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Marital Satisfaction, Family Strengths, and Gender: Implication for Marriage Enrichment

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Abstract

Possible relationships between marital satisfaction, family strengths, and gender were investigated using the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS) (Schumm, 1990), the Family Functioning Style Scale (FFSS) (Trivette, Dunst, Deal, Hamer, and Propst, 1990), and a global measure of marriage and family strengths. Because it was theorized that there were seven dimensions of family strengths, the FFSS, which measures five dimensions of family strengths, was revised by adding 29 questions that primarily measure the family strengths of care and centeredness/spirituality. Data were gathered through marriage enrichment seminars presented as part of the Building and Enriching Strong Tennessee (B.E.S.T.) Families project. Findings suggest that the dimensions of family strengths may be more fluid than static and that participants in marriage enrichment seminars do not differ significantly from non-participants on the KMS or revised FFSS. Findings from the current study also revealed no significant differences between husbands and wives on the KMS. Wives did report higher scores than husbands on both the revised FFSS and a global scale of marriage and family strengths.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The modern emotional and relational state of the American family reflects a continuum of complexity and diversity. While some families enjoy a positive and healthy family atmosphere, other families constantly are being bombarded and weakened by stresses related to abuse, alcohol and drug use, divorce, financial strains, lack of time, unemployment, etc. Such problems take their toll on the family and, thus, warrant the attention of family specialists. Many family specialists have directed their efforts toward developing and implementing programs that seek to ameliorate these stressors and adequately prepare citizens for healthy interpersonal relationships (Schvaneveldt & Young, 1992). However, instead of merely focusing on correcting problems, an alternative approach to helping families is to strengthen families by teaching them skills, useful in preventing rather than only ameliorating crisis due to stressors (Stinnett, Sanders, & DeFrain, 1981).

Marriage enrichment is one preventive approach that offers couples an opportunity to improve their marriage.

Marriage enrichment is an important tool for helping couples to develop their relationship, especially since a strong marital relationship is often viewed as the foundation of a strong family (Dyer & Dyer, 1982) and many couples are experiencing marriages that are less than satisfying (Smith, Shoffner, & Scott, 1979). Still a relatively new area of research, the topic of marriage enrichment lacks depth of research in several areas. Arcus and Thomas (1993) suggested that marriage enrichment programs need to be explored in terms of how they can be structured to better meet the needs of participating couples. Guerney and Maxson (1990) echoed this concern by suggesting that researchers should consider which type of program will work better for a particular group. Such a consideration may include conducting research on populations as well as content foci. In addition, Stahmann and Salts (1993) pointed out that the issue of gender needs to be addressed and that educators can be quite useful in informing couples about the sexual revolution as well as encouraging a nonsexist attitude regarding gender roles.

Many marriage enrichment programs focus on the development of certain strengths in the marital relationship (e.g., communication). These strengths are commonly known in the literature as "family strengths." However, it is

important to know more about what in reality constitutes a strong family before these attributed strengths are encouraged in marriage enrichment programs that intend to develop more satisfying relationships (Otto, 1963). Although many scholars have been instrumental in developing the concept of family strengths, including the development of measurement techniques, additional research in this area is needed in order to better understand the concept of family strengths and to help families further develop their unique family strengths. This need for additional research also applies to marriage enrichment programs using family strengths as a means to achieve marital enrichment. Otto (1963) noted the need for "[d]efining, analyzing and establishing the nature of family strengths," which he believed would make "a major contribution to the development of effective programs which will strengthen family life" (p. 329).

Rationale

The concepts of marital satisfaction, family strengths, and gender need to be further addressed, especially as they pertain to marriage enrichment. Such attention is needed in order to strengthen the theoretical base of marriage

enrichment, to improve marriage enrichment programs, to better serve participating couples, and, ultimately, to help families more effectively deal with the inevitable stresses of life by helping them to develop potential strengths.

Statement of the Problem

The need for research in the area of marriage enrichment, marital satisfaction, family strengths, and gender raises many questions. The particular problems addressed in this study were:

1. How does the marital satisfaction and family strengths of seminar participants differ from non-participants with respect to gender?
2. Is there any relationship between marital satisfaction and family strengths?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were fourfold: (a) to clarify inconsistencies in the family strengths literature by proposing an updated, comprehensive perspective of family strengths with terminology that offers greater conceptual clarity; (b) to connect the concept of family strengths more

securely with the concept of marital satisfaction, particularly by investigating any possible relationships between family strengths and marital satisfaction; (c) to define clearly and measure marital satisfaction, especially since the concept of marital satisfaction is often poorly differentiated from other commonly used terms (as noted by Fincham & Bradbury, 1987); (d) and to explore marriage enrichment in terms of how it can better meet the needs of those attending enrichment programs.

Nominal Definitions

Family Life Education: According to Arcus, Schvaneveldt, and Moss (1993), family life education is the movement toward serving and helping to meet the needs of family members regardless of age in an educational manner taking into account personal and family values. In addition, Arcus et al. (1993) reported that three rationales, specifically "dealing with problems, preventing problems, and developing potentials" (p. 10), have influenced the development of family life education.

Marriage Enrichment: According to Dyer and Dyer (1982) and Hof and Miller (1981), marriage enrichment includes an educational as well as a preventive approach to

strengthening and enhancing the marital relationship. Dyer and Dyer (1982) further reported that the emphasis of marriage enrichment has been on the development of interpersonal skills with the expectation that couples can build satisfying marriages from strengths they already possess.

Marital Satisfaction: Wright, Nelson, and Georgen (1994) differentiate between marital satisfaction, marital adjustment, marital stability, and marital quality. Marital satisfaction is defined as "the marital partners' subjective satisfaction with their marriage" (p. 40). Morris (1992) has defined marital satisfaction as "the global subjective evaluation of one's feelings about his/her marriage" (p. 8).

Family Strengths: Trivette, Dunst, Deal, Hamer, and Propst (1990) define family strengths as "the competencies and capabilities of both various individual family members and the family unit that are used in response to crises and stress, to meet needs, and to promote, enhance, and strengthen the functioning of the family system" (p. 18). Stinnett and Sauer (1977) adopted the definition of family strengths given by Otto in 1975, stating that family strengths are "relationship patterns, social and psychological characteristics which create a sense of positive family identity, promote satisfying interaction

among family members, and encourage the development of individual potential of family members" (p. 5).

CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature

Enrichment and Prevention Programs

According to Arcus and Thomas (1993), marriage enrichment and similar prevention programs are but one aspect of family life education whose central purposes have been threefold: (a) to help families effectively deal with social problems; (b) to teach families positive skills and attitudes, thereby preventing family problems; (c) and to help families and individuals to develop their fullest potentials. Arcus and Thomas (1993) also stated that "the ultimate goal of family life education is 'to strengthen and enrich individual and family well-being'" (p. 5). Guerney and Maxson (1990) described marital and family enrichment as psychoeducational programs aimed at promoting family agreement and strength as well as the overall well-being of family members through highly structured programs created to serve the general public. Some family life educators have focused on marriage enrichment in a response to the common belief that a family is only as strong as the marital relationship upon which the family is founded (Dyer & Dyer,

1982). According to Hof and Miller (1981), marriage enrichment seeks to enhance relationships through education and prevention with a fourfold purpose:

> to increase each person's self-awareness and the awareness of his or her partner, especially regarding the positive aspects, strengths, and growth potential of the individuals and the marriage; to increase exploration and self-disclosure of the partners' thoughts and feelings; to increase mutual empathy and intimacy; and to develop and encourage the use of skills needed by the partners for effective communication, problem solving and conflict resolution (p. 3)

History of Marriage Enrichment as a Service Delivery Method

David Mace (1982) reported that marriage enrichment first began in January of 1962 in Barcelona, Spain, when Father Gabriel Calvo invited a group of 28 married couples for a weekend retreat. Father Calvo felt that effectively functioning families begin with a loving couple and throughout the retreat asked the husbands and wives questions in order for them to reflect on themselves as individuals, their marriage relationship, and their

relationship with God. According to Mace (1982), it was later in that same year that he and his wife were invited to lead a retreat for married couples. As marriage counselors, they knew the difficulty in helping couples whose relationships already had deteriorated, and they had hopes of discovering ways to prevent problems before they occurred. During this same time, Herbert and Roberta Otto were teaching families to evaluate their family strengths in the West (Smith, Shoffner, & Scott, 1979). There is no doubt that many others, including individuals, churches, universities, and other organizations, have attempted to help married couples through a marriage enrichment process. The contributions of Father Gabriel Calvo, the Maces, the Ottos, and others have encouraged a rapid growth of the marriage enrichment movement.

According to Mace (1982), Leon and Antoinette Smith put together the first training program for marriage enrichment leadership which took place in 1966. Fourteen couples were enrolled. The training program was led by Edward and Ethlyn Staples.

More recent developments in the field of marriage enrichment include expanding enrichment programs originally designed for couples only to include enrichment programs for parents and the entire family.

Types of Prevention

One aim of marriage enrichment is the prevention of marital and family problems. Prevention, according to L'Abate (1990), is "any approach, procedure, or method intended and designed to improve one's interpersonal competence as an individual, as a partner, and as a parent" (p. 20). However, prevention can be classified in three categories: (a) primary prevention targets individuals "at risk," (b) secondary prevention targets individuals "in need," and (c) tertiary prevention targets individuals "in crisis" (L'Abate, 1990, p. 30). According to Bolman (1969):

> Primary prevention attempts to prevent a disorder from occurring. Secondary prevention attempts to identify and treat at the earliest possible moment so as to reduce the length and severity of disorder. Tertiary prevention attempts to reduce to a minimum the degree of handicap or impairment that results from a disorder that has already occurred. (p. 208)

Marriage enrichment has typically been used as primary prevention. According to Otto (1976), marriage enrichment programs are intended for couples who have functional marriages but who wish to enhance their relationship, but they are not intended for couples whose marriages are in

need of repair. Marriage enrichment is not a panacea for all marital and family problems (Smith, Shoffner, & Scott, 1979). Rather, couples with problems may be better helped through tertiary prevention techniques such as therapy and counseling.

Prevention is a necessary component for relationship maintainance. According to L'Abate (1985), "most families, no matter how functional, need skill training in all facets of family life" (p. 169). Hof and Miller (1981) also stated that many people subscribe to the myth of naturalism and believe that married couples automatically know how to relate to one another and can continue an effective relationship effortlessly. Many couples progress from the need for primary prevention to the need for secondary or tertiary prevention. According to Otto (1976), "The need for relationship enrichment and personal growth is often not recognized by couples, and this can lead to a subtle and insidious debilitation of the relationship over a period of time" (p. 11). Marriage enrichment may be an effective prevention technique for couples who wish to enhance and maintain their marital relationships.

Effectiveness of Marriage Enrichment Programs

Many researchers have analyzed the effectiveness of individual marriage enrichment programs. Giblin, Sprenkle, and Sheehan (1985) conducted a meta-analysis of 85 enrichment studies and found that "the average person who participates in enrichment is better off than 67% of the untreated controls at posttest" (p. 360). This study concluded that the outcome of enrichment programs is greater for subjects who are less educated than those who are more highly educated and that enrichment also may work quite effectively with distressed couples as well as the targeted functional couples.

Marriage enrichment programs also may have a negative impact on program participants. According to Doherty and Walker (1982), marital conflict, the avoidance of problems, and marital enmeshment may result from enrichment techniques such as couple-centered communication. Doherty and Walker did not describe what type of couple is likely to have a negative experience but stressed the importance of careful screening out of distressed couples, as well as the need for marriage enrichment leaders to be prepared to deal effectively with couples who become stressed during the marriage enrichment program.

Populations and Formats of Marriage Enrichment Programs

An interesting analysis of marriage enrichment compares couples who choose to attend marriage enrichment programs and couples who choose not to attend. Many researchers have speculated as to why some individuals choose not to attend such programs, especially when the benefits of the program have been explained and individuals realize the positive impact the program could have on their relationship. According to Mace (1975), many couples are unwilling to participate in marriage enrichment programs due to what he terms the "inter-marital taboo," or the belief that a successful marriage requires no special abilities coupled with a reluctance to obtain help when they see their marriage relationship deteriorating. In addition, Mace stated that "privatism" also deters couples from participating because many feel that marriage should be private and that the sanctity of marriage should not be breached. Simon (1976) stated that the Family and Child Service of Metropolitan Seattle began to take a more preventive approach in place of their former medical-model approach. It was observed that: (a) the medical model made clients feel they were unhealthy, (b) the agency's services were used when people were in crisis and not for reasons

such as prevention, (c) people were often ill-prepared to deal effectively with human relationships, (d) people often felt they were abnormal or unusual if they had to admit something was wrong and ask for help, and (e) people did not seem to be afraid of situations such as classes and prevention groups where they could come to improve themselves and their relationships without admitting to having a problem. Otto (1976) added that many couples may choose to not attend because they fear the workshop or program will force them to work through problems that they have worked hard to cover over and not deal with effectively. Additionally, gender and race may also play a role in whether a couple (or individual) chooses to attend a marriage enrichment program. According to a study by Duncan, Box, and Silliman (1996) involving college-age students, females tend to have a greater interest in marriage preparation programs; therefore, in order to encourage more men to be interested and participate in programs, advertisements for marriage preparation or enrichment programs should be directed more towards men than women.

Current marriage enrichment programs offer much variability in their delivery format. Diskin (1986) reported that some programs are guided by trained leaders in a highly structured format, some programs use a group format in order

to encourage interaction, and still other programs consist of prerecorded tapes. Otto (1976) added that marriage and family enrichment programs use "a variety of methods, approaches, and materials drawn from diverse disciplines and fields" (p. 25). Also according to Diskin (1986), there is a great deal of variability in the amount of time required for the program, the organization which sponsors the program (from religious organizations to universities), and the particular focus of the program.

Goals and Objectives of Marriage Enrichment Programs

The specific goals of marriage enrichment programs may differ from program to program. The overall aim of marriage enrichment programs is to improve marriage and family life from within the marriage relationship (Otto, 1976) as well as to encourage better living (Smith, Shoffner, & Scott, 1979).

The objectives of marriage enrichment programs tend to vary even more widely than do the goals. Although the goal of most enrichment programs is to improve marriages, individual programs achieve this goal in different ways. Some programs focus on communication, whereas other programs focus on other aspects of human behavior. Smith, Shoffner,

and Scott (1979) reported that the goal of better living may be reached "by gaining some insights, skills, and avenues through which normal persons, marriages, and families can come nearer to reaching their potential in dealing with close relationships" (p. 88). In addition, Smith et al. (1979) listed two specific objectives of marriage enrichment: "to learn the skills of communication" and "to learn some of the principles of human behavior" (p. 88). Finally, Ball and Ball (1979) stated that "in general the enrichment programs are concerned with enhancing the couple's communication, emotional life, or sexual relationship" (p. 91). Regardless of the particular objectives of programs, the overarching objective of the marriage enrichment programs is that participants' marriages and family lives are being enriched.

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction plays an important role in marriage enrichment programs. First, marital satisfaction may be the criterion some marriage enrichment educators use to exclude some couples from progressing further in the program. However, in comparing the pre-enrichment program marital satisfaction scores of couples participating in a

program with published norms and in comparing enrichment participants with non-participants, Powell and Wampler (1982) found that marriage enrichment participants experienced less marital satisfaction than non-participating research volunteers (of which some but not all had equal accessibility to marriage enrichment programs). Powell and Wampler speculated that this obvious difference in levels of marital satisfaction could be due to (a) participants' needs for marriage enrichment outweighing the cost of the temporary disruption in their lives or (b) participants' optimistic feelings that their unsatisfactory marriage could be better helped through an enrichment experience than through therapy.

Second, marital satisfaction may be the criterion some educators use to determine the effectiveness of a marriage enrichment program. Powell and Wampler (1982) reported that a major assumption of many family life educators is that "if happily married couples could be provided with appropriate skills and growth experiences, not only would their immediate marital satisfaction be heightened, but they would be able to resolve future developmental crises without resorting to divorce" (p. 389). However, Mace (1982) indicated that outcomes of marriage enrichment might not be immediate; rather, the marital

enrichment experience might serve as the catalyst for the beginning of change.

Marital Satisfaction and Gender

Researchers generally support the notion that the perceived and reported marital satisfaction of men is greater than the marital satisfaction of women. For example, using a national sample of married couples (involved in either marital counseling or marital enrichment) who took the ENRICH Inventory, Fowers (1991) found that men reported higher levels of marital satisfaction than women. In addition, using a Swedish version of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), Kaslow, Hansson, and Lundblad (1994) found that not only were men's scores of marital satisfaction higher than women's, but the marital satisfaction of women was often found to be somewhat dependent upon the level of the man's marital satisfaction. When comparing groups with high and low marital satisfaction, Kaslow et al. found that there were significant differences in subjects' responses to questions about leisure activities, philosophy of life, time spent together, and frequency of quarrels. The researchers reported that the overall marital satisfaction scores for

their Swedish group were much higher than the American comparison group, which was collected by Spanier in 1976.

Family Strengths or Family Functioning Style

The family strengths perspective for helping marriages and families is based on empowerment. It gives families more dignity by pointing out the positive aspects of their family lives. It also encourages skills within their families that helps them prepare for future stresses. According to Trivette, Dunst, Deal, Hamer, and Propst (1990), whereas early interventionists in the past have been more reactive against family deficiencies, the family strengths approach is more proactive. Trivette et al. also have suggested that researchers and interventionists should promote the importance of the following ideas:

- that strengths are present in all families;
- that failures of the family should not be seen as deficiencies of the family but as the failure of society to adequately teach families;
- that families should be helped by focusing on the positive functioning of the family rather than its dysfunctions;

- that strength-oriented, rather than problem-centered, programs should be used to strengthen family functioning; and
- that encouraging families to become more independent is empowering.

The family strengths perspective is particularly useful for family life education, especially since one rationale for family life education has been the development of potential in individuals and families (Arcus et al., 1993). Schvaneveldt and Young (1992) stressed that family life educators not only need to understand the concept of family strengths, but they need to let families know that they possess these strengths.

Although many researchers agree that family strengths can be a positive aspect of programs designed to help families, there seem to be inconsistencies in the family strengths field. First, researchers disagree as to whether the concept of family strengths is a unidimensional or multidimensional concept. Otto (1963) wrote that the "criteria for the assessment of family strength are not seen as isolated variables, but as clusters or constellations which are dynamic, fluid, interrelated, and interacting" (p. 336). In spite of the unidimensional approach, researchers have continued to discover and report differing dimensions

of family strengths. The Maces (1980) stated that the three essential elements necessary for a successful marriage are commitment, effective communication, and the creative use of conflict. DeFrain and Stinnett (1992) listed six characteristics of strong families: "commitment," "appreciation and affection," "positive communication," "time together," "spiritual well-being," and "ability to cope with stress and crisis" (p. 18). Trivette et al. (1990) noted 12 qualities of strong families:

1. A belief in and sense of *commitment* toward promoting the well-being and growth of individual family members as well as that of the family unit.
2. *Appreciation* for the small and large things that individual family members do well, and encouragement to do better.
3. Concentrated effort to spend *time* and do things together, no matter how formal or informal the activity or event.
4. A sense of *purpose* that permeates the reasons and basis for "going on" in both bad and good times.
5. A sense of *congruence* among family members regarding the value and importance of assigning time and energy to what the family considers its goals, needs, projects, and functions.

6. The ability to *communicate* with one another in a way that emphasizes positive interactions among family members.
7. A clear set of family *rules, values,* and *beliefs* that establishes expectations about acceptable and desired behavior.
8. A varied repertoire of *coping strategies* that encourage positive functioning in dealing with both normative and non-normative life events.
9. The ability to engage in *problem-solving* activities designed to evaluate options for meeting needs and procuring resources.
10. The ability to be *positive* and see the positive in almost all aspects of their lives, including the ability to see crises and problems as an opportunity to learn and grow.
11. *Flexibility* and *adaptability* in the roles necessary to procure resources to meet needs.
12. A *balance* between the use of internal and external family resources for coping and adapting to life events and planning for the future. (p. 18-19)

Curran (1983) reported 15 traits of healthy families: the healthy family "communicates and listens," "affirms and supports one another," "teaches respect for others,"

"develops a sense of trust," "has a sense of play and humor," "exhibits a sense of shared responsibility," "teaches a sense of right and wrong," "has a strong sense of family in which rituals and traditions abound," "has a balance of interaction among members," "has a shared religious core," "respects the privacy of one another," "values service to others," "fosters family table time and conversation," "shares leisure time," and "admits to and seeks help with problems" (p. 23-24). Finally, Gladding (1995) addressed eight qualities of healthy families:

- commitment
- appreciation
- willingness to spend time together
- effective communication patterns
- religious/spiritual orientation
- ability to deal with crisis in a positive manner
- encouragement of individuals
- clear roles (p. 32-34)

Although scholars are not in agreement as to what constitutes family strength, they have provided differing dimensions of family strengths that, when compiled, produced a comprehensive list of family strengths more accurately portraying the range of possible family strengths.

A second inconsistency in the family strengths literature is the name scholars have used to describe the concept of family strengths. Although the term family strengths is fairly common, some authors have chosen a different term. For example, Carlson and Fullmer (1991) referred to family strengths as competencies. And Trivette et al. (1990), who opposed the word strength when describing the characteristics of families because it implies that some families are weak, suggested the term family functioning style because it implies that families handle life's stresses in uniquely different but effective ways. There also are inconsistencies in the naming of the particular family strengths (or family functioning style). For example, Trivette et al. (1990), after running a factor analysis on the items of their Family Functioning Style Scale, arrived at five factors: commitment, cohesion, communication, competence, and coping. At first glance, these factors seem to relate quite well with DeFrain and Stinnett's (1992) list of six characteristics of strong families (commitment, appreciation and affection, positive communication, time together, spiritual well-being, and ability to cope with stress and crisis). However, Trivette et al.'s (1990) factor of commitment seems to measure what DeFrain and Stinnett call time together, and Trivette et al.'s factor of cohesion

seems to measure what DeFrain and Stinnett call commitment. There seems to exist a lack of conceptual clarity. Although such inconsistency can create confusion in the literature, important family strengths have been identified and measured through the development of scales.

When combining Trivette et al.'s (1990) five factors and DeFrain and Stinnett's six family strengths, a list of seven family strengths is developed that includes chronology, commitment, communication, competence, coping, care, and centeredness/spirituality. The following discussion identifies points of convergence and divergence regarding the dimensions of family strengths as proposed by Trivette et al. (1990), Stinnett and DeFrain (1985), and Curran (1983).

Chronology is the amount of time that family members spend together. Stinnett and DeFrain (1985) found that "[s]trong families spend time--quality time--and in great quantities" (p. 14). Curran (1983) reported that sharing time with family is crucial for healthy families since it is within this time that other family strengths are experienced. She stated that the healthy family "has a sense of play and humor" (p. 125), "has a balance of interaction among its members" (p. 132), and "shares leisure time" (p.

144). Trivette et al. (1990) classified time together as an indicator of commitment.

Commitment is the unspoken pledge that family members make to "stick together" no matter the circumstances. Stinnett and DeFrain (1985) stated that strong families have commitment and that "[m]embers of strong families are dedicated to promoting each other's welfare and happiness. They value the unity of the family" (p. 14). In a later article, DeFrain and Stinnett (1992) reported that family members often attribute the success of their family to commitment, saying it is "essential to the well-being of the family" (p. 19).

Communication as a family strength refers to positive and effective communication. Stinnett and DeFrain (1985) reported that "[m]embers of strong families have good communication skills and spend a lot of time talking with each other" (p.14). In a later article, DeFrain and Stinnett (1992) stated that the communication patterns of strong families is honest and straightforward. Positive communication in strong families includes seeing the perspective of other family members (Stinnett & DeFrain, 1985). Curran (1983) wrote that the healthy family communicates as well as listens and that they value their meal time and the conversations they share there.

Competence, according to L'Abate (1990), is "what an individual is, does, and has in different settings" (p. 59). Therefore, family competence consists of the family's identity, the family's actions, and the family's possessions. These conditions of being, doing, and having determine how well a family endures the challenges of life.

Coping as a family strength includes the positive ways that families deal with stress as well as their perceptions of stress. According to Stinnett and DeFrain (1985), strong families see stress as an opportunity for growth. Optimism plays an important role in helping families adjust well in situations of stress and during times of crisis (DeFrain & Stinnett, 1992). Curran (1985) wrote that there are at least five healthy ways that couples can deal with stress: "They view stress as a normal part of life," "They share feelings as well as words," "They develop conflict-resolution skills," "They make use of support people and systems," and "They are adaptable" (p. 29). Curran (1985) also wrote that positive reactions to stress include viewing the stress as temporary; working together towards a solution; developing new ways to deal with stress, including new rules; holding the expectation that life is going to be stressful; and maintaining the feeling that the family can deal well with the stress.

Care is also an important family strength in which family members show their love and appreciation for one another. Stinnett and DeFrain (1985) stated that strong families show appreciation for family members frequently and that this demonstration of appreciation in families serves to boost one another's self-esteem. In showing care for one another, family members express how much they like each other through frequent positive interactions that focus on the good in each other (DeFrain and Stinnett, 1992). According to Curran (1983), the healthy family shows affirmation and support for one another as well as respect and trust. Curran also stated that "[f]amily affirmation and support are not luxuries but necessities in our lives" (p. 77). The idea of care or appreciation and affection is similar to cohesion, defined as "the emotional bonding family members have with each other" (p. 7) by Smith and Stevens (1992). In addition, they report that cohesion includes emotional attraction, differentiation, supportiveness, loyalty, psychological safety, family identification, physical caretaking, and pleasurable interaction.

Centeredness/Spirituality also has been noted as a family strength in which families experience spiritual well-being, shared values, and a well developed sense of social

interest. Stinnett and DeFrain (1985) found that "[w]hether they go to formal religious services or not, strong family members have a sense of a greater good or power in life, and that belief gives them strength and purpose" (p. 14). DeFrain and Stinnett (1992) included spiritual well-being as a family strength that contributes hope, meaning, and purpose for families, especially through tough times. Curran (1983) found that the healthy family instills morals in its members by "teach[ing] a sense of right and wrong" (p. 185) and that the healthy family has a "shared religious core" (p. 217). Also according to Curran, the husband and wife in a healthy family hold important values, communicate these clearly to their children, and help their children to live morally by holding them responsible for their behavior. Brigman (1992) added that religion may enhance family strengths by contributing love, forgiveness, commitment and responsibility for one another, shared beliefs and values, shared time, and support and respect for the institution of marriage.

These seven family strengths (chronology, commitment, communication, competence, coping, care, and centeredness/spirituality) are present in varying degrees in all families but even more so in strong families. Strong marriages and families seem to know the secret of using

these family strengths successfully and to their advantage. Stinnett and DeFrain (1985) stated that "the strengths of these families serve as a pool of resources that they draw on when times are difficult" and that "unhealthy families are worn out and depleted on a daily basis by the stress of poor relationships" (p. 137).

Family Strengths and Gender

Gender influences the expression of individual family strengths in several different ways. First, gender seems to exert no influence on chronology, the time that families spend together. Fowers (1991) found that, when comparing husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction as assessed by the ENRICH inventory, no significant differences were found between gender on the leisure activities subscale.

Next, communication seems to be influenced by gender. Using a national sample of married couples (involved in either marital counseling or marital enrichment) who took the ENRICH Inventory, Fowers (1991) found that men report higher levels of marital satisfaction and higher levels of satisfaction concerning communication. In addition, Tannen (1990), in You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation, stated that women and men have very different

styles of communication. For example, women engage in rapport talk and men in report talk. A woman is often forced to listen to a man's explanation as though she has no mind of her own. And, even though ridiculed by men for doing it, women engage in gossip as a way to establish intimacy. Within genders, gender roles may also influence communication. Juni and Grimm (1994) found that "{h}usbands in gender-role congruent couples show greater dissatisfaction in affective communication than those in androgynous couples" (p. 109).

Research has shown mixed results concerning the influence gender has on coping behaviors. Markman, Silvern, Clements, and Kraft-Hanak (1993) reported that, in spite of other researchers reporting evidence of gender differences in dealing with conflict (i.e., women pursue and men withdraw in conflict discussions), no observable gender differences were found in engaged couples. Also, Fowers (1991) found no significant differences between husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction scores on the conflict resolution subscale of the ENRICH inventory.

Gender seems to have an influence on the family strength of care. Oggins, Leber, and Veroff (1993) found that affection, affirmation, and intimacy are linked with sexual relations for both men and women with sexual

relations and intimacy linked a little more closely for women than men. And Acitelli and Antonucci (1994) found that social support is more closely related to marital satisfaction for wives than husbands.

Finally, gender influences the family strength of centeredness/spirituality. Fowers (1991) reported that men cited religion as a more significant part of their marriage than did women.

Family Strengths and Marital Satisfaction

Family strengths, in general, have a positive influence on a couple's marital satisfaction. The family strength of chronology is positively related to marital satisfaction. Kaslow, Hansson, and Lundblad (1994) reported in a study of long-term marriages that couples with higher marital satisfaction reported more agreement over time spent together, leisure interests, and recreational activities.

The family strength of commitment has been cited by men and women as a reason for their marital satisfaction. Using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) to measure marital satisfaction in 100 couples from retirement communities in 8 states across the United States, Lauer, Lauer, and Kerr (1990) found that commitment--to the marriage relationship

as well as to their spouse--was indicated by both husbands and wives as an important reason for the success of their long-term satisfying marriages. In another study of long-term satisfactory marriages, Fennell (1993) also reported that husbands and wives reported that their successful marriages were attributable to their lifetime commitment to the marriage relationship, loyalty to spouse, and a commitment to sexual fidelity.

Communication also plays an important role in marital satisfaction. Cupach and Comstock (1990) found that satisfactory communication about sex between couples is positively related to marital adjustment, including marital satisfaction, and proposed that "quality communication about sex is a necessary, but insufficient, condition for sexual and marital satisfaction" (p. 184). According to Montgomery (1981), quality communication in a marriage is dependent on knowledge of one's spouse, the ability of both spouses to send and receive information, and shared verbal and nonverbal language patterns. Quality communication is found to influence marital satisfaction. Montgomery hypothesized that openness, confirmation, transactional management, and situational adaptability not only contribute to quality communication but are positively related to marital satisfaction.

Concerning competence, Lauer, Lauer, and Kerr (1990) reported that husbands, but not wives, list agreement on major decisions as an important reason for their long-term and satisfying marriages.

Care also is an important determinant of marital satisfaction. Fennell (1993) found in a study of long-term satisfactory marriages that husbands and wives, when reporting characteristics that have contributed to their successful marriages, cited very similar attributes, including respect for one's spouse as a friend, desire to support one's spouse, good companionship, and willingness to forgive one another. Acitelli and Antonucci (1994) found that social support is more closely related to marital satisfaction for wives than husbands. Humor also influences marital satisfaction but more so for husbands than wives (Ziv & Gadish, 1989). Kaslow, Hansson, and Lundblad (1994) reported that couples, especially in long-term marriages, who have a high level of cohesion also tend to have a high level of marital satisfaction. Huston and Vangelisti (1991) found that marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives was positively correlated with receiving affection but that giving affection was more closely correlated with marital satisfaction for husbands than wives. And, in their study on long-term marriages, Lauer, Lauer, and Kerr (1990) reported

that both husbands and wives cited liking their mate as a person and as a best friend, laughing together, and being proud of their mate's accomplishments as reasons for the success of their long-term and satisfying marriages. In addition, wives cited agreement on expression of affection as a reason, whereas this characteristic did not appear on the top ten list for husbands.

Finally, centeredness/spirituality also influences marital satisfaction. In a study on long-term marriages by Lauer and Lauer (1990), wives, but not husbands, listed agreement on the philosophy of life as an important perceived reason for their long-term and satisfying marriage. Fennel (1993) found that, in long-term satisfying marriages, husbands and wives both reported strong moral values and spiritual commitment as important characteristics responsible for the success of their marriage.

The concepts of marriage enrichment, marital satisfaction, family strengths, and gender have been linked in the literature. Marital satisfaction has been influenced by gender in most studies and associated with each of the six family strengths. Marital enrichment has been a useful tool frequently increasing marital satisfaction among participants. However, important questions remain as to how marital satisfaction and gender are related to family

strengths among marriage enrichment participants and nonparticipants.

CHAPTER III

Methods

Selection of the Sample

The sample used for the following comparisons was taken from couples and individuals involved in the Building and Enriching Stronger Tennessee (B.E.S.T) Families program, a family life education seminar focused on teaching couples and parents how to become a stronger family through experiential activities in conflict resolution and communication. According to Morris, Roberts, Slayton, and Carter (1996):

> B.E.S.T. Families is a series of prevention-based seminars (marriage/family enrichment) that focus on presenting didactic information and experiential techniques that encourage, enrich, and enable Tennessee individuals to become stronger and healthier in their personal and relational well-being. . . The B.E.S.T. Families programs are conducted in an intensive weekend format involving 10 to 12 hours of information, skill building, modeling, and participant practice.

The seminars were led by Dr. Lane Morris from the Department of Child and Family Studies at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and were held in churches as well as religiously-associated institutions between April 1995 and March 1996. Participants in the marriage enrichment seminar were self-selected, having a choice to attend or not to attend the seminars. Advertisements for the seminars were made through church bulletins, church announcements, fliers, and some media (e.g., radio, newspaper) advertisements. The non-participant group, randomly selected from the populations from which the sample came, were individuals who had chosen not to attend the marriage enrichment seminar. Two additional sets of non-participant data were collected from populations who had been offered the marriage enrichment seminar but had canceled due to lack of interest.

Instrumentation

Three instruments, the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), the Family Functioning Style Scale (FFSS), and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale were completed by participants in the study. In addition, a Personal History Inventory was used to obtain sociodemographic information. See Appendix A for a list of items included on these scales.

Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS).

The KMS is a 3-item 7-point Likert-type instrument created by Schumm, Jurich, and Bollman (Schumm, 1990) and first used in the fall of 1977 (Schumm, Nichols, Schectman, & Grigsby, 1983). The KMS was designed as a brief but valid assessment of marital satisfaction with respect to marriage as an institution, the marital relationship, and the character of one's spouse based on the conceptual differences between marriage, marital relationship, and spouse as noted by Spanier and Cole in 1976 (Schumm et al., 1986; Schumm et al., 1990). The KMS consists of the following three items: "How satisfied are you with your marriage?", "How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband [or wife]?", and "How satisfied are you with your husband [or wife] as a spouse?" (Schumm, 1990).

The KMS has proven to be a useful instrument demonstrating high levels of internal consistency reliability (α=.98) (Schumm et al., 1983) as well as high test-retest reliability (α=.71) (Mitchell, Newell, & Schumm, 1983). In addition, Barnes, Schumm, Jurich, and Bollman (1984) reported higher scores for internal consistency reliability for women (α=.93 in a rural sample

and α=.91 in an urban sample) than for men (α=.84 in both rural and urban samples).

The KMS also has proven to be a valid instrument. In a study of the validity of the KMS, Schumm, Paff-Bergeen, Hatch, Obiorah, Copeland, Meens, and Bugaighis (1986) found that the KMS was correlated significantly with the Quality Marriage Index and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). In fact, the KMS was correlated significantly more with the DAS Satisfaction subscale than any other DAS subscale. Thus, it appears that the KMS meets requirements for concurrent validity. Concerning discriminant validity, the KMS is not high in discriminant validity but compares favorably with other popular scales such as the Quality Marriage Index and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Schumm et al., 1986).

The KMS, in spite of its strengths as a reliable and valid instrument, has weaknesses--as evidenced by problems with normality and correlations with marital and individual social desirability. Schumm et al. (1983) reported that tests for both skewing and kurtosis indicated a non-normal distribution of scores for the KMS. Schumm et al. (1983) also found high correlations between marital satisfaction and social desirability in a sample of married mothers. Mitchell, Newell, and Schumm (1983) found that individual social desirability may account for up to 14% of the

variance of marital satisfaction, and marital social desirability may account for up to twice that variance. Schumm et al. (1983) reported that problems of non-normality are lessened when controlling for marital social desirability.

Because of its strengths as a reliable and valid measure, the KMS was chosen to assess marital satisfaction.

Family Functioning Style Scale (FFSS).

The FFSS was developed by Deal, Trivette, and Dunst in 1988 and includes 26 items measuring 12 family strengths, using a 5-point Likert-type rating scale (Trivette et al., 1990; Dunst, Trivette, Deal, 1988). In their preliminary study of the FFSS with parents of children with and without handicaps, Trivette et al. (1990) ran a factor analysis producing five factors they entitled commitment, cohesion, communication, competence, and coping. The scale was reported to be both reliable and valid as an instrument. Their study revealed an alpha of .92 for the entire scale; alphas for each of the subscales ranged from .77 for coping to .85 for commitment. To assess criterion validity, the FFSS was compared to McCubbin, McCubbin, and Thompson's Family Hardiness Index (FHI) and was reported to measure

like characteristics of family functioning, although few constructs of the FFSS could be effectively equated with constructs of the FHI (e.g., confidence, challenge, and control). To assess predictive validity, FFSS scores were compared with scores from the Psychological Well-Being Index and the mastery and health subscale of the Family Inventory of Resources and Management. Family Strengths were found to be correlated with the well-being and health of the family and its members.

The FFSS has been used in at least three studies since its preliminary analyses were published in 1990. Sexton, Snyder, Rheams, Barron-Sharp, and Perez (1991) used the FFSS in a survey of mothers and interventionists to assess the usefulness and length of several written surveys. Ahmeduzzaman and Roopnarine (1992), using the FFSS to assess the parent-child relationship in African-American fathers, reported high reliability coefficients as well as intercorrelation coefficients for the 5 factors ranging from $r = .05$ to $r = .85$. Young and Roopnarine (1994) used the FFSS to assess the childcare involvement of fathers. Reliability of the scale and its subscales were examined, but the content, construct, or criterion validity of the scale was not examined before the five factors (e.g., commitment, cohesion, etc.) were used in their analyses.

In spite of the preliminary evidence given by its authors of the reliability and validity of the FFSS, the version of the FFSS used by Trivette et al. (1990) may be limited in several areas. First, the FFSS fails to measure two important family strengths noted in the literature. The two additional family strengths of care and centeredness/ spirituality need to be assessed in order to better reflect what the literature holds as important family strengths. Also, Trivette et al. (1990) cited that the FFSS is a 26-item instrument but included only 25 items in their article. The original 25 items listed in their article were used for the present study with one change: "Can depend on friends and family for help" was split into "Can depend on friends for help" and "Can depend on family for help." Therefore, there were 26 items used in the current study representing the original items of the FFSS. Finally, items measuring the factors of commitment and cohesion better reflect the concepts of chronology and commitment.

In order to better assess family strengths in the current study and more fully assess the breadth of strengths reflected in the literature, additions were made to the FFSS. The additional items on the Revised FFSS were written so as to more fully assess seven family strengths (chronology, commitment, communication, competence, coping,

care, and centeredness/spirituality). See Table 1* for a listing of these items of the original FFSS, their factor loadings, and reliabilities for each factor as reported by Trivette et al. (1990) and Table 2 for a listing of additional items created.

Reported to be a reliable and valid measure of family strengths in a preliminary study conducted by Trivette et al. (1990), the FFSS with the previously described additions was used in the current study to assess the presence of family strengths among participants of the study.

Strong Marriage/Family Scale.

A scale was created for the study to measure a global sense of marriage and family strength. The scale consists of the two items: "My marriage is strong" and "My family is strong." The items were rated with the use of a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The alpha computed for this scale in the current study was .88. There were concerns that a scale could not be successfully created and used with an adequate reliability with so few items. Zeller and Carmines (1980) reported that tests of reliability can be run on scales with

*All tables may be found in Appendix B.

as few as two items and that, as the number of items increases, the alpha will take on a larger value.

Hypotheses of the Study

The current study sought to examine the following hypotheses:

1. Seminar participants will not differ significantly from seminar non-participants in marital satisfaction nor in family strengths present.
2. Marital satisfaction as measured by the KMS will be highly correlated with the FFSS and its subscales.
3. Husbands will exhibit higher scores of marital satisfaction on the KMS than wives.

Procedures

Data collection.

Data were collected using a pre-experimental research design method, combining a one-group pretest-posttest design with a static-group comparison (Campbell & Stanley, 1963) for the entire data set. Before discussing or participating in structured learning experiences that would enhance or

enrich their marital satisfaction or family strengths, seminar participants were asked to complete an instrument that included the KMS, revised FFSS, Strong Marriage/Family Scale, and Personal History Inventory. Husbands and wives completed their instruments separately. Four to six weeks later, seminar participants were mailed a second instrument to complete that included the KMS. Couples were encouraged to complete their instruments separately; separate return envelopes were included for this purpose. Seminar participants were self-selected for the study.

Also at Time 2 (4 to 6 weeks after the seminar was held), a randomly-selected group of couples from the same population as the seminar participants but who chose not to attend the seminar was mailed an instrument to complete that included the KMS, revised FFSS, Strong Marriage/Family Scale, and Personal History Inventory. Couples were encouraged to complete their instruments separately, and separate return envelopes were supplied for this purpose.

The current study focuses on data collected through June 17, 1996, from seminar participants at the time of the seminar (pre-test) and from the non-participant group only. This experimental design is described as a static group comparison of pre-test data.

Data management.

Data were managed via the use of SPSS command and data files.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Sample Description

The sample used in the study consisted of 228 men and women in a Southeastern state who had either attended or chosen not to attend the marriage enrichment seminar, B.E.S.T. Families, offered to members of their church or religiously- affiliated institution. There were 141 individuals (approximately 70 couples) that comprised the participant group. Of the 87 individuals that comprised the non-participant group, 70 individuals (81%) represented 35 husband/wife couples, 15 individuals were married women, and 2 individuals were married men. There was a 100% response rate from the seminar participants on returned instruments at Time 1. The 100% response rate was due to participants filling out their instruments as part of the marriage enrichment seminar. There was a 20.6% response rate for the non-participant group who had a choice to participate or not participate in the study as a non-participant.

The overall sample averaged 35.3 years of age with a range of 18 to 70 years. The sample was comprised of 47% men

and 53% women. Most (96%) of the sample was White with 1% Black and 2% other making up the balance. Most of the sample (94%) were married individuals, but 6% of the sample were divorced and remarried individuals and 1% were engaged individuals. The average length of present marital status was 10.8 years with a range of 0 to 46 years. Parental status also was assessed with 37% of the sample reported having at least one daughter and 35% of the sample reported having at least one son. Most individuals (56%) reported earning a Bachelor's degree or higher. The sample was affiliated with several denominations: Baptist, the largest of the protestant denominations, (67%); Church of God (24%); Methodist (4%); Pentecostal (2%); Presbyterian (1%); Catholic (1%); and other (2%). Most of the sample (67%) reported full-time employment status; the sample averaged 38 hours per week of work, 11 years of employment, and approximately $20,000 of personal pre-tax income. See Table 3 for a more comprehensive listing of demographic characteristics of the entire sample, as well as a comparison between participants and non-participants and between all males and females involved in the study.

Preliminary Analyses

In order to assess the three hypotheses of the study, it was necessary to conduct some preliminary analyses on the FFSS, especially since the FFSS is not an established scale in the literature nor has it been used with the marriage enrichment population.

First, reliabilities for the original portion of the FFSS as well as the five subscales of commitment, cohesion, communication, competence, and coping were investigated, resulting in alphas quite similar, but lower, than those reported by Trivette et al. (1990) (see Table 4).

Although the FFSS appeared to be a modestly reliable scale with our sample, there still existed some concerns regarding the validity of the FFSS. First, the sample used by Trivette et al. (1990) and the sample used for the current study were from unique populations. The sample used by Trivette et al. (1990) were parents of preschool-aged children with and without handicaps from a clinical population. The sample used for the current study were predominantly white, religiously-oriented, married individuals from a non-clinical population either choosing to participate in marriage enrichment seminars or choosing not to participate but probably possessing a strong

volunteer bias. The sample for the current study, however, was not that unique to populations of marriage enrichment participants.

Second, there existed some concerns regarding the construct validity of the FFSS. Trivette et al. (1990) reported correlations between the five subscales of the FFSS (commitment, cohesion, communication, competence, and coping) and the four subscales of the Family Hardiness Index (FHI) (coordinated commitment, confidence, challenge, and control). Although Trivette et al. (1990) reported results as a measure of criterion-related validity, the comparison made between commitment of the FFSS and coordinated commitment of the FHI better reflect the concept of construct validity, "the extent to which the measure, or subscales of the measure, correlate positively with other measures of the same construct" (Grotevant & Carlson, 1989, p. 62). However, the coefficient reported for the correlation between commitment and coordinated commitment at .34 only weakly to moderately describes convergent validity between like constructs. Rather, it may describe discriminant validity. Furthermore, Trivette et al. (1990) asserted that the FFSS and the FHI measure like concepts even though correlations between total scale scores and

between subscales, although significant, were moderate at best.

Given the uniqueness of the populations used for the Trivette et al. (1990) study and the current study and given concerns about the construct validity of the FFSS, factor analysis of the 26 items of the FFSS was conducted. Because correlations between FFSS scale items showed weak to fairly moderate interrelationships between items, a principle-components factor analysis using oblique rotation was used on the 26 items from the original FFSS, limiting the number of items extracted to five factors accounting for 57.3% of the variance. However, factor analysis for this sample produced factor solutions very different from those reported by Trivette et al. (1990), although the same factor analysis was run by Trivette et al. (1990). (See Table 5 for factor solutions produced by factor analysis in this study on items from the original FFSS.)

In an attempt to understand the failure of the FFSS to factor similarly to the results of earlier research, a second principle components factor analysis using oblique rotation was conducted using the original scale items but allowing the scale items to load freely into factors, producing results similar to the first analysis, yet with six factors present. This factor analysis also failed to

produce factors with composition similar to those cited by Trivette et al. (1990).

Because the original 26-item FFSS failed to factor similarly to factor analysis results reported by Trivette et al. (1990), I considered it methodologically unsound to attach the 29 additional scale items that were written to supplement the FFSS to the 5-factor solution presented by Trivette et al. (1990) as originally intended.

Based on a review of the family strengths literature, I initially theorized that there were six to seven distinct family strengths. In an effort to test this theoretical model of six or seven family strengths, separate principle components factor analyses using oblique rotation were conducted with collected data using the 55-item revised FFSS, forcing items into six and seven factors. Comparing the results of these analyses, the 6-factor solution was chosen for subsequent analyses for empirically-based reasons. The 6-factor solution had better face validity than the 7-factor solution which separated like items into separate factors. Also, changes in the Eigenvalue and percent of explained variance decreased considerably after six factors. The 6-factor solution explained 50.7% of the variance and is presented in Table 6.

As noted in Table 6, the six factors chosen as best of fit for the revised 55-item FFSS were as follows: communication/conflict resolution, competence, clarity of values, caring commitment, coping, and central faith. Originally, it was theorized that seven factors would emerge from factor analysis including chronology, commitment, communication, competence, coping, care, and centeredness/spirituality. It is interesting to see that the concept of chronology did not factor out in factor analysis, but that all other concepts did with caring and commitment factoring together and with centeredness/spirituality splitting in to the two factors clarity of values and central faith.

The 55-item revised FFSS demonstrates that it is quite reliable, with an alpha of .9520. Alphas for the six factors range from .64 to .89, considered to be at highly acceptable levels for purposes of research by Grotevant and Carlson (1989), and are listed in Table 7 along with descriptive statistics for the revised FFSS and its factors. The six factors of the revised FFSS as produced by the factor analysis in this study and presented in Table 6 were used to assess the hypotheses of the study.

Hypothesis 1

In order to assess hypothesis 1--*seminar participants will not differ significantly from non-participants in marital satisfaction nor family strengths present*--*t*-tests comparing participants to non-participants across measures of the revised FFSS, the six subscales of the revised FFSS, the KMS, and the Strong Marriage/Family scale were used to reveal that seminar participants did not differ significantly (at $p<.05$) from non-participants (see Table 8). The comparison between participants and non-participants of Factor 1 (communication/conflict resolution) approached significance ($t=-1.76$, $p=.081$), but it was concluded that seminar participants, in general, do not differ significantly from seminar non-participants.

Hypothesis 2

In order to assess hypothesis 2--*marital satisfaction as measured by the KMS will be highly correlated with the FFSS and its subscales*--correlations were run using data collected from the participant group at Time 1 and the non-participant group. Computed coefficients revealed that the KMS was correlated only weakly with the revised FFSS at

.2647 as well as with the six subscales with coefficients ranging from .1956 to .3307 ($p<.003$). It was concluded that the KMS was only weakly to moderately correlated with the revised FFSS and its subscales for this sample. Correlations between the KMS and the revised FFSS and its subscales are presented in Table 9 along with correlations between the Strong Marriage/Family Scale and the revised FFSS.

To further investigate the relationship between the KMS and the revised FFSS, its subscales, and the Strong Marriage/Family scale, additional analyses were conducted. T-tests were used in two separate analyses to compare men and women across participant and non-participant groups, revealing no significant difference at the $p<.05$ level for the KMS, revised FFSS, Factors 1-6, nor the Strong Marriage/Family scale. Results of these comparisons are reported in Tables 10 and 11.

Because the men and women did not differ significantly across groups for comparisons made regarding scores on the KMS, the revised FFSS, Factors 1-6, and the Strong Marriage/Family scale, men from both the participant group and the non-participant group were grouped together for further analyses. The same holds true for the women of the study; therefore, comparisons using t-tests across gender were made and are presented in Table 12. Several of

these comparisons were found to be significantly different at the $p<.05$ level. Females had significantly higher scores on the revised FFSS, Factor 1 (communication/conflict Resolution), Factor 2 (competence), and the Strong Marriage/Family scale with Factor 3 (clarity of values) approaching significance at .05.

Because no differences were found for men between the participant and non-participant groups and for women between the participant and non-participant groups, not only could comparisons be made between genders, multiple regressions also could be run for men and for women. First, multiple regressions were run using the KMS as the dependent variable and factors 1-6 as the independent variables. For men, Factor 1 (communication/conflict resolution) appears to be the best predictor of marital satisfaction as measured by the KMS. For women, Factor 4 (caring commitment) appears to be the best predictor of marital satisfaction.

Next a regression was run using the KMS as the dependent variable and adding the Strong Marriage/Family Scale to the six factors. For men, scores for the Strong Marriage/Family scale was the best predictor of marital satisfaction, followed by Factor 1 (communication/conflict Resolution). For women, scores for the Strong Marriage/

Family was the best predictor of marital satisfaction. (See Table 14 for standardized Betas, variances, and F values for the regressions for men and Table 15 for statistics for women.)

Hypothesis 3

In order to assess hypothesis 3--*husbands will report higher scores of marital satisfaction on the KMS than wives*--t-tests were run comparing summed scores on the KMS between husbands (n=70) and wives (n=71) participating in the seminar. The mean summed score on the KMS for husbands was 17.3538; the mean summed score on the KMS for wives was 17.6377. There was no significant difference found between KMS scores for husbands and wives. (See Table 13). Interestingly, a comparison of scores on the revised FFSS and its six factors revealed that husbands and wives did differ significantly on Factor 1 (communication/conflict resolution) (t=-2.11, p=.037) and on the Strong Marriage/Family Scale (t=-2.37, p=.019). (See Table 13.)

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Discussion

Conclusions from the Study

Based on a review of the literature (Mace & Mace, 1980; DeFrain & Stinnett, 1992; Trivette et al., 1990; Curran, 1983; and Gladding, 1995), I theorized that the concept of family strengths was multidimensional and consisted of the following factors: chronology, commitment, communication, competence, coping, care, and centeredness/spirituality. Using these seven factors, analyses were planned to test correlations between each of them and the KMS, as well as to compare differences between participants and non-participants and between husbands and wives.

Given that (a) the sample used for the current study as well as the preliminary study conducted by Trivette et al. (1990) on the FFSS were from uniquely different populations, (b) there were concerns with the validity, especially when the factor commitment of the original FFSS correlated only moderately with the factor coordinated commitment of the Family Hardiness Index, and (c) the validity of the FFSS has remained relatively unquestioned in the literature since its

publication, I decided to run factor analysis on the original 26-item FFSS. When results of factor analysis of the original 26-item FFSS did not resemble in the least the five-factor solution reported by Trivette et al. (1990) there was little foundation for the present study to continue its planned analyses based on Trivette et al.'s five-factor model with the newly created additional items constructed to measure care and centeredness/spirituality. Furthermore, I considered it unethical to ignore the results of factor analysis from the current study and return to the scales suggested by Trivette et al. (1990).

Understanding that family strengths may be interrelated concepts (Otto, 1963) that may explain differences in the factoring of the FFSS between the Trivette et al. (1990) and the current study, but not wishing to diverge from the original direction of the study and its theoretical background of the existence of seven family strengths, I ran factor analyses on the revised 55-item FFSS forcing the items into six and seven factors. A comparison of these factor analyses showed that the six-factor solution appeared to be the best factor solution for the revised 55-item FFSS for several reasons. First, the six-factor solution had better face validity than the seven-factor solution. The seven-factor solution split apart like items into separate

factors. And, second, there was little change in the eigenvalues and percent of variance explained by the factors after Factor 6. The six-factor solution to the revised 55-item FFSS appeared to be the best solution for the revised FFSS according to the data. Because the six-factor solution--measuring the factors of communication/conflict resolution, competence, clarity of values, caring commitment, coping, and central faith--seemed to be the best solution for the revised 55-item FFSS, it was used for subsequent analyses assessing the three hypotheses. First, it was concluded that seminar participants do not differ substantially from non-participants in the current study because there were no significant differences found between the groups on the KMS, the revised FFSS and its six factors, and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was confirmed in spite of previous evidence suggesting that marriage enrichment participants do report lower scores on marital satisfaction (Powell & Wampler, 1982). Several reasons may account for the lack of significant differences between the participant and non-participant groups. First, and most importantly, there are a variety of reasons that couples either choose to attend or not attend marriage enrichment seminars. Some couples may attend because their marriage is strong and they wish to improve it. Some couples

may attend in an effort to save their marriage (although the seminar host screened participants, some very troubled marriage partners may have slipped through). On the other side, some couples may choose to not attend because they feel that their marriage is strong and they do not need help. Other couples may choose to not attend because they feel their marriage is weak and, by attending, they feel they would be admitting to their problems. Mace (1975) stated that the "inter-marital taboo" and "privatism" were successful in deterring couples from participating in marriage enrichment programs. A second reason that Hypothesis 1 was confirmed may be due to data for both participants and non-participants being taken from a unique, religiously-oriented population that probably possess similar beliefs and values. Third, a low response rate (20.6%) for the non-participant group may indicate a strong volunteer bias. Non-participants not returning instruments may have self-selected themselves out of the sample because of information they wished not to divulge about their marriage.

Second, hypothesis 2 was assessed and the KMS was not found to be highly related to the revised FFSS nor to any of Factors 1-6. It was expected, rather, that marital satisfaction would be dependent on the presence of family

strengths and that the KMS would be much more highly correlated with the FFSS. This theory was not supported. It may be that family strengths play only a small role in marital satisfaction and that some other concept is a better encourager and predictor of marital satisfaction. Also, some couples may be satisfied in their marital relationship but not strong; other couples may be strong but not necessarily satisfied in their relationships. Multiple regressions also were run on the KMS and the revised FFSS, its factors, and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale; however, due to the low correlation of the KMS with any of these scales, the regression analyses merely confirmed that the revised FFSS and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale has only a weak relationship with the KMS. An interesting result of the regression of the six revised FFSS factors on the KMS revealed that for men, communication/conflict resolution was the best predictor of marital satisfaction. This finding helps to support earlier findings by Fower (1991) in which men who reported high levels of satisfaction with communication also reported high levels of marital satisfaction.

Third, based on data from the participant group, husbands and wives did not differ significantly on marital satisfaction as measured by the KMS. This finding is

contrary to research on marital satisfaction and gender, which generally points to men reporting higher marital satisfaction than women (Fowers, 1991; Kaslow et al., 1994). The lack of significant difference between husbands and wives on the KMS in this sample may be due to the nature of the sample (participants in a marriage enrichment seminar) or changing trends. However, husbands and wives did differ significantly at $p<.05$ for Factor 1 (communication/conflict resolution) and on the Strong Marriage/Family Scale, with wives reporting higher scores.

Implications for Research

Findings in this study emphasize the need for more research in the area of family strengths. Specifically, since factor analysis results on original scale items of the FFSS with this sample did not resemble results cited by Trivette et al. (1990), more research on the FFSS is needed before it should be used as an established scale in research. The difference between the factor analysis of the 1990 study and that of the current study may best be explained by the fluid, interrelatedness of family strengths noted by Otto (1963). The findings of the current study as compared to the study by Trivette et al. (1990) serve as

evidence to the premise that family strengths are not static. And, although family strength may be measured as a whole concept, it may be that the dimensions of family strength cannot be measured easily as separate variables due to their fluid nature (although to do so would not only bring about a better understanding of family strengths but also would be helpful aimed at strengthening families to professionals leading family life education programs. My conclusion is that the Strong Marriage/Family Scale may be useful as a short, global instrument measuring self-reported levels of marriage and family strength: It is brief, has a moderate correlation with the FFSS, and moves away from the dimensional aspect of family strengths.

Both the original and revised versions of the FFSS have proven to be internally consistent instruments, as evidenced by high alphas; however, whether the concept family strength is taken as a whole or whether the concept of family strengths are divided into different dimensions, the FFSS, at present, lacks validity. Further tests of validity--including content, criterion, and construct validity--need to be made on the FFSS whether it is to be used as a unidimensional or multidimensional scale. If the FFSS can be established as a multidimensional scale, a multitrait-multimethod process of validation is recommended in order to

establish convergent and discriminant validity with each of the family strength factors (Campbell & Fiske, 1959).

Implications for Practice

Findings in this study reveal that there are some interesting differences concerning gender in reported family strengths between males and females participating in marriage enrichment seminars. Women in this sample reported higher scores on the family strengths of communication/ conflict resolution and competence as well as stronger agreement with the statements that their marriage and family were strong.

In marriage enrichment seminars, leaders must be careful not to stereotype women and men nor force them to fit or recreate traditional gender role expectations. Instead, leaders should empower both women and men to express themselves in their marriage in whatever ways they wish. And, if a woman finds she is good at a particular task or area of family strength, let her contribute her ability to the marriage—and likewise for men. However, men and women should not necessarily be separated at marriage enrichment seminars to be taught different skills, nor should one expect either sex to take on the responsibility of a certain

aspect of the relationship. A husband and wife couple can be viewed as a team, and I think that is what marriage enrichment should be about.

Limitations of the Study

Although the sample for the current study may be representative of the marriage enrichment population, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to the general population for several reasons. First, because of the religious involvement of the sample, traditional views on marriage may have included a divorce taboo. Second, there was an unrepresentation of African-Americans and other minority ethnic groups that may have influenced the data as well. Third, there were fewer remarried couples than would be expected. This may be due to many remarried couples not feeling comfortable in their church with their new marriage, especially since many churches tend not to accept remarriages as moral. Fourth, the B.E.S.T. Families sample differed from the sample used by Trivette et al. (1990) in that it was not a clinical sample nor was parenthood a prerequisite for inclusion. Finally, data from the non-participant group may have been highly influenced by a volunteer bias since non-participants responded with a 20.6%

response rate. Although these limitations may prevent the data from being generalized, the data still reflects the sample used in the study and may also represent many other participants and non-participants of marriage enrichment seminars.

Summary

There were four objectives set for this study. The first objective was to clarify inconsistencies in the family strengths literature by proposing an updated, comprehensive list of family strengths with terminology that more accurately reflects the meanings of the concepts. In an attempt to achieve this objective, the FFSS created by Deal, Trivette, and Dunst in 1988 was used along with some additional items added by the researchers to measure seven categories of family strengths frequently reflected in the literature. Due to problems with either sampling or instrumentation or both, factor analysis on the original 26-item FFSS revealed five factors, an outcome at odds with that published by Trivette et al. in 1990. It seems unlikely that a seven dimensional model of family strengths can be achieved as theorized. Factor analysis forcing items into six factors provided a good fit that corresponds somewhat

with the seven dimensional model theorized. However, both the process and the outcome of the current study emphasize developing a reliable and valid measure of family strengths.

The second objective was to connect the concept of family strengths more securely with the concept of marital satisfaction, specifically by investigating any possible correlations between family strengths and marital satisfaction. This was achieved by running correlational tests between KMS scores and revised FFSS scores, including subscales of the revised FFSS as suggested by the results of factor analysis. Correlation testing between the KMS and FFSS shows only a weak relationship. However, because of the possibility of sampling or instrumentation problems, these findings should not be taken as conclusive evidence that marital satisfaction is unaffected by the presence of family strengths in a relationship, although in some marital relationships this may be the case.

The third objective was to clearly define and measure marital satisfaction, especially since the concept of marital satisfaction is often confused with other commonly used terms, as noted by Fincham and Bradbury (1987). Marital satisfaction when defined as "the global subjective evaluation of one's feelings about his/her marriage"

(Morris, 1992, p. 8) seems to have been accurately measured by the KMS.

The fourth objective was to explore marriage enrichment in terms of how it can better meet the needs of those attending enrichment programs. This objective was implemented primarily by comparing KMS and FFSS scores between participants and non-participants so as to better describe any differences in marital satisfaction and family strengths between these two groups. Few differences were noted. A self-reported needs assessment of marriage enrichment seminar participants may also indicate ways leaders can better meet the needs of seminar participants.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale

Please respond to the following items using the following scale, by writing the appropriate response in the blank to the left of the item number.

1 - extremely dissatisfied
2 - very dissatisfied
3 - somewhat dissatisfied
4 - mixed
5 - somewhat satisfied
6 - very satisfied
7 - extremely satisfied

___ 1. How satisfied are you with your marriage?

___ 2. How satisfied are you with your husband/wife as a spouse?

___ 3. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband/wife?

Revised Family Functioning Style Scale

Based upon your feelings about your family, please indicate to what extent the following items characterize your family:

0=Never like my family
1=Rarely like my family
2=Occassionally like my family
3=Frequently like my family
4=Almost always like my family

1. ___ Spends time together even with busy schedules.
2. ___ Takes pride in family accomplishments.
3. ___ Tries to forget overwhelming problems for awhile.
4. ___ Agrees upon acceptable family behaviors.
5. ___ Tries not to worry about uncontrollable events.
6. ___ Trusts each other.
7. ___ Teaches a sense of right and wrong.
8. ___ Doesn't take each other for granted.
9. ___ Relationships will outlast material possessions.
10. ___ Members share concerns and feelings.
11. ___ Can depend upon each other in difficult times.
12. ___ Can depend upon friends to help.
13. ___ Affirms and supports one another.
14. ___ Shares similar religious beliefs.
15. ___ Enjoys spending time together.
16. ___ Makes personal sacrifices if it benefits entire family.
17. ___ Believes there is good in the worst situations.
18. ___ Decision making is done to benefit the entire family.
19. ___ Tries to look at the bright side of things.
20. ___ Respects each other.
21. ___ Appreciates family traditions.
22. ___ Pitches in and helps each other.
23. ___ Sticks together no matter the difficulties.
24. ___ Member listen to both sides of disagreements.
25. ___ Solves its own problems before asking others for help.
26. ___ Makes decisions about solving problems.
27. ___ Assumes responsibility for our own family's welfare.
28. ___ Shares similar values.

29. ___ Makes time for important things.
30. ___ Members can depend upon each other.
31. ___ Talks about different ways of dealing with problems.
32. ___ Seeks help with problems.
33. ___ Has "rules" about acceptable behavior.
34. ___ Respects privacy of individual family members.
35. ___ Prays together.
36. ___ Shares leisure time together.
37. ___ Agrees about important family matters.
38. ___ Encourages one another to be themselves.
39. ___ Can depend upon relatives to help.
40. ___ Respects elders.
41. ___ Attends church together.
42. ___ Has a sense of play and humor.
43. ___ Listens attentively to each other.
44. ___ Has a clear base of parent rules.
45. ___ Actively seeks to help one another.
46. ___ Shares in devotions together.
47. ___ Allow for negotiation of family rules.
48. ___ Has a strong friendship network.
49. ___ Cares about each other.
50. ___ Values a work ethic.
51. ___ Appreciates each other.
52. ___ Values a college education.
53. ___ Enjoys spending time with in-laws.
54. ___ Has a secure financial base.
55. ___ Has established community roots.

Strong Marriage/Family Scale

Please indicate your sense of agreement by writing the appropriate response in the blank to the left of the item number.

1=Strongly Disagree
2=Disagree
3=Neutral
4=Agree
5=Strongly Agree

_____1. My marriage is strong.
_____2. My family is strong.

Personal History Inventory

1. Age:_____
2. Gender: _____Male _____Female
3. How would you describe your ethic or racial background? (check one)
   _____White/American, Caucasian
   _____Black American
   _____Native American, Indian
   _____Latin American, Hispanic
   _____Oriental American, Asian Pacific
4. Present Marital Status: (check)
   _____Single
   _____Married
   _____Widowed
   _____Divorced

_____Married and Separated

_____Widowed and Remarried

_____Divorced and Remarried

Other (please specify)_____

5. Length of present marital status: _____

6. Number of children currently living in your household:

_____Daughters

_____Sons

7.Highest degree earned: (check)

_____Elementary school (grades K-5)

_____Junior High (grades 6-8)

_____High School (grades 9-12)

_____Bachelors

_____Masters

_____Doctorate

_____Other _____

8. What is your denomination affiliation? (Please give the full name of your denomination)._____

9. Which of the following best describes your employment status?

_____No employment

_____Part time

_____Full Time

_____Other

10. If employed, how many hours do you work per week on this job?_____

11. What is your personal pre-tax income? Please do not count your spouse's income, but do include your other income allowances (i.e., car allowance, house allowance, social security allowance).

_____less than $5,000
_____$5,000 to $7,499
_____$7,500 to $9,999
_____$10,000 to $14,999
_____$15,000 to $19,999
_____$20,000 to $24,999
_____$25,000 to $34,999
_____$35,000 to $49,999
_____$50,000 or more

12. How many years have you been employed?_____

APPENDIX B

Table 1. FFSS Items Reported by Trivette et al. (1990) Including Chronbach's Alphas and Factor Loadings

Commitment, α=.84	
Spends time together even with busy schedules	.81
Doesn't take each other for granted	.71
Enjoys spending time together	.68
Pitches in and helps each other	.63
Makes time for important things	.40
Cohesion, α=.85	
Takes pride in family accomplishments	.78
Relationships will outlast material possessions	.74
Makes personal sacrifices if it benefits entire family	.67
Sticks together no matter the difficulties	.66
Members can depend upon each other	.51
Communication, α=.79	
Tries to forget overwhelming problems for awhile	.66
Members share concerns and feelings	.60
Believes there is good in the worst situations	.59
Members listen to both sides of disagreements	.59
Talks about different ways of dealing with problems	.49
Agrees about important family matters	.47
Competence, α=.79	
Agrees upon acceptable family behaviors	.76
Can depend upon each other in difficult times	.55
Decision making is done to benefit the entire family (also loaded at.45 with Cohesion)	.49
Solves its own problems before asking others for help	.48

Table 1 (continued)

Coping, α=.77	
Tries not to worry about uncontrollable events	.74
Can depend upon friends and relatives to help	.72
(The above item was split into the following items for the current study:	
Can depend upon friends to help	
Can depend upon relatives to help)	
Tries to look at the bright side of things	.55
Makes decisions about solving problems	.461
Has 'rules' about acceptable behavior	.41

Table 2. Additional Items Created for the FFSS

"Shares leisure time together" (Curran, 1983, p. 21)
"Has a sense of play and humor" (Curran, 1983, p. 21)
"Listens attentively to each other" (Stinnett, 1979
"Allows for negotiation of family rules" *
"Seeks help with problems" *
"Encourages one another to be themselves" (Otto, 1979).
"Has a clear base of parent rules" (Curran, 1983)
Items Added to Assess **Care:**
"Trusts each other" (Curran, 1983)
"Affirms and supports one another" (Curran, 1983)
"Respects each other" (Curran, 1983)
"Assumes responsibility for our own family's welfare" (Curran, 1983)
"Respects privacy of individual family members" (Curran, 1983)
"Respects elders" (Curran, 1983)
"Actively seeks to help one another" *
"Enjoys spending time with in-laws" *
"Has a strong friendship network" (Otto, 1979)
"Cares about each other" *
"Appreciates each other" (Stinnett, 1979)
"Has established community roots" (Curran, 1983)
Items Added to assess **Centeredness/Spirituality:**
"Teaches a sense of right and wrong" (Curran, 1983)
"Shares similar religious beliefs" (Curran, 1983)
"Appreciates family traditions" (Curran, 1983)
"Shares similar values" (Curran, 1983)
"Prays together" (Curran, 1983, p.21)
"Attends church together" (Stinnet, 1979)
"Shares in devotions together" *
"Values [a] work ethic" (Curran, 1983, p. 21)
"Values a college education" (Curran, 1983)
"Has a secure financial base" (Curran, 1983).

*Item was created by researchers.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample Including Comparisons Between Experimental Groups and Genders (in percentages except where otherwise noted)

	Groups				
Demographic Variable	Total (n=228)	P* (n=141)	NP** (n=87)	♂ (n=104)	♀ (n=119)
Age***	35.3	32.6	39.4	36.4	34.2
Gender					
Male	46.6	48.5	43.7	100.0	0.0
Female	53.4	51.5	56.3	0.0	100.0
Race					
White	96.3	96.2	96.5	95.0	97.4
Black	0.9	**	2.4	1.0	0.9
Other	2.8	3.9	1.2	4.0	1.8
Marital status					
Married	93.5	95.4	90.7	93.1	94.0
Remarried	5.5	3.1	9.3	5.9	5.2
Other	0.9	1.5	**	1.0	0.9
Years Married***	10.8	8.8	13.8	10.6	10.9
Parental Status					
With Daughters	46.7	38.8	48.0	46.9	45.4
With Sons	46.2	47.3	44.9	46.2	46.2
Educational Level					
Elementary	1.4	**	3.5	2.0	0.9
Junior High	0.9	0.8	1.2	1.0	0.9
High School	32.9	31.3	35.3	33.0	32.8
Bachelor's	43.1	47.3	36.5	42.0	44.0
Master's	10.6	9.9	11.8	13.0	8.6
Doctorate	1.9	2.3	1.2	2.0	1.7
Other	9.3	8.4	10.6	7.0	11.2

Table 3 (continued)

Religious Affiliation					
Baptist	67.0	63.3	72.6	67.7	66.4
Catholic	0.5	**	1.2	2.0	**
Church of God	24.1	28.1	17.9	22.2	25.7
Methodist	3.8	1.6	7.1	4.0	3.5
Pentecostal	1.9	2.3	1.2	2.0	1.8
Presbyterian	0.9	1.6	**	1.0	0.9
Other	1.9	3.1	**	2.0	1.8
Employment Status					
No Employment	0.4	14.7	8.4	1.0	19.1
Part-Time	11.4	21.7	12.0	4.1	20.1
Full-Time	62.3	61.2	75.9	77.3	58.3
Other	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	1.7
Hours per Work Week	38.1	35.0	41.9	41.5	32.7
Personal Pre-Tax Income					
< $5,000	13.0	17.8	6.4	8.7	17.2
$5,000-$7,499	3.2	3.7	2.6	2.2	4.3
$7,500-$9,999	3.2	3.7	2.6	2.2	4.3
$10,000-$14,999	12.4	10.3	15.4	9.8	15.1
$15,000-$19,999	12.4	12.1	12.8	8.7	16.1
$20,000-$24,999	10.8	12.1	9.0	5.4	16.1
$25,000-$34,999	18.4	19.6	16.7	23.9	12.9
$35,000-$49,999	14.6	10.3	14.1	21.7	7.5
$50,000 or More	11.9	7.8	15.5	17.4	6.5
Years of Employment***	11.1	7.8	15.5	11.1	10.2

Note: *P=Participants, **NP=Non-participants, *** in years.

Table 4. Alphas for the Original 26-Item FFSS and Its Subscales

	α's	
Scale	Trivette et al. (1990)	Current Study
Commitment	.84	.73
Cohesion	.85	.78
Communication	.79	.74
Competence	.79	.64
Coping	.77	.61
FFSS Total	.92	.92

Table 5. Factor Solutions for the 26-Item FFSS Factor Analysis with Five Forced Factors Using Oblique Rotation

Scale Items	Factor Loadings	
Factor 1		
Makes decisions about solving problems (CP)*	**.70929**	
Believes there is good in the worst situations (CC)	**.70249**	
Solves its own problems before asking. . .for help (CT)	**.66212**	
Decision making is done to benefit. . .family (CT)	**.55769**	
Agrees about important family matters (CC)	**.53422**	
Makes. . .sacrifices if it benefits. . .family (CH)	**.50323**	
Tries to look at the bright side of things (CP)	.49638	.41369 (2)
Members can depend on each other (CH)		
Agrees upon acceptable family behaviors (CT)		
Eigenvalue: 9.39913		
Factor 2		
Tries not to worry about uncontrollable events (CP)	**.70065**	
Tries to forget overwhelming problems for awhile (CC)	**.58529**	
Eigenvalue: 1.58583		
Factor 3		
Has "rules" about acceptable behavior (CP)	**-.71991**	
Talks about. . .ways of dealing with problems (CC)	**-.43089**	
Eigenvalue: 1.54860		
Factor 4		
Can depend upon friends to help (CP)	**.80891**	
Can depend upon relatives to help (CP)	**.53754**	**.48468 (3)**
Spends time together even with busy schedules (CM)	**.44256**	
Enjoys spending time together (CM)	**.43189**	
Makes time for important things (CM)	**.42003**	
Eigenvalue:1.24833		

Table 5 (continued)

Factor 5		
Can depend upon each other in difficult times (CT)	**-.69169**	
Doesn't take each other for granted (CM)	**-.68392**	
Pitches in and helps each other (CM)	**-.65330**	
Relationships will outlast material possessions (CH)	**-.63851**	
Sticks together no matter the difficulties (CH)	**-.58708**	
Members listen to both sides of disagreements (CC)	**-.52901**	**.43616(1)**
Takes pride in family accomplishments (CH)	**-.48933**	
Members share concerns and feelings (CC)	**-.47618**	
Eigenvalue: 1.11522		

Note: Factor membership was defined by factor loadings of .4 or higher. Items that split-loaded with a difference of .2 or less were excluded from factor membership. Items maintained for factor inclusion are printed in **bold** print. Abbreviations in parentheses indicate where the item loaded in the Trivette et al. (1990) study. *CM=Commitment, CH=Cohesion, CC=Communication, CT=Competence, and CP=Coping.

Table 6. Factor Solutions for the Revised 55-Item FFSS Factor Analysis Using Oblique Rotation

Scale Items	Factor Loadings
Factor 1: Communication/Conflict Resolution	
Solves its own problems before asking. . .for help.	**.51332**
Talks about different ways of dealing with problems.	**.48665**
Takes pride in family accomplishments.	**.42777**
Members share concerns and feelings.	**.42091**
Listens attentively to each other.	**.41911**
Members listen to both sides of disagreements.	.45951 -.40739(4)
Makes decisions about solving problems.	
Eigenvalue: 17.51831	
Factor 2: Competence	
Shares similar religious beliefs.	**-.77518**
Attends church together.	**-.75884**
Shares similar values.	**-.70635**
Enjoys spending time together.	**-.59554**
Values a college education.	**-.53343**
Shares leisure time together.	**-.41406**
Agrees about important family matters.	
Agrees upon acceptable family behaviors.	
Makes time for important things.	
Has a sense of play and humor.	
Respects elders.	
Eigenvalue: 2.69385	
Factor 3: Clarity of Values	
Has "rules" about acceptable family behavior.	**.71219**
Has a clear base of parental rules.	**.64274**
Teaches a sense of right and wrong.	**.48320**

Table 6 (continued)

Assumes responsibility for our own family's welfare.	**.48437**	
Values a work ethic	**.47836**	
Makes personal sacrifices if it benefits entire family.		
Decision making is done to benefit the entire family.		
Respects privacy of individual family members.		
Eigenvalue: 2.14241		
Factor 4: Caring Commitment		
Can depend on each other in difficult times.	**-.82336**	
Cares about each other.	**-.72454**	
Relationships will outlast material possessions.	**-.66230**	
Sticks together no matter the difficulties.	**-.57732**	
Trusts each other.	**-.53264**	
Appreciates each other.	**-.50980**	
Doesn't take each other for granted.	**-.49707**	
Tries to look at the bright side of things.	**-.47877**	
Respects each other.	**-.46406**	
Appreciates family traditions.	**-.45907**	
Members can depend upon each other.	**-.44064**	
Affirms and supports one another.	**-.41962**	
Encourages one another to be themselves.	**-.41921**	
Has a strong friendship network.	**-.41468**	
Pitches in and helps each other.	**-.40715**	
Can depend on relatives to help.	-.48466	-.41761(3)
Actively seek to help one another.		
Enjoys spending time with in-laws.		
Eigenvalue: 2.00747		
Factor 5: Coping		
Tries to forget overwhelming problems for a while.	**.66339**	
Has established community roots.	**.65487**	
Has a secure financial base.	**.62812**	

Table 6 (continued)

Can depend upon friends to help.	**.59709**
Tries not to worry about uncontrollable events.	**.46355**
Believes there is good in the worst situations.	
Eigenvalue: 1.90537	
Factor 6: Central Faith	
Shares in devotions together.	**-.72167**
Prays together.	**-.70714**
Seeks help with problems.	**-.55140**
Allows for negotiation of family rules.	
Eigenvalue: 1.63738	

Note: Factor membership was defined by factor loadings of .4 or higher. Items that split-loaded with a factor loading difference of .2 or less were eliminated from the factor. Items maintained for factor inclusion are printed in **bold** print.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics and Alphas for the Revised FFSS, the Six Subscales of the Revised FFSS, the KMS, and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale for the Total Sample (n=228)

Scale	Total Items	Summed Means	Ranges	Std. Dev.	α's
Revised FFSS	55	178.493	20-217	29.230	.9520
Factor 1: Communication/ Conflict Resolution	6	18.982	7-24	3.653	.8018
Factor 2: Competence	6	21.723	3-24	3.018	.8077
Factor 3: Clarity of Values	5	17.493	4-20	2.714	.6959
Factor 4: Caring Commitment	15	51.414	4-60	8.366	.8947
Factor 5: Coping	5	13.678	2-20	3.475	.6707
Factor 6: Central Faith	3	7.148	1-12	2.405	.6431
KMS	3	17.619	3-21	13.176	.9296
Strong Marriage/Family	2	8.804	2-10	1.487	.8801

Table 8. Summed Means Across Group for the KMS, Revised FFSS, Factors 1-6, and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale

Variable	P* (n=141)	NP** (n=87)	t	p
KMS	17.5612	17.7126	-.34	.733
Revised FFSS	179.1286	177.4713	.39	.698
Factor 1: Communication/ Conflict Resolution	18.6429	19.5287	-1.76	.081
Factor 2: Competence	21.9281	21.3882	1.30	.195
Factor 3: Clarity of Values	17.3929	17.6588	-.69	.491
Factor 4: Caring Commitment	51.8786	50.6667	.99	.323
Factor 5: Coping	13.5429	13.8966	-.72	.470
Factor 6: Central Faith	7.1295	7.1786	-.14	.887
Strong Marriage/Family	8.7194	8.9419	-1.10	.273

Note: *P=Participants, **NP=Non-Participants.

Table 9. Coefficients for Correlations between Summed Scores for the KMS, Revised FFSS, Factors 1-6, and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale

	KMS	Strong Marriage /Family
Factor 1:Communication/ Conflict Resolution	.3307****	.4801****
Factor 2: Competence	.2234***	.3396****
Factor 3: Clarity of Values	.1956**	.26666****
Factor 4: Caring Commitment	.2422****	.4392****
Factor 5: Coping	.2377****	.2863****
Factor 6: Central Faith	.1990**	.2238***
Revised FFSS	.2647****	.4360****
Strong Marriage/Family	.5540****	1.0000

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, ****p<.000

Table 10. Summed Means of the KMS, Revised FFSS, Factors 1-6, and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale Across Group for Males

Variable	P* (n=70)	NP** (n=37)	t	p
KMS	17.3538	17.9737	-.83	.408
Revised FFSS	175.7576	171.1579	.64	.522
Factor 1: Communication/ Conflict Resolution	17.9848	18.5526	-.66	.509
Factor 2: Competence	21.5846	20.5946	1.28	.205
Factor 3: Clarity of Values	17.1515	16.9730	.27	.787
Factor 4: Caring Commitment	51.1364	49.5526	.79	.433
Factor 5: Coping	13.0909	13.6579	-.80	.424
Factor 6: Central Faith	7.1385	7.0000	.27	.787
Strong Marriage/Family	8.3846	8.7632	-1.09	.278

Note: *P=Participants, **NP=Non-Participants.

Table 11. Summed Means of the KMS, Revised FFSS, Factors 1-6, and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale Across Group for Females

Variable	P* (n=71)	NP** (n=50)	t	p
KMS	17.6377	17.5102	.23	.819
Revised FFSS	182.3000	182.3673	-.01	.989
Factor 1: Communication/ Conflict Resolution	19.2714	20.28.57	-1.74	.084
Factor 2: Competence	22.2000	22.0000	.50	.619
Factor 3: Clarity of Values	17.5429	18.1875	-1.43	.157
Factor 4: Caring Commitment	52.5857	51.5306	.70	.486
Factor 5: Coping	13.9714	14.0816	-.16	.871
Factor 6: Central Faith	7.1714	7.3125	-.30	.764
Strong Marriage/Family	9.0000	9.0833	-.35	.724

Note: *P=Participants, **NP=Non-Participants.

Table 12. Summed Means Across Gender for the KMS, Revised FFSS, Factors 1-6, and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale

Variable	Males (n=104)	Females (n=119)	t	p
KMS	17.5825	17.5847	-.01	.996
Revised FFSS	174.0769	182.3277	-2.07	.040
Factor 1: Communication/ Conflict Resolution	18.1923	19.6891	-3.04	.003
Factor 2: Competence	21.2255	22.1186	-2.11	.037
Factor 3: Clarity of Values	17.0874	17.8051	-1.93	.055
Factor 4: Caring Commitment	50.5577	52.1513	-1.39	.166
Factor 5: Coping	13.2981	14.0168	-1.55	.122
Factor 6: Central Faith	7.0891	7.2288	-.43	.670
Strong Marriage/Family	8.5243	9.0342	-2.51	.013

Table 13. Summed Means of the KMS, Revised FFSS, Factors 1-6, and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale Across Gender for Seminar Participants Only

Variable	Husbands* (n=70)	Wives (n=71)	t	p
KMS	17.3538	17.6377	-.53	.597
Revised FFSS	175.7576	182.3000	-1.45	.149
Factor 1: Communication/ Conflict Resolution	17.9848	19.2714	-2.11	.037
Factor 2: Competence	21.5846	22.2000	-1.15	.254
Factor 3: Clarity of Values	17.1515	17.5429	-.87	.386
Factor 4: Caring Commitment	51.1364	52.5857	-1.14	.259
Factor 5: Coping	13.0909	13.9714	-1.56	.120
Factor 6: Central Faith	7.1385	7.1714	-.08	.934
Strong Marriage/Family	8.3846	9.0000	-2.37	.019

Note: Participants in the study are married couples.

Table 14. Stepwise Multiple Regression of the Revised FFSS Factors and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale on the KMS—Males Only (n=104).

Scale	Standardized Beta	F	Unique Variance
KMS			
Factor 1: Communication/ Conflict Resolution	.475210	28.586*****	.22582
R^2= .22582 F=28.58623*****			
KMS			
Strong Marriage/ Family Scale	.569512	48.576*****	.44621
Factor 1: Communication/ Conflict Resolution	.218276	7.136**	.03794
R^2= .48415 F=45.52012*****			

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, ****p<.0001, *****p<.0000.

Table 15. Stepwise Multiple Regression of the Revised FFSS Factors and the Strong Marriage/Family Scale on the KMS—Females Only (n=119).

Scale	Standardized Beta	F	Unique Variance
KMS			
Factor 4: Caring Commitment	.357081	16.806****	.12751
R^2= .12751 F=16.80620****			
KMS			
Strong Marriage/ Family Scale	.457907	30.245*****	.20968
R^2= .20968 F=30.24511*****			

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, ****p<.0001, *****p<.0000.

VITA

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