was that men who participated in housework were more likely to be healthy in follow ups four years later. Men who had more active roles in household labor also had less overwhelming feelings over the emotions expressed by their wife. They also were able to face conflict, and decrease physiological symptoms of stress (increased heart rates) than were men who did not housework.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

This study looks at wife-dominant, husband-dominant, egalitarian, and anarchic power relations between couples and how this set-up influences marital adjustment and couples’ feelings about behavioral marital therapy. The hypothesis was that there would be the high levels of marital satisfaction with lesser levels of negative behaviors in couples who were egalitarian, followed by husband-dominant, wife-dominant, and anarchic marital arrangements.

**Methods:**

There were 53 couples who participated in this study. Couples participated in couples’ counseling for 10-12 weeks which mainly included Behavioral intervention strategies. Measurements included: the Lock-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Lock & Wallace, 1959) or the DAS (Spanier, 1976), areas of change questionnaire (Margolin et al., 1983), Inventory of Marital Conflict (to assess for negative behaviors), (Olsen & Ryder, 1970) or a discussion of a contentious situation in their relationship, a measure for assessing
the power patterns in the relationship (measured by assessing for which spouse’s conclusion was chosen), and videotapes for observers to evaluate.

**Conclusions:**

Overall, egalitarian couples showed higher levels of marital satisfaction and these results were significantly higher than wife-dominant and anarchic couples. In general, husbands reported higher marital satisfaction and wives were requesting more modifications in their husbands than the other way around; egalitarian couples were less likely to make requests of change in their partners. Egalitarian couples also had the least amount of negative interactions while anarchic relationship had a higher number of negative interactions than all other groups.

In response to behavioral therapy, wife-dominant relationships improved marital satisfaction significantly while egalitarian and husband dominant relationship showed very little change and anarchic relationship showing lower levels of marital satisfaction after treatment.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The authors stated that even though husbands of working wives spend more time in household chores, the proportional number of hours is still lacking compared to women (Demo & Acock, 1993). The researchers explain four different reasons why the division of labor might be so unbalanced including relative resources, time availability, economic
dependency, and ideology. The author goes on to explain the concept of “doing gender” including what is considered to be feminine or masculine roles.

Four hypotheses are considered. First are those spouses with traditional ideologies will have husbands who least contributes to the domestic chores. Second is that there will be little difference in men’s contribution when they are traditional and their wives are egalitarian. Third are those egalitarian husbands will contribute more time to domestic endeavors when married to traditional wives. Fourth is that couples who both have egalitarian ideologies will have the best balance in domestic duties. Regardless of wife ideology is the idea that men who are egalitarian are more likely to contribute to household tasks and responsibilities.

**Methods:**

The National Survey of Families and Households was used to measure 2,719 married couples. The two measures considered here included the indication of household labor which asked couples to guess the total number of hours devoted to three different categories of tasks including female oriented, male oriented, or gender-neutral oriented tasks. The next measure was the levels of traditionalism used to consider each person’s gender ideology. The researchers controlled for number of children, length of marriage, age, education, income, employment, and other demographic variables.

**Conclusions:**

On average, wives spent an average of 30 hours more in household duties per week than husbands. The more the husband works, the less contributions he makes to household tasks, the more the wife works, the more the husband contributes to household tasks. Overall, men married to traditional wives did not contribute more to household duties despite their
own ideologies. Men married to nontraditional wives contributed more to the household duties but not as much as men married to women who had egalitarian ideologies of gender-roles. In general, in order for men to contribute equally to household responsibilities, both partners must hold egalitarian beliefs about gender-roles.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The purpose of this study was to consider couples’ preferred nurturing roles, along with their perceptions of child care, and the perceptions of how many resources were readily available to the children based on demographic variables.

**Methods:**

This was a mixture of cross-sectional as well as longitudinal data using 153 and 86 couple respectively, who had children under the age of 18. The interviews were done via phone calls. Longitudinal data was taken once in 1983 and again in 1989.

**Conclusions:**

The author concluded that both fathers as well as mothers desire the fathers to have increased levels of nurturing roles. Over the 6 year span, it was found that non-traditional patterns became increasingly common. Women’s desired role changes were correlated with sufficient levels of resources for the kids. Men had the perception that they had sufficient time to spend with their children while women perceived their time with the children as less-than sufficient.

Concepts and Main Hypothesis:

The purpose of this study was to look at the role expectations of husbands and wives, determine how accurate the other person distinguishes the expectations of their partner, consider how the expectations differ from one another and from actual behavior, and to see how household divisions of labor affect each individual.

Methods:

489 couples who were married were interviewed. It was found that nearly 67% of these couples were dual-earners in their household. Measures that were used include role expectations, the awareness of partner’s role expectation, the correctness of the awareness, the level of attachment to individual roles, and the awareness of actual labor put into household duties.

Conclusions:

The majority of couples believed that raising and caring for children should be a joint task but just over a third thought that housework should be a joint venture. Nearly 70% of individuals thought that money responsibilities should be shared while only a quarter of people thought that earning the money should be a joint effort. It was also found that spouses tend to misinterpret the expectation of their spouse regularly. Husbands are perceived to be more traditional than expected and wives less traditional than expected by their partners. Husbands stated being willing to be more involved when their wives did not expect that they would be willing to do so. Nearly six in ten men thought that housework should be shared but
only one in three actually did so. Couples in general agreed to the levels of which person performed which tasks in the home. Husbands were found to share in household tasks more often if the wife worked outside of the home.

The authors suggest that spouses desired to maintain traditional roles but that some of these individuals would like to enter into untraditional spheres such as men’s being more willing to care for their children. An interesting finding was that while 66% of men said they would like for their wives to hold a job, 75% of them also stated that making money was the responsibility of the man.


Concepts and Main Hypothesis:

Three methods have generally been used to explain division of household labor. The first one is relative-resources available to both partners, the second is the levels of practicality, and the third is general ideology about how sex-roles should function. It was hypothesized that husbands would be more willing to put effort into household responsibilities if they also participate in child care, work fewer hours outside the home, encourage their wives to work outside the home, and if they have higher levels of education.

Methods:

Subjects were taken from the National Survey of Families and Households (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988) and included individuals who were part of two-parent homes with children under five years old.
Housework was measured by the averaged number of hours devoted to housework as reported by both husband and wife of themselves and each other. Child care was also measured in a similar way. Relative resources were measured in terms of the percentage of income earned by the family. Practicality was assessed by asking the number of hours spent in a job setting. Ideology was measured using questions having to do with beliefs about employment of the wife.

**Conclusions:**

Overall, husbands helped with 21% of the effort put into household duties and 26% with childcare responsibilities. One finding was that more children led to decreased effort in housework but increased levels of child care. They also found that the more income the wife earned, the more likely the husband was to put more effort into household duties but not to the care of the children. A surprising outcome was that the more husbands contributed to childcare, the more they also contributed to household duties. Another conclusion was that wives generally have more say in household responsibilities whereas husbands have more say in who participates in child care. For instance, the more resources and education a wife (but not the husband) has, the more likely her husband will share in home and child responsibilities. This may show that these kinds of responsibilities are still part of what is considered a feminine role.

The overall finding was that through the different changes in practicality, resources, and attitudes about gender roles, couples are showing less clichéd responsibilities in the home.

**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The purpose of this study was to look at the relation between spouses’ work and marital experiences. The authors hypothesized that individuals who appreciate self-direction would value more egalitarian notions in their marriages. It was also hypothesized that those who emphasize conformity would have more traditional divisions of household labor.

**Methods:**

The sample included 167 dual-earning couples working at least 20 hours per week. A series of 8 face-to-face or phone interviews were conducted over the course of 2 weeks. Measures included the measures of work conditions scale (Lennon, 1994), the revised rank order of parental values scale (Schaefer & Edgerton, 1985), the gender-based attitudes toward marital roles measure (Hoffman & Kloska, 1995) and a measure to assess for the division of traditional women-based tasks within the household.

**Conclusions:**

The values that each spouse had were displayed in their division of household labor. Individuals who valued self-direction generally had less traditional beliefs and attitudes in relation to marital roles and functions. The behaviors exhibited were therefore based around the beliefs and values that the individual held to. The experiences that each person had at work seemed to shape the values those individuals had. The values were then linked to the marital arrangement and roles which were set up. More self-direction at work let to more
self-direction in the home and in less traditional marital roles in favor of more egalitarian roles.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The authors wanted to look at behavioral marital therapy from the perspective that it uses conflicting meanings regarding each gender’s role in the marital subunit. They suggest that overall, the issue of gender has largely been ignored when behavioral marital therapy is employed. The authors intend to look at valid sex differences and the roles of gender and how behavioral marital therapy in particular affects each gender.

**Methods:**

The article takes a look at both the advantages and disadvantages which behavioral marital therapy has to offer. Within this is the idea of equity theory. According to Hatfield (1982), equity theory is based on the idea that as a whole, the role each spouse plays in a relationship is generally balanced. It is only when there is a perception of inequity that persons in a relationship become dissatisfied with the relationship. The authors make the assumption that behavioral marital therapy believes that couples will function in an egalitarian way without much assistance. A suggestion that the authors take up is to consider where the couple lies in relation to traditional vs. egalitarian division of roles.

Behavioral therapy is looked at in terms of its ability to move clients toward action. The amount of behavioral exchange between partners is also discussed in this article suggesting that behavioral therapy adopts this idea. It suggests that partners may agree to
change certain behaviors if the spouse will also agree to change their own certain behaviors. The training of communication and problem-solving strategies is also discussed as is how therapy should go about setting up goals.

**Conclusions:**

Behavioral therapy tends to enhance egalitarian relationships while not paying much attention to the gender concerns. The authors make suggestions for recommendations that should be put into place in order for behavioral therapy to be more concerned with sex roles in relationships. They suggest that practitioners be sensitive to differing messages given by each partner when considering sex role differences. In addition, therapists should also be concerned with their own biases towards sex roles and what they believe to be the healthiest way to go about things.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

A number of hypotheses are made throughout this study. First is that less liberal attitudes lead to a better fit between beliefs and roles. Next is the idea that if there is strain financially, egalitarian relationships would be less likely. Third is that the more women worked, the more role balance there would be in the relationship. Fourth is that women would feel more balance when husbands were willing to care for children in their absence and that leisure time spent with children would lessen the gender balance. More balance would be felt when they both had opportunities for leisure. Finally, time spent with other
couples would increase feelings of role-balance and that women would feel more balanced if they had more contact with relatives.

**Methods:**

The sample was taken from the fourth phase of a longitudinal study with 80 couples. Individuals were each interviewed over the phone six different times. Measures included the Role balance scale (Marks & MacDermid, 1996), time spent doing housework, time spent and type of leisure activity, Attitudes towards women Scale (Spence & Helmreich, 1972), amount of paid work, level of financial strain, parents’ attachment to their children (Abidin, 1990), marital satisfaction (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976), and relationship maintenance (Braiker & Kelley, 1979).

**Conclusions:**

When spouses have more liberal ideas about gender roles, they are generally less satisfied with the role balance. Marital satisfaction is higher when the balance between spousal roles is also balanced. Wives perceived more equality when they worked more hours in paid labor, when there is little financial strain, experience less leisure time with their children, has more leisure time with their spouse, and are more involved with social supports. Husbands perceive more relationship equality when they spent more time with their wives and alone in leisure time with their children. They also found that as income increases, roles become more balanced but the opposite is true when men work more hours. Attitudes about role balance also seemed to increase when attachment of both spouses to their children is higher.

**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The authors of this study wanted to look at the symbolic meanings that individuals assign to marriage and whether or not that influences the amount of household labor each partner contributes. They wanted to identify if a lack of equality was interpreted by the wife as a lack of caring and encouragement from their husbands. Women who are more egalitarian are hypothesized to be less accepting of unequal divisions of labor and husbands would in turn dedicate more time to household responsibilities. Egalitarian wives would also feel less encouraged and cared for by their husbands if labors were not shared whereas traditional wives would not perceive this lack of equality as a lack of care or concern. Overall they hypothesize that the more a wife accepts her role and her husband’s role, the more satisfied she will be in her relationship.

**Methods:**

The sample consisted of 287 women who participated in a longitudinal study. The measures were taken from the third wave of this particular study. Measures included the satisfaction of help and support from the husband, marital quality, Affect Balance Scale and the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (Radloff, 1977) to measure psychological well-being, a measure of gender ideology, wife’s employment status, and a measure to assess for the division of household labor.

**Conclusions:**
Researchers found that egalitarian wives were more satisfied when their husbands shared equally in household duties. Women who are employed full-time seemed to be more satisfied with the husbands’ contributions to household labor. Women seemed to perceive the division of household labor more positively if she also perceives her husband as supportive and caring towards her. Women with egalitarian beliefs as well as women who worked full-time seemed to be unhappy with the support received form their husbands when household responsibilities were not shared. Traditional wives may rationalize the lesser role that husbands take in the home and thereby seemed to maintain the traditional position of each partner. In effect, personal well-being and marital satisfaction is seen as being indirectly influenced by the division of household labor by way of the level of support felt from the husband.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

In this study, researchers looked at role relations and equity between couples. Equity was conceptualized as the level of fairness felt by both parties. The authors of this study wanted to discover how equity perceptions (not actual equality) and role relations influenced marital adjustment.

**Methods:**

This study included 112 couples who were married and in which both partners contributed more than 20 hours a week to work. Couples were asked to fill out questionnaires. The first was a demographics form which also assessed for the couples’ roles and the importance of their role along with their feelings of being overwhelmed.
Questionnaires included an assessment of who carried out what responsibilities in the home, the Traupmann-Utne-Walster Scale: Participants’ Perceptions of Input, Outcomes, and Equity/Inequity (Traupmann, Peterse, Utne, & Hatfield, 1982), the DAS (Spanier, 1967), and the General Well-Being Schedule (Fazio, 1977).

**Conclusions:**

Spouses were considered separately. It was found that wives had higher commitment to their careers and more overload than husbands’. Wives were also found to not benefiting from the arrangement while the opposite was true for husbands. Overall it was found that there was less stress among couples in equitable relationships, followed by those who reported being overbenefited and finally underbenefited. Husbands and wives who felt their relationships were equitable had higher levels of marital satisfaction than non-equitable spouses.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

Researchers wanted to take a broader look at levels of father involvement by including more than just a care-giving role. They wanted to include amounts of decision-making, task performance, a broader range of parenting responsibilities. The authors note a number of findings which have been found to lead to more involvement with the father. The authors seemed emphasize the idea that levels of a child’s attachment were related to the father’s involvement in a number of areas with their child.

**Conclusions:**
Despite all of the positive findings suggesting that children benefit from increased father involvement, a number is hurdles still stand in the way of this from happening. There are a number of attitudes about men being emotionally unable to sensitively and properly care for a child. There are assumptions that child care is not the responsibility of men and that men are not as interested in their children as women. The authors make a number of suggestions for both research as well as counselors to take and put into practice in order to lessen these stereotypes and negative effects placed on men. Overall, the field of family studies has not considered true differences between fathers and mothers and often frameworks used to study families are often slow to re-establish frameworks which encourage fathers to be more involved with their children.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The purpose of this study was to look at the marital satisfaction of couples where both individuals were employed. It looked at decision-making and considered beliefs about gender-roles in relation to satisfaction of the marriage.

**Methods:**

The study included 104 couples with children preschool aged or younger. Questionnaires were mailed to the couples.

**Conclusions:**

The strongest predictor of marital satisfaction was when a person’s beliefs about gender roles matched the current roles each person was taking. This study also discovered
that men had higher levels of marital satisfaction when their wives were shown to have more decision-making power than they themselves. Women were shown to have higher marital satisfaction when actual roles and decision-making power were more egalitarian. Other factors were found to influence marital satisfaction. Higher marital satisfaction was indicated by higher satisfaction levels of the division of labor. There were negative correlations between marital satisfaction and the number of children as well as the age of the wife. Also, women who were employed on a full-time basis were shown to have husbands who were less satisfied in the marriage.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The authors of this study assume that couples will be most satisfied in their relationship when they have worked out an arrangement in which the division of household labor and finances are mutually agree upon. Domestic labor was extended to include household duties as well as emotional labor and enhancement of one’s status.

**Methods:**

A random sample was taken from couples in which both individuals worked outside the home in order to test for variables influencing marital satisfaction. A shortened DAS (Spanier, 1976), a measure of the perception of household labor and satisfaction with it, the perception of emotional work questionnaire (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983), gender ideology (Spence & Helmreich, 1978), and a measure of status enhancement were all measures used in this study. A formula for economic dependency was also calculated.
**Conclusions:**

If was found that over all women spent around 15 and men around 7 hours involved in household responsibilities. The authors found that marital satisfaction for women was most determined by the approval with the division of household labor, emotional labor, and enhancement of status. Marital satisfaction for men was most determined by the division of labor, actual household labor, and emotional labor. A number of factors were found to be indirectly influencers of marital satisfaction for both men and women. All three parts of domestic labor were found to be associated with marital satisfaction. Couples do not have to split work up evenly but it is important that couple be satisfied with whatever arrangement they do have. It is generally found that couples share emotional labor more equally than other household duties. It seems as though the more household work and emotional labor the women does compared to the man, the less satisfied she is in the marriage.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The purpose of this study was to look at the ways in which moving into parenthood affected the quality of a marriage relationship. The researcher also wanted to see if gender attitudes, equality within marriage, the temperament of the baby, and level of involvement affected the levels of satisfaction as a new parent.

**Methods:**

The researcher recruited couples who were about to become new parents. A total of 96 couples chose to participate and were mailed a packet of questionnaires before the birth of their child and than at 12 weeks postpartum. The researchers used the DAS (Spanier, 1967),
Attitude Toward Women Scale, (Spence & Helmriech, 1973) to measure traditionality, Global Measures of Participants (Walster et al., 1978) to measure equity, Father Activity Questionnaire (Furneaux, 1982) which was altered to fit the study, and the Infant Behavior Questionnaire (Rothbart, 1977) to measure infant temperament.

**Conclusions:**

Marital satisfaction was found to decrease significantly at 12 weeks postpartum. However the marital satisfaction before the birth of the first child was found to be the best predictor of marital satisfaction at 12 weeks postpartum. When marital satisfaction levels were high pre-birth, the score decreased yet were not in the dysfunctional range. The other factors that were measured only accounted for 7% of the total variability in marital satisfaction.

Couples who held more traditional sex-role beliefs contributed to lower levels of marital satisfaction after the birth of the child, but only for women. Temperament of the child as well as nontraditional attitudes was not predictive of overall marital satisfaction.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The researchers discussed the relevance of career, children, and sex-role attitudes on marital happiness. They hypothesized that the division of household labor would be related to traditional sex-role attitudes in a positive way and related to dual-career couples in a negative way. They also proposed that in situations where both individuals worked, marital satisfaction would be higher. They also hypothesized that the addition of children over the
three waves would create couples who had more traditional roles. They also predicted that marital satisfaction would increase with higher satisfaction of household labor, lower traditional sex-role attitudes, and higher marital interactions.

**Methods:**

Researchers used a data set known as Marital Instability over the Life Course which was a three-wave study of 2,033 people who were married. They included Dual-earner families when both partners worked more than 40 hours a week, a measurement of sex-role traditionalism, the division of household labor (including satisfaction and fairness with the division), a marital interaction scale, and a marital happiness scale.

**Conclusions:**

The presence of children was found to be a predictor of lessened marital satisfaction. In general, the higher a couples’ income was, the lower their marital satisfaction was found to be. Traditional sex-role attitudes were shown to lessen average household income as well as have effects on the division of household labor and seemed to negatively influence marital satisfaction but these findings were not significant. Researchers did discover that couples who were both employed were more satisfied with their marriages leading to the conclusion that traditional gender attitudes indirectly affect levels of marital satisfaction. The authors made the conclusion that perceptions of equity were more important than actual levels of equity.


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**
This study considers the equity theory in relation to marital satisfaction. The authors hypothesized that equal housework and decision making would lead to higher feelings of social support, that fairness would also be associated with higher feelings of social support, and that there might be differences in these perceptions between men and women.

**Methods:**

Perceived social support was measured using questions in relation to: the average in percentage of housework that was done (using self-reports), decision-making power, and perceived fairness.

**Conclusions:**

Researchers concluded that performance of unequal or unfair feelings about the division of household labor was related to lower sentiments of support for both individuals who are involved in this situation whether benefited or disadvantaged. In other words there were not gender differences in the perceptions of social support experienced by equitable or non-equitable relationships. Social supports are felt most strongly when equal distribution of household labor is decided on equally. Overall, women did not identify inequalities in these divisions more fairly than men. It seems as though equitable relationships gave the highest amounts of psychosocial benefits and this can be the case by measuring both decision-making power as well as perceptions of fairness.

**28) Citation:** Whisman, M. A., & Jacobson, N. S. (1989). Depression, marital satisfaction, and marital and personality measures of sex roles. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 15*(2), 177-186.

**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**
The purpose of this study was to look at the association between levels of depression and roles within the marital relationship (other than employment status of women). The hypotheses were that because of social exchange theory, individuals will be more satisfied with a marriage where rewards outweigh costs. Therefore, women were predicted to have increased levels of depression when they had less power in the family-decisions but more power in household duties. A second hypothesis was based on the equity theory which says that equal relationships are more satisfying. Therefore women who sense that their relationships as having unequal distributions of family and household work will be more depressed. The final hypothesis is that women who are dissatisfied with the division of labor based on their ideologies would display greater levels of depression.

**Methods:**

The sample contained 50 couples who were a part of an outpatient program for the depression of the wife. The sample also had 25 couples where neither spouse was dealing with depression. The study used the Masculinity and femininity scales as developed by Baucom (1976), the Who does what to measure ideal perception of roles, decision-making, and responsibilities. The Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979) was used to measure for depression. Each individual came to a room and filled out the set of questionnaires independently.

**Conclusions:**

Both husbands and wives showed that women who were depressed generally had unequal levels of decision-making and were more dissatisfied with the arrangements. The researchers concluded that higher levels of unequal decision making were positively correlated with depression levels of the wife. Overall, the clinic sample showed higher levels
of being dissatisfied with the way household tasks were distributed and they were also less satisfied with the division of child-rearing. These same women were shown to be less masculine.


Concepts and Main Hypothesis:

Many past studies have shown that fathers show more play and less care-giving to their children than mothers yet fathers are competent to do both roles. One of the purposes of this study was to consider ways that parents interact as spouses and how that influences their parenting levels. They take on an ideological support perspective which suggests looking at levels of support that spouses offer to one another. Therefore the hypothesis is that marital quality is thought to be positively correlated to parenting competence.

Conclusions:

Many studies have also shown that emotional support by the husband increased the wife’s feelings of mothering competence, and this was also the case for fathers (Dickie & Matheson, 1984). Other studies find that the physical support of fathers which is found in increased levels of household duties and responsibilities as well as child care when the wife works outside of the home (Walker & Woods, 1976; Pleck, 1983). There have been found to be fewer outside supports for families with new babies. Therefore, fathers are thought to give more time to their families and children because of this (Parke & Tinsley, 1984).

Marital satisfaction can also be predicted by the amount of agreement that spouses have in regards to their particular roles. If partners have different ideas about role expectations, this can lead to decreased levels of marital satisfaction (Parke & Tinsley 1981).
The ideological support idea comes from studies done in which wives who were said to have traditional ideologies had decreased levels of marital satisfaction when their husbands tried to participate in child care and household duties (Russell & Radin, 1983).


**Concepts and Main Hypothesis:**

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of ways in which couples come to make decisions about work and family. The authors wanted to determine how sex-role attitudes and individual characteristics influence satisfaction in marriage. The authors discussed ways that individuals try to influence or gain power over others. They also considered the relative resource theory and sex-role beliefs.

The hypotheses were that men would have more direct influence over work and family decisions whereas women would have more indirect influences over such decisions. Another hypothesis was that liberal sex-role beliefs would be correlated with direct influence strategies. A third hypothesis suggested that women with more resources would be more willing to use direct influence. The final hypothesis was that relative resources and sex-role beliefs would impact marital satisfaction.

**Methods:**

This study included 61 couples who were married to one another and had faced making a work-related decision within the past six months. Couples were sent packets of questionnaires. The questionnaires included demographic information, a gender role ideology scale (Spence & Helmreich, 1978), an influence strategy scale (Sprio, 1983), and the
semantic differential scale (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976) to assess marital satisfaction.

**Conclusions:**

There appeared to be no major differences between men and women’s attempts to influence another person. Wives were found to use more direct influence when she earned more financially and with more education. This was not the case for men. The third hypothesis was shown to be the opposite as proposed. Spouses with traditional ideologies were found to use more direct influence over one another. Surprisingly, this study found that traditional ideologies and lower indirect influence of the both partners led to increased levels of marital satisfaction. The authors conclude that it may be easier for couples to negotiate roles in a traditional style of marriage.
APPENDIX 2

Measurements/questionnaires

Demographic Questions:

Your birth date ____________/_________/_________

Month Date Year

Your ethnicity ______________________

Are you currently married? ____yes ____no

If you are currently married, how long have you been married? _____years _____months

Household Income (please circle)

Less than $10,000 $10,001-20,000 $20,001-30,000 $30,001-40,000

$40,001-50,000 $50,001-60,000 $60,001-70,000 Greater than $70,001

Currently, my income is _________ the income of my partner.

a. greater than
b. less than
c. equal to

d. greater than
e. less than
f. equal to

Currently, my education is _________ the education of my partner.

d. greater than
e. less than
f. equal to
Marital Decision-Making Scale (MDMS)

Instructions: Listed below are several areas that couples make decisions on. Please consider each of these areas and indicate the extent to which you and your partner agree on these things even before any discussion takes place, and also indicate who usually makes the final decisions in these areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who makes the final decision after discussion</th>
<th>I Make</th>
<th>Partner Makes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Where you live and whether you should move.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What job you take and whether you should change or quit a job.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How many hours you work.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What job your partner takes and whether he/she should change or quit a job.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How many hours your partner works.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How many children there should be in your family.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. When and how to praise or punish your children.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How much free time to spend together with your partner.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How to spend your free time with your partner.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How to spend your free time apart from your partner.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. How your partner spends free time apart from you.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. How much time to spend with children.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. When to have social contacts with friends.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Which friends to see.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. When to have social contacts with relatives.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Which relatives to see.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. How to spend money on large purchases.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. How to spend money on small purchases.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. When to take vacation.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. How to spend vacation time.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Whether to attend church, and if so, which church to attend.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. How to follow or practice religion at home.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. When to have sex.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. How to have sex.</td>
<td>n/a 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Family Responsibility Index (FRI)

During a typical working week, who is responsible for each of the following tasks? (Circle the appropriate number.)

5 = Me always  
4 = Me more  
3 = My partner and me equally or both  
2 = My partner more  
1 = My partner always  
n/a = Does not apply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mow lawn</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Trim and/or edge lawn</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Plant and tend flower/vegetable garden</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Water lawn and garden</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Service lawn and garden tools</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Trim bushes, fertilize lawn</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Wash clothes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Put clean clothes away</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Iron clothes</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Indoor painting</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>11. Outdoor painting</td>
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<td>12. Physical upkeep of house exterior</td>
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<td>13. Household repairs</td>
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<td>14. Household remodeling</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Put on storm windows/screens</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Put dishes in dishwasher/wash dishes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Empty dishwasher/dry or put dishes away</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Clean stove, counters, and table</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>19. Balance checkbook</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Pay bills</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Prepare income tax form</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>22. Make major financial decisions</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Clean bathroom</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Vacuum rugs</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Wash floors</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>26. Dust furniture</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>27. Change bedding</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. Make beds</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. Care for indoor plants</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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Family Responsibility Index (FRI) (Continued)

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30. Empty garbage</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. Check and add gas, oil, water, battery fluid to vehicle</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Decide when vehicle needs servicing/take to garage</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>33. Buy/have vehicle tires changed</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>34. Wash/wax car</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>35. Wash windows and drapes/curtains</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>36. Wash walls</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>37. Clean refrigerator and stove</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>38. Shampoo rugs and furniture</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>39. Polish floors</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. Buy clothes for self</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Buy clothes for other family members</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>42. Make dental and doctor appointments</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>43. Take children to dentist/doctor</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>44. Stay with children when sick</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>45. Care for family pets</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>46. Take care of preschool children</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>47. Discipline children</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>48. Arrange for child care</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>49. Organize family recreation/entertainment</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>50. Keep in touch with relatives and friends</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>51. Plan meals/buy food</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>52. Prepare meals</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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</table>
Satisfaction Subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The following questions have different answers. Please read the questions and answers carefully. Please indicate below approximately how often the following items occur between you and your partner based on this scale:

0 = All the time
1 = Most of the time
2 = More often than not
3 = Occasionally
4 = Rarely
5 = Never

___ 1. How often do you discuss or have you considered separation or terminating your relationship?
___ 2. How often do you or your partner leave the house after a fight?
___ 3. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?
___ 4. Do you confide in your mate?
___ 5. Do you ever regret that you entered into this relationship (or lived together)?
___ 6. How often do you and your partner quarrel?
___ 7. How often do you and your partner "get on each other's nerves?"

Use the scale below for question 8:

0 = Never
1 = Rarely
2 = Occasionally
3 = Almost Every Day
4 = Every Day

___ 8. How often do you kiss your mate?

9. The numbers on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy" represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please indicate below which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Unhappy</td>
<td>Fairly Unhappy</td>
<td>A Little Unhappy</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Very Happy</td>
<td>Extremely Happy</td>
<td>Perfect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Degree of happiness, based on the scale above (please circle): 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Satisfaction Subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Continued)

10. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? (Please circle the number)

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

IRB forms

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DATE: 28 November 2006

TO: Tara Dekkers
c/o M. Murphy, 4380 Palmer

CC: Dr. Megan Murphy
4380 Palmer

FROM: Jan Canny, IRB Administrator
Office of Research Assurances

SUBJECT: IRB ID 06-515  Study Review Date: 27 November 2006

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair has reviewed the project, “Division of household Labor and Decision-making: The Relationship to Marital Satisfaction”, (IRB ID 06-515) and has declared the study exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b)(4). The applicable exemption category is provided below for your information. Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review by the IRB. Only the IRB may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

The IRB determination of exemption means that this project does not need to meet the requirements from the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human subjects, unless required by the IRB. We do, however, urge you to protect the rights of your participants in the same ways that you would if the project was required to follow the regulations. This includes providing relevant information about the research to the participants.

Because your project is exempt, you do not need to submit an application for continuing review. However, you must carry out the research as proposed in the IRB application, including obtaining and documenting (signed) informed consent if you have stated in your application that you will do so or if required by the IRB.

Any modification of this research should be submitted to the IRB on a Continuation and/or Modification form, prior to making any changes, to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Exempt Category

(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
Acknowledgements

I would like to express gratitude to my major professor, Dr. Megan Murphy, for her encouragement, support, and guidance throughout the writing of this thesis and throughout my work as a graduate student. She has given me so much insight and many helpful suggestions and she continues to challenge me to do my best. I also want to say thank-you to my committee members Dr. Ronald Werner-Wilson and Dr. David Vogel for their suggestions, support, and time that they have contributed toward my thesis and my education.