THE INTERGENERATIONAL EFFECTS OF FAMILY EXPRESSIVENESS ON

MARITAL COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT BEHAVIORS

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THE INTERGENERATIONAL EFFECTS OF FAMILY EXPRESSIVENESS ON MARITAL COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT BEHAVIORS

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the present study is to gain a greater understanding of the precursors of marital conflict and communication patterns by examining their relationship with expressiveness in the family of origin. Married individuals (N = 184; 97 men and 97 women) completed questionnaires that assessed their perceptions of both positive and negative expressiveness of mother and father while the respondent was growing up, and current marital communication and conflict behaviors used with their spouses. Only mother positive expressiveness was significantly related to positive communication and conflict behaviors, and this relationship was found only for sons. Results of hierarchical regression analyses indicated that mother and father negative expressiveness significantly predicted negative marital communication and conflict behaviors for sons and daughters. This was the case for both sons and daughters even though parental negative expressiveness was reported at lower levels than positive expressiveness. Data on current

parent-child conflict were available for half of the sample. Parent-child conflict did not significantly contribute to the understanding of individuals' marital communication and conflict behaviors.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Emotional expressiveness is a complex and multifaceted domain that affects our daily lives, yet little is known about how the patterns of expressiveness in one's family of origin affect an individual's later relationships. Emotional expressiveness is defined as the outward display of emotion, which includes facial, vocal, or behavioral displays combined with positive and negative tone (Kring, Smith, & Neale, 1994; Halberstadt, Crisp, & Eaton, 1999). Alternatively, Halberstadt and her associates (1999) define family expressiveness as the predominant pattern or style of nonverbal and verbal expression found in the family, as a separate construct from expressiveness. One's family of origin is the most commonly attributed source of an individual's emotional expressiveness.

The study of family expressiveness has only begun recently. In Halberstadt, Crisp, and Eaton's (1999) review of the literature, a total of 77 manuscripts had been written on the topic of family expressiveness. Early research on family expressiveness focused on general family expressiveness and its effects on children. Results from these studies have helped establish a consensus that children learn their pattern of expressiveness through observational learning in their families of origin (Halberstadt et al., 1999). Results also have indicated that family expressiveness is not just a continuum ranging from more expressive to less expressive, but instead has multiple dimensions.

Specifically, expressiveness is made up of positive and negative expressiveness, which are not necessarily related (Halberstadt et al., 1999). In general, positive family expressiveness is correlated with positive outcomes, such as children's expressiveness and understanding of emotions, whereas negative family expressiveness has been related to negative outcomes, such as anger expression in children (Burrowes & Halberstadt, 1987).

Research has recently moved beyond the examination of general family expressiveness to focus on specific family members. A number of studies measuring individual parental expressiveness have found links between parental expressiveness and children's emotional expressiveness, social skills, social popularity, and pro-social behaviors such as helpfulness, concern for and attention to others, and empathy (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996; Halberstadt et al., 1999; Halberstadt, Fox, & Jones, 1993). In Gottman and his associates' (1996) study, children who had a better understanding of emotions were not necessarily more expressive than their peers, but were considered more socially competent.

It is quite likely that the social competence children develop continues into adolescence and adulthood. While much less attention has been directed toward these life-cycle stages, studies indicate that family expressiveness is related to adolescent outcomes such as self-esteem and well-being. Positive family expressiveness is associated with positive parent-adolescent relationship outcomes, including family problem-solving ability, greater communication quality, and less conflict; also negative family expressiveness is positively associated with poorer quality relationships characterized by greater conflict and more difficulty in dealing with problems (Capaldi,

Forgatch, & Crosby, 1994; Flannery, Montemayor, & Eberly, 1994; Flannery, Montemayhor, Eberly, & Torquati, 1993; Julian, McKenry, & McKelvey, 1991).

We would expect to see similar patterns of relationship skills in adulthood. Adults who are more aware of emotions and more comfortable handling emotions are likely to have greater success in their relationships. Comfort with their own emotional expression and emotional situations would be especially helpful in conflict situations, particularly in regard to communication skills. However, our understanding of the relationship between family expressiveness in the family of origin and outcomes during adulthood is less clear. Only three studies reviewed addressed this relationship; two focusing on whether family expressiveness is related to later relationship outcomes, and one focusing more specifically on husbands' interactions with their wives. Barth & Steingard's study (1994, as cited in Halberstadt et al., 1999) indicated that young adults tend to mirror family expressiveness styles in their dating relationships. Not surprisingly, King (1993) found that one's perceptions of partner's general expressiveness were related to one's marital satisfaction.

The third study by Wall (2003) was the only one to examine both positive and negative family expressiveness in the context of marital behaviors. His study examined husbands only. Wall's study indicated that positive family expressiveness in one's family of origin is related to husbands' patterns of interaction within the marital relationship. This included expressing fondness and admiration for one's spouse, having knowledge of the partner's daily life, and being responsive to the partner's bids for connection. Positive family expressiveness was also negatively related to emotional disengagement from the partner. Wall found stronger support for the effects of positive expressiveness

than for negative expressiveness in the family of origin. Results from these studies, and from those described above for the parent-adolescent relationship, suggest that expressiveness in the family of origin may be related to communication and conflict-solving skills that partners bring to the marital relationship. However, not all studies have examined both positive and negative family expressiveness in the family of origin, pointing to the need for further examination of how these aspects of family expressiveness influence adult relationship patterns.

An impressive body of literature documents the significant role that communication skills play in maintaining romantic relationships. Poor communication and conflict behaviors have been found to be related to greater negativity in relationships and greater marital instability (e.g. Gottman, Coan, Carrere, & Swanson, 1998; Leonard & Roberts, 1998; Rogge & Bradbury, 1999). Communication and conflict behaviors are important aspects of the marital relationship, and the literature on family expressiveness suggests that experiences in the family of origin may play an important role in the development of these behaviors.

Throughout the literature on expressiveness, intergenerational transmission, marital conflict and communication, researchers have been interested in sex-related patterns. Men and women have frequently been found to have different expressive styles, women being more expressive than men in general (e.g., Brody, 1997; Halberstadt et al., 1999). Women typically provide more emotional forms of social support (Marks & McLanahan, 1993), engage in more positive relationship thinking (Cate, Koval, Lloyd, & Wilson, 1995), and use more maintenance strategies such as positivity and openness (Dainton & Stafford, 1993). Husbands and wives tend to express

themselves differently during conflict, men inhibiting their anger and facial expression more than wives, and wives being more emotional (see Brody, 1997 for a review). However, there are a number of studies that have not found sex differences in men's and women's expressive behaviors in close relationships (Cutrona & Suhr, 1994; Pasch & Bradbury, 1998; Ragsdale, 1996; Sprecher et. al., 1995), or, when differences are found, they are small.

Researchers have also examined the parent-child relationship, with an interest in whether there are relationship patterns unique to four dyads: mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, and father-son. Most studies have found, as expected, that both mothers and fathers have an important influence on child outcomes, but some studies have found dyadic sex-related patterns such as differences between the impact of father-daughter and mother-daughter relationships on child outcomes, or fathers influencing their sons but both mothers and fathers both influencing daughters (e.g. Reese-Weber & Marchland, 2002; Cassidy et al., 1992). Some researchers have suggested that fathers' involvement, possibly because fathers are generally less involved, may have stronger effects than mothers' involvement (e.g. Maccoby, 1990). These findings demonstrate the complexity of human interaction, and the need to further explore whether sex is related to expressive styles in the family of origin and to children's later marital communication and conflict styles.

Based on the current literature, it is apparent that the family of origin is a crucial environment that influences the development of skills in emotional expression and social competence, which in turn have a significant influence on individuals' marital relationships. The purpose of the present study is to gain a better understanding of how

patterns of expressiveness in the family of origin influence marital communication and conflict styles. Theoretically a person from an expressive family, specifically one with high positive patterns of expression, has learned to understand and express his/her emotions appropriately, a helpful skill in relationships. Ease of communication and interaction leads to healthier relationships. Understanding the basis of this pattern can assist therapists in their attempts to intervene in the family of origin before poor communication and conflict patterns develop.

This study will examine how parental expressiveness in the family of origin is related to communication and conflict behaviors in one's adult relationships. Two hypotheses will be tested. Hypothesis 1: Positive expressiveness in the family of origin will be associated with individuals' use of more positive and engaging interactions. Hypothesis 2: Negative family expressiveness will be associated with use of more negative and withdrawing interactions. In this study, two research questions will be addressed. Research Question 1: Will maternal expressiveness have a stronger relationship with child outcomes than paternal expressiveness, and will sons and daughters be affected in similar or different ways by maternal and paternal expressiveness? Research Question 2: Which types of parental expressiveness, positive or negative, are most predictive of individuals' later communication and conflict behaviors in the context of marriage?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, the relationship between patterns of family expressiveness in the family of origin and marital communication and conflict behaviors will be examined. The literature relevant to this study includes the following areas: Family expressiveness in the family of origin, intergenerational transmission of interactional and behavior styles, marital communication and conflict styles, and sex differences. Family expressiveness patterns in the family of origin are expected to have a significant effect on child outcomes in their later adult relationships, including the ways that they communicate and deal with conflict in their marital relationships. It is expected that sex will also be a factor in both patterns of parental expressiveness and in outcomes for sons and daughters.

Family Expressiveness

Emotional expressiveness is defined as the outward display of emotion, which includes facial, vocal, or behavioral displays combined with positive and negative tone (Kring, Smith, & Neale, 1994; Halberstadt et al., 1999). The general family pattern or style of both verbal and non-verbal expressiveness is called family expressiveness (Halberstadt et al., 1999), and is a separate construct from emotional expressiveness. It is family expressiveness which will be the predictor variable in the present study. Early studies of family expressiveness investigated general family expressiveness and it's effects on children. In recent years research on family expressiveness has expanded to

include different styles of expressiveness, emotional experience and regulation, understanding of emotion, and social competence (Halberstadt et al., 1999).

Measurement. Many studies of family expressiveness have used self report measures of expressiveness. Gross and John (1998) felt that it was unclear whether the different measures of emotional expressiveness refer to the same construct and whether that construct is multidimensional or unidimensional. They examined six of the most common questionnaires in an attempt to determine which factors make up expressiveness. The researchers discovered that emotional expressiveness cannot be measured on a continuum from inexpressive to expressive because of the multidimensionality of emotional expressiveness. They found that general expressiveness can be divided into expressive confidence, masking, and core emotional expressiveness. Expressive confidence predicts outgoing, extroverted behavior, whereas masking is related to the regulation of negative affect. Core emotional expressiveness is described as the spontaneous expression of emotion, and within it lie positive expressiveness, negative expressiveness, and impulse intensity. Gross and John (1998) argue that core expressiveness is what most researchers consider emotional expressiveness. Of that core, positive and negative expressiveness are the most commonly studied components and will be the primary focus of this study.

Child Outcomes. Families are commonly believed to be the primary context where children learn about emotions, and numerous studies have shown this to be the case (Balswick & Avertt, 1977; Boyum & Parke, 1995; Cassidy, Parke, Butkovsky, & Braungart, 1992; Gottman et al., 1996). Many of these studies have focused on how children learn social rules about what to feel and how to express their feelings (e.g.

Gottman et al., 1996). The primary processes through which children learn these rules include modeling, reinforcing, labeling, interpreting, and coaching (Halberstadt et al., 1999). A number of researchers have hypothesized that the general expressiveness of an individual's family of origin is the root of development of emotional expressiveness (e.g. Kring et al., 1994).

Researchers have found that children tend to segregate themselves into same sex groups at an early age, where they begin to develop different interaction styles. Girls are taught to value being emotional and boys are taught to disregard emotionality and be unemotional (Brody, 1997). Early theory on family expressiveness focused on how gender differences emerged from parental behaviors with daughters versus sons (e.g. Halberstadt et al., 1993). It was believed that the patterns of emotional expression in the family would predict children's levels of expressiveness and emotionality.

Sex differences in emotional expressiveness likely result from differences in how individuals are socialized (Brody, 1997). Maccoby (1990) theorizes that children may learn gender patterns by observing their parents, typically their father. It is unclear whether these early gender differences lead to later differences in experienced emotion or just in the frequency of emotional expression. In a study by Brody (1997) using 95 school-aged children and their families, fathers and mothers completed the Household and Child Care Checklist in which they rated how much time they spent on 15 different child care tasks. Results indicate that the percentage of time fathers spent with their children was related to the Masculinity-Femininity scale of the child version of the Personal Attribute Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974) and emotions that children expressed in stories written on the Themes for Emotional

Development-R scale. Girls with more involved fathers expressed more positive, competitive and aggressive emotions and less sadness than girls with fathers who were less involved. Boys of more involved fathers expressed less competitiveness, anger, and aggression, and more warmth and fear than those with less involved fathers. These results suggest that non-traditional behavior by fathers is associated with non-traditional behavior in their children. Since most fathers spend relatively little time with their children, Brody argues that this may be the reason these results are not often found.

Several studies have found significant associations between parents' expressiveness and children's emotional expressiveness, social skills, and popularity. In their review of literature, Halberstadt and her fellow authors (1999) found that patterns of positive expressiveness in families are related to children's social competence, and highly negative expressiveness is detrimental to child outcomes. Interestingly, some studies have found that low-to-moderate levels of negative family expressiveness are related to better outcomes for children. Also, positive expressiveness was linked with children's understanding of emotions, and in their popularity with peers.

Recently, some studies have begun to examine the expressiveness of individual parents and not just general family expressiveness. In one such study by Cassidy and her fellow researchers (1992), both mothers and fathers of 61 kindergarten and first grade children completed Halberstadt's Family Expressiveness Questionnaire as a measure of their own individual expressiveness. The researchers then interviewed the children regarding their understanding of emotion. The children and their parents then played a game together in a lab setting. The findings of the study revealed that mother's expressiveness in the home predicted their children's peer relationships, and that father's

expressiveness both in the home and the lab predicted their children's peer relations. Consistent with traditional gender roles, mothers reported greater expressiveness on the FEQ than husbands. Interestingly this was not the case when observed in the laboratory setting. During play in the lab, mothers' and fathers' emotional expressiveness were not significantly different.

In another study of the emotional environment in the family and child social competence, Gottman, Katz and Hooven (1996) examined the effects of parents' meta-emotion philosophy on children. The researchers define parental meta-emotion philosophy as the feelings and thoughts about one's own emotions and one's children's emotions. Gottman and his associates (1996) theorize that parental meta-emotion philosophy is related to positive parenting and to the inhibition of negative parental affect, which directly effects children's regulatory physiology, in turn effecting children's ability to regulate emotions. The researchers found that children whose parents had a positive meta-emotional philosophy were more expressive at a younger age. Children who were emotion-coached at age five were rated by teachers as more socially competent at age eight, though they were not more emotionally expressive with their peers. Gottman and his associates (1996) theorize that what the child learned from his or her mother's meta-emotion philosophy during preschool was retained by the child and underlies the development of social competence with peers. In middle childhood it is socially inappropriate when entering a group of peers to talk about and express one's own feelings (Gottman et al., 1996). Emotion-coached children have learned to be intelligent about social emotions, including how to behave in emotionally challenging situations, like those calling for an inhibited emotional response. Gottman and colleagues

(Gottman, et al. 1996) refer to this as emotional competence, and others call it emotional intelligence. It is likely these effects extend well into adulthood, but few studies have examined the relationship between family expressiveness in the family of origin and adult outcomes.

Adolescent and Adult Outcomes. One study that does link the emotional environment in the family of origin to late adolescence was conducted by Bronstein, Briones, Brooks, and Cowan (1996). Bronstein and her fellow researchers followed 40 children from fifth grade until twelfth grade to examine the long-term effects of family emotional socialization. They found that children from families who were receptive of emotion while the children were in fifth grade rated themselves as more emotionally expressive in twelfth grade. They also found that adolescent emotional expressiveness was positively related to social and psychological adjustment.

In another study of adolescent outcomes, Julian, McKenry, and McKelvey (1991) investigated the father-child relationship. They examined a number of factors including fathers' emotional expressiveness as mediators of stress influences on the relationship between fathers and their adolescent children. The findings of the study included that fathers' emotional expressiveness was positively related to the father-adolescent relationship. The researchers suggest the fathers' lack of conformity with the traditional sex role allowed the fathers to assume a less traditional role with their sons.

Those studies that have examined the link between family expressiveness in the family of origin and adult children demonstrate that adults from families that are more expressive rate themselves as more emotionally expressive and are rated as expressive by their peers (Balswick & Avert, 1977; Burrowes & Halberstadt, 1987; King & Emmons,

1990). One study by King and Emmons (1990) which focused on general family expressiveness found that college students from expressive homes experienced more intense emotions and were less ambivalent about their emotions than were those from less expressive families. Cooley (1992) found that women from families with high levels of positive expressiveness and low levels of negative expressiveness were less likely to be depressed, which suggests that positive expressiveness in one's family of origin may serve as a buffer against the development of depression.

Two studies have examined the influence of both positive and negative family expressiveness on outcomes in intimate relationships. A study of the relationship between parental expressiveness in the parent-child dyad was conducted by Barth and Steingard (1994, as cited in Halberstadt, 1999). Results indicated that both positive and negative expressiveness in the mother-child and father-child relationships were related to young adults' own expressiveness in dating relationships.

Findings from a study of the effects of family expressiveness in men's family of origin indicated a relationship to men's later marital relationship (Wall, 2003). Wall found that positive emotional expressiveness in husbands' families of origin was positively related to their own emotional intelligence, and the couple's marital friendship. Positive family expressiveness was also negatively related to husbands' emotional disengagement from the partner. Negative family expressiveness was related to husbands' emotional disengagement from their spouse and a small negative correlation was found between husbands' negative family expressiveness in their family of origin and marital friendship.

King (1993) studied the relationship between emotional expression, ambivalence

over expression, and emotional satisfaction with 50 married couples using the Emotional Expressiveness Questionnaire and the Ambivalence Over Emotional Expression Questionnaire. She found that emotional expressiveness was positively correlated with marital satisfaction, and that a subject's perception of his or her spouse's emotional expressiveness was also positively correlated with marital satisfaction. Husbands' ambivalence over expression was negatively correlated with both their wives' and their own marital satisfaction, but wives' ambivalence was unrelated to marital outcomes. King (1993) concludes that men who are more emotionally expressive, thereby failing to conform to sex role traits, experience heightened relationship satisfaction, as do their partners. This explanation is consistent with theories that a lack of comfort with one's emotions leads to worse psychological well-being (King and Emmons, 1990). King (1993) theorizes that conflict strategies such as emotional withdrawal and stonewalling, which have been shown to be related to marital conflict and dissolution, could be the result of ambivalence over expression of emotion in response to conflict. King suggests that a spouse's emotional expressiveness may lead to relationship satisfaction, but an alternative explanation may be that people in satisfying relationships can open up and be emotionally expressive. It is also possible that ambivalence about emotional expression may be the result of low satisfaction and not the cause of it.

Though the majority of research findings have been consistent with theories that children from expressive families are more expressive, and that positively expressive families have children who are more positively expressive, some researchers have found differing results. One such study by Halberstadt, Fox, and Jones (1993) was not consistent with the hypotheses about associations between family and children's

development styles. The self-report Family Expressiveness Questionnaire (FEQ; Halberstadt, 1986) was used to measure of mother's expressiveness and observations were used to measure children's facial and vocal expressiveness of happiness, sadness, fear and anger. Children with low-expressive mothers were more positively expressive than children with mothers who rated high in expressiveness. This may be because highly expressive mothers were also more negatively expressive than low expressive mothers, especially in anger expression. This is known as a cross-over effect, and Halberstadt and her fellow researchers (1999) theorize that this may happen because positively expressive homes are also supportive homes in which children experience the freedom to express their negative emotions. This cross-over effect may also be a result of children from low-expressive homes masking their negative expressions by replacing them with positive expressions, or, conversely, that parental expression has an effect on children's emotionality. The reasons behind these inconsistencies are not yet known and are open for theoretical work.

In summary, the family environment is generally considered the primary context where children learn about emotions. Children from more emotionally expressive families tend to have a greater understanding of emotions and tend to be regarded as more socially competent by their peers. Some studies have shown that these effects extend into adolescence and early adulthood, but most studies have focused only on young children. The majority of the studies reviewed focused on the effects of family expressiveness on individual outcomes, with less attention paid to relationship outcomes. Studies have found a clear relationship between positive emotional expression and positive outcomes, but findings are less clear that negative expressiveness leads to

negative outcomes. In the present study it is expected that the style of family expressiveness in the family of origin will be significantly related to communication and conflict behaviors in marriage. It is expected that positive family expressiveness will be related to positive communication and conflict behaviors, and that negative family expressiveness will be related to negative communication and conflict behaviors. Father and mother expressiveness will be examined independently in relation to child marital communication and conflict behaviors, and it is expected that both parents' expressive patterns will be significantly related to those outcomes.

Intergenerational Transmission

The family is widely considered the context where children learn about behavior, emotion, and social rules. A number of researchers have examined behavioral patterns in the family of origin as predictors of child outcomes. Many of the studies on intergenerational transmission are based on social learning theory and focus on imitation, with the idea that children learn about relationships by watching their parents' interactions. Some studies have focused on the environment in the family of origin and its effects on children's relationships as adults. Numerous studies have focused on the intergenerational transmission of violent behaviors, specifically marital violence. Others have focused on the intergenerational transmission of marital quality and stability. However, relatively few studies have attempted to determine the family of origin predictors of day-to-day communication and conflict patterns in relationships, which will be the outcome variable of the present study. The studies which have been conducted have found a strong effect of the family of origin on marital stability and quality.

The Marital Relationship and Child Outcomes. The influence of the family of

origin has been shown to effect children in multiple ways and has been the focus of a large amount of attention. In a study by Crockenberg and Langrock (2001) the researchers examined the role of specific emotions in children's responses to inter-parental conflict. Mothers and fathers of 164 six year old children reported on their styles of marital conflict, and then were observed interacting with their children. Their children's behavioral adjustment was rated, and children reported on their own emotional reactions to specific conflict events between their parents. The researchers found that the children mirrored the conflict behaviors of their same-sex parent; however they also found evidence of interaction effects. They found interactions between marital aggression, specifically that the amount of anger, sadness, and fear that girls exhibited increased with father's marital aggression. Father's aggression interacted with anger to predict externalizing for boys, and it interacted with fear to predict internalizing behavior in boys.

In one longitudinal study involving parents and their children Feng, Giarrusso, Bengtson and Frye (1999) examined whether parental divorce would impact children's marital satisfaction in their own marriage. The researchers measured marital satisfaction using a scale developed by Gilford and Bengtson (1979), which is based on marital interaction such as calm discussion and anger expression during disagreements. They found that parental divorce itself had only a minor impact on children's marital satisfaction, and both parent and child gender moderated the effects of divorce. Parental divorce did have a significant effect on daughters' likelihood of divorce, and parents' negative marital interactions were related to sons' marital satisfaction in their marriage, but parents' positive interactions were unrelated to their children's marital satisfaction.

However, the results were different when the researchers controlled for the children's ages. If children were under 18 when parental marital satisfaction was measured, effects began to surface. Mother's positive marital interactions were moderately correlated with daughters' positive marital interactions, and fathers' and daughters' negative interactions were correlated. This finding implies that the father and mother interactions have different kinds of influence on their daughter's outcomes over time.

Feng and his associates (1999) theorized that when mothers are dissatisfied with their relationships, they focus on the mother-child relationship, whereas when fathers are dissatisfied with their marital relationship they focus less on the father-child relationship. Feng and his fellow researchers suggest that transmission of marital quality and instability may occur through different processes for daughters and sons. Mothers are likely to provide different role models than fathers, for both daughters and sons. The idea that intergenerational transmission of behaviors and patterns may be gender-related demonstrates the need for further study of both child and parent gender as potential factors, both of which will be examined in the current study.

Feng and his fellow researchers' findings are consistent with other studies which have found that it is not divorce itself that causes problems for children, but the interparental conflict that often precedes divorce. In a study by Webster, Orbuch and House (1995) the effects of the structure of the family of origin were examined as a predictor of marital quality and stability. The researchers used the National Survey of Families and Households to obtain a national sample. They theorized that if divorce is assumed to be associated with problematic family interaction pre-divorce, children of divorced parents would have greater interpersonal relationship problems in their own

marriages. They found that families with very happy marriages had no relationship between family history and child marital interactions. In families with lower levels of marital happiness, children of divorce were much more likely to report negative interaction problems such as negative escalation and reduced communication with their spouse. The researchers' findings were consistent with their hypothesis that childhood observation of interparental conflict may negatively affect subsequent marital satisfaction and quality.

The Parent-Child Relationship and Child Outcomes. Another area of intergenerational transmission which has received attention is how the parent-child relationship influences child outcomes. In one study by Crockenberg and Lourie (1996), parents' use of coercion and negation with their children was examined in relation to how it is related to children's peer conflict strategies, behavioral adjustment and social competence. Parent child relationships were first measured at age two, and then followed until age six. The researchers found parent's use of coercion and reasoning with their children was related to their children's conflict strategies with peers and social competence at age six. This study demonstrates the influence of parent-child interactions on child conflict strategies and behaviors, but relatively few studies have been conducted examining this influence into adolescence and adulthood.

In one of the few longitudinal studies examining the effects of family of origin interactional processes on adult romantic relationships, Conger and his fellow researchers (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000) followed 193 young adults for eight years and then examined their interpersonal relationship behaviors with their romantic partners. They hypothesized that adult children of parents who demonstrated competent marital

relationships, which included high levels of warmth and support, and low levels of hostility and coercion, would emulate those relationships. The data did not support this hypothesis, but interestingly, parenting styles did affect children's relationships in other ways. Children whose parents were nurturing and involved were more likely to be a warm, supportive and non-hostile romantic partner. The researchers also found that the individual's affective behaviors, including warmth and hostility, and their relationship quality were strongly associated and this was consistent regardless of whether it was self report, partner report, or a combined couple report (Conger et al., 2000). Another interesting finding from this study is that parenting behaviors were the only significant family of origin predictors of later relationship competence . This remained the case even after taking into account earlier behaviors with their siblings, such as warmth and hostility. Similar to the findings of Feng and his fellow researchers (1999), Conger and associates theorized that there may be strong interrelationship between parenting skills and parental marital behavior, which could help account for some of their findings.

Reese-Weber and Bartle-Haring (1998) conducted a study examining the family of origin predictors of adolescent-romantic partner conflict resolution strategies. The researchers examined the relationship of adolescent-mother and adolescent-father conflict resolutions strategies with adolescent-romantic partner conflict resolution strategies. In self report, 163 late adolescents described their perceptions of styles of conflict in their relationships with their parents, their siblings and their romantic partners, as well as inter-parental conflict strategies. The adolescents reported that they used similar conflict behaviors and strategies when in conflict with their parents and siblings as they did with their romantic partners. Mother-adolescent and father-adolescent conflict strategies had a

direct relationship with the strategies that adolescents used with their romantic partners. The researchers theorize that it is not the inter-parental conflicts that influence how their children will deal with conflict in their romantic relationships later on, but instead the conflicts between the parents and child. These findings are very similar to that of Conger and his fellow researchers (2000). Reese-Weber and Bartle-Haring believe that direct experience was a more powerful influence on the development of conflict styles than merely witnessing the conflict.

In another study of the predictors of late adolescent relationships, Reese-Weber and Marchand (2002) examined parent-adolescent conflict as well as adolescent attachment anxiety and depressive symptoms as predictors of late adolescents' conflict skills in romantic relationships. They also examined possible gender differences for both adolescents and parents. With a sample of 256 college students the researchers used the self-report Managing Affect and Differences Scale (Arellano & Markman, 1995) to examine the communication and conflict behaviors the adolescents use with their parents and with their current relationship partner. Each of the predictor variables was significant predictors of adolescent-romantic partner conflict strategies. When further examined, the data revealed gender effects. For adolescent men, father-son behaviors and adolescent depressive symptoms were predictors of relationship conflict patterns, but for adolescent women, communication and conflict patterns with both their mothers and their fathers, as well as attachment anxiety, were predictors of romantic relationship patterns. It is possible that adolescent men are identifying more with their fathers than their mothers. Women, however, were affected by their relationship with both their father and their mother, indicating the importance of both of these parent-child

relationships as factors that influence outcomes for daughters. Reese-Weber and Marchand's study demonstrates the importance of intergenerational transmission of patterns of behavior to children, and draws attention to the importance of sex differences as a component in these studies.

In summary, from the studies of intergenerational transmission of traits and behaviors there is a link between the family of origin and child outcomes. Researchers have found the family of origin to be a source of individuals' emotional expressive styles. Some studies have found that witnessing marital conflict as a child in the family of origin can adversely affect a child's conflict skills and marital outcomes such as marital satisfaction and divorce. Other studies have found that the relationship between children and their parents is strongly related to how individuals deal with their own conflict in their romantic relationships as adolescents and young adults. In the present study it is hypothesized that expressiveness in the family of origin will be related to how children deal with their own day-to-day marital communication and conflict as adults.

Marital Communication and Conflict Behaviors

From studies of intergenerational transmission it is clear that the family of origin can have significant long term effects on individuals, specifically in the realm of their style of interpersonal interaction. Individuals bring their interaction styles with them into marriage and it is necessary to examine what effects these styles may have on marital and family outcomes. The majority of the studies conducted on the relationship between marital communication and conflict behaviors and marital outcomes have focused on conflict patterns before and during marriage. Many of these studies have focused on extreme conflict and violence; however in recent years researchers have begun to

examine not only the effects of severe levels of conflict on marriage, but also the effects of day-to-day interaction and communication styles on the marital relationship. The detrimental effects of marital conflict have been found to have a significant impact not only in marital outcomes but also on children, and may be passed on from generation to generation.

Conflict. In an attempt to discern the roots of the marital outcomes, researchers have examined specific marital conflict and communication patterns. For example, Rogge and Bradbury (1999) conducted a study in which they measured communication and aggression styles of 56 newlywed couples and followed them for four years. The researchers were interested in the predictive factors of marital satisfaction and dissolution. They hypothesized that communication and problem-solving behavior early in marriage would be linked to later marital satisfaction while aggression would be predictive of marital dissolution. The researchers used the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) to assess aggression between partners, and the Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ; Christensen & Sullaway, 1984) to assess communication and problem solving styles. The CPQ assesses the likelihood of individuals to be constructive or destructive in relationship problem solving. Their findings were consistent with their hypotheses: communication patterns predicted marital satisfaction four years later and aggression in the marriage predicted marital dissolution. Interestingly, these results remained even after controlling for initial marital satisfaction. The authors theorize that the deterioration of marital satisfaction in couples with poor communication and problem solving behaviors would continue beyond the four year mark and that it may eventually lead to the dissolution of marriage (Rogge & Bradbury,

1999).

In a longitudinal study conducted by Leonard and Roberts (1998), marital conflict behaviors and marital aggression of newlywed couples were examined. A total of 494 couples were followed for one year and given a number of self-assessment measures including the CTS and the Conflict Inventory (CI; Margolin, 1980). The researchers found that anger expression, specifically husband anger reported by the wife, was especially detrimental to marriages. Anger expression was related to physical aggression, marital instability, and marital satisfaction. Conflict avoidance by either spouse was found to be a predictor of later divorce. Interestingly, problem solving on the part of the wife was related to less marital aggression, but husbands' problem solving was related to higher levels of marital aggression. These seemingly conflictual results demonstrate the complexity of marital interaction. Leonard and Roberts suggest that other conflict behaviors and problem solving skills should be examined to better understand these patterns. Other researchers such as Arellano and Markman (1995) also felt that studies using measures such as the CTS focus too much on extreme conflict and violence and not enough on everyday interactions and conflicts. Some researchers have attempted to move beyond the more extreme conflict behaviors to discover less extreme predictors of marital outcomes (e.g. Pasch & Bradbury, 1998; Gottman & Levenson, 2000).

Day-to-Day Interactions. Day-to-day interactional and conflict patterns, which will be the outcome variable in the present study, have been linked to a number of marital outcomes. For example, Pasch and Bradbury (1998) conducted a longitudinal study of newly married couples and the prediction of marital outcomes based on conflict and non-

conflict discussions. Sixty newly married couples participated in two tasks, one in which the couple discussed a conflict in their marriage, and the other in which the spouses discussed a topic of personal difficulty in which one of them desired personal change in himself or herself. Pasch and Bradbury theorized that the way in which spouses help each other handle personal difficulties is important in understanding how marriages succeed and fail, and may be separate from how they deal with marital conflict. The researchers predicted that negative content and affect in both the marital conflict discussion and the social support task would predict that a couple would become distressed over time, but that support skills would provide information not available from studying marital conflict alone.

Pasch and Bradbury found that marital satisfaction was associated with both marital conflict and social support domains. Spouses who were more satisfied were less likely to blame or reject their spouses and were also more likely to facilitate mutual understanding with their partners. Also, couples who were more satisfied with their marriages showed lower levels of anger and contempt in both conflict and support situations. In regard to predicting the development of marital distress, the researchers found behavior in each of the situations predicted the development of distress separately, and in different ways. In conflict situations, the husband's affective tone, specifically anger and contempt, predicted later marital distress. In the support situations, later distress was predicted by wives' low levels of positive and high levels of negative behavior when offering support. Interestingly, the quality of behavior in the support task was found to moderate the effect of wives' negative affect in the conflict situations. However, for couples who were high in negative affect, strong support skills did not

buffer them from later becoming distressed. These findings demonstrate the importance of daily interaction patterns, specifically in how individuals seek support from their spouses on topics not directly tied marriage.

In a study on the predictors of divorce in newlyweds, Gottman and Levenson (2000) examined both conflict and events-of-the-day discussions. Seventy-nine married couples spent at least eight hours apart and then reunited in the laboratory for three 15 minute conversations discussing events of the day, a pleasant topic, and an area of continuing disagreement for the couple. The conversations were coded for facial and affective behaviors. The couples were tracked for 14 years, and then asked periodically to complete questionnaires assessing marital status, satisfaction, and one regarding the possibility of dissolution. The researchers found that certain behaviors predicted divorce and that there were different characteristics of early- versus later-divorcing couples. Early divorcing couples were more likely during the conflict discussions to have scored higher in negative affect such as criticism, defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling than non-divorced couples. Interestingly it was the absence of positive affect during the events-of-the-day conversation that was most predictive of later divorce and not the presence of negative affect. However, this lack of positive affect was not predictive of early divorce. Overall Gottman and Levenson found that they could predict divorce over the 14-year period with a 93% accurate model which included affective interaction, marital satisfaction, and thoughts of marital dissolution in both events-of-the-day and conflict discussions. This surprisingly high predictability demonstrates the importance of conflict and day-to-day interactions in the course of marriage.

In a study by Gottman, Coan, Carrere, and Swanson (1998), 130 subjects

participated in a six year longitudinal study of day-to-day marital conflict skills and future marital happiness and stability over time. The researchers observed the newlyweds' interactions and found behavioral predictors of divorce to include: 1) husbands who rejected their wives' influence, 2) negative start-up of conflict by the wife, 3) a lack of de-escalation of low-intensity negative-wife affect by the husband, 4) a lack of de-escalation of high-intensity negative-husband affect by the wife, and 5) a lack of physiological soothing of the husband. All of these events in conflict were issues of poor communication and conflict skills. The researchers found no evidence that expression of anger itself is destructive in marriage, but when expressed as contempt, belligerence, or defensiveness during conflict, the effects are highly negative. Happy and stable marriages were predicted by: 1) a softened startup by the wife, 2) the husband accepting influence from his wife, 3) the husband's de-escalation of low-intensity negative affect, 4) the wife using humor to soothe her husband, and 5) the husband using positive affect and de-escalation to sooth himself.

The need for a greater understanding of the precursors of marital interaction becomes all the more apparent when the effects of marital conflict on children are examined. Many studies have shown that the conflict preceding a divorce may have much stronger effects on child outcomes than the act of divorce itself. As mentioned earlier in the study by Feng, Giarrusso, Bengtson and Frye (1999), marital conflict has a significant effect on parents' interactions with their children. Parental conflict was related to children's interactions and satisfaction years later in their own marriage.

Another study, conducted by Belsky, Youngblade, Rovine and Volling (1991), examined the association between the marital relationship and the parent-child

relationship using 100 families. The researchers followed the families from pregnancy through the first three years of the child's life, using both self report of marital quality and observation of the family in a laboratory setting of free-play and teaching tasks. Belsky and his associates examined parents' warmth and affection, as well as types of control used, and children's behavior was examined for affect as well as child social behavior. They found that as self-reported levels of love for one's spouse decreased and marital conflict increased, fathers tended to be more negative and intrusive when dealing with their children, regardless of the sex of the child. Children of these fathers tended to be more negative and disobedient. Interestingly, these tendencies were not found for the women in these marriages. The researchers theorize that it is possible that men are less able to differentiate between their relationship with their spouses and their relationship with their children. This is consistent with the theory of spillover.

In their review of the literature Erel and Burman (1995) describe spillover as feelings engendered in one system being expressed in another, such as the parental relationship spilling over into the parent-child relationship. This can occur in both positive and negative ways, occurring through many different mechanisms derived from social learning theory, socialization, family stress, and role strain. Erel and Burman (1995) suggest that this may take different forms for mothers and fathers because gender roles in the family traditionally differ. Belsky and colleagues (1991) raise the possibility that mothers are compensating for fathers' insensitive parenting or that they are seeking a warm and positive relationship with their child to make up for what is lacking in their marriages. Regardless of the reason why mothers and fathers differ in their responses to marital conflict, the parent-child relationship, and thus the children, were adversely

affected by a decrease in marital quality. These findings add to the body of literature demonstrating the strong effect that marital conflict can have on children.

In summary, from the findings of studies on the effects of marital conflict and communication it is evident that behavioral patterns in marriage have a strong impact on the satisfaction and longevity of marriage, and that they can have a strong effect on children. Marital conflict has been shown to have adverse effects on marital outcomes such as marital satisfaction and divorce, but from the research we also know that certain day-to-day communication and conflict behaviors are influential in marital outcomes. In this study, it is expected that ongoing marital communication and conflict behaviors will be strongly related to family expressiveness in the family of origin.

Sex Differences

Throughout the literature previously reviewed, sex differences have been identified. Some studies have examined sex differences in child outcomes, and others have examined sex differences in parent-child dyads. Generally women have been shown to be more expressive than men (see Halberstadt et al., 1999 for a review). The feminine gender role is characterized by nurturance and warmth, which are expressive traits, and the masculine role is characterized by independence and dominance, traits associated with instrumentality (Green & Kenrick, 1994). Women are stereotypically more expressive and less aggressive than men, and these gender stereotypes begin to emerge as early as preschool age (Brody, 1997). Women are taught to value being emotional, and men are taught to be unemotional and disregard emotionality (Brody, 1997). In addition to these sex differences in expressiveness, researchers have found differences between men and women in their interactions and influence on others (e.g.

King, 1993; Pasch & Bradbury, 1998).

Adult relationships. In the examination of sex differences in marital relationships, some studies have found that women are more quarrelsome and critical than their partners, and that men often inhibit their anger and facial expression thereby stonewalling their wives (see Brody, 1997 for a review). In the study by King (1993) mentioned earlier, men and women were affected differently by ambivalence over their emotional expression: men's satisfaction in marriage was significantly decreased when they were ambivalent over expression of emotion. Men who were more emotionally expressive, contrary to the traditional gender role, tended to have greater relationship satisfaction. To a lesser extent, women's emotional expressiveness was positively associated with marital satisfaction. Leonard and Roberts (1998) found that husband anger, as reported by the wife, was specifically detrimental to marriage. The same study found that wives' problem solving was related to less marital aggression, but husbands' problem solving was related to more aggression. In a study by Pasch and Bradbury (1998), husbands' and wives' behavior in conflict and support situations had different predictive qualities for marital outcomes. Husbands' expression of anger and contempt during conflict was predictive of later marital distress, whereas wives' low levels of positive behaviors and high levels of negative behaviors during the support situation were predictive of distress.

Parent-Child Relationships. Apart from sex differences in adult relationships, a few studies have discovered sex differences in parent-child relationships. Stereotypically, children are closer to their mothers than their fathers, and the mother-child relationship is more influential than the father-child relationship, however, most of

the research reviewed in this paper has indicated that both fathers and mothers are important. Only three studies found different patterns by gender composition of the parent-child dyad. In Belsky, Youngblade, Rovine and Vollings' study (1991), during periods of stress and marital conflict, children's fathers, but not mothers, were intrusive and negative when dealing with their children, regardless of the child's sex. Also, the children of these fathers were more likely to be more negative and disobedient themselves.

In Reese-Weber and Marchland's study (2002), mothers' and fathers' relationships with their children were significantly different, though there were similarities, and male and female children were differently affected by their relationships with their parents. More specifically, father-son conflict styles predicted how sons dealt with conflict in their own relationships, whereas daughters' conflict resolution styles were predicted by both mother- and father-daughter conflict. The researchers theorize that the adolescents are identifying more with their same-sex parent than with their opposite-sex parent.

In Feng, Giarrusso, Bengtson & Frye's study (1999), sons and daughters were differently affected by parental conflict and divorce. Positive marital interactions of mothers and fathers were related to daughters' positive marital interactions in their own marriage, but parental marital conflict in general was related to son's marital satisfaction. In the same study, fathers' relationship with their children worsened during marital conflict, whereas mothers' relationships with their children improved during marital conflict. This could be due to spillover, the expression of feelings related to the marital relationship being expressed in the parent-child relationship, is responsible for

differences as well. Feng and colleagues' findings are consistent with Erel and Burman's (1995) suggestion that spillover from the marital relationship may occur differently for men and women because of their differing roles in the family.

In summary, from these studies it is evident that sex differences can add an important level of understanding to human interaction, though the findings have not always been consistent. For the most part, it seems that mothers and fathers have an important influence on child outcomes, though they may influence their children in different ways. Few studies have examined father's and mother's expressiveness, separate from general family expressiveness. Fewer still have examined mothers' and fathers' relationship to sons and daughters. In the current study, both parents' expressiveness will be examined. As the majority of studies have used the report of only one spouse, typically the wife, including both husband and wife reports in the current study gives a more complete representation of possible gender differences. It is expected that mothers will be more expressive in both positive and negative domains than fathers, expressing more warmth and love, as well as more sadness. Because of the lack of consistency of gender findings in previous studies it is unclear how these differences might influence children's later marital conflict behaviors for husbands and wives.

Summary

The purpose of the present study is to gain a greater understanding of the precursors of marital conflict and interaction patterns by examining the relationship between expressiveness in the family of origin and marital communication and conflict behaviors. Children who come from more expressive families have a greater understanding of their own and others' emotions. This skill seems to be carried through

the life cycle into adolescence where there are positive effects during adolescence and some into early adulthood. When these children have grown and formed families of their own, they will be more adept and comfortable dealing with their emotions. It is likely that, with a greater understanding of emotions, they will become more emotionally sensitive or emotionally intelligent, knowing when it is appropriate to express their emotions, and how to most effectively express these feelings. These skills are expected to influence how they interact with their partners in marriage.

In general, research on family expressiveness has shown that positive family expressiveness is correlated with children's expressiveness and understanding of emotions. This connection is clearer than that of negative family expressiveness. Negative family expressiveness, especially when it is extreme, seems to have negative effects on children. Generally children from emotionally expressive households have a better understanding of emotions, and that emotional intelligence is related to social competence in children. The emotional expressiveness and comfort with emotional situations learned early in childhood is evident well into adulthood. Although less is known about how these abilities are demonstrated in the context of adult romantic relationships.

The transmission of these traits between generations, particularly for young children, has been demonstrated in emotional expressiveness as well as behavioral and relationship patterns. Witnessing marital conflict as a child adversely effects the development of conflict skills as well as the ability to deal with conflict in later relationships. Characteristics of the parent-child relationship have been found repeatedly to influence how children or adolescents will deal with their own relationships later in

life, including how they will deal with conflict in their own marriage. The importance of discovering the precursors of marital communication and conflict behaviors becomes readily apparent when we examine the impact of negative conflict behaviors on the satisfaction and longevity of marriage, and on child outcomes. From the research we also know that certain day-to-day communication and conflict behaviors are especially influential in marital outcomes, and that these effects are separate from those of severe conflict and marital violence. It is likely that the family of origin is the environment in which these day-to-day styles develop. By attaining a greater understanding of the precursors of marital interaction patterns, interventions in the family of origin could be made before these interaction styles develop.

Part of attaining a better understanding of the influences of expressiveness in the family of origin includes an examination of possible sex differences. A large number of the studies reviewed have examined sex differences, and some studies have found that fathers and mothers have different expressive styles: mothers are generally being more expressive and fathers generally inhibit their expression of emotion. Conventional wisdom holds that children are closer to their mothers than their fathers and that the mother-child relationship is more influential than the father-child relationship. However, most of the research reviewed in this paper has indicated that relationships with both mothers and fathers are important. Unique effects have been found for both the mother-child and father-child relationships. Thus, it is important to examine possible gender effects in order to better understand the complexity of the parent-child relationship.

In the present study there are two hypotheses: (1) positive expressiveness in the family of origin will be associated with individuals' use of more positive and engaging

interactions during conflict, and (2) negative family expressiveness will be associated with use of more negative and withdrawing interactions during conflict. Both paternal emotional expressiveness and maternal emotional expressiveness will be examined in relation to child outcomes. Two research questions are also posed. First, will maternal expressiveness have a stronger relationship with child outcomes than paternal expressiveness, and will sons and daughters be affected in similar or different ways by maternal and paternal expressiveness? Secondly, which types of parental expressiveness, positive or negative, are most predictive of individuals' later communication and conflict behaviors in the context of marriage?

III. METHODS

Participants

Any married individuals were eligible for the study, regardless of age or length of marriage. To recruit respondents, students enrolled in undergraduate courses in Human Development and Family Studies at a large southeastern university were asked to assist in locating participants. Students were given extra credit for the return of a completed survey packet by a married couple. The questionnaires were collected at two separate times. A total of 46 husbands and 46 wives in the first group, and 51 husbands and 51 wives in the second group fully completed the questionnaires. Respondents from the two groups were compared to each other by sex across all demographic and study variables. Small differences were found on only two of the variables for men, the second group having slightly lower level of education and scores on the MADS positive composite subscale. Women in the two groups did not significantly differ on any of the demographic or study variables. For the purposes of the study all data from the two groups were combined.

The demographic profiles of the sample are summarized in Table 1 (Appendix A). The majority of subjects were Caucasian (92.1%) and the mean age was 41.53 for husbands and 39.68 for wives. The majority of subjects were religious with 74.5% of the sample considering themselves at least moderately religious, and were predominantly Christian (74.3% Protestant, 11.8% Catholic, .5% Jewish, .5% from and eastern religion,

and 12.8% other). The sample was well educated with 63.8% of husbands and 60% of wives having completed at least a four year college degree. The sample was largely middle class, with the average family income between $40,000 and $45,000 per year. Two-thirds of the families earned a yearly family income of more than $50,000. Most subjects were in their first marriage (84.2% of husbands and 84.2% of wives), with the average length of marriage being 14.85 years, ranging from under a year to 49 years, and a standard deviation of 12.89. About three-fourths of the sample (75.8%) reported having at least one child.

Procedure

Each couple received a packet containing an informed consent form, a demographics questionnaire, and a variety of instruments that assess individual and relationship factors. The scales included the Family Expressiveness Questionnaire (FEQ; Halberstadt, 1986), the Managing Affect and Differences Scale (MADS; Arellano & Markman, 1995), and the Conflict Scale from the Quality of Relationship Inventory (QRI; Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason, 1991). Participants were instructed to complete questionnaires independently of their spouse. In addition, a form was provided for participants to include their contact information if they desired a copy of the results to be sent to them.

Measures

Family Expressiveness. In this study family expressiveness, the main predictor variable, was measured using the Family Expressiveness Questionnaire developed by Halberstadt (FEQ: Halberstadt, 1986). The FEQ is a self-report measure of family expressiveness which has been used in numerous studies as a measure of positive and

negative family expressiveness. The majority of studies of family expressiveness use self-report measures. The FEQ is a 40-item scale used to assess individuals' perceptions of the frequency with which both positive and negative types of emotional expression occurred in their family of origin (FEQ; Halberstadt, 1986). Participants used a 9-point Likert scale (1 = never to 9 = very often) to indicate the frequency with which each behavior occurred in their family while they were growing up. Items that assessed positive family expressiveness included statements like "expressing deep affection or love for someone," "telling someone how nice they look," and "telling a family member how happy you are." Items assessing negative emotional expressiveness included items such as "expressing disappointment over something that didn't work out," and "threatening someone." (see table F for a complete list of items and subscales)

The FEQ is a retrospective questionnaire designed to be filled out by one family member who assigns for each item a collective score about the family as a whole. It has also been used as a measure of the perceived expressiveness of individual family members. The FEQ has reliability ranging from $\alpha = .75$ to .88, and a 10 day test-retest reliability ranging from $\alpha = .89$ to .92 (Halberstadt, 1986). In previous studies, parents and college age students have shown agreement about their family's expressiveness (Halberstadt, 1986; Burrowes & Halberstadt, 1987). For this study, reliability for perceived positive expressiveness subscale was $\alpha = .94$ for mothers and $\alpha = .95$ for fathers, and for perceived negative expressiveness $\alpha = .91$ for mothers and $\alpha = .90$ for fathers.

Conflict Management. In order to measure marital conflict and communication styles, most studies have used self-report measures. The measure that was used in this

study as the outcome variable, the Managing Affect and Differences Scale (MADS, Arellano & Markman, 1995), was designed to assess specific communication and conflict management behaviors in relationships. It includes measurements of the participants' own perceptions of their behaviors, and has been found to be effective for assessing communication and conflict management behaviors that occur during day-to-day interactions. The original authors felt that other measures of marital conflict, such as the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) focus too much on extreme conflict and violence, and not enough on everyday interactions and conflicts (Arellano & Markman 1995).

The MADS is designed for assessing communication and conflict management behaviors that occur during day-to-day interactions, normally inaccessible to outside observers. The scale includes eleven subscales that assess both constructive and destructive communication strategies characteristic of romantic relationships. The subscales that assess positive strategies include leveling, emotional expressiveness, love and affection, editing, validation, feedback, stop actions, and focusing. The subscales that assess negative strategies include negativity, negative escalation, and withdrawal. The measure includes items such as "I offer constructive alternatives for my wife's bothersome behaviors," "when I argue with my husband I lose my temper easily," and "when my wife has a complaint, I try to understand her point of view." (see table G for a full list of items and subscales)

The MADS has been found to be a reliable and valid measure of marital conflict behaviors. Arellano & Markman (1995) used Cronbach's alphas to assess internal consistency and found reliabilities ranged from .64 to .90. Concurrent validity of the

MADS scale was tested by correlating the subscales with measures of relationship satisfaction (MAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959). Results indicated that the positive subscales were positively related to marital satisfaction, and the negative subscales were negatively related to marital satisfaction. Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing satisfied and dissatisfied couples with the use of the communication and conflict management behaviors assessed by the MADS. Results indicated that the scale does discriminate between dissatisfied and satisfied couples in the expected ways. For example, dissatisfied couples were significantly higher than satisfied couples on the subscales of negativity, negative escalation, and withdrawal. Satisfied couples reported significantly higher scores on the remaining subscales that assessed constructive communication strategies.

In the present study, Cronbach's alphas for the subscales ranged from .50 to .82. Composite positive and negative subscales were created. The composite positive subscale included all of the subscales that assessed constructive communication strategies, and had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .92. The composite negative subscale included items that assessed unhelpful strategies, and had a Cronbach's alpha of .84.

Parent-Child Relationship.

A number of studies have demonstrated that conflict between parents and their children is predictive of child outcomes. In the present study, a subscale from the Quality of Relationship Inventory (QRI, Sarason *et al.*, 1991) that assesses relationship conflict was available for respondents in the second data collection group (52 husbands, 52 wives). Items that define the conflict dimension reflect the extent to which the individual experiences angry or ambivalent feelings regarding the target person (e.g.

"How often does this person make you feel angry?") (see table H for a complete list of items and subscales). Each item is assessed on a Likert-style rating of four levels (1 = does not correspond at all; 4 = correspond very much). In this study subjects reported on their current relationship with both their mother and their father. The measure showed high reliability in the present study, with Cronbach's alphas ranging from .82 to .86 for men's and women's parent-child relationships.

IV. RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between positive and negative expressiveness in the family of origin and marital communication and conflict behaviors. It was hypothesized that positive parental expressiveness will be associated with adult children's positive communication and conflict behaviors (a composite of leveling, emotional expressiveness, love and affection, editing, validation, feedback, stop actions, and focusing); and negatively associated with negative strategies (a composite of negativity, negative escalation, and withdrawal). It was hypothesized that negative parental expressiveness will be negatively associated with the positive communication and conflict strategies, and positively associated with the negative strategies. Correlational analyses using the Pearson product-moment correlation were conducted to examine the relationships between positive and negative patterns of family expressiveness and the adult child's communication and conflict behaviors. These relationships were examined separately for men and women.

The results from the correlational analyses (see appendix C, tables 3 and 4) were used to determine which variables would be used in multiple hierarchical regression analyses (see appendix D, tables 5 and 6). Age and years married were entered into the first step to control for any possible confounding effects, Mother's and father's positive and negative expressiveness were entered into the second step to predict respondents' communication and conflict behaviors. Using a smaller sub-sample of respondents who

completed the parent-child conflict subscale of the QRI, an additional hierarchical regression was conducted with parent-child conflict in the third step to determine if parent-child conflict further explains communication and conflict behaviors.

Preliminary Data Analyses

Table 2 (Appendix B) shows the means and standard deviations for men's and women's Family Expressiveness Questionnaire scores, Managing Affect and Differences Scale (MADS) composite positive and negative scores, and each of the individual subscales of the MADS. Overall, both men and women reported fairly high levels of positive expressiveness and moderate levels of negative expressiveness in their family of origin.

Paired T-Tests. Paired sample T-tests were conducted comparing men's and women's scores on the FEQ and on the MADS. Mean scores and reliabilities for the measures are reported in Appendix B, Table 2. Overall, children rated their parents as more positively expressive than negatively expressive (fathers $t(185) = 7.727$, $p < .001$; mothers' $t(185) = 14.020$, $p < .001$). Generally they also rated mothers as more positively expressive ($t(185) = 11.274$, $p < .001$) and negatively expressive ($t(185) = 3.164$, $p < .01$) than fathers. Men rated their mothers as more positively expressive than their fathers ($t(91)=9.224$, $p < .001$), as well as more negatively expressive than their fathers ($t(91) = 3.710$, $p < .001$). Women rated their mothers as more positively expressive than their fathers ($t(93) = 6.884$, $p < .001$), but there was no difference between women's ratings of mother's and father's negative expressiveness (t (93)= .942, NS).

In regard to marital communication and conflict behaviors, both women and men describe themselves as engaging in significantly more positive than negative communication behaviors with their spouses (men's t (94) = 11.787, $p < .001$, women's t (94) = 13.692, $p < .001$). Women , more often than men, described themselves as using positive communication behaviors (t (94) = 4.101, $p < .001$). Women and men did not differ in their perceptions of their use of negative behaviors with their spouses (t (94) = .021, NS).

Bivariate Correlations

Table 3 (Appendix C) shows the zero-order bivariate correlations between the subscales of the FEQ and MADS. Variables of interest included each respondent's perception of paternal and maternal positive and negative expressiveness, and the respondents' communication and conflict behaviors. It was expected that parental family expressiveness would be related to the respondents' marital communication and conflict strategies.

Sons. For sons, maternal positive expressiveness was positively correlated with the positive composite score of the MADS ($r = .229$, $p < .05$), as well as with the Leveling ($r = .256$, $p < .05$), Emotional Expressivity ($r = .277$, $p < .01$), and Communication Over Time ($r = .218$, $p < .05$) subscales. Maternal negative expressiveness was positively correlated with the negative composite score of the MADS ($r = .303$, $p < .01$), as well as with the Negativity ($r = .295$, $p < .01$) and Negative Escalation ($r = .302$, $p < .01$) subscales. Paternal positive expressiveness was not significantly correlated with the positive composite score of the MADS ($r = .115$, NS), but the Emotional Expressivity subscale was positively correlated ($r = .226$, $p < .05$).

Paternal negative expressiveness was positively correlated with the negative composite subscale of the MADS ($r = .321$, $p < .01$), as well as the Negativity ($r = .364$, $p < .001$) and Negative Escalation subscales ($r = .280$, $p < .01$).

Daughters. For daughters, maternal positive expressiveness was not correlated with any composite or subscale of the MADS. Maternal negative expressiveness was positively correlated with the negative composite of the MADS ($r = .368$, $p < .001$), as well as the Feedback ($r = .356$, $p < .001$), Negativity ($r = .344$, $p < .001$), Negative Escalation ($r = .356$, $p < .001$), and Withdrawal ($r = .217$, $p < .05$) subscales of the MADS. Paternal positive expressiveness was unrelated to any composite or subscale of the MADS. Paternal negative expressiveness was negatively correlated to the positive MADS composite ($r = -.215$, $p < .05$) as well as to the Validation subscale ($r = -.235$, $p < .05$), and was positively correlated to the negative composite of the MADS ($r = .343$, $p < .001$), as well as the Negativity ($r = .309$, $p < .01$) and Negative Escalation ($r = .348$, $p < .001$) subscales.

Multiple Regression

Finally the predictive ability of parental expressiveness on the child's later communication and conflict behaviors was examined. In this study, only one of the four parental expressiveness variables was significantly related to positive marital communication and conflict behaviors for both sons and daughters; thus, regression analyses were unnecessary. Parents' negative expressiveness for both sons and daughters was significantly related to negative marital communication and conflict behaviors. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted separately for sons and daughters to ascertain which parents' expressiveness was the more important predictor of

the respondents' negative communication and conflict behaviors in his/her marital relationship. A summary of the analyses is shown in Table 4, Appendix D.

Sons. Age and years married combined were not a significant predictor of sons' negative communication and conflict behaviors. Mother and father negative expressiveness combined explained 13% of the variance (F change (2, 86)= 6.412 , $p <$ .01). Fathers' negative expressiveness was the only significant unique predictor of son's negative communication and conflict behaviors ($\beta = .231$, $p < .05$), explaining 5% of the unique variance.

Daughters. Daughters' negative communication and conflict behaviors were not predicted by age and years married. Total parental negative expressiveness was a significant predictor of negative communication and conflict behaviors (F change (2, 89) = 9.68, $p < .01$), explaining a total of 18% of the variance. Father's negative expressiveness was positively related to daughters' negative communication and conflict behaviors ($\beta = .234$, $p < .05$), explaining 4% of unique variance. Mother's negative expressiveness was positively related to daughters' negative communication and conflict behaviors ($\beta = .271$, $p < .05$), explaining 6% of the unique variance.

Additional Analyses

A total of 51 couples participating in the current study completed the Quality of Relationship Inventory, which included a measure of parent-child conflict. Complete Quality of Relationship (QRI) data were collected from a total of 47 men and 49 women.

Sons. Analyses were conducted to examine relationships between respondents' parent-child conflict and the family expressiveness and marital communication and

conflict variables. Father-son conflict was positively correlated with paternal negative expressiveness ($r = .545$, $p < .001$), and mother-son conflict was positively correlated with maternal negative expressiveness (r - .674, $p < .001$). There were no additional significant zero order correlations between parent-son conflict can sons' marital communication and conflict behaviors.

Daughters. Father-daughter conflict was positive correlated with paternal negative expressiveness ($r = .616$, $p < .001$), and mother-daughter conflict was positively correlated with maternal negative expressivity ($r = .713$, $p < .001$). Father-daughter conflict was negatively correlated with daughters' positive communication and conflict behaviors ($r = -.302$, $p < .05$) and positively correlated with their negative communication and conflict behaviors ($r = .377$, $p < .01$). Mother-daughter conflict was also negatively correlated with positive communication and conflict behaviors ($r = -.297$, $p < .05$), and positively correlated with negative communication and conflict behaviors ($r = .454$, $p < .01$)

To determine whether parent-child conflict contributed additional information above and beyond parental expressiveness, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted, with age and years married entered in the first step, significant parental expressiveness variables entered in the second step, and parent-child conflict entered in the third step. Since there were no significant zero-order correlations between parent-child conflict and marital behaviors for sons, regression analyses were conducted only for daughters. Results for positive and negative parental expressiveness are reported separately.

For women's positive communication and conflict behaviors, the control

variables of age and years married were not significant. At the second step, paternal negative expressiveness was found to be a significant predictor of women's negative communication and conflict behaviors (F change (1,46) = 6.139, $p < .05$, explaining 11% of the variance (R2 adjusted = .10). At the third step, parent-daughter conflict was not significant.

For women's negative communication and conflict behaviors, the control variables of age and years married were not significant. The block of father and mother negative expressiveness was found to be a significant predictor of women's negative communication and conflict behaviors (F change (2,47) = 11.787, $p < .001$), explaining 32% of the variance. Parent-daughter conflict was not significant. These results are summarized in Table 5, Appendix D.

V. DISCUSSION

A fairly substantial body of literature indicates that family expressiveness is influential for young children's outcomes, but relatively little is known about the impact of patterns of parental expressiveness after children become adults. The limited evidence that is available suggests that patterns from the family of origin continue to be important. The primary purpose of the current study was to examine the effects of maternal and paternal expressiveness in the family of origin on later marital communication and conflict behaviors.

Two hypotheses were posed in the current study. The first hypothesis focused on positive parental expressiveness and its relationship with positive communication and conflict skills, and it was partially supported in that significant relationships were found between mothers' positive expressiveness and sons' outcomes. However, there were no significant relationships found for maternal expressiveness and daughters' outcomes, or between paternal expressiveness and outcomes for either sons or daughters. The second hypothesis focused on the relationship between negative parental expressiveness and negative communication and conflict behaviors, and this hypothesis was supported for both sons and daughters. The two research questions addressed the roles of maternal and paternal expressiveness for sons and daughters. Because neither maternal nor paternal positive expressiveness was related to marital behaviors for daughters, and maternal positive expressiveness was related only to positive outcomes for sons. Regression

analyses indicated that both mothers' and fathers' negative expressiveness predicted individuals' negative communication and conflict behaviors.

Positive Family Expressiveness

The literature has consistently suggested that family positive emotional expressiveness is related to positive outcomes in children and adolescents, such as social competence (Halberstadt, 1999). There have been only three studies which have examined family expressiveness and adult outcomes. These studies (Barth & Steingard, 1994; King, 1993; Wall, 2003) have found that young adults tend to mirror the patterns of family expressiveness from their family of origin in their own dating/married relationships, and that family expressiveness is related to patterns of interaction in intimate relationships. However, the results from this study did not fully replicate this pattern for positive family expressiveness. Only one significant relationship was found for parental positive expressiveness and child outcomes. Sons of more positively expressive mothers were more likely to use more beneficial communication and conflict skills. For sons, fathers' positive expressiveness was unrelated to son's later communication and conflict behaviors with their wives. Neither mothers' nor fathers' positive expressiveness was related to any of daughters' later marital behaviors. Thus, findings from this study indicated that parents' positive expressiveness in the family of origin does not consistently translate into adult children replicating these behaviors.

The finding that positive dimensions of the mother-son relationship do appear to

be duplicated in later marital interactions is consistent with studies which have show that young adults tend to mirror the positive patterns of family of origin expressiveness in their own dating/married relationships. For example, Wall (2003) found that positive family expressiveness predicted husbands' fondness and admiration for their wives, as well as responses to bids for attention, and was negatively related to emotional disengagement. Wall focused on the positive aspects of marital friendship, but also found that negative family of origin expressiveness was inversely related to husbands' marital friendship, and strongly positively correlated with loneliness and emotional disengagement.

In the present study, both sons and daughters tended to see their mothers as more positively expressive than their fathers, which may explain why fathers' positive expressiveness was unrelated to sons' and daughters' later marital behaviors. Both men and women reported relatively high levels of positive communication and conflict behaviors in their own marriages. However, only sons', and not daughters', positive communication and conflict behaviors were influenced by parental positive expressiveness, and only by mothers One possibility is that sons need greater levels of positive expressiveness from fathers in order to be significantly influenced. Another possibility is that sons are learning more about positive interactions from their mothers. They may use their mothers' behaviors as a model for the positive behaviors they engage in with their wives. Since women are expected to be more positively expressive in their relationships in general, it may not matter as much whether their mothers were more or less positively expressive. That is, gender role socialization may be an important factor that influences women's likelihood of engaging in positive behaviors with their spouse.

An interesting finding that should be noted was that mothers' positive expressiveness was negatively related to age for both men and women, meaning that, as they aged, respondents perceived their mothers as less positively expressive. For daughters, the length of time they had been married was also negatively related to views of mothers' positive expressiveness; however there was no such relationship for sons. Age and years married were unrelated to how either daughters or sons perceived paternal positive expressiveness, or maternal and paternal negative expressiveness. Also, there was no significant relationship between age and years married with parental negative expressiveness. Although the current study is not longitudinal, these correlations suggest that time does not impact either men's or women's views of negative family expressiveness, but women may be less likely to remember positive dimensions of their mothers' expressive behaviors.

Negative Family Expressiveness

Previous studies have demonstrated that negative parental expressiveness can have a noteworthy impact on children and adolescents (Halberstadt et al., 1999). In the current study we see that when both mothers and fathers were perceived as being more negatively expressive, both sons and daughters engaged in more negative conflict behaviors with their spouse. These results indicate that negative family expressiveness continues to have a substantial impact for both men and women on later functioning in their marital relationships. Even though negative parental behaviors occurred at a lower rate than positive behaviors, it is the negative behaviors of both parents that retain influence into adulthood. In addition to the joint impact of mother and father negative expressiveness, both sons and daughters were impacted uniquely by the negative

expressiveness of their fathers. These findings highlight the importance of including information about relationships with fathers in research on relationship dynamics.

The findings from the current study support an intergenerational transmission model, with stronger support for the role of negative patterns of communication than for positive patterns. Parental negative expressiveness had a stronger relationship with an individual's marital communication and conflict behaviors than positive expressivity. Other studies on family expressiveness have found support for the role of both positive and negative family expressiveness. This study provided a more in-depth approach to assessing specific marital interactions, including specific negative behaviors in the context of conflict. Assessing these more specific negative behaviors pointed to the particular impact that negative family expressiveness can have on later interpersonal relationships. Both men and women rated their parents as more positively than negatively expressive. It seems that there is more memory of positive aspects of parental expression than of negative parental expression, but negative parental expressiveness is more likely to have an impact on later outcomes. Interestingly, mothers' negative expressiveness did not contribute uniquely to sons' marital communication and conflict behaviors, even though sons rated their mothers as more negatively expressive than their father. Daughters reported no difference in their perceptions of mother and father negative expressiveness.

It appears that fathers' negative expressiveness has a somewhat different influence on child outcomes than does mothers' negative expressiveness. One possibility is that mothers and fathers interact differently with their children, depending on the sex of the child. This would be consistent with findings about the development of gendered

patterns (Cassidy et al., 1992). In the current study, while daughters perceived mothers and fathers to be equally negatively expressive, sons perceived fathers to be less negatively expressive than mothers. Previous studies (e.g. Brody, 1997) suggest that fathers may be more influential on gender development than mothers. Because fathers are socially expected to be less expressive than mothers, even small changes in emotional expressivity may have significant effect on child outcomes.

The current findings share some interesting parallels with Reese-Weber and Marchand's (2002) study that used the same measure of communication and conflict behaviors. They found that father-son conflict resolution behavior predicted how sons dealt with conflict in their own relationship. For daughters, conflict with both mothers and fathers was related to how children deal with conflict. These results are similar to the patterns found in this study. Sons were influenced uniquely by fathers' negative emotional expressiveness, whereas daughters were influenced by both maternal and paternal negative expressiveness.

The link between parental negative expressiveness and children's subsequent negative communication and conflict behaviors may be related to marital conflict in the family of origin. Belsky et al. (1999) found that fathers tend to be more intrusive in their children's lives during times of marital conflict. Persistent marital conflict in the family of origin would increase negative parental expressiveness. Erel and Burman (1995) suggest that parents' negative feelings surrounding marital conflict may spill over into their interactions with the child. Sons, but not daughters, whose fathers were more intrusive tended to be more negative and disobedient in Belsky and colleagues study (1999). This suggests that there are different mechanisms for women and men.

Parent-Child Conflict

Previous studies have found that the parent-child relationship has significant influences on child outcomes, specifically on children's own interpersonal relationships. Reese-Webber and Bartle Haring (1998) theorized that it is not the inter-parental conflict that influences how children handle later conflict but the parent-child conflict. In the current study, information on current parent-child conflict was collected on approximately half of the sample.

Negative expressiveness in the family of origin was related to sons' and daughters' descriptions of current parent-child conflict. However, for sons, their current conflict with their parents was unrelated to current marital communication and conflict behaviors. For daughters, current conflict with both parents was related to positive and negative communication and conflict behaviors with their spouses. However, when added in the hierarchical regression current parent-child conflict did not further explain communication and conflict behaviors in the marital relationship for daughters.

It is important to note that within the smaller sub-sample parental negative expressiveness in daughters' family of origin explained 32% of the variance of negative communication and conflict behaviors. This is almost twice the 18% of the variance explained using the entire sample. It is unclear why this is the case. The two data collection groups were not significantly different on any of the demographic variables, except that the men in the two groups differed slightly in level of education. Men in the two groups also differed on their positive MADS composite, though this was by a 0.2 difference on a five point scale, which is not likely to be a meaningful difference.

While parent-child conflict did not add any explanatory power of marital

communication and conflict behaviors beyond that of parental expressiveness, it is important to note that the QRI addresses the current parent-child relationship. The FEQ specifically asked respondents to reflect back to their past, "while growing up," regarding expressive styles of their parents, but the same was not asked in relation to parent-child conflict. Parent-child conflict was significantly related to perceptions of parental negative expressiveness, suggesting that the effects of negative parental expressiveness in earlier years may persist into the parent-child relationship during adulthood

Strengths and Weaknesses

One strength of this study was that data were collected from both men and women on their perceptions of both mothers' and fathers' expressiveness. Most previous studies have either asked about the mother or have asked about overall family expressiveness. The fact that some differing results were found for sons' versus daughters' demonstrates the importance of gathering information from both men and women. Looking at mothers' and fathers' expressiveness separately yielded a more complete picture of the influences of expressiveness in the family of origin.

Additionally, emotional expressiveness in the family of origin has been identified as influencing child outcomes, but very few studies have examined the relationship between parental expressiveness and outcomes in adult children. Given the effects of conflict in the marital relationship and in child outcomes, understanding their precursors is vitally important. The predictive power of negative parental expressiveness on marital communication and conflict behaviors was impressive, even though negative expressiveness generally occurs at lower levels than positive expressiveness. Ages of respondents ranged from 17 to 80 years old and the predictive power was retained over

the course of the lifetime. This knowledge holds significant import for those teaching parenting skills and for marriage and family therapists. With a greater understanding of the precursors of marital interaction patterns, it may be possible to intervene in the family of origin before these negative interaction patterns develop.

Another strength of the current study was the prediction of day-to-day marital communication and conflict behaviors. Researchers such as Pasch & Bradbury (1998) and Gottman & Levenson (2000) have demonstrated that events that occur on a day-to-day basis, not just in severe conflict, have a significant impact on marital outcomes such as marital satisfaction and marital dissolution. Understanding the precursors of those day-to-day interaction behaviors is important in understanding the impacts of family dynamics.

One of the weaknesses of this study was the data are based on concurrent self-report measures. Because of this the results are susceptible to biases of the individuals. For example, family expressiveness was measured retrospectively, but memories of childhood events may be colored by later interactions. The current parent-child relationship may very well impact the perceptions of parental expressiveness when viewed by the adult children. Parents may have become more or less expressive over the years due to any number of events, further clouding individuals' recollections.

These biases are also related to the use of the Quality of Relationship Inventory. Because the QRI language is based on the current parent-child relationship, and not retrospective, its usefulness in the current study was minimal. Also, the sample size for the QRI sub-sample was relatively small, making identification of patterns very difficult.

An additional weakness of the current study was that the sample was not randomly selected. Students from the university were used to recruit subjects. The students recruited predominantly white middle- and upper-middle class couples, limiting the generalizability of this study regarding socioeconomic status, race, and culture. The students likely recruited couples that were either peers or in their parents' age group, potentially creating a bimodal sample. However, in the current sample there was no clear bimodality.

Future directions

The findings from the current study suggest a number of new directions for future research and intervention. First, family expressiveness was found to be significantly related to both positive and negative communication and conflict behaviors, especially to negative behaviors. These negative behaviors may be related to other marital outcomes. The link between family expressiveness in the family of origin and marital outcomes should be further examined to include the likelihood of marital satisfaction and marital dissolution.

Future studies should continue to use data collected from both men and women in order to gain a more complete understanding of the influence and development of gender patterns. Future studies could determine what specific aspects of marital communication and conflict behaviors are impacted by expressiveness in the family of origin. As Crockenberg and Langrock (2001) suggested, it is possible some specific emotions or behaviors are more influential than others. Future studies using larger samples could examine how family expressiveness is related to other aspects of conflict that have been found to important in predicting marital outcomes, such as demand-withdraw patterns,

showing contempt or using stonewalling. Also, it would be instructive to examine family expressiveness patterns and different types of positive and negative expressiveness, such as anger, sadness, and fear.

Future research would also be benefited by having each spouse describe their perceptions of their partner's communication and conflict behaviors. It would also be interesting to explore the effects of variables, such as emotional intelligence or gender-role orientation. It is also recommended that future studies examine the relationship between retrospective parent-child conflict as well as family expressiveness in the family of origin to examine possible effects of both of these types of variables in predicting marital outcomes.

Conclusion

The study of family expressiveness is fairly recent, but the findings from the body of literature addressing this topic point to the important role that family expressiveness plays for individual and interpersonal outcomes. The role of family expressiveness has been more extensively documented for outcomes in children. The few studies of the effects of family expressiveness on adolescents and adults suggest that they continue to influence relationship patterns throughout life. Much of the research documents the important role played by positive family expressiveness, although findings have also pointed to the detrimental impacts that negative family expressiveness can have.

In this study, more support was found for the effects of negative family expressiveness on relationship outcomes than for positive family expressiveness. Maternal positive expressiveness was found to be a weak predictor only of sons' positive communication and conflict behaviors in their own marriage. However, parental

negative expressiveness was moderately associated with both sons' and daughters' self-reported negative communication and conflict behaviors, even though parental negative expressiveness was reported at lower levels than positive expressiveness. Support was also found for the roles of both maternal and paternal negative expressiveness in predicting later negative marital behaviors of sons and daughters. The findings of this study corroborate and expand on previous findings regarding family expressiveness and how its effects are retained throughout the lifespan, especially for negative expressiveness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table 1. Demographics Profile of Participants by Gender

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participants by Gender

Demographic Factors	Men		Women	
	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency
Race				
Caucasian	93.7	89	90.5	86
African-American	5.3	5	6.3	6
Mexican-American	1.1	1	0	0
Asian-American	0	0	2.1	2
Native American	0	0	1.1	1
Education				
Completed high school/GED	6.3	6	6.3	6
Some trade or technical school	3.2	3	3.2	3
Completed trade/tech school	0	0	3.2	3
Some College	25.3	24	27.3	26
Completed 4 year degree	27.4	26	36.8	35
Some graduate/professional school	24.2	23	16.8	16
Post graduate/prof. school completed	11.6	11	6.3	6
Missing	1.1	1	0	0
Family Income				
Less than $10,000	5.3	5	7.4	7
$10,000-$14,999	4.2	4	3.2	3
$15,000-$19,999	2.1	2	2.1	2
$20,000-$24,999	4.2	4	3.2	3
$25,000-$29,999	2.1	2	1.1	1
$30,000-$34,999	3.2	3	2.1	2
$35,000-$39,999	2.1	2	3.2	3
$40,000-$44,999	8.4	8	6.3	6
$45,000-$49,999	4.2	4	6.3	6
$50,000 or more	63.2	60	64.2	61
Marital Status				
First marriage	84.2	80	84.2	80
Second marriage	13.7	13	13.7	13
Other	2.1	2	2.1	2

Religious Affiliation				
Protestant	77.9	74	68.4	65
Catholic	12.6	12	10.5	10
Other	8.4	8	19.0	18
Missing	1.1	1	2.1	2
Religiosity				
Not at all	1.1	1	1.1	1
Little	5.3	5	2.1	2
Mildly	6.3	6	0	0
Fairly	18.9	18	14.7	14
Moderately	32.6	31	27.4	26
Strongly	31.6	30	52.6	50
Missing	0	0	2.1	2
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Age	41.53	14.07	39.68	13.47
Length of marriage (in years)	14.63	12.93	15.07	12.92

N = 95 men and 95 women

Appendix B

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliabilities for All Scales by Gender

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliabilities for All Scales by Sex

	Mean, Standard Deviation, and paired t tests.			Reliability	
Measure	Men	Women	t[a]	Men	Women
Family Expressiveness (FEQ) (Range 1-9)					
Mother's Positive Expressiveness	6.46 (1.40)	6.76 (1.38)	1.471	.94	.94
Mother's Negative Expressiveness	4.75 (1.53)	4.39 (1.51)	-.1747	.90	.91
Father's Positive Expressiveness	5.18 (1.52)	5.69 (1.64)	**2.326***	.95	.95
Father's Negative Expressiveness	4.19 (1.49)	4.23 (1.53)	.394	.91	.90
Managing Affect and Differences Scale (MADS) *Positive components* (Range 1-5)					
MADS Positive subscale composite	3.80 (.42)	3.98 (.41)	**4.101*****	.91	.92
MADS Leveling	3.45 (.64)	3.83 (.61)	**5.250*****	.75	.78
MADS Emotional Expressivity	3.96 (.61)	4.21 (.66)	**3.294****	.72	.84
MADS Validation	3.96 (.53)	4.14 (.54)	**3.041***	.79	.83
MADS Love & Affection	4.06 (.53)	4.24 (.52)	**2.150***	.72	.85
MADS Editing	3.97 (.52)	4.12 (.48)	**2.681***	.75	.72

MADS Feedback	3.59 (.66)	3.88 (.61)	**3.988****	.63	.65
MADS Stop Actions	3.35 (.88)	3.07 (.88)	**-2.265***	.54	.59
MADS Focusing	3.48 (.66)	3.50 (.64)	.256	.52	.49
MADS Communication Over Time	3.92 (.71)	3.96 (.79)	.457	.70	.74
Managing Affect and Differences Scale (MADS) *Negative components* (Range 1-5)					
MADS Negative subscale composite	2.64 (.69)	2.64 (.68)	.021	.85	.83
MADS Negative Escalation	2.66 (.91)	2.81 (.89)	1.347	.71	.63
MADS Negativity	2.61 (.74)	2.67 (.75)	.706	.76	.71
MADS Withdrawal	2.69 (.78)	2.43 (.86)	**-2.512****	.47	.60
Quality of Relationship Inventory (QRI) *Father (n = 47)*					
QRI Conflict	1.93 (.53)	1.99 (.67)	.487	.85	.82
Quality of Relationship Inventory (QRI) *Mother (n= 49)*					
QRI Conflict	2.06 (.66)	1.95 (.65)	-.817	.83	.86

n = 95 men and 95 women. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. [a] - t test degrees of freedom ranged from 91-94, except for QRI data.

Appendix C

Zero-Order Correlations for All Variables for Husbands and Wives

Table 3. MEN – (Matrix)

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
FEQ									
1. Mother FEQ: Positive Expressivity									
2. Mother FEQ: Negative Expressivity	.011								
3. Father FEQ: Positive Expressivity	**.573*** **	-.054							
4. Father FEQ: Negative Expressivity	**.243***	**.493****	.058						
MADS									
5. MADS: Positive Composite	**.229***	-.144	.115	-.071					
6. MADS: Negative Composite	-.020	**.303****	-.012	**.321****	**-.455*** **				
QRI (47 men)									
7. Father: Conflict	**.249***	.116	-.019	**.535*** **	.047	.162			
8. Mother: Conflict	-.184	**.674*** **	-.085	.164	-.084	.215	.157		
Demographics									
9. Age	**-.223***	-.134	-.121	-.188	**-.248***	-.103	-.086	-.218	
10. Years Married	-.114	.046	-.055	-.062	**-.215***	-.105	-.091	-.053	**.797*** **

n = 95 men. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Table 4. WOMEN – (Matrix)

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
FEQ									
1. Mother FEQ: Positive Expressivity									
2. Mother FEQ: Negative Expressivity	.137								
3. Father FEQ: Positive Expressivity	**.52*** **	**.236***							
4. Father FEQ: Negative Expressivity	**.239***	**.406*** **	-.016						
MADS									
5. MADS: Positive Composite	.073	-.089	-.033	**-.215***					
6. MADS: Negative Composite	.020	**.368*** **	.098	**.343****	**-.483*** **				
QRI (51 women)									
7. Father: Conflict	.156	**.349****	.136	**.616*** **	**-.302***	**.377****			
8. Mother: Conflict	-.185	**.713*** **	.062	.218	**-.297***	**.454*** **	**.351***		
Demographics									
9. Age	**-.212***	-.167	-.171	.094	**-.252***	-.034	-.030	-.247	
10. Years Married	**-.212***	-.067	-.098	.088	**-.225***	.016	-.004	-.222	**.868*** **

n = 95 women. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Appendix D

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Marital Communication and Conflict Behaviors

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for variables predicting Marital Communication and Conflict Skills

Table 5. Men

	MADS Negative Composite					
Variable	**Step 1**			**Step 2**		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Age	-.002	.009	-.034	.007	.008	.141
Years Married	-.001	.009	-.027	-.010	.009	-.174
Father Negative Expressiveness				.107	.054	**.231 ***
Mother Negative Expressiveness				.094	.055	.204
R^2		.003			**.129****	
F for change in R^2		.145			**6.412**	

n = 95 men. $^{+}$p <.1, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 6. Women

	MADS Negative Composite					
Variable	**Step 1**			**Step 2**		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Age	-.010	.011	-.208	-.005	.010	-.106
Years Married	.010	.011	.194	.005	.010	.103
Father Negative Expressiveness				.104	.047	**.234 ***
Mother Negative Expressiveness				.121	.049	**.271 ***
R^2		.011			**.177 *****	
F for change in R^2		.497			**9.681**	

n = 95 women. $^{+}$p <.1, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Appendix E

Demographics Questionnaire

Demographics Questionnaire

We would like for you to answer the following questions about yourself. In order to get a complete and accurate picture it is essential that you answer as honestly as possible. Your answers are confidential so no one will know how you responded. Please place the number that corresponds to your answer in the space provided to the left of each question. Thank you for your cooperation!

_____ 1) Age

_____ 2) Sex (1) - Male (2) - Female

_____ 3) Please indicate your ethnic background:

(1) Caucasian (2) African-American (3) Hispanic
(4) Asian-American (5) Native American (6) Other:_____

_____ 4) What is your present marital status? (**Select one only**)

(1) First marriage (2) Remarried (3) Living together
(4) Separated (5) Divorced (6) Widowed

_____ 5) How many times have you been married?

_____ 6) How many years have you been married to your present spouse?

_____ 7) What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

(1) No formal education
(2) Some grade school
(3) Completed grade school
(5) Completed high school or GED
(6) Some trade or technical school
(7) Completed trade or technical school
(8) Some college
(9) 4 year college degree (B.A., B.S., etc.) completed
(10) Some graduate school or professional school

_____ 8) What was your total family income (gross income) before taxes in 2002?

(1) Less than $10,000 (2) $10,000-$14,999 (3) $15,000-$19,999 (4) $20,000-$24,999
(5) $25,000-$29,999 (6) $30,000-$34,999 (7) $35,000-$39,999 (8) $40,000-$44,999
(9) $45,000-$49,999 (10) $50,000 or more

____ 9) Please indicate below your children's sex, age, and your relationship (biological, step, other) to them.

Child's Initials	**Child's Sex**	**Child's Age**	**Relationship**

____ 10) What is your current occupation? (E.g., teacher, welder, homemaker, salesperson)

_____

____ 11. What is your current religious affiliation?

1. Catholic 2. Protestant (denomination) _____ 3. Jewish
4. Eastern (eg, Buddhist) 5. Muslim 6. Other (specify)_____

____12. To what extent do you consider yourself religious?

1. Not at all 2. Little 3. Mildly 4. Fairly 5. Moderately 6. Strongly

Appendix F

Family Expressiveness Questionnaire

FEQ Subscales

Positive Expressivity

1. Showing forgiveness to one who broke a favorite possession.
2. Thanking family members for something they have done.
3. Exclaiming over a beautiful day
6. Praising someone for good work.
15. Expressing exhilaration after an unexpected triumph
16. Expressing excitement over one's future plans.
17. Demonstrating admiration.
18. Expressing sorrow when a pet dies.
20. Telling someone how nice they look.
21. Expressing sympathy for someone's troubles
22. Expressing deep affection or love for someone.
24. Crying when a loved one goes away.
25. Spontaneously hugging a family member.
27. Expressing concern for the success of other family members.
28. Apologizing for being late.
29. Offering to do somebody a favor.
30. Snuggling up to a family member.
32. Trying to cheer up someone who is sad.
33. Telling a family member how hurt you are.
34. Telling family members how happy you are.
37. Expressing gratitude for a favor.
38. Surprising someone with a little gift or favor.
39. Saying "I'm sorry" when one realizes one was wrong.

Negative Expressivity

4. Showing contempt for another's actions.

5. Expressing dissatisfaction with someone else's behavior.

7. Expressing anger at someone's carelessness.

8. Sulking over unfair treatment by a family member.

9. Blaming one another for family troubles.

10. Crying after an unpleasant disagreement.

11. Putting down other people's interests.

12. Seeking approval for an action.

13. Expressing embarrassment over a stupid mistake.

14. Going to pieces when tension builds up.

19. Expressing disappointment over something that didn't work.

23. Quarreling with a family member.

26. Expressing momentary anger over a trivial irritation.

31. Showing how upset you are after a bad day.

35. Threatening someone

36. Criticizing someone for being late.

Appendix G

Managing Affect and Differences Scale

MADS Subscales

Please use the scale below to show how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Unsure	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

Positive Composite:

Leveling

1. ____ When I feel hurt by my wife, I tell her.
8. ____ I tell my wife exactly how I think and feel.
14. ____ In conflict I try to help my wife understand what I am saying.
24. ____ I tell my wife when she has done something that bothers me.
30. ____ When I am angry at my wife, I tell her.
32. ____ I offer constructive alternatives for my wife's bothersome behaviors.
38. ____ When I am disappointed in my wife, I tell her.

Emotional Expressivity

7. ____ I tell my wife when I'm feeling disappointed.
15. ____ I tell my wife when I am proud of her.
31. ____ I tell my wife when I am feeling happy.
39. ____ I tell my wife when I am pleased with her.
40. ____ I tell my wife when I'm feeling proud.

Validation

9. ____ I listen to what my wife says and feels.
10. ____ I show interest in my wife's activities.
25. ____ Knowing how my wife feels is important to me.
26. ____ I give my wife attention.
33. ____ I verbally communicate to my wife that I understand and value her position.
34. ____ I give my wife emotional support.
41. ____ I listen to all of what my wife is saying before I respond.
42. ____ When my wife has a compliant, I try to understand her point of view.

Love and Affection

11. ____ I am comfortable expressing affection for my wife.
12. ____ I wish my wife was more affectionate.
27. ____ I am affectionate toward my wife.
35. ____ I verbally communicate love to my wife.
43. ____ I love my wife.

Editing

13. ____ I try to phrase things positively when I have a complaint.
28. ____ I try to express appreciation for my wife, rather than complaints about her.
29. ____ I tell my wife when I'm having a bad day.
36. ____ I try to interact positively with my wife.
37. ____ I try to focus on the positive side of situations.
44. ____ I don't mind doing my wife a favor, even if I've had a bad day.
45. ____ I express appreciation for my wife's help, despite her unsuccess.
46. ____ I try and think of my wife's point of view when I find myself thinking about my own.

Feedback

4. ____ When issues arise, I ask my wife directly how she feels or thinks about it.
21. ____ I try to check with my wife whether my interpretations of what she says are correct.
53. ____ If I do not understand my wife's point of view, I ask for her to elaborate on it further.
58. ____ I summarize my wife's message to make sure that I understand her point of view.

Stop Actions

16. ____ When conflicts get out of hand, I can agree to stop and talk at a later time.
22. ____ When conflicts get heated up, I usually try to stop them and ask if we can set up another time for discussion.

Focusing

5. ____ I try to focus on only one issue at a time during conflicts with my wife.
17. ____ I accept responsibility for staying on track during a conflict.
54. ____ When we drift off topic in a conflict, I try to get us back on track.

Communication Over Time

6. ____ I understand my wife better than in the past.
20. ____ I am more comfortable with discussing feelings than in the past.
52. ____ I confide in my wife more than in the past.
57. ____ I communicate better than in the past.

Negative Composite:

Negativity

3. ____ I often disagree and quarrel with my wife.
19. ____ When my wife makes complaints, I make complaints.
47. ____ I get on my wife's nerves.
49. ____ I often hassle and nag my wife.
51. ____ I often attack instead of listening to my wife's gripes.
56. ____ I often interpret my wife's messages more negatively than they are intended.

Negative Escalation

18. ____ When I argue with my wife, I lose my temper easily.
48. ____ When I argue with my wife, my negative feelings rise quickly.
55. ____ I find myself unable to get out of heated arguments with my wife.

Withdrawal

2. ____ When problems arise, I often leave the room.
23. ____ When we are discussing issues, I remain silent.
50. ____ When discussing issues with my wife, I usually withdraw.

Appendix H

Quality of Relationship Inventory

Please use the scale below to describe your relationship with your MOTHER, or the person you consider to be your mother.

Not at all	A little	Quite a bit	Very much
1	2	3	4

Support

1. To what extent can you turn to this person for advice about problems?
3. To what extent could you count on this person for help with a problem?
5. To what extent can you count on this person to give you honest feedback even if you might not want to hear it?
8. To what extent could you count on this person to help you if a family member very close to you died?
16. If you wanted to go out and do something this evening, how confident are you that this person would be willing to do something with you?
19. To what extent can you count on this person to listen to you when you are very angry at someone else?
23. To what extent can you really count on this person to distract you from your worries when you feel under stress?

Depth

11. How positive a role does this person play in your life?
12. How significant is this relationship in your life?
13. How close will your relationship be with this person in 10 years?
14. How much would you miss this person if the two of you could not see or talk with each other for a month?
17. How responsible do you feel for this person's well-being?
18. How much do you depend on this person?
26. If you could have only a small number of social relationships, how much would you want your contact with this person to be among them?
29. How considerate is this person to your needs?

Conflict

2. How often do you have to work hard to avoid conflict with this person?
4. How upset does this person sometimes make you feel?
6. How much does this person make you feel guilty?
7. How much do you have to "give in" in this relationship?
9. How much does this person want you to change?
10. How much more do you give than you get from this relationship?
15. How critical of you is this person?
20. How much would you like this person to change?
21. How angry does this person make you feel?
22. How much do you argue with this person?
24. How often does this person make you feel angry?
25. How often does this person try to control or influence your life?
27. To what extent can you trust this person not to hurt your feelings?
28. How often do problems that occur in this relationship get resolved?