Marital Problems and Marital Satisfaction: An Examination of a Brazilian Sample

Nalu de Araujo Nunes
Brigham Young University - Provo

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd
Part of the Family, Life Course, and Society Commons

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation
Nunes, Nalu de Araujo, "Marital Problems and Marital Satisfaction: An Examination of a Brazilian Sample" (2008). All Theses and Dissertations. 1606.
https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/1606

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
MARITAL PROBLEMS AND MARITAL SATISFACTION:

AN EXAMINATION OF A BRAZILIAN SAMPLE

by

Nalu de Araujo Nunes

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

Marriage and Family Therapy Program

School of Family Life

Brigham Young University

December 2008
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Nalu de Araujo Nunes

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

_____________  __________________________________________________________
Date           Richard B. Miller, Committee Chair

_____________  __________________________________________________________
Date           Randal Day, Committee Member

_____________  __________________________________________________________
Date           Roy Bean, Committee Member
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate’s graduate committee, we have read the thesis of Nalu de Araujo Nunes 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.

____________________________________

Date

Richard B. Miller
Chair, Graduate Committee

Accepted for the Program

Richard B. Miller
Director of the School of Family Life

Accepted for the College

Susan Rugh
Associate Dean of the College of Family Home and Social Sciences
ABSTRACT

MARITAL PROBLEMS AND MARITAL SATISFACTION:

AN EXAMINATION OF A BRAZILIAN SAMPLE

Nalu de Araujo Nunes

Marriage and Family Therapy Program

Master of Science

The objective of this study is to examine the types of problems faced by Brazilian couples in the sample, the gender differences in the perception of marital problems, and the associations between marital problems and marital satisfaction.

The sample used in this study was part of the third wave of data collection of a longitudinal study of 126 families living in Porto Alegre, a city in southern Brazil. The RDAS was the instrument used to assess marital satisfaction. Marital problems were identified by asking participants to check the problems they perceive in their marriage from a list of common marital problems (money, children, sex, jealousy, mother's family of origin, father's family of origin, drugs, alcohol, other).

Data analysis consisted of the study of frequencies, Pearson's correlations between the number of problems identified by husbands and wives and their RDAS
scores and test comparisons between groups of husbands and wives. A total of 16 regression analyses were performed to identify the impact of each marital problem on marriage satisfaction of both husbands and wives. Husbands’ and wives’ RDAS scores were the dependent variable in all regressions and each problem, age, race, number of children, and income were the independent variables.

Results showed that money, children, jealousy, sex, and family of origin were common problems faced by Brazilian couples in the sample. There were few gender differences, with the only differences being that wives were more likely to report sex as a problem and husbands were more likely to report that their wife’s family of origin was a problem. The number of problems had a negative effect on marital satisfaction of husbands and wives. Results also show that sex had a significant impact on marital satisfaction of both wives and husbands and alcohol had a significant impact on marital satisfaction of wives in the sample.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I’m grateful I have been lucky to work with talented people whose support has been invaluable to me.

I must express my appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Richard Miller for his guidance, time, and patience in revising this thesis many times, for helping improve my writing, for his help with statistics, for his contagious enthusiasm as a researcher, for providing me opportunities to participate in congresses and conferences, for his sense of humor, and for pronouncing my name correctly.

I want to thank my committee, Dr. Roy Bean and Dr. Randal Day, for being such good role models, for insightful comments, ideas, and feedback that helped me to improve this thesis. Thanks to the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University for providing the opportunity to conduct this project and for travel grants that helped broaden my horizons and created opportunities for my future.

Thanks to Olga Garcia Falceto, Carmen Luiza C. Fernandes, and the research team in Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil, for conducting a large study on Brazilian families and for allowing me to use their data in this thesis. Special thanks to Olga Falceto, for her feedback on this thesis, for being an example of a remarkable woman, for being able to show both strength and sensitivity, intelligence and tenderness, competence and affection.

It’s difficult to express the depth of gratitude for my old and dear friend Daniel Harr, who has been present in many of the best and worst moments in my life,
who has provided support, encouragement, and help in just everything I needed while I was working on this thesis. My sincere gratitude to Grant and Kathleen Harr for their support, good hearts, and faith in people.

To Alex (in memoriam) for believing I have what it takes to succeed.

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my mother, Virginia Nunes and to my father, Otalicio de Araujo Nunes, whose constant encouragement, uncountable sacrifices and unconditional love supported me through difficult times.

Finally, I would like to thank the creator of the universe, who is the fount of all knowledge.
Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................ iv
Acknowledgements ................................................................................... v
Contents ...................................................................................................... viii
List of Tables ............................................................................................ x
List of Figures ........................................................................................... x
Introduction ................................................................................................ 1
Literature Review ....................................................................................... 4
    Common Marital Problems in America ................................................. 4
    Gender Differences in Marital Problems ............................................ 5
    Marital Problems and Marital Satisfaction ........................................ 6
Brazilian Families ....................................................................................... 7
    Family Structure in Brazil ................................................................. 7
    Gender Differences in Brazilian Marriages ....................................... 9
    Brazilian Marital Relationship .......................................................... 10
    Marital Problems among Brazilian couples ................................... 11
    Domestic Violence ................................................................................ 14
    Marital Satisfaction ............................................................................. 15
Research Questions ................................................................................... 16
Methods ...................................................................................................... 17
    Sample Selection ............................................................................... 17
    Assessments ....................................................................................... 20
What are the common problems experienced by Brazilian couples? .................. 22
Are there gender differences in husbands and wives’ perception of marital problems? .................. 23
Is there a positive relationship between marital problems and marital satisfaction? .................. 23
Which of the problems are linked to marital satisfaction? ...... 23
List of Tables

Table 1: Common Problems Experienced by Brazilian Couples .......... 41
Table 2: Rank Order of Marital Problems .................................. 43
Table 3: Paired Gender Differences ........................................... 44
Table 4: Correlation between the Number of Problems and RDAS scores .. 45
Table 5. Correlations between Problems and Marital Satisfaction

of Wives ..................................................................................... 46
Table 6. Correlation between Problems and Marital Satisfaction

of Husbands ................................................................................ 47
Table 7. Results of Regression Analyses of Marital Problems’ Impact on

Marital Satisfaction of Wives ................................................... 48
Table 8: Results of Regression Analyses of Marital Problems’ Impact on

Marital Satisfaction of Husband ............................................... 49

List of Figures

Figure 1. Bar Graph of Marital Problems ..................................... 42
Introduction

The quality of marital relationships is important in Brazil. A study analyzing marital discord and depression was conducted with a Brazilian sample of 99 women and showed that marital satisfaction was a strong predictor of depression two years later (Hollist, Miller, Falceto, & Fernandes, 2007). Marital satisfaction is also related to child development in Brazil. Studies comprising Brazilian families found that marital conflict was associated with externalized child maladjustment (Stutzman, Miller, Hollist, & Falceto, 2008; Oliveira, Marin, Frizzo, Ravanello, & Rossato, 2002). A qualitative study examining marital satisfaction and domestic violence showed that marital conflict leading to violence has a negative effect on child development (Santos, 2004).

These studies that demonstrate the importance of healthy marriages in Brazil are consistent with research that has been done in other cultures. Research in the United States indicates that marital dissatisfaction and conflict have been linked to negative health outcomes (Kiecolt-Glaser, Glaser, Cacioppo, & Malarkey, 1998, Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001, Kiecolt-Glaser, McGuire, Robles, & Glaser, 2002), while marital satisfaction has been linked to positive outcomes for men, women, children, and the community (Gallagher, 2003; Hirschl, Altobelli, & Rank, 2003; Korenman & Neumark, 1991; Lewis & Butterfield, 2007; Stolzenberg & Waite, 2005; Waite, 1995; Wilcox, 2005; Zagorsky, 2005). In a study of Russian families, results indicated that nursery school–age children’s reports of parents’ marital conflict was linked to more overt and relational aggression for boys (Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Olsen, & McNeilly-Choque, 1998).
Although there are documented benefits of healthy marital relationships in Brazil, as well as other countries, every marriage has its problems. There have been a number of studies that have examined the kinds of problems that couples experience; however, these studies have used exclusively North American samples, which consist primarily of Caucasians (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Epstein, Baucom, & LaTaillade, 2006; Henry & Miller, 2004; Miller, Yorgason, Sandberg, & White, 2003; Wright, Nelson & Georgen, 1994).

As very little research has been conducted to examine relationship problems among couples in Brazil, this exploratory study had the objective of examining marital problems experienced by Brazilian couples by analyzing data from a sample of families living in a city in southern Brazil.

Brazil is the largest country in South America, both in terms of the geographical size of the country and its population. Brazil’s total land area is only slightly smaller than the United States, and it is larger than the 48 contiguous states. In fact, Brazil has the fifth largest land mass and fifth largest population in the world (Department of Economic and Social Affairs—Population Division, United Nations, 2006). Like the United States, Brazil is a multicultural and multiethnic country, founded mostly by immigrants. There are, however, enough reasons to hypothesize that research results obtained from mostly Caucasian couples in North America may not apply to couples in Brazil.

Individuals from different cultural backgrounds may have different perceptions of similar events because they hold different beliefs, values, and social expectations (Hofstede, 1990). According to Hofstede, two different systems of values, individualism and collectivism, are present in every culture. However, the United States is considered to
have a preponderance of the individualist value system, while Brazil shows a
preponderance of the collectivist value system. In individualist societies, characteristics
such as self-expression, individual thinking, and personal choice are highly desirable and
valued (Triandis, 1995). Identity and self-esteem are formed based on individual
characteristics. Confrontation is considered healthy and is a way of receiving and giving
feedback. The core values are self-sufficiency, independence, success, and personal
achievement. Relationships are more egalitarian and flexible in roles than they are in
collectivist societies. The understanding of the physical world and its meaning for human
life is associated with private property and individual ownership. Collectivist societies,
like Brazil, focus on interdependence and on developing and sustaining stable and
successful groups (Greenfield, 1994). Responsibility toward the family and community,
adherence to norms, respect for authority and elders, and group consent are highly
valued. Confrontation is considered rude, unpleasant, and undesirable. Self-worth and
esteem are developed from “the performance of self-sacrificing acts that create social
links and bonds” (Greenfield & Quiroz, 2001, p.6). In collectivist societies, relationships
are not egalitarian but are defined by hierarchical roles, which depend on gender, family
background, and age. The understanding of the physical world is shaped in the context of
its meaning to human life and is associated with shared property and group ownership
(Greenfield & Quiroz, 2001).

Cultures also differ in communication and interaction styles. Scholars have
referred to the United States as predominantly a low-content culture and Brazil as a high-
content culture (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Chua, 1988). In low-content cultures, like
the United States, values are explicit. A speaker or writer uses neutral language rather
than expecting the listener or reader to understand implied linguistic connotations, and
the description of facts is precise. Individuals are expected to be aware and willing to
grow the appropriate behaviors in their social interactions. In high-content cultures, like
Brazil, language has implicit connotations and communication is derived from both the
culture and the language. Shared experiences are important and ambiguity in
communication is used to express emotions.

Those differences in language contents between the United States and Brazil
show that communication and conflict may have different meanings in different cultures.
and culture as a system of symbols and meanings allows conflict to be seen as embedded
in the normative system of the culture.”

Considering the significance of culture in human interaction, it seems reasonable
to suppose that American and Brazilian couples may perceive marital conflicts, their
nature, and their impact on marital satisfaction differently. Consequently, research on
marital problems using American samples might not be generalizable to Brazilian
couples.

Literature Review

Common Marital Problems in America

Marital problems have been a subject of interest to family researchers during the
past forty years, and research has consistently found a lack of communication to be one
of the most common problems among couples (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Cleek & Pearson,
1985; Geiss & O’Leary, 1981; Miller, et al., 2003; Storaasli & Markman, 1990;
Whisman, Dixon, & Johnson, 1997).
Money has also proven to be one of the major sources of conflict in marriage (Cleek & Pearson, 1985; Douglass & Douglass, 1993). Money is a continuing and persistent source of marital conflict across the married life cycle. (Henry & Miller, 2004; Henry, Miller, & Giarusso, 2005).

Sexual intimacy is another common marital problem. The label sexual problems can define a broad range of topics related to physical intimacy, such as frequency of sex, differing sexual desires, sexual quality, and sexual infidelity (Christensen & Miller, 2006).

Research has also found children to be a common source of distress in American marriages (Cleek & Pearson, 1985; Douglass & Douglass, 1993; Henry & Miller, 2004). Transition to parenthood, parenting differences, children entering puberty, children leaving home, and many other issues related to children can be sources of conflict in a marital relationship.

Additional marital problems found in the American literature are power struggles and unrealistic expectations (Whisman, et al., 1997), friends and relatives (Blood & Wolfe, 1960), housework chores, moodiness (Douglass & Douglass, 1993), and jealousy, drinking, and anger (Amato & Rogers, 1997). Surprisingly, gender-role issues, violence, values, and spiritual issues are not problems commonly experienced by couples (Henry & Miller, 2004; Miller, et al., 2003).

**Gender Differences in Marital Problems**

Family scholars have argued for decades that women and men experience marriage in a different way. Studies comprising North American couples indicate gender differences in the perception of marital problems, with women generally perceiving and
reporting more marital problems than men (Levinger, 1966; Amato & Rogers, 1997; Miller, et al., 2003).

There is also evidence that women and men are likely to perceive potential problem areas differently. In a study of younger couples, Storaasli and Markman (1990) found that women reported money and issues with relatives as more intense problems in their relationships, while men reported children as a more intense problem. However, Henry and Miller (2004) found that women reported higher levels of perceived marital problems in only one out of fourteen areas: communication. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to report parents/in-laws as a problem.

Marital Problems and Marital Satisfaction

The examination of marital problems and their possible negative correlation to marital satisfaction is important because some problems can have a significant negative impact on marriage, while it is possible that other problems, while annoying, don’t impact spouses’ perception of their satisfaction in the relationship. For example, Amato and Rogers (1997) found that sexual infidelity, drinking, spending money, jealousy, moodiness, not communicating, and anger were significant predictors of subsequent divorce, with infidelity being the strongest predictor. On the other hand, they found that complaints of being critical and domineering, irritating habits, and having feelings easily hurt were not significant predictors of subsequent divorce.

Henry and Miller (2004) found that values, communication, commitment, decision-making, emotional intimacy, and sexual issues had the strongest impact on marital satisfaction in midlife. Parents/in laws, spiritual matters, and housecleaning showed the lowest correlation with marital satisfaction. Similarly, Storaasli and Markman
(1990) reported that communication and sex had the greatest impact on marital satisfaction. Using a different list of marital problems, Douglass and Douglass (1993) found that problems causing the most relationship conflicts were husbands’ and wives’ mood/temper and disciplining children.

In summary, American research in the last 15 years has found that emotional and sexual intimacy problems are highly correlated with marital dissatisfaction, as well as values, communication, drinking, and money issues. In-laws and spiritual matters had the lowest correlation with marital satisfaction in more than one study.

**Brazilian Families**

*Family structure in Brazil.* More than 50% of Brazilians live in common-law relationships characterized by a “stable union.” Law protects Brazilian “stable unions” when the union lasts for at least five years. Stable unions are defined as two people living together with the intent of forming a family. The same rights that apply to marriage are also applied to stable unions in case of separation and inheritance. As stable unions can be registered in a notary office, same-sex couples can have a stable union agreement, although official marriage between two people of the same sex is not allowed in Brazil.

Although the typical family structure in Brazil consists of parents and children, it is also common to have extended families living together (PNAD, 1996). In contrast to American family structure, the Brazilian definition of family includes extended kin groups, rather than simply the nuclear family of spouses and children. Usually children live with parents until they get married and sometimes return after divorce or separation. Even when married, they prefer to live close to their nuclear and extended families.
Interaction with the extended family—cousins, uncles, aunts, and in-laws—is frequent (weekly and often daily).

Family size has decreased in recent years. For example, from 1995 to 2005, in the southeast area of Brazil, the percentage of families with children decreased from 56.6% to 48.5%. Brazilian average family size decreased in the period of time from 1995–2005 from 3.9 to 3.4 members in the northeast region and from 3.4 to 3.1 in the southeast region of Brazil (IBGE, 2005). The fecundity rate, which is the average number of children per woman, was 1.7 children in the southeast area in 2005, 1.9 in the southern area, and 1.9 in the center-west area for white women. For black and mulatto women, the fecundity rate was 2.6 children per woman in north area. The increasing professionalization and education of women may be one of the causes for the decrease in the number of children in Brazilian families (IBGE, 2005).

Indeed, the DINC (Double Income and No Children) model of family is one of the most growing family models in Brazil. In Brazil, DINCs are couples who have never had children, live together with no other persons, with an average monthly income of R$ 1,260.00 each. The number of Brazilian DINCs in 2007 was 1.9 million, twice the number in 1997, as a result of a decrease in fertility rate and the increase of female participation in the work force (Síntese dos Indicadores Sociais do IBGE, 2008).

In the last thirty years Brazilian women have developed new roles (Biasoli-Alves, 2000) that have changed values and family structure in Brazil. One of those changes is the increasing number of families headed by women, from 3.4% in 1993 to 14.2% in 2006. (IPEA, 2008). In 2001, women headed 35% of families (PNAD, 2001), and this number increased by an additional 4% in 2003. The 2005 release of the Synthesis of
Social Indicators, by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), showed that 43.6% of the economic active population in 2005 were women. What the data reveal are that men’s participation in the work market has been reduced in the past ten years, while women’s participation increased by 3.2%. Women also have more education than men in Brazil at all educational levels. The higher difference can be seen in universities, where the number of women is 30.8% higher than the number of men (PNAD, 2005).

Even though there has been an increase of women in the work force and women have the higher levels of education, Brazilian women still receive lower salaries than men in the same occupation and are still responsible for doing the housework. PNAD results showed that 92% of women who work outside the home also do the housework. Men’s participation in housework has increased only 2.0% from 1995 to 2005, and an egalitarian division of labor is still far from being realized (PNAD, 2005).

*Gender differences in Brazilian marriages.* Brazilian studies suggest that men and women view marriage differently within their culture. Magalhães (1993) interviewed 20 couples in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with ages ranging from 25 to 55 years, and explored their ideas about marriage and divorce. Ninety percent of the women defined marriage as a “relationship of love”, and 100% of men defined marriage as a “family constitution.” When divorce is inevitable, men pinpoint feelings of frustration and failure, while women focus on the experience of loneliness and sadness. Women’s responses in this study may explain why Brazilian women file for divorce much more than men do (IBGE, 2005). For Brazilian women, when the “relationship of love” is over, there will be no reason to keep marriage alive, while for men, although a love relationship ceases to exist, family still exists, so there is less of a reason for divorce (Féres-Carneiro, 1998).
Brazilian marital relationships. Research suggests that the emotional aspects of marital relationships are important to Brazilians. Della Coleta (1991) studied 90 men and 116 women married for a minimum of three years and asked them to report the “six most important things to achieve and maintain an ideal marriage.” The responses generated a list of 37 most common answers. Results showed that love was the most important reason associated with a successful marriage, followed by understanding, respect, and fidelity. Other important factors included friendship, communication, and sex. Gender differences were present in that love, sex, and children were reported more frequently by men, while communication, trust, friendship, compatibility, and understanding were reported more frequently by women.

Based on those results, a second study (Della Coleta, 1991) was performed to verify these findings with another sample. Participants in the second study were 62 married couples with different ages, number of children, length of marriage, and education. They were asked to rank a list of 13 reasons for a successful marriage from the most important reason to the least important one. The items in the list were the ones identified in the first study. The second study revealed that love was ranked as the first factor in achieving and maintaining an ideal marriage. Money was the least important factor, ranking 13. Results showed similar answers for both men and women, with some indication that sex, children, fidelity, and honesty were more important factors for men than for women. Results also showed that the most important reasons for failure in marriage were falling out of love, infidelity, sexual problems, domestic violence, arguments and fights, and money.
According to Bernardo Jablonski (1998), the Brazilian culture provides an ideal model of relationships that is not compatible with reality, based greatly on passion and romantic love, reinforced by the massive influence of television, movies, and arts that portray the ideal relationship in terms of passion and romantic love. Brazilian couples have difficulties in understanding the transition from passion to companionship, and they interpret the transition as a sign that love is over. When love is gone or transformed into companionship, Brazilian couples feel betrayed and blame their partners, instead of realizing that the culture imposes an ideal model of relationships that is impossible to maintain.

Marital problems among Brazilian couples. Brazilian researchers Teixeira Garcia and Tassara (2003) define a marital problem as “designed from the existence of a desirable standard for a marital relationship. This pattern of desire is historic and socially defined and set limits on what should be desirable and what cannot be achieved in a sexual-affective relation. The distance or closeness to those patterns would define what is a problem and its possibilities and limits for solution.” (p.1) (quotation translated from Portuguese). Thus, Garcia points out that a problem is largely defined as the discrepancy between what is desired in a romantic relationship and what is possible to attain.

Garcia and Tassara (2003) analyzed the type of marriage problems of 20 medium- and high-class women married for more than 15 years in Vitoria, Espirito Santo, Brazil. Semi-structured interviews were recorded and analyzed. Problems were grouped into two categories: (a) marital problems due to money or husbands’/wives’ jobs (22.4%) and (b) marital problems due to relationship issues (77.6%). These relationship issues included the relationship between husband and wife (54.2%) and relationships between a spouse
and other family members, including the family of origin (23.4%). Job demands limited the time spouses spent together, creating conflicts. Economic crisis and professional accomplishments achieved by both husbands and wives were also sources of conflict. When wives achieved more professional development than their husbands, they showed a tendency to expect their husbands also to ascend professionally, while their husbands tended to minimize their wives’ professional accomplishments. Garcia and Tassara’s study also reveals that problems reported by Brazilian women in their sample were due to the failure of husbands to maintain the expected role as providers of financial resources, provide acceptable affection and care to their partners, and be a good sexual partner.

Similar to their North American counterparts (e.g., Amato & Rogers, 1997), a Brazilian study conducted by Féres-Carneiro (2003) showed that infidelity was a problem frequently associated with separation among Brazilian couples. Féres-Carneiro’s study analyzed 32 divorced or separated participants (16 men and 16 women). Data collection was based on semi-structured interviews exploring the desire for separation, decision for separation, separation process, and individual identity reconstruction. Both males and females reported infidelity perpetrated by husbands as an important cause of the wife’s desire for separation. Results revealed that, although male extramarital affairs are more tolerated than female extramarital affairs in Brazil, there is still a negative reaction from women, who often file for divorce after marital infidelity. For example, a study about the perceptions of behaviors associated with infidelity in romantic relationships in Brazil, comprising a sample of 115 women and 117 men, found that men were flexible about the idea of infidelity when they were the perpetrators but very inflexible when they were the victims (Perlin, 2003).
Research suggests that extramarital affairs are common in Brazil. The project “Estudo da Vida Sexual do Brasileiro” (Abdo, 2004), which is translated “Study of Brazilian Sexual Life,” was conducted in 2003 and examined 7,103 individuals from 18 to 80 years old in 13 Brazilian states. Anonymous participants answered an 87-item questionnaire related to their sexual and emotional lives. Results show an average of 50% of men and 26% of women reported having extramarital affairs. Another study examining 1,279 middle-class men and women in Rio de Janeiro shows that 60% of men and 47% of women reported an extramarital affair (Goldenberg, 2006).

The reasons given by Brazilians for extramarital affairs are the search for new emotional satisfaction, need for variety, immaturity, alcoholism, and opportunity (Jablonski, 1998). Goldenberg (2006) also reported that the most common reasons cited by women are lack of love, dissatisfaction, relationship crisis, and problems. Men reported those same reasons, plus physical attraction, sexual drive, “I couldn’t resist,” “just happened,” instinct, male nature, opportunity, and so they would not “regret the opportunities I missed.”

The increasing participation of Brazilian women in the work force has resulted in more chances for women to engage in extramarital affairs and become more sexually demanding. The imbalance between the number of men and women may also facilitate extramarital affairs, since there are many more women than men in Brazil, primarily due to the higher mortality rate among men (Goldenberg, 2006).

Féres-Carneiro (1998) examined men and women from different ages and found that sexual intimacy is important among Brazilian couples. Both men and women demonstrated placing high value on sexual activity to maintain a successful life in
common. The study found that 60% of women and 68% of men considered their sexual life as “excellent or very good.” When also considering the ”regular sexual life” answers, the percentage increased to 86% and 92% for women and men, respectively.

Sexual problems reported by Brazilians, according to *Vida Sexual do Brasileiro*, (2004), were mostly due to alcohol/drug abuse, stress, depression, and worries about performance. When asked what variables are important for sexual performance, 77% of women and 62.3% of men answered “feelings and affection,” 70.6% of women and 63.9% of men reported “level of intimacy,” 70.5% of women and 63.6% of men reported “appropriate environment,” 68.2% of women and 73.5% of men reported “physical attraction,” and 66.5% of women and 69.5% of men reported “enough time and tranquility.”

*Domestic violence.* Research indicates that violence is a common reason for divorce in Brazil. Forty-five percent of all fault divorces requested by women in Brazil are due to domestic violence (IBGE, 2007). A multi-stage study was conducted in Brazil in 2002/2003 comprising a sample of 6,760 women ranging from 15 to 69 years old, with the objective of accessing the prevalence of intimate partner violence in fifteen state capitals in Brazil. The Brazilian version of the Conflict Tactics Scales was used to access levels of partner violence. Results showed that the prevalence of psychological aggression was 78.3%, minor physical abuse 21.5%, and severe physical abuse 12.9%. Violence was more frequent in relationships where women were younger than 25 years old and with less than 8 years of education. The study also compared prevalence of Brazilian violence to international findings, showing that Brazil’s rate (12.9%) is much higher than the mean of the estimates in North America (2%) and Europe (8%) and lower
than North Africa/Middle East (33%) and Latin America averages (21%) (Reichenheim, et al., 2006).

Research indicates that alcohol and drug abuse is high in Brazil. A national survey about alcohol and drug consumption was conducted in 2002, comprising the 107 larger cities in Brazil, including all Brazilian capitals and almost 50 million people, which represents 41% of the Brazilian adult population. Results showed that 11.2% of Brazilians in the sample were dependent on alcohol, 9% were nicotine dependent, and 6% had already used cannabis at some point in their lives. Heroin use was only 0.1%, which is 10 times lower than in the United States (Carlini, Galduróz, Noto, & Nappo, 2002). Another study comprising a sample from Porto Alegre, southern Brazil, found that 9.3% of the sample was alcohol dependent, 15.5% were heavy drinkers, and 12.3% drank daily (Moreira, et al., 1996).

There is an overall attitude of tolerance for alcohol consumption, which facilitates the access, use, and abuse of alcohol in Brazil. Alcohol-related problems are greater than those associated with illegal drug consumption in Brazil (Kerr-Correa et al., 2005). Federal laws restricting the purchase of alcoholic beverages to individuals older than 18 are not enforced; beverages containing less than 13% alcohol are not considered alcoholic beverages; and prices of alcoholic beverages are very low (Kerr-Correa et al., 2005). The social burden of alcohol problems is associated with violence, family problems, child abuse, public disorder, and lost productivity, among other problems. (Meloni & Laranjeira, 2004).

*Marital satisfaction.* Research suggests that most couples in Brazil are happily married. A study of marital satisfaction among Brazilian couples was conducted in
Brasilia, Federal District, with a sample of 222 married men and 222 married women. Most of the participants’ ages were concentrated between 31 and 49 years. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale was used to evaluate marital satisfaction. Results showed that most of the participants in the sample were satisfied with their relationships and that men reported more marital satisfaction than women. (Reichenheim, et al., 2006).

Predictors of marital satisfaction were examined in a study of 28 couples married for more than 20 years. The study was conducted in São Paulo and identified “closeness” as the most important predictor, followed by problem-solving skills, cohesion, good communication, satisfaction with economic status, and religiosity (Norgren, Souza, Kaslow, Hammerschmidt, & Sharlin, 2004).

Locus-of-control personality orientation was also found to play a role in the perception of marital satisfaction in Brazilian marriages. In a study of a sample of 90 men and 116 women who had been married for at least for 3 years, results indicated that an internal locus of control, which is the belief that you have control over your life and yourself, was associated with greater marital satisfaction (Della Coleta, 1991).

Research Questions

Although there is significant information about marital problems among marriages in the United States, little is known about the problems couples face in other countries and cultures. This is particularly true of marriages in Brazil. Consequently, it is important to better understand Brazilian marital relationships. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1) What are the common problems experienced by Brazilian couples in the sample?
(2) Are there gender differences in husbands’ and wives’ perceptions of marital problems?

(3) Is there a positive relationship between the number of problems in marriage and marital satisfaction?

(4) Which of the problems are linked to marital satisfaction?

This study considered that marital problems faced by Brazilian couples are different from marital problems faced by American couples and hypothesizes that there are gender differences in Brazilian husbands’ and wives’ perception of marital problems.

Methods

The data analyzed in this project are part of a larger longitudinal study of Brazilian families being conducted by Dr. Olga Falceto, a professor in the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, and partially sponsored by Brigham Young University. The ongoing study is being conducted in Porto Alegre, a city in southern Brazil, which has a population of 1.36 million.

Sample Selection

The sample in the study was selected by systematic methodology in a conjoint effort of three units of the Division of Community Health of Grupo Hospitalar Conceicao. Families in the study live in Vila Jardim. According to the official distribution of public medical services in Brazil, families living in Vila Jardim are assigned to one of the units of Grupo Hospitalar Conceicao when medical services are needed. Birth records of infants born from March 1998 to December 1999 were examined and identified as eligible for the study. A medical student obtained identification data, checked the inclusion criteria, and invited each family to be interviewed. Seven families
showed no interest, while 215 families met the inclusion criteria. Of the 215 families selected for the larger study, 48 families did not participate primarily due to lack of time or because they were not at home in three consecutive visits. An additional 16 families were excluded from the study because of the child having a twin (3 families), being HIV positive (6 families), having died (2 families), or having severe medical conditions (2 families). Overall, 153 families participated in the first wave of data collection, representing a 76.9% response rate.

After agreeing to participate in the study, families were interviewed by two family therapists and filmed by a medical student. The two-hour, semi-structured, in-home interviews had the objective of collecting data through a questionnaire and observed behaviors and interactions among the family members. Interviews included an open conversation with extended family and friends who were in the household at the time of the interview, as well as the more formal interview with the couple and separate interviews with the husband and wife.

The first wave of data was collected in 2000, the second wave in 2002, and the third wave, which is being examined in this study, was collected in 2004, when children were 4 years old. Trained family therapists conducted the interviews in all waves of data, collecting data about the marital relationship, child’s development, social support, mother’s mental health, and other contextual variables. The number of participants in wave-2 was 18% smaller than the number of participants in wave-1; this difference was mainly due to relocation. A total of 125 families participated in the wave-2 data collection. The total number of participants in wave-3 was 126 families. The percentage of women without a partner in the sample at wave-3 was 16.2 %, and 6.8% lived
separately from their partners. Consequently, these couples were not included in the analysis of marital problems. The total number of participants in the sample was 177 (97 wives and 80 husbands).

The population in Brazil is racially diverse. In the present sample, 56.7% of participants were White, 26.7% were Black, and 16.7% reported a mixed racial heritage. The larger proportion of White subjects in the sample is a reflection of the European influence in southern Brazil and is not racially representative of other regions of Brazil. The racial distribution of population in Brazil according to the 2008 release of the Synthesis of Social Indicators is: 49.4% White, 7.4% Black, 42.3% Mixed, and 0.8% Asian and Indian. The 2008 release also shows that the largest concentration of White Brazilians is in the south (78%) and the largest concentration of mixed race is in the northern region (68.3%) (IBGE, 2008). Thus, the racial composition of the sample appears to be fairly representative of southern Brazil, although the racial distribution in southern Brazil is different from that of the rest of Brazil.

Families in the study are economically heterogeneous, with most of them being lower-middle class families. The average monthly family income was 837.09 Brazilian Reals ($SD = 607.82$), with a range of 40.00 to 3,000.00 Reals) in wave-3. Currently in Brazil the minimum salary is about 380 Reals. (This is about the equivalent of 220.00 US dollars). According to IBGE (2006), Brazilian average income in 2005 was 824.00 Reals. Thus, the sample’s average income appears to be comparable to the Brazilian national average.

The mean age of wives in wave-3 was 30.32, and the mean age of husbands was 34.50. The average number of years of education was 7.05 years for husbands and 6.63
years for wives. When the wave-3 data were being collected, 19.7% of wives and 5.6% of men were currently engaged in formal education. The average number of children in wave-3 was 2.6.

Assessments

**Marital problems.** For the assessment of marital problems, husbands and wives were requested to identify the source of problems in the relationship by checking the alternatives to the statement: “Your fights are due to:” (mark all applicable). The alternatives were: 1–marital relationship, 2–problems with the children, 3–alcohol, 4–drugs, 5–jealousy, 6–money, 7–extended family (mother), 8–extended family (father), and 9–other (specify). The marital relationship category was excluded from the analysis because it did not provide specific information about marital problems.

Sexual problems were identified by the question: “How is your sexual life?” The alternatives were: (1) good, as always; (2) good with some difficulty; (3) with difficulties; (4) with important difficulties; (5) bad; (6) not active. Answers 3 to 6 were coded as a marital problem and responses 1 and 2 were coded as not a marital problem.

**Marital satisfaction.** The instrument used to measure marital satisfaction was the RDAS (Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale), which is a shortened 14-item revision of the original 32-item Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Busby, Christensen, Crane, & Larson, 1995). The construct validity of the RDAS was confirmed by factor analyses and additional analyses using a popular marital instrument. Discriminate analyses demonstrated the validity of the RDAS. Internal consistency (α = .90) and split-half reliability estimates are evidences that the RDAS is a reliable instrument to identify distressed and non-distressed couples.
The English version was translated into Portuguese using the procedures developed by Herrera, DelCampo, and Ames (1993), including both an initial translation and a back-translation. Results of Cronbach’s alpha analysis to test for internal consistency were .83 for the wives and .79 for the husbands.

*Control variables.* Control variables were also included in the analysis, including age, race, income, and number of children. The income variable was measured in Reals, the Brazilian currency. Race was measured by having participants check their race from response options that included White, mixed, Black, and other. The variable “race” was recoded into dummy variables for each racial group (1 = yes, 0 = no), with White being the reference group.

*Analysis*

Common problems experienced by Brazilian couples were identified by the analyses of the frequency, which provides percentages of the problems reported by husbands and wives and a rank percentage order determined for each gender. Paired t-test analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to determine if there were significant gender differences in husbands’ and wives’ perceptions of marital problems.

For the assessment of a possible relationship between the number of problems in marriage and marital satisfaction, a new variable was created to identify the number of problems reported by each participant. The new variable “number of problems” was created by adding the answers marked as “1,” which represent the existence of a problem in the reported area for each of the participants in the survey. Pearson correlation
analyses were then performed to assess any association between number of problems and marital satisfaction for husbands and wives separately.

The relationship between specific problems (jealousy, money, drugs, wife’s family of origin, husband’s family of origin, children, sex, alcohol, other) and RDAS scores were examined using regression analysis, conducted separately for husbands and wives and for each problem separately. The variable “marital problems” used in this analysis was expressed by 2 values: “0,” no problem present”, and “1,” problem present. The control variables used in these analyses were age, income, race, and number of children.

Results

*What are the common problems experienced by Brazilian couples?*

The analysis of frequency showed that the most common marital problem reported by Brazilian couples was money, with 43.1% of wives and 37.3% of husbands reporting it as a problem in their marriage. Children were the second most reported problem both by wives (30.6 %) and husbands (25.5 %). Jealousy was the third most reported problem, with 30.6 % of wives and 21.6 % of husbands reporting jealousy as a problem in their marriages. Sex was the fourth most reported problem, reported by 19.6% of wives and 5% of husbands. Mother’s family of origin was the fifth most common marital problem, reported by 6.9% of wives and 13.7% of husbands. (See Table 1.)

The rank order of marital problems reported by wives in the sample was money, children, jealousy, sex, husband’s family of origin, other, alcohol, and drugs. The rank order of marital problems reported by husbands in the sample was money, children, jealousy, mother’s family of origin, other, alcohol, sex, and drugs. (See Table 2 and
Both Brazilian husbands and wives in the sample reported that money, children, and jealousy are their most common problems and that drugs are the least common of their problems.

Are there gender differences in husbands’ and wives’ perception of marital problems?

Paired t-tests found few differences in men’s and women’s perceptions of marital problems. Specifically, there were no gender differences for money ($t = .330, p = .744$), children ($t = -.298, p = .767$), jealousy ($t = .330, p = .744$), father’s family of origin ($t = -.443, p = .661$), and other ($t = -3.74, p = .711$). (See Table 3). Gender differences were found in the area of sex, with wives reporting sex as a problem more than husbands ($t = 2.783, p < .05$), and mother’s family of origin, with husbands reporting it as a problem more than wives ($t = 2.084, p < .05$).

Is there a positive relationship between marital problems and marital satisfaction?

Pearson’s correlation between the number of problems reported by wives and RDAS scores showed that there was a negative relationship between the number of marital problems and marital satisfaction, with a higher number of problems being associated with a lower level of marital satisfaction ($r = -.273, p < 0.05$).

Pearson’s correlation between the number of problems reported by husbands and RDAS scores also shows that there was a negative relationship between the number of marital problems and husbands’ marital satisfaction, with a higher number of problems being associated with a lower level of marital satisfaction ($r = -.275, p < 0.05$).

Which problems are linked to marital satisfaction?

Controlling for age, race, and income, the results from multiple regression analyses indicated that only the marital problems identified as sex ($\beta = -.295, p < 0.05$).
and alcohol ($\beta = -0.304, p < 0.05$) were significantly associated with marital satisfaction among wives. (See Table 7.)

As indicated in Table 8, the only identified marital problem that was significantly associated with marital satisfaction among husbands was sex ($\beta = -0.311, p < 0.05$).

Discussion

Findings indicated that money, children, jealousy, sex, and family of origin were the most common problems faced by Brazilian couples in the sample. There were few gender differences, with the only differences being that wives were more likely to report sex as a problem and husbands were more likely to report that their wife’s family of origin was a problem. Results also showed that the number of problems had a negative effect on marital satisfaction and that sex and alcohol had a significant impact on marital satisfaction of Brazilian couples in the sample.

Results of the study suggest that there are both are cultural similarities and differences between Americans and Brazilians regarding the types of problems faced by couples. Money, children, and sex are common problems in both the United States and Brazil; jealousy and family-of-origin marital problems are more common in Brazil than in the United States.

Findings indicating that money and children were common problems faced by Brazilian couples are consistent with other studies that suggest money as a cause of marital conflict (Cleek & Pearson, 1985; Douglass & Douglass, 1993; Henry & Miller, 2004; Henry, et al., 2005). According to Cerbasi (2004), marital money problems in Brazil can occur when money is insufficient, with one spouse blaming the other for spending more than necessary, or when money is more than enough, which results in
arguments about how to invest or spend. Cerbasi points out that the cause for marital money problems among Brazilian couples is usually a lack of communication and financial planning.

Children were another common reason for marital conflict in the sample. Results are in accordance with other studies (Cleek & Pearson, 1985, Douglass & Douglass, 1993; Henry & Miller, 2004).

Jealousy was also found to be a frequent problem reported by Brazilian couples in the sample. David Whitehouse, a former BBC editor, once wrote that jealousy is alive and well and living in Brazil. The comment was based on the studies of Brase, Caprar, and Voracek (2004), which suggested an evolutionary explanation on the origin of jealousy and reveals that countries with a high fertility rate, like Brazil, also show higher levels of jealousy. Jealousy is associated with conflict in relationships, feelings of anger, and aggressive behavior (Canary, Spitzberg, & Semic, 1998; Daly & Wilson, 1996). Studies also suggest that jealousy is a common experience in romantic relationships in Brazil (Almeida & Mayor, 2006; Amélio & Martinez, 2005; Cavalcante, 1997, Ferreira-Santos, 1998; Ramos & Calegaro, 2001. Della Coleta (1991) also reported jealousy as one of the causes of Brazilian marriage failure. Within the context of Brazilian culture, though, jealousy may sometimes be seen as positive. Brazilian couples may feel social pressure to show jealousy as proof of love (Ferreira-Santos, 1998). It is also common for Brazilians who are the object of jealousy to feel flattered by the attention (Ferreira-Santos, 1998). Conversely, Americans seem to perceive jealousy in a different way. A study about jealousy in the American culture reports, “in the post-1970 articles, jealousy
was interpreted as an inappropriate and frequently pathological behavior resulting from low self-esteem” (Gordon, 2001, p.156).

Results from the current study also showed that the influence of family of origin is a problem among a number of the couples, especially the spouse’s family of origin (i.e., in-laws). The high value placed on strong ties, as well as the physical and psychological closeness with one’s family of origin, may cause difficulties in the process of creating and maintaining an independent sense of identity for new Brazilian families. In some instances, husbands and wives not only allow, but ask for the interference of their family of origin in their marital conflicts. In clinical practice, both husbands’ and wives’ families of origin are sometimes invited to participate in therapy sessions. This particular way of addressing marital problems is not only accepted, but often required in a Brazilian cultural environment, which includes extended family and sometimes even friends in the conceptualization of family.

Results don’t support the hypothesis that there are gender differences in husbands’ and wives’ perception of most marital problems. Gender differences were found only in the areas of sex and alcohol. Other studies also reveal gender differences in the perception of sex (Eells, Workman, & O’Flaherty, 1996; Storaasli & Markman, 1990). Sex was reported to be a common problem for Brazilian wives but not for Brazilian husbands. A possible explanation may be that Brazil is a hierarchical culture of gender inequalities where women are not regarded as equal to men. Sex role demands and gender structure promote the idea that women should be passive and accept a submissive role. In result, wives may seek to please their husbands even at the expense of their own needs.
A spouse’s alcohol abuse was another problem reported by wives and not by husbands. Alcoholism is frequently referred to as the disease of denial among alcoholics. The vast literature about the association of alcohol and domestic violence, with women and children the usual victims, and the impact of alcoholism on sexual intimacy, can help explain the results. Alcoholism is also associated with a plethora of negative effects on the alcoholic’s spouse. Berger (1993) reports feelings of self-pity and hatred, avoidance of social interactions, mental and physical exhaustion, and financial difficulties, among others.

Results also showed that sex and alcohol have the strongest impact on marital satisfaction. These results are consistent with other studies that suggest that sex is associated with marital satisfaction (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Henry & Miller, 2004a; Storaasli & Markman, 1990) as well as alcohol (Homish & Leonard, 2005; Johns, Newcomb, Matthews, & Bradbury, 2007; Marshal, 2003).

Limitations of the Study

Due to the size and diversity of Brazil’s population, it is not possible to generalize the findings and interpretation of this study to a larger Brazilian population. Because the study was conducted in Porto Alegre, a city in southern Brazil that is predominantly Caucasian, these results can not be automatically generalized to other regions of Brazil that have different population characteristics. In addition, data from the present study were obtained from families who use public hospitals in Porto Alegre. Public hospitals provide free medical care in Brazil and are commonly used by lower-income families who cannot afford private medical care. Consequently, the sample used in this study excludes higher-income Brazilian couples.
The measurement of the marital problems in this study was limited by the design of “yes” and “no” response options for most problems. Moreover, the measurement of problems did not include communication problems, which among the most common problems reported by the American literature (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Cleek & Pearson, 1985; Geiss & O’Leary, 1981; Miller, et al., 2003; Storaasli & Markman, 1990; Whisman, et al., 1997).

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should build on this study by using more generalizable Brazilian samples. Data on couples who live in different parts of Brazil that represent the diverse racial make-up, socioeconomic structure, and culture of Brazil would help build upon the current, limited knowledge base concerning marital problems in Brazil. Researchers and clinicians could benefit from research that more deeply explores the problems encountered by Brazilian couples. For example, questions about the causes of money problems in Brazil that address issues related to the scarcity of resources, lack of planning, or power and control issues would be fruitful areas of future research. Questions about the difficulties faced by couples when they report problems with children, identifying if those difficulties are due to differences in parenting styles, transition to parenthood, teen-parents conflicts, or other reasons would be an area to be explored by future research on Brazilian marriages. It’s also important to understand what causes Brazilian women to report sexual problems as a common and significant marital problem, whether those difficulties are due to the frequency of sexual encounters, expectations about performance, infidelity, or other reasons.
Future research on Brazilian marriages would benefit from using measures that are more fully developed and sophisticated. The measure of marital problems in this study, with the exception of sexual problems, was based on a “yes” or “no” format. Other measures of marital problems (Henry & Miller, 2004) use a Likert response scale that assesses the degree to which an area, such as money, is a problem in a marriage. A Likert scale may be a more sensitive instrument for assessing marital problems.

Clinical Implications

This study suggests areas in the marital relationship that may be fruitful areas of discussion in therapy. For example, it may be useful to clinicians to facilitate communication about money, exploring its symbolic meanings, anxieties, discomfort, and emotional and behavioral contexts. The recognition that children can be a source of marital conflict can be especially important in a culture that has high expectations for group harmony. The ability to provide parent training and the exploration of meanings related to family and parental roles can be meaningful tools for therapists to help Brazilian couples.

This study also suggests that clinicians must be aware of the impact of sexual intimacy on Brazilian couples and be prepared to assess and address sexuality with them. The scarcity of specialized resources to educate and treat sexual dysfunctions in Brazil is especially relevant due to the negative impact of marital problems related to sexual intimacy on marital satisfaction. Interventions could be designed to identify, explore, and provide help, especially to women.

This study also outlines the importance of dealing with jealousy and in-laws in Brazilian marriages. While these are not common problems among U.S. couples, these
two areas pose potential problems for Brazilians. Clinicians may wish to be alert to these problems and specifically assess their presence when treating Brazilian couples.

In conclusion, results show that it’s important that marital therapists be aware of the impact of culture on individuals and families and be aware of the specific needs and challenges that are more likely for Brazilian couples. Considering the many challenges faced by families in Brazil today, the increasing number of separations and divorces, and considering the importance of marriages to the well being of individuals and communities, Brazilian researchers and therapists must have the resources necessary to conduct studies and start building Brazilian-specific literature about marital problems and marriages in general. The practice of marriage and family therapy in Brazil will be more effective and efficient if based on findings that represent the Brazilian population.
References


*Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica, 15*, 1–11.


Santos, L.V. (2004). Avaliaçao da dinamica conjugal violenta e suas repercussoes sobre
os filhos. *Psicologia, Teoria e Pratica, 6* (1) 59–72


### Tables

**Table 1: Common Problems Experienced by Brazilian Couples.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Wives</th>
<th>Husbands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s family of origin</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s family of origin</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Abuse</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Bar Graph of marital problems.
Table 2: Rank Order of Marital Problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank Order</th>
<th>Wives</th>
<th>Husbands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>Jealousy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Wife’s family of origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Husband’s family of origin</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>Drugs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Paired Gender Differences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husbands' family of origin (wife) x Husband's family of origin (husband)</td>
<td>-.443</td>
<td>.661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (wife) x Children (husband)</td>
<td>-.298</td>
<td>.767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (wife) x Other (husband)</td>
<td>-.374</td>
<td>.711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy (wife) x Jealousy (husband)</td>
<td>.330</td>
<td>.744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (wife) x Sex (husband)</td>
<td>2.783</td>
<td>.007*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money (wife) x Money (husband)</td>
<td>.330</td>
<td>.744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s family of origin (wife) x Wife’s family of origin (husband)</td>
<td>2.084</td>
<td>.044*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: Correlation between the number of problems and RDAS scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2 tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s number of problems x Wife’s RDAS</td>
<td>-.273**</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband’s number of problems x Husband’s RDAS scores</td>
<td>-.275*</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5. Correlations Between Specific Problems and Marital Satisfaction of Wives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2 tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy x Wife’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money x Wife’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.043</td>
<td>.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs x Wife’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>.a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s Family of Origin x Wife’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband’s Family of Origin x Wife’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>.911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other x Wife’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.033</td>
<td>.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children x Wife’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>.875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex x Wife’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.324**</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol x Wife’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.364**</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes.

* p > 0.05

** p > 0.01

a. cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.
Table 6. Correlation Between Specific Problems and Marital Satisfaction of Husbands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pearson</th>
<th>Sig. (2 tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy x Husband’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money x Husband’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.165</td>
<td>.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs x Husband’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>.a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s family of Origin x Husband’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.173</td>
<td>.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband’s Family of Origin x Husband’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other x Husband’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children x Husband’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.034</td>
<td>.815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex x Husband’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.272*</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol x Husband’s Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.918</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes.

* $p > 0.05$

** $p > 0.01$

*** .a cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.
Table 7: Results of Regression Analysis of Marital Problem's Impact on Marital Satisfaction of Wives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wife's Family</th>
<th>Husband's Family</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Alcohol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>-.063</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-.094</td>
<td>-.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (Mix)</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (Black)</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>-.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.266</td>
<td>-.237</td>
<td>-.241</td>
<td>-.242</td>
<td>-.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
<td>-.187</td>
<td>-.201</td>
<td>-.199</td>
<td>-.205</td>
<td>-.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>-.168</td>
<td>-.181</td>
<td>-.179</td>
<td>-.195</td>
<td>-.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>.151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. This table shows the results of 7 regression analyses. Each regression is reported in one column.

Dependent Variable: rdas_wife

- p < 0.10
- ** p < 0.05
Table 8. Results of Regression Analyses of Marital Problems’ Impact on Marital Satisfaction of Husbands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Problem</th>
<th>Jealousy</th>
<th>Money</th>
<th>Wife's Family</th>
<th>Husband's Family</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Alcohol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race (Mix)</td>
<td>-0.065</td>
<td>-0.041</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>-0.041</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>-0.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (Black)</td>
<td>-0.110</td>
<td>-0.093</td>
<td>-0.122</td>
<td>-0.127</td>
<td>-0.107</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>-0.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>0.181</td>
<td>0.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
<td>-0.299</td>
<td>-0.312</td>
<td>-0.265</td>
<td>-0.275</td>
<td>-0.282</td>
<td>-0.191</td>
<td>-0.290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.118</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.133</td>
<td>0.086</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes.

This table shows the results of 7 regression analyses. Each regression is reported in one column.

Dependent Variable: rdas_wife

- p < 0.10
- ** p < 0.05