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# The Relationship of Equal Division of Labor and Satisfaction of Division of Labor to Positive Parenting as Mediated by Parents' Relationship Quality

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The Relationship of Equal Division of Labor and Satisfaction of Division of Labor to Positive  
Parenting as Mediated by Parents' Relationship Quality

Lauren A. Barnes

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science

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## ABSTRACT

### The Relationship of Equal Division of Labor and Satisfaction of Division of Labor to Positive Parenting as Mediated by Parents' Relationship Quality

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Couples learn to negotiate a complex intersection between household labor and family processes. Using both observational coding and questionnaire self report, this study examined the relationship between father and mothers' reported equality with their division-of-labor, their satisfaction with division-of-labor and their respective positive parenting as observed in taped interaction with a target child while controlling for quality of the relationship between the parents. Findings showed that egalitarian division of labor was positively related to satisfaction in division of labor and that egalitarian division of labor was a significant predictor of mothers' relationship quality, but not fathers' relationship quality. It also showed that fathers', but not mothers', marital relationship quality was found to be correlated with positive parenting and satisfaction with division of labor was a significant predictor of positive parenting for mothers, but not for fathers. Therapists should be mindful of and address the role division of labor plays in a family. Researchers should examine the use of a more comprehensive overview of division of labor tasks.

Keywords: division of labor, marital quality, parent-child interaction, observation, egalitarian, equity, positive parenting

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## Introduction

Fathers and mothers shape the development of their children. Numerous studies have concluded that father involvement is associated with positive cognitive, behavioral, and developmental child outcomes (Garfield, 2006). Preterm infants with positive father interactions are also more likely to have improved weight gain, improved breastfeeding rates, higher receptive language skills, and higher academic achievement (Garfield, 2006). Children with maternal involvement tend to thrive as infants and excel academically throughout their school years (Simpkins, 2002).

Three couple factors that may influence parental involvement with children are division of labor between fathers and mothers, their satisfaction with their division of labor, and high marital relationship quality. Past research has shown that, in relationships where couples learn to successfully manage and split the division of labor, they generally have positive marital interactions (Toth, 2008; Braun et al., 2008; Kluwer, Heesink & De Vliert, 1997; Antill, 1988; Benin, 1988). Children rely on their parents' involvement and connection for growth and success. Thus, children may reap the benefits or consequences of a marital relationship. For example, past research has shown that in relationships where marital quality is high and marital interaction is positive, parents are more likely to be positively involved with their children (Hair et al., 2009; Sharmir, Schudlich & Cummings, 2001; Tritt & Pryor, 2005). It is possible that a positive marital relationship creates an environment in which parents can be more involved with their children because they are not emotionally tangled in a troubled marriage, and such parental involvement is likely to be related to actual observed positive parenting.

The purpose of this study was to identify how fathers' and mothers' perception of the equality of their division-of-labor, their satisfaction with their division of labor, and their

perceptions of their couple relationship are each related to parent's actual positive parenting behaviors as observed in a parent-child interaction task.

### **Literature Review**

A good deal of research has examined the importance of having a good relationship between parents and children. High relationship quality and connection between parents and children allows for open communication and closeness. Research has found that a good parent-child relationship leads to better child outcomes in social, cognitive, and emotional development and helps children construct better relationships with others (Harrist & Ainslie, 1998; Amato, 1994; Fuligni & Eccles, 1993; Peterson & Zill, 1986).

The systemic nature of families suggests that one or more individual's interactions or behavior may impact others in the system. For example, in families with two parents present, research has shown that each parent's involvement is likely to be related to their partner's involvement with parenting (Pleck, 2008). Research has also examined different types of parenting models and found that authoritative parenting- being both responsive and demanding- tends to be a successful parenting model for most children (Simons & Conger, 2007). Having at least one parent in an authoritative position may often buffer children from the effects of having a parent who tends to parent from a different model (Simons & Conger, 2007). As each part of the family system interacts, they impact the others and thus the family is in a constant flux of changing patterns. This systemic view of families was emphasized by Murray Bowen as he conceptualized families as a close emotional unit in which complex interactions would undoubtedly affect other parts of the system (Bowen, 1994). For example, a change in one person's behavior is generally followed by a complementary change in the behavior and functioning of other members of a family system. Thus, it can be hypothesized that a couple's

interaction may in turn affect how they interact with other parts of the system- such as their children.

Systems theory allows many to believe that one person's interaction within a family system has the capacity to impact another family member. Thus, the responsibilities of each parent impact the family dynamics occurring in the system. Research examining parents' obligation to work outside the home notes a shift in the family system to better accommodate for the work responsibilities (Zvonkovic, 2005). It can be assumed that work within the home also affects the family dynamics regularly occurring within and between individuals. Some research has examined how the marital relationship between parents can impact child outcomes, but few studies have investigated how division of labor between parents affects marital interaction which, in turn, may affect mothers' and fathers' positive parenting (Papp et al, 2005; Howes & Markman, 1989; Peterson & Zill, 1986).

### **Positive Parenting**

Parents are responsible for the emotional, physical, social and intellectual development of their children. Many different styles and methods of parenting currently exist; however, there is still not one specific model of parenting that will work with all children (McKay, 2006; Baumrind, 1971). Due to the numerous kinds of parenting styles, positive parenting may be defined in a variety of ways. Many scholars believe that the best parent-child relationship occurs when there is an emotional connection and positive interaction acknowledged between a parent and their child. Parental involvement is often a component of this positive parenting experience (DeVore & Ginsburg, 2005). Positive parenting interactions such as parental monitoring, communication, supervision and high parent-child relationship quality often lead to less risky behaviors in adolescents and are seen as protective factors for children (DeVore & Ginsburg,

2005). Historically, a great deal of research has looked at the involvement of mothers in their children's lives, but only recently have measures been created to look more specifically at the roles fathers play in their children's lives (Hawkins et al., 2002).

Marital relationship quality has been shown to impact other relational aspects in families (Ganiban et al., 2009; Yu & Gamble, 2008). For example, couples who express having high relationship quality often have positive interactions with their children and agree on their parenting styles (Ganiban et al., 2009; Yu & Gamble, 2008). Research has also shown that children who have parents that are actively involved in their life are more likely to excel in school, be less involved in risky behaviors, and are more likely to be accepted by their peers and are not at risk of being bullied (Chen & Gregory, 2009; McBride, et al., 2009; Jeynes, 2008; Wong, 2008; Yang et al., 2006; Simons-Morton & Crump, 2003).

It should be noted, that very few studies have used observations of parent-child interaction as a variable of focus. One study by Russell and Russell (1996) examined mother-child and father-child interactions with children ages 6-7 using Patterson's (1982) Family Interaction Rating Scale to code interactions. During a two-hour observation period, the family would prepare and eat their dinner and then play a ring-toss game. The amount of time in observation allowed families to participate in normal routines and tasks as well. Russell and Russell concluded that positive parenting interactions were generally correlated negatively with child misbehavior whereas parent's negative interactions and responses were positively correlated with child's misbehavior. Other studies examining parent-child interactions tend to rely on self-reported data and do not examine the observable positive parenting interactions that may be occurring (Chen, 2006; Shearin, 2003).

A recent article by Day and Padilla-Walker (2009) examined mothers' and fathers' connectedness and involvement with their children. Specifically, they found that both mothers' and fathers' connectedness and involvement impacted their children, but in different ways. Father connectedness and involvement were negatively related to adolescents' internalizing and externalizing behaviors, whereas mother connectedness and involvement were positively related to adolescents' prosocial behaviors and hope. They also found that when one parent's involvement was low, the other parent's involvement made a significant and important contribution to the child's well-being, particularly in the area of internalizing behaviors. This further emphasizes the importance of parental connectedness and involvement with children.

### **Marital Relationship Quality**

While there are many factors that can contribute to overall relationship quality, it is beyond the scope of this study to specifically examine every factor. This study will focus on love, conflict, criticism and self-reported assessment of marital quality as measures for parent's relationship quality.

Positive marital interactions are generally found in relationships where both individuals feel satisfied within the relationship. Laboratories created to watch couple interaction have found that negative interaction is much more common for unhappily married couples than happily married couples; that is, unhappily married couples exhibit negative interactions and do not pretend to be happy in their interactions (Gottman, 1998; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989). Adolescents whose parents report high quality relationship *and* who have a good parent-adolescent relationship with both parents consistently have the best outcomes compared to children who do not have these high quality relationships (Hair et al., 2009).

Couples who report high marital satisfaction are likely to feel securely attached to their partner and have positive experiences with sacrifice and commitment. One research study showed that in relationships where there is low marital relationship quality, parents were less able to be consistent in their parenting practices (Talbot & McHale, 2004).

Division of labor has been shown to be related to the quality of marital interaction. A review of research literature showed that no empirical studies have investigated how division of labor affects both the perceived quality of marital interaction and each parent's observed parenting interaction with the child.

### **Division of Labor**

With such high rates of employment of husbands and wives, one may wonder how the amount of time spent at work affects the division of labor within the home. Research has indicated that the nuclear family, defined as one father and one mother with their children, has begun to dissolve and is no longer such a prominent ideal for most individuals (Williams et. al, 2005; Smock & Noonan, 2005; Scott, 1993; Bureau of National Affairs, 1986). By the close of the 1980s, the standard nuclear family structure of the 1950s, with the classic stay-at-home-mother and breadwinning father and dependent children, accounted for less than 10% of the population (Bureau of National Affairs, 1986). In 2000, nuclear families with the original biological parents accounted for roughly 24.1% of households, compared to 40.3% in 1970 (Williams et. al, 2005). While this may not be a direct result of more women and men in the workforce working longer hours, there is a high correlation between the two variables (Williams et. al, 2005). Even though the nuclear family may not be the typical arrangement of families and more men and women strive to excel in the workforce, couples continue to have children and

raise them. It is becoming more common for a child to be raised in a home where both parents are employed (Parker, 1999; Higgins, 1992; Bureau of National Affairs, 1986).

As parents spend more time outside of their homes, more daycares and other childcare facilities are being used and the amount of one-on-one time between parents and children is diminishing (Scarr, Phillips & McCartney, 1989; Presser, 1988). Research has examined the relationship between couples' division of labor and employment hours (Bird, 1999; Perry-Jenkins, 1993; Higgins & Duxbury, 1992; Holder & Anderson, 1989). Most research has concluded that, regardless of the number of hours women may work, they still tend to do the same amount of work around the house compared to women who do not work outside of the home (Sanchez, 1997; Holder & Anderson, 1989; Kane & Sanchez, 1994; Sanchez, 1994). The division of labor seems to remain fairly consistent, regardless of the employment situation of various couples. These findings indicate that employment hours have little or no effect on the division of labor for women (Holder & Anderson, 1989; Kane & Sanchez, 1994; Sanchez, 1994; Sanchez, 1997).

However, division of labor is often defined as housework and does not always include labor that relates more directly to children which may naturally make the measure more biased toward the typical female role in the home (e.g. giving children a ride to sports activities) (see Broude 1990; Bradley, 1984; Baxter, 1997). Very few studies have included variables that differ from the standard household labor tasks. Although, when other non-standard household variables are examined, it is likely that fathers may be more involved in household labor. Past research has examined many contributing factors to marital division of labor and has found that when the division-of-labor tasks are agreed upon by each individual in a couple, they may feel more satisfied in their relationship (Toth, 2009; Kluwer, Heesink & Van de Vliert, 1997; Piña &

Bengtson, 1993). As a couple seeks to balance the division of labor, they may reap the rewards of more positive family processes. This study will measure division of labor as it relates to both household tasks and parent-child involvement as to not be biased toward a specific gender. The study also examined father and mothers' self-reported satisfaction with division of labor and childcare.

### **Purpose Statement**

As stated earlier, the purpose of this study was to identify how fathers' and mothers' perception of the equality of their division-of-labor, their satisfaction with their division of labor, and their perceptions of their couple relationship are each related to parent's actual positive parenting behaviors as observed in a parent-child interaction task.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested:

#### **Actor Effects.**

- 1) Egalitarian division of labor will be positively related to positive parenting behaviors for both fathers and mothers.
- 2) Egalitarian division of labor will be positively related to satisfaction in division of labor for both fathers and mothers
- 3) Egalitarian division of labor will be positively related to marital relationship quality for both fathers and mothers
- 4) Satisfaction with division of labor will be positively related to positive parenting behaviors for both fathers and mothers.
- 5) Satisfaction with division of labor will be positively related to couple relationship quality for both fathers and mothers.

- 6) Couple relationship quality will be positively related to positive parenting behaviors for both fathers and mothers.

**Partner Effects.**

- 7) A. Fathers' egalitarian division of labor will be positively related to mothers' positive parenting behaviors.  
B. Mothers' egalitarian division of labor will be positively related to fathers' positive parenting behaviors.
- 8) A. Fathers' egalitarian division of labor will be positively related to mothers' satisfaction in division of labor.  
B. Mothers' egalitarian division of labor will be positively related to fathers' satisfaction with division of labor.
- 9) A. Fathers' egalitarian division of labor will be positively related to mothers' marital relationship quality.  
B. Mothers' egalitarian division of labor will be positively related to fathers' marital relationship quality.
- 10) A. Fathers' satisfaction with division of labor will be positively related to mothers' positive parenting behaviors.  
B. Mothers' satisfaction with division of labor will be positively related to fathers' positive parenting behaviors.
- 11) A. Fathers' satisfaction with division of labor will be positively related to mothers' relationship quality.  
B. Mothers' satisfaction with division of labor will be positively related to fathers' relationship quality.

12) A. Fathers' perception of couple relationship quality will be positively related to mothers' positive parenting behaviors.

B. Mothers' perception of couple relationship quality will be positively related to fathers' positive parenting behaviors.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual measurement and structural equation model related to the above hypotheses.

*Insert Figure 1 here*

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The participants for this study were taken from Wave 2 of the *Flourishing Families Project* (FFP). The FFP is an ongoing, longitudinal study of inner family life involving families with children between the ages of 10 and 14 at Wave 1. At Time 1, this study consisted of 500 families (163 single-parent, 337 two-parent) with a child between the ages of 11 and 14 (*M* age of child = 11.49; 51% male). Ninety-six percent of participants from Wave 1 also completed the data for Time 2 (*N* = 478, 154 single parent and 324 two-parent families). Ninety-three percent of mothers and 90% of fathers reported being biological parents, 5% reported being adoptive parents, and 2% of mothers and 5% of fathers reported being step-parents. Seventy-six percent of mothers, 86% of fathers, and 70% of children were European American; 13% of mothers, 6% of fathers, and 13% of children were African American; 3% of mothers, 2% of fathers, and 5% of children were Asian American; 2% of mothers, 1% of fathers, and 2% of children were Hispanic; and 3% of mothers and fathers, and 11% of children indicated that they were "mixed/biracial" or of another ethnicity. Fourteen percent of families reported an income less than \$25,000 per year, 16% made between \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year, and 70% made more than \$50,000 per year. In

terms of education, 60% of mothers and 70% of fathers reported having a bachelor's degree or higher.

Families were interviewed in their homes, with each interview consisting of a one-hour video and a one-and-one half hour self-administered questionnaire for each family member. The one-hour video was coded using the *Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales (IFIRS)*. For this study, survey data, as well as, observational coding data were utilized, as provided by all family members (child, mother, and father).

Three hundred and thirty-six of the families had two married parents in Wave 2. Eleven of the two-parent families were cohabitating. This study used 298 two-parent families; the other 49 families did not have sufficient coding data (see Table 1). Forty-nine percent of the children from two-parent families were female. For two-parent families, 82% of mothers, 86% of fathers, and 70% of children were European American; 4% of mothers, 5% of fathers, and 13% of children were African American; 4% of mothers, 2% of fathers, and 5% of children were Asian American; 3% of mothers, 1% of fathers, and 2% of children were Hispanic; and 5% of mothers and fathers and 11% of children indicated that they were "mixed/biracial" or of another ethnicity. Seven percent of families reported an income less than \$25,000 per year, 15% made between \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year, and 78% made more than \$50,000 per year. In terms of education, 71% of mothers and 68% of fathers reported having a bachelor's degree or higher. Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of this sample.

*Insert Table 1 here*

This sample had a high percentage of employed individuals with only 9 parents (2.5%) being full-time stay-at-home parents. This is similar to the current national average of 4.2% of families having one stay-at-home parent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Parents were asked

to identify who they believed was the primary caregiver. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents marked the mother as the primary giver and 7% marked that both parents equally contributed to care giving.

### **Procedure**

Participant families for the FFP were selected from a large northwestern city and were interviewed during the first eight months of 2007 and approximately one year later for Wave 2. Families were primarily recruited using a purchased national telephone survey database (Polk Directories/InfoUSA). This database claimed to contain 82 million households across the United States and had detailed information about each household, including presence and age of children. Families identified using the Polk Directory were randomly selected from targeted census tracts that mirrored the socio-economic and racial stratification of reports of local school districts. All families with a child between the ages of 10 and 14 living within target census tracts were deemed eligible to participate in the FFP. Of the 692 eligible families contacted, 423 agreed to participate, resulting in a 61% response rate for the first wave. However, the Polk Directory national database was generated using telephone, magazine, and internet subscription reports; so families of lower socio-economic status were under-represented. Therefore, in an attempt to more closely mirror the demographics of the local area, a limited number of families were recruited into the study through other means (e.g., referrals, fliers;  $n = 77$ , 15%). By broadening our approach, we were able to significantly increase the social-economic and ethnic diversity of the sample.

All families were contacted directly using a multi-stage recruitment protocol. First, a letter of introduction was sent to potentially eligible families (this step was skipped for the 15 families who responded to fliers). Second, interviewers made home visits and phone calls to

confirm eligibility and willingness to participate in the study. Once eligibility and consent were established, interviewers made an appointment to come to the family's home to conduct an assessment interview that included video-taped interactions (not used in current study), as well as, questionnaires that were completed in the home. The most frequent reasons cited by families for not wanting to participate in the study were lack of time and concerns about privacy. It is important to note that there were very little missing data. As interviewers collected each segment of the in-home interview, questionnaires were screened for missing answers and double marking.

## Measures

### **Division of Labor.**

An assessment of the couple's division of labor in parenting and household tasks was conducted using the Division of Labor Scale Items (adapted from Strazdins & Broom, 2004) (See Appendix A). This instrument was used to assess the current division of household and childcare labor between the respondent and their partner. Seven items were taken from the original questionnaire (Strazdins & Broom, 2004) so as to provide a shorter scale because of questionnaire length concerns. In addition, 11 items were added to measure other aspects of division of labor for a total of nineteen items. Parents responded to these nineteen questions using the following response categories: 0 (*We don't do this*), 1 (*My partner always does this*), 3 (*We do this equally*), and 5 (*I always do this*). Sample items include, "Grocery shopping", "Household repairs" and "Looking after child if sick". The higher the score the more the respondent perceives themselves to do more work in the family/home. Mothers and fathers also reported their satisfaction with the division of labor and their satisfaction with childcare. Possible scores range from nineteen to ninety-five.

Participants were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the division of labor and the division of childcare. This was done using a 5 point Likert scale with 1 being *very dissatisfied* to 5 being *very satisfied*. Strazdins & Broom (2004) found reliability for the measure to be .73 and Flourishing Families found the reliability for the measure to be .768 for Parent 1 (P1) and .779 for Parent 2 (P2).

### **Marital Relationship Quality.**

A father and a mother latent variable called relationship quality were created using four different scales on the Flourishing Families questionnaire as indicators- Love, Criticism, Marital Conflict and Relationship Quality (See Appendices B, C, D & E).

The Love instrument was used to assess “components of caring, attachment, and the desire for emotional intimacy with one’s spouse (Kayser, 1990). Both fathers and mothers completed the measure regarding their perception of love in the relationship. The original scale consisted of 20 items, but was shortened to 8 items for the purposes of the study and because all of the items loaded onto one scale. This instrument uses a four point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 4 (*very true*). Participants responded to sample statements, “I miss my spouse when we’re not together for a couple days” and “I feel little, if any, desire to have sex with my spouse.” After reverse coding some items for directional scoring purposes, higher scores indicate higher levels of reported love and affection. Possible scores range from 8 to 24. Kayser (1990) found the reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha) to be .97 while reliability for the shortened version in this sample was found to be .905 for Parent 1 (P1) and .868 for Parent 2 (P2).

The Marital Conflict scale was used to assess marital conflict. Participants responded to eight common problems and indicated how often each item is a problem. Items were selected from the RELATE assessment battery (Busby, Holman, Taniguchi, 2001). Responses were based

on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*). Issues included “financial matters”, “rearing children”, and “who’s in charge”. Possible scores range from 8 to 40. After reverse scoring this scale lower scores suggested less frequent arguments and conflict. Busby, Holman, and Taniguchi (2001) found reliability to be .80 for males and .83 for females. The reliability for this sample (Cronbach’s Alpha) was found to be .730 (P2) and .746 (P1).

Couple Criticism was measured using the couple communication scale adapted from RELATE (Busby, Holman, Taniguchi, 2001). Respondents answered six items including “My partner uses tactless choice of words when he or she complains” and “When my partner gets upset, he/she acts like there are glaring faults in my personality”. Responses were based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*). After reverse scoring, higher scores indicate lower levels of negative communication and criticism. Busby, Holman, and Taniguchi (2001) found reliability to be .61 for both males and females. The reliability for this sample (Cronbach’s Alpha) was found to be .858 (P2) and .852 (P1).

Marital Relationship Quality was assessed using a modified version of the Norton Quality Marriage Scale (Norton, 1983). Both fathers and mothers completed this measure from their perspectives. Responses were based on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very strongly disagree*) to 6 (*very strongly agree*). Partners responded to five questions including, “My relationship with my partner makes me happy” and “My relationship with my partner is very stable”. Higher scores indicate higher perceived marital quality. Respondents also recorded the degree of happiness in their relationship. Responses were based on a 10-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very unhappy*) to 10 (*perfectly happy*). High responses indicate extreme joy and low responses indicate extreme unhappiness. Possible scores range from five to fifty. Berg,

Trost, Schneider, & Allison (2001) found reliability to be .95 (Cronbach's Alpha) and this FF sample found reliability to be .942 for Parent 1 and .946 for Parent 2.

### **Positive Parenting.**

Two latent dependent variables, Father Positive Parenting and Mother Positive Parenting, were created using codes from behavioral observation for the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales, IFIRS (Melby & Conger, 1998) (See Appendix E). This coding system is a global or macro-level observational coding system meaning that the focals (or the primary person of interest in the video task) are coded according to their overall characteristics. This coding system measures behavioral and emotional characteristics of individuals, as well as, relationship processes in both discussion-based and activity-based interactions. Behaviors are coded at the following two levels: Individual Characteristics Scales and Dyadic Interaction Scales. The Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales were initially developed to code behavioral processes in discussion and problem-solving interactions in families with adolescents (Lorenz & Melby, 1994). This system has been used extensively to score interaction in young-adult dyads and was recently adapted for scoring behaviors of parents and young children (2-8 years of age) engaged in activity-based interactions (Melby & Conger, 1998). This coding system has also been used successfully when scoring interactions in Native-American and African-American families (Melby & Conger, 1998).

Parent-child interaction tasks are coded using 39 behavior scales for each individual. These scales include: Individual Characteristics Scales, Dyadic Interaction Scales, Dyadic Relationship Scales, Group Interaction Scales, Parenting Scales, Individual Problem-Solving Scales and Group Problem-Solving Scales.

Flourishing Families coders were trained to provide a macro level rating from 1 to 9 on each behavior scale. The coders received over 90 hours of training which included tests over content of scales, as well as, practice coding couples and families with feedback from certified coders. Coders had to code at least one criterion couple task that had also been coded by certified coders at the Iowa Behavioral and Social Science Research Institute and reach a minimum of 80% inter-rater agreement in order to become a certified coder. The coding manual provided extensive descriptions of each scale, as well as, examples and non-examples of the codes. Once a coder became certified, 25% of their coded tasks were then blindly assigned to a second coder. Assignments for reliability coding were made in such a way that coders were unaware which of their tasks would be coded by two people.

Positive Parenting will be created by using summed totals of the following observational parenting codes as indicators: parental influence, quality time, consistent discipline, and child monitoring.

Parental Influence was defined according to the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scale, as the parent's direct and indirect attempts to influence, regulate or control the child's life according to commonly-accepted, age-appropriate standards. The scale reflects parental expectations for age-appropriate behavior. Coders are asked to take into account the degree to which the parent sets standards and attempts to regulate or control the child's life according to commonly accepted expectations. They are also asked to consider the extent to which the parent specifies guidelines or rules for conduct at home (e.g., behavior, manners, chores, homework, TV), develops and oversees daily routines (e.g., brushing teeth, eating regular meals), sets rules for behavior away from home (e.g., with friends, at social events, at school), and directs the child's behavior in the task in terms of guidelines for behaviors that generalize beyond the current task interaction (Melby & Conger, 1998).

Quality Time was defined, according to the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scale, as the extent of the parent's regular involvement with the child in settings that promote opportunities for conversation, companionship, and mutual enjoyment. Of particular interest is a sense of time "well-spent" vs. merely superficial involvement. Please note that this scale differs from Child Monitoring (knowledge and information) in that it measures the quality of time that a parent and child spend together. Quality of time relates to opportunities for conversation, involvement, and companionship, the ways opportunities are used, and evidence of mutual enjoyment in these activities. The rating is based on both parent and child reports of the degree to which they are involved in meaningful or mutually enjoyable activities (Melby & Conger, 1998).

Consistent Discipline was defined, according to the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scale, as the degree of consistency and the persistence with which the parent maintains and adheres to rules and standards of conduct for the child's behavior (whether or not there is evidence of violation of standards by the child) and disciplines the child when the child violates rules and standards of conduct. This scale applies to both implicit and explicit rules and standards of conduct. Indicators of consistent discipline are the extent to which children appear to have clear expectations about what will happen if they violate the rules and evidence that the parent follows through with an expected consequence or punishment when misbehavior occurs. The parent may try various strategies, but consistently persists in encouraging the child's efforts to achieve goals during activity-based tasks (Melby & Conger, 1998).

Child Monitoring was defined according to the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scale as the parent's knowledge and information, as well as, the extent to which the parent pursues information, concerning the child's life and daily activities. It measures the degree to which a parent knows what the child is doing, where the child is, and with whom. It assesses the parent's

awareness of the child's daily life and routines, knowledge of who the child's friends are, and what his or her interests and activities might be. For parents with young children, this scale also includes an awareness of children's abilities and skill levels. That is, parents scoring high not only track children's whereabouts during the task, they also demonstrate an awareness of their children's preferences, skills, and knowledge. This intimate awareness of their children facilitates their ability to structure activity-based tasks to maximize children's success (Melby & Conger, 1998).

### Results

Means and standard deviations for all measured variables were calculated (see Table 2). Correlations between measured variables were also analyzed (see Table 3), particularly looking at correlations between father and mother satisfaction with division of labor and childcare, father and mother positive marital interaction, and father and mother positive parenting. It was determined that all of these factors should remain separate.

The first step was to determine how well the measured indicators factor loaded on their respective latent variables. As seen on Table 2, the factor loadings for each of the indicators on their respective latent variables were above .50 and were deemed acceptable. Indicators for division of labor had factor loadings between .78 and .90. The four indicators for relationship quality loaded with a range from .75-.95 for mothers and fathers. The indicators for Positive Parenting also had acceptable loadings between .64 and .78.

*Insert Table 2 here*

As seen in Table 2, the means for mother and fathers' satisfaction with division of labor tasks were very similar (Mothers:  $\bar{X} = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ; Fathers:  $\bar{X} = 3.68$ ,  $SD = .88$ ) as were the means for satisfaction with parenting children (Mothers:  $\bar{X} = 3.92$ ,  $SD = .85$ ; Fathers:  $\bar{X} = 3.90$ ,

SD= .75). This sample appears to be highly satisfied with the division of labor and division of childcare as the possible range of scores was 1 (*very dissatisfied*) to 5 (*very satisfied*) and both mothers and fathers reported means were roughly 4. Fathers as a group reported slightly more egalitarian division of labor than did mothers (Mothers:  $\bar{X}$  =39.15, SD= 5.73; Fathers:  $\bar{X}$  = 41.07, SD= 5.08); these means were out of a possible score of 95. Since this is the first time this division of labor measure has been used, it is difficult to say if this is more or less egalitarian than other populations. Mothers reported slightly higher scores in terms of parental influence and child monitoring than fathers (*Parental Influence* Mothers:  $\bar{X}$  =5.85, SD= 1.32; Fathers:  $\bar{X}$  = 5.38, SD= 1.30. *Child Monitoring* Mothers:  $\bar{X}$  =6.52, SD= .92; Fathers:  $\bar{X}$  = 6.06, SD= 1.05). Fathers' self-reported being slightly more consistent in disciplining their children (Mothers:  $\bar{X}$  =5.37, SD= 2.19; Fathers:  $\bar{X}$  = 5.56, SD= 2.37). All of the observational coding scales are rated on a scale of 1 to 9 so their reports tend to fall roughly in the mid-range.

As presented in Table 3, correlations between mothers' and fathers' reports of egalitarianism in division of labor were not high enough that they presented multi-collinearity problems ( $r=.44$ ,  $p<.001$ ). As such, they were treated as separate variables in the model. Mothers' and fathers' reports of egalitarian division of labor were correlated to their respective reports of their satisfaction in division of labor (Mothers:  $r=.24$ ,  $p<.01$ ; Fathers:  $r=.20$ ,  $p<.01$ ). The only variable found to be correlated with mothers' positive parenting was her satisfaction with the division of labor ( $r=.17$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Fathers' positive parenting was found to be correlated most significantly with mothers' report of marital relationship quality and mothers' observed positive parenting ( $r=.26$ ,  $p<.001$ ;  $r=.27$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Mothers' relationship quality was found to be significantly correlated with all other variables except for her positive parenting (Mother Division of labor  $r=.26$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Father Division of labor  $r=.16$ ,  $p<.05$ ; Mother Satisfaction with

Division of labor  $r=.49$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Father Satisfaction with Division of labor  $r=.50$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Father Relationship Quality  $r=.76$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Mother Positive Parenting  $r=.01$  non-sig; Father Positive Parenting  $r=.26$ ,  $p<.001$ )

*Insert Table 3 here.*

Structural Equation Modeling was conducted using AMOS 17.0 (2007) to examine the structural model proposed in Figure 1. The advantage of structural equation modeling is that both direct and indirect paths between variables can be estimated, both actor and partner effects can be determined, and measurement error can be accounted for. The  $R^2$  value for father positive parenting was .36 and it was .32 for mother positive parenting. The model fit (see Figure 2) was good in that the chi square was not significant, the CFI was above .95, and the RMSEA was less than .05 ( $X^2= 124.47$ ,  $df= 126$ ,  $p=.48$ , CFI= .992, RMSEA=.012).

### **Actor Effects**

The first hypothesis regarding actor effects, that egalitarian division of labor would be positively related to positive parenting behaviors for both fathers and mothers, was not supported directly in this study. The second hypothesis was accepted in that mothers' and fathers' reports of egalitarian division of labor were significantly related to their reports of their satisfaction in division of labor (Mothers:  $\beta=.19$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Fathers:  $\beta=.17$ ,  $p<.01$ ). The third hypothesis was that egalitarian division of labor would be positively related to marital relationship quality for both fathers and mothers. This hypothesis was supported only for mothers (Mothers:  $\beta=.21$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Satisfaction with division of labor was found to be positively related to positive parenting behaviors only for mothers (Mothers:  $\beta=.16$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The fifth hypothesis, that satisfaction with division of labor would be positively related to couple relationship quality, was found to be true for both fathers and mothers (Mothers:  $\beta=.41$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Fathers:  $\beta=.43$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Finally, couple

relationship quality was found to be positively related to positive parenting behaviors for both fathers and mothers (Mothers:  $\beta=.30$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Fathers:  $\beta=.22$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

### **Partner Effects**

The first hypothesis regarding partner effects was that husband's egalitarian division of labor would be positively related to wives' positive parenting behaviors and wives egalitarian division of labor would be positively related to husbands' positive parenting. This was not supported directly in this study. The second hypothesis that husbands' egalitarian division of labor would be positively related to wives' satisfaction in division of labor and wives' egalitarian division of labor would be positively related to husbands' satisfaction with division of labor was also not supported in this study. Wives' egalitarian division of labor was found to be positively related to husbands' marital relationship quality (Mothers:  $\beta=.16$ ,  $p<.05$ ). This hypothesis was not accepted for husbands. The fourth hypothesis, that husbands' satisfaction with division of labor would be positively related to wives' positive parenting behaviors and wife's satisfaction would be positively related to husband's parenting, was not supported in this study. The fifth partner effects hypothesis was that husbands' satisfaction with division of labor would be positively related to wives' relationship quality and wives' satisfaction with division of labor would be positively related to husbands' relationship quality was accepted (Mothers:  $\beta=.26$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Fathers:  $\beta=.25$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The final hypothesis regarding partner effects was that husbands' perception of couple relationship quality would be positively related to wives' positive parenting behaviors and wives' perception of couple relationship quality would be positively related to husbands' positive parenting behaviors was not supported for either spouse in this study.

*Insert Figure 2 here*

### Discussion

The hypothesis that egalitarian division of labor would be positively related to satisfaction in division of labor was supported in this study for both fathers and mothers. There may be differences in attitudes and expectations regarding division of labor tasks. It is likely that couples who openly discuss and negotiate household labor will be more satisfied in the results and the division-of-labor. Previous research has shown that when partners discuss and agree on their part in the division of labor, they are generally more satisfied, not only in the division of labor itself but also in their couple relationship (Toth, 2009; Kluwer, Heesink & Van de Vliert, 1997; Piña & Bengtson, 1993). For example, a traditional couple may believe that the woman has certain tasks such as cleaning and the man has certain tasks such as working outside of the home to provide. They would split the tasks accordingly, yet still be satisfied in the division of labor. It is possible that this sample held less traditional views and was therefore fairly satisfied overall with egalitarian division of labor. Kluwer et al. (1997) studied differences between egalitarian and traditional couples and found that each group could be satisfied as long as their expectations and implicit rules about roles were met. They also found that unsatisfied traditional couples were less inclined to have conflict than egalitarian couples when they were unsatisfied with the current division of labor (Kluwer, Heesink & Van de Vliert, 1997). Having an egalitarian division of labor seems to be associated with more satisfaction for fathers and mothers than having one spouse do more of the household labor and child care in this sample. However, it is difficult to discern whether the division of labor tasks are truly egalitarian or more equitable because of the measure used and how the scores were summed for coding. It is possible that couples learned to split the same task equally (e.g. My partner and I do the laundry equally) or they split the tasks depending on type (e.g. My spouses usually helps our child with

homework and I usually do the dishes). Both of these scenarios would have produced similar scores in the way the items were measured in this study.

Gender roles have fluctuated throughout history with varying expectations as to the tasks and responsibilities of each sex. In the past, men were the authority figures in their households and were expected to maintain this position while women depended on them for their livelihood. Most contemporary couples believe that each partner should benefit from intimate relationships and have equal power to shape the relationship to meet their goals and expectations (Sullivan, 2006). Though relationship ideals have fluctuated, many stereotypical gender patterns continue (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2005). One study in 1996 showed that egalitarian family organization improved couple stability (Coltrane, 1996). Another study showed that equal power in a relationship was important for both men and women in their reports of couple satisfaction (Steil, 1997). These findings suggest that it is important for couples employ their individual power during discussions in the relationship as they strive for their division of labor ideal.

Egalitarian division of labor was found to be a significant predictor of mothers' relationship quality, but not for fathers'. This suggests that fathers do not necessarily need to have an egalitarian division of labor to be satisfied in their marital relationship, but that mothers find more benefits in their marital relationship when the division of labor is egalitarian and when they are satisfied with their own and their spouse's contribution to household and childcare tasks. Other factors such as openly discussing division of labor and having positive communication and conflict resolution skills may be more influential on a husband's marital quality than egalitarian division of labor (Gottman, 1989; Snyder, 1979). As noted earlier, women tend to do more household chores than their husbands regardless of hours spent outside of the house or in employment (Sanchez, 1997; Holder & Anderson, 1989; Kane & Sanchez, 1994; Sanchez,

1994). It is possible that women are more affected by egalitarian division of labor because they feel more supported and less like they are doing *all* of the housework and childcare on top of their other duties and responsibilities. Since men, in general, tend to be less involved in carrying out division of labor tasks it makes sense that they are less affected by the portion of labor each individual is responsible for.

Fathers', but not mothers', marital relationship quality was found to be correlated with positive parenting. That is, mothers were found to have positive parenting regardless of the quality of the relationship with their spouse. This suggests that mothers may, indeed, be natural nurturers or at least be socialized to be nurturing parents regardless of other circumstances (Reiber, 1976). Fathers were found to have more positive parenting interactions with their children if they were satisfied in their marital relationship, but not directly from any other pathways. It is possible that fathers may be influenced more greatly by the emotional stress that arises from having an unhappy marital relationship than their wives and are less able to function in their relationship with their children because of this stress (Umberson et. al, 1996; Gottman, 1993).

Father's relationship with his wife remains the best predictor of his positive parenting. This suggests the importance of having a positive marital relationship so that father's parenting may be positive and beneficial for children. A father's involvement in his children's lives is important to help with adjustment and the difficulties of adolescence. Research has shown that father involvement may serve as a catalyst in helping teenagers cope with difficulties of being a teenager and the involvement even has positive benefits for fathers such as improved self-esteem and functioning (Crockett, 1993). Other research has shown that mothers have a large impact of fathers' involvement and parenting of their children suggesting that mothers should encourage

and allow their partners to be more involved in child care and other parenting tasks instead of believing they need to take all responsibility for children (Allen, 1999). This shows cognitive, behavioral and social benefits for the parents and the child (Allen, 1999; Crockett, 1993).

In this study satisfaction with division of labor was a significant predictor of positive parenting for mothers but not for fathers. Previous research has found that mothers who are happy in life are more likely to spend time and be invested in their children than mothers who are less satisfied or happy (Hair et. al., 2009; Sharmir, Schudlich & Cummungs, 2001; Tritt & Pryor, 2005; Umberson, 1992). It is possible that the satisfaction with the division of labor impacts a mothers' happiness and general satisfaction much more than it impacts a father's because other factors such as communication, conflict resolution skills and feeling validated play a bigger role in contributing to his marital satisfaction (Gottman, 1989). This may also be related to the findings of the second hypothesis that mothers tend to be more satisfied with an egalitarian division of labor than fathers.

This study is quite different from past studies for a few reasons. The parent-child relationship was coded using observational data. Most studies simply ask parents and children to rate their relationship quality on questionnaires while this study used live interaction coded by trained professionals to assess relationship quality. It is likely that this data is more reliable than self-report. This study also included a more comprehensive division of labor scale. Research in the past has generally defined division of labor as household chores and tasks. This study added questions related to childcare to be more gender neutral. The sample of this study is quite large and diverse and is generalizable to most of the United States population (with the exception of Latinos). Most demographic information is matched closely with US norms.

### **Implications for Therapy**

The systemic nature of families suggests that individuals within a family are consistently and constantly impacting other family members (Bowen, 1994). This study supported systems theory in that the marital relationship and activities and behaviors between couples as related to division of labor may influence how they interact with their children. Therapists should be mindful of the influence that division of labor may have on a couple's relationship. They should assess each partner's satisfaction with the division of household labor and division of childcare. Having this knowledge will help therapists to address possible concerns such as the fairness over the division and how each partner feels about their contribution. This will allow therapists to continue assessment and treatment in a way that is beneficial to the system of the family.

Therapists should also be aware that they should be knowledgeable and aware of couple dynamics when working with children. Often, children come into therapy and the family system is not completely assessed. Therapists should ask to have contact with the family and assess basic couple and family functioning to ensure the children's emotional, physical, social and other needs are being met by both parents and then continue in the course of therapy. They should be especially attentive to father involvement with the child and assess the quality of the marital relationship if father's involvement with his children seems low.

Feminist theory purports that women are disadvantaged in society due to sex, gender, ethnicity etc. (Rowan, 2001). Therapists operating from this lens help their clients acknowledge that problems are due to this disempowering culture and attempt to empower the client (Rowan, 2001). Simply glancing at the data of this study may lead feminist therapists to strive to increase the egalitarian division of labor; however, this data also showed that satisfaction in the division of labor is also important. Thus, therapists should encourage their clients to discuss the division

of labor and reach a consensus regarding how they will each be satisfied with the division of tasks.

Structural family therapists believe that families are governed by a certain set of rules that dictates each subsystem's role (Minuchin, 1974). Therapists operating from this lens would join with the family system to better understand the rules that determine how the family functions and then seek to rebuild the relationships and subsystems in a healthier manner (Minuchin, 1974). It would be important for structural therapists to assess the rules surrounding division of labor and how the various subsystems interact around these tasks. Therapists should assess children's' and parents' roles in the division of labor and determine if structural changes would be ideal for the family to function healthier.

Therapists should encourage clients to discuss equity within their relationship. This study looked at how egalitarian the division of labor was, but it is still unknown if the split of labor was equitable as well. Past research has shown that perceived inequity in couple relationships was related with lower intimacy- especially for wives (Larson, 1998). Therapists can assess the attitudes fathers and mothers have regarding division of labor and what their goals are regarding how the tasks should be split. Therapists should ensure that each partner feels heard, understood and validated and help create open dialogue between partners regarding housework.

### **Future Research**

The findings of this study suggest several questions for future studies. Division of labor could be examined more intensely with more attention and detail to the tasks that qualify as labor. Tasks related more to child care and quality time with children should be included in future research. Research could also try to answer some of the following questions: Why is it that women appear to be positive parents regardless of the quality of their marriage relationship?

Why is it that men's relationship with their children appears to be so dependent on their happiness in their marital relationship? Why is it that mothers, but not fathers, are more satisfied in an egalitarian division of labor? Is there a difference between an equitable and egalitarian division of labor? How does gender play a role in deciding and carrying out the division of labor? These questions would be important to answer for future implications for therapy and have application to daily living and family life.

### **Limitations**

This study had a few limitations. The sample used in this study was cross-sectional meaning that the participants in this study only completed this data at one point in time. The demographics of the sample are for the most part generalizable to the population of the United States, except that Latinos are not well represented in this sample. The results of this sample would likely fit best with European Americans. Another limitation is that there were only two questions that determined satisfaction with division of labor and childcare. Additional questions related to satisfaction with division of labor might better measure this variable. Such questions might include, "How satisfied are you in the decision making process that determined how much housework you and your spouse would be involved in?" or "How satisfied are you with the load of housework that is your responsibility?"

### **Conclusion**

It appears that division of labor has influence on a marital relationship and, thus, the relationship between parents and their children. Partner's satisfaction with child care and division of labor, as well as, the egalitarian division seemed to impact the relationships that were observed in this study. Mothers and fathers perceptions of their relationship with each other also appeared to influence how they interacted with their children. Parents should be especially

mindful of the many tasks in their lives and be willing to adjust their priorities to best fit the needs and growth of their children and attend to the success of their parent-child relationship.

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Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N=298 mothers, 298 fathers)*

	Males	Females
	$\bar{X}$ (S.D)/%	$\bar{X}$ (S.D)/%
Age	45.72 (5.85)	43.85 (5.63)
Marital Status		
Married	96.3%	96.9%
Cohabiting	3.7%	3.1%
Race		
Caucasian	86.4%	82.8.0%
African Am	5.1%	4.1%
Hispanic	1.0%	3.0%
Asian American	2.0%	4.4%
Other	2.4%	2.0%
Multiethnic	3.0%	3.7%
Education		
Less than H.S.	0%	1.4%
High School Diploma	6.1%	4.4%
Some College	25.9%	23.7%
Bachelors Degree	38.6%	41.4%
Grad/Professional Degree	29.4%	29.1%
Household Income		
Under \$15000	2.4%	
\$15001-24999	5.8%	
\$25000-49999	15.4%	
\$50000-74999	34.6%	
\$75000-99999	29.1%	
\$100000-119,999	2.7%	
\$120,000-149,000	4.5%	
\$150,000+	4.1%	
Missing	1.4%	
Family Size	4.37 (1.03) 3-9 range	4.42 (1.00) 3-9 range

Table 2

*Means, Standard Deviations, Ranges, Reliability Coefficients, and Factor Loadings for All Measured Variables*

Variables	Mothers				Fathers			
	X (SD) Range	$\alpha$	Fact. Load	X (SD) Range	$\alpha$	Fact. Load		
Division of Labor	39.15(5.73)22-57	.81	N/A	41.07(5.08)28-54	.80	N/A		
Satisfaction w/Division of Labor								
With Tasks	3.57(1.01) 1-5	N/A	.78	3.68( .88) 1-5	N/A	.90		
With Parenting Children	3.92( .85) 1-5	N/A	.89	3.90( .75) 1-5	N/A	.81		
Relationship Quality								
Norton Relationship Quality	31.39(7.06) 6-40	.95	.87	32.12(6.25) 6-40	.94	.89		
Couple Love	27.16(4.81) 8-32	.91	.86	27.63(4.09)11-32	.87	.84		
Marital Conflict-Relate	28.44(4.03)10-40	.75	.83	28.89(4.02)12-40	.73	.83		
Criticism-Relate	22.36(4.72) 7-30	.86	.80	21.12(4.92) 6-30	.85	.77		
Positive Parenting								
Parental Influence	5.85(1.32) 1-9	.84	.75	5.38(1.30) 1-8	.85	.78		
Quality Time w/ Child	5.30(1.57) 1-9	.79	.69	5.32(1.43) 1-9	.82	.73		
Consistent Discipline	5.37(2.19) 1-9	.81	.68	5.56(2.37) 1-9	.82	.64		
Monitoring Child	6.52( .97) 2-9	.82	.70	6.06(1.05) 3-9	.79	.71		

Table 3

*Correlation Matrix for All Latent Variables*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Mother Division of Labor	1.0							
2.Father Division of Labor	.44***	1.0						
3.Mother Satisfaction with Division of Labor	.24**	.05	1.0					
4.Father Satisfaction with Division of Labor	.10	.20**	.32***	1.0				
5.Mother Relationship Quality	.26***	.16*	.49***	.50***	1.0			
6.Father Relationship Quality	.29***	.09	.36***	.30***	.76***	1.0		
7.Mother Positive Parenting	.07	.01	.17*	.04	.01	.05	1.0	
8.Father Positive Parenting	.12	.17*	.10	.07	.26***	.19**	.27***	1.0

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

## Figure Captions

*Figure 1.* Measurement and Hypothesized Actor-Partner Effects Model with Mother and Father Division of Labor, Satisfaction with Division of Labor, Couple Relationship Quality as Predictors of Mother and Father Positive Parenting.

*Figure 2.* SEM Results with Standardized Betas reported on Significant Paths. (N=298 couples, 298 mothers, 298 fathers)

Figure 1

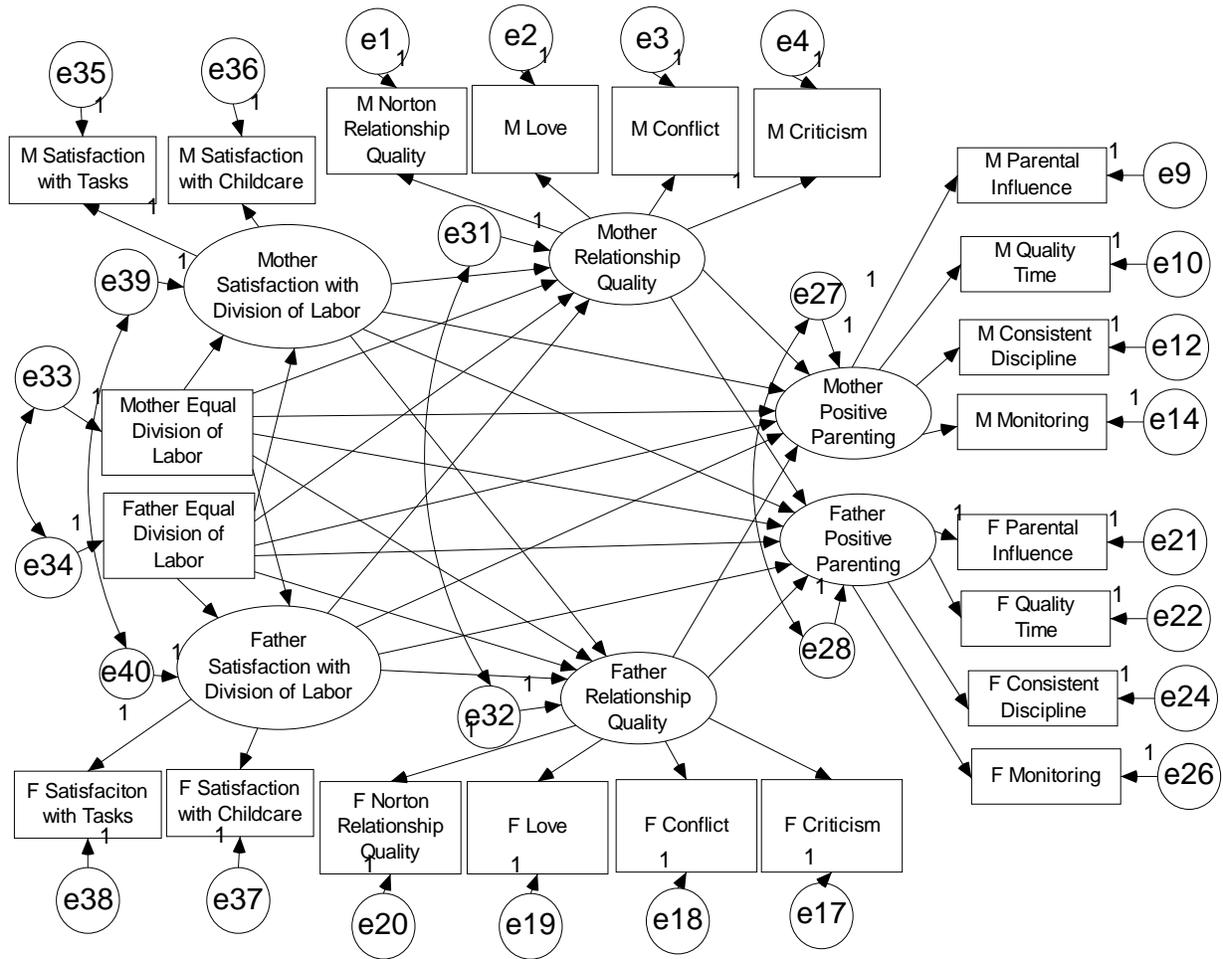
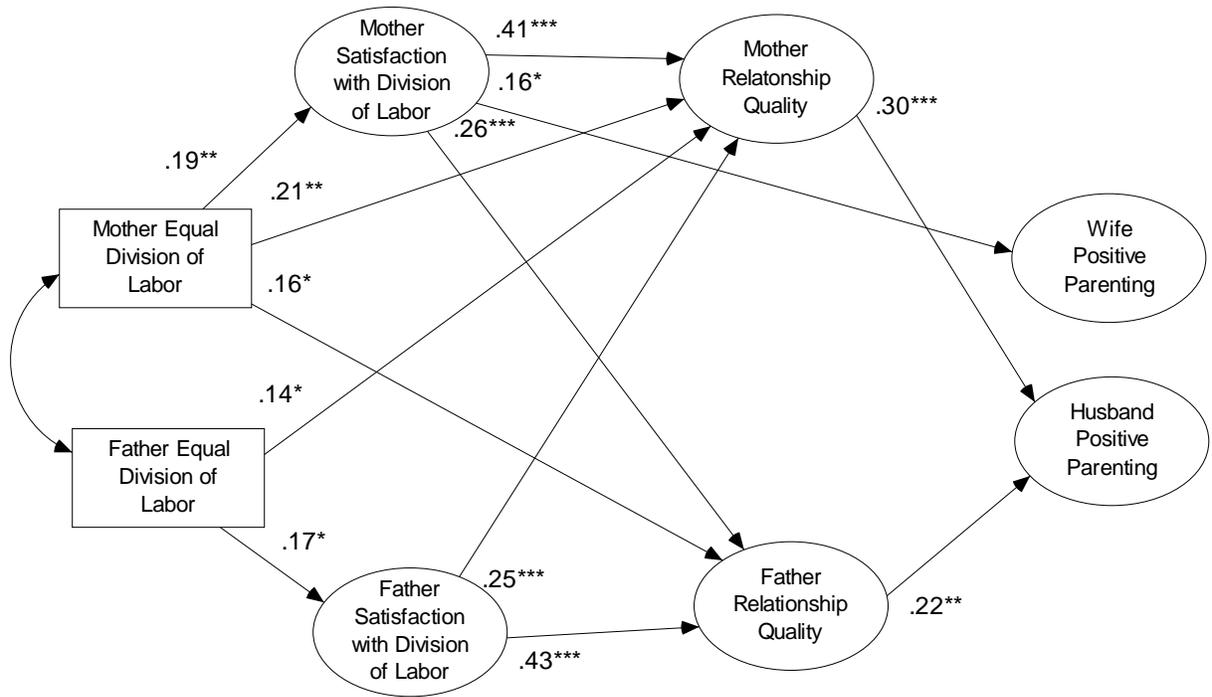


Figure 2



$X^2=124.47, df=126, p=.48$

CFI=.992, RMSEA=.012

## Appendix A

## Division of Labor Scale

Please rate how often you do the following using this scale:

0=We don't do this

1=My partner always does this

3=We do this equally

5=I always do this

1. Cooking and menu planning
2. Cleaning up after meals
3. Grocery shopping
4. Laundry: washing, ironing, and folding
5. Vacuuming, dusting, tidying up house
6. Cleaning bathrooms
7. Making bed
8. Household repairs
9. Shopping for child(ren)'s clothes
10. Getting child(ren) to extracurricular activities (piano, dance, gymnastics lessons)
11. Getting child(ren) to sports events
12. Teaching child(ren) values
13. Teaching child (ren) cooking, cleaning, and sewing skills
14. Teaching child (ren) to manage money
15. Teaching child(ren) physical skills (to ride a bike, to throw or dribble a ball, to change a tire, to mow a lawn, mechanical skills)

16. Teaching and helping child(ren) with self-care (e.g., brushing teeth, dressing)
17. Looking after child(ren) if sick
18. Helping child(ren) with homework
19. Making doctor's/dentist's appointments and getting child (ren) to them

Please rate how satisfied you are with the following using this scale:

1= Very dissatisfied

2= Somewhat dissatisfied

3= Neutral

4= Pretty satisfied

5= Very satisfied

1. In general, how satisfied are you with the way you and your partner divide housework?
2. In general, how satisfied are you with the way you and your partner divide child care?

Reliability (Strazdins & Broom, 2004): .73

Reliability (Flourishing Families, Wave 2):

P1 = .768 (P2 = .779)

Adapted from Strazdins, L. & Broom, D. H. (2004). Acts of love (and work): Gender imbalance in emotional work and women's psychological distress. *Journal of Family Issues*, 25, 356-378.

## Appendix B

## Love Scale

Please rate how true the following are using this scale:

1= Not at all true

2= Not very true

3= Somewhat true

4= Very true

1. I enjoy spending time alone with my spouse.
2. I miss my spouse when we're not together for a couple days.
3. Most of the time I feel very close to my spouse.
4. My love for my spouse has increased more and more over time.
5. Apathy and indifference best describe my feelings toward my spouse.
6. I feel little, if any, desire to have sex with my spouse.
7. There are times when I do not feel a great deal of love and affection for my mate.
8. I enjoy sharing my feelings with my spouse.

Reliability (Kayser, 1990):

Marital Disaffection (21-item version from which these 8 items are taken) .97

Reliability (Flourishing Families, Wave 2):

P1 = .905 (P2 = .868)

Adapted from Kayser, K. (1990). The Process of Marital Disaffection: Interventions at Various Stages. *Family Relationships*, 39, 257-265.

## Appendix C

## Marital Conflict Scale

Please rate how often you have conflict over the following using this scale:

1= Never

2= Rarely

3= Sometimes

4= Often

5= Very Often

1. Financial Matters
2. Communication
3. Rearing children
4. Intimacy/Sexuality
5. Parents/In-laws
6. Roles (who does what)
7. Who's in charge
8. Drinking/Drug Use

Reliability (Busby, Holman, Taniguchi, 2001):

Males= .80

Females= .83

Reliability (Flourishing Families, Wave 2):

P1 = .746 (P2 = .730)

Busby, D.M., Holman, T.B., Taniguchi, N. (2001). RELATE: Relationship evaluation of the individual, cultural and couple contexts. *Family Relations*, 50, 308-316.

## Appendix D

## Couple Communication: Criticism

Please rate how often this occurs using this scale:

1= Never

2= Seldom

3= Sometimes

4= Often

5= Very Often

1. My partner doesn't censor his or her complaints at all. She or he really lets me have it full force.
2. My partner uses tactless choice of words when he or she complains.
3. There's no stopping my partner once he/she gets started complaining.
4. When my partner gets upset, my partner acts like there are glaring faults in my personality.
5. When I complain my partner acts like he or she has to "ward off" my attacks.
6. My partner acts like he/she is being unfairly attacked when I am being negative.

Reliability (Busby, Holman, Taniguchi, 2001):

Males= .61

Females= .61

Reliability (Flourishing Families, Wave 2):

P1 = .858 (P2 = .852)

Busby, D.M., Holman, T.B., Taniguchi, N. (2001). RELATE: Relationship evaluation of the individual, cultural and couple contexts. *Family Relations*, 50, 308-316.

## Appendix E

## Norton Quality Marriage Scale

Rate the questions using the following scale:

1= Very Strongly disagree

2= Strongly disagree

3= Somewhat disagree

4= Somewhat agree

5= Strongly agree

6= Very Strongly Agree

1. We have a good relationship.
2. My relationship with my partner is very stable.
3. Our relationship is strong.
4. My relationship with my partner makes me happy.
5. I really feel like part of a team with my partner.

Marital quality was assessed using a modified version of the Norton Quality Marriage scale. (Norton, 1983) The responses were based on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very strongly disagree*) to 6 (*very strongly agree*). Partners responded to 5 questions including, “My relationship with my partner makes me happy” and “My relationship with my partner is very stable”. Higher scores indicate higher perceived marital quality.

Respondents also recorded the degree of happiness in their relationship. Responses were based on a 10-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very unhappy*) to 10 (*perfectly happy*). High responses indicate extreme joy and low responses indicate extreme unhappiness. Berg, Trost,

Schneider, & Allison (2001) found reliability to be .95 (Cronbach's Alpha coefficient). The reliability tests for this sample indicated a Cronbach's Alpha of P1 = .942 (P2 = .946).

Original measure comes from:

Norton, R. (1983). Measuring marital quality: A critical look at the dependent variable. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 45, 141-151.

Reliability obtained from:

Berg, E. C., Trost, M., Schneider, I. E., & Allison, M. T. (2001). Dyadic exploration of the relationship of leisure satisfaction, leisure time, and gender to relationship satisfaction. *Leisure Sciences*, 23, 35-46.

Reliability (Berg, Trost, Schneider, & Allison, 2001): .95

Reliability (Flourishing Families, Wave 1):

P1 = .942 (P2 = .946)

## Appendix F

## Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales

*Parenting Scales*

**Quality Time (QT):** the extent of the parent's regular involvement with the child in settings that promote opportunities for conversation, companionship, and mutual enjoyment

**Child Monitoring (CM):** the parent's knowledge and information, as well as the extent to which the parent pursues information, concerning the child's life and daily activities

**Consistent Discipline (CD):** the degree of consistency and the persistence with which the parent maintains and adheres to rules and standards of conduct for the child's behavior (whether or not there is evidence of violation of standards by the child) and disciplines the child when the child violates rules and standards of conduct

**Parental Influence (PI):** the parent's direct and indirect attempts to influence, regulate or control the child's life according to commonly-accepted, age-appropriate standards

Melby, J.N. et al. (1998). The Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales (fifth edition). Iowa State University, Institute for Social and Behavioral Research, Ames.