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The Contribution of Couple Leisure Involvement, Leisure Time and Leisure Satisfaction to Marital Satisfaction

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF COUPLE LEISURE INVOLVEMENT,
LEISURE TIME, AND LEISURE SATISFACTION TO
MARITAL SATISFACTION

by

Heather Ann Johnson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

Department of Recreation Management and Youth Leadership

Brigham Young University

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Heather Ann Johnson

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Heather Ann Johnson in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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ABSTRACT

THE CONTRIBUTION OF COUPLE LEISURE INVOLVEMENT, LEISURE TIME, AND LEISURE SATISFACTION TO MARITAL SATISFACTION

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Department of Recreation Management and Youth Leadership

Master of Science

The purpose of this study was to further clarify the relationship between couple leisure patterns and marital satisfaction by examining the contribution of joint couple leisure involvement, leisure time, and leisure satisfaction to couples' satisfaction with married life. The sample consisted of 48 married couples (N = 96). The Marital Activity Profile (MAP), a modified version of the Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP) was used to determine couple leisure involvement in core and balance leisure activities and leisure satisfaction. The Satisfaction With Married Life (SWML), a modified version of the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) was used to measure marital satisfaction. Blocked multiple regression analyses indicated a positive relationship between satisfaction with

couple leisure and marital satisfaction, specifically satisfaction with core leisure activity patterns. Implications and recommendations for further research are discussed.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables ix

The Contribution of Couple Leisure Involvement, Leisure Time, and Leisure Satisfaction
to Marital Satisfaction

 Abstract2

 Introduction.....3

 Review of Literature4

 Methods.....15

 Findings.....18

 Discussion.....20

 References.....28

Appendix A Prospectus.....38

 Introduction.....39

 Review of Literature44

 Methods.....82

 References.....87

 Appendix A-1 Marital Activity Profile (MAP)97

List of Tables

Table	Page
1 Zero Order Correlations among Demographic Variables.....	35
2 Zero Order Correlations among Research Variables.....	36
3 Summary of Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Couple Leisure Satisfaction.....	37

Running Head: COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

The Contributions of Couple Leisure Involvement,
Leisure Time, and Leisure Satisfaction to
Marital Satisfaction

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2 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to further clarify the relationship between couple leisure patterns and marital satisfaction by examining the contribution of joint couple leisure involvement, leisure time, and leisure satisfaction to couples' satisfaction with married life. The sample consisted of 48 married couples (N = 96). The Marital Activity Profile (MAP), a modified version of the Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP) was used to determine couple leisure involvement in core and balance leisure activities and leisure satisfaction. The Satisfaction With Married Life (SWML), a modified version of the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) was used to measure marital satisfaction. Blocked multiple regression analyses indicated a positive relationship between satisfaction with couple leisure and marital satisfaction, specifically satisfaction with core leisure activity patterns. Implications and recommendations for further research are discussed.

The Contribution of Couple Leisure Involvement, Leisure Time, and Leisure Satisfaction
to Marital Satisfaction.

Marital relationships have changed significantly over the past one hundred and fifty years. Institutional relationships based on stability and security have given way to a more pluralistic view of marriage in which couples are looking for a more flexible marital commitment (Doherty, 1997). As a result of this desire for flexibility, the United States has become known for our high divorce rates and the collapse of our traditional marriage life (VanDenBerghe, 2000). This is evident in the increasing numbers of marriages ending in divorce. Although nearly all people marry in their lifetime (Bjorksten & Stewart, 1984), nearly one half of all first marriages are expected to end in separation or divorce (Castro-Martin & Bumpass, 1989). About half of those who get divorced get remarried, with even more remarriages ending in divorce (Brody, Newman, & Forehand, 1988). Couples and their marital relationships play a vital role in the preservation of the family. Families are the fundamental unit of society (Proclamation, 1995), and it follows that stronger marriages lead to stronger families and strengthened societies.

As the national divorce rate rises, scholars are paying more attention to marital satisfaction and the factors that affect it, including couple leisure. Previous findings have shown that couples that participate in activities together are more satisfied with their marriage (Holman & Epperson, 1989; Orthner & Mancini, 1990; 1991). However there is not a clear understanding concerning whether it is the kinds and amount of couple leisure involvement, the satisfaction with or quality of couple leisure involvement, or the amount of time spent together, that contributes to marital satisfaction. Therefore the purpose of

4 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

this study was to further clarify the relationship between joint couple leisure and marital satisfaction by examining the contribution of couple leisure involvement, satisfaction with couple leisure involvement, and joint couple time to a couple's satisfaction with married life.

Review of Literature

Systems Theory

Systems theory provides a useful framework for studying couples. A marital relationship can be viewed as a system of interacting roles and communication networks. Underlying this system is the perception of relationship satisfaction that determines whether or not the system is able to maintain itself in its present form. Constantine (1986) defined system structure as “the sum total of the interrelationship among elements of a system, including membership in the system and the boundary between the system and its environment” (p.52). Systems theory is a way of looking at the world in which people are interrelated with one another (Constantine, 1986; Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993), and assists in explaining the behavior of complex organized systems, such as a spousal relationship.

Systems theory provides useful insights into the relationships between leisure and couple variables, and provides a good foundation for studying couple activity patterns and their impact on couple marital satisfaction. From a systems theory perspective (Constantine, 1986), couple leisure activities contribute to several aspects of the couple's marital relationship. One of these aspects influenced by couple leisure is couple bonding, which in turn can affect satisfaction in two ways. First, common activities and interest

enforce boundaries around the relationship. Shared interests and activities may be one of the more important forces establishing and maintaining boundaries in the couple system. Second, couple leisure activities contribute to developing collective interest and identity by placing couples in situations where they are learning to enjoy activities together (Fincham, Beach & Kemp-Fincham, 1997).

In order to better evaluate and understand the satisfaction spouses experience with their relationship, there must first be guidelines to follow for evaluation. Determining that the spousal relationship is a system and using a systems perspective increases the understanding of how and why the relationship system functions as it does, as well as how to best deal with issues such as communication, growth, adaptation, setting boundaries, rules, setting goals and interacting together.

Marital Satisfaction

In recent years, scholars have focused more on marital satisfaction. The rationale for studying this subject stems from its centrality to individual and family well-being (Stack & Eshelman, 1998). There are many benefits that occur in society when strong marriages are formed and maintained, and the need to develop interventions for marital distress and divorce has become more prevalent (Castro-Martin & Bumpass, 1989). Recently, researchers have also argued that marital satisfaction most likely does not follow a U-shaped curve over the marital career as was once believed, but instead drops significantly over the first ten years of marriage on average, and then continues to gradually decline in the ensuing decades (Amato, 1997; Glenn, 1998; Rollins & Feldman, 1970; Vaillant & Vaillant, 1993).

6 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

When couples do succeed in creating a satisfying marriage, the satisfaction tends to safeguard spouses from psychological distress and negative life events (Waltz, Bandura, Pfaff, & Schott, 1988). Marital distress and dissatisfaction have negative consequences for the physical and emotional well being of spouses and their children (Bloom, Asher & White, 1978; Emery, 1982). Several different factors have been found to affect marital satisfaction. Some of those recurring in the literature include violence, children, income, and stress (Belsky, 1985; 1990; Belsky & Pensky, 1988; Cordova, Jacobson, Gottman, & Rushe, 1993; Greenstein, 1990; Hoffman & Manis, 1978; Markman, 1981; Stack & Eshelman, 1998; Waite and Lillard, 1991). One more factor that has been found to influence marital satisfaction is that of joint couple leisure involvement (Orthner & Mancini, 1990; 1991).

Joint Couple Leisure

Of importance to this study is the research that has been done concerning couple leisure patterns. One early framework for looking at couples and their leisure was developed by Orthner and Mancini (1990; 1991). They described three types of couple leisure activity patterns which include individual, parallel, and joint. These patterns refer to the individuals' participation in the activity and their level of interaction during the experience (Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Orthner & Mancini, 1991).

Individual leisure refers to leisure that is done without one's spouse. It is participated in either alone, or with people other than one's spouse. Engagements in individual pursuits and interaction with others to the exclusion of one's spouse were good predictors of global marital distress, and the absence of marital satisfaction (Smith,

Snyder, & Monsma, 1988; Orthner & Mancini, 1991). Holman and Jaquart (1988), as well as Orthner and Mancini (1990), also suggest that a negative relationship exists between individual leisure and marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Although it has been found that couples who participate in individual activities experience lower levels of marital satisfaction (Hill, 1988; Holman & Jaquart, 1988; Locke, 1951; Orthner, 1975; Smith, Snyder, & Monsma, 1988), it has also been found that participation in shared activities, or commitment to the same activities, was not essential to marital satisfaction if the spouses perceived that their partners supported their individual activity choices. When one spouse is committed to an activity and the other is not, significant support from that individual's spouse helps affirm the role of the spouse and promote marital satisfaction (Baldwin & Ellis, 1998). This support could be expressed in many different ways, such as holding conversations about the spouse's participation and performance in the activity, arranging schedules to accommodate watching their spouse participate in the activity, or giving equipment related to the activity as gifts (Baldwin & Ellis, 1998;).

Studies suggest that support in the pursuit of a personally meaningful goal or behavior plays an important role in maintaining high levels of well-being (Brunstein, Dangelmayer, & Schultheiss, 1996; Baldwin & Ellis, 1999). As perceived support increases, marital satisfaction also increases, and it has been found that those who participate in supported independent recreation activities reported higher marital satisfaction than those who participated in fully independent activities (Baldwin & Ellis, 1998; Acitelli, & Antonucci, 1994; Wan, C. K., Jaccard, J. & Ramey, S. L., 1996; Julien,

8 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

& Markman, 1991). These findings are important because couples do not always enjoy the same types of activities. Couples who have different interests and participate in individual activities without their spouse will not necessarily experience a decline in their marital satisfaction, as long as there is significant support from their partner concerning the individual activity. Support concerning individual activity participation plays a large role in increasing marital satisfaction (Baldwin & Ellis, 1999).

Parallel couple leisure refers to individual participation in the same activity at the same time. This type of couple activity calls for little or no communication or interaction, such as watching a movie, or watching television together. Leisure activities such as these may represent a false front, suggesting togetherness when it does not necessarily exist. Although a couple may be sitting on the same couch watching the same movie, that does not necessarily mean that their time together is providing the maximum benefit possible. In such situations there is usually little communication, interaction, or problem solving. Leisure activities that involve little or no communication provide less benefit to couples than others and may actually harm the relationship when they are the primary form of couple activity interaction (Orthner & Mancini, 1990; 1991).

The third leisure pattern described by Orthner and Mancini (1990; 1991) is joint leisure. Joint leisure describes activities in which couples participate together with high levels of interaction. These types of activities are conducive to optimal communication and alternative role patterning. It has been found that couples that share leisure time together in joint activities tend to be much more satisfied with their marriages (Baldwin, Ellis & Baldwin 1999; Holman & Jaquart, 1988; Orthner & Mancini, 1991). Spousal

understanding increases with greater amounts of shared leisure time together (Orthner & Mancini, 1980). Baldwin, & Ellis (1999) found no significant difference between couple's who participated in joint recreation together and couple's who did not, but were highly supportive of each other in individual leisure pursuits. For example, a husband might enjoy running in races; his wife dislikes running, but comes and watches him run every race. While she does not actually run, the couple does enjoy joint leisure participation in the experience, which is still related to higher marital satisfaction. Joint activities may, however, cause conflict when the couple is not used to being together often. This occurs when the couple is not accustomed to spending time together, and is suddenly forced to communicate and interact. Although some levels of conflict are good in a relationship, the conflict that joint activities may cause a couple might deter them from further joint leisure interactions (Orthner & Mancini, 1990).

Orthner's (1975) concept of joint, parallel, and individual activities for examining couple's leisure provided the framework for one of the few consistent lines of research in this area. Although this line of research provided somewhat consistent findings and made a significant contribution to the literature, significant questions remain and further research has been called for (Hawkes, 1991; Holman & Epperson, 1989; Orthner & Mancini, 1990). The types of couple leisure activities that were actually measured in this early line of study were somewhat limited and the manner of measurement was clearly limited to time only. It is, therefore, not clear whether it is the types of couple leisure activities, the amount of involvement itself, the quality or satisfaction with the involvement, or if it was simply increased amount of time spent together as a couple that

10 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

contributed to increased marital satisfaction. Orthner and Mancini (1990) acknowledged the limitations of the couple leisure model and called for better use of improved theoretical frameworks in future research examining contributions of family and couple leisure. Therefore, a different theoretical framework that has been utilized in examining family leisure involvement may provide a different perspective and further insight into the couple leisure and marital satisfaction relationship.

Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning

The Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning (Zabriskie, 2000) is grounded in family systems theory and not only explains how family leisure involvement influences families, but suggests that different kinds of family leisure activities are related to different aspects of family functioning. The model, which has been developed and successfully tested in recent years (Zabriskie, 2000; 2001; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2000) has been utilized as a theoretical framework in a variety of studies examining family leisure (Baker 2004; Christiansen, 2004. Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003; Smith, Taylor, Hill, & Zabriskie, 2004; Zabriskie & Freeman, 2003; Zabriskie & McCormick 2003). Although the model has not been used in previous studies of married couples, it provides a sound framework for examining family leisure involvement, was developed from a family systems perspective, and therefore, is likely to provide a useful and insightful framework for the examination of the primary subsystem within families.

Iso-Ahola (1984) explained that there is a duality in leisure involvement for individuals that results from the balance of two opposing needs that simultaneously influence an individuals' behavior. He states that individuals "seek both stability and

change, structure and variety, and familiarity and novelty in [their] leisure” (p. 98).

Freeman and Zabriskie (2003) explained that the interplay between the need for both stability and change plays a much greater role when examining the needs of family or couple systems and is a primary underlying concept of family systems theory. In other words, in order to be healthier and function better, families and couples must meet the need for stability in interactions, structure, and relationships, and fulfill the need for novelty in experience, input, and challenge (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Similar to individuals, families and couples also tend to seek the balance between stability and change through their leisure behavior (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). The Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning suggests that there are two interrelated categories or basic types of family leisure involvement (core & balance) which families utilize to meet needs of stability and change, and ultimately facilitate outcomes of cohesion and adaptability, which are the primary components of family functioning. The model has also been utilized to examine the contributions of core and balance leisure involvement to the related construct of family satisfaction (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003).

Core couple leisure involvement can be depicted by joint participation in activities that are common, regular, relatively accessible, and usually home/neighborhood-based. They tend to require little planning and resources, and are often spontaneous and informal. They are consistent, safe, positive, and provide a context in which to foster relationships (Zabriskie, 2000). Couples participating in core activities can safely explore boundaries, clarify couple/family roles and rules, and practice ways to

12 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

enforce them. Spouses can be consoled, rewarded, refreshed and rejuvenated through regular core leisure involvement.

The playful interaction and relaxed conversation enjoyed among couples while completing household duties such as laundry or doing dishes together may also need to be included as a core activity for couples. Such regular activities may become a leisure choice that is looked forward to among couples in which they can enjoy each others company and complete household work at the same time. These chosen regular activities performed side by side are likely to help develop relationships, foster communication, and increase understanding of one another. Regular personal interaction based on shared experiences enhances the knowledge of co-participants and, thus, fosters increased personal relatedness and feelings of closeness and cohesion (Zabriskie, 2000).

Balance couple leisure involvement can be depicted by joint participation in activities that are less common, less frequent, often out of the ordinary and provide novel experiences. These activities are likely to require greater investment of resources, such as effort and time, and are usually not home-based. They often require more planning and are therefore less spontaneous and more formalized (Zabriskie, 2000). Balance types of joint activities require couples to negotiate and adapt to new input, experiences, and challenges, facilitate the development of adaptive skills, and the ability to learn and change. They also tend to expose couples to new and unexpected stimuli from the outside environment, which provides the input and challenge necessary for couples to learn and progress as an evolving and developing relationship system (Zabriskie, 2000).

The Core and Balance Model suggests that families who regularly participate in both core and balance family leisure activities are likely to function better and have greater family satisfaction than those who participate in extremely high or low amounts of either category. Therefore, when considering couples the model would suggest that while different couple leisure patterns may meet different needs and contribute to different aspects of a couples functioning or marital satisfaction, the inter-relationship between both core and balance couple leisure involvement is necessary in order to positively influence marital satisfaction. The use of this model as the framework for the current study may help provide considerable insight and add further understanding as to the relationship between couple leisure patterns and marital satisfaction.

Leisure Satisfaction

Leisure satisfaction has also been studied in regards to its relationship to life satisfaction (Russell, 1987; 1990). Russell (1987) compared the influence of several activities on life satisfaction, with one of those activities being recreation or leisure. She hypothesized that recreation participation and recreation satisfaction would be stronger predictors of life satisfaction than all the other activities. The results indicated that religiosity had a slightly higher influence on life satisfaction than recreation participation. Nevertheless, satisfaction with recreation had a much greater influence than either religiosity or recreation participation. Russell determined that it was the satisfaction with the recreation activity involvement that impacted the life satisfaction rather than the frequency of involvement.

14 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

In a similar study, Russell (1990) examined the interrelationship among recreation and other life circumstance variables, one of which was quality of life. The findings indicated that religiosity, gender, education, marital status, and age were significantly related to income, health, recreation activity participation, and recreation satisfaction. However, these variables were not found to influence quality of life directly. The only significant and direct predictor of quality of life was satisfaction with recreation involvement.

Although no similar studies have been conducted examining couples leisure satisfaction, Baldwin and Ellis's (1998) findings related to the value of spousal support of individual leisure pursuits versus the actual joint participation suggest that there may be similarities among couples as well. Particularly when considering the changing context for a couple over the family life cycle, it is possible that satisfaction with joint couple leisure involvement may play as significant a role in explaining marital satisfaction as the participation itself.

Overall, past research has clearly identified a link between couple leisure and marital satisfaction. Findings, however, are still unclear as to whether it is the amount or type of couple leisure involvement, the satisfaction with the involvement, or simply the time spent together that influences a couples' satisfaction with their marriage. Therefore the purpose of this study was to use the Core and Balance framework to examine the contribution of joint couple leisure involvement, satisfaction with joint couple involvement and joint couple time, to overall marital satisfaction.

Methods

Sample

Subject couples (n = 48) were recruited door to door through a convenience snowball sampling method in a mid-size western suburban area. Completed surveys were collected from 48 married couples yielding data from 96 individuals. The respondents ranged in age from 18 to 76 with a mean of 31.51. Concerning ethnicity, the majority (95%) were white, the remainder included Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics. The number of children each couple had ranged from 0-10 with a mean of 2.04. Years married ranged from 1 to 48 with a mean of 10.1 years. Couples income ranged from less than 10,000 dollars a year to between 126,000- 150,000 dollars a year, with a mean of 31,000-40,000 dollars a year. There was only one woman in this sample who had experienced a divorce, and had remarried. Her responses referenced her current marriage.

Instrumentation

The research questionnaire included the following scales: (a) the 15-item Marital Activity Profile (MAP) which measures couple leisure involvement and leisure satisfaction based on the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning (Zabriskie, 2000); (b) the Satisfaction with Married Life Scale (SWML) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), that measures satisfaction with married life based on the respondents own criteria; three questions that measure satisfaction with joint couple time, and (c) relevant socio-demographic questions.

The MAP measures involvement in marital leisure activities based on the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning (Zabriskie, 2000). It is a modification

16 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

of the Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP), which has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties (Zabriskie, 2001). Modifications included adjusting activity descriptors to describe couples activities, the elimination of 2 categories that did not clearly fit for couples, the addition of two categories needed for couples (e.g., household cooking and cleaning, and communication), and the combination of categories in three other cases. All other aspects of the instrument remained the same including format, scoring procedures, and leisure satisfaction items.

Respondents identify leisure activities done with their spouse across 15 activity categories. Eight categories of activities are representative of core marital leisure patterns (e.g., home-based TV/videos together, regular communication, cleaning or cooking together, and playing games together) and seven categories are representative of balance marital leisure patterns (e.g., community-based events, outdoor activities, adventure activities, and travel or tourism together). Each question root asks if the respondent participates in the activity category with their spouse. Specific examples are included with each question to help delineate between categories. If the answer is yes, respondents are asked to complete ordinal scales of estimated frequency (“about how often?”) and duration (“for about how long per time?”), as well as satisfaction with participation with your spouse in the root activity. Respondents are asked to answer the satisfaction question, which is measured on a five point likert scale even if they do not participate in the root activity with their spouse.

Scores for the MAP are calculated by first multiplying the ordinal indicators of frequency and duration of participation in each category, and then summing the core

categories to provide a core marital leisure index and summing the balance categories to provide a balance marital leisure index. The total couple leisure involvement score is calculated by summing the Core and Balance indices. The satisfaction with couple leisure scores is calculated by summing the satisfaction responses for the core items and balance items. The original FLAP has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties including evidence of construct validity, content validity, and test-retest reliability for core ($r = .74$), balance ($r = .78$), and total family leisure involvement ($r = .78$) (Zabriskie, 2001). The MAP was designed for the current study and no specific evidence of validity and reliability for its use is available yet.

The SWML is a modified version of the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) in which the words “married life” replaced the word “life” as it was in the original items. The SWML requires respondents to agree or disagree with five statements about married life on a seven point likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Scoring consists of summing all items which produces a satisfaction with married life score that ranges from 5 to 35. The original scale has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985).

Satisfaction with the amount of time spent with spouse was measured by three items addressing a couples' time together that required subjects to respond to a five-point likert-type scale for each item. A series of socio-demographic questions were included to identify underlying characteristics of the sample and to provide possible controlling

18 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

factors. Items included age, gender, ethnicity, number of children, years married, past marital status, and estimated annual income.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were utilized to examine underlying characteristics of the study sample. Pearson Product Moment zero-order correlations between variables were examined for multicollinearity as well as to identify possible controlling factors that could be included in subsequent regression equations. Although there were some significant zero-order correlations indicated, the magnitude of the correlation coefficients did not indicate multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996) except for the cases in which variables were derived from previous variables such as total couple leisure involvement and total couple leisure satisfaction. Therefore, they were not included in the same regression analysis.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted using a blocked entry method. Couple leisure involvement variables (core leisure involvement, balance leisure involvement) and total couple leisure time were included in the first block, followed by the couple leisure satisfaction variables (core couples leisure satisfaction and balance couple leisure satisfaction) in the second block. The multiple correlation coefficients (R^2) were examined at an alpha level of .05 and standardized regression coefficients (Beta) determine the relative contribution of each variable in a significant model.

Findings

Scores from the SWML scale ranged from 12 to 35 with a mean of 28.80 ($SD = 5.64$). Internal consistency for scores from this sample was reported at an acceptable level

($\alpha = .923$). The MAP provided index scores for core, balance, and total couple leisure involvement and satisfaction with core, balance, and total couple leisure involvement. Core couple leisure scores ranged from 16 to 104 with a mean of 50.79 ($SD = 18.48$). Balance couple leisure scores ranged from 8 to 120 with a mean of 53.21 ($SD = 24.06$). Total couple leisure involvement scores ranged from 36 to 188 and had a mean of 105.04 ($SD = 32.13$). Satisfaction with core couple leisure involvement ranged from 15 to 40 with a mean of 30.01 ($SD = 5.29$). Satisfaction with balance couple leisure involvement ranged from 14 to 33 with a mean of 24.68 ($SD = 4.47$). Finally, satisfaction with total couple leisure ranged from 31 to 75 with a mean of 55.09 ($SD = 9.54$). Satisfaction with joint couple time ranged from 3 to 9 with a mean of 6.52 ($SD = 1.90$).

Examination of the zero-order correlation coefficients indicated no significant relationships between couple marital satisfaction and any of the demographic variables including age, gender, number of children, years married, past marital status, and estimated annual income (Table 1). There were also no significant relationships reported between marital satisfaction and core leisure involvement, balance leisure involvement or satisfaction with joint couple time (Table 2). There was a positive relationship between marital satisfaction and satisfaction with core and balance couple leisure involvement.

Following univariate analyses, a blocked multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the contributions of independent variables to the explanation of marital satisfaction beyond the zero-order relationships (Table 3). The first block consisted of core couple leisure involvement, balance couple leisure involvement, and satisfaction with joint couple time, and did not account for a statistically significant

20 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

portion of the variance in marital satisfaction ($R^2 = .024$; $p < .05$). After adjusting for the first block we added the satisfaction with couple leisure involvement variables, which resulted in a statistically significant change ($R^2 = .429$; $p < .01$) in variance explained in marital satisfaction. Although satisfaction with both core and balance couple leisure involvement was significant in the univariate case, satisfaction with core couple leisure involvement was the only significant predictor of marital satisfaction in the multivariate case (Table 3, Block 2).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to use the Core and Balance framework to examine the contribution of joint couple leisure involvement, satisfaction with joint couple involvement and joint couple time, to overall marital satisfaction. Overall, couples in this study indicated that it was not the level or amount of couple leisure involvement or the satisfaction with the amount of time spent together, but the satisfaction with couple leisure that contributed to marital satisfaction. Such findings are consistent with previous family theory and leisure research. Findings also add considerable clarification and insight into the early line of research with couple leisure and marital satisfaction. Although study limitations must be considered, findings have significant practical and scholarly implications.

Perhaps the most significant contribution from the current findings is that the best predictor of marital satisfaction was satisfaction with leisure involvement. In other words it appears that the quality of couple leisure involvement was much more important than the amount of time spent together or the amount and level of leisure involvement itself

when considering marital satisfaction. Couples that were satisfied with their leisure involvement with their spouse, regardless of the amount or type of involvement, were clearly more satisfied with their marriage than couples who may have participated in more or different kinds of leisure activities but were not satisfied with that participation.

These findings are consistent with existing family literature and add further insight to this line of study. A family systems perspective suggests that more is not always better and that couples should interact at a comfortable level for their individual relationship. The Circumplex Model (Olsen & DeFrain, 1994) is a graphical representation of family relationships, is based on systems theory, and can be applied to couple relationship systems as well. The model suggests that families and couples that report moderate levels of cohesion and adaptability tend to function higher than those who have extreme high or low levels of cohesion and adaptability. Furthermore, the model suggests that families and couples tend to function better where they feel most comfortable. Although this might not be where other families function, as long as the entire family is comfortable there, the family can experience optimum benefits from their relationships with each other. Current findings support this model and appear to be similar for couples and their leisure involvement as it relates to marital satisfaction. What is right for one couple may be too much or too little for another. Therefore it appears to be more important for couples to be comfortable with their leisure involvement rather than to participate in a specific amount. This is the first study that has provided such support to this model by measuring a different construct such as couple leisure involvement.

22 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

The Circumplex Model also addresses the concept of a “dynamic family”. Dynamic families may function at extremes for short periods of time, but they always find their way back to homeostasis, where they are most comfortable. Dynamic families also recognize the need for change throughout the course of the family life cycle and must acknowledge and adjust to changes in family structure. Current findings support the “dynamic family” concept and suggest that higher functioning couples are able to adjust their joint leisure patterns in response to changing family structure. Dynamic couples recognize that over the course of a family life cycle they will have to make adjustments regarding the amount and types of leisure activities they are able to participate in together. For example, couples that have small children reportedly have much less time for couple leisure (Witt & Goodale, 1981) while those in the empty nest phase may have more time for joint leisure involvement. Current findings suggest that couples that are able to adjust the amount and type of couple leisure involvement so that they are both satisfied within their current context also report higher marital satisfaction. With couple leisure satisfaction being the most significant contributor to the explanation of marital satisfaction, it can be presumed that couples can work to find the proper amount of leisure involvement for their particular relationship throughout the changing stages of the family life cycle.

Current findings are also consistent with previous leisure research and support Russell’s (1987) study comparing the influence of an individuals’ leisure on life satisfaction. Russell determined that it was the satisfaction with leisure that impacted life satisfaction rather than the frequency or amount of involvement. In a similar study,

Russell (1990) examined the interrelationships among leisure, other life circumstance variables such as religiosity, gender, education, marital status, and age, and their influence on quality of life. The only significant and direct predictor of quality of life was leisure satisfaction. Current findings support those of Russell (1987; 1990) from a couple's leisure context by indicating that it is the satisfaction with leisure participation, not the amount or type of leisure participation, which influences the satisfaction with married life.

Findings also support and add additional clarification to the early line of couple leisure research. Historically, researchers (Holman & Jacquart, 1988; Miller, 1976; Orthner, 1975; Smith, Snyder, & Monsma, 1988) have consistently reported positive relationships between joint couple leisure activities and marital satisfaction, from an individual, parallel, and joint activity pattern framework. Consistent findings were also reported from international studies including those from Australia (Palisi, 1984), England (Bell, 1975), and Korea (Ahn, 1982). However, the types of couple leisure activities that were actually measured in this early line of study were somewhat limited and the manner of measurement was clearly limited to time only. Authors acknowledged the limitations of these studies and called for further research with improved theoretical frameworks. Current findings provide continued support for this line of couple leisure research by reporting a continued relationship between couple leisure and marital satisfaction. Findings are, however, able to add further insight into this relationship by suggesting that it is not necessarily the amount of couple leisure involvement but the satisfaction with that involvement that contributes to marital satisfaction. Furthermore the use of the Core

24 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

and Balance family leisure framework allowed for the examination of different types of couple leisure patterns. Findings clearly indicated that satisfaction with core couple leisure patterns (home based, common, everyday leisure activities) together was the most significant contributor to increased marital satisfaction.

Implications and Recommendations

Findings from this study have several valuable implications for professionals who work with couples. Findings provide further empirical evidence indicating that couple leisure involvement is related to overall marital satisfaction. Professionals that work with couples often overlook the role of couple leisure involvement. Based on these findings, however, it is clear that couple leisure involvement is an integral component of marital satisfaction and must be acknowledged and addressed. Another insight from these findings that must be considered is that the satisfaction with couple leisure involvement appears to play a much greater role in marital satisfaction than does the type or amount of leisure involvement. Therefore, professionals can help couples address and negotiate issues related to leisure involvement and the satisfaction with their involvement within their current family structure.

Furthermore, the importance of regular, common, often home based leisure activities together should also be considered. Often when couple leisure involvement is addressed by professionals or used as a treatment modality, emphasis is placed on those activities that are out of the ordinary or different such as new challenging events or vacations. While such activities are often impactful, particularly during a treatment situation, findings from this study indicate that regular joint activities such as eating

dinner together, reading, gardening, and talking while washing dishes may contribute more to overall marital satisfaction.

Although findings provide several useful implications, limitations from this study must be recognized. The study used correlational techniques and therefore interpretations in terms of the directionality of the relationship between leisure satisfaction and marital satisfaction cannot be made without further research. Furthermore, the current sample was relatively small and homogenous. Future research should consider a larger sample of couples from a broader, more diverse geographical population. Utah is a predominantly religious society and all of the respondents in the current sample were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The LDS religion is strongly focused on families. Emphasis is placed on spending time together with one's spouse and family. Given the opportunity to perform the same study in an environment that is more religiously diverse may yield different findings.

It is recommended that further work also be completed regarding the Marital Activity Profile (MAP). Activity categories for the instrument were modified from the original FLAP (Zabriskie, 2000) for families. While the MAP appears to have demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties no specific validity and reliability work has been conducted. Such work should be completed prior to further research with this instrumentation.

Findings from this study also suggest several other recommendations for future research. First, couple activity patterns clearly may play different roles and therefore contribute in different ways to marital satisfaction in different stages of the family life

26 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

cycle. Therefore, examination of the contribution of family leisure involvement and leisure satisfaction to marital satisfaction within different marital categories across the life span, would clearly add further insight to this line of study.

Second, more consideration needs to be given to the context of the activities themselves and the motivation behind participation. For example, do spouses participate out of guilt or because they want to? Who decides what to do, and what state of mind are the couples in when they participate in the activities together? Such questions are likely to play a role in how satisfied couples are with their activity participation. Qualitative methodologies are likely to provide the greatest insight into the motivation behind couple's participation or lack of participation in couple activity patterns.

Third, more attention could be given to responses as couples, instead of as individuals. Scholars have consistently reported significant findings related to family leisure involvement from family perspectives derived from parent and child data sets (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003; Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). Similar methodologies should be used when examining couple leisure involvement. Examining husbands and wives responses together could provide additional information and insight into the couple leisure and marital satisfaction relationship, by providing a couple perspective.

Finally, it is recommended that couple leisure and marital satisfaction should be explored in relationship with measures of marital communication. Previous research has indicated that communication is vital to marital satisfaction (Cordova et al, 1993). Orthner (1975) reported a significant relationship between participation of husbands and

wives in joint leisure and the level of their communication and Presvelou (1971) reported that the frequency of joint leisure activities was positively related to marital communication, especially nonverbal communication such as caring. Therefore, the consideration of marital communication may add further insight to the current findings as they relate to couples leisure involvement, leisure satisfaction, and their overall marital satisfaction.

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30 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

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Table 1

Zero Order Correlations among Demographic Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Marital Satisfaction	-	-.030	.126	-.022	-.071	.021
2. Age		-	-.119	.768**	.979**	.517**
3. Gender			-	-.010	-.025	-.027
4. Number of Children				-	.768**	.644**
5. Number of Years Married					-	.513**
6. Income						-

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

36 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

Table 2

Zero Order Correlations among Research Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Marital satisfaction	-	.132	-.011	.039	.014	.670**	.445**	.677**
2. Core couple CLI***		-	.159	.691**	-.088	.206	.202	.179
3. Balance couple CLI			-	.824**	-.006	-.038	.272*	.143
4. Total CLI				-	-.107	.064	.316*	.193
5. Sat w/couple time					-	.116	.152	.153
6. Sat w/core CLI						-	.712**	.948**
7. Sat w/balance CLI							-	.883**
8. Sat w/total CLI								-

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. ***CLI = couple leisure involvement.

Table 3

Summary of Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Couple Leisure Satisfaction

Variable	B	SE B	β
Block 1 $R^2 = .024$ (<i>ns</i>)			
Core couple leisure index	.029	.041	.097
Balance couple leisure index	.020	.031	.091
Total couple leisure time	.233	.425	.074
Block 2 $\Delta R^2 = .429$ ($p < .01$)**			
Core couple leisure index	.002	.032	.005
Balance couple leisure index	.023	.026	.102
Total couple leisure time	-.011	.343	-.003
Core couple leisure satisfaction	.748	.169	.710**
Balance couple leisure satisfaction	-.110	.211	-.089

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. $n = 96$

Appendix A

Prospectus

Chapter 1

Introduction

Nearly 2400 years ago, Aristotle described his philosophy regarding the meaning of life. He believed that people seek happiness and a life filled with “that which is good and lasting (Dollahite, 2000).” Aristotle’s ideas are still highly respected today, and are evident as we look to individuals who make the decision to get married. As our society takes marital vows we are committing ourselves to what we believe will be a lasting marriage filled with joy and happiness. This ideal of a long lasting companionate relationship is what we are all searching for. We seem to live in an era where the commitment to our marital relationships is slowly diminishing. Divorce, once a difficult ruling to obtain can now be justified by simply citing “irreconcilable differences”, and where a divorced individual used to be in the minority, now many married individuals seem to have experienced at least one divorce. On top of this, married couples are counseled to lead and guide, teach and direct, support, nurture, and protect the family unit, which is the fundamental unit in society (Hinckley, 1995). As marriages disintegrate, so do families, leaving children confused and worried and weakening our society. Even mass media seems obsessed with love and marriage through media reports, talk shows and reality television. People are looking for ways to be happy in marriage.

We live in a time where people are always busy. Technology has allowed us to put aside many of our personal interactions and substitute them for email, cell phones, television or the computer (Daly, 1996). Couples have developed a false idea that just

40 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

because they are in the same room or same house, they are together. Relationships require communication and interaction to remain healthy (Olson & DeFrain, 1994). Recognizing the need for renewed energies toward communication and interaction can help couples find more satisfaction in their marriages.

This leads to the question, what if couples that play together really do stay together? Does marital satisfaction improve as spouses interact more frequently in positive activities together? What do couples do together, how often do they do these things, and how satisfied are they with their participation. Answers to these questions would provide couples with a better understanding of how to spend their time, whether it is doing housework, learning a new hobby, or being intimate. As couples make these realizations and renewed commitments their marriages will become stronger, families will become stronger, and our society will benefit.

Statement of the Problem

Researchers have conducted studies concerning leisure interaction and their correlation with some aspects of marital strength (Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Baldwin, 1999). The Problem of this study is to explore the relationship that could exist between married couples activity patterns and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with marital life.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to provide couples, marriages counselors, policymakers and society with a greater understanding about the impact of interactive activities on marital satisfaction. A greater understanding of these impacts can lead to changed patterns of behavior that strengthen marriages, families and the fabric of society.

Need for the Study

At a time when so many marriages are ending in divorce, couples are wondering how to stay together and find satisfaction in their marital relationships. This thesis project can help not only validate previous finding that couples who participate in activities together are more satisfied (Holman & Epperson, 1989; Orthner & Mancini, 1990; 1991), but also bring new light to the subject concerning meaningful types of activities and there duration. With this new knowledge couples can then take steps to apply the finding to their own relationships, perhaps improving their marital satisfaction.

Delimitations

The study will be delimited in the following ways:

1. One hundred study packets gathered from 50 randomly chosen subject couples between the ages of 20 and 70, living in the Provo/Orem, Utah community, who have been married at least 2 years.
2. Marital Satisfaction will be operationalized using the Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ).
3. Couple Activity Patterns will be operationalized using the Marital Activity Profile (MAP).
4. Data will be collected over a 2week period of time in November of 2003.

Limitations

This study will be limited in the following ways:

42 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

1. The use of correlational techniques, therefore not allowing interpretations to indicate directionality of relationships.
2. The depth and breadth of the questionnaire.
4. The sample will be from a highly homogenous, highly family focused, religious city in the state of Utah.
5. Subjects in the study will take the survey in the same location as their spouse. Although they will be instructed not to share information, it could be that couples do discuss their answers with each other.
6. There has been evidence of reliability and content related evidence of validity presented for the Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP), but these have not been proven for the Marital Activity Profile (MAP).

Assumptions

This study will be based upon the following assumptions:

1. The sample will be representative of a broad spectrum of couples in the different stages of the family life cycle.
2. Couples who have been married longer will have more to base their level of marital satisfaction on.
3. High marital satisfaction is not a direct result of recreation alone.
4. Individuals did not discuss their survey answers with their spouse.
5. Findings regarding marital satisfaction and the stage of life cycle will follow a U shaped curve.

5. Test instruments will measure the underlying constructs that they intend to measure.

Hypotheses

This study will be designed to test the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no difference in marital satisfaction as a result of the length of time the couple has been married.

2. There is no relationship between couple activity patterns and marital satisfaction.

3. There is a relationship between couple activity patterns and marital satisfaction.

4. A total marriage activity index score will be correlated with the Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire.

5. There is a relationship between activity patterns and the married life satisfaction scale.

Definition of Terms

Couple: a man and woman married to each other who's shared goal is to support one another emotionally, spiritually, and physically.

Marital satisfaction: the degree to which a married couple feels content, comfortable, and happy with their marital relationship.

Couple activity patterns: physical exercise, entertainment, recreation, intimacy, and work habits, demonstrated by each or both individuals in a marriage relationship.

44 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

Chapter2

Review of Literature

The literature related to couple activity patterns and marital satisfaction is reported in this chapter. For organizational purposes, the literature is organized in the following topic areas: (a) systems theory (b) marital satisfaction (c) activity patterns (d) summary.

Systems Theory

A marital relationship can be viewed as a system of interacting roles and communication networks. Underlying this system is the perception of relationship satisfaction that determines whether or not the system is able to maintain itself in its present form. Constantine (1986) defined system structure as “the sum total of the interrelationship among elements of a system, including membership in the system and the boundary between the system and its environment” (p.52). System’s theory tries to explain the behavior of complex organized systems, such as a spousal relationship, and it is a way of looking at the world in which people are interrelated with one another (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993).

Systems theory can provide some useful insights into the relationships between activity and couple variables and provides a good foundation for studying couple activity patterns and their impact on couple marital satisfaction. From a systems theory perspective (Constantine, 1986), couple activities contribute to many things, including couple bonding, which in turn can affect satisfaction in two ways. First, common activities and interest enforce boundaries around the relationship. Shared interests and

activities may be one of the more important forces establishing and maintaining boundaries in the couple system. Second, couple activities contribute to developing collective interest and identity by putting couples in situations where they are learning to enjoy activities together (Fincham, Beach & Kemp-Fincham, 1997).

Systems theory is based on five main ideas, that when considered together help to explain the changing dynamics of a relationship system. They are: circularity, holism, organization, information processing, and change, which include adaptation and growth. A more in depth look at these guiding systems principles can shed light on the benefits that occur from studying couples from a systems view point.

Circularity

Systems elements are linked so that each piece affects all the other pieces. Interaction and causality are not linear, but instead all members of the system act in a circular way, each action affects the other. All members are involved in the control aspects of the system, though that does not mean there is a smooth coordination of action. The causal linkages are circular with no start and no end and with no possibility of concluding that things started with one individual person or event. The system does not operate with a linear cause and effect chain (Jackson 1965). Reciprocity, mutuality, and fit are three sub-concepts of circularity. Reciprocity is the process of one partner's behavior drawing on the other behavior and so forth. Mutuality refers to the process of both members of a relationship system mutually drawing on the others actions and behavior. Fit is the way that the behaviors are joined together over time, which creates a sequence that becomes coordinated and somewhat predictable (Butler, 1995; Olsen,

46 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979). Spouse's and outside observers often "punctuate" the circle of the system and have a tendency to view their relationships linearly rather than systemically. An example of this would be when each partner focuses on one behavior isolated from all others. For example, a husband focuses on one specific behavior of his wife that "causes" him to be upset with her and raise his voice. The wife on the other hand may back up one more step and focus on a specific behavior of her husband that "causes" her to be frustrated with him. Each partner ignores and denies the complex interactional web that exists in their relationship system. The web helps to support the circularity of the relationship. Couples look to punctuate their relationship in ways that blame their partner, looking for the "original sin" (Butler, 1997, p.3). Recognizing circularity among relationship systems can help spouse's understand how they work together.

Holism

Holism is based on two compositional laws: The Law of Composition, and the Law of Decomposition. The Law of Composition states that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Using water is a good example of this law. Hydrogen and oxygen alone are gases. But when put together become a very useful liquid, necessary for life. The Law of Decomposition states that the part is more than a fraction of the whole (Butler, 1995). This law proposes that members of relationship systems contain within themselves potential beyond those that emerge and are expressed in any specific situation. For example, problem solving might be a weakness for the couple, but not a weakness for an individual spouse. These two laws are very important when you are evaluating a

relationship system. If you focus on individual spouses you don't get a full picture of the entire system or relationship. Conversely if emphasis is only placed on the system as a whole, individual characteristics are overlooked.

All individuals in a system have emergent and divergent properties. Emergent properties are a person's potentialities that surface in any given situation or context. Submerging properties are those potentialities that are repressed or subdued in any given situation or context. Therefore it is valuable to focus on these properties in the context of both the Law of Composition and Decomposition. In this context, the reason why potentialities become apparent or are subdued becomes more evident in relation to the system as a whole (Butler, 1995).

Organization

Organization is fundamental to a relationship system and encompasses many concepts. Boundaries, a fundamental organizational concept, keep systems organized by determining what will come into the system and what will go out. The boundaries act as filters that not only mediate information, but also set the system aside from other systems, and provide protection.

Using boundaries, systems can be broken down into subsystems that contain an individual member or group of members of a system distinguished from other members of the system by a distinct role or function, by hierarchy, or by boundaries. A family system may be thought of as including subsystems (Kantor & Lahr, 1975; Minuchin, 1974). Individual family members may be perceived as subsystems of the family. Family members may also be perceived as grouped in subsystems, such as the marital subsystem,

48 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

the parental subsystem and so forth. The family can also function as a subsystem of a larger system, such as society. Subsystems are very important and work to carry out specific functions in the system. Hierarchy is granted to those subsystems that have more power than others such as parents over children (Rosenblatt, 1994).

Boundaries can be characterized in terms of their permeability, selectivity, and variability. Variability refers to the ability of boundaries to be adaptive. Systems have problems when boundaries are too rigid or too diffuse. Often variability changes over time. In a couple setting, the couple as newlyweds might be very open to new activities in order to please their spouse, but over time, as they get to know each other better, there is less variability in what they are willing to try and entertain. Permeability refers to how open or closed systems boundaries are. For example, couples may have very open boundaries when it comes to discussing financial information, but very rigid boundaries when it comes to talking about marital conflict. Selectivity refers to what the system selects to allow through its boundaries.

Systems are also organized through belief systems. Shared beliefs within relationship systems help organize the system and mediate interaction. As a result, both interaction structure and process within marital and family systems can be profoundly influenced or determined by beliefs. Beliefs could include things such as shared religious beliefs, and cultural beliefs.

Rules, usually created as a result of the beliefs a member of a system has, also help systems stay organized. They are used to create order, and to create a general understanding and consensus among system members. Rules seem to take input from

outside the couple and produce output for the world inside the spousal relationship (Broderick & Smith, 1979). Rules are negotiable, and often stem from families of origin. When couples come together with different rules and understandings of how rules should be followed a great deal of compromise must come into play as they make new rules for themselves. Variability has a large effect on rules, especially in a family setting. Often times there are many rules that are strictly enforced when children in the system are young, but over time as the children grow older, rules become more lenient and negotiable. Rules are also flexible. There are many times when systems have to create new rules or modify old rules when new situations arise. Regardless of the modifications, rules provide a great deal of organization and help to create a general understanding among members of a system.

Along with rules, the roles played by members of a system are also very important to the organization of a system. As each member of the system plays his or her role, order is kept amongst the system, and other members feel more comfortable because they know what part each member of the system is playing. All members in a system have their own individual roles. These roles are a coherent set of interrelated behaviors, performed by an individual member of a system, or by a subsystem, for the benefit of the system as a whole (Butler, 1997). The role of a husband played by a man, or the role of a parent played by a mother would be examples of this.

Information Processing

Members of systems process information and communicate one with another. Communication can be characterized on a dimension of openness to closeness. Open

50 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

communication involves a great deal of freedom to communicate thoughts, feelings, opinions, and fantasies between spouses. Openness also allows the freedom to be honest and complete in communicating (Bowen, 1978). Closed communication involves blocking, walling, distorting, or denying thoughts, feelings, and opinions, along with truths (Zuk, 1965). Closed communication often results out of fear of rejection. Communication styles of open and closed, although relatively simple, can cause great dissatisfaction amongst spouses. If one spouse is open and one spouse is closed, positive constructive communication will rarely take place. This can bring contention, confusion, and dissatisfaction to the relationship.

Communication is delivered in feedback loops. They are connections between behavior and evaluation of behavior. Feedback can lead to either attenuation or amplifying responses (Rosenblatt, 1994). Attenuating feedback, which is also known as negative feedback is responsive information or behavior within a relationship system that operates to maintain system functioning or performance within the boundaries set by the system. Attenuating feedback is designed to maintain system homeostasis. For couples, different behaviors or experiences during conflict bring feedback which acts to attenuate and dampen the conflict and brings it back into a comfortable range for those involved (Butler, 1997). For example, becoming loud during an argument, swearing or hitting, may constitute feedback leading to an attenuating response.

An amplifying feedback, or positive feedback is responsive information or behavior within a relationship system that operates to amplify or increase deviation from a set point of system functioning (Rosenblatt, 1994). An amplifying loop increases the

behavior to its outermost limits. An example of this would be a father coming home from work in a bad mood. He speaks harshly to his wife who in turn makes a comment about his bad attitude. Her comment then amplifies his bad mood, he becomes crankier which in turn causes the wife to become more critical, and the loop is continually amplified. An example on the flip side would be the expression of gratitude. The wife might express gratitude for her family. As a result, the wife finds herself having good feelings towards them, wanting to serve them more, and expressing more love verbally. As a result her husband and children do all they can to producing the positive behavior that their mother and wife appreciate. As a result of their actions the wife/mother feels even more good feelings towards them and continues in service, and the amplifying feedback loop continues.

Change, Adaptation, Growth

Systems have a tendency to seek homeostasis, maintaining a steady state or equilibrium. It is in this state that members feel most comfortable; as they know what roles they are to play and what to expect (Butler, 1997, p. 5).

Equipotentiality, and equifinality are two concepts related to change, adaptation, and growth that help to explain homeostasis. Equipotentiality refers to the capacity of a relationship system to arrive at different endpoints from the same starting point. This concept implies the inability to predict systems behavior and outcomes. It is based on agency among system members. Equifinality is just the opposite of equipotentiality. It is the capacity of relationship systems to arrive at the same endpoint from different starting

52 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

points. This concept, like equipotentiality establishes agency into the system and makes predictions about the system hard to come by.

As systems strive to grow, they can take on a hunting behavior. This behavior is the constant ongoing activity of the system towards achieving its reference level of performance or functioning (Butler, 1995). One way of understanding this behavior is by applying it to a heater, or cooling system. The regular activity of the system turning on and off in order to achieve the desired temperature in the room as determined by the temperature setting could represent a hunting behavior. The system never achieves the exact temperature desired for an extended period of time, but fluctuates right near the setting, hunting for the temperature the system has been set at.

When it comes to facing change, growing, and adapting to life situations, rituals can aid couple as they deal with the experiences. They are powerful tools for symbolizing and bringing about change. Rituals open couple systems in very brief periods of time and bring about reorganization with new structure, new processes and new beliefs and expectations. As spouses move through their lives together, they are faced with many different challenges, trials and new experiences. When couples are faced with changes, having a consistent, comfortable ritual to fall back on provides security. This in turn gives the couple confidence to take on the changes. Being open and receptive to change brings growth to the relationship system. A couple's ability to deal with the new situations can determine how satisfied they are in their marriage.

Using a systems perspective can increase understanding of how and why the relationship system functions as it does and in return, how to best deal with issues such as

communication, growth, adaptation, setting boundaries, rules, and fulfilling roles. In order to better evaluate and understand the satisfaction spouses feel in their relationship, we must first have guidelines to follow for evaluation. Determining that the spousal relationship is a system and using a systems perspective can increase our understanding of how and why the relationship system functions as it does and in return how to best deal with issues such as communication, growth, adaptation, setting boundaries, rules, and setting goals. When we have a better understanding of how the spousal system works then we can have a foundation that can lead us to understanding their activity patterns and how they affect their marital satisfaction.

Marital Satisfaction

For many couples marriage is a very satisfying endeavor. Marriages change and evolve. Discovering the variables that effect marriages is important because nearly all people marry in their lifetime (Bjorksten & Stewart, 1984). Nearly one half of all first marriages are expected to end in separation or divorce (Castro-martin & Bumpass, 1989). About half of those divorced get remarried with even more remarriages ending in divorce (Brody, Neuman, & Forehand, 1988). When couples do succeed in creating a satisfying marriage, their satisfaction tends to safeguard spouses from psychological distress, and negative life events (Waltz, Bandura, Pfaff, & Schott, 1988). Marital Distress and dissatisfaction have negative consequences for the physical and emotional well being of spouses and their children (Bloom, Asher & White, 1978; Emery, 1982).

Although systems theory has been universally embraced as one of the best theories in which to examine a couple relationships, it is important to touch on a few of

54 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

the other theories that have pioneered the study of satisfaction in marriages. These other theories have been coupled with systems theory, seeking to explain marital satisfaction and those variables that affect it. Working in the realm of systems theory, social exchange theory, behavior theory, attachment theory, and crisis theory have been commonly proposed as good theories to help explain the dynamics of couple's interpersonal relationships.

Social Exchange Theory

The most frequently cited theory in research on marriage and close relationships comes from Thibaut and Kelley's (1959) theory of interdependence and proposes that relationships grow, develop, deteriorate, and dissolve as a consequence of an unfolding social-exchange process, which may be conceived as a bartering of rewards and costs both between the partners and between members of the partnership and others" (Huston & Burgess, 1979, p.4).

Behavioral Theory

Behavioral theories of marriage also have their roots in the work of Thibaut and Kelly (1959). The focus of social exchange theory is interpersonal. Marital satisfaction is understood to be the result of each individual's weighting of attractions and alternatives and those attractions and alternatives are conceived to be "aspects of perception, not action" (Gottman, 1982, p. 950). Although rewards and costs are also part of behavior theories, the main focus is on the interpersonal exchange of specific behaviors. This approach is strong because it supplies a means to explain how judgments of marital satisfaction change over time. It gives couples an opportunity to learn on the basis of their

interactions and the evaluations that follow from them, whether or not they are in a rewarding relationship (Bradbury & Fincham, 1991).

Attachment Theory

Bowlby's (1969) work on relationships between infants and their caregivers is where attachment theories of marriage stem from. Bowlby (1969), through his research suggested that the nature of this first close relationship determines a child's internal working model of what close relationships are like, so it should determine the nature of an individual's close relationship throughout the course of life. Hazen and Shaver (1987, 1994), and Shaver, Hazan, & Bradshaw (1988) were some of the first to apply these attachment ideas to adult relationships. They believed that close relationships between adults mirror enduring styles of attachment developed in infancy and early childhood. This perspective emphasized that an individual's early experiences in close relationships shape the nature and development of future relationships in adulthood. Relationship satisfaction depends largely on the satisfaction of basic needs for comfort, care and sexual gratification (Hazen & Shaver, 1994). The success of the relationship will rest on whether each spouse trusts that the partner can fulfill those needs.

Crisis Theory

Crisis theory stems from Hill's (1949) efforts to explain how families react to stressful events. Although crisis theory was designed to explain the functioning of families, some marital researchers have used the theory to explain and predict marital outcomes. These efforts assume that declines in marital satisfaction and the occurrence of separation or divorce reflect failures to recover from crises. In general, couples

56 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

experiencing more stressful events should be more vulnerable to negative marital outcomes, and this effect should be moderated by the couples levels of resources and the couple's definition of events.

In recent year's scholars have paid more attention to marital satisfaction (Castro-Martin & Pampase, 1989). The rational for studying marital satisfaction stems from its centrality in individual and family well being (Stack & Eshleman, 1998), from the benefits that occur in society when strong marriages are formed and maintained, and from the need to develop interventions for marital distress and divorce as they have become more prevalent (Castro-Martin & Bumpass, 1989).

According to the 1998 U.S. Bureau of the Census, the American divorce rate has declined for the eighth straight year, perhaps as a result of the increase in the age at first marriage. About half of first marriages are projected to end in permanent separation or divorce and the level of satisfaction in intact, first marriages has declined since the mid-1970's (National Marriage Project, 1999, Rogers & Amato, 1997). Recently researchers have also argued that marital satisfaction probably does not follow a U-shaped curve over the marital career, as was once believed, but instead drops significantly over the first 10 years of marriage on average, and then drops more gradually in the ensuing decades (Amato & Booth, 1997; Glenn, 1998; Rollins & Feldman, 1970; Vaillant & Vaillant, 1993). Other recent findings related to marital satisfaction include studies on affect, and physiology. Researchers (Fincham & Beach, 1999) have found that considering an affective dimension of marital interaction helps to account for the variability in the quality of marriage. Some studies show that negative affect is detrimental for marriage,

whereas others show that it promotes marital quality or is unrelated (Fincham & Beach, 1999). Findings also show that martially satisfied couples demonstrated more likeness in physiological systems than martially dissatisfied couples (Thomsen & Gilbert, 1998). Marital conflict, especially among newlyweds, has been found to increase pituitary and adrenal hormones as levels of hostility increase (Malarkey, Kiecolt-Glaser, Pearl, & Glaser, 1994). These physiological findings are important because they create a link between marital functioning and physical well-being.

There are many factors that have been found to affect marital satisfaction. Some of the factors are very similar to those expressed by couples as hindrances to couple activity participation. Of specific interest and reoccurrence in the literature are violence, children, income, and stress.

Violence

Although physical violence is difficult to directly observe, studies are now being conducted on interaction styles in marriages and their relationship to violence. Findings have shown that when compared with distressed couples that are not violent, the interactions of distressed violent couples are marked by higher levels of negative reciprocation, anger and contempt (Cordova, Jacobson, Gottman, & Rushe, 1993). These findings clarify how disagreements can escalate in violent marriages, and they confirm that behavioral differences between distressed and non-distressed couples can exist even when physical violence does not. They also show that when there is violence there is less marital satisfaction, but that the victim of the abuse will only admit they are dissatisfied

58 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

when they are certain their spouse cannot find out what they have reported. Out of fear they often lie.

Children

Children have an interesting effect on marriages. Belsky (1990) and Waite and Lillard (1991), both found that children increase the stability of marriage, at least when they are relatively young, while decreasing its quality. Perhaps this is because couples try to increase stability in the marriage for the children that have recently been added to the relationship. It has been found that couples satisfaction levels change significantly between the last trimester of pregnancy through several months or a few years postpartum (Stack & Eshelman, 1998). Belsky & Rovine (1990) reported that couples do not change much on important variables such as ethics, morals and religious beliefs, over the transition to parenthood, and demonstrated how the ways in which couples decided to work through the addition of children in their relationship, could be predicted from demographic and personality data (p.12). In a study done by Cox, Paley, Burchinal, and Payne (1999), they found that declines in marital quality and increases in negative interaction were predicted by symptoms of depression, child gender, and whether the pregnancy was planned. So children's affect is different with every couple, but it usually puts them in a position where although they want to participate in more activities together they are unable to because children (especially when they are very young) must be tended to. This leaves couples feeling that the quality of their marriages have gone down because they are not as active as they once were.

Income

The effects of income on marriage depend greatly on the source of income. Husband's income and husband's employment have positive effects on marital stability and satisfaction, whereas wives income and employment have the opposite effect (Greenstein, 1990). Research (Greenstein, 1990; Markman, 1981) also suggests that the absolute income of a couple may matter less to the marriage than the amount of stable financial resources from which a couple can access. The only exception has been found when the couple is receiving public assistance, which is a different type of stable income. This has the opposite affect, predicting slight declines in marital satisfaction and stability across time (Hannan et al., 1977).

Stress

The presence of stress predicts lower marital stability and less marital satisfaction over time. One exception to this trend is the transition to parenthood. It has been found that the experience of becoming a parent can bring a great deal of stress and lead to declines in marital satisfaction (Belsky, 1985; Belsky & Pensky, 1988; Hoffman & Manis, 1978). The interesting finding about parenting and the stress it brings to couples is that although it leads to decreased marital satisfaction, it has been found to lead to increased marital stability (Belsky, 1990; Waite & Lilliard, 1991). Stressful events can account for variations in marital quality and stability over time. Several studies have shown that the behaviors spouse's exchange are affected by the stress couples encounter (Aubry, Tefft, & Kingsbury, 1990; Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Wethington, 1989; Halford, Gravestock, Lowe, & Scheldt, 1992; Repetti, 1989). This might mean that a

60 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

husbands long day at work affects his patience with his wife, and a wife's frustrating day with the children leads to her having a short fuse with her husband. Circumstances outside the couple's locus of control can affect adaptation between spouses, which can account for decreased satisfaction. The backgrounds and traits that spouses bring to the marriage can also bring stress and affect the adaptive processes. Things such as experiences in childhood in the family of origin, level of education, and personality have all been found to possibly bring added stress to a couples relationship and are directly associated with the satisfaction of marital interactions (Markman, 1981).

Stressful events challenge a couple's ability to adapt. Couples must then find a way to adapt to the variety of stressful events and circumstances that they encounter. The ability of a couple to adapt depends on the degree of stress they experience and the vulnerabilities that each spouse brings to the marriage. Couples' who gather experiences with adaptive processes to deal with stress gradually influence their perceptions of their marital satisfaction, which in turn contributes to the stability of the marriage. Couples with ineffective adaptive processes who must cope with stressful events and have many long lasting vulnerabilities, can experience declining marital satisfaction, separation, or divorce.

Measuring Marital Satisfaction

Researchers have taken steps in trying to create the ideal way to study and measure marital satisfaction. There have been four important developments in measurement. One, there has been a realization that a satisfied marriage is not simply one that is without dissatisfaction (Halford, Kelly, & Markman, 1997). Two, positive and

negative evaluations of marriage can be conceptualized and measured as separate, although related dimensions (Fincham, Beach, & Kemp-Fincham, 1997). Three, satisfaction needs to be conceptualized not just as a judgment made by spouses at one point in time but as trajectory that reflects fluctuation in marital evaluations over time (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). The advantages to this third development, is that it encourages repetitive, longitudinal studies on marriage. Fourth, a social-cognitive perspective has been applied to the conceptualization of marital satisfaction (Fazio, 1995). Applying this new perspective brings to light the possibility that spouses who's marital satisfaction is accessible should report more stable satisfaction over time, relative to spouses whose satisfaction is less accessible (Fincham, 1987).

With so many people getting married and divorced there is good reason to continue to examine marital satisfaction. With so many variables affecting satisfaction it is hard to look at all of them in one study. It does seem logical that one of those variables that can help determine or even predict marital satisfaction is a couples activity patterns. What do couples do together? How often do they engage in the activities, and how does that affect their marital satisfaction?

Activity Patterns

Definitions of activities and leisure, along with our understanding and make up of families have changed over time. One concept concerning activity patterns, leisure, and marital satisfaction however, has stayed fairly constant: benefits come for couples that do things together. Couples who engage in joint activity participation on a regular basis with their spouse report higher levels of marital satisfaction, communication that is more

62 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

successful, and better problem solving skills in their relationship (Baldwin, Ellis & Baldwin 1999; Holman & Jaquart, 1988; Orthner & Mancini, 1991).

Great benefits come from participating in activities together (Orthner & Mancini, 1990). Activity participation has always been very important to individuals and family. Couple leisure activities are integral to promoting couple bonds. Research has also shown that couple leisure activities are positively related to couple stability, couple satisfaction and couple interaction (Orthner & Mancini 1990). Recreation and companionship are related to marital quality. Satisfaction with leisure activities appears to correlate with marital and family satisfaction (Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Orthner & Mancini 1991).

Society has long since believed in the need for leisure (Russell, 1999). The idea of contemplation is commonly referred to as classical leisure: this ancient form of leisure encompassed activities that involved the pursuit of truth and self-understanding, an act of contemplation full of searching, examining and reflection (Dare, Walton, & Coe, 1998).

In modern society, classical leisure is not as popular as it used to be. Work has taken over many spheres of life, and is what we are taught to take seriously, where leisure time is empty time. We now consider leisure as the time we have which is not bound by obligations (Robinson & Godbey, 1997). Modern leisure is now most commonly defined as either activities done in our free time, a state of mind, or an activity. This concept is completely opposite from the classical theory on leisure (Dare et al., 1998)

Not only has our definition of leisure changed but our definitions of families, roles, and marital relationships have also taken on new definitions. The essence of family life today can be described as changing and diverse. The changes are hard to see from

day to day, but over the decades they are more apparent. Couples are more likely to live together before getting married. Children are coming later and divorce separates almost half of all marriages. Parenting has become less of a focus for today's families and the number of single parent families has dramatically increased (Orthner, 1998). More women are in the work force and couples are spending less time engaged in activities together. Individual responsibilities as they relate to gender roles and families have also changed. Fathers are not the only working parent. Mothers have also entered the work force. Also where housework and children were always known as the women's job, stay at home fathers now do the wash and drive carpool.

Prior to the 20th century, family bonding was facilitated through shared family work activities and other family roles. Families were held together by strong external constraints and their complementary roles, particularly between husbands and wives (Larson, Gillman, & Richards, 1997). This was a pre-industrial time when men and women had quite different patterns of socialization and in which their complementary roles were vital to individual and family success. With industrialization, family and gender roles became more interchangeable. Individual families became more dependent for their success on the ability of husbands and wives to reconcile their different needs and interests, rather than their abilities to submerge their individual needs and interests in favor of larger family goals (Larson et al., 1997). Families were not looking to separate work and leisure, instead, leisure and work were one in the same as families worked together to accomplish the jobs that were necessary day to day.

64 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

Industrialization also brought change to families. Fathers have left home for the work place and although some mothers still stay at home, many women are also in the work force. Family members engage in many activities individually instead of with the rest of the family. Recreation is no longer part of everyday activity, but instead is done when there is time, with those who are interested. Recreation is now something that individuals participate in when their work is done.

Benefits of Shared Activities

Marital strengths have demonstrated links to participation in shared activities. These include the meeting of relational needs, developing problem-solving skills, building parent child bonds, and improving social support. Spending time together, learning new activities and solving problems in less threatening environments can particularly help couples practice skills that can be transferred back into the day to day life of the family and marital relationship. The area of potential family strength that has received the most attention is the meeting of relational needs that otherwise are not always met. Shared recreation experiences are related to higher marital satisfaction, improved marital commitment and even lower rates of divorce. Couples who are happy to share activities are not looking for ways out of their relationship (Holman & Jaquart, 1998). Recreation could then be the key to successful marriages today. Time spent in separate, independent activities that separate marital partners, have been found to hinder couple strengths (Holman & Jaquart, 1988; Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Orthner & Mancini, 1991; Smith et al., 1988). Shared activities can also impact couple problem solving. Healthy problem solving requires open communication and practice in being

flexible and adaptable. Both of these skills are promoted in active shared experiences.

These help couples practice the skills they can apply to tougher tests of their relationship (Gillis & Gass, 1993).

Couple Activity Patterns

Couples leisure has been classified into activity patterns. Activity patterns refer to the individual participating in the activity and their level of interaction during the experience (Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Orthner & Mancini, 1991). This variable can be divided into three dimensions, individual, parallel, and joint. Individual leisure refers to leisure that is done without one's spouse. It is participated in either totally alone, or with other people, other than one's spouse. Engagements in individual pursuits and interaction with others to the exclusion of one's spouse were good predictors of global marital distress, and the absence of marital satisfaction (Smith, Snyder, & Monsma, 1988; Orthner & Mancini, 1991). Holman & Jaquart (1988), and Orthner & Mancini (1990), also suggest that a negative relationship exists between individual leisure and marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Although it has been found that couples who participate in individual activities experience lower levels of marital satisfaction (Hill, 1988; Holman & Jaquart, 1988; Locke, 1951; Orthner, 1975; Reissman, Aron, & Bergen, 1993; Smith, Snyder, Trull, & Monsma, 1988), it has also been found that participation in shared activities, or commitment to the same activities, was not essential to marital satisfaction if the spouses perceived that their partners supported their activity choices. When one spouse is committed to an activity and the other is not, significant support from that individual's

66 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

spouse helps affirm the role of the spouse and promote marital satisfaction (Baldwin & Ellis, 1998). This support could be expressed in many different ways, such as holding conversations about the spouse's participation and performance in the activity, arranging schedules to accommodate watching their spouse participate in the activity, or giving equipment related to the activity for gifts (Baldwin & Ellis, 1998; McCall & Simmons, 1978).

Studies suggest that support in the pursuit of a personally meaningful goal or behavior plays an important role in maintaining high levels of well being (Brunstein, Dangelmayer, & Schultheiss, 1996; Ruehlman & Wolchik, 1988). As perceived support increases, marital satisfaction also increases, and it has been found that those who participate in supported independent recreation activities reported higher marital satisfaction than those who participated in fully independent activities (Baldwin & Ellis, 1998; Acitelli, & Antonucci, 1994; Cutrona, 1996; Jaccard, Wan, & Ramey, 1996; Julien, & Markman, 1991). These findings are important because couples do not always enjoy the same types of activities. Couples who have different interests and participate in individual activities without their spouse will not necessarily experience declines in their marital satisfaction as long as there is significant support from their partner concerning the individual activity. Support concerning individual activity participation plays a large role in increasing marital satisfaction (Baldwin & Ellis, 1998).

Parallel leisure refers to individual activities in a group context, taking place when two people are engaging in the same activity. The activity calls for little or no communication or interaction, such as watching a movie, or television. Leisure activities

such as these seem to represent a false front, suggesting togetherness when it does not necessarily exist. Just because a couple is sitting on the same couch watching the same movie doesn't mean that their time together is providing the maximum benefit. In these situations there is usually little communication, interaction, or problem solving. Leisure activities that involve little or no communication provide little benefit to couples and may actually hurt the relationship (Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Orthner & Mancini, 1991).

The third leisure category is joint leisure. Joint leisure describes activities in which couples participate together with high levels of interaction. These types of activities are conducive to optimal communication and alternative role patterning. It has been found that couples that share leisure time together in joint activities tend to be much more satisfied with their marriages (Baldwin, Ellis & Baldwin 1999; Holman & Jaquart, 1988; Orthner & Mancini, 1991). Spousal understanding increases with greater amounts of shared leisure time (Orthner & Mancini, 1980). Findings show that no significant difference has been found between couple's who participate in joint recreation together and couple's who did not, but were highly supportive of each other (Baldwin, & Ellis, 1998). For example, a husband might really enjoy running in races while his wife dislikes running but comes and watches him run every race. Even though she doesn't actually run, this doesn't necessarily hurt their relationship because she supports his individual activity and participates in a different way. Joint activities may however, cause conflict when the couple is not used to being together often. This occurs when the couple is not used to spending time together and is forced to communicate and interact. Although some levels

68 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

of conflict are good in a relationship, the conflict that joint activities can cause a couple might deter them from further joint leisure interactions (Orthner & Mancini, 1980).

Leisure Constraints and Barriers

There are many different reasons why couples do or do not participate in leisure activities together. These different constraints and barriers have different effects on couples depending on what stage of life they are in and their willingness to find the time in their busy schedules to actively engage in activities with their spouses.

Spouse employment is one variable found to effect leisure. Wives and mothers who are employed have less available time to spend participating in leisure (Holman & Epperson, 1984). As a result, employed wives are more likely to have husbands who enacted the activity planning in the spousal relationship. The employment of wives resulted in a decline in recreation involving social relationships. A woman's employment however, does not effect her involvement in intra-family and commercial recreational activities (Rollins & White, 1998). This suggests that although working wives do not have time for "girl's night out", they still do find time to participate with their spouse in activities. Leisure time together comes at the expense of a great deal of stress. Wives and mothers are juggling work, family responsibilities and trying to find time to spend with their significant other (Groves, 1997; Hill, 1988).

Socioeconomic status also effects couples activity time together. Financial well-being accounts for a very small portion of the variance in couple activity choices, especially when other factors are included simultaneously. Socioeconomic status does however have a large effect on the types of activities that might be chosen. Couples with

little money to spend on leisure feel they are limited as far as the activities they can participate in. Learning a new skill or investing in a new hobby such as mountain biking, golf, tennis, or even going out to dinner can cost a great deal of money, funds a couple might not have. Couples with little extra money have to be more creative in their leisure planning, seeking out inexpensive activities. The extra effort can become frustrating and often leaves the couple feeling it is more trouble than it is worth (Holman & Epperson, 1984).

The leisure behaviors that an individual's parental family enacted also affect current family leisure choices. It has been found that about half of a person's favorite current activities were begun in the family of orientation (Holman & Epperson, 1984). Current family type appears to make some difference.

Location of relatives has also been found to have some impact on family recreation (Holman & Epperson 1984). Those couples with relatives in close proximity spend more leisure time together. One reason for this could be because there are other people planning and facilitating events and activities, which takes pressure off the couple. And there are people close by to watch children so the couple can do more together.

Amount of leisure time is generally seen in terms of with whom the individual or couple spends it or what the individual or couple does during the leisure time. This means that when you look at what a couple does together, do they have the time to go away for a long weekend, or just enough time to eat breakfast together in the morning, or do the dishes together? The effect that a specific activity form or activity pattern has on a

70 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

marriage or a couple is dependent on the amount of time given to that activity form or pattern (Holman & Epperson, 1984).

The most frequently used variable to explain couples activity patterns and satisfaction is stage of family life cycle. Companions have different amounts of time for, and interest in, individual and couple activities at different life cycle stages. When a husband and wife are raising their children, there is less time for couple activities especially for the women whose primary responsibility could be taking care of the children. The portion of time spent in couple activities is more important to the wives' marital satisfaction than it is to the husbands (Holman & Jaquart, 1998), yet men have more time for leisure pursuits. Family life cycle stage also appears to affect the type of activities couples choose (Holman & Epperson, 1984). For example, when children are present they often participate in activities with the parents. Therefore activities might include trips to "Chuck-E-Cheese for pizza when the couple would rather be at nice restaurant having steak. When children are older or have left the home, couples don't have to worry about being home or getting babysitters and can be gone longer, engaged in activities they prefer. The total number of activities participated in by a spouse is unrelated to either partner's marital satisfaction. The total number of activities makes a difference only when there is a great discrepancy between spouses (Holman & Jaquart, 1988).

Family life cycle may also impact leisure barriers, but those barriers change over the life of a family. More home centered activities occur when mothers are not employed outside of the home and when a child was a preschooler (Larsen et al., 1997). Children

have an interesting effect on marital satisfaction concerning activity patterns together. They seem to have a negative impact on marital satisfaction but they increase marital stability (Hill, 1988; Orthner & Mancini 1991). The presence of a preschool child significantly depressed the amount of time husbands and wives spent together in activities. Children can contribute to marital dissolution in situations where the spouses have less shared leisure time. Couples with children tend to choose activities that will be most enjoyed by the children rather than themselves or their spouses. This can lead to dissatisfaction with couple activity patterns (Hill, 1988; Orthner & Mancini 1991).

Work issues can also be considered barriers to shared activities. Husbands employment has a more pronounced effect on time spent with children than does wives employment, and parents in single earner families are more likely to spend time with children than those in a dual earner family (Huston & Burgess, 1979). Women's involvement in work inside and outside of the home occurs at the expense of time with their spouse (Orthner & Mancini, 1991).

Different gender role attitudes also create barriers to couple activity participation and marital satisfaction. Men and women view leisure differently, especially in a family setting where children are present. Men are more likely than women to view leisure as an opportunity for attachment and affiliation. Couple leisure for fathers is seen as relaxation, diversion and an opportunity for self-expression.

Regardless of their employment status, most mothers are still viewed as holding primary responsibility for the day-to-day care of the children and family. The gender approach to leisure constraints research has shown that women have less time for couple

72 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

leisure because they are more constrained than men with regard to household obligations and family commitments (Henderson, 1995; Jackson, 1985; Searle & Horna, 1989), and that these constraints are also related to family life cycle (Jackson & Henderson, 1995, Witt & Goodale, 1981). As a result, the home and family realm are less clearly a context of leisure, since they are often putting the needs of others before their own. Mothers often wonder if they ever experience leisure. They feel less free; less intrinsically motivated and experience less enjoyment than their husbands during couple, home, and family leisure activities (Larson, Gillman, & Richards, 1997; Smith, Snyder & Monsma, 1988).

The leisure constraints for women increase over the life cycle, while for men these expectations are much lower and more constant. Although men also experience feelings of increased stress over time, it has less to do with family expectations. Men have more liberty to pursue a career, interests outside the home, or personal interests within the home than do women (Witt & Goodale, 1981). When time-budget analysis are used to measure activity participation, married women are found to have significantly less activity time than married men (Shaw, 1985). The problem of not having enough free time seems to increase during the entire child-rearing period, and falls off sharply as a barrier once children have left the home. Kelly (1975) has discussed the reduced flexibility of time during the parenthood stage. Family responsibilities increase and become less flexible for women, and responsibilities within the home fall on the women as a result of child rearing. Kelly (1974) also found that having children at home raised the amount of role-related activities.

Typologies of Constraints

A constraint may be defined “as any factor which intervenes between the preference for an activity and participation in it” (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw & Freysinger, 1989, p. 117). The above-mentioned barriers and constraints are just the beginning of an ever-increasing list of constraints that hinder couples opportunities to participate in activities together.

Intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints to positive couple leisure experiences exist (Orthner & Mancini, 1991). Intrapersonal constraints involve internal states and are said to interact with leisure preferences, and are considered unstable and amenable to change (Orthner & Mancini, 1991). These factors include stress, depression, anxiety, religiosity, kin and non-kin reference group attitudes, socialization influences, sense of competence, and personal evaluations of the appropriateness and availability of leisure activities (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997; Orthner & Mancini, 1991).

Interpersonal constraints may be the products of individual barriers that people bring into the marriage relationship, or the products of the interaction between spouses. These include aspects of the marriage relationship, such as sex role attitudes, general quality of the relationship, spousal conflict, decision-making abilities and power in the marital relationship. This constraint also includes factors related to the parent-child relationships, and interactions with friends, coworkers and neighbors (Larson, Gillman, & Richards, 1997; Mannell & Kleiber, 1997; Orthner & Mancini, 1991; Smith, Snyder & Monsma, 1988).

74 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

Structural constraints include factors such as lack of opportunities or the cost of activities that result from external conditions in the environment. They could be related to paid and unpaid work, families and the ideal of care, perceived lack of entitlement to leisure, gender defined personality traits, socioeconomic status, and health and safety concerns. They might include family life cycle stage, financial resources, season, climate, the nature of work time, availability of activity opportunities, and reference group attitudes regarding activity appropriateness (Holman & Epperson, 1984; Mannell & Kleiber, 1997; Orthner & Mancini, 1991).

Henderson et al. (1988) also touched on a fourth alternative type of constraint, labeled antecedent, and defined it as “attitudes associated with an a priori recreation situation such as personal capacities, personalities, socialization factors, interests, etc.” (p. 70). This alternative constraint seems as though it could be one of the most important, touching on how “comfortable” an individual might feel with themselves, their abilities, and also based on their interests and how well they have or have not done in certain activities in the past.

Overcoming Leisure Constraints

After discussing so many reasons why couples don't participate in activities together it seems there is not a solution. Despite the many constraints to leisure couples face, especially as they progress through the life cycle (Jackson, 1985; Jackson & Henderson, 1995; Searle & Horna, 1989), there are ways to overcome the constraints. Two proposed mechanisms to overcoming constraints are “constraint negotiation” and “recreation substitutability” (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). “Constraint negotiation refers to

the strategies people use to avoid or reduce the impact of the constraints and barriers to activity participation and enjoyment” (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997, p. 341). Recreation substitutability “explains a narrower range of constraint coping behavior and deals with how people stay active and continue to meet their activity needs by choosing a new activity or setting when a preferred activity is no longer possible” (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997, p. 341).

Negotiating Constraints. Different constraints affect people in different ways. Couples might use constraints negotiation when interpersonal and structural constraints hinder them from participating, or make participation difficult. Jackson, Crawford and Godbey (1993), have addressed three strategies to negotiate constraints. Cognitive strategies include cognitive dissonance reduction, where activity alternatives are devalued and no longer appeal to the participant. Behavioral strategies include modifying leisure and changing other aspects of one’s lifestyle. Time management strategies could include controlling daily routines, sharing responsibilities with other family members, such as one’s spouse, and choosing alternative activities that require less time (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). A couple’s ability to negotiate constraints can allow more time for joint activities, and in return bring added stability and satisfaction to the marriage.

Recreation Substitutability. Recreation substitutability takes place when the participant substitutes an entirely new or adapted activity for the old activity, which they can no longer participate in. Predicting what activities individuals or couples will choose as substitutions is difficult because each participant is looking to fulfill different needs (Brunson & Shelby, 1993; Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Iso-Ahola (1986) argued, “the

76 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

greater a person's feeling of choice or freedom in selecting a new activity, the greater his or her willingness to substitute" (p.369). For couples this way of negotiation might cause conflict as each spouse is looking for an activity that provides different things, yet they are trying to participate in shared activity experiences.

Rituals

Another tool couples can use to help overcome barriers and constraints to joint activity participation are by establishing rituals together. Rituals are highly valued repetitions of symbolic social activities that contribute significantly to the establishment and preservation of a couple's collective sense of itself (Bossard & Boll, 1950; Pett, Lang, & Gander, 1997; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). As powerful organizers of behavior, rituals provide the couple with a sense of stability and identity, serving as a means of learning about culture and socialization both within and outside the relationship system (Schuck & Bucy, 1997). Ritual characteristics include: role assignment, affect, regularity, expectation of attendance, ability to plan and execute, and symbolic significance (Fiese, 1996). Rituals provide a better understanding of the structure and meaning of a relationship system as well as reveal the extent a couple's ritual life is related to overall cohesion and satisfaction in the household (Haines, 1998).

According to Doherty (1997), for activities to be rituals they must be planned, coordinated, and meaningful. They can be classified into three categories: connection rituals, love rituals, and community rituals. *Connection rituals* serve as everyday opportunities for couples to bond and to become involved. *Love rituals* focus on one-to-one intimacy that makes family members feel special. *Community rituals* are an

opportunity for couples to connect with a wider social network from which they both give and gain support. Good rituals can keep couples from drifting farther apart while they work on their problems (Doherty 1997). Rituals are symbolic of communication that brings satisfaction to couples, and are experiences acted out in a systematic fashion over time (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Through rituals, couple identification is confirmed, feelings of belonging are fostered, and couple roles are defined (Baxter & Clark, 1996; Bennett et al., 1988; Fiese, 1992; Gruber & McNinch, 1992; Rubin, 1989; Shuck & Bucy 1997, Wolin et al., 1997). Rituals mean something different to each individual in the relationship system; similarly, different couples have distinct ritual styles. Rituals promote stability and cohesion within a relationship unit. According to Doherty (1997), consistency is at the heart of couple rituals. Rituals can provide a couple with identity, perspectives, and a tool for dealing with stress and disruption in the relationship system.

In a world of transition, rituals serve to anchor the couple as they contribute to the establishment and preservation of a “couple identity” (Baxter, & Clark, 1996; Bennett et al., 1988; Fiese, 1992; Pett et.al., 1997). Symbolic intra-family communication channels built by rituals foster perceptions of belonging, satisfaction, and self-esteem as this patternistic form of communication helps to establish and preserve the couple’s collective sense of itself (Rubin, 1989). Members have the opportunity to confirm their identification with each other, create feelings of belonging, delineate boundaries, and define roles within families (Bennett et al., 1988; Fiese, 1992; Gruber, & McNinch, 1992; Shuck, & Bucy, 1997; Wolin et al., 1980). The special meaning and repetitive nature of rituals have a bonding effect that stabilizes and preserves a collective sense of family

78 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

identity through the generations. Couple rituals appear to be an affirmation of bonds that serve to enforce connections between a couple, thus strengthening the relationship system, giving it continuity into the future, particularly during times of tension, and change (Pett et al., 1992).

Core/Balance Marital Activities

It is important to look at the couple activity patterns and not just the specific activity. Iso-Ahola (1984) argued that stability and novelty in leisure behavior could be pursued within or between leisure activities. Zabriskie (2000) suggests the ideas of Core and Balance as two basic patterns of activities that demonstrate different characteristics in order to meet the needs of both stability and change, which can lead to different outcomes of couple cohesion, adaptability, and satisfaction.

Core activities are relatively accessible, usually home/neighborhood-based activities that couples do. They are easier to facilitate and participate in, require little planning and resources, and could be spontaneous and informal. They are consistent, safe, positive, and provide a context in which to foster relationships (Zabriskie, 2000). They are usually non-threatening due to their regularity and familiar environments. Couples participating in core activities can safely explore boundaries, clarify couple/family roles and rules, and practice ways to enforce them. Spouses can be consoled, rewarded, refreshed and rejuvenated through core activities. Daily happenings are addressed and feelings and emotions can be expressed during involvement in core activities.

Household work is a major part of core activities. Although this can change over the course of the life cycle, it is important to include work and family/household maintenance in core activities. Often, couples interaction during the day comes when the two of them are doing dishes together, laundry or cleaning house. Although these are not necessarily the number one choice of activity for the couple, they are things that have to be done, and couples may decide that they are much more enjoyable done together than done individually. Working side by side can be very powerful in developing relationships, fostering communication, and increasing couple understanding of one another. Not recognizing work as a core activity may leave much of a couple's time spent together, unaccounted for. Regular personal interaction based on shared experiences enhances the knowledge of co-participants and, thus, fosters increased personal relatedness and feelings of closeness and cohesion (Zabriskie, 2000).

Balance activities are less common, less frequent, and provide novel experiences. These activities require greater investment of resources like effort, and time, and are usually not home based. They probably require more planning and are therefore less spontaneous and more formalized (Zabriskie, 2000). Although they usually occur less frequently, they sometimes take place for a longer duration of time than core activities, and can be more out-of-the ordinary. Couples negotiate and adapt to new input, experiences, and challenges, facilitate the development of adaptive skills, and the ability to learn and change. Balance activities require couples to be exposed to new and unexpected stimuli from the outside environment, which provides the input and challenge

80 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

necessary for couples to learn and progress as an evolving and developing relationship system (Zabriskie, 2000).

Although the concepts of core and balance have been examined in regards to families (Zabriskie, 1999), exploring the core and balance connection with couples could possibly shed some light and add strength to the idea that couple activity patterns and marital satisfaction are connected.

Summary

Strong couples are basis for strong families, and strong families contribute to strong societies. Using the systems theory gives us a foundation from which to study families and their activity patterns. Previous research has shown that couples that participate in joint activities will experience more satisfaction with their marriages and increased spousal understanding (Baldwin, Ellis & Baldwin 1999; Holman & Jaquart, 1988; Orthner & Mancini, 1991). Despite the fact that joint activities benefit couples, finding time to participate is very difficult amongst all of the interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural constraints (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997; Orthner & Mancini, 1991) that they are faced with, especially over the course of the life cycle (Henderson, 1995; Jackson, 1985; Searle & Horna, 1989). Although not all constraints can be eliminated or overcome, couples that are willing to use negotiation strategies and recreation substitutability to deal with the constraints, have a better chance of finding ways to participate in joint activity patterns, which could possibly lead to increased marital satisfaction.

It is important to know not only how much time couples spend together, but if the activities themselves make a difference regarding marital satisfaction. Are couples that

spend time cleaning the house together (core) as satisfied as those who spend time rock climbing once a month (balance)? Must both types of activities be present in order to create the greatest level of marital satisfaction, and if core is weak, does balance suffer and vice versa? Therefore the purpose of this study is to evaluate couples activity patterns. The study aims to look at the activities couples share, how frequently they participate, how satisfied they are with their participation, and if there is any connection between the answers to the above questions and couples marital satisfaction.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The problem of this study is to investigate the correlations that might exist between marital satisfaction and couple activity patterns. The methodologies of this study are presented in the following organizational pieces: (a) selection of subjects; (b) instrumentation; (c) design of the study; (d) data collection procedures; (e) treatment of data.

Selection of Subjects

Volunteer subjects will be sought throughout the Provo/Orem, Utah area. A convenience sample of 40 married couples will provide data for the study. They will be approached through referrals and door-to-door solicitation as necessary. First, subjects will be gathered from throughout Utah County utilizing a snowball technique. They will be referred first by acquaintances in traditional Latter-day Saint wards. Acquaintances of the investigator will not participate in the study, but the acquaintances will provide referrals. Approximately four acquaintances of the investigator will provide four referral couples each that will in turn be asked to provide two additional referral couples. Besides the snowball technique, a second effort to gather subjects will be made through door-to-door solicitations at Brigham Young University married student housing as necessary to complete data collection.

The major criteria for subject selection are married couples that have been married for at least two years to the same individual. They will include 40 married couples of all different ages and in different stages of the family life cycle. Children are

not a requirement. Race and religion will not effect subject selection, nor will occupation or income.

These criteria were selected to give the study an external validity factor that would allow the results to be generalized to an overall understanding of couples throughout the course of the life cycle stages.

Instrumentation

The research questionnaire called the Marital Activity Profile or MAP is a modified version of the Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP) (Zabriskie, 1999). The FLAP has been modified to the MAP in order to better suit the couples that it will be administered to. In creating the MAP, we have taken into consideration important new concepts and ideas that pertain specifically to couples. The idea of work is especially important as we look at the activities in which couples spend time engaged in together. Two other important concepts that have been added are the idea of communication, and intimacy, both aspects of a couples relationship system that were not included in the original FLAP (Zabriskie, 1999) created for families.

Our idea is that the majority of a couple's time together is spent engaged in work/household maintenance. Neglecting to acknowledge this time together would leave major holes in accounting for how couples spend their time. This can especially be true as couples make their way through the life cycle, children, and the other responsibilities that demand a couple's time. As this occurs, often the only time couples have with each other takes place while cooking, or cleaning, or doing routine household maintenance. We have taken into account the findings concerning increased satisfaction that come to couples as

84 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

they engage in joint activities opposed to individual (Holman & Epperson, 1984), and the benefits that ritualizing activities can bring to a relationship system (Doherty, 1997; Wollin & Bennett, 1984) and have developed questions based around the core and balance (Zabriskie, 1999) activities that couples participate in.

The questionnaire asks respondents to comment on activities done with their spouse, how often the activities are engaged in, and how satisfied the spouse is with the amount of participation in each activity (Zabriskie, 20000). Activities are divided into domains, half core and half balance (Zabriskie, 1999). The initial questions are followed by a satisfaction with Life Scale (SFWL), which has been modified from the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985). A small set of demographic questions such as gender, age, ethnicity, and number of children will also be utilized for reliability.

Design of the Study

Subjects will be contacted through referrals and if necessary, door-to-door solicitation. Regardless of how subjects are obtained, all subjects will be administered the Marital Activity Profile (MAP). The researcher will administer the questionnaires and subjects will be asked to complete them in one week without any discussion with their spouse concerning their responses. Surveys will be collected on a predetermined day and time.

Data Collection Procedures

The following procedures will be followed during data collection. The investigator has rewritten the FLAP (Zabriskie, 1999), creating an activity profile suitable

for married couples (MAP). Instructions will be given for those providing referrals to refer couples that are from a variety of points in the life cycle. Using the referrals the investigator will identify those eligible, interested subjects who meet the requirements for the study. Once contacted, subjects will be administered a consent form. The form explains the risk as well as the benefits, how the information will be used and contact numbers. The consent form will also inform them that their answers will be kept completely anonymous and will only be used for this study.

The surveys will be coded on a master list in order to keep track of surveys, survey completion and survey collection.

Surveys will then be hand delivered to the subjects who have qualified. The surveys will be dropped off at their homes and will be accompanied by an envelope for them to place their completed surveys in. A letter explaining the problem and purpose of the study as well as instructions for completing the survey will also accompany the surveys. The letter will also ask for timely completion of the survey and will include the pick up date on which finished surveys will be collected. The surveys will then be left with the participants. Five days after the surveys are dropped off, a reminder phone call will be made to remind subjects of their pick up date, schedule a pick up time, and answer any questions subjects might have. One week later the investigator will return to pick up the completed surveys. All the surveys will be collected and in the event that enough surveys are not completed, door-to-door solicitation will take place if necessary to collect the remaining number of surveys needed.

86 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

Treatment of Data

Scores for the MAP will be calculated by multiplying the frequency and duration of participation in each category. The summing of the core categories will provide a core couple index and the same will be done with the balance categories. The two indices will then be summed to create a total couple activity involvement index (Zabriskie, 2000). The couple leisure satisfaction score will be calculated by averaging the satisfaction with participation with their spouses across the different categories (Zabriskie, 2000). Data will also be entered into a database using SPSS that will help to distinguish correlations that might exist.

Data will be analyzed appropriately, coded, and checked for data entry errors. Findings will be analyzed for descriptive statistics.

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Appendix A-1

Marital Activity Profile (MAP)

100 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

3. Do you participate in regular communication (for example time set aside to talk, talking for an extended period of time during meals, or before going to bed, etc.) with your spouse?

YES _____ NO ____

If YES how often?	
At least daily	
At least weekly	
At least monthly	
At least annually	



For about how long per time? (check only one)			
< 1 hour		1-2 hrs	
2-3 hours		4-5 hours	
3-4 hours		6-7 hours	
5-6hours		7-8 hours	
8-9 hours		9-10 hours	
> 1 day		>10 hours	

How satisfied are you with your level of participation with your spouse in these activities? (please circle one)

Very
Dissatisfied

1

2

3

4

Very
Satisfied

5

4. Do you participate in games, crafts, and/or hobbies (for example playing cards, board games, video games, drawing, scrap books, sewing, painting, ceramics, home improvement projects etc.) with your spouse?

YES _____ NO ____

If YES how often?	
At least daily	
At least weekly	
At least monthly	
At least annually	



For about how long per time? (check only one)			
< 1 hour		1-2 hrs	
2-3 hours		4-5 hours	
3-4 hours		6-7 hours	
5-6hours		7-8 hours	
8-9 hours		9-10 hours	
> 1 day		>10 hours	

How satisfied are you with your level of participation with your spouse in these activities? (please circle one)

Very
Dissatisfied

1

2

3

4

Very
Satisfied

5

5. Do you participate in home-based or neighborhood based activities (for example star gazing, gardening, yard work, playing catch, shooting baskets, bike rides, fitness activities, exercise, etc.) with your spouse?

YES ____ NO ___

If YES how often?	
At least daily	
At least weekly	
At least monthly	
At least annually	



For about how long per time? (check only one)					
< 1 hour		1-2 hrs		2-3 hours	
3-4 hours		4-5 hours		5-6hours	
6-7 hours		7-8 hours		8-9 hours	
9-10 hours		>10 hours		> 1 day	

How satisfied are you with your level of participation with your spouse in these activities? (please circle one)

Very
Dissatisfied

Very
Satisfied

1

2

3

4

5

6. Do you attend and support your spouse's individual activities (for example watching their sporting events, musical performances, school/work programs and presentations, etc.)?

YES ____ NO ___

If YES how often?	
At least daily	
At least weekly	
At least monthly	
At least annually	



For about how long per time? (check only one)					
< 1 hour		1-2 hrs		2-3 hours	
3-4 hours		4-5 hours		5-6hours	
6-7 hours		7-8 hours		8-9 hours	
9-10 hours		>10 hours		> 1 day	

How satisfied are you with your participation with family members in these activities? (please circle one)

Very
Dissatisfied

Very
Satisfied

1

2

3

4

5

102 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

7. Do you participate in home-based religious/spiritual activities (for example scripture reading, couple prayer, gospel discussions, etc.) with your spouse?

YES ____ NO ____

If YES how often?	
At least daily	
At least weekly	
At least monthly	
At least annually	



For about how long per time? (check only one)			
< 1 hour		1-2 hrs	
3-4 hours		4-5 hours	
6-7 hours		7-8 hours	
9-10 hours		>10 hours	
		2-3 hours	
		5-6hours	
		8-9 hours	
		> 1 day	

How satisfied are you with your level of participation with your spouse in these activities? (please circle one)

Very Dissatisfied

Very Satisfied

1 2 3 4 5

8. Do you participate in community-based social activities (for example going to restaurants, parties, shopping, picnics, etc.) with your spouse?

YES ____ NO ____

If YES how often?	
At least daily	
At least weekly	
At least monthly	
At least annually	



For about how long per time? (check only one)			
< 1 hour		1-2 hrs	
3-4 hours		4-5 hours	
6-7 hours		7-8 hours	
9-10 hours		>10 hours	
		2-3 hours	
		5-6hours	
		8-9 hours	
		> 1 day	

How satisfied are you with your level of participation with your spouse in these activities? (please circle one)

Very Dissatisfied

Very Satisfied

1 2 3 4 5

9. Do you participate in spectator activities (for example going to movies, sporting events, concerts, plays or theatrical performances, etc.) with your spouse?

YES ____ NO ____

If YES how often?	
At least daily	
At least weekly	
At least monthly	
At least annually	



For about how long per time? (check only one)			
< 1 hour		1-2 hrs	
3-4 hours		4-5 hours	
6-7 hours		7-8 hours	
9-10 hours		>10 hours	
		2-3 hours	
		5-6hours	
		8-9 hours	
		> 1 day	

How satisfied are you with your level of participation with your spouse in these activities? (please circle one)

Very Dissatisfied

Very Satisfied

1 2 3 4 5

10. Do you participate in community-based sporting activities (for example bowling, golf, swimming, skating, working out at the gym, etc.) with your spouse?

YES ____ NO __

If YES how often?	
At least daily	
At least weekly	
At least monthly	
At least annually	



For about how long per time? (check only one)					
< 1 hour		1-2 hrs		2-3 hours	
3-4 hours		4-5 hours		5-6hours	
6-7 hours		7-8 hours		8-9 hours	
9-10 hours		>10 hours		> 1 day	

How satisfied are you with your level of participation with your spouse in these activities? (please circle one)

Very
Dissatisfied

Very
Satisfied

1

2

3

4

5

11. Do you participate in community-based special events (for example visiting museums, zoos, theme parks, fairs, etc.) with your spouse?

YES ____ NO __

If YES how often?	
At least daily	
At least weekly	
At least monthly	
At least annually	



For about how long per time? (check only one)					
< 1 hour		1-2 hrs		2-3 hours	
3-4 hours		4-5 hours		5-6hours	
6-7 hours		7-8 hours		8-9 hours	
9-10 hours		>10 hours			
1 day		8 days		15 days	
2 days		9 days		16 days	
3 days		10 days		17 days	
4 days		11 days		18 days	
5 days		12 days		19 days	
6 days		13 days		20 days	
One week		Two weeks		3 or more weeks	

How satisfied are you with your level of participation with your spouse in these activities? (please circle one)

Very
Dissatisfied

Very
Satisfied

1

2

3

4

5

14. Do you participate in outdoor adventure activities (for example rock climbing, river rafting, off-road vehicles, scuba diving, etc.) with your spouse?

YES ____ NO __

If YES how often?	
At least daily	
At least weekly	
At least monthly	
At least annually	



For about how long per time? (check only one)		
< 1 hour	1-2 hrs	2-3 hours
3-4 hours	4-5 hours	5-6hours
6-7 hours	7-8 hours	8-9 hours
9-10 hours	>10 hours	
1 day	8 days	15 days
2 days	9 days	16 days
3 days	10 days	17 days
4 days	11 days	18 days
5 days	12 days	19 days
6 days	13 days	20 days
One week	Two weeks	3 or more weeks

How satisfied are you with your level of participation with your spouse in these activities? (please circle one)

Very
Dissatisfied
1

2

3

4

5

Very
Satisfied

15. Do you participate in tourism activities (for example couple vacations, traveling, visiting historic sites, visiting state/national parks, etc.) with your spouse?

YES ____ NO __

If YES how often?	
At least daily	
At least weekly	
At least monthly	
At least annually	



For about how long per time? (check only one)		
< 1 hour	1-2 hrs	2-3 hours
3-4 hours	4-5 hours	5-6hours
6-7 hours	7-8 hours	8-9 hours
9-10 hours	>10 hours	
1 day	8 days	15 days
2 days	9 days	16 days
3 days	10 days	17 days
4 days	11 days	18 days
5 days	12 days	19 days
6 days	13 days	20 days
One week	Two weeks	3 or more weeks

How satisfied are you with your level of participation with your spouse in these activities? (please circle one)

Very
Dissatisfied
1

2

3

4

5

Very
Satisfied

106 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

Next, please indicate how satisfied you are with the amount of time you spend with your spouse. Circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

	Not Enough Time		Just About Right		Too Much Time
1. The amount of time I spend with my spouse overall	1	2	3	4	5
2. The amount of time I spend in home-based spousal activities	1	2	3	4	5
3. The amount of time I spend in spousal activities away from home	1	2	3	4	5

Below are seven statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by circling the appropriate number on the line following that item. Please be open and honest in responding.

	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 slightly disagree	4 neither agree nor disagree	5 slightly agree	6 agree	7 strongly agree
1. In most ways my married life is close to ideal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The conditions of my married life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am satisfied with my married life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in my married life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. If I could live my married life over, I would change almost nothing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Marital activities are an important part of our married life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Marital activities add to the quality of our life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please answer the following questions in reference to your family currently. Please be as open and honest as possible. All responses are strictly confidential.

Use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Almost never	Once in awhile	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always

Describe your family:

- 1. Family members are supportive of each other during difficult times.
- 2. In our family, it is easy for everyone to express his/her opinion.
- 3. It is easier to discuss problems with people outside the family than with other family members.
- 4. Each family member has input regarding major family decisions.
- 5. Our family gathers together in the same room.
- 6. Children have a say in their discipline.
- 7. Our family does things together.
- 8. Family members discuss problems and feel good about the solutions.
- 9. In our family, everyone goes his/her own way.
- 10. We shift household responsibilities from person to person.
- 11. Family members know each other's close friends.
- 12. It is hard to know what the rules are in our family.
- 13. Family members consult other family members on personal decisions.
- 14. Family members say what they want.
- 15. We have difficulty thinking of things to do as a family.
- 16. In solving problems, the children's suggestions are followed.
- 17. Family members feel very close to each other.
- 18. Discipline is fair in our family.
- 19. Family members feel closer to people outside the family than to other family members.
- 20. Our family tries new ways of dealing with problems.
- 21. Family members go along with what the family decides to do.
- 22. In our family, everyone shares responsibilities.
- 23. Family members like to spend their free time with each other.
- 24. It is difficult to get a rule changed in our family.
- 25. Family members avoid each other at home.
- 26. When problems arise, we compromise.
- 27. We approve of each other's friends.
- 28. Family members are afraid to say what is on their minds.
- 29. Family members pair up rather than do things as a total family.
- 30. Family members share interests and hobbies with each other.

108 COUPLE MARITAL LEISURE PATTERNS

The following section asks some general questions about you and your family.

Please complete the following on your **current** family.

	Age	Sex	Ethnic Background	Lives in your home
	In Years	M or F	A=Asian/Pacific Islander B= Black not Hispanic H=Hispanic N=Native American W=White, not Hispanic	Yes or No
YOU				
Your Partner				
Child				
Child				
Child				
Child				
Child				
Child				
Child				

How many years have you been married to your current spouse? _____ (in years)

Have you **ever** been divorced? Yes _____ No _____

Please indicate number of adults other than you & your partner that currently live full-time in the home.

Please indicate the estimated annual income for your family.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ Less than \$10,000 | _____ 41,000 – 50,000 | _____ 81,000 – 100,00 |
| _____ 10,000 – 20,000 | _____ 51,000 – 60,000 | _____ 101,000 – 125,000 |
| _____ 21,000 – 30,000 | _____ 61,000 – 70,000 | _____ 126,000 – 150,000 |
| _____ 31,000 – 40,000 | _____ 71,000 – 80,000 | _____ Over \$150,000 |

Thank you for your time and effort! Please return both surveys in the envelope provided.