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by

Elsa Rojas

August, 2011

THE IMPACT OF GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT CHOICE
ON THE MARITAL SATISFACTION OF DUAL-EARNER COUPLES

A Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

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Abstract

This purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between gender roles, a wife's feelings regarding her employment and marital satisfaction in dual-earner couples. As part of the data analysis, a multiple regression analysis was performed to determine what impact the level of femininity and level of masculinity had on the marital satisfaction of each group of participants; women who want to work, women who feel they must work, men who perceive their wives want to work and men who perceive their wives feel they must work. Significant results were only seen in the final group (men who perceive their wives feel they must work) where levels of femininity and masculinity accounted for 80% of the original variance. Analyses were also conducted to examine between group differences in regards to levels of femininity, masculinity and marital satisfaction, but no significant results were found.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Marital satisfaction has long been the focus of extensive research, and with more than 2 million marriages in the U.S. each year (Tejada-Vera, B., & Sutton P. D., 2010) it continues to be a topic of great importance. That said, marital satisfaction is a complex concept influenced by the interplay of many factors within a relationship (Hinde, 1997) and is associated with both the quality of marital interactions and with each individual's well being (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000). Early research in the field focused on the relationship between marital satisfaction and various demographic factors including a couple's income, race, gender, and age (Brinkerhoff & White, 1978; Corra et. al., 2009). Others have investigated the effects of premarital living arrangements (Hewitt & Vaus, 2009) and ongoing physical and mental health problems (Tucker, Winkelman, & Katz, 2000). However, as the body of research grows, many researchers have turned their attention to more complex factors. Vannoy and Philliber (1992) found that a couple's ability to give and receive support was more closely correlated to marital quality than many demographic factors, including gender. Still other researchers have pointed to differences in a couple's conflict resolution style as yet another factor that may play an important role in shaping their marital satisfaction for either better or worse (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989).

The beginning of the Women's Movement in the 1950s brought with it a change in the role of women both at home and in the work force, leading researchers to begin to focus on how this could lead to poorer marital adjustment (Axelson, 1963; Nye & Hoffman, 1963; Orden & Bradburn, 1969) attempts to replicate many of those findings have not been

successful. In fact, other researchers report that a wife's employment may have many positive consequences (Simpson & England, 82; Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Marshall & Barnett, 1991). This is particularly true of women who prefer to be employed (Benin & Nienstedt, 1985). More recently, researchers began to theorize that a women's participation in the workforce would improve the equality between the couple leading to greater marital quality (Coltrane, 1996; Risman & Johnson-Sumerford, 1998) and, in fact, women in dual-career couples often report increased self-esteem, enhanced social contacts and an independent identity (Barnett & Baruch, 1985). Additionally, men in dual-income homes report lower stress levels associated with being the sole financial provider and an increase in opportunity for family involvement (Barnett & Rivers, 1996). Despite these findings, a woman's employment status is likely to create additional stress, and the conflicts of demanding work and family roles have been shown to affect the quality of marital relations (Hochschild & Machung, 1989).

The stress of these competing demands, often termed role strain, exists whenever there are too many conflicting roles that require an individual's time and energy (Perrone & Worthington, 2001). Interactions between work and family will invariably have an effect on not only the individual, but also the family and the other roles that individual occupies; however, that effect may be either positive or negative (Goode, 1960). Despite the possible benefits, Galinsky, Bond, and Friedman (1996) reported that 42% of nonparents and 58% of parents experience some conflict in managing family, work, and social roles. This is important, because as of 2008 more than 50% of marriages existed in dual-income homes (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009) meaning the effects of

balancing the strain from work and family conflicts have great implications for the population.

A mediating factor in how couples deal with the strain of work and family stress seems to be spousal support. Numerous studies have shown that spousal support is important for both increased marital satisfaction and individual functioning (Dehle et al. 2001; Purdom, Lucaus & Milller, 2006); moreover, spousal support has also been shown to reduce role-strain (Carlson & Perrewe, 1999). Perrone & Worthington (2001) found that spousal support can reduce the negative effects of career-related stress, and even just the perception of spousal support has been linked to increased marital satisfaction (Julien et al. 2003). And while spousal support is important in all marriages, Purdom et. al (2006) suggest that it becomes increasingly important for dual-income couples who experience greater demands on their time and may need increased levels of spousal support in order to maintain the same level of satisfaction as single-income couples.

Another important factor when discussing marital satisfaction is gender. The link between gender and marital satisfaction has been studied from a number of perspectives. More than one's biological sex, gender is a socially constructed construct that helps to define what is and what is not appropriate for each gender (Zvonkovic, et. al, 1996). Ideas of what one's gender means and what each person's gender role should be are created through the processes of ego development, social learning, and cognitive experience (Robinson & Green, 1981). These beliefs are heavily influenced by society, and are both descriptive - in that they dictate what is typical behavior for each sex - and prescriptive - because they tell people what behaviors are appropriate for their sex (Eagly, 2009). The pressure between internalized stereotypes and social expectations may create

gender role strain when it is in conflict with what is attainable for an individual (Pleck, 1981, 1995). For instance, working women may experience gender role strain due to the conflict between their responsibilities at work and the responsibility they feel to do the majority of child and home care. Alternately, men report feeling isolated from their wives and children because of the time they spend away from home working to be the provider, feelings that may also create gender role conflict (Vogel et al., 2003).

While there has been significant research into both the effects of gender role and employment status on marital satisfaction, few studies have looked into how these factors interact to effect a couple's marital satisfaction. Additionally, those studies have not been consistent in the way a couple's employment type is defined. Often, dual-income couples are divided into dual-earner and dual-career categories. According to Baskin (1998), the wives in dual-career families are more career oriented than their dual-earner counterparts who are simply holding jobs. However, researchers have also differentiated between the two couple types using information such as advanced training, education level, and experience in a career field (Baskin, 1998). Currently, there has been no clear definition of what a dual-career couple is (Haddock et al., 2001) and there is no theoretical evidence to support the definition of what a "career" may be for dual-career couples.

Other researchers have created categories of workingwomen based on their provider role attitude. According to Hood (1986) much of the research on women's employment asserts that if women are working outside the home they have assumed some responsibility for the family's economic wellbeing and see themselves as economic providers. In her work, Hood recognizes three provider attitudes: co providers, main/secondary providers and ambivalent co providers. These divisions among dual-

income couples and working women have been helpful in conducting research, but they do little to address the components of a women's desire to work which has been shown to play an important role in the couple's marital satisfaction (Ordern & Bradburn, 1966).

In the present study, the interactional effect that gender role and employment status have on marital satisfaction were investigated. Unlike previous studies, dual-income couples were divided based on the wife's reasons for working, i.e. whether she is working because she wants to, or because she feels either social or economic pressure to work. These interactions are important to examine as an individual's gender role will effect how they engage in spousal support behaviors, their overall experience of being a participant of the dual-income family, the severity of role strain that is experienced, and the ability of both the husband and the wife to cope with the stress of a dual-employment marriage. In order to clearly define how the issues of gender role and employment affect martial satisfaction, the present study considered research in the areas of gender, role strain, spousal support, marital typologies, and dual-income couples.

While the growing body of research has shed some light on what determines marital satisfaction, it is clear there is still much to understand. As detailed above, both employment status and gender roles play a part in increasing or decreasing a couple's level of marital satisfaction. However, there is a complicated interplay that exists between these factors. This may be further complicated by the manner in which workingwomen are currently classified – using information regarding the number of hours the work, type of job they have, or level of education. These factors may not accurately reflect women's feeling about work and so these classifications may not be the most accurate indicators of marital satisfaction. It then follows that differentiating between women who chose to

work and those who would prefer to be at home may lead to an increased understanding of the role work and gender play in marital satisfaction.

Research Questions

In the present study, self-report instruments for marital satisfaction, gender role and work choice were used to help better understand the interplay of these factors.

Specifically the following research questions were examined.

- 1) Will levels of masculinity and levels of femininity significantly predict marital satisfaction in women who want to work?
- 2) Will levels of masculinity and levels of femininity significantly predict marital satisfaction in women who feel they must work?
- 3) Will levels of masculinity and levels of femininity significantly predict marital satisfaction in men who perceive that their wives want to work?
- 4) Will levels of masculinity and levels of femininity significantly predict marital satisfaction in men who perceive that their wives feel they must work?
- 5) What differences exist with respect to marital satisfaction between those women who want to work versus those women who feel they must work?
- 6) What differences exist with respect to marital satisfaction between those men who perceive that their wives want to work versus those men who perceive that their wives must work?
- 7) Will women who want to work differ significantly in levels of femininity from women who feel they must work?
- 8) Will women who want to work differ significantly in levels masculinity from

women who feel they must work?

- 9) Will men who perceive that their wives want to work differ in levels of femininity from men who perceive that their wives feel they must work?
- 10) Will men who perceive that their wives want to work differ significantly in levels masculinity from men who perceive that their wives feel they must work?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is divided into seven sections, each one outlining a relevant body of literature that is important to the rationale for the current study. The first six sections discuss different constructs relevant to the study including gender, dual-income couples, role strain, spousal support, gender role and employment, typologies of marriage and marital roles. The final section provides a brief summary of the literature along with a further discussion of the rationale for the current study.

Gender

To date there has been a significant amount of research examining the role of gender on marital satisfaction and adjustment. Looking at the differences between men and women, many researchers have found that husbands tend to report higher levels of marital satisfaction than wives (Amato et al., 2003; Kaufman, 2006). Moving beyond differences based on biological sex, researchers have looked at the importance of gender roles and the shared beliefs about an individual based on their identified sex (Eagly, 1987). These beliefs imply different prosocial behaviors for women and men, as well as provide a framework for both of what is typical for each sex and what someone of each sex should do (Eagly, 2009). Traditional gender roles have dictated that women hold power in the home, while the outside world is the domain of men (Beavers, 1982). This has meant that women have historically developed skills associated with caring for a home and relationship maintenance while men have focused on skills related to earning money outside the home (Steil, 1997).

An important outgrowth of one's idea of gender and one's gender role is gender-role identity. As defined by Vannoy and Philliber (1992), gender-role identity refers to the incorporation of traditional masculine or feminine roles into one's self-concept. Researchers looking at levels of femininity and masculinity within individuals have found evidence that marital adjustment is correlated with one's level of androgyny and masculinity (Agarwal & Srivastava, 1989; Rozenzweig & Dailey, 1989), while other research has shown that role-undifferentiated individuals are more prone to marital maladjustment (Davidson & Sollie, 1987, Juni & Grimm, 1994).

Further research focused specifically on marital satisfaction, has shown a relationship between the constructs of femininity and masculinity and increased marital satisfaction. In a study by House (1986) femininity in women and masculinity in males was positively correlated to marital satisfaction. Later studies have shown that while the wife's gender-identity is unrelated to the satisfaction of either spouse, the higher the husband rates in both masculinity and femininity the better the quality of marriage for both partners (Vannoy & Philliber 1992). Vannoy and Philibier's study also provided evidence to suggest that more important than the husband's gender-identity is his wife's perception of his gender role expectations. The more traditional a wife perceives her husband to be the lower the quality of marriage for both partners. That is to say that no matter what the husband's true gender role expectations are, if his wife perceives him to be more egalitarian both partners will have greater marital satisfaction (Vannoy & Philliber 1992).

Gender and ideas about the meaning of gender also effect how men and women balance the roles of work and family. This is because there are cultural expectations

associated with various roles within a marriage, roles that tend to be gendered, making the experience of competing demands different for women and men (Milkie & Peltola, 1999). A prime example of these differences can be seen in the gendered expectations that distinguish between being a good wife and mother and being a good husband and father (Milkie, Simon, & Powell, 1997). The different gendered "shoulds" that dictate how people spend their time also create gender differences in how individuals balance their time commitments (Berk, 1985). For example, women are expected to give their all to their children, which can result in emotional distress when outside demands take her away from her children (Hays, 1996). This creates a competition between the roles of wife and mother, so time in one role equals neglect in another role. This is often different for men because the roles of husband and father and worker are more easily combined – being a good provider can encompass both work and home duties (Simon, 1995).

Dual-Income Couples

Understanding the effects of gender on marriage in general, and dual-income couples specifically, is important because in 2008 both spouses worked in over 50% of married-couple families in the U. S. (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009) reinforcing the importance of understanding the unique challenges of this population. As a consequence of the increase in dual-income homes, both genders are finding it challenging to meet the demands of both marriage and work (Schramm et al., 2005). Initial research into wives' employment seemed to show a negative relationship with marital satisfaction (Axelson, 1963; Nye & Hoffman, 1963; Orden & Bradburn, 1969). These women did not fit the white, middle-class stereotype and were seen as a threat to the American norms following World War I (Yogev, 1988). Furthermore, men with

working wives rated their marriages less positively than men with non-working wives, and both men and women judged working women to be failures and unfeminine (Yogev, 1988). However, there has been research to show that a women's employment may be unrelated to marital happiness (Schoen, 2006) and that it may carry many positive consequences (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Barnett & Marshall, 1991, Larson & Holman, 1994).

To better understand the effect dual-employment may have on a marriage it is important to understand both the costs and rewards. Rapoport and Rapoport (1969) identified five stress domains for the dual-career family: work overload, decreased social networks, balancing work and family roles, individual identity conflicts, and discrepancies between personal and social norms. Additionally, researchers have found that work and family roles tend to be intertwined for dual-career couples who more often report that they will allow work to interfere with their relational responsibilities than to let the relationship interfere with work. This effect of work on family life is negatively correlated with dyadic and job satisfaction (Aryee et. al, 1999).

Amongst dual-career couples, both men and women acknowledge that their work environment can affect their mental health and level of distress. Positive work environments can lead to a greater sense of well-being, but a negative experience can increase levels of distress (Barnett & Brennan, 1997). The body of research in this area seems to indicate that this is a greater problem for women who often report greater levels of distress linked to their job conditions than do men. Additionally, single and childless women report decreased distress as job quality improves, the same does not hold true for married women (Barnett, et. al., 1994). Barnett and Shen shed some light on this picture

in 1997 with a study that revealed women working part-time outside the home tended to have not only decreased salary and benefits, but also take on a greater share of housework, tasks that are positively linked to increased psychological distress.

Jones and Fletcher (1996) discussed the evidence that work strain effects a couple's satisfaction and experience at home. According to their study, work stresses can account for a significant amount of the variation in a couples' mood at home though men and women were affected differently. Men tended to be influenced by both work and domestic stress while women were likely to be negatively impacted by mainly domestic pressures (Jones & Fletcher, 1996).

Benefits of the dual-income family include increased family income, development opportunity beyond sex-role stereotypes, and partnership in a relationship based on equality of power and initiative (Gilbert & Rachlin, 1987). Additionally, wives in dual-income homes have the opportunity to develop professionally, to create a sense of self separate from the family, experience greater economic independence, and an increased sense of well-being and increased social contacts (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971; Helms-Erikson, et. al, 2000, Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Gilbert, 1985). For husbands, dual-income homes may relieve some of the pressure to be the sole provider and allow them to be more involved in parenting, thus enabling men to express their needs to nurture and bond with their family (Barnett & Rivers, 1996; Gilbert & Rachilin, 1987). It is worth noting that while it has been previously thought that family and martial roles were more important to women, these roles have been growing more salient for men (Barnett et al., 1993; Barnett et al., 1994). Men's marital roles have been shown to impact their well being and happiness on an equal level with their job role (Barnett et al., 1994).

Despite the possible benefits of working outside the home, not all women desire to engage in the work force. For some women it seems that the equal opportunity to work has simply turned into a new mandate for women to combine the role of career woman and homemaker (Giele and Holst 2004). Between 1997 and 2005, the employment rate for married women with children under one-year old dropped from fifty-six percent to forty-nine percent (U.S. Department of Labor 2006). While it follows that this trend may be due to a slowing economy, it is also likely that there are women who are choosing to leave the work force and return home.

This maternal drive for women to be at home with their children may be due to the ways in which both girls and boys are socialized to believe that a mother can do the job of childrearing better than anyone else, including the children's father (Chodorow 1978). While there are some women, often in professional careers, who can afford to return home and chose to do so, it follows that there are also women who entered the work force who would prefer to return home to devote more energy to their role as wife and homemaker but cannot for any number of reasons.

The domain of balancing work and family roles has been of particular interest to researchers who began to look at the "second shift" of household duties many working women experience when they arrive home. While men are doing more housework than in the past, the amount of time spent on completing household tasks is still unequal (Coltrane, 1996) leaving working women to shoulder a greater percentage of household work and causing them to face greater work-home conflicts (Bartley, Blanton & Gilliard, 2005). This unbalanced workload is important because research has shown a negative link between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction (Stevens et. al, 2007)

Inversely, increased sharing of the household chores, parenting and supportive behavior has been shown to result in a higher quality of life and better marital satisfaction (Anderson & Leslie, 1991; Fish, New, Van Cleave, 1992). This is especially true for egalitarian women who look to their spouse for help at home and often experience more unfairness in an unequal division of household labor than do traditional women who consider it their role to take care of the home (Mickelson, Claffey, & Williams, 2006).

Role Strain

This increased strain due to work and family commitments is often termed role strain. Role strain theory posits that people have many role relationships resulting in multiple interactions between roles that have an effect on the person, family and the other roles the individual occupies (Goode, 1960). As defined by Social Role Theory, role strain occurs when there are too many competing demands on an individual because of the multiple roles he or she is involved in (Fein, 1990, 1992).

Many potential consequences of role strain have been discussed in the literature. Specific to marital satisfaction, Norrell & Norrell (1996) found that role strain significantly increased marital distress in members of dual-career couples. Additionally, higher levels of conflict between work and family are associated with decreased marital satisfaction (Campbell & Snow, 1992). Other negative effects include; burnout, decreased well-being, job dissatisfaction, physical and mental illness, and marital distress (Hayes & Mahalik, 2000; Good et al., 1996; Pleck, 1995). Additionally, it has been shown that as the number of roles and responsibilities increases so does the potential for role overload and psychological distress (Goode, 1960; Haddock & Rattenborg, 2003). In

1995 Paden and Buehler hypothesized that this increased potential for role overload is based on the assumption that people have a daily allotment of time and energy that cannot be replenished until the next day. Based on this hypothesis, the greater the demands of a person's roles the more likely they are to deplete their daily reservoir. They must therefore limit the resources that can be devoted to each role.

The potential for role strain is important when looking at the issues associated with dual-income families because the role of mother and employee can often exert a great deal of pressure on a woman. Despite moves in the United States toward a more egalitarian distribution of household work, women still experience more role spill-over and feel greater responsibility for the family and household tasks than men do (Burley 1991). That said, women are not alone in feeling pressured to fulfill traditional roles. Despite women's move into the workforce, men continue to feel the pressure to provide financially, pressure that can lead to feelings of isolation from their family due to the time spent at work (Vogel et al., 2003).

Despite the pit falls, researchers have found that there are benefits to taking on multiple roles. The expansion hypothesis states that the gains one makes by having multiple roles will offset some stresses (Sieber, 1974). Additionally research has found that holding multiple roles may promote wives' mental and physical health (Haddock et al., 2001; Stevens et. al, 2007) and that as a wives employment increases so does her access to social resources which in turn may increase her life satisfaction and assists in problem management (Barnett & Rivers, 1996).

It is important to note that the gains associated with multiple roles can have a

positive effect not just on wives, but on their husbands as well. Haddock and Rattenborg (2003) reported increased levels of marital satisfaction in couples with multiple roles, and Barnett and Rivers (1996) suggested that a wife's economic contribution to the family relieves her husband of the burden of being the sole provider. Additionally, Perrone and Worthington, (2001) found that couples who successfully balance work and family report having happier relationships, higher self-esteem, less psychological distress, higher overall well being, and higher job satisfaction.

Spousal Support

With research split over the benefits and pit falls of holding multiple roles, it is important to understand the differences between those families that are able to experience gains from their dual roles and those who experience only increased strain and decreased marital satisfaction. One key factor seems to be spousal support. Spousal support has been shown to be important for both increased marital satisfaction and individual functioning (Dehle et al. 2001; Purdom, Lucaus & Milller, 2006) and has been shown to reduce role-strain (Carlson & Perrewe, 1999). It is thought that this is accomplished because spousal support acts as a buffer for stress, preventing emotional isolation and stress-related deterioration of the marriage (Cutrona, 1996). Additionally, spousal support lowers the risk of conflict escalation and helps to enhance the feel of connectedness within the relationship.

The importance of spousal support is especially salient for wives who are looking to their husbands for support, because while women are socialized to support men's occupational roles, men are not taught to support women in the same way (Gilbert &

Rachlin, 1987). Because of this, Gilbert and Rachlin (1978) posit that while spousal support may take many forms, it should include a positive attitude toward the woman's career and a willingness to help with childcare and household responsibilities. This may be difficult for some individuals because of societal expectations regarding what is appropriate male and female behavior.

Adherence to gender stereotypes may limit many dual-income couples from balancing their work and family demands effectively because they may be limited in the forms of spousal support they are able to demonstrate (Eagly, 1987). Studies have shown that couples that are able to put aside gendered roles and create a more egalitarian distribution of labor are not only more likely to stay married, but also maintain increased marital satisfaction, experience less role strain and experience higher overall well-being (Haddock et al., 2001; Perrone & Worthington, 2001). Additionally, couples that are able to break down the gender division and share the provider and caretaker roles often find that social demands become easier to cope with (Silverstein, Auerbach, & Levant, 2002).

While it is clear that spousal support is important for dual-income couples, some research suggests that some types of spousal support may be perceived as more or less helpful depending on an individual's gender role attitude (Mickelson, Claffey & Williams, 2006). For women who hold a more traditional gender role housework may be considered a woman's responsibility and so her husband's help with household tasks is less expected and less important than other forms of spousal support. The reverse is true for women with more egalitarian views, they feel that men and women are equal in all domains and therefore her husband's support with housework is more important and may be expected. The expectations are opposite for men – traditional men expect more

support in household work than egalitarian men do (Mickelson, Claffey & Williams, 2006).

Other research in this area has focused on the idea of spousal support adequacy as a means of better understanding how the frequency of various support behaviors is perceived (Dehle et al., 2001). This seems to be an important line of research as much of the existing literature on stress suggests that individuals have different coping styles that need to be address (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1998). For example, if an individual coping with stress is provided unwanted support that individual may see their spouse as uncaring or patronizing (Dehle et. al., 2001). Additionally, being the recipient of unwanted support may cause feelings of guilt for not accepting the undesired support (Brock & Lawrence, 2008).

In their study of newlywed couples, Brock and Lawrence (2008) followed couples through the first three years of marriage assessing for chronic strains, spousal support adequacy, and quality of marriage. They found that while spousal support adequacy did not appear to be a major factor in a husbands' experience of stress spillover and role strain in the early years of marriage, when wives experience an increase in role strain and received adequate spousal support they exhibit increased marital satisfaction. Husbands in the study reported lower levels of marital satisfaction coupled with increased role strain regardless of whether or not they perceived themselves to have received adequate spousal support (Brock & Lawrence, 2008).

Pasch and Bradbury (1998) also distinguished between types of spousal support, identifying both positive and negative support behaviors. Through their study, they found

that marital satisfaction was related to higher levels of positive support behaviors and lower levels of negative support behaviors. What distinguishes between support behaviors that are perceived as positive or negative remains unclear. Women have been shown to base perception of support on factors such as tone of voice while men base their perception on larger factors such as their view of the marriage as a whole (Carels & Baucom, 1999). For both sexes, how each individual views their spouse has been shown to impact the effectiveness of the spousal support provided. Cobb, Davila and Bardbury (2001) found that a person's positive view of their spouse was linked to increased ability to both receive and provide spousal support.

Gender role and Employment

Just as gender roles help to determine how spousal support is perceived and given, they may also affect how both the wife and husband may handle the dual-income relationship. The rationale behind Vannoy and Philber's 1992 study was that only couples that hold a traditional view would suffer decreased marital satisfaction due to the wife's employment. Vannoy and Philber hypothesized that when couples hold traditional views these roles are threatened if the wife works – i.e. the husband feels he is not providing for his family and the wife feels that she was unsuccessful in attracting a husband who could provide. The results of the study showed that rather than stated traditional versus non-traditional beliefs, it was the husband's attitude and the wife's perception of her husbands' expectations that resulted in greater marital satisfaction for dual-income couples. The more supportive the husband was of his wife working and the more egalitarian the wife perceived her husband to be, the more satisfied they were in their marriage (Vannoy & Philber, 1992).

It is important to note that some research suggests that an individual's gender role attitude will also influence how they handle work-family conflict. For example, a woman who feels it is good for her family if she is employed may experience less stress than a mother who believes it is a women's role to be at home. Additionally, a husband who has less rigidly defined gender role beliefs and feels he should play a role in childcare is likely to feel greater distress over time at work than a father who believes his wife should handle childcare (Nomaguchi, 2009; Townsend, 2002). That said, egalitarian women who chose to work outside the home may experience criticism from society that more traditional women and working fathers do not face.

A study by Brescoll and Uhlmann (2005) found that both male and female adult participants saw working mothers as more selfish than stay-at-home mothers, working fathers, or stay-at home fathers, leading participants to openly evaluate working women less favorably than stay-at-home women. This type of prejudice is likely to be experienced differently by traditional women who agree with the notion that they should be at home, but because of outside circumstances they are forced to work.

While gender seems to play a role in the experience of participating in a dual-income relationship and in work-family conflict, it is still debatable whether or not women experience higher levels of work-family conflict than men. Some studies have found that women experience more work-family conflict than men (Duxbury & Huggubsm 1991; Voydanoff, 2004), but others have been unable to replicate these findings (Milkie & Peltola, 1999; Voydanoff, 1988). This inconsistency could be explained by taking into account the total number of hours worked by both men and women in paid and unpaid positions. A 2006 study using a time-diary found little gender

difference in the total hours of work performed when both paid and unpaid work was accounted for (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006).

Specific to dual-income couples with children, mothers typically take on the burden of managing child-related activities that require greater planning and flexibility and are not accounted for in measures of time allocations. These activities, including child-related emergencies and making child related doctor appointments (Deutsch, 1999; Hochchild, 1989), may interfere with a mother's paid work schedule and increase her work-family conflict. However, as the definition of fatherhood changes to include greater demands for men to participate in childcare and housework men may experience increased work-family conflict (Winslow, 2005).

Regardless of the actual division of labor, an individual's perception of the fairness of that division is important in understanding levels of distress related to the division of household labor for dual-income couples. Lennon and Rosenfield (1994) found that while nearly a third of women feel they do more housework than their partners, most women perceived this division to be fair. This perception is important because research has found that those who perceive an unfair division of labor in their marriage experiences reduced well-being, lower levels of marital satisfaction, and increased work-family conflict (Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994; Grote & Clark, 2001; Frisco & Williams, 2003).

Typologies of Marriage and Marital Roles

When discussing the multiple concepts that influence how employment will effect marital satisfaction, it is important to understand the ways in which employment has been

looked at in past research. In researching dual-income marriages, many studies have focused on the differences between dual-earner and dual-career marriages. However, often the terms are used synonymously (Yogev & Brett, 1985) and there is lack of recognition of the differences within the dual-career category (Gilbert & Rachlin, 1987). Many times wives in dual-career families are described as having a higher commitment to their career (Baskin, 1998) with a desire to advance in their profession (Granello & Navin, 1997) and a feeling that career is a crucial aspect of their identity (Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005). These traits are not typically associated with wives in dual-earner couples, who are usually described as simply holding a job. Dual-earner couples also tend to have fewer resources, often the wife may work out of financial need leading to greater consequences when the woman is not working and leaving the couple with decreased negotiating power with employers (Aryee et. al., 1999). Additionally, there is an assumption that in dual-career couples neither spouse will subordinate their career to their family commitment (Gilbert & Rachlin, 1987).

Researchers have also differentiated between the two couple types using information such as advanced training, education, and more experience in a career field (Baskin, 1998), the thought being that dual-career women tend to work more and to have advanced further in their education and career than dual-earner women. However, there has been no clear and accepted definition of what a dual-career couples is (Haddock et al., 2001) and there is no theoretical evidence to support the definition of what a “career” may be for dual-career couples.

In 1983 Peplau proposed a classification of marital roles related to the division of labor in the home. In this classification marital roles are divided into three groups:

traditional, modern, and egalitarian. The three types of marriages are defined by their differences along two continuums; power and role specialization (Peplau, 1983). Power in this sense refers to the extent to which the husband is more dominant than the wife. Role specialization refers to the extent that roles are specialized between the spouses, generally along gender lines (Gilbert & Rachlin, 1987). According to Peplau's classification system, traditional marriages are "based on a form of benevolent male dominance" and include very specialized roles for each spouse. Egalitarian marriages reject both these ideas, and modern marriages represent the middle position.

While the increase of dual-career couples would suggest that many couples have adapted an egalitarian model where both spouses have a commitment to their full-time job and share in the housework, many studies indicate that most dual-career marriages are anything but egalitarian (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976). Through a study of men in dual-career couples Gilbert (1985) identified three types of marriage; traditional, participant, and role-sharing. The defining aspect in Gilbert's view is how household chores and childcare are divided. In traditional marriages the wife remains responsible for family work, even if she is employed outside the home. In participant marriages, both spouses share parenting responsibilities while housework remains the responsibility of the wife. An equal division of household labor and childcare responsibilities characterizes role-sharing marriages. Factors considered in this typology include personal values, characteristics, attitudes, power dynamics in the relationship, societal norms, and support systems (Gilbert & Rachlin, 1987).

Several attempts have been made to develop alternative classifications for women that address the larger picture of why women work and the differences in how women

view the role work plays in their lives. For example, Hakim (1995, 1998, 2002) divided women into three categories: home-centered, work-centered and adaptive. Hakim argues that home-centered women do not work, or tend to work part time in careers that facilitate their ability to place priority on domestic obligations. If these women do work full-time it is out of necessity and they tend to choose jobs that will allow them to prioritize their home responsibilities. In contrast to home-centered women, work-centered women prioritize their work roles and tend to fit their family life to their work demands. Despite these differences, it should be noted that these two categories are not divided along educational lines. It is not assumed that work-centered women invest more in their education as the educational system may function both as a place to gain qualifications for the work world, or as a marriage market (Hakim 2002). Adaptive women, according to Hakim (2002), combine family and work without prioritizing one over the other.

To date, some researchers have supported Hakim's preference theory (Rose 2005); however, others have questioned its legitimacy because Hakim classifies over two-thirds of women as adaptive (Procter & Padfield 1999). Others feel that Hakim has used the outcomes of women's work roles to measure their preferences – neglecting the circumstance of a woman's life that may have shaped her preferences (Breugel, 1996). Additionally, others criticize Hakim's theory as it neglects to look at the lifecycle variations that may also play a role in shaping a woman's work preferences differently at different points in her lifecycle (Fagan 2001, Blackwell 2001).

Other researches trying to create categories of working women have looked at women's provider role attitude. Hood (1986) recognized three divisions among women based on their provider attitudes. Co providers feel that the provider role is shared equally

between husband and wife, thus the wife's income is important to the family.

Main/secondary providers view the wife's income as unnecessary to the family.

Ambivalent co providers realize the importance of the wife's income, but are uncomfortable with the idea of a shared economic responsibility. Central to Hood's framework is the idea that the provider role is based not only on a wife's economic contribution, but also her view of this contribution and her investment in her role as breadwinner (Helms-Erikson et. al 2000).

Studies that support Hood's assertion regarding provider-roles have been helpful in understanding how women's participation in paid-labor outside the home effects family functioning (Helms-Erikson et. al 2000). For example, women who take on the breadwinner role are more likely to feel that their husbands' perform an unfairly low amount of housework (Ferree, 1988). In 1992 Perry-Jenkins et al. took this research a step further, looking at how a wife's provider-role attitude was differentially related to division of labor in the home and to the wife's mental health, marital satisfaction, and relationship with children. The results of the study suggest that a wives' level of attachment to the provider role affects personal well-being and the family dynamics. Most notably, ambivalent co providers and main-secondary wives reported the highest levels of depression and role overload. Main-secondary wives reported the highest levels of martial satisfaction while the lowest levels were reported by ambivalent co providers (Perry-Jenkins et al., 1992). In contrast to this study, research done by Helms-Erikson et. al (2000) suggests that a women's work characteristics relate differentially to their well-being and family experiences based on their provider role. For example, for women who define themselves as a breadwinner, work qualities that represent status are more likely to

affect the woman's personal well-being and the marriage.

While these various typologies of dual-income families and working women may be helpful in categorizing couples within several different dimensions, they do little to address the components of a women's desire to work which plays an important role in the couple's marital satisfaction. In fact, researchers focusing on the different work outlooks for women have found some important differences between these groups. Overall, women who work for personal fulfillment are likely experience less role-strain, and studies have found that women who enjoy their job are better able to handle family related stressors than women who are unhappy with their job (Barnett, Marshall, & Sayer 1992). This would suggest that perhaps a more useful distinction among dual-income couples may be the wife's reasons for working. Orden & Bradburn (1969) found that in couples where the woman worked out of need reported higher levels of tension and lower levels of satisfaction in both the husband and wife. This was in opposition to findings that couples where the woman chose to work reported higher levels of both marital and job satisfaction.

While the growing body of research has shed some light on what determines marital satisfaction, it is clear there is still much to understand. As detailed above, both employment status and gender roles play a part in increasing or decreasing a couple's level of marital satisfaction. However, there is a complicated interplay that exists between these factors. Additionally, because current divisions of working women may not accurately reflect women's feeling about work these classifications may not be the most accurate indicators of marital satisfaction. It then follows that differentiating between women who chose to work and those who would prefer to be at home may lead to an

increased understanding of the role work and gender play in marital satisfaction.

Specifically the following research questions were examined.

- 1) Will levels of masculinity and levels of femininity significantly predict marital satisfaction in women who want to work?
- 2) Will levels of masculinity and levels of femininity significantly predict marital satisfaction in women who feel they must work?
- 3) Will levels of masculinity and levels of femininity significantly predict marital satisfaction in men who perceive that their wives want to work?
- 4) Will levels of masculinity and levels of femininity significantly predict marital satisfaction in men who perceive that their wives feel they must work?
- 5) What differences exist with respect to marital satisfaction between those women who want to work versus those women who feel they must work?
- 6) What differences exist with respect to marital satisfaction between those men who perceive that their wives want to work versus those men who perceive that their wives must work?
- 7) Will women who want to work differ significantly in levels of femininity from women who feel they must work?
- 8) Will women who want to work differ significantly in levels masculinity from women who feel they must work?
- 9) Will men who perceive that their wives want to work differ in levels of femininity from men who perceive that their wives feel they must work?
- 10) Will men who perceive that their wives want to work differ significantly in levels masculinity from men who perceive that their wives feel they must

work?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A total of 187 participants agreed to participate in the study and were sent research packets. 82 packets were returned to the investigator, including the 75 packets from subjects whose data is represented in the study, as well as seven packets that were excluded. Of those seven which were excluded, 4 (2 male and 2 female) were excluded from the study because the materials were not completed in their entirety; the remaining 3 (2 male and 1 female) were excluded because their answers were determined to be unreliable based on the Inconsistency scale on the MSI-R.

The 75 married adults who participated in this study were broken down into four groups as follows: 16 men who perceive that their wives want to work, 10 men who perceive that their wives feel they must work, 28 women who want to work, and 21 women who feel they must work. All Subjects were members of dual-income marriages, where both the subject and their spouse were employed outside the home. Subjects were recruited from local business associations, community centers, and from community events hosted on the University of Houston campus. The University of Houston Human Subjects Committee approved the study, and all subjects were provided with an informed consent document along with information on the purpose of the study prior to their participation. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Subjects were recruited on an individual basis, meaning that subjects were able to participate in the study regardless of their spouse's willingness to volunteer.

Participants' Gender, Ages, and Length of Marriage

This study's participants consisted of 75 married individuals, within the sample 26 were men and 49 were female. The ages of the 75 participants in the study ranged from 24 to 65 (see Table 1-1). The average age for female respondents was 33.1 with a median age of 30. The average age for male respondents was 36.1 with a median age of 30.5. The length of the participants' marriage was calculated based on reported length in years. The participants' in this study had been married for an average of 6.8 years, with men reporting an average of 9.07 years of marriage and women averaging 5.59 years of marriage.

Ethnicity

In terms of ethnicity the sample was primarily Caucasian (88%) (see Table 1-2). Of the remaining participants 6 (8%) were Hispanic, 2 (2.6%) were Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 1 (1.3%) was African American. The categories used to determine ethnicity were created to mirror the categories used in the most recent census.

Education Level

Slightly more than 75% of the sample reported earning at least an Associate's degree, with 45% of the sample earning a Bachelor's degree, and 25% obtaining a master's degree or higher (see Table 1-3). Only 1 participant reported having less than a high school education. Participants also reported on their spouses' level of education. More than 83% of the spouses had obtained at least an Associate's degree, with 42.6% having earned a Bachelor's degree and 24% having earned a Master's degree or higher. 3

participants reported that their spouse had not received a high school diploma or the equivalent (GED).

Household Income

Participants reported their household income based on pre-determined ranges provided on the demographics questionnaire. Income levels were divided as follows 1) less than \$10,000 2) \$10,000 to \$39,999 3) \$40,000 to \$59,999 4) \$60,000 to \$89,999 5) \$90,000 to \$119,999 6) \$120,000 to \$149,999 7) \$150,000 or more. Only 1 participant (female) did not report a household income. The majority of participants (62.5% of female participants and 65% of male participants) reported a household income in the fifth range or higher (see Table 1-4).

Table 1-1. Participants' age

	Mean	Median	SD	Range	
				Low	High
Women's age (in years)	33.1	30	8.2	24	59
Men's age (in years)	36.1	30.5	10.8	25	65

Table 1-2. Participants' ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Frequency(<i>f</i>)	Percent (%)
Caucasian	66	88
Hispanic	6	8
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	2.6
African American	1	1.3

Table 1-3. Participants' and spouses highest level of education completed

Education	Frequency(<i>f</i>)		Percent(%)	
	Participant	Spouse	Participant	Spouse
Less than High school	1	3	1.3	4
High school diploma or equivalent	2	3	2.6	4
Some college	4	7	5.3	9.3
Associate's degree	6	6	8	8
Bachelor's degree	34	32	45	42.6
Some Graduate course work completed	9	6	12	8
Graduate degree	19	18	25	24

Table 1-4. Participant's household income

Income level	Frequency(<i>f</i>)	Percent (%)
\$40,000 - \$59,999	22	29.3
\$60,000 - \$89,999	5	6.7
\$90,000 - \$119,999	10	13.3
\$120,000 - \$149,999	10	13.3
\$150,000 or more	27	36.5

Instrumentation

In order to measure gender role identity the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) Short Form (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1974) was used. The questionnaire is comprised of 24 items that are broken down into three eight-item scales. The Masculinity and Femininity scales are comprised of unipolar items that are considered desirable characteristics of both genders, but that are more often found in one gender. The final scale, labeled Masculinity-Femininity, is bipolar and consists of attributes that have dissimilar social desirability for each sex and was not used in the present study. For each item a five-point Likert rating scale is used to allow participants to rate themselves.

The short form of the PAQ was developed from the full PAQ, which is comprised of 55 questions. The questions for the short form were chosen from each of the three

subscales based on their whole part correlations (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1974). The full length PAQ was developed using the Sex Role Stereotype Questionnaire (SRSQ) which was developed by Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, and Broverman (1968) and 16 additional items created by Spence, Helmreich and Stapp. The items were given to a group of students at the University of Texas at Austin. A portion of the students were instructed to rate the “typical adult male and female” while a second group was instructed to rate the “typical college student” and yet a third group was told to rate the “ideal male and female”. All the subjects were then instructed to go through the items and rank themselves (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1974). Of the original 134 items, 66 showed significant differences between males and females in both the typical peer and adult conditions. Of these 66 items 55 were chosen arbitrarily for the full form of the PAQ.

High correlations are shown between the PAQ and the PAQ short form on all subscales (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1974). On the full scale for Femininity r equalled .90, for Masculinity, r for the full scale equalled .90, and for the Masculinity – Femininity r equalled .90. For the two complete forms, the reliability coefficient for total self was .92, for the stereotypes scale the coefficient was .94. This reveals a positive correlation between the two forms. Test-retest reliability for the instrument done after a thirteen week period revealed correlation coefficients of .92 for the Masculinity scale, .98 for the Femininity scale, the values for the subscales varied from .65 - .91 (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1974).

The Marital Satisfaction Inventory, Revised (MSI-R; Snyder, 1997) was used to measure levels of marital satisfaction. As defined by Snyder (1997), marital satisfaction is determined by examining an individual's relationship distress and their dissatisfaction

with various components of their relationship including time together, communication, and sexual satisfaction. The MSI-R is a self-report measure that is designed to measure marital satisfaction as defined by Snyder, low scores on the individual scales indicate the individual views their relationship as satisfying and exhibits increased marital satisfaction.

The assessment is composed of 150 “True” or “False” items, which for the purpose of this study were scored on an individual basis, although the tool can be used with an intact couple. Responses were scored across 13 scales including two validity scales, a global affective scale (Global Distress) and ten additional scales that measure specific areas of distress – Affective Communication, Problem-Solving Communication, Aggression, Time Together, Disagreement About Finances, Sexual dissatisfaction, Role Orientation, Family History of Distress, Dissatisfaction With Children, Conflict Over Child Rearing. For the purposes of the present study the Global Distress scale was used as the measure of marital satisfaction. This scale measures the individual’s overall dissatisfaction with the relationship and reflects global relationship distress, unfavorable comparisons to other individuals’ relationships and pessimism regarding the future of the relationship (Snyder, 1997). Low scores on this scale indicate the individual views their relationship as satisfying and exhibits increased marital satisfaction (Snyder, 1997).

The MSI-R is a revision and restandardization of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI), which was created by Snyder in 1981. The revisions to the original MSI include a larger and more representative standardization sample, a reduction in the number of items and the addition of a scale assessing distress over the aggression in a relationship. Despite the changes, key features of the MSI remain and there is a strong

correlation between parallel scales in the MSI-R and the original instrument (Snyder, 1997). Reliability testing of the MSI-R has confirmed both the internal consistency and the instrument's stability across time for the individual scales. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .70 to .93 on the scales (excluding the Inconsistency scale) with a mean of .82. Test-retest reliability at a 6-week interval showed coefficients of .74 - .88 with a mean of .79 (excluding the Inconsistency scale). Additionally, looking at the correlations between the corresponding revisions the relationship between the MSI-R scales and the scales of the original MSI were tested. The results of this examination showed correlations ranging from .94 to .98 revealing high levels of interrelation (Snyder, 1997).

Subjects also filled out a basic demographic sheet that included questions about age, gender, length of marriage, number and age of children (when applicable), level of education, type of work, hours worked outside the home and income level. This demographic sheet also included questions designed to determine if the subject and his or her spouse worked outside the home because of a personal desire or out of a financial or psychological need to work.

While it was likely the case that most people fall somewhere between these two choices, it was the goal of the researchers to determine which option was the most salient for the subjects. As discussed earlier, researchers have used several typologies for both dual-income families and working women. Most relevant to this study is Hakim's classification home-centered, work-centered and adaptive women (Hakim, 1998). While there has been some support for this theory, the fact that over two-thirds of women are classified as adaptive has caused others to question the legitimacy of the classifications

(Procter & Padfield 1999). It is exactly this scenario that the researchers were hoping to avoid by creating a forced choice option.

Procedure

Subjects were recruited from local business organizations, community centers, and from community events hosted on the University of Houston campus. Those who agreed to participate were sent a packet containing an informed consent document, the test materials, and a return envelope. The sequence of the test materials was randomly assembled within the packet to protect against any possible order effect. The instruments were coded with a number prior to being handed out to maintain coordination of the materials.

Within the packet was a letter instructing subjects to complete the test materials in a distraction-free environment, in one sitting, and without input from their spouse. Once they completed the materials, subjects were asked to mail the materials back to the researcher. In homes where both the husband and the wife choose to participate they were instructed not to discuss the instruments with one another and were both given individual packets to help ensure the security and anonymity of their information.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Data Analysis

To conduct the analysis, participants were divided into four groups: women who want to work, women who feel they must work, men who perceive that their wives want to work, and men who perceive that their wives feel they must work. A regression analysis was performed to determine what impact the level of femininity and level of masculinity had on the marital satisfaction of each group of participants. Additionally, multivariate analysis of variance procedures were conducted in order to determine whether women who work primarily for money differed significantly from women who work because they want to, with respect to marital satisfaction, level of femininity, and level of masculinity. A second MANOVA was conducted to examine the same variables among the men who participated in the study.

Research Questions 1 – 4

A multiple regression analysis was performed to determine what impact the level of femininity and level of masculinity had on the marital satisfaction of each group of participants. Specifically, this analysis was designed to address the following research questions:

- 1) Will levels of masculinity and levels of femininity significantly predict marital satisfaction in women who want to work?
- 2) Will levels of masculinity and levels of femininity significantly predict marital satisfaction in women who feel they must work?

- 3) Will levels of masculinity and levels of femininity significantly predict marital satisfaction in men who perceive that their wives want to work?
- 4) Will levels of masculinity and levels of femininity significantly predict marital satisfaction in men who perceive that their wives feel they must work?

For the first question, levels of masculinity and femininity accounted for only 20% of the original variance in marital satisfaction, $F(2, 27) = 3.14$ for women who want to work (see Table 3-1). However, only levels of masculinity served as a significant predictor of marital satisfaction ($\beta=1.11, p=0.025$). For the second question, regarding women who feel they must work, levels of masculinity and femininity accounted for only 10.5% of the original variance, $F(2,20)=1.06$. While this indicates that there is little statistical evidence that levels of either masculinity or femininity are good predictors of marital satisfaction for this population, it is worth noting that levels masculinity ($\beta= -0.79, p=0.16$) again seemed more significant than levels femininity ($\beta=0.18, p=0.57$).

In analyzing the data for the third question, the model accounted for only 1.8% of the original variance in marital satisfaction, indicating that levels of masculinity and femininity play a very small role in determining marital satisfaction for men who perceive that their wives want to work. This was in stark contrast to the results of analysis on the fourth question. For this group, men who perceive that their wives feel they must work, the model accounted for 71% of the original variance, $F(2,9)=8.70$. Again there was no evidence that levels of femininity predicted marital satisfaction with any statistical significance however, evidence suggests that the level of masculinity ($\beta= -3.77, p=0.005$) may be an important predictor of marital satisfaction (see Table 3-1). That said,

it is worth noting that these results have only limited generalizability due to the small sample size (N=10).

Research Questions 5 – 10

Two multivariate analysis of variance procedures were conducted in order to determine if between-group differences existed with respect to marital satisfaction, levels of femininity, and levels of masculinity. Specifically, the following questions were asked:

- 5) What differences exist with respect to marital satisfaction between those women who want to work versus those women who feel they must work?
- 6) What differences exist with respect to marital satisfaction between those men who perceive that their wives want to work versus those men who perceive that their wives must work?
- 7) Will women who want to work differ significantly in levels of femininity from women who feel they must work?
- 8) Will women who want to work differ significantly in levels of masculinity from women who feel they must work?
- 9) Will men who perceive that their wives want to work differ in levels of femininity from men who perceive that their wives feel they must work?
- 10) Will men who perceive that their wives want to work differ significantly in levels of masculinity from men who perceive that their wives feel they must work?

The first MANOVA test was conducted to determine if there was any statistically significant difference between the two groups of women based on levels of marital satisfaction, masculinity and femininity. The results show no evidence of significant differences, Wilks' Lambda =0.783 (see Table 4-2). The second test, conducted to determine if there were any differences between the two male groups also showed no evidence of any statistically significant differences, Wilks' Lambda =0.658 (see Table 4-1). The Wilks' Lambda test was used because the data was not normally distributed.

Follow Up Analysis

Additional multiple regression analyses were performed using the total study population (N=75) to search for evidence of other predictors of marital satisfaction. A model was developed using two sub-scales of the MSI-R, Problem Solving Communication (PSC) and the Affective Communication (AFC), which accounted for 61.5% of the original variance, $F(2, 74)=57.51$. For the two factors, statistical evidence suggests that scores on the both the PSC scale ($\beta=0.5, p=0.000$), and scores on the AFC scale ($\beta=0.31, p=0.009$) serve as significant predictors of marital satisfaction (see Table 3-2). As with the Global Distress scale, the AFC and PSC scales measure areas of distress in the relationship so that individuals with low scores report more satisfactory and fulfilling relationships.

Table 2-1. Descriptive Statistics for study's variables

	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Personal Attributes Questionnaire Femininity Scale	31.53	4.62	17 – 40
Personal Attributes Questionnaire Masculinity Scale	29.20	2.97	23 – 36
Marital Satisfaction Inventory Revised - Global Distress Scale	48.88	8.66	39 – 76

Table 2-2. Descriptive Statistics for study's variables by gender

	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
PAQ- Femininity			
Males	30.80	4.57	17 – 39
Females	31.91	4.65	22 – 40
PAQ- Masculinity			
Males	29.73	2.86	24 – 35
Females	28.91	3.02	23 – 36
MSI-R- Global Distress Scale			
Males	50.08	10.60	39 – 67
Females	48.24	7.48	39 – 65

Table 3-1. Regression Analysis of Research Questions 1 - 4

Group #	R^2	p	p	F	df	β	β
		(Masculinity)	(Femininity)			(Masculinity)	(Femininity)
Group 1	20.1	0.025	0.659	3.14	2,27	1.112	0.157
Group 2	10.5	0.165	0.574	1.06	2,20	-0.791	0.185
Group 3	1.8	0.630	0.891	0.12	2,15	-0.473	0.081
Group 4	71.3	0.005	0.420	8.70	2,9	-3.777	-0.522

Table 3-2. Regression Analysis of Follow Up Analysis

	R^2	p (AFC)	p (PSC)	F	df	β (AFC)	β (PSC)
Whole Sample	61.5	0.009	0.000	57.51	2,74	0.316	0.504
Women	58.0	0.100	0.003	31.78	2,48	0.261	0.476
Men	66.4	0.041	0.005	22.75	2,25	0.437	0.530

Table 4-1. Multivariate Analysis of Variance between Male Groups

Variable	SS	df	F	p	R^2
Femininity	7.78	1	0.53	0.53	0.01
Masculinity	8.67	1	1.06	0.31	0.04
Marital Satisfaction	1.69	1	0.01	0.90	0.001

Table 4-2. Multivariate Analysis of Variance between Female Groups

Variable	SS	df	F	p	R^2
Femininity	0.04	1	0.002	0.96	0.00
Masculinity	0.61	1	0.06	0.79	0.001
Marital Satisfaction	60.10	1	1.07	0.30	0.02

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The roles of masculinity and femininity

Research questions 1 – 4 investigated the impact of levels of femininity and masculinity on marital satisfaction in four groups of people; women who want to work, women who feel they must work, men who perceived that their wives want to work and men who perceived their wives work because they feel they must work. For the different groups the model accounted for 20%, 10%, 1.8%, and 71% of the variance in marital satisfaction respectively. While the statistical significance of levels of masculinity and femininity on marital satisfaction seemed limited, it is worth noting that levels of femininity were even less significant. This is consistent with past research, which has shown masculinity to be a stronger indicator of marital satisfaction and adjustment than femininity (Agarwal & Srivastava, 1989; Rozenzweig & Dailey, 1989).

Results from the current study seem to be at once in-line with, and in opposition to, previous research indicating that levels of masculinity may play only a small role in the marital satisfaction of women, but that it is an important predictor for men (House 1986, Vannoy & Philliber 1992). Here, the current study seems to reinforce findings that levels of masculinity play a minor role in predicting the marital satisfaction of women, but the male group presents an interesting twist to previous results as masculinity was shown to be important for one group (accounting for nearly 71% of variance in men who perceived that their wives feel they must work) and not the other.

Previous research has not divided male participants based on their perception of their wives' reasons for working, making it difficult to make any assumptions as to why masculinity may be a strong predictor of marital satisfaction for one group and not the other. It is especially interesting that higher levels of masculinity would predict higher levels of marital satisfaction in the group of men who perceived that their wives did not want to work. It might be assumed that men with high levels of masculinity could view their wives' need to work as a failure on their part to fulfill the traditional role of breadwinner, it would then be expected that this would decrease marital satisfaction which was not the case with the participants in this study. Perhaps this is a reflection of the changing roles of men in the home. Research has shown that marital and family roles are becoming more salient for many men (Barnett et al., 1993; Barnett et al., 1994), and being part of a dual-employment marriage has allowed men to be more involved in parenting, enabling them to nurture and bond with their family (Barnett & Rivers, 1996) and increasing their marital satisfaction.

In examining the results from research question number one, statistical evidence for levels of femininity and masculinity as predictors of marital satisfaction is only somewhat convincing, with the model accounting for 20% of the variance. That said, this is the only group where the relation between levels of masculinity and marital satisfaction was inverse, meaning that higher levels of masculinity predicted lower levels of marital satisfaction in women who want to work. While caution is needed in interpreting these results due to the overall low predictive ability of the model, the results are worth noting because while some studies have show that a wife's gender-identity is unrelated to marital satisfaction (Vannoy & Philliber 1992), higher levels of masculinity have not

been shown to predict lower levels of marital satisfaction. This may be the result of the unique way in which the groups were divided in the study, taking into account the subjects' reasons for working rather than simply the number of hours worked or type of job held.

Between Group Differences

Perhaps one of the more interesting results of the study was the lack of between-group differences revealed by the multivariate analysis of variance performed. Past research has shown some differences in levels of marital satisfaction between dual-income and dual-career couples (Ordern & Bradburn, 1966, Nomaguchi, 2009; Townsend, 2002) and amongst the various couples types (Mickelson et. al, 2006, Silverstein et. al, 2002). Perhaps, because dual-employment homes have become more accepted and the roles of wife and husband have become less gendered, couples have been able to more easily experience the benefits of dual-employment. As Milkie & Peltola (1999) discussed, different roles within marriage have long been defined by cultural expectations, but as the culture shifts so might the importance of gender-identity in relation to marital satisfaction allowing couples to renegotiate roles and better balance work and family.

Limitations

Issues with the recruitment of subjects and the characteristics of the sample created inherent methodological limitations for the present study. While efforts were made to increase the diversity and sample size of the population, the researcher had limited success recruiting participants, specifically males, individuals from diverse ethnic

backgrounds, and a broader range of socio-economic status. The result is a study largely based on the participation of education, middle and upper-middle class Caucasians. Because previous studies have shown differences in marital satisfaction based on race and income (Corra et. al., 2009) it is important to understand that the results in the study may not be reflective of individuals from other racial and SES backgrounds.

Another limitation to the study is the relatively small sample size, specifically for the male participants, N=16 for men who perceive that their wives want to work and an N=10 for the group of men who perceive that their wives feel they must work. Because of this, the analysis of this group's responses should be viewed as pilot research. More research with larger sample sizes will be needed to draw any firm conclusions.

Areas For Further Research

Perhaps the most notable finding in from the study was the identification of the PSC and AFC scales of the MSI-R as being significant predictors of overall marital satisfaction. The PSC scale measures overt distress in the relationship and a couples' general inability to resolve conflict. This is done by assessing three key constructs; failure to resolve even minor differences, lack of specific problem-solving skills, over reactivity of partner and inability to discuss sensitive topics (Synder, 1997). The AFC scale is designed to measure a subject's dissatisfaction with the amount of affection and understanding their partner expresses. Two areas of assessment are considered in this scale; lack of affection and support and lack of empathy or mutual disclosure (Snyder, 1997). Considering the vast range of problem areas assessed by the MSI-R it is interesting that these two scales should be such strong indicators of overall marital

satisfaction. Past research has shown the importance of proper spousal support for dual-employment (Dehle et al. 2001; Purdom, Lucaus & Milller, 2006), these results may indicate another key area for couples negotiating both work and family roles. At minimum, this question may be worth further exploration in future research.

Additionally, the findings related to the 4th research question, specifically that 71% of the variance in marital satisfaction can be explained by looking at levels of masculinity and femininity amongst male who perceive that their wives feel they must work, warrant further exploration. Because the population of this group was so small (N=10) it is difficult to know if this is a true trend or the result of a small population size. That said, based on this sample, higher levels of masculinity are an important predictor of higher levels of marital satisfaction. It is not clear based on past research why levels of masculinity may be a more important predictor for men who perceive their wives want to work versus those men who perceive their wives want to work, but previous research has shown that perception (Carels & Baucom, 1999, Julien et al. 2003, Vannoy & Philliber 1992) can be a powerful factor in marital satisfaction.

Conclusion

Although the present study did not yield the expected results, two interesting findings do stand out. The finding that levels of masculinity proved to be a significant predictor of marital satisfaction for men who perceive that their wives feel they must work is interesting, not only because the model accounted for 71% of the variance, but also because the model proved to be fairly unhelpful for predicating the marital satisfaction of the other male group. While the present study cannot explain this

difference, it was unexpected and warrants further study. Additionally, the results of the follow up analysis, which revealed that the PSC and AFC scales were significant predictors of marital satisfaction, were also unexpected and notable. In the practice of couples counseling there is a growing trend to focus less on helping couples build communication skills; however, these results seem to indicate that a couples' ability to communicate to solve problems and express emotions is important to their overall marital satisfaction.

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APPENDIX A
STUDY COVER LETTER

Dear Respondent,

I am following up with you regarding your willingness to participate in a research project designed to look at some of the difficulties couples face when both members participate in the work force. This research project will be used as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Education.

Along with this letter is a short questionnaire that asks a variety of questions about you and your spouse, as well as two surveys designed to obtain more information about you and your marriage. I am asking you to look over the questionnaires, complete them and send them back to me.

Additionally, there is a copy of an informed consent document enclosed in this packet, which you may keep for your records.

This research packet should take about 45 minutes to complete. I ask that when you complete the materials in this packet that you do so in a distraction-free environment and that you complete the packet in one sitting. Additionally, please do not discuss this study with your spouse until you have completed the questionnaires. These steps will help to maintain the integrity of the research.

Please note that your participation in this survey is confidential and your answers are completely anonymous.

Once completed, please return the materials in the self-addressed envelope provided. You do not need to provide a return address when mailing the final materials; this will help to ensure that your answers remain anonymous.

Your participation is voluntary, but if you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, you may contact me at 713-743-3214 or Dr. John P. Gaa (713-743-9819).

This project has been reviewed by the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713) 743-9204.

Sincerely,

Elsa Rojas,

Graduate Student
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Houston

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

Informed consent
University of Houston
Consent to Participate in Research

Project Title and Purpose: The Impact of Gender and Employment Choice on the Marital Satisfaction of Dual-Earner Couples

You are invited to participate in a research project conducted by Elsa Rojas, an Educational Psychology graduate student at the University of Houston, under the supervision of Dr. John P. Gaa. The focus of this project is to examine the interplay of multiple factors on the satisfaction of relationships, specifically among working couples. Results of this research will make a valuable addition to our understanding of factors effecting satisfaction within relationships.

Non-Participation:

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate, may withdraw at any time, and may refuse to answer any question.

Procedures:

You are one of about 150 participants that will be asked to complete this research packet. I ask that you complete the enclosed materials at one time, without input from your spouse. Responding to these questionnaires will take approximately 45 minutes of your time. Once you have completed the questionnaires, you are asked to seal your answers in the return envelope and mail them back to the researchers.

Confidentiality:

All responses given are anonymous. The materials are marked with an arbitrary code number and will not list your name. Additionally, there is record linking participants to the code number – the code is simply used to link the individual questionnaires to one another. These measures ensure that there will be no way to trace answers back to a single individual.

Risk/Discomfort

It is not anticipated that there are any risks involved in participating in this project. However, please note that some questions are aimed at gaining an understanding of participants' level of marital satisfaction and therefore may be personal in nature.

Benefits:

There are no direct benefits to the participants of this research. However, the results of this project may contribute a great deal to the understanding of how various factors affect a couple's level of marital satisfaction.

Publication Statement:

The results of this project may be published in professional and/or scientific journals. They may also be used for educational purposes or professional presentations. However, no individual participants will be identified.

Questions:

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONCERNING THIS PROJECT YOU MAY CONTACT ELSA ROJAS (713-743-3214) OR DR. JOHN P. GAA (713-743-9819).

ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (713-743-9204). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer each question in the provided space.

1. What is your sex?
 Male
 Female
2. What is your age? _____
3. How long have you been married? _____
4. Do you have children, and if so how many? _____
5. Do your children currently live in your home? _____
6. Do you work full time or part time? _____
7. Does your spouse work full time or part time? _____
8. What is your job/
occupation? _____
9. What is your spouse's job/
occupation? _____
10. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
 Less than High school
 High school graduate - high school diploma or the equivalent (for
example: GED)
 Some college
 Associate degree
 Bachelor's degree
 Some Graduate degree course work completed
 Graduate degree
11. What is the highest degree or level of school your spouse has completed?
 Less than High school
 High school graduate - high school diploma or the equivalent (for
example: GED)
 Some college
 Associate degree
 Bachelor's degree
 Some Graduate degree course work completed
 Graduate degree

12. What is your total household income?
- Less than \$10,000
 - \$10,000 to \$39,999
 - \$40,000 to \$59,999
 - \$60,000 to \$89,999
 - \$90,000 to \$119,999
 - \$120,000 to \$149,999
 - \$150,000 or more
13. How do you describe yourself? (please check the one option that best describes you)
- American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - Asian or Asian American
 - Black or African American
 - Hispanic or Latin
 - Non-Hispanic White
14. If your lifestyle was not going to be effected, would **YOU** choose to continue working in your current job?
- Yes
 - No
15. If your lifestyle was not going to be effected, would **YOUR SPOUSE** choose to continue working in his/her current job?
- Yes
 - No
16. If your lifestyle was not going to be effected, would **YOU** choose to continue working in any job?
- Yes
 - No
17. If your lifestyle was not going to be effected, would **YOUR SPOUSE** choose to continue working in any job?
- Yes
 - No
18. People often work for a number of reasons. For the reasons below, please rank their level of importance to **YOU** with 1 being most important and 4 being least important.
- Money

- ___ Social contact
- ___ Satisfaction
- ___ Social pressure

19. People often work for a number of reasons. For the reasons below, please rank their level of importance to **YOUR SPOUSE** with 1 being most important and 4 being least important.

- ___ Money
- ___ Social contact
- ___ Satisfaction
- ___ Social pressure

20. Are there any other important reasons **YOU** work? If so, what are they and where would they rank in comparison to the reasons above.

21. Are there any other important reasons **YOUR SPOUSE** works? If so, what are they and where would they rank in comparison to the reasons above.

APPENDIX D

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES QUESTIONNAIRE – SHORT FORM

Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1973)

Instructions:

The items below inquire about what kind of person you think you are. Each item consists of a PAIR of characteristics, with the letters A-E in between. For example,

Not at all artistic A.....B.....C.....D.....E Very artistic

Each pair describes contradictory characteristics - that is, you cannot be both at the same time, such as very artistic and not at all artistic.

The letters form a scale between the two extremes. You are to choose a letter which describes where YOU fall on the scale. For example, if you think that you have no artistic ability, you would choose A. If you think that you are pretty good, you might choose D. If you are only medium, you might choose C, and so forth.

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Not at all aggressive | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very aggressive |
| 2. Not at all independent | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very independent |
| 3. Not at all emotional | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very emotional |
| 4. Very submissive | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very dominant |
| 5. Not at all excitable in a major crisis | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very excitable in a major crisis |
| 6. Very passive | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very active |
| 7. Not at all able to devote self completely to others | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Able to devote self completely to others |
| 8. Very rough | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very gentle |
| 9. Not at all helpful to others | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very helpful to others |
| 10. Not at all competitive | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very competitive |
| 11. Very home oriented | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very worldly |
| 12. Not at all kind | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very kind |
| 13. Indifferent to others= approval | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Highly needful of others' approval |
| 14. Feelings not easily hurt | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Feelings easily hurt |
| 15. Not at all aware of feelings of others | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very aware of feelings of others |
| 16. Can make decisions easily | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Has difficulty making decisions |
| 17. Gives up very easily | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Never gives up easily |
| 18. Never cries | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Cries very easily |
| 19. Not at all self-confident | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very self-confident |
| 20. Feels very inferior | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Feels very superior |
| 21. Not at all understanding of others | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very understanding of others |
| 22. Very cold in relations with | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | Very warm in relations |

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| others | | | with others |
| 23. Very little need for security | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | | Very strong need for security |
| 24. Goes to pieces under pressure | A.....B.....C.....D.....E | | Stands up well under pressure |

APPENDIX E

MARITAL SATISFACTION INVENTORY – REVISED

Martial Satisfaction Inventory – Revised

Due to copyright the survey cannot be reprinted in its entirety, below is a sample provided by the publisher, Western Psychology Services.

MSI-R AutoScore™ Form

Douglas K. Snyder, Ph.D.

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. When my partner and I have differences of opinion, we sit down and discuss them. | <input type="radio"/> T | <input type="radio"/> F |
| 2. I am fairly satisfied with the way my partner and I spend our available free time. | <input type="radio"/> T | <input type="radio"/> F |
| 3. My partner almost always responds with understanding to my mood at a given moment. | <input type="radio"/> T | <input type="radio"/> F |
- 

