

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS' THOUGHTS AND PERCEPTIONS  
ON TIME MANAGEMENT IN FAMILIES: THE POSSIBLE  
EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

A DISSERTATION

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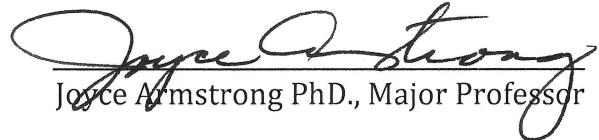
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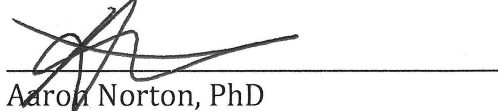
To the Dean of the Graduate School:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Richard E. Toney entitled "Marriage and Family Therapists' Thoughts and Perceptions on Time Management in Families: Possible Effects on Children." I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Family Therapy.

  
Joyce Armstrong PhD., Major Professor

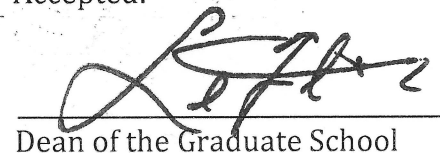
We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

  
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## DEDICATION

For my mother, Mable Toney, and my late brother, Robert Toney, Jr., thank you for always  
believing in me even when I didn't believe in myself.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank God for allowing me to have the ability to move forward in my life to achieve my endeavors. Secondly, I would like to thank my mother, who encouraged me throughout this process and continued to tell me to “go get it because it’s yours.” She has always been the beam of light that I needed in my life. Next, I would like to thank Dr. Glen Jennings for helping me understand that I should always “focus on the things that I want to grow.” This is a challenging process but I believe that nonetheless it is all worth it! I would also like to thank Dr. Norton for being that third person on my committee without really knowing me but understanding “scholarship.” When I asked about being a part of my dissertation committee, Dr. Norton quickly agreed and informed me that if I need any help, he would be available. For that, I thank you! I thank Dr. Moore for helping me see the finish line early on in my doctorate career. Dr. Moore encouraged me to understand that “it makes no sense to complete comprehensive exams and not get the degree.” Because of those words of encouragement, I am now approaching the finish line! I thank Dr. Armstrong for showing me that I have to push my own limits and press through to the finish line with dignity. I extend a special thanks to Dr. Armstrong for allowing me to see things through a different lens and become a man of virtue throughout this endeavor. Finally, to my friends and family who have encouraged me along the way and allowed me to “have my space” when I needed it, I am truly grateful. This is a life journey that I will never forget!

## ABSTRACT

RICHARD E. TONEY

### MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS' THOUGHTS AND PERCEPTIONS ON TIME MANAGEMENT IN FAMILIES: THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

DECEMBER 2015

The purpose of this study was to determine whether licensed marriage and family therapists discuss issues concerning time management with the families in which they work. This qualitative study was fueled by five research questions: Do licensed marriage and family therapists explore time issues as a factor impacting family functioning; Do licensed marriage and family therapists think that the lack of time management has a negative impact on children; Do licensed marriage and family therapists discuss the topic of time management with families at any time during the course of therapy; What do licensed marriage and family therapists say about the lack of time with children during a session; and How do licensed marriage and family therapists begin a discussion about parents spending more time with their children? Twenty-one Texas licensed family therapists were recruited to participate in an online questionnaire through PsychData. Five themes emerged from the data: (a) time management strategies, (b) attention to the child, (c) quality vs. quantity, (d) investigation of family patterns, and (e) parental education. Findings indicated that research participants believed that discussing time management with their clients and families served as resource for families in developing

time management strategies, and that families are challenged in balancing parenting, family, and time management.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Time management within families is a very delicate balancing act that can incur many implications for the family unit, including but not limited to family functioning due to the struggle to balance work and home activities. These reasons include (a) maintenance of the home; (b) care for the children; (c) balance of work; and (d) balance of leisure activities with the children, spouse, and self-care. Today's families struggle with finding ways to build family relationships. Within these family relationships, there may be times where attention to certain members of the family might be neglected. When a family member does not receive the desired attention that is needed, then there may be negative implications that manifest in the family system. There may even be times when the negativity will initially go unnoticed by other members in the family. By the time negative behaviors have gotten to the worst point, there is a possible need for outside intervention. In the case of children who may feel that their parents are not paying attention to their needs, the implications may include poor grades, negative school behaviors towards staff and peers, engaging in at-risk behaviors, and other aspects that pose a threat to family functioning. The feelings of the children may stem from the parents having difficulty in managing their time to allow for appropriate activities with their children. This could cause the children to engage in negative activities so that the need for attention may be met. Although the children may engage in

negative behavior, their thoughts and beliefs may be that their parents don't care about them and may not care about what types of activities they engage in.

Other ways that family functioning may be impacted in a negative manner is parents' beliefs about the way they spend time with their children in the home, the way that parents communicate with their children about certain behaviors that they exhibit, and an overall sense of feeling tired when parents have completed activities outside of the home. Thus, the perpetuating cycle that is created could possibly cause children to feel as if they are alone. Professionals may be aware of some of the implications that negative behavior causes, but they may not be aware of how their impact and their thoughts and beliefs on time management affect the ways in which they communicate with their clients in practice. It is important for professionals to know how families value and spend time as it relates to parents spending quality time with their children. Offer and Schneider (2009) stated, "How families spend time provides a lens through which we can learn about the structure of relationships in the household. Recent studies show that working families today are managing their lives quite differently than their fathers and mothers" (p. 827). Offer (2013) has indicated that family time has an effect on the well-being of the children and adolescents who are within the home (p. 32).

Time management, in reference to childhood behavior, is a very important aspect to be examined due to some researchers indicating that school age children spend time alone. As a matter of fact, Wight, Raley, and Bianchi (2008) reported that, "For younger school age children of working parents, children may spend a number of hours alone or in self-care each day, perhaps before they are mature enough to handle such arrangements."

In this case, time management would prove to be an issue that needs to be dealt with due to the possibility of unsupervised children engaging in improper behavior. Children who are left alone have a greater chance to engage in negative or risky behaviors (Wight, et al. 2008). Behavioral problems are likely to exist in a situation where parental supervision is decreased or non-existent. Children who are engaging in negative or risky behaviors are more than likely not supervised by a parent due to the activities that the parent has to be involved in such as employment, college, and organizations. If children are left alone to do things on their own, they have a greater opportunity to engage in activities that could be detrimental to them. These children who are left alone could also engage in negative activities and refrain from telling their parents about any trouble that they could be in. This could further impair the functioning of the family because the level of trust could be broken between the parent and the children. This could lead to the parent wanting to seek assistance in identifying what is causing the negative behavior to manifest.

The amount and quality of time between parents and children has direct implications on children and teens. In reference to educational development and socialization while in school settings, children have a greater chance of dropping out of school, criminal involvement, risky sexual behavior, and skipping such activities as football, baseball, basketball, University Interscholastic League activities (UIL) etc., due to lack of parental support (Wight et al., 2008). The work schedules of some parents prevent them from being involved in their children's activities, especially if they work during the times that their children may be involved in activities that are primarily after school (Wight et al., 2008). These activities could be football, baseball, soccer, etc. If a

parent is working a 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. work shift, for example, then he or she will be unable to sit in a place where the children may be performing or engaging in an activity where parental observation is expected by the children. Due to their employment, parents face the task of determining how they will spend time with their children. What specific activities parents are willing to engage in when they have the freedom to spend time with their children may be a point of concern. But when there is no supervision and the children engage in negative behaviors, parents may not understand that their lack of appropriate time management lends itself to the negative behavior exhibited by the children. “Children’s educational development is contingent on more than just their classroom hours, including such things as parent-teacher conferences, school plays, science fairs, and PTA meetings. Many of these activities take place after regular school hours. The ability of parents who work nonstandard hours, particularly evening hours, to participate in these activities is likely hampered by their work schedules” (Wight et al. 2008).

Finally, the establishment of healthy bonds between parents and children assists children and teens in understanding the importance of not engaging in negative behaviors as well as helping to reduce such negative behaviors. The positive activities of parents with children equates to children’s understanding of how families function appropriately. When children grow up, they can oftentimes adopt the culture of their family of origin. With this in mind, time management must be balanced in order to create a healthy bond between parents and their children so that the next generation that springs from the family of origin will assist their children in understanding the importance of proper time

management as it relates to the reduction of negative behavior in their children. The bond between parents and children is usually established when parents begin spending quality time with their children (Bowlby, 1988). This means that the parents take the time to engage in activities along with their children in order to create avenues of quality time, better communication, and closeness between them. The willingness of parents to participate in activities with their children allows children to have a sense of belonging. It may drive children closer to their parents and establish their bond. Showing children care and concern by spending time with them could assist children in understanding the importance of family connections. This could teach children that when they become adult parents, they should spend time with their children in order to establish the same type of closeness or bond that they experienced as children. “Parents who are involved in their children’s lives on a daily basis and have established strong bonds of trust and affection accumulate social capital, which in turn facilitates the transmission of human capital skills from one generation to the next”, (Cooksey, Menhaghan, & Jekeielek, 1997, p. 657).

### **Statement of the Problem**

#### **Time Management**

Time management is the act or process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency or productivity. A range of skills, and tools, may aid time management and techniques used to manage time when accomplishing specific tasks, projects, and goals complying with a due date. This set encompasses a wide

scope of activities, and these include planning, allocating, setting goals, delegation, analysis of time spent, monitoring, organizing, scheduling, and prioritizing. Initially, time management referred to just business or work activities, but eventually the term broadened to include personal activities as well (Morgenstern, 2004, p. 133).

Given the purpose of this qualitative study, time management will relate to the balance between work and other activities of the parents outside the home and family activities as the potential for being a factor causing possible negative effects on children as viewed through the lens of multifamily configurations from a phenomenological perspective. These families have an issue with connecting their time together as well as dealing with the way that work and other outside activities affect children's behavior. Thus, the therapist is the individual who has the ability to help families develop strategies to manage time together. Strategies of managing time and methods of coping with negative behaviors of children are taught to parents by professionals who help families deal with behavioral concerns and the lack of closeness within families. These professionals may inquire about things that occur within the family to determine if there needs to be any assistance given. This assistance would provide the family with a way of possibly dealing with the negative behaviors of the children and the development of strategies that enhance the family bond.

### **Traditional Family Households**

Discovering a balance within the traditional home may be a cause of controversy for some families. For example, a wife may feel that because the husband may not be



doing anything substantial at the time within the home (i.e. watching television or reading the newspaper), he could assist her with some of the housework. On the other hand, the husband could feel compelled to allow the wife to do all of the housework because he believes that housework is gender specific and does not require any of his attention. At this point, neither parent is taking time with the children because they are involved in their own circumstances and children may not be properly supervised (Bowen and Pittman, 1995).

### **Single-Parent Households**

Single parents have to maintain appropriate time schedules for work, activities outside of the home, and for spending time with their children. Single-parent households experience emotional concerns related to time constraints. If parents have the opportunity to allow their children to come to their workplace, then there is a possible chance for the children to see what their parents do for employment. This could also create the opportunity for parents and children to spend time together with each other. Activities like father/son day and mother/daughter day allow children to create a bond with each other and assist the parent in finding out more about their children. Barling and Van Bart (1984) conducted research and the findings indicated, “There is a positive association between parents’ experiences of employment and children's behaviour, and a same-sex effect is evident” (p. 53). This means, for example, that children who see their parents in a career that children may find interesting, may exhibit behaviors that indicate that they are interested in the same field. Creating an avenue for children to be a part of the parents’ employment endeavors could possibly create positive time and opportunities for

children to establish a closer bond with parents of the same sex (i.e. father is a firefighter and the son has an opportunity to work with the father for a day). On the other hand, Barling and Van Bart (1984) found that negative emotions (e.g. role conflict) associated with mothers' employment were related to greater conduct problems for boys and lack of maturity for girls. Thus, the sex of the child moderates the influence of mothers' positive employment experiences (e.g. job satisfaction). Moreover, the gender of children interacts with the nature of children's behavior (i.e. under-control or over-control) in predicting the impact of negative emotions associated with mothers' employment (for example, through role conflict). The research indicated that due to the mother possibly having the ability to cope with role conflict, this ability to cope would also be evident in children's behavior. Barling and Van Bart (1984) further indicated that children who had mothers who were unable to solve conflict appropriately, would exhibit the same difficulty with regards to conflict of any kind. Although there was no indication in the research from this study, one would wonder how things would have been if the researcher included information regarding the father's response towards the negative behavior of children as they exhibited negative behavior towards others. The connection is that even though there were behaviors that were exhibited in children, they were in direct relation to the time that was being spent with the parent. If there is a therapist that assists families in dealing with their time, families have better behavioral outcomes in children as well as the possibility to strengthen bonds with one another (Bowlby, 1988).

## **Blended Family Households**

Blended families and how they manage time with both stepchildren and adopted children may cause concern within time management as well. It is vital for professionals to understand how all types of family constellations experience possible issues with behavioral concerns with additional children who have come into a household where a management strategy, whether good or bad, has already been established.

It is important that the field of family therapy provide its own definition of time management as to allow a greater understanding of how it should be solved and to help family members gain greater understanding of their new roles within the family as it relates to preventing possible negative behaviors of their children. The principal researcher in this qualitative study was unable to find any research where licensed marriage and family therapists were asked about their thoughts on time management and how the lack of time with children can negatively impact children or adolescents' behavior. Previous studies have used pagers, logs, diaries, etc., in order to gain insight on the way families manage their time. This does not give the thoughts and perceptions of therapists who may work with families who have difficulty utilizing and managing their time along with children who are concerned with negative behavior.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to determine whether licensed marriage and family therapists discuss issues concerning time management with the families in which they work and the possibilities of negative childhood behavior as it relates to the lack of appropriate time management. This study was guided by five

research questions that sought to determine whether marriage and family therapists felt that time management was a topic to discuss with the families in which they serve. The researcher also sought to determine if time management had a negative impact on children's behavior, as well as how licensed marriage and family therapists brought up the topic during sessions. Finally, the researcher wanted to determine what licensed marriage and family therapists say while in sessions with families. There is a specific need for this type of research because, most if not all of the research conducted on family time management does not discuss how professionals deal with the effects of how the family responds to the lack of time management. It is also important to consider how time management plays a role in the development or behavioral consequences of children or adolescents within the family. It was the goal of this study to determine how licensed marriage and family therapists think about, respond to, and discuss the lack of time management and the lack of time spent with children and adolescents with families during sessions. This study sought to look more deeply into this phenomenon due to there being little research on how therapists worked with children who are affected by the lack of family time. On a greater scale this study is important because, as Cooksey et al. (1997) point out, it is important for professionals to have greater awareness of how work related issues and outside activities of parents impact the behaviors of children, resulting in negative behaviors that children can carry into their own adulthood. This could also impact the way the adult children raise their children, how they care for themselves, and their emotional welfare. In this regard, licensed marriage and family therapists can benefit from the discussion of time management in therapy sessions to assist their clients

in the development of strategies as well as assisting the family members in understanding the importance of having quality time with one another.

### **Research Questions**

Five basic questions guided this study:

RQ 1. Do licensed marriage and family therapists explore time issues as a factor impacting family functioning?

RQ 2. Do licensed marriage and family therapists think that the lack of time management has a negative impact on children?

RQ 3. Do licensed marriage and family therapists discuss the topic of time management with families at any time during the course of therapy?

RQ 4. What do licensed marriage and family therapists say about the lack of time with children during a session?

RQ 5. How do licensed marriage and family therapists begin a discussion about parents spending more time with their children?

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions apply:

*Complementarity* – Is the way in which each partner admires, fulfills, or is expected to fulfill, the unconscious needs and role expectations of the other partner.

*Family Projection Process* – Is a concept that describes the means by which levels of differentiation of the parents are passed on to their children.

*Family Rules* – Are shared norms and values that govern the regular patterns of family functionality.

*Family System* – Is an interdependent, contributing part of the unit that controls each member's behaviors.

*Family Therapy* – Is the type of treatment that involves the entire family system in the therapeutic process.

*Stress Spillover* – Is when mental pressure at either work or home results in mental pressure within other domains.

### **Assumptions**

The following assumptions grounded this investigation:

1. Therapists will have strategies to assist families in managing their time more effectively.
2. Therapists will be able to recognize issues concerning the lack of time management and how they impact family functioning.
3. Therapists will have the ability to assist children and parents in expressing their concerns about time management issues.
4. Therapists will be able to identify the lack of time with children and discuss these concerns with the family.
5. Therapists will understand what time management issues are and how to deal with them when working with families.
6. Therapists will give accurate information on their responses.

### **Delimitations**

The delimitations for the purpose of this research study were the following.

1. Participants who were licensed marriage and family therapists and were fully licensed were selected for this study.
2. Participants were licensed in the state of Texas only.
3. None of the participants in the study were from other states.
4. Licensed marriage and family therapist associates were not selected for this study.
5. Participants were volunteers who agreed to go online to complete the questionnaire on a secure website ([www.PsychData.com](http://www.PsychData.com)).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this research is based on Phenomenological Theory. Specifically in the Phenomenological Theory, intentionality is used (Sokolowski, 2000). In reference to the Phenomenological Theory, information is based on shared human experiences. Furthermore, it is, “the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person view point. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed towards something, as it is an experience about some object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its object or meaning together with appropriate enabling conditions” (p. 32).

More specifically, Cerbone (2006) reported that phenomenology is more concerned about the way things may manifest or “show up”. He further indicated that phenomenology is related to our perception and how we may have concentrated on that which is being manifested. In other words, phenomenology assists others in

understanding what the shared experience is and how people identify the experience as something is happening. Cerbone (2006) stated, “The word ‘phenomenology’ means the study of phenomena where the notion of a phenomenon coincides, roughly with the notion of experience” (p. 7). These shared experiences help people to determine what they feel or think about themselves as they are experiencing the situation. The focus is not on the actual experience, but on the thoughts that manifest from the experience (p. 10).

### **Intentionality**

Intentionality refers to the theory of knowledge and not to the theory of human action (Sokolowski, 2000). Furthermore, it is important to recognize that the root word *intend* should not be confused with the conventional sense of the word. Intend or intention, in this case, is not what we have in mind to do purposefully, but that it is a cognitive or a mental concept (Sokolowski, 2000). Sokolowski (2000) describes intentionality as the “Conscious relationship we have to an object” (p. 8). To better shed light on this topic Sokolowski (2000) reported that humans are aware of themselves as well as their own ideas. Within the mind, concepts are created and in a circular manner, the human experience is directed towards it. The human experience can cause one to look outside them and develop “impressions” where one may conceptualize what things might be like for others.

With respect to this qualitative study, phenomenology fits because the principal researcher attempted to determine what the licensed marriage and family therapist



perceives and experiences within the sessions as it relates to conversations about time management.

### **Summary**

This chapter discussed how time management in families could cause concerns with family functioning. Children who are not supervised have a greater opportunity to engage in negative and at-risk behaviors. Time management was described as how a person plans and exercises their control over certain situations. The description of the different constellations of family was provided to discuss its relation to how time is managed within each constellation. The purpose of the study was explained and it explored how the researcher sought to examine marriage and family therapists' thoughts and perceptions on time management in families. More specifically, the researcher wanted to determine if the therapists brought up time management issues in the sessions and if they did, what types of was discussed. Finally, this section discussed the definitions, assumptions, limitations, and theoretical framework.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will discuss a review of the literature regarding family time use, parental time, parental childcare, and its effects on children. There has been extensive research on time management and the family but little on how family time management affects the behavior of children negatively from the perspective of licensed marriage and family therapists. Based on this researcher's review of books, journals, etc., there is little research that indicates the thoughts and perceptions of licensed marriage and family therapists on time management and how they believe it relates to the negative behaviors of children. Therefore, this researcher will look at different aspects of research that correlate to negative behavior and tie it to the reason this study was conducted.

"The evidence is no such that it leaves no room for doubt... that the prolonged deprivation of a young child of maternal care may have grave and far reaching effects on his character and son on the whole of his future life. It is a proposition exactly similar in for to those regarding the evil after effects of German measles before birth or deprivation of Vitamin D in infancy" (Bowlby, 1988, p. 81). Cassidy and Shaver (2010) indicated that parental time with children is very important. Their research also found that the maternal impact seemingly is greater than the fraternal impact of parenting. Cassidy and Shaver (2010) report that children need "nurturing, sensitivity attuned, responsive caregiving environments for optimal development" (p. 641). Teicher (2002) added that

parent-child closeness, parental sensitivity to young children's emotions and needs, and use of supportive adult guidance in place of punitive discipline yield more positive developmental outcomes for children. The closeness of the children to their parents increases the emotional attachment and the bond that assists in emotional well-being.

### **Family Time Management**

Time management within today's society holds a critical balance within families. Many parents have to contend with whether to work extra hours to support their family or work fewer hours in order to make time for their children. Offer (2013) indicated that many parents struggle with determining what is best for their work as well as what is best for their families, attempting to combine the two. According to Hilbrecht, Zuzanek, and Mannell (2008) teenagers experience these time pressures when they get older as well, specifically when they become old enough to get jobs. The lack of research regarding this contention as well as the effects on children indicates a gap that may need to be looked upon from a phenomenological perspective.

Parents' feelings of depletion could cause the parent to feel tired and not interested in any activities or interactions with their children. The challenge then becomes, finding a healthy balance so that children may be involved in activities that include the parents. Based on a report of Bowen and Pitman (1995) "The amount of time that an individual devotes to work, parenting, marital, and other role-related activities (e.g., church member, political party member) may lead to feelings of over load and depletion and the responsibilities that arise within each sphere of activity may lead to feelings of conflict between and among roles" (p. 23). Kelly, Moen, and Tranby (2011)

also indicated that, “Other work demands associated with work-family conflict include mandatory or unexpected overtime, job pressure and perceived overload, job stress, and psychological job demands such as working fast or having many interruptions” (p. 268).

Though the topic of work scheduling and the consequences of these schedules for family life has received increased attention in recent years, there tends to be greater emphasis on when work takes place rather than where work is conducted. And although there are a few qualitative accounts of women’s experiences with doing paid work at home, less is known about the extent to which this work arrangement might ease work-family tensions by allowing workers more uninterrupted time for work and greater time for leisure activities as well as time for children. (Wight et al. 2008, p. 263)

This, in turn, is indicative of the thought that children who lack family time may experience greater behavioral problems due to not being able to participate within the family experience of leisure time and the togetherness of the family as a whole (Elkind, 2001). The aforementioned research also seems to indicate that if work is brought to the home by the parent then the home is, in essence, a workplace and not a place for leisure or family activities. With this in mind, children may see their parent as a worker and not a parent, lessening the opportunity to create a bond with the parent. The result of this is what Bowen and Pittman (1995) describe as spillover where stress at either work or home results in stress at the other domain. In this sense, the relationship between the child and the parent suffers because work is at home and there is less time for parent-child interactions, decreasing the establishment of appropriate bonding. Flouri and Buchanan

(2003) reported that parental involvement is related to the happiness of children in families. More specifically, Tubbs, Roy, and Burton (2005) stated, “Twenty-five percent (n = 15) of mothers intentionally made time for face- to-face conversation with children in their daily routines. During neighborhood walks and cleanup after dinner, and even during walks home from the elevated train after a hectic workday, parents found contexts to engage children in meaningful conversation” (p. 82).

Presser (2004) indicated that within the past 40 years there has been a significant increase in the service sector thus having implications on families. Mothers have increased their workload by going into the workforce. This places a “greater demand” on the mother, as she has to consider her employment as well as her responsibilities at home. Also, there is a growing trend of there being a “24 -7 service economy,” which may impact families, specifically family functioning. Family routines may be disrupted due to a mother going into the workforce resulting in the lack of “quality childcare.” This will eventually prevent family members from being together “in the same place at the same time” (Presser, 2004). With this in mind, there can be several negative behavioral concerns that may take place when family members are not together. One study found that nonstandard parental work schedules are negatively related to children’s emotional and behavioral outcomes (Hill, Waldfogel, Brooks - Gunn, & Wen-Jui, 2005). There is also research that indicates that the negative effects on children are mediated by poor family functioning, parents’ depressive symptoms, as well as hostile and ineffective parenting (Strazdins, Clements, Korda, Broom, & D’Souza, 2006).

Another important topic related to this research is the home lives of children and the changes in the past years. There have been changes within family and the home setting over the past 24 years. This seems to be due to divorce and parents having children out of wedlock. And the result is where children are ultimately being raised in single parent homes (Mare & Winship, 1991). With the combination of single parents spending less time at home due to employment along with having to make time with their children, single parents struggle to manage time for employment and time for their children.

According to Wight et al. (2009), it is believed that when parents have employment with flexible hours or have the ability to work from their home, there is a greater chance for parents to balance employment and family life. The concern is the possibility of work and family lines being blurred if a parent works from home. This can possibly cause increased behavioral concerns by children because although the parent(s) is present, they are still unable to spend specific family time with children causing an even more pronounced strain on the relationship between parents and children.

### **Family Time Management and its Potential Effects on Children**

The consequences for not having information related to this issue could have major effects on the clinical settings for licensed professional counselors (LPCs), licensed marriage and family therapists (LMFTs) as well as psychologists and psychiatrists. Issues which may have arisen, but have not been looked at via this scope, could possibly be a result of clinicians misdiagnosing children, prescribing medication for children that is not actually needed, and placing children in facilities (i.e., psychiatric hospitals and

residential treatment facilities) without actually looking at the true dynamics within the family system. Lakes (2011) indicated that if parents spend more time with their children who have a clinical diagnosis such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), the behavioral symptoms would diminish. As a matter of fact, they also reported that, “There is now preliminary evidence that children who have a genetic predisposition toward hyperactivity and inattention may be more negatively impacted by less optimal parenting practices. Moreover, parent intervention for preschoolers has the potential to reduce symptoms of ADHD as well as reduce the symptoms of comorbid conduct problems among children who have ADHD” (p. 654). If the potential of comorbidity in behavioral and conduct disorders can be diminished via an increase in family involvement, then clinicians may have been missing the link that assists them in making better and more informed decisions about how to treat behavioral concerns in reference to the way families manage their time and structure leisure. Behavioral concerns such as tobacco use at an early age and violent behavior were indicated in a study done by Fulkerson et al. (2006). They reported that the lack of family mealtime had a significant effect on children’s behavior where children engaged in violent behavior and tobacco use when they did not have mealtime with their parents.

### **The Role of Fathers in Family Time Management**

As it is understood that parental investment has an effect on the development of children, “Much of the parental time literature attempts to illuminate which parents spend the most time doing childcare activities and much of the literature on family time simply ignores the father or assumes that they are similar to other parents” (Pacholok &

Gauthier, 2010, p. 254). Due to the fact that often mothers are the ones who are participating in childcare and leisure activities with their children, fathers are often omitted from the research literature. With this in mind, it is important to note what the literature states about fathers who participate in family time as well as leisure activities within the family system. Romano and Bruzzese (2007) indicated that it has become more apparent that fathers play a significant role in the development of children. Studies have indicated that when fathers invest their time and emotions towards their children, it increases children's cognitive development and emotional wellbeing.

### **Behavioral Concerns of Children in Relation to Family Time**

Often times the literature discusses parent training programs to target possible behavioral concerns that occur including slight information regarding spending more time with children who may be exhibiting behavioral concerns. Based upon the researchers review of journal articles and books no information was found as it relates to how clinicians should treat family members experiencing time management issues. The most popular behavioral concerns that are exhibited by children are externalizing behaviors such as aggression, noncompliance to authority and acts of opposition. Yet, there is no information reporting of these behaviors are a direct result of the lack of family time by caregivers. Elkind (2006) reported an interesting finding about single parents as it relates to at-risk sexual behavior. He stated that single parents provide a different example than parents who are married. The single parent may have a paramour who comes to visit and possibly stays the night. Children then have access to see romantic behaviors such as petting, kissing, and touching in a sexual manner. Based on the work of Elkind, this



could cause some children to have a desire to seek “something similar.” This speaks to several complexities within the relationship between parents and children. There is an indication that although there may be positive displays of courtship, children will then have to share time with someone else who is now romantically involved with their parent. This could further distance children from attempting to establish a connection with the parent, thus creating a greater avenue for children to engage in risky sexual behavior as well as other negative activities such as criminal involvement, truancy, early sexual behavior, etc. Once the attention is given to children at this point, it seems to be due to negative behavior and the establishment of a bond or extra time for parents and children to engage and spend time together, which possibly decreases due to negative behavior.

Fathers play a very important role as it relates to raising children. Fathers provide the opportunity for children to see what role fathers play within the family. Whether the father exhibits behaviors of being the breadwinner, the caregiver, or both, fathering is a very important aspect of childrearing. Before the discussion of fathers takes place, it is important to look at the concept of parenting and how fathers “parent” from a research based perspective (Linn, Wilson, & Fako, 2015).

### **A Brief History of Family**

At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, fathers had been considered the breadwinners of the family in Western civilization (Linn et al. 2015). Although mothers had “considerable autonomy in organizing and controlling the process of the homes” (Linn et al., 2015, p. 13), men were the ones who controlled the finances and the structure of the home. Males were the ones who were considered to be in control of the pre-

industrial society. During the pre-industrial period, mothers were responsible for caring for the infants and adolescents until the male children became old enough to do outside work or activities with their fathers. Cancian (1987) stated, “In the 1950s, the majority of people in the United States lived in two parent families; however, by the 1960s, this dominant form was being undermined by macro changes in the world economy, the expanding social movement of feminism in all highly industrialized western countries and rising divorce rates” (p. 648). It is also important to point out that in the 1950s, most married couples gained marital satisfaction from “the fulfillment of traditionally defined roles of breadwinner, homemaker, and mother” (Cancian, 1987, p. 652). As time went on, during the 1970s, the divorce rate was on the rise. By the 1980s the divorce rate had reached approximately 50% for first marriages (Linn et al., 2015, p. 86). To give some clarity, a simple explanation might be a shift from what has been known as traditional households to the many different types of family formations. What this means is in the past families were made up of the mother, the father, and the biological children. The family dynamics at the time indicated that the mother was the homemaker and the nurturer of the family. The father, on the other hand, established the financial support of the home as well as implemented the discipline. As time went on the definition of the “family” had to change due, but not limited to, mortality rates and divorce (Linn et al., p. 13). To discuss a connecting bridge between time periods, the divorce rates increased for first-time married couple between the 1950s and the 1980s to upwards of 50%. Therefore the definition of family had to change. Fathers living in separate houses had to deal with financing their children as well as the home in which they lived outside of the

previous nuclear family residence since a divorce had occurred. This trend has continued throughout this time and has now incorporated more definitions of family and how fathers relate to their children in such families. Linn et al. (2015) stated,

Scanning the current social landscape in the United States reveals nuclear families consisting of a married man and woman and their biological and/or adopted children; step-families including a married man and woman, their biological and/or adopted children, and children from former marriages; single parent families that typically are comprised of an unmarried male and female, their biological children, and children from other relationships; same sex families, which include a married or cohabitating couple and their biological or adopted children, and/or children from former marriages and relationships and transnational families which mostly consist of a married man and woman and their children who are residing and working in different countries. (p.14)

Within the realm of the pre-industrial period and current times, there was a shift in the way that fathers parented their children. Connecting the 18<sup>th</sup> century to current research, according to Cherlin (2004), during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, father involvement assisted with “A drop in the mortality of children and adults, improved standard of living and a redefinition of the meaning of marriage.” (p. 857)

Currently, fathers play a role in the family that assists children in understanding how they should be and how they should respond within the modern day culture.

According to Marisiglio and Roy (2013), “The contemporary model for fatherhood in the

United States and other developed societies is ‘new fatherhood’’. (p. 192) Linn et al. (2015) stated,

New fatherhood encompasses the traditional roles of providing (i.e., housing and other necessities including health insurance) but add the more modern responsibilities of caring for and nurturing prenatal moms, infants, and children. Optimally, there is a balance between the providing and caring roles expected of fathers today. Particularly with the United States, but also within other developed nations, attainment of modern fathering as defined by the “new fatherhood” model is deeply affected by economic and social inequality. (p. 15)

Within the concept of new fatherhood, Plantin (2007) reported that men with more resources (i.e. education, finances, and status) are better able to nurture and care for their children. As a matter of fact, “As professionals, they have more flexibility to adjust their work roles to provide time for infant and childcare including playing with children, transporting and monitoring them, and feeding, bathing and cleaning up after them” (Linn et al. 2015, p. 17).

In the 1960s and 1970s the definition of marriage and ultimately the definition of family changed where divorce was on the rise and there were more single parents than before. As a matter of fact Wilcox (2009) reported,

The divorce revolution of the 1960s and ’70s was over-determined. The nearly universal introduction of no-fault divorce helped to open the flood-gates, especially because these laws facilitated unilateral divorce and lent moral legitimacy to the dissolution of marriages. The sexual revolution, too, fueled the

marital tumult of the times: Spouses found it easier in the Swinging Seventies to find extramarital partners, and came to have higher, and often unrealistic, expectations of their marital relationships. Increases in women's employment as well as feminist consciousness-raising also did their part to drive up the divorce rate, as wives felt freer in the late '60s and '70s to leave marriages that were abusive or that they found unsatisfying. (p. 82)

During the 1990s there were changes that brought about different dynamics for families. According to a report by Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, and Crouter (2000) the 1990s stand out because of the advances in technology that were made. The introduction of the cell phone, computers, pagers and other devices made it easier for adults to do their work in different places such as in the car, airplanes or even home. Bringing work to the home created concerns for some families as it diminished the time between family members (Perry-Jenkins et al., 2000). Hayghe (1997) reported how mothers entering the workforce increased during the 1990s. "In 1997, the overall employment rate of women was 59.5%, with 63.9% of women with children under age 6 and 78.3% of women with children ages 6 to 17 employed" (Hayghe, 1997, p. 43).

### **Fathering and Military Deployment**

As some fathers who are in the military attempt to reintegrate into their families and homes, there is a set of dynamics that should be discussed regarding this population which includes: the age of the children when the father left for deployment, the connection between father and children while the father was deployed, and the way in which the father comes back into the home after deployment, as well as a myriad of other

psychological concerns that may have occurred during the deployment and how children and spouses see the father in parenting children who may not have been in contact with their father due to the deployment. In order to understand the relationships between children and their fathers who have been deployed one must look at research indicating what occurs between these family members. Based on a report by Allen and Staley (2007), teachers have the task of working with children who have concerns about their fathers being deployed to another location because of the military. Allen and Staley (2007) also indicated that if the teachers were unable to support the children emotionally, they would be referred to a professional who may be able to assist them further.

Walsh, Dayton, Erwin, Muzik, Busuito, and Rosenblum, (2014) reported that during the first years of life, there is a “Rapid progression of physical and cognitive changes” (p. 36). Children experience a need for a biological connection with the parent to establish behavioral patterns. Interruption of the normal setting within the household is especially difficult for young children. Children may experience “grief and loss” related to the parent being away from them. Also depression and anxiety may manifest in the behaviors of the remaining parent when they are left with the responsibility of rearing children alone (Walsh et al. 2014).

### **Blended Families**

The term, *blended families* includes several different types of family units. It most commonly means a set of parents and their children from previous relationships. However, the term *blended families* extends far beyond this within American society. As we look at the concept of the blending of families, we must initially consider the fact that

kinship care and adoption also make up blended families. Within the scope of adoption, foster care, and kinship care, there is an adjustment that may have to be made by each member of the blended family. Gibson (2005) indicated that many children, who are in the foster care or kinship care system, rely on the assistance of some of the extended members within their family to assist them in meeting their needs as well as the needs of their children.

African American families and other American families, who struggle against social and economic adversity, appear to have particularly diverse and flexible family forms. Adaptability and flexibility have allowed these families to respond to elevated needs brought by their social and economic positions. This flexibility includes a greater reliance on extended family members for social and economic support. (p. 283)

### **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

There are a growing number of grandparents who are taking on the responsibility of raising their grandchildren. This is usually because the children's parents may be on drugs, incarcerated, or have health problems that prevent them from being able to care for their children by themselves. According to Minkler and Fuller - Thomson (2005), since 2001, more than 2,400,000 grandparents have been raising grandchildren in the United States. According to research by Minkler and Fuller - Thompson (2005), it is particularly prevalent in the African American population. Often times the population consists of grandmothers who are raising their grandchildren. This puts them in a category of being single parents. This same study indicated several different risk factors that could possibly

damage the opportunity for these African American caregivers to spend time with their grandchildren in a manner they would like if they would not have the concerns or the issues discussed within the study. Issues that were discussed in this study included, poverty, education, health related factors, and limitations in mobility. When looking at this population, it is important to note that there is great difficulty with many African American grandparents to spend quality time with their grandchildren. Although Minkler and Fuller - Thompson (2005) did not indicate any behavioral outcomes or negative behavioral responses of children, the lack of supervision from these aforementioned grandparents could possibly create a platform for negative behavior within children to flourish. It is important to note, for example, how grandparents in poor health would have to take time to see their primary care physician for their regular check-ups, which could be every three months for each physician that they may be seeing for particular illnesses. For example a grandmother who may suffer from rheumatoid arthritis, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes may have three different physicians working with her. With this being said, the grandparent who is also caring for adolescents or younger children may have difficulty finding enough time to care for the needs of children the way he or she would like if he or she did not have medical concerns. One of the greatest parts of the previously mentioned study was that these grandparents were not caring for these children for short periods of time. In other words, the grandparents had been caring for the children for 3-4 years or more.

Another point of concern could be that the child or adolescent could feel as if he or she has to monitor the health of the grandparent who is to be caring for children. This



could cause a role reversal where children are then caring for the grandparents instead of the grandparents taking care of the children. Another issue of concern within the study was the education level of the grandparents. Many of the grandparents had less than a high school education. This poses a threat to the education of children, especially when it comes to the children possibly needing assistance with schoolwork. This could cause issues at school where children may not want to be involved with their education and start engaging in at-risk behaviors such as truancy. This would be an added stressor to a grandparent who has health problems and has to care for children or adolescents with behavioral concerns. If therapeutic interventions from a licensed marriage and family therapy were implemented in this case, where the grandparent could be assisted in making schedules to combat time conflicts, then there is a possibility that a stronger bond could be established between guardians and children. This could reduce the negative behaviors of children because quality time will be invested in children and their activities.

### **Summary**

While there is evidence that relationships can be strained by work and family roles, the researcher found no information that indicates that therapists shared their thoughts and perceptions about time management of the family as it relates to possible negative effects on children's behavior. Literature focused more on the roles within the home and how children who are not supervised may engage in risky behavior such as truancy, at-risk sexual behavior, criminal behavior, etc. Much of the literature focused on single mothers versus single fathers. Blended families were considered in the literature and grandparents who were parenting their grandchildren were considered as well. No

literature was found that discussed how licensed marriage and family therapists used possible time management strategies in order to assist parents with coping with the struggles related to time management and how these possible coping skills could curve negative behaviors in children. Some literature described that parents struggle to balance work, life and other activities as the parent experiences depletion where they are too tired to be involved with their children or other activities. The possible effect of this could be where children engage in negative activity because they are not involved with activities along with their parents. Some literature indicated that due to the household structure in single parent households, time for parenting is limited due to the single parents having to be the breadwinner, as well as having to juggle other potential tasks such as going to college and handling other affairs which all take away from the bond that could potentially be made with the children.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

This phenomenological study examined the thoughts and perceptions of time management from the perspectives of licensed marriage and family therapists as it relates to possible negative effects on children's behavior. Thoughts consist of the information that is processed in a person's mind while perceptions are related to the way an individual understands information. The study explored if marriage and family therapists discussed the topic of time management with families, if marriage and family therapist believed that time management was an issue that needed to be addressed, how they brought the discussion up in sessions, and what suggestions they may have for assisting the parents in spending more time with the children in order to possibly reduce negative behavior. There were five research questions that guided this study.

RQ 1. Do licensed marriage and family therapists explore time issues as a factor impacting family functioning?

RQ 2. Do licensed marriage and family therapists think that the lack of time management has a negative impact on children?

RQ 3. Do licensed marriage and family therapists discuss the topic of time management with families at any time during the course of therapy?

RQ 4. What do licensed marriage and family therapists say about the lack of time management with children during a session.

RQ 5. How do licensed marriage and family therapists begin a discussion about parents spending more time with their children?

This research project examined how licensed marriage and family therapists discussed and explored time management with families they served via an online questionnaire in PsychData. Therapists were asked questions regarding their experience in discussing and exploring time management with families they have served. They were also asked questions regarding how they communicated with the families about the importance of time management as it relates to the negative behavioral issues of children. This data collection method is very appropriate for qualitative research. This data collection process allowed the researcher the ability to create themes and concepts and make meaning of the data that was collected on the PsychData website. According to Creswell (2013), “Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants. They must use a protocol – and instrument for collecting data – but the researchers are the one who actually gather the information. They do not tend to use or rely on questionnaires or instruments developed by other researchers” (p. 84). Throughout the process, the researcher focused on the research questions in order to determine what meaning and understanding the marriage and family therapists had when working with families on time management issues.

This research study utilized qualitative methodologies of classifying, coding, and analyzing using the qualitative methods discussed by (Creswell, 2013). Specifically, for this particular study, structural coding, descriptive coding, In vivo coding, and holistic

coding were all applied in order to triangulate the data and insure its trustworthiness (Saldana, 2013). Structural coding assists the researcher in determining how the data relates to the research questions. Descriptive coding gives a summary of data in a word or a short phrase and is particularly used to create themes from the data collected. In vivo coding gives a researcher a better understanding of what a participant said or meant. This type of coding uses the actual words of the participant to describe what was reported by the participants. Finally, holistic coding is used when the researcher has an idea of what they are looking for within the data. With this type of coding the information is, “lumped together” to create broad themes for the data collected (Saldana, 2013). In this analysis of qualitative research it was important to generate themes and concepts. The driving force for this study was the information that was reported by the participants in a self-reported script. Creswell (2013) stated that “In the entire qualitative process, the researcher keeps focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or that writers express in literature” (p. 75). From a phenomenological perspective, this research is derived from the concept of “intentionality.” Sokolowski (2000) indicated that, “The core doctrine in phenomenology is the teaching that every act of consciousness we perform, every experience we have, is intentional” (p. 8).

### **Sample**

The sample for this study included 21 licensed marriage and family therapists who were selected from the Texas State Department of Health and Human Services website. Convenience sampling and selective sampling were utilized in this case due to

the fact that the names and addresses along with the licensure status of the marriage and family therapists were listed on the website for public viewing. At the time convenience sampling was used there were 2,906 licensed marriage and family therapists within the state of Texas. The principal investigator went to the website of the Texas State Board of Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Examiners. Upon going to the site, selective sampling was used due to lack of funding; the researcher was unable to purchase postcards for all 2,906 marriage and family therapists. Therefore, the researcher went to the 500<sup>th</sup> person on the website and chose 700 participants from the list of 2, 906 licensed marriage and family therapists. The selected sample was from the 500<sup>th</sup> licensed marriage and family therapist to the 1200<sup>th</sup> licensed marriage and family therapist. The names and addresses of these 700 therapists were cut into strips and folded. They were then placed in a large bowl where they were mixed. From the pool of 700 licensed marriage and family therapists, 500 were randomly selected. The investigator mailed out postcards in waves of 25 until all 500 postcards were sent out to potential participants. The remaining 200 names and addresses were placed in a shredder and destroyed. The postcards that were sent to potential participants had the following message:

“Hello,

My name is Richard E. Toney and I am doctoral student at Texas Woman’s University. I am conducting a study on Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists’ perception of time management of the family and how they feel it may affect the behavior of children. I would like your assistance with this study since you are a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. If you are interested in assisting me and participating in

this study, please go to [www.PsychData.com](http://www.PsychData.com). Click “login” and go to the section at the bottom right of the screen that says, “Trying To Participate in a Survey?” Type in survey number 164775 and your survey will begin. Be advised that participation in this study is voluntary and that there is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, and internet transactions.”

### **Population**

The sample population included 21 licensed marriage and family therapists who were willing to participate in the study and answer the questions on the Time Management Interview Questionnaire (See Appendix A) placed on PsychData.com for the participants to complete in the form of a survey. Selective sampling was used first by going on the website and selecting the 500<sup>th</sup> through the 1200<sup>th</sup> licensed marriage and family therapists. Out of these 700 potential participants, 500 were randomly selected from a bowl where the 700 participants had their names and addresses cut into strips and folded. The 500 randomly selected licensed marriage and family therapists were sent a postcard discussing the study and requesting that they participate. It was the initial expectation that 25 licensed marriage and family therapist would participate in the survey but due to lack of responses from the randomly selected participants, only 21 participants were counted for the study. It is also important to note that even though 500 postcards were mailed out to 500 randomly selected participants, 36 postcards came back to this researcher as “undeliverable.” Therefore, the total number of marriage and family therapists who possibly received the postcard was actually 464. The consent form to the study was present when the participants logged into the website to take the study. They

were informed that by continuing to the questionnaire this was an indication that they agreed to participate in the study. The set amount of 25 therapists was not reached in this study and due to the lack of responsiveness. Therefore, the total number was 21.

### **Questionnaire**

The specific interview questions for this qualitative study explored the possible complexities that marriage and family therapists may face when discussing time management issues with families who come to them for treatment. The principal researcher designed the interview questionnaire. PsychData was the instrumental method of collecting this information so that it could be gathered and coded. There was no rigidity in the structuring of these open-ended questions that were placed on PsychData. This was done so that the collected responses would be rich and in the voice of the marriage and family therapist giving the response. PsychData is a secure website that is utilized by Texas Woman's University. By the participants putting their responses in the PsychData system, it allows the researcher to have access to the responses of the participants. The following interview questions (IQ) were recorded in a PsychData survey for the participants to answer:

IQ 1. How do you explain the importance of time management to parents/guardians as it relates to the negative behaviors of children?

IQ 2. In your own words, describe the way you would bring up the topic of parents spending more time with their child/children in order to decrease negative behaviors.



IQ 3. How would you assist parents in processing their concerns about not having enough time for their children?

IQ 4. How would you discuss with children, that there needs to be a balance between the time that they spend with their parents as well as the time that they have to themselves for activities outside of the family?

IQ 5. Can you explain from your personal experience the degree to which you have seen parents express their thoughts about spending time or the lack of spending time with their children?

IQ 6. Can you explain from your experience how children felt or expressed themselves during a session as it relates to the parent(s) not spending time with them?

IQ 7. What were some of the possible explanations that parents gave in sessions about what has caused them to not be able to spend more time with their children?

IQ 8. What suggestions would you give to a family in reference to time management as it relates to effective parenting and children's behavior?

### **Protections of Human Rights**

The researcher submitted the proposal for this study to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Texas Woman's University so that it could be reviewed and approved. Upon approval from the IRB, the potential participants within this study received a black and white postcard in the mail indicating the request to participate in the study. The researcher discussed on the postcard the potential risks of loss of confidentiality per Texas Woman's University policy. The postcard directed the participants to the

PsychData website and instructed them to use Survey Number 164775, in order to start the survey. To increase anonymity of the participants within this study, the informed consent was placed as the first page before the questionnaire began. The participants were also told that if they had any questions, they could contact the principle investigator for answers. At the end of the informed consent, a message was written as follows: “By continuing to move forward and read and answer the questions below, indicates that you agree to participate in the study.” Therefore, there was nothing to sign. Those who chose to continue to the questionnaire did so and completed the questionnaire.

### **Procedures**

Recruitment postcards were sent to 500 potential participants for this qualitative study. The researcher purchased 500 postcard stamps and mailed out all 500 postcards in waves of 25 postcards per week. When it was noticed that the responses were slow, the researcher increased the number of postcards to waves of 50 until all 500 postcards were sent out. The researcher then awaited the responses and checked the PsychData website periodically to determine how many participants responded to the study.

Marriage and family therapists who agreed to participate in this study adhered to the instruction on the postcard and logged into the PsychData website and completed the study. The informed consent was the first page that each participant saw once they put in the survey number (#164775) associated with this study. After continuing, demographic information was collected from each participant at the beginning of the survey. The participants were required to click with a check the demographic information that related

to them. The demographic information did not reveal the identity of the participants in any way. The following information made up the demographics of the study.

1. Length of time as a fully licensed MFT
2. Age
3. Race
4. Education

After the demographic information, the participants proceeded to the interview questions.

The recruitment strategy began on March 1, 2015 and ended on September 3, 2015. It was believed that after receiving 50% replies, the researcher would send out 25 additional postcards and continue the process until the expected participation reached 25 participants. However, the researcher repeated the process multiple times sending out all 500 post cards yielding only a response 4.2% for a total of 21 responses.

It was the expectation of the researcher that the participants would respond to all items on the Time Management Interview Questionnaire (see Appendix A), via PsychData.com. One participant did not respond to the age category. This was likely due to the gap that was in the age category. The researcher did not add the age range of 47 years to 56 years onto the demographic section of the questionnaire. For the purpose of appropriate data collection, all open-ended questions were analyzed for reoccurring themes. Transcripts for each interview were written by the participant on the PsychData website. Emerging themes were arranged in outline form and reviewed by the researcher. Emerging themes were also highlighted by different colors using the highlighting feature in Microsoft Office 2010. Highlighting the emerging themes in different colors assisted

the researcher in color coding the data and matching it to the related research question. Structural codes were highlighted in yellow, descriptive codes were highlighted in pink, holistic codes were highlighted in orange and In vivo codes were highlighted in blue. It is important to note that Rossman and Rallis (1998) indicated that coding is the assembly of data and information into “chunks” (p.171). With this in mind, four different coding methods were utilized for triangulating the data appropriately for trustworthiness and validity.

### **Coding Method**

The coding method that was used for this qualitative study assisted the researcher in determining what licensed marriage and family therapists say about their beliefs on the possible effects of lack of time management on children’s behavior. Within this study, the researcher sought to determine if marriage and family therapists had any thoughts and perceptions related to time management of the family. More specifically, the researcher attempted to determine if marriage and family therapists believed that the lack of time management of parents could negatively impact children or adolescents’ behavior. The researcher also wanted to determine if marriage and family therapist thoughts that time management was an important topic to discuss during their sessions. This helped the researcher to see this topic from the perspectives of the marriage and family therapists. Manifest content such as written words and phrases were observed within this study. This researcher scanned each open-ended question for similarities in themes emerging from the data. Emerging themes were evaluated and coded by the researcher.

The responses to the interview questions were coded and highlighted by way of structural coding and descriptive coding. According to Saldana (2013), “Structural coding is appropriate for those employing multiple participants, standardized and semi-structured data-gathering protocols, hypothesis testing, or exploratory investigations to gather topics or indexes of major categories or themes” (p. 84). Furthermore, Saldana (2013) mentioned, “Descriptive coding summarizes in a word or short phrase – most often as a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (p. 88). Hence, both the structural and descriptive coding methods were useful when evaluating the responses from the participants. The information from the questionnaires was recorded, coded, and documented from the Time Management Interview Questionnaire (Appendix A). The themes from the research questions were coded as the overarching themes since these were the questions that the researcher wanted to answer in this qualitative study. In vivo coding was utilized to develop the themes from the interview questions because they contained the “voice” of the marriage and family therapists. Saldana (2013) described In vivo coding as, “A word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record”. Due to the fact that holistic coding allows for researchers to “Chunk the text into broad topic areas” (Saldana, 2013), this researcher used holistic coding in order to determine what the overarching themes were as well as to give greater understanding of the data and to tie the previously mentioned themes back to the research questions. In essence the interview questions were designed to assist the researcher in answering the five research questions pertaining to this study.

The Time Management Questionnaire that was used included no identifiable information as to keep the identity of the participant confidential. The questionnaire included the following: education of the therapist, length of time that the marriage and family therapist has been fully licensed, age of the marriage and family therapist, and race of the marriage and family therapist. The rest of the survey included eight open-ended questions.

### **Analysis of Themes**

The data were downloaded and reviewed several times for completeness to ensure that appropriate themes and concepts could be formulated. The researcher identified each completed questionnaire using a numerical identification code as Participant #001 through Participant #021. The use of an online questionnaire reduced the time needed for transcribing data in verbatim scripts. A professional colleague approved by the major advisor was given the responses in order to review them for coding purposes. This professional colleague was knowledgeable of the qualitative process. After looking over the research questions, the interview questions, and the responses, she made a determination as to whether her themes were similar to those of the researcher. Neither of the themes and concepts from the colleague and the researcher was exact; yet they were similar. The researcher, the professional colleague, and the major advisor agreed upon which themes would be appropriate to use in this research study.

The researcher read all 21 transcripts and initially coded the responses first using structural coding with descriptive coding. The researcher placed each response in order from the first participant to complete the survey (participant # 001) to the participant who

completed the survey last (participant # 021). The researcher read all responses for each question separately and placed them in respective groups. Then the researcher grouped all responses for the first interview question and looked for emerging themes that developed. The remaining number of interview questions were analyzed and coded in the same manner. The actual interview questions were then analyzed and coded by the researcher in order to find congruency within the data as it related to the specific research questions. The researcher used In vivo coding to code the interview questions in order to ensure that the responses that were coded would relate back to the interview questions. After coding the interview questions, the research questions were coded. The researcher utilized holistic coding in order to code the specific research questions. This was done so that the researcher could ensure that the two coding procedures from the responses (structural and descriptive coding), and the coding procedures from the actual interview questions (In vivo coding) all related to the specific research questions.

### **Securing the Data**

All of the data were stored in a locked file drawer in the researcher's office. To further increase confidentiality and further protect the participants, the researcher assigned an identifier code number to each questionnaire. Copies of the responses were sent to the researcher's major advisor and the professional colleague who served as the one who would do peer debriefing (Marshall & Rossman 2014). The researcher's major advisor and the researcher are the only two individuals who had access to the original transcribed information.

## **Summary**

This qualitative, phenomenological study examined licensed marriage and family therapists' thoughts and perceptions of time management of the family as it related to the possible negative effects on children's behaviors.

A professional colleague who is familiar with qualitative research along with the researcher's major advisor agreed with the emerging themes that the researcher saw within the collected data. Each licensed marriage and family therapist who participated in the research had his or her rights protected by the researcher according to the policy of the Institutional Review Board at Texas Woman's University.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the results of the collected data that was downloaded from the PsychData website. Using an internet-based website listing of licensed marriage and family therapists, 500 names were identified followed by the mailing recruitment to each. Thirty-six postcards were returned as “undeliverable” leaving 464 of which 21 participated in this study. There were five research questions that were explored in this research.

RQ 1. Do licensed marriage and family therapists explore time issues as a factor impacting family functioning?

RQ 2. Do licensed marriage and family therapists think that the lack of time management has a negative impact on children?

RQ 3. Do licensed marriage and family therapists discuss the topic of time management with families at any time during the course of therapy?

RQ 4. What do licensed marriage and family therapists say about the lack of time management with children during a session?

RQ 5. How do licensed marriage and family therapists begin a discussion about parents spending more time with their children?

This chapter includes the emerging themes and concepts that derived from the thoughts and perceptions of marriage and family therapists as it related to time

management of the family. This chapter will also include the therapists' beliefs on how time management may negatively impact children's behavior. This chapter will further discuss what licensed marriage and family therapists say when they bring up the discussion of time management as well as the strategies they discuss with families.

### **Description of the Sample**

Twenty-one licensed marriage and family therapists completed an online qualitative questionnaire using PsychData related to their thoughts and perceptions on time management and the possible effects on children. Demographic questions provided a general profile of the participants including race, education, age, and licensure. It is important to note that "Hispanic" is not a race but an ethnicity, yet it was placed in the questionnaire demographic area under race in order to include the population within the survey. In reference to race/ethnicity, 5 (24%) were African American, 10 (48%) were Caucasian, 4 (19%) were Hispanic, and 2 (9%) were Asian. There were no participants (0) in the study that fell into the category of "Other." Regarding the education of the participants, 12 (57.1%) were educated on the master's level and 9 (42.9%) were educated on the doctorate level. Of the 21 participants, 9 (45%) were 57-67 years of age. The remaining age groups included: 36-46 = 8 (40%); 25-35 = 2 (10%); and 67-78 = 1 (5%). This section is in reference to 20 respondents instead of 21 due to the principal researcher not entering an age range of 47-66. It is assumed that one participant did not mark a response for the other age ranges because he or she did not fall in either of the other age categories. The length of time as a licensed marriage and family therapist was as follows: 1 – 5 years = 5 (23.8%); 6 – 10 years = 3 (14.3%); 11 – 15 years = 5 (23.8%);

16 – 20 years = 4 (19.05%); and 20 or more years = 4 (19.05%). No other demographic information had been collected in order to ensure the confidentiality of the participants (see Table 1).

## **Findings**

This section will relate all themes that have been coded back to the research questions, which were the foundation of this qualitative research. The first research question for this study was: Do licensed marriage and family therapists explore time issues as a factor impacting family functioning? Interview Questions 7, 9, and 10 addressed this research question. The interview questions were as follows: (7) How would you assist parents in processing their concerns about not having enough time for their children; (9) Can you explain from your personal experience the degree to which you have seen parents express their thoughts about spending time or the lack of spending time with their children; and (10) Can you explain how children felt or expressed themselves during a session as it relates to the parent not spending time with them? The overarching theme for this was Discussion of Time Management and the subtheme associated with this was Time Management Strategies.

The second research question for the study was: Do licensed marriage and family therapists think that the lack of time management has a negative impact on children? The specific interview question that related to this research question was Interview Question 5. The interview question was as follows: (5) How do you explain the importance of time management to parents/guardians as it relates to the negative behaviors of children? The

overarching theme related to this question was Negative Impacts. The subtheme that was associated with this interview question was Attention to the Child.

The third research question for this study was: Do licensed marriage and family therapists discuss the topic of time management with families at any time during the course of therapy? The specific interview question that related to this research question is Interview Question 11. The interview question is as follows: (11) What were some of the possible explanations that parents gave in session about what has caused them to not be able to spend more time with their children?

The fourth research question for this study was: What do licensed marriage and family therapists say about the lack of time with children during a session? The specific interview question that related to this research question was Interview Question 8. The interview question was as follows: (8) How would you discuss with children that there needs to be a balance between the time that they spend with their parents as well as the time that they have to themselves for activities outside of the family?

The fifth and final research question for this study was: How do licensed marriage and family therapists begin a discussion about parents spending more time with their children? The specific interview questions that related to this research question were questions numbers 6 and 12. The interview questions were as follows: (6) In your own words, describe the way you would bring up the topic of parents spending more time with their child/children in order to decrease negative behavior and (12) What suggestions would you give to a family in reference to time management as it relates to effective parenting and children's behavior?

## **Coding Results**

### **Dominant Structural Themes and Concepts for Responses**

This section discusses the rationale for determining the dominant structural themes and concepts (a) time management strategies (b) attention to the child, and (c) quality vs. quantity. Each theme is followed by key phrases and concepts supporting the themes.

#### **Time Management Strategies**

Time management strategies were identified as one of three dominant structural themes due to the congruence of responses given by participants. The therapists indicated how they would work with families to assist them in making sure that they had the ability to see how they could make necessary changes to spend more time with their children. This was the most appropriate theme agreed upon by the principal researcher, the professional colleague, and the major advisor.

1. The therapist giving the families ideas on how to deal with and manage their time
2. Discussion of appropriate strategies to assist the family in better family functioning
3. Discussing alternative methods to time being spent without spending money
4. Examining time opportunities for the parents to see where time could be spent with the child

### **Attention to the Child**

Licensed marriage and family therapists indicated that there was a need for the families to pay more attention to children. This theme was chosen because it showed how the participants communicated with parents about the importance of parents paying attention to children and how this could establish and possibly rebuild the rapport between parents and the children.

1. Exploration and discussion related to attention to the child
2. Discussion of the urgency of doing things that the child may like
3. Exploring options that show the child that he/she is liked
4. Employment related concerns

### **Quantity vs. Quality**

Participants discussed the issue of how much time parents spent with children as well as the quality of that time that is spent with children. This theme was chosen because the participants indicated that there was a need for parents to know that children need for parents to be present for them. The participants also indicated that they discussed the quality of that time that important life events should be shared by both parents and children.

1. Discussion of what the parents say about the amount of time spent with the child
2. Discussion related to how the child feels about the time or lack of time with their parents

3. Discussions related to the parent's frustration about not being able to spend more time with the child
4. Misunderstanding of how time should be spent
5. Discussion with the child about their thoughts and concerns related to the amount of time and how time is spent with their parents

### **Dominant Descriptive Themes and Concepts for Responses**

This section discusses the rationale for determining the dominant descriptive themes and concepts, (a) investigation of family patterns, and (b) parenting education. Each theme is followed by key phrases and concepts supporting the theme.

#### **Investigation of Family Patterns**

Participants indicated that they spoke with both the parents and the children about what happened normally within the family. They inquired about what usually happened on a daily basis as well as how the children communicated with their parents. The participants asked the parents what the daily routine within the family was to determine how the family was functioning.

1. Exploring the day to day occurrences within the family
2. Asking about specific patterns within the daily lives of the family
3. Examining the thoughts and perceptions of parent and child regarding what goes on within the family setting

#### **Parental Education**

This theme was chosen because participants indicated that there was a need to educate the parents on ways to spend more time with their children. The parents were

given information such as referrals to books and materials to help them in finding ways to improve the functioning of the family.

1. Discussing how counterproductive routines can be corrected
2. Discussion of research related to the behavior of the children
3. Discussing examples of how things should work and teaching parents how to do them

### **Other Themes and Concepts (Irrelevant Themes)**

Other themes and concepts were identified but had no relevance to the study included patterns of change; modeling; discipline; interpretation of the child's thoughts; clinical documentation; and child's behavior. The irrelevant themes had no significance due to the responses in these categories numbering two or less. Due to them being outside of the responses for the dominant themes, they had no relevance to the study.

### **In Vivo Themes and Concepts for the Interview Questions**

The following themes will be discussed in the same order as they are presented below. All themes in this section relate to the interview questions. These themes emerged and were utilized in this study because they are the "voice" of the participants. In other words, the responses show how the participants communicated in their responses to the questionnaire. It is important to note that all of the following themes were chosen due to their relation to the research questions. Theme one was chosen because the researcher wanted to ensure that responses either answered or did not answer the research questions. Theme two was chosen to depict the thoughts of what the participants said about parents spending more time with children. Theme three was chosen to give clarity to the



therapeutic process and ensure that the therapists were establishing rapport with parents by listening to what they had to say about not being available to spend time with their children. Theme four was chosen to determine if licensed marriage and family therapists brought up the topic of time management and how balancing the families' time could improve the functioning of the families. Theme five was chosen to allow licensed marriage and family therapists the opportunity to discuss what parents may have said in sessions. Theme six was chosen so that the licensed marriage and family therapists could give insight as to what was discussed with the children and what the children said during sessions. Theme seven was chosen so that licensed marriage and family therapists could express their interpretation and their perceptions of what they experienced when they heard parents give their explanations regarding lack of time management during sessions. The final theme was chosen in order to allow licensed marriage and family therapists to discuss the strategies that they gave families who struggled with time management issues in sessions. The therapists' responses were centered around:

1. Therapists explaining the importance of time management
2. Therapists' descriptions of parents spending more time with their child/children
3. Therapists assisting in parents' processing of their concerns
4. Therapists' discussion that there needs to be a balance
5. Therapists explaining how parents express their thoughts
6. Therapists explaining how children felt or expressed themselves during sessions
7. Therapists discussing the explanation that parents gave in session
8. Therapists' suggestions as it relates to effective parenting and children's behavior

These emerging themes and concepts evolved from the interview questions due to how the participants responded to the questions.

### **Holistic Themes and Concepts for the Research Questions**

1. Time Issues
2. Negative Impacts
3. Discussion of Time Management
4. What the Therapist Says in Session
5. The Beginning of the Discussions

The above themes will be discussed in the same order as they appear above. The research questions were coded to determine accuracy of the participant responses as it related to the research questions. They were also themed holistically to determine if the interview questions and the participants' responses complimented the research questions. Time issues were chosen because it gives a broad perspective of what the participants might have said in therapy sessions. In reference to time issues, licensed marriage and family therapists explored the content of what was stated by the parents regarding the parents' inability to spend time with their children. This included by was not limited to work, college, involvement with outside activities, and parents being too tired to engage with their children. Negative impacts was chosen to determine if the participants discussed any concerns about what could happen if the parents continue to lack appropriate time management skills or strategies. With regard to negative impacts, the researcher looked for any evidence of licensed marriage and family therapists informing parents that there are negative effects that could occur when the parents continue to lack

appropriate time management and neglect to spend time with their children. The discussion of time management was a theme because it relates to what the therapist may explore during a session with families. In reference to discussion of time management, the researcher sought to determine if licensed marriage and family therapists explored the topic of time management in such a way that informed parents of what time management is and how it relates to the behavior of their children and how it impacts the relationship with family members, especially parents and children. The researcher also sought to determine if licensed marriage and family therapists discussed time management as an issue that impacts family functioning. What the therapist says in sessions was themed because the over-all discussion between licensed marriage and family therapists and families allowed the researcher to determine what was discussed and processed during actual sessions. In reference to this theme, the researcher sought to determine if licensed marriage and family therapists said anything about time management. The researcher also sought to determine if parents or children discussed issues with time management in sessions. Regarding what was discussed, as a reflection of what the children of the parent said in sessions, the licensed marriage and family therapists would have an idea of how to discuss time management issues and concerns with families.

The beginning of the discussions was developed in order to determine if parents or licensed marriage and family therapists brought up the topic of time management issues and what was discussed and explored at the beginning of family therapy sessions. In reference to this theme, the researcher wanted to determine if the discussion was led by the therapist or by the families. The rationale behind this was that the researcher wanted

to investigate whether the licensed marriage and family therapists would assist the families in understanding the importance of parents spending quality time with one another in order to improve family functioning. The researcher also wanted to determine if licensed marriage and family therapists played the role of educator to assist the families in conceptualizing the importance of time management and how it impacts family functioning.

The researcher used a color-coding scheme as mentioned before to relate all themes back to the overarching themes and concepts, which were the themes of the research questions. In other words, since the structural themes for the responses were color-coded yellow, the descriptive themes were color-coded pink. The In vivo themes (themes from the actual interview questions) were color-coded blue and the holistic themes were color-coded orange. All themes were color-coded to associate them with their specific coding method (structural, descriptive, In vivo, and holistic). Once these themes were separated and coded, they were examined to determine how they related to the research questions.

Through further investigation and analyzing of the data, the dominant codes were as follows.

1. Discussion of Time Management
2. Negative Impacts
3. Time Issues
4. The Beginning of the Discussion
5. What the Therapist Says in Session

The section below will address the five dominant codes that were found throughout the responses as they relate back to the specific research questions that were previously discussed. All five of these themes were continuously repeated throughout the responses. There were also five subthemes that were related to the interview questions that related to the specific research questions as well. These subthemes were as follows.

1. Time Management Strategies
2. Attention to the Child
3. Quantity vs. Quality
4. Investigation of Family Patterns
5. Parental Education

The researcher connected these subthemes to the dominant themes and illustrated how they were interrelated to create a connection with the overall purpose of this research. This will be shown throughout the rest of this section.

### **Discussion of Time Management**

The researcher found that 15 participants who responded to Interview Question 7 were congruent with the dominant theme, 17 for Interview Question 9 were congruent with the dominant theme, and 19 responses were congruent with the dominant theme for the first research question. The data indicated that therapists believed that the discussion of time management with their clients and families assisted them in developing time management strategies to better assist clients with the overall functioning of the family. Participant 005 reported:

I spend a large amount of time talking about managing your time better. I provide information, charts, calendars, etc. to assist them but it really boils down to whether or not they choose to recognize the poor choices they make. Self-gratification is a huge barrier to quality family time on both sides. The kids want to play video games rather than play a board game with the family and mom would rather watch a romance movie than sit and watch a Disney flick with their kids. It is very basic, but when they have learned that family time is not important, it is really difficult to convince them that this will change their family life and the behavior of the children when they realize mom really cares enough to spend time with me.

Participant 001 stated,

Affirm the importance of time away such as for jobs and self-care and family of origin needs. Process how important the time away is compared to primary family needs. If there are adjustments desired, how can it be done in a friendly way? This all be stated carefully especially without judgment. I might check with a client how they are feeling in this conversation, checking especially for historic including faith influences.

It is also important to note that not only does the therapist discuss time management strategies with the families, some therapists reported that they have discussions related to how children feel while in the session as well as how parents process their thoughts and feelings related to not having enough time to spend with their

children. This was an indication as to why the strategies were developed by the therapist in the first place.

Participant 014 reported:

When children talk about their concerns with their parents not being there, they usually discuss that they want their parents to just talk to them about how they feel. The children usually say that the parents act as if they don't love them. From my experience, children like to spend time with their parents because they want to be heard and they feel that none of their parents are listening to them".

Participant 019 reported, "Many times, what I've seen is children feeling as if their parents don't care about what there they're doing. Often times, I've experienced many children say that they get toys, gifts and money to pacify them. Their chief complaint is that they don't want any of that. They want the attention of the parent.

As a technique to find out the true feelings of the child, Participant 010 reported, During the course of the therapy process, I have been known to separate the children from their parents and ask children what they feel needs to be different in the home and they usually tell me that they want to go places with their parents but the response is usually: 'They are always working'. I have even had some to internalize the lack of parental involvement as the child believing, they just don't like me.

Regarding the licensed marriage and family therapists' experiences of how parents processed their thoughts and concerns about the inability to spend time with their

children, Participant 005 indicated that from their experience parents did not understand the way that time is spent versus simply being in the home with the children. Participant 005 reported:

Many parents equate meeting the basic needs of the children as spending time with them. Feeding, bathing, and keeping the house clean are all seen as activities that involve spending time with them. The problem as I see it is defining for parents what quality time looks like. Most are very reluctant to let go of what they have always believed about this, so it is a real struggle. When I see a parent that is not spending good quality time with the children, i am forced to speak up and point out how this affects the child.

Participant 012 reported, “Most parents gave feelings of guilt when they can’t spend as much time with their children. Their time is limited because of work or lack of interest in their child’s interests.” Participant 010 further indicated that:

Most often from my experience, parents do not seem to realize that they do not spend much time with their children. They communicate about having to work to provide for their children and feel as if their family time is limited and has to be sacrificed due to the employment. With this in mind, they seem to just want their children to behave and not act negatively in the community.

In summary, as it relates to the dominant theme, discussion of time management and the subtheme time management strategies, the participants explored how time management strategies were developed during the course of the therapy process. It appears that due to the expression from the parents and the expression from the children,



time management strategies were developed. Through the dominant theme, discussion of time management, the therapists seemed to have felt the need to further engage families in developing a healthy set of strategies to create a closer bond between the children and the parents to process and explore issues impacting the functioning of the family.

Interview Questions 7, 9, and 10 were the basis for the subtheme, time management strategies, which related to the dominant theme, discussion of time management. The discussion of time management assisted the therapists in having a greater understanding and awareness of the parent-child relationship as it relates to the development of time management strategies.

### **Negative Impacts**

This researcher found that 13 participants believed that attention to children directly affected the behavior that parents see or were told about in different settings. With this in mind, those responses will be discussed in this section. Participant 017 reported:

I believe that poor time management is one of the major issues families struggle with. Mainly, they are overscheduled, over committed, and don't have enough family time for the needs of the children and also for the needs of the married couple. The marriage suffers because there isn't time set aside for the couple. The children suffer because most of the time the family spends together is with activities outside the family circle such as games, parties and other public activities. I feel that this provides a chaotic environment that negatively impacts

children. There are few family dinners together, little structure in the home and the use of iPads, video games, and social media become the de facto parents.

Therapists discussed how parents should acknowledge the importance of giving children special attention and should create a closer bond thus in-turn, will reduce the negative impacts of children's behaviors. Participant 011 reported:

I usually tell parents that the time they spend with their children offers the children to have a closer bond with them which helps in discipline. I tell them that if the bond is closer they usually don't have many problems with their children's behavior because a lot of times, kids want to spend time with their parents.

While 13 participants reported about the negative impacts as it related to the attention of the child, Participant 060 gave a report that indicated that some behaviors are "age appropriate behaviors" and that paying closer attention to the children will reduce these behaviors and possibly deter any negative impact that it may have on children's behavior. Participant 060 reported:

Many times my clients come in to sessions with children they report as having significant behavioral problems. Upon assessment, generally speaking, the children are displaying age appropriate behaviors but the parents are trying to manage multiple things at a time and are not recognizing the behavior for what it is...attention seeking. Also, the parents who stop and pay focused attention to their children often find that the relationship with them improves – no matter what age. We are in an age of multitasking and it's draining our relationships. I encourage parents to set specific amounts of time aside to spend with their

children each day where they don't focus on anything else, every 15 min.

Inevitably, they both feel better and behavior improves.

In summary, the majority of the participants listed that attention to the child was closely related to the negative impacts of children's behavior. The responses of the participants frequently linked attention, the reduction of outside interference, multiple things happening within the lives of the parents, and not creating a bond with children as being the specific reasons for negative impacts of children's behavior. Some of the licensed marriage and family therapists responded by indicating that they check the family routine to determine if there is a lack of attention as it relates to the children's behavior. Since negative impacts were the overarching theme for the research question, the subtheme that is related to this would be the Attention to the Child. Therefore, the subtheme directly relates to the overarching theme. Expressed in a more noticeable way, one could say that by looking at the information from this qualitative perspective, Interview Question 6 is directly linked to the second research question.

### **Time Issues**

As it relates to Time Issues, 16 participants indicated that the parents usually reported that they did not have enough time to spend with their children because of work related issues as well as when they did have time, they were tired from their place of employment. With this in mind, time issues, is related to the subtheme quality vs quantity. The interview question related to the theme and subtheme was Question 11.

Participant 001 headed off the survey responses with an interesting account of the therapy process:

Being one parent with work responsibilities. Even two parents have long and involved work responsibilities that place them overtime or out of town on assignments. The parents' financial irresponsibility might contribute to the decision for a second job.... extra activities with the friends of the parents. Sometimes I believe parents confusion and anger about raising a child or that particular child might unawaredly [without awareness] contribute to the parents' avoidance to the child. Sometimes, a parent[s] involvement in a romantic relationship outside the family distracts the parent to the time needs of the child. Participant 011 reported:

It seems that the top two reasons that parents give is that they are employed in the evening or they are working more than one job or they report that they are working and going to college or technical school to improve their lives. I work with a lot of single-parent households and this is what I notice with them. The few households that I've worked with where both parents are in the home, the father and the mother are both working in order to give the child what he or she wants but that does not seem to help the child because the negative behavior continues. The two parent households don't usually give a reason, they just report about the negative behavior of the child.

Participant 019 reported,

It frequently ends up with a conversation about their type or employment and that they 'have' to work. This usually comes from single parents. When it relates to traditional families, the husband seems to believe that the wife should do some

activities. Many times the husbands do not realize the importance of them spending time with their children.

Additionally, Participant 015 reported,

Some of possible explanations that parents give in session are: there is only one parent in the household, I'm doing everything all by myself, I'm tired when I get off and you seem like you don't want to be bothered (possible talking about the absent father). Participant 005 gave a short answer, indicating, "It is always the same – work and fatigue."

Participant 006 seemed to have an interesting response regarding what usually happens in sessions related to this topic. Participant 006 reported,

Legal issues such as parenting agreements are a big one for me given my specialty. Others include work, and blending of families. Blended families seem to think the best thing to do to encourage relationships is to spend all their time together. I encourage dates with their bio children to enhance connection and lessen the pressure.

Participant 009 gave seven reasons the response for the explanation that parents gave in session. "1. Work 2. Busy 3. Too tired 4. Not enough time 5. Children would rather watch TV; play video games, etc. 6. Children would rather be with friends than with parents 7. Children don't want to spend time with parents." One of the most interesting responses was that of Participant 018 who reported, "Ignorance of what it means to spend time with their children, see number 9". After closely investigating this statement, the researcher looked at the participant's response to Interview Question 9 and

it was reported, “I think that most of the time, the parents are unaware of the need for children to have personal time with them.” The same participant believes that parents do not understand or fail to acknowledge that children desire one-on-one time with their parents. The participant further stated, “I think they believe sitting in a restaurant with everyone (including the parents) texting on a cell phone constitutes time with their children.”

In summary, Interview Question 11 supported a subtheme, which was Quantity vs. Quality. The dominant theme was Time Issues. The interview question shows direct consistencies with the research question. Moreover, the research question sought to determine if marriage and family therapists discussed the topic of time management at any time during the course of therapy. It was indicated that they did and that the specific interview question indicated that there was a concern of quantity vs. quality. In essence, the time issue was substantiated by the responses of the therapist by the way they discussed how parents indicated that they were unable to spend “quality” time with their children because of the “quantity” of time that they were not involved with the children due to employment, being too busy, or simply feeling too tired.

### **The Beginning of the Discussions**

Within the scope of the dominant theme, (The Beginning of the Discussion), the researcher noticed that 16 participants discussed what therapists explored at the beginning of the sessions. The subtheme related to the dominant theme is the investigation of family patterns. With this in mind, the researcher will discuss how these two coexist within the data.

Participant 005 indicated:

It all starts with the child. Many of the children I meet in my program are being raised by ghost parents – they go through the motions of being a parent, but they are not truly invested beyond that. I ask children straight out what they want from their parent (s) and the majority of them say they wish they had more god time with them. ‘I want my mommy to play with me’. ‘When mommy is home she is asleep most of the time’, ‘Mommy is crabby when she picks me up’ – these are just some examples. I also like to ask the kids how they ask for time with the parent and most say they are afraid to[o], or that she will say she is too busy.

Participant 006 reported,

Its best shown through example and needs to come from the top down in the family structure. Not making time for yourself as a parent and not making time for self-care teaches children that it isn’t expected. Making time for date night teaches children that the marriage relationship is valuable to the family. If the parents stumble over it, I have them define family values and speak from those values when addressing resistance from their children. ‘In this home we value family. Mom and I make time to have dates because we need time to focus on each other to keep this family happy’ or ‘Dad and mom need to go to the gym. In our family, we value health and wellness. If we don’t exercise, we don’t live out that value and feel uncomfortable with ourselves.

Participant 008 indicated that, “This becomes an issue with some families as the children age. I often ask children what kind of support they need from parents to do better in school and life.” Participant 010 seems to express the same thoughts as Participant 008 by reporting,

I would ask the children of the family to tell me what they find fun about the family activities and then ask them about what they find fun outside of the family activities. I would then assist the children in processing and exploring how they feel about making time for activities with their parents as well as making time for activities away from their parents.”

Participant 012 also seems to agree with the previously mentioned participants, reporting, “I would explain to the children the importance of a good balance of family time, personal life and education.

Two of the participants had similar responses but they were not consistent with the previously mentioned data. Participant 014 reported:

I really don’t discuss this with children because that will determine the flow of the session as pushing my agenda. Often, I experience children who are literally starving for the attention of their parents so I allow them to have their say. I don’t want to interfere with them processing how they want their mother and father to be present in their lives because this is important to them so I don’t discuss outside activities to anyone in the family unit because they don’t seem to be ready for any of that”. In accordance with the Participant 016 mentioned that, “I don’t think I would tell them anything about this because the family might not have a



problem with this. They would more than likely have a problem with spending time with one another. I don't usually come across this problem in therapy.

In summary, the specific research question supported the dominant theme, which was The Beginning of the Discussion. The subtheme related to the specific research question was the investigation of family patterns. The connection related to the research question and the interview question indicated that many participants agreed that they would investigate the patterns of the family to begin the discussion about the lack of time management while in the session with parents alone, one-on-one with children or with the family in its entirety. There were other participants who reported that they would not open up a discussion about the lack of time with children because it could "determine the flow of the session" which is something that Participant 014 did not want to do or "the family might not have this problem" which was what was reported by Participant 016. The majority of the participants (16 participants) reported what they would say about the lack of time with children during a session.

### **What the Therapist Says in Sessions**

The dominant theme for the final research question was What the Therapist Says in Sessions. The subtheme associated with this was Parental Instruction. In other words, therapists give (say) "instruction" to parents regarding how they should spend more time with their kids. For Interview Question 6, 16 participants explored what they would say in session. For Interview Question 12, 18 participants discussed what they would say in sessions with families. This section will first discuss some of the responses for Interview Question 6 and then some of the responses for Interview Question 12. The

researcher will then summarize this section and indicate how both interview questions relate to the fifth research question.

Participant 005 seemed to take an instructional stance on parental education and how it can counter against the negative impacts of children's behavior. This participant reported:

This is tricky for my families, since most parents equate the fact that they are in the same house as spending time with their children. They are very remiss in their parental duties in so far as they do not want to give up their own person time to play games or watch movies with their kids. I rarely see families doing much together, so I try to organize outings for them and then afterwards, we discuss how their children behave after the outing. Most times, they see a real correlation between the outing and behavior, but they rarely relate it to spending time together – they believe it is a matter of stimulation for kids that calm them down. In my trainings, one of the first little tests I give parents is to sit down for thirty minutes with their children – step one is to turn off the cell phone and leave it in another room so that children know you are focused on them. I also encourage them to ban cell phones from the dinner table.

Participant 006 indicated:

I don't usually have to bring it up. We discuss the situation, I ask about parenting styles and it comes out in the assessment. For children who are school aged or higher, I recommend family dinners without the distraction of TV or technology (Phones, etc.). Especially in binuclear families where the other household may be

calling or texting the children during dinner. Placing phones on chargers during dinner is a great rule to manage that added chaos. If they feel they aren't connecting with their kids I also suggest the daily high and low format. It reduces complaining and forces the family each to come up with at least one good thing from their day. In my binuclear family work, I also suggest dates with the kids as ways to increase one on one time and encourage positive relationships.

From a standpoint of intentionality, Participant 014 reported,

I like to first ask parents what they do with their children to make them feel loved. If they tell me that they purchase things for their children, I go into asking them how much time they feel that they could spend with the child or children if they were actually spending time with them and not just buying things for them. If they mention that they spend time with their children, I ask them how much of that time do they think benefits the relationship between them and their children.

In reference to Interview Question 12, the researcher found that 18 responses related to the dominant theme and the parental education seemed to be more along the lines of showing the parents what to do rather than entering into a discussion with them about effective parenting.

Participant 003 reported:

You want my opinion about you spending time with your child – No time you spend with you[r] child is wasted. UNLESS all you do is judge. If you are their harshest critic, they cannot feel love from you. The love they need cannot come through the judgment you lead with. WHAT DOES IT TAKE? TIME, TIME,

TIME, THOUGHT, PRACTICE, SETTING ASIDE YOUR UNLIVED  
DREAMS CONSISTENCY. aND SOMETIMES, YOU JUST SHOW UP.

Participant 005 reported:

I usually show the parent how much time they could have if they were more organized. I am a bit of a bully about keeping things in order all the so you never have to spend the entire weekend catching up. I also work with the kids about things like keeping their rooms clean - making the bed every day and getting to bed at the same time every night. Routines are very important and kids like structure – it is the parent that I struggle with most of all – the kids are pliant and eager to please so I often volunteer to keep a child with me and I work on things so I can show mom how to do it later.

Participant 011 suggested, “listening” as an approach to the subtheme of Parental Education.

Participant 011 reported,

I would encourage them to listen to one another and find out the needs of each person in the household. As a LMFT, I believe that many times, parents do not see what is really going on with their children because they are too busy providing for them and not getting to know them.

Participant 013 reported,

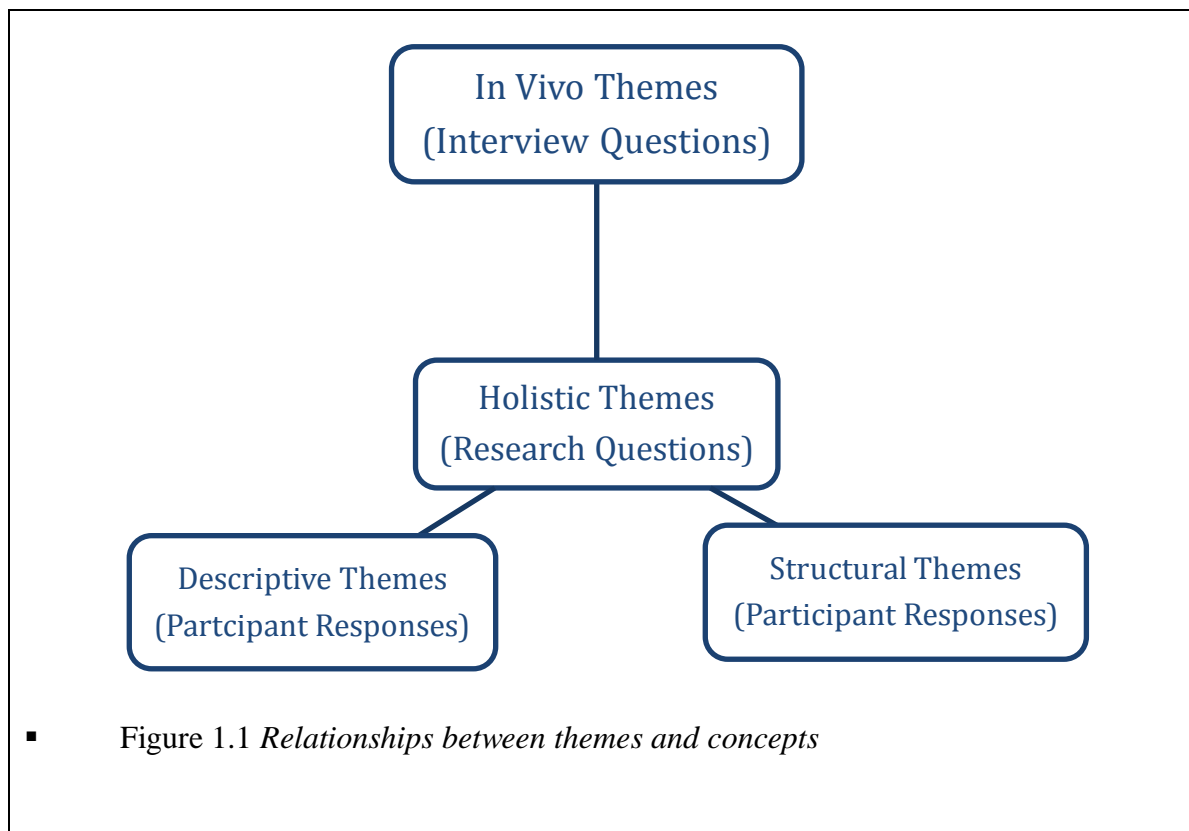
I would explain to parents that effective parenting consists of making sure that parents recognize the importance of being inflected in their children’s lives. I

would also give them material to read, so that they could understand that negative child behavior can be reduced if they spend more time with their children.

In summary, the dominant theme, What the Therapist Says in Sessions in reference to the last research question was associated with the subtheme, Parental Education, which is related to both Interview Questions 6 and 12. Eighteen participants were consistent with their responses as it related to the fifth and final research question for Interview Question 12. Also 16 participants had consistent answers for Interview Question number 6. Each interview question was included in the subtheme of Parental Education as their responses were closely related. Finally, both interview questions as well as the subtheme were in direct relationship with the dominant theme of What the Therapist says in Session (See Table 2).

There were themes within the study that were irrelevant in this study. These themes included Patterns of Change, Modeling, Interpretation of Child's Thoughts; and Clinical Documentation. The data had no relevance as it related to the research questions or the interview questions (See Table 3).

To give greater understanding of the themes and subthemes that were developed in the research study and how they relate to one another, the figure below allows for greater understanding of how all themes and subthemes tie together and revert back to the research questions.



### Summary

This chapter presented dominant themes, subthemes, irrelevant themes, and the number of responses as it related to the research findings. The data collected were discussed in relation to each research question as well as how each interview question related to the research questions. Twenty-one licensed marriage and family therapists completed the questionnaire that was assessed on PsychData. The participants responded to demographic items as well as eight interview questions.

The findings of major themes were organized and reported as they related to the five research questions within the study. The research questions were as follows.

RQ 1. Do licensed marriage and family therapists explore time issues as a factor impacting family functioning?

RQ 2. Do licensed marriage and family therapists think that the lack of time management has a negative impact on children?

RQ 3. Do licensed marriage and family therapists discuss the topic of time management with families at any time during the course of therapy?

RQ 4. What do licensed marriage and family therapists say about the lack of time management with children during a session?

RQ 5. How do licensed marriage and family therapists begin a discussion about parents spending more time with their children.

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS,  
IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS,  
AND LIMITATIONS

This qualitative research study explored licensed marriage and family therapists' thoughts and perceptions on time management of the family in order to determine if these marriage and family therapists believed that the lack of time management had possible negative effects on children. A summary of the study, discussion of the findings, conclusions, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research will be presented in this chapter.

**Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether licensed marriage and family therapists discussed issues concerning time management with the families in which they work and the possibilities of negative childhood behaviors as it relates to the lack of appropriate time management. For the purpose of examining the research questions, the study looked at the thoughts and perceptions of licensed marriage and family therapists who worked with families. Twenty-one licensed marriage and family therapists with varying ages, races/ethnicities, education levels, and lengths of time as licensed marriage and family therapists were the respondents in this study. The majority of participants was Caucasian with an average age range of 57 – 67 years old.



The Length of time as a fully licensed marriage and family therapist was tied for 1 – 5 years and 11 – 15 years. Finally the most frequent education level of the participants was master's level. It is important to note that the participants did not check for grammar when writing their responses. This could be due to the possibility of the respondents rushing to complete the study.

The participants were recruited by the researcher via postcard that was mailed to the addresses that were found on the Texas State Board of Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Examiners. Convenience sampling and selective sampling was utilized in this study. The postcards provided the potential participants instructions on assessing the PsychData website and to Survey #164775. No transcribing was done for this survey because the responses entered were the direct responses from each participant within the study.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Five research questions were explored in this study.

RQ 1. Do licensed marriage and family therapists explore time issues as a factor impacting family functioning?

RQ 2. Do licensed marriage and family therapists think that the lack of time management has a negative impact on children?

RQ 3. Do licensed marriage and family therapists discuss the topic of time management with families at any time during the course of therapy?

RQ 4. What do licensed marriage and family therapists say about the lack of time management with children during a session?

RQ 5. How do licensed marriage and family therapists begin a discussion about parents spending more time with their children?

Eight interview questions were developed from the research questions. Participant responses from the survey were analyzed and the resulting themes that emerged were organized according to the five research questions.

### **Findings Related to the Research Questions**

Research Question 1: Do licensed marriage and family therapists explore time issues as a factor impacting family functioning?

The first research question examined whether licensed marriage and family therapists explored time issues with families. The following interview questions associated with the research question are as follows: (1) How would you assist parents in processing their concerns about not having enough time for their children; (2) Can you explain from your personal experience the degree to which you have seen parents express their thoughts about spending time or the lack of spending time with their children; (3) Can you explain from your experience how children felt or expressed themselves during a session as it relates to the parent not spending time with them?

### **Discussion of Time Management**

There were three interview questions associated with the first research question. The results regarding each set will be discussed in the order that the questions were mentioned above. For the first interview question, 15 responses were consistent with the dominant theme. In reference to the second interview question associated with the same research question, 17 responses were consistent with the same research question and

regarding the third interview question, 19 responses were consistent with the first research question. A subtheme was also associated with this research question: Time Management Strategies. Due to the expressions from the parents and the expression from the children, time management strategies were developed. Through the dominant theme, discussion of time management, the therapists seemed to have felt the need to assist the parents with strategies to further engage them in developing a healthy set of strategies to create a closer bond between the children and the parents to explore issues impacting family functioning. Interview Questions 7, 9, and 10 were the base for the subtheme, Time Management Strategies, which related to the dominant theme, Discussion of Time Management. The discussion of time management assisted therapists in having a greater understanding and awareness of the parent-child relationship as it relates to the development of time management strategies.

Research Question 2: Do licensed marriage and family therapists think that the lack of time management has a negative impact on children?

### **Negative Impacts**

Interview Question 6 associated with the second research question. Thirteen responses were consistent with the second research question. The subtheme that was associated with this research question was Attention to the Child, while the overarching theme was Negative Impacts. The subtheme that was related to this theme was attention to the child. Therefore, the subtheme directly related to the overarching theme. Expressed in a more noticeable way, one could say that by looking at the information from this qualitative perspective, Interview Question 6 directly linked to the second research

question, because out of the responses 13 participants associated the lack of time management with the negative behavior of children.

Research Question 3: Do licensed marriage and family therapists discuss the topic of time management with families at any time during the course of therapy?

### **Time Issues**

There was one interview question related to the third research question. Sixteen responses were consistent with the third research question. The subtheme related to this dominant theme was Quantity vs. Quality. The subtheme or interview question directly related to the third research question. The interview question shows direct consistencies with the research question. Moreover, the research question sought to determine if marriage and family therapists discussed the topic of time management at any time during the course of therapy. The responses indicated that these therapists did discuss time management as it relates to quantity vs. quality time.

Research Question 4: What do licensed marriage and family therapists say about the lack of time with children during a session?

### **The Beginning of the Discussions**

There was one interview question associated with the fourth research question. The subtheme associated with was Investigation of Family Patterns. Sixteen responses were consistent with the dominant theme. The connection related to the research question and the interview question indicated that many participants agreed that they would investigate the patterns of the family to begin the discussion about the lack of time management

while in the session with parents alone, one-on-one with children or with the family in its entirety.

Research Question 5: How do licensed marriage and family therapists begin a discussion about parents spending time with their children?

### **What the Therapist Says in Sessions**

There were two interview questions that were associated with this fifth and final research question. Eighteen participants were consistent with their responses as it related to the fifth and final research question for Interview Question 12. Also 16 participants had consistent answers for Interview Question 6. Each interview question was included in the subtheme of Parental Education as their responses were closely related. Finally, both interview questions as well as the subtheme were in direct relationship with the dominant theme of What the Therapist Says in Sessions.

### **How the Overarching Themes Relate to the Literature**

The literature review in Chapter Two is related to the themes that emerged within the study. This section will discuss the overarching themes and how they relate to the literature review in Chapter Two. Although there are subthemes in this qualitative study, the overarching themes encapsulate all other themes the emerged within the research.

### **Time Issues and its Relation to the Literature**

Time issues within the literature refers to the struggles that parents face while attempting to juggle work, home, and outside activities along with striving to create quality time with children. The feelings of overload may lead to parents not having a desire to be involved with their children because they are too tired from outside activities,

thus, the relationship between parents and children suffers. This creates an issue with family functioning as well. With this in mind, if parents spend more time with children, the likelihood of behavioral concerns may diminish. This thought is backed by the previously mentioned research by Lakes (2011) when it was reported that if parents spend more time with their children who suffer from ADHD, then the behavioral concerns would diminish.

### **Negative Impacts and its Relation to the Literature**

Negative Impacts was created as a theme because the literature encourages the thought that the lack of family time management affects the behavioral concerns of children. Elkind (2001) mentioned that if the employment of the parent is brought to the home, the likelihood of parent-child interactions decreases. Therefore, the lack of supervision leaves children open to engage in activities that are deemed inappropriate by their parents. Elkind (2001) further suggested that behavioral problems further increase when children do not have an opportunity to experience leisure time and togetherness with their parents.

### **Discussion of Time Management and the Literature**

The discussion of time management integrates with the literature in a subtle way. Although none of the literature in chapter two discussed how therapists talked about time management in sessions with families, the research that was previously mentioned did elude to the importance of fathers being involved with children. More specifically, how behavioral concerns could diminish when fathers are present in the lives of children. According to Walsh et al. (2014) children experience a need for a biological connection

with their parents. With this being said, if a single mother comes to a licensed marriage and family therapist about the negative behavior of her child, the therapist may ask the mother how involved is the father with the child. If it is indicated that the father is not as involved as the child would like, then the discussion of time management will occur.

### **What the Therapist Says in Sessions and the Literature**

What therapists discuss in sessions is important to the literature due the therapeutic sessions being the driving force that assists families with strategies to improve time management. These strategies also improve family functioning as well as the relationship between parents and children. According to Offer (2013), parents struggle with how to manage their time between work and other activities. Marisiglio and Roy (2013) also indicated that this struggle places a toll on family functioning. With this in mind, if a child is exhibiting behavioral problems and the parent feels as if the child needs therapeutic assistance, then a licensed marriage and family therapist may ask about what occurs within the family on a regular basis. This could give the licensed marriage and family therapist an opportunity to discuss what things may be impacting the family's current functioning and how to create avenues to improve it.

### **The Beginning of the Discussions and the Literature**

The beginning of the therapeutic session is the information that therapists use to guide them in how to continue the therapeutic process. With this being said, the literature discussed how children's happiness is impacted by the lack of parental involvement (Flouri & Buchanan, 2003). Time management is limited in some family constellations such as single parent households because single parents have to be the breadwinner and

much of the time is devoted to work and improving the living situation of the family (Bowen & Pitman, 1995). According to the literature, spillover can also be a factor related to this overarching theme. Bowen and Pittman (1995) discussed how the stress on a parent's job could also cause stress within other domains of the parent's life, specifically related to the functioning of the family. In other words, a single mother could come to the therapeutic session and discuss how tired she may be of her child's behavior as well as her explanation of her being the sole breadwinner and working to improve the lives of her children. This could begin a discussion in session as to how licensed marriage and family therapists could assist the families with time management strategies.

### **Conclusions**

The following conclusions were reached in the examination of the data and review of the literature:

1. From the sample for this study, licensed marriage family therapists discussed time management issues with families they serve. They also assisted the families in developing strategies in order to decrease the negative behaviors of their children.
2. From the sample for this study, negative impacts were considered a concern within the therapeutic process when families bring their children to therapy for behavioral concerns, especially if behavioral concerns were the reason that they were brought in for therapy initially.
3. An exploration of the family patterns related to how the licensed marriage and family therapists conducted the sessions and how they made attempts



at putting together the concept that the lack of appropriate time was a major contributing factor to the negative behaviors of children.

4. Licensed marriage and family therapists tended to educate the parents on strategies that could be used to establish a greater bond with their children.
5. Licensed marriage and family therapists asked children how they felt about spending more time with their parents. It seemed as if it was discussed either in the presence of the parents or individually with the therapist.
6. Although parents made excuses about time management concerns specifically related to employment, the licensed marriage and family therapists attempted to implement strategies in order to better manage time so that family time will become a priority.

### **Limitations**

The findings of this study were limited in three ways. First, licensed marriage and family therapists were the only professional population that were recruited to participate in the study as marriage and family therapist hold the specialty licensed within the state of Texas to work specifically with families and their many issues. Other therapy professional such as psychologists and licensed professional counselors could have fit the criteria of this study if they had specialty training or education within the field of family therapy. Also, one of the participants did not respond to the age criteria due to there being a gap in the age range. The age range between 47 years and 56 years was not added into the demographic section of the questionnaire. Secondly, the research tool that was

designed was not tested to determine if the same results would have occurred within another study. Finally, the researcher was unable to attain all 25 participants as expected. Therefore, 21 participants were included to complete the study. It is also important to note that the responses may have been different from the licensed marriage and family therapists who did not participate in the study.

### **Implications**

This research may be useful for all licensed marriage and family therapists in working with families and children with negative behavior due to the lack of parental time management. In other words, licensed marriage and family therapists who initiate the topic of time management where the parents identify that they are not able to spend the amount of time necessary to build a relationship with their children, will have a better understanding of how best to manage their time. This study further provides therapist and professionals training marriage and family therapists a different lens for working with families with work-family balance issues. The implications for this research may also be of benefit to licensed professional counselors who have an educational background in family therapy or some sort of certification in family therapy where the clinician specifically works with families as a whole.

Professors in institutions of higher education may find this research useful in the preparation of future therapists in the field to assist them with the concerns of lack of time management when parents are unable to provide the care and attention due to various circumstances. The research findings suggest that licensed marriage and family therapists have an idea of what issues parents face when parents come into the clinical

setting reporting of negative behaviors in their children. The research findings further suggest that licensed marriage and family therapists, who believe that the lack of time management affects the behavior of children, share a common view that strategies must be developed in order to assist parents in finding avenues to spend more time with their children.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

This research focused on the thoughts and perceptions of licensed marriage and family therapists as it relates to time management within the family and its possible effects on children. It is recommended that future research on this topic examine whether these findings can be replicated when other clinicians, i.e., licensed professional counselors and clinical social workers who may provide therapeutic interventions for families are considered. There is also a need for research to determine if time management strategies that are given by the licensed marriage and family therapists are beneficial and effective in reducing the negative behaviors of children.

It is also recommended that this study be replicated to a much larger population of licensed marriage and family therapists to determine generalizability. Several participants identified what they say and how they bring up the topic of time management. A study that includes a sample population covering a larger portion of the United States may produce a plethora of different perspectives. It is also important to note that almost half or the participants had a doctorate degree. This could mean that the participants felt that because of their education, they wanted to participate in the study. On the other hand, the lack of participation in this study could mean that the potential participants were not

interested in the study when they received the postcard. There could also be other reasons that the potential participants did not feel the need to participate in the study that was not mentioned above.

A qualitative study that addresses the outcomes of time management strategies from the perspective of potential families is recommended as well. The research findings suggested that therapists believed that the implementation of time management strategies were efficacious for producing positive outcomes. The development of three instruments to measure levels of effectiveness would be helpful. First, an instrument that measures how many licensed marriage and family therapists believe that time management issues contribute to the negative behaviors of children would be helpful. Secondly, an instrument that measures which time management strategies are most effective in reducing the negative behaviors of children. And finally, an instrument that determines the reports from families about the effectiveness of time management strategies that were implemented by licensed marriage and family therapists.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, implications, limitations, conclusions and recommendation for further research was discussed. This chapter also discussed how the overarching themes are related to the literature in chapter two. Themes emerges from the research and matched how the literature discussed the possibility that children behaviors are related to the amount of time that parents spend with their children as reported by the licensed marriage and family therapists in this study. The findings within this qualitative research study may be of therapeutic value to parents who enter into therapy with the chief

complaint of their children having negative behaviors. The research findings suggest that when parents visit licensed marriage and family therapists for assistance in negative behaviors that are possibly related to parents' lack of time management with their children, time management strategies will be developed in order to counter the threats of increased negative behavior from the children. Since this research has been limited to a population of licensed marriage and family therapists, it is unknown whether similar findings would occur with other clinicians in the human services field. Other professionals include: nurturing parenting facilitators, caseworkers, social workers, child protective services investigators, child and family services employees and even the Texas Department of State Health Services.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Time Management Interview Questionnaire

### **Time Management Interview Questionnaire**

**Length of time as a fully licensed MFT:**

\_\_\_\_ 1 – 5 years \_\_\_\_ 6 – 10years \_\_\_\_ 11 – 15years \_\_\_\_ 16 – 20years \_\_\_\_ 20 or more

**Age:**

\_\_\_\_ 25 – 35 years \_\_\_\_ 36 – 46 years \_\_\_\_ 57 – 67 years \_\_\_\_ 67 – 78 years

**Race:**

\_\_\_\_ African American \_\_\_\_ Caucasian \_\_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_\_ Asian

**Education:**

\_\_\_\_ Master's Level \_\_\_\_ Doctorate

1. How do you explain the importance of time management to parents/guardians as it relates to the negative behaviors of children?
2. In your own words, describe the way you would bring up the topic of parents spending more time with their child/children in order to decrease negative behaviors.
3. How would you assist parents in processing their concerns about not having enough time for their children?
4. How would you discuss with children, that there needs to be a balance between the time that they spend with their parents as well as the time that they have to themselves for activities outside of the family?
5. Can you explain from your personal experience the degree to which you have seen parents express their thoughts about spending time or the lack of spending time with their children?

6. Can you explain from your experience how children felt or expressed themselves during a session as it relates to the parent(s) not spending time with them?
7. What were some of the possible explanations that parents gave in session about what has caused them to not be able to spend more time with their child/children?
8. What suggestions would you give to a family in reference to time management as it relates to effective parenting and children's behavior?

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

**INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPAT IN RESEARCH  
TEXAS WOMAN’S UNIVERSITY**

**Investigator: Richard E. Toney.....Rtoney@MAIL.twu.edu 832.XXX.XXXX**  
**Advisor: Joyce Armstrong, PhD.....Jarmstrong@MAIL.twu.edu**  
**940.898.2690**

**Marriage and Family Therapists’ Thoughts and Perceptions on Time Management  
in Families: Possible Effects on Children**

The purpose of this study is to explore how fully licensed marriage and family therapists perceive the lack of time management on the behavior of children and adolescents. This research will seek to determine specific answers related to whether fully licensed marriage and family therapists discuss the topic of time management and if they believe that the lack of time with children and adolescents has a negative impact on the child. It is from the experiences of fully licensed marriage and family therapists that I hope to learn specific ways that the topic of time management and lack of time management is discussed with families. Your information about this subject matter is very important.

**Procedural Description:**

If you choose to participate in the study, you are asked to read this consent form completely and continue to the study. Continuing to proceed and complete the study indicates that you agree to participate and complete the research questions.

**Potential Risks:**

All research has the potential for risk or harm to participants. Necessary steps will be taken to minimize the risks of this study. The following is a list of potential risks and minimizing steps:

**Confidentiality:**

There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, and Internet transactions. The responses from each participant and all information related to their responses will be held in a locked file cabinet and the principal researcher will be the only person that has access to the file cabinet. The locked filing cabinet will be placed and secured in the principal researcher’s office to restrict access. You are not asked to place any identifiable information on this website. If for any reason, the participant contacts the principal researcher via email for any questions, the email will be discarded immediately once the participant has been given a response.

**Anonymity:**

No personal identifiable data will be collected. Each participant will be assigned a 3-digit number. Participants will not receive any identifiable information regarding other participants involved in the study. Participants will not be asked to sign a consent form.

They will be informed, “By continuing to move forward and read and answer the questions below, indicates that you agree to participate in the study. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the principal researcher (Richard E. Toney) at the number or email address above at any time”.

This will help in NOT identifying them in any way.

**Time loss due to answering the questions on the questionnaire:**

Participants’ questionnaires should take less than 45 minutes. The total time should not exceed 60 minutes. Participants have the right skip items or stop responding at any time.

**Emotional Discomfort:**

Upon the time that the participants agree to participate in the study, all participants will be given a referral list in order to assist them with any emotional concerns that may be experienced while answering the questions. When the participants check the consent form on the PsychData website, agreeing to the study, a referral list will be attached for their assistance should they experience emotional discomfort. A list of referrals will be attached to the consent form so that they may express their feelings and concerns about what they may be experiencing while answering the research questions.

The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researchers know at once if there is a problem and they will help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

**Possible loss of work time:**

Completing the survey will take approximately 45 minutes which may distract you from fulfilling work related tasks and participation with other activities.

**Fear of retribution for non-participation:**

Your participation in the study is voluntary. No penalty will be given should you decline to participate or withdraw from the study.

**Participation Benefits:**

Participants may benefit from this study by understanding and recognizing the importance of creating a dialogue about time management and discovering ways that families can utilize their time in more appropriate ways. The participants will gain a deeper understanding of the importance of time management and it’s impact on children and families.

**Questions Regarding the Research:**

If you have any questions regarding the research study, feel free to address those questions with the principal researcher. If you have any questions after the research is



over, you can contact the principal researcher, Richard E. Toney at: 832.851.5163 or email: [Rtoney@MAIL.twu.edu](mailto:Rtoney@MAIL.twu.edu)

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By continuing to move forward and read and answer the questions below, indicates that you agree to participate in the study. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the principal researcher (Richard E. Toney) at the number or email address above at any time.

### **Referral List**

Should you become overwhelmed for any reason while completing this survey, a list of numbers are provided below in order to assist you.

**Mental Health America:** 1-800-273-TALK

**National Child Abuse Hotline:** 1-800-4-A- CHILD

**Veterans Crisis Hotline:** 1-800-273- 8255

**Texas Suicide Hotline:** 1-512-472- 4357 (Austin, Texas)

**Texas Suicide Hotline:** 1-214-828-1000 (Dallas, Texas)

**Texas Suicide Hotline:** 1-800-762-0157 (Denton, Texas)

**Texas Suicide Hotline:** 1-866-970-4770 (Houston, Texas)

**Texas Suicide Hotline:** 1-800-316-9241 (San Antonio, Texas)

APPENDIX C  
TABLE 1

Demographic Information on Participants

Table 1

*Demographic Information on Participants*

<b>Length of Time</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Education Level</b>
<b>Fully Licensed</b>	<b>in years</b>		
<b>in years</b>			
1-5 years =	57-67 = 49%	African American = 24%	Master's Level = 57.1%
28.3%			
6-10 years =	36-46 = 40%	Caucasian = 48%	Doctorate Level =
14.3%			42.9%
11-15 years =	25-35 = 10%	Hispanic = 19%	
23.8%			
16-20 years =	67-78 = 5%	Asian = 9%	
19.05%			
20 years or more		Other = 0%	
= 19.05%			

APPENDIX D  
TABLE 2

Findings As Identified by Participants

Table 2

*Findings as Identified by Participants*

Themes	Subtheme	Number Responses	Research Question	Survey Question
<b>Themes</b>	Subtheme	Number Responses	Research Question	Survey Question
<b>Discussion of Time Management</b>	Time Management Strategies	15	Do licensed marriage and family therapists explore time issues as a factor impacting family functioning?	How would you assist parents in processing their concerns about not having enough time for their children?
		17		Can you explain from your personal experience the degree to which you have seen parents express their thoughts about spending time or the lack of spending time with their children?
		19		Can you explain from your experience how children felt or expressed themselves during a session as it relates to the parent not spending time with them?
<b>Negative Impacts</b>	Attention to The Child	13	Do licensed marriage and family therapists think that the lack of time management has a negative impact on children?	How do you explain the importance of time management to parents/guardians as it relates to the negative behaviors of children?

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<b>Time Issues</b>	Quantity vs. Quality	16	Do licensed marriage and family therapists discuss the topic of time management with families at any time during the course of therapy?	What were some of the possible explanations that parents gave in session about what has caused them to not be able to spend more time with their child/ children?
<b>The Beginning of the Discussion</b>	Investigation of Family Patterns	16	What do licensed marriage and family therapists say about the lack of time with children during a session?	How would you discuss with children, that there needs to be a balance between the time that they spend with their parents as well as the time that they have to themselves for activities outside of the family?
<b>What the Therapist Says in Session</b>	Parental Education	16	How do licensed marriage and family therapists begin a discussion about parents spending more time with their children?	In your own words, describe the way you would bring up the topic of parents spending more time with their child/ children in order to decrease negative behavior.
		18		What suggestions would you give to a family in reference to time management as it relates to effective parenting and children's behavior?

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APPENDIX E  
TABLE 3

Irrelevant Themes

Table 3

*Irrelevant Themes*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
Patterns of Change	2	No relevance
Modeling	1	No relevance
Interpretation of Child's Thoughts	2	No relevance
Clinical Documentation	1	No relevance
Discipline	1	No relevance



## APPENDIX F

### IRB File Closed Letter



**Institutional Review Board**

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

P.O. Box 425619, Denton, TX 76204-5619

940-898-3378

email: [IRB@twu.edu](mailto:IRB@twu.edu)

<http://www.twu.edu/irb.html>

DATE: TO:

FROM:

October 21, 2015

Mr. Richard E. Toney

Family Sciences

Institutional Review Board - Denton

*Re:*

*File Closed for Marriage and Family Therapists' Thoughts and Perceptions on Time Management in Families the Possible Effects on Children (Protocol #: 18005)*

The TWU Institutional Review Board (IRB) has received the materials necessary to complete the file for the above referenced study. As applicable, agency approval letter(s), the final report, and signatures of the participants have been placed on file. As of this date, the protocol file has been closed. IRB records will be stored for four (4) years from this file closed date.

cc.

Dr. Karen Petty, Family Sciences

Dr. Joyce Armstrong, Family Sciences

Graduate School