ABSTRACT. The purposes of this paper are to (a) describe a resource exchange theory which outlines the dimensions of life quality (Foa and Foa, 1974), (b) present a multi-dimensional measure of personal evaluations of family life quality based on this theory, and (c) report the results of a two-stage study in which the scale was used. The scale includes items representing love, status, services, information, goods, and money resources received from the family. Respondents evaluated the degree to which the receipt of these resources satisfied personal needs for: (a) love and affection, (b) respect and esteem, (c) comfort and assistance, (d) shared meaning, (e) personal things, and (f) money for personal use. Reliability, correlation, covariance, cluster, and factor analyses on data from 592 subjects provided information for reducing the number of items. A reduced version of the scale was administered to 331 of the same subjects one year later. The two stages provided evidence of construct validity and reliability for the scale.

Family scholars in the past quarter century have given minimal attention to conceptualizing and measuring family life satisfaction/quality yet have remained preoccupied with measuring marital satisfaction/quality (Olson, 1988). Quality of life researchers have clearly established the importance of family life to personal well-being, yet have not gone beyond the use of a few items for measuring the construct (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Campbell, 1981). The development of perceptual indicators of family life quality is needed because of the importance of family, at both individual and societal levels, in contributing to quality of life.

The research literature on family life satisfaction/quality suffers from many of the same conceptual and measurement problems that have been identified in the marital satisfaction/quality research (Huston and Robins, 1982; Sabatelli, 1988). There is little agreement on definitions of family life quality or on the appropriate indicators, however, most measures of family life quality could be criticized for content validity. The domain of family life is so complex that any self-report measure cannot adequately reflect the content of the domain.
The research literature indicates three different approaches to self-report measures of family life quality. The need for surveys to be short often forces researchers to use one-item measures rather than to examine the content of family life in greater depth. Recent examples of one-item measures of personal feelings about family life can be found in the works of Ball and Robbins (1986); Broman (1988); and Voydanoff (1988). The second measurement approach has been to combine items for a summary measure to represent overall family life quality. There is minimal agreement, however, about what content of family life should be summarized (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Amato and Partridge, 1987; Weigel et al. 1987). The Kansas Family Life Satisfaction Scale (KFLSS) (Duncan et al. 1988; Schumm et al. 1986) and Pittman and Lloyd (1988) considered the important content to include satisfaction with the role relationships of spouse and parent. These measures would not be useful for single-parent or childless families.

The third approach to self-report measures of family life quality would include the multi-dimensional scales which are more extensive explorations of the content of family life (Epstein et al. 1987; Lavee et al. 1987; Lowman, 1987; Moos and Moos, 1987; Olson, 1988; Otto, 1983; Stinnett et al. 1982). The constructs of 'strong', 'healthy', and 'effectively functioning' families (indicators of family life quality) are defined and operationalized in different ways in the above measures.

The purposes of this paper are to (a) describe a resource exchange theory which outlines the dimensions of life quality (Foa and Foa, 1971, 1973, 1974, 1980), (b) present a multi-dimensional measure of personal evaluations of family life quality based on this theory, and (c) report the results of a two-stage study in which the scale was used.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The resource exchange theory of Foa and Foa (1974) has several advantages as a means of conceptualizing quality of the family environment for meeting individual needs. The family is recognized as the group where the widest range of resource exchanges takes place and where there is the greatest potential for meeting personal needs. The theory explains the dynamics of interpersonal satisfactions resulting from resource exchanges which meet human needs. The dimensions of