USE OF TESTS AND MEASURES IN MARITAL
AND FAMILY RESEARCH

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Summary.— Measures from the marital and family literature were rank ordered by
frequency of appearance in the PsycINFO database from 1974-1997. The Family En-
vironment Scale, Dyadic Adjustment Scale, and the Family Adaptability and Cohesion
Evaluation Scales were the instruments found to be most used in research.

Boughner, Hayes, Bubenzer, and West (1994) reported on the use of
standardized tests and measures by marital and family therapists. There is a
dearth of studies on the research use of family and marital assessment tech-
niques in the literature, although Lindholm and Touliatos (1993) comment-
ed on the continuing popularity of measurement in family research. The pur-
pose of the present study was to examine the use of measures in the family
and marital areas during the past three decades.

An initial listing of 50 tests was constructed by consulting the major
texts in the area (Filsinger, 1983; Fredman & Sherman, 1987; Grotevant &
Carlson, 1989; Touliatos, Perlmutter, & Straus, 1990), as well as recent jour-
nals in the family and marital specialties. A search on each measure was con-
ducted in the PsycLIT CD-ROM database for the years 1974-1997 and only
those instruments with 10 or more hits were retained for the final analyses.
These 22 measures were introduced as key-word descriptors for an online
search of PsycINFO which includes coverage of dissertations, books, and
chapters (see Table 1).

These results indicate that several tests such as the Conflict Tactics
Scale and the series of measures called The Family Adaptability and Cohes-
ion Evaluation Scales seem to be gaining in popularity, whereas others, e.g.,
Marital Adjustment Test, apparently have lost their status in research investi-
gations. It is important to note that this study compared family and marital
measures in the scholarly literature and did not include clinical instruments
(e.g., the MMPI, 16-PF, or the Millon scales) found to be used frequently
by marital and family therapists (Boughner, et al., 1994).

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TABLE 1
Top 10 Ranked Tests With Frequency of Hits For Each 8-Year Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Environment Scale</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>465</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dyadic Adjustment Scale</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>319</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>109</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior Scale (FIRO-B)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict Tactics Scales</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>McMaster Family Assessment Device</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Adjustment Test</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>Marital Satisfaction Scale</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>Marital Satisfaction Inventory</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Communication Inventory</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
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REFERENCES


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