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Invisible Household Labor and Ramifications for Adjustment: Mothers as Captains of Households

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Abstract

We address the issue of invisible labor in the home by examining how the distribution of the mental and emotional labor inherent to managing the household between spouses may be linked with women's well-being, including their satisfaction with life, partner satisfaction, feelings of emptiness, and experiencing role overload. In a sample of 393 U.S. married/partnered mothers, mostly of upper-middle class backgrounds with dependent children at home, results showed that a majority of women reported that they alone assumed responsibility for household routines involving organizing schedules for the family and maintaining order in the home. Some aspects of responsibilities related to child adjustment were primarily handled by mothers, including being vigilant of children's emotions, whereas other aspects were shared with partners, including instilling values in the children. Responsibility was largely shared for household finances. Regression analyses showed that after controlling for dimensions of emotional and physical intimacy, feeling disproportionately responsible for household management, especially child adjustment, was associated with strains on mothers' personal well-being as well as lower satisfaction with the relationship. The implications of our work highlight the need to consider the burden of household management on mothers' well-being and speak to mothers' own needs for support and care as the primary manager of the household. In future research on division of labor, it will be useful to measure these critical but often neglected dimensions of who coordinates the household, given potential ramifications of this dimension for the quality of marriages and women's personal well-being.

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Authors' Contributions

LC performed the statistical analysis, participated in the interpretation of the data, and drafted the manuscript. SSL conceived of the study and participated in its design and coordination and helped to draft the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interests.

Ethical Approval

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Study oversight was obtained from Arizona State University Institutional Review Board.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Keywords

Division of labor; Well-being; Partner satisfaction; Intimacy; Motherhood

The adage, "A mother's work is never done," rests on the myriad responsibilities linked with motherhood including not just everyday tasks and chores, but also ongoing psychological caretaking. Despite shifting gender role norms that have seen men contributing more to housework and childcare than ever before, women still manage most of the household's labor—even when employed full-time—and gender differences in the amount of time spent on the household tend to be the greatest among couples with children (Bianchi et al. 2006; Birch et al. 2009; Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015; Coltrane 2000; Dempsy 2002; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010; Parker and Wang 2013). For many mothers, this unequal burden can take a toll on mental health and well-being (Goldberg and Perry-Jenkins 2004). Studies have shown that the unequal division of labor in the home (primarily physical housework) is associated with women's psychological distress, depression, role overload, and even poor cardiovascular health (Bird 1999; Goldberg and Perry-Jenkins 2004; Harryson et al. 2012; Nomaguchi and Milkie 2003; Riina and Feinberg 2012; Thurston et al. 2011). In the present study, therefore, we examine (a) the extent to which the management of the household is equally distributed between spouses and (b) how this distribution may be associated with salient aspects of women's well-being including satisfaction with life and partner satisfaction, feelings of emptiness, and experiences of parenting role overload.

There is a potentially important aspect of mothers' household work that has not been adequately captured in U.S. national, demographic surveys thus far (Winkler and Ireland 2009): the burden of being the "captain of the ship" who is managing the household. This burden reflects the mental and emotional labor inherent to being the primary manager of a household (Eichler and Albanese 2007; Hochschild 1989; Offer 2014; Winkler and Ireland 2009)—labor that often precedes the routine, physical work of maintaining the household. Thus, in addition to doing most of the physical housework and childcare, mothers also are the ones who most often manage, plan, anticipate, and organize both routine and unexpected household tasks and family events, as well as support the daily well-being of family members (Bianchi et al. 2006; Daly 2002; Erickson 2005; Hochschild 1989; Offer 2014).

The conceptualizations of mental and emotional labor inherent to household management are not new in the literature (Hochschild 1989; Erickson 2005; Winkler and Ireland 2009). However, although mental and emotional labor are acknowledged as forms of labor that contribute to the mental burden and stress of keeping the household, these types of labor are frequently overlooked by family members and researchers alike, due in part to their invisible nature (Darrah et al. 2007; Offer 2014; Shaw 2008). In fact, few studies specifically examine the management of household tasks or childcare as a distinct component of household labor because it often occurs as part of multitasking, even spilling into other domains, and is rarely identified as a primary household task (Ahn et al. 2017; Meier et al. 2006; Offer 2014; Winkler and Ireland 2009). Thus, household management is a construct that has been difficult to define and capture in research on time use and division of labor, at times described as "care work," which includes lists of specific mental and organizational tasks

that facilitate caring for the family and household (Mederer 1993; Meier et al. 2006) or is conceptualized as the amount of time spent thinking about family and household work during the day (Ahn et al. 2017; Offer 2014).

Captain of Household Management

In the current study, we sought to capture mothers' felt obligations as the "captain of the ship" that was their household, that is, the extent to which mothers felt that they, more so than their spouses, shouldered responsibility for management of the home. A multidimensional approach was used in operationalizing this construct following recommendations that researchers should use integrative definitions of household labor, spanning aspects of running the home broadly as well as caring for children and managing financial affairs (see Eichler and Albanese 2007; Winkler and Ireland 2009). Thus, the construct we assessed encompassed responsibility for keeping track of the everyday needs, demands, and schedules of all family members, ranging from organizing all children's activities (Lareau and Weininger 2008; Meier et al. 2006; Walzer 1996) to being vigilant of their various emotional needs, behaviors, and developing values (Eichler and Albanese 2007; Luthar et al. 2013; Senior 2014). This conceptualization most closely corresponds with Meier and colleagues' (2006) measures of household and childcare management; but rather than a list of discrete tasks to manage, we more broadly captured categories of management responsibilities (because ensuring "coverage of various household tasks" may encompass anything from meal preparation and cleaning to maintenance and repairs, and also includes the outsourcing of tasks).

This conceptualization and approach to measuring household management reduces the number of items in the scale and allows for subjective, individual differences in the tasks involved in keeping up the household for a given family. Further, the current study included items that spanned additional domains of household labor beyond the management of routine household tasks, such as the management burden associated with raising children, including emotional labor, as well as the management of financial affairs (e.g., large financial decisions like buying a new car). Again, rather than focusing on a specific, routine task like buying school supplies for children or paying bills, these conceptualizations of managing the raising of children and finances seek to address the broader construct of managing the family's affairs that is more in line with being the "captain" of the household and consistent with recommendations from research on economic household labor (Mederer 1993; Thorne 2010; Winkler and Ireland 2009).

The burdens associated with being the manager or captain of household, defined in the present integrative, multidimensional way, can be especially high among upper-middle class mothers as seen in U.S. national reports on time use (Christensen and Schneider 2010; Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Offer 2014). Data between 2003 and 2007 showed that college-educated American mothers of school-aged children invested 130% more time than did less educated mothers in parenting responsibilities of management—that is, planning, organizing, and monitoring their children's lives outside the home (Kalil et al. 2012). Similarly, between 1993 and 2008, U.S. college-educated mothers reportedly increased their time invested in activities focused on children from 12.0 to 20.5 hours per week, whereas

less educated mothers increased theirs from 10.5 to 16.0 hours (Ramey and Ramey 2010). Parallel increases for college-educated fathers were from 4.2 to 9.7 hours per week. The greater increases among well-educated mothers likely reflects the dual facts that (a) they are generally the primary caregivers of their children and (b) in general, children in high achieving communities are involved in many more organized extracurricular activities than in decades past so that these activities impinge on parents' time (e.g., driving to and from rehearsals or sports practices, attending performances or games).

Interestingly, economic or financial household labor has been shown to be gender-typed depending on social class or economic stability, with men being more involved in finance-related management of the household when there is greater economic stability and wealth and thus greater discretion and control in how money should be used (see Thorne 2010). However, there is evidence to suggest that women take on a greater role in the financial management of the household when their own earnings increase (Mano-Negrin and Katz 2003) or under circumstances of negative wealth or debt when financial management responsibilities are intensive and time-consuming (Thorne 2010). Notably, recent research suggests that when finances are managed jointly, spouses feel more empowered and report higher relationship quality and stability (LeBaron et al. 2018). Findings such as these attest to the importance of exploring the ramifications for adjustment of carrying a disproportionate responsibility for running the home and family (relative to partners) among this higher educated demographic of mothers.

The toll on women's well-being associated with such management responsibilities is highlighted in sociological research. Lareau and colleagues have in fact documented that well-educated mothers (with college degrees or more) disproportionately shoulder the work of coordinating "concerted cultivation" via children's extra-curricular pursuits (Lareau 2002, p. 748; Lareau and Weininger 2008). "Mothers reported nagging children to get ready, coping with children's resentment and irritation, and racing to get to activities in the requisite time period; the strict deadlines created countless headaches for parents, particularly mothers. Fathers were insulated from this 'invisible labor'" (Lareau and Weininger 2008, p. 443). In fact, findings from a recent study suggest there are cultural norms and beliefs that may help to insulate men from this type of labor because there is less expectation and societal pressure for men compared to women to be concerned with and keep track of their partners' outstanding needs (Ahn et al. 2017).

Building upon the aforementioned studies, in the present study we sought not just to illuminate the extent of an unequal distribution of household management, but also to determine potential ramifications for mothers' adjustment. Prior research examining the division of household management has focused on spousal conflict and relationship satisfaction, as well as qualitative reports of emotional distress and resentment (Mederer 1993; Meier et al. 2006; Thorne 2010). Thus, the current study sought to expand on these findings to examine the association of household management with a range of subjectively perceived adjustment variables that included both positive and negative aspects of well-being of the couple and of the mother herself. Two aspects of the couple's relationship were measured: overall satisfaction with her partner and feelings of parenting role overload or feeling overwhelmed by the parenting role. These were examined given evidence that the

unequal burden of mental and emotional labor can contribute to significant marital dissatisfaction within couples as well as feelings of being stretched too thin (Mederer 1993; Meier et al. 2006). In assessing women's personal adjustment, we examined overall satisfaction with life, as well as feelings of emptiness—the general sentiment, "Is this all there is to my life?" We considered these last two indices particularly relevant to mothers with higher education because a nontrivial proportion may harbor feelings of disappointment about their primary status as household managers despite their high educational attainment and often initially promising careers (Luthar et al. 2013; Luthar and Ciciolla 2015).

In examining the degree to which feeling primarily responsible for the management of household routines and children's adjustment might contribute to women's well-being, our goals were also to identify links largely unique to this construct, partialling out potential confounds in statistical associations. The first step toward such stringency in our analyses was to simultaneously consider another aspect of household management not often considered in the literature: responsibility for major financial decisions. Unlike responsibility for household routines, we postulated that being responsible for financial decisions would not have negative ramifications for mothers' adjustment because making decisions about a major investment or purchasing a new car (a) are occasional or sporadic decisions rather than routine, everyday responsibilities and (b) may actually be associated with positive feelings, such as empowerment, rather than being seen as tedious and humdrum jobs (see Hui et al. 2011; Sherman et al. 2012).

In further efforts to ascertain the unique influence of household management, we planned, a priori, to partial out links for several other constructs known to have strong associations with mothers' adjustment, including aspects of intimacy in relationships (Luthar and Ciciolla 2015). Specifically, four dimensions of intimacy have previously been shown to be robust in relation to multiple indicators of mothers' well-being: satisfaction with friendships, feelings of being unconditionally accepted, feeling comforted when distressed, and authenticity in relationships (Luthar and Ciciolla 2015). In addition to these dimensions, we considered two aspects of physical intimacy: satisfaction with sexual intimacy (known to be significant among married or partnered mothers and for people in general; Bodenmann et al. 2007; Celello 2009) and satisfaction with being held or hugged, entailing physical closeness in non-sexual ways. There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating the value of human touch for overall well-being (see Field 2010; Shaltout et al. 2012). In the present study, our goals were to determine the degree to which well-being varied as a function of our perceived household management dimensions in particular, rather than being driven by dimensions of intimacy with which they were likely to show some overlap.

To summarize, our goals for the present study were to examine the ramifications of feeling disproportionately responsible for managing the household relative to partners or spouses. To gauge the unique significance of the multiple aspects of household management, including household routines, child adjustment, and household finances, on women's well-being, we partialled out contributions of several other factors known to be associated with mothers' psychological adjustment, including dimensions of emotional and physical intimacy.

With the expectation that the invisible labor of household management will include distinct aspects or types of household management—including primary responsibility (more than that of the partner) for household routines, for child adjustment, and for finances—we examined two major hypotheses. (a) A majority of mothers will report that they hold primary responsibility for managing both household routines and child adjustment (Hypothesis 1a), whereas a majority of mothers will report that they equally share responsibility for household finances with partners (Hypothesis 1b). (b) Feeling disproportionately responsible for household management will be uniquely associated with measures of well-being, including life satisfaction, partner satisfaction, parenting role overload, and feelings of emptiness—over and above known correlates of well-being including emotional and physical intimacy (Hypothesis 2a). In particular, responsibility for household routines will be negatively associated with partner satisfaction and life satisfaction, as well as positively associated with parenting role overload and feelings of emptiness (Hypothesis 2b). Additionally, responsibility for child adjustment will be negatively associated with partner satisfaction and life satisfaction, and positively with parenting role overload and emptiness (Hypothesis 2c); and responsibility for household finances will be linked positively with partner satisfaction, life satisfaction, and parenting role overload, and negatively with emptiness (Hypothesis 2d).

Method

Sample and Procedure

To address these predictions, we accessed Luthar and Ciciolla's (2015; 2016) data from their Moms as People study, an online survey developed to examine how mothers felt about various aspects of their lives, which included an oversampling for relatively well-educated women. Women were recruited to the study by word-of-mouth, flyers, media reports, and lectures, and between 2005 and 2010, a total of 2,247 U.S. women completed the survey (for further details, see Luthar and Ciciolla 2015; 2016). Because this online study evolved over time, additional dimensions were assessed in the measurement battery and in its final version; relationship variables not administered in previous versions—including variables about partner satisfaction and physical intimacy—were added to the core questionnaires on personal adjustment and parenting (Luthar and Ciciolla 2015; 2016). Across the various online measures, 88% (n = 2,247) of mothers who began the survey completed it, and only 11.8% (n = 306) discontinued before the end. No incentives were offered for completion.

For the current study we utilized data from a subset of 393 women who indicated they were married or in a committed partnership and had dependent children under the age of 18 years living at home whose greater dependency may have an influence on both the division of household management and personal adjustment (infancy through the high school years). Demographic details of the sample are provided in Table 1. As shown, approximately half the mothers in our study had a graduate degree and an additional quarter of the sample had a college degree; the remainder of were moderately educated (Wilcox 2010) with a high school education but not a college degree. The majority of women were legally married. Of the women who reported having a partner or spouse, a majority had male partners.

Measures

For those measures not previously published and used specifically for our study, we indicate them with an asterisk (*) in the sections that follow, and we list the specific items of these measures in the description or associated table (and have also included these in the online supplement).

Household management.—To assess division of household management, mothers were asked who was responsible for managing diverse household responsibilities ranging from organizing schedules for the family and making financial decisions to instilling values and shaping character in children, with answer choices being “Mostly me,” “Mostly my spouse/partner,” or “Both equally.” The total number of items was 13 (see Table 2). Each endorsement of “Mostly Me” was summed to compute scores reflecting mothers’ perceptions of the extent to which they are responsible for managing household labor. A score of zero would indicate that a mother did not feel primarily responsible for any household management, whereas a score of 13 would imply that a mother felt primarily and solely responsible for managing all of the listed household responsibilities. Similarly, variables reflecting “mostly my spouse” and “both equally” were computed. The resulting three variables were orthogonal, such that the total sum across them could not exceed 13. Because the focus of the current study was on the extent to which mothers felt primarily responsible for the management of the household, only endorsements of “Mostly Me” were used in analyses. As described further in the Results section, factor analysis provided evidence for three subscales: Responsible for Household Routines*, Responsible for Child Adjustment*, and Responsible for Household Finances*.

Emotional intimacy.—Measures of emotional intimacy included four variables that have shown robust links with mothers’ adjustment (Luthar and Ciciolla 2015; 2016; see online supplement for complete measures). These included two single item questions: “Do you feel ‘seen’ and loved for the person you are, at your inner core?” and “When you are deeply distressed, do you feel comforted in the ways you need?,” with both rated on 6-point scales from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*all the time*), with higher scores reflecting greater feelings of being loved and comforted. Additionally, six items with a 5-point scale from 1 (*not at all true*) to 5 (*very true*) assessed authenticity or being genuine in relationships, with higher summed scores reflecting greater authenticity (e.g., “My inner self is very much congruent, or similar, with what I show to others” and “I am not really quite the person that people think I am”—reverse scored). Satisfaction with friendships was measured by adding three items rated on a 4-point scale from an adapted version of the Inventory of Parent Experiences (Crnic 1983), which measured satisfaction with the frequency of visiting with friends in person, on the phone, or electronically, rated from on a scale from 1 (*very dissatisfied*) to 4 (*very satisfied*), with higher summed scores reflecting greater satisfaction with friendships.

Physical intimacy.—With regard to physical intimacy, quality of sex* was assessed by one item, “How would you judge the quality of your sex life?,” rated on a 4-point scale, 1 (*Poor*), 2 (*Fair*), 3 (*Good*) to 4 (*Excellent*), with higher scores reflecting a higher quality sex life. To assess non-sexual, physical intimacy, mothers reported on the frequency of three items rated on a 5-point scale, 1 (*Never/1–2 times a year*), 2 (*Less than once a month*), 3 (*1–*

2 times a month), 4 (*Once a week*), 5 (*Several times a week*): "How often do you get full, warm hugs from other adults?"; "How often do other adults hold you, tenderly, in their arms?"; and "How often do you snuggle, cuddle up with another adult?". For each question, they also rated their satisfaction with the respective frequencies, on a 4-point scale from 1 (*Very dissatisfied*) to 4 (*Very Satisfied*), with higher scores reflecting greater satisfaction. The sum of the three satisfaction with being held* items were used in analyses. The satisfaction ratings were used because they provided more information on the participants' perceptions about whether the frequency of non-sexual touch was matched with what they personally desired (e.g., not too much or too little). Frequency and satisfaction variables were correlated at .75.

Satisfaction with partner.—Among the outcome variables, satisfaction with partner* was assessed by eight items rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), with higher summed scores reflecting greater partner satisfaction. The individual items reflected emotional intimacy, communication between partners, and relational conflict —all factors that have been previously identified as important to partner or spousal satisfaction (Mackey et al. 2004). Good internal consistency across items was seen in the alpha coefficient of .90. The items were as follows: "My relationship with my partner/spouse brings me much happiness;" "My partner/spouse does things that frustrate me" (reverse scored); "I share my inner most concerns and fears with my partner/spouse;" "I think about separating from or divorcing my partner/spouse" (reversed scored); "My partner/spouse truly knows and understands the person I am;" "My partner/spouse does things that are hurtful to me" (reversed scored); "I like the person my partner/spouse is;" and "I feel resentment toward my partner/spouse" (reversed scored).

Parenting role overload.—This variable was assessed by seven items rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The variable specifically seeks to capture the extent to which one feels overloaded or overwhelmed in their role as a mother/ parent, with higher summed scores reflecting greater feelings of being overwhelmed in the parenting role. The scale items are reported in full by Luthar and Ciciolla (2015), and examples include, "I feel overwhelmed by all I have to do to take care of my family" and "My family's demands often leave me feeling depleted at the end of the day." (See the online supplement for the complete measure.)

Overall life satisfaction and emptiness.—Overall life satisfaction was measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al. 1985), with five items measuring global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life and rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), with higher summed scores reflecting greater life satisfaction. Finally, emptiness was assessed by four items rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (*not at all true*) to 5 (*very true*), reflecting women's feelings of emptiness and dissatisfaction with their lives (Luthar and Ciciolla 2015). Examples include: "In spite of everything I have, I feel a deep dissatisfaction" and "I look around at my life and think, 'Is this all there is.'" Higher summed scores reflected greater feelings of emptiness.

Table 3 presents the total number of women who provided data for each measure included in the present report as well as alpha coefficients of internal consistency for multi-item scales,

means and standard deviations, the range of responses, and the correlation matrix with all study variables. All measures were found to have adequate reliability. Additionally, evidence of their validity is evident in the strong correlations (and not mutual redundancy) among conceptually related variables. In all measures utilized, high scores represent high levels of the construct being assessed.

Results

Handling Missing Data

Missing values were examined for the extent of missing data using IMB SPSS Statistics 22, and Multiple Imputation (MI) analysis was conducted, which uses a Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) algorithm knows as fully conditional specification (FCS). The imputation model included all the variables used in the current study, as well as additional variables from the larger dataset that may add importantly to the imputation (e.g., personality variables). Twenty separate datasets were imputed, with the number of between-imputation iterations set to 200 (Enders 2010). Analyses were then run on all 20 imputed datasets and the statistics automatically pooled.

Across all of the variables examined here, no more than 14% of data were missing on any variable. This said, in order to buttress the veracity of our findings, we replicated central analyses using the total sample with missing values imputed (n = 393), and the subset of women with complete data across all variables (n = 334). The overall pattern of results and interpretation of the findings did not change when looking solely at the original data with missingness or at the subset with complete data. The following analyses then use the full dataset that includes 393 women.

Measuring Household Labor

To address Hypothesis 1, delineating different types of household management, principal components analysis was used to identify and compute composite scores on “Mostly Me” responses across the factors underlying household labor. We expected that three factors would emerge: responsibility for household routines, for children’s well-being, and for household finances. In fact, initial eigenvalues indicated that the first three factors explained 37%, 16%, and 8% of the variance, respectively. The fourth and fifth factors had eigenvalues less than one and explained 7% and 5% of the variance, respectively. Solutions for three, four, and five factors were each examined using varimax and oblimin rotations of the factor loading matrix. The three factor solution, which explained 61% of the variance, was preferred because of (a) prior theoretical expectations based on review of the original items, (b) the results of the scree plot indicating a leveling off after 3 factors, and (c) difficulty interpreting the fourth and subsequent factors in association with an insufficient number of primary loadings. There was little difference between the three-factor varimax and oblimin solutions, and no items were eliminated. A varimax rotation provided the best defined factor structure, with all items having primary loadings over .50. The factor loading matrix for this solution is presented in Table 2.

For each subscale, endorsements of “Mostly Me” were summed, and higher scores indicated greater personal responsibility for that type of household labor. Cronbach’s alpha was used to examine the internal consistency of “Mostly Me” responses across each subscale: .72 for Responsible for Household Routines (4 items); .65 for Responsible for Child Adjustment (4 items); and .87 for Responsible for Household Finances (5 items). Note that on the second of these subscales, one item, “Willing to give up things personally important, for the welfare of the household” had a lower factor loading (.59) compared to the other items (.62–.78). At the same time, this item’s loading on Factor 2 was clearly higher than its loadings on the other two factors (.21–.17). On its face, this item reflects the personal sacrifice associated with being a parent, giving everything possible for the betterment of the family, and especially for one’s children. Furthermore, eliminating this item did not result in an increase in alpha for the subscale (.61); thus, this item was retained with the other three in scoring Responsible for Child Adjustment. However, in future studies, it may be more appropriate for the item to read, “Willing to give up things personally important, for the welfare of the children.”

Descriptive Data

In Table 2 for each item, we also present the proportion of mothers indicating “Mostly Me,” “Mostly Partner,” and “Both Equally.” As expected in Hypothesis 1a, across all the Responsible for Household Routine items, a majority of women (70%–88%) indicated that they themselves were primarily responsible (“Mostly Me”). Similarly, a majority of women indicated that they were primarily responsible for two Responsible for Child Adjustment items: “Being vigilant of children’s emotions” (64%) and “Knowing children’s school teachers or administrators” (78%). At the same time, they were more likely to equally share responsibilities with partners on the other two duties: “Willing to give up things personally important, for the welfare of the household,” (47%) and “Instilling values and shaping character in the children” (72%). For Responsible for Household Finances items, as expected (Hypothesis 1b), a majority of women (53%–80%) indicated that responsibility for major financial decisions was shared equally with their partners.

Simple correlations among the variables are presented in Table 3. As expected, of the three dimensions of household management, primary responsibility for both routines and for child adjustment showed significant links with adjustment outcomes, in a negative direction with both Life and Partner Satisfaction and inversely with Role overload and Emptiness. Absolute values of these correlation coefficients were .14 to .44 (*mdn* = .20). Primary responsibility for finances was also significantly linked with three of the four outcomes, although the magnitude of the correlations was considerably smaller(.06, .12, .13, and .19).

The relationship predictors were correlated with all four adjustment outcome variables in hypothesized directions, with absolute values of the 16 correlation coefficients ranging from .32 to .61 (*mdn* = .42). Of the two relationship variables not so far examined in prior research (i.e., satisfaction with sex and with being held), overall, the relationships with outcomes were if anything, slightly larger for the latter. In relation to partner satisfaction, role overload, life satisfaction, and emptiness, the pairs of correlation coefficients for satisfaction with sex versus being held were .51 vs. .57; .17 vs. .20; .36vs. .42, and .32

vs .31, respectively. (Interestingly, the same pattern held for the correlations between these measures of physical intimacy with the other four relationship variables, preceding them in Table 2; absolute values ranged from .20 to .38 for satisfaction with sex, *mdn* = .31; and from .26 to .47 for satisfaction with being held, *mdn* = .41.)

Regression Analyses

To address the predictions delineated in Hypothesis 2, we used hierarchical multiple regressions to examine the hypothesized associations in predicting mothers' life satisfaction, partner satisfaction, parenting role overload, and emptiness. We entered sets of predictor variables in separate blocks to discern their relative contributions to adjustment outcomes (i.e., change in R^2). After controlling for demographic indices (educational level, family income, employment status, and number of children in Model 1), as well as including measures of Emotional Intimacy (Model 2) and Physical Intimacy (Model 3), we entered indices of central interest in our study (Model 4): the three indices of household management (i.e., Responsible for Household Routines, Responsible for Child Adjustment, and Responsible for Household Finances.

In Hypothesis 2a, we predicted that feeling disproportionately responsible for household management will be uniquely associated with measures of well-being, including life satisfaction, partner satisfaction, parenting role overload, and feelings of emptiness—over and above known correlates of well-being including emotional and physical intimacy. Taking each outcome measure of well-being in turn, results showed that the indices of household management accounted for unique variance in three of the four outcomes—over and above demographics, emotional intimacy, and physical intimacy.

Table 4 presents the results of the regression analysis for Life Satisfaction. After accounting for demographics, emotional intimacy, and physical intimacy, responsibility for household management still accounted for 2% of the variance in Life Satisfaction, in support of Hypothesis 2a. In support of Hypothesis 2c, Responsible for Child Adjustment was significantly (negatively) associated with Life Satisfaction. Hypotheses 2b and 2d were not supported because Responsible for Household Routines and Responsible for Household Finances were not significantly associated with Life Satisfaction.

Table 5 presents the results of the regression analysis for Partner Satisfaction. After accounting for demographics, emotional intimacy, and physical intimacy, responsibility for household management still accounted for 4% of the variance in Partner Satisfaction, in support of Hypothesis 2a. Hypotheses 2c and 2d were supported because Responsible for Child Adjustment and Responsible for Household Finances were significantly (negatively) associated with Partner Satisfaction. Again, Hypothesis 2b was not supported because Responsible for Household Routines was not significantly associated with Partner Satisfaction.

Table 6 presents the results of the regression analysis for Parenting Role Overload. After accounting for demographics, emotional intimacy, and physical intimacy, responsibility for household management only accounted for 1% of the variance in Parenting Role Overload (i.e., Model 4 was not statistically significant), not supporting Hypothesis 2a. Although the

overall model was not statistically significant, Responsible for Household Routines was positively associated with Parenting Role Overload, and this was the only finding to give support to Hypothesis 2b.

Finally, Table 7 presents the results of the regression analysis for Emptiness. After accounting for demographics, emotional intimacy, and physical intimacy, responsibility for household management still accounted for 2% of the variance in Emptiness, in support of Hypothesis 2a. In support of Hypothesis 2c, Responsible for Child Adjustment was significantly (positively) associated with Emptiness. Hypotheses 2b and 2d were not supported because Responsible for Household Routines and Responsible for Household Finances were not significantly associated with Emptiness.

Relative contributions of the four sets of predictors to the different outcomes.—Notably, the demographic variables collectively contributed to a significant increase in R^2 for only Life Satisfaction, with Education and Family Income having significantly positive associations (see Table 4). By contrast in Model 2, the indices of emotional intimacy together as a block accounted for moderate proportions of changed variance across all of the outcome measures of well-being (see Tables 4–7), with values ranging from .23 for parenting role overload to .44 for emptiness. At least two of the four emotional intimacy predictors were significantly associated with all four outcomes (see Tables 4–7), and all four emotional intimacy predictors had significant unique links with emptiness (see Table 7). The physical intimacy indices included in Model 3 significantly contributed to unique variance for Life Satisfaction (see Table 4) and Partner Satisfaction (see Table 5). Within Model 3, Quality of Sex was positively linked with Life Satisfaction (see Table 4) and Partner Satisfaction (see Table 5); and in addition, satisfaction with non-sexual touch (Being Held) was positively related to partner satisfaction (see Table 5). Collectively, variables in the complete hierarchical regression model explained approximately 51% of the variance in Life Satisfaction; 57% of the variance in Partner Satisfaction; 24% of the variance in Parenting Role Overload; and 48% of the variance in Emptiness.

Supplementary analyses.—In a second set of hierarchical regressions (see Tables 1s–4s in the online supplement), we applied a less stringent test of the significance of the household management variables, entering them in Model 2 following demographics, and before the physical and emotional intimacy variables. When the household management block was included in Model 2 (compared with Model 4 as shown in Tables 4–7), the R^2 values were much larger, .20, .22, .04, and .13, respectively for Life Satisfaction, Partner Satisfaction, Parenting Role Overload, and Emptiness. These analyses suggest that the relationships between the responsibility for household management and adjustment variables may, in part, be explained by dimensions of intimacy. (Note that in these additional analyses where physical and emotional intimacy variables were entered after the responsibility for household management variables in Blocks 3 and 4, the percent of the variance explained by these Blocks, respectively, in predicting Life Satisfaction, Partner Satisfaction, Parenting Role Overload, and Emptiness were 14%, 27%, 3%, and 8% for the physical intimacy variables, and 17%, 8%, 17%, and 27% for the emotional intimacy variables.)

Discussion

Results of the present study were generally consistent with our hypotheses. As expected, most of the women in our sample felt that they, more than their partners, shouldered household responsibilities in two domains (managing household routines and ensuring children's well-being), but they were more likely to equally share responsibilities in the third domain (managing household finances). The second set of hypotheses was partially supported. We had expected negative links with adjustment for both household routines and ensuring children's well-being but links were more consistently seen for the latter. Unexpectedly, managing household finances was negatively linked with partner satisfaction. We discuss each of these findings in turn in the following.

Division of Household Management

In the present sample of relatively well-educated mothers, we found there were in fact several "invisible" aspects of household management for which women felt disproportionately solely responsible. Considering the patterns across all four of the household routine management items we queried, as well as half the items related to children's adjustment, these quantitative data provide credence to prior qualitative ethnographic reports on women's "invisible labor" in the household (i.e., the mental and emotional labor that keeps the household running) (Hochschild 1989; Lareau and Weininger 2008). Specifically, our findings are consistent with reports describing the disproportionately high burden of responsibilities such as coordinating the household and managing children among relatively well-educated U.S. mothers (more so than well-educated fathers; Eichler and Albanese 2007; Offer 2014; Winkler and Ireland 2009).

They are also consistent with conceptual social-cognitive perspectives emphasizing the descriptive and prescriptive stereotypes in the continuation of such divisions; that is, women are expected and assumed to be more communal than are men and, accordingly, disproportionately shoulder tasks at home (Eagly & Wood, 2012). As Ahn and colleagues (2017, p. 436) persuasively argue: "[Part] of the reason that the division of housework tends to remain traditionally divided even in the face of dramatic changes in women's employment and earnings is because women internalize societal standards of being communal."

But is this burdensome? Does it matter for mothers' well-being if they do in fact feel that, overall, they are the executive managers of keeping the household running smoothly (aside from actually doing the tasks involved)? Our results suggest it does, with some interesting nuances. Although responsibility for household routines showed some association with feelings of parenting role overload, it did not have strong links with other aspects of psychological well-being. Rather, when all dimensions were considered in multivariate regressions, it was feeling solely responsible for children's adjustment that most consistently showed associations with outcomes, being negatively linked with mothers' partner satisfaction and satisfaction with life and positively linked with feelings of emptiness.

This pattern of findings may partly be a result of the different stakes involved in the two sets of responsibilities. In other words, it can be tedious and even stressful to manage multiple schedules of a busy family (Ahn et al. 2017), but if there is an occasional late pickup after

school, or forgotten chores, there are unlikely to be serious long-term ramifications for the family. On the other hand, a mother might fear more serious consequences if she failed to pick up on signs of her 12-year old's depression or neglected to be an adequate advocate for her children to their teachers, coaches, and administrators at school. With the stakes being higher for the latter type of responsibilities, feeling alone in handling them would imply greater strain on mothers' personal adjustment and their relationships with partners.

It should be noted that it is possible that responsibility for household routines did not demonstrate the same associations with personal adjustment due to a lack of variability in the data. That is, with 70% to 88% of women reporting that they are primarily responsible for household routines, it would be difficult to find unique associations with the outcome variables.

Potential Mechanisms

In terms of broad underlying mechanisms, it is plausible that feeling disproportionately like the manager of children's well-being and household routines manifests in resentment in the marriage, which in turn, affects feelings of well-being. Stated differently, if mothers feel that their partners contribute minimally to these ongoing, inescapable, and sometimes high-stakes responsibilities, they may feel resentful, distant, and even taken for granted (Ogolsky et al. 2014; Saginak and Saginak 2005). This suggestion is supported by regression results showing that in large part, associations between these responsibility dimensions and mothers' adjustment outcomes were largely outweighed by feelings of authenticity in their close relationships (i.e., of being seen and loved for who they really were as individuals) and feelings of closeness. To illustrate, in predicting partner satisfaction, variance explained by the dimensions of household management decreased from 22% to 4% when these were allowed to precede the set of intimacy variables in the hierarchical regression analyses, as opposed to when they were entered last.

Aside from feelings of interpersonal resentment, however, poor adjustment may also be associated with high stress. The tasks included in our measure are akin to what Crittenden (2004) wrote in her book, titled, "If you've raised kids, you can manage anything." Among the dozen or so sets of tasks she lists for household manager are supervising child development, including daily psychological support and resolving problems; interceding with teachers and attending meetings and events at school; maintaining responsibility for routine medical care; coordinating sporting and other extracurricular activities; keeping a constant mental inventory of what's needed in household (from light bulbs and toilet paper to gifts); assuring good family nutrition; keeping track of new clothes and shoes needed for children; planning events including bar and bat mitzvahs and birthday parties; coordinating transportation to and from school and extracurricular activities; overseeing care of pets; management of crises including trouble at school and accidents (and much more). Crittenden quotes Madeline Albright, former U.S. Secretary of State, as saying that multi-tasking is the essential parenting skill, adding that this "…is the only skill mothers are universally credited with possessing" (Crittenden 2004, p. 15).

Admirable as this might be, ongoing multitasking is not without costs, as seen from studies in the workplace. When people in managerial roles feel that they have a large number and

scope of assignments and responsibilities, and that they must be accomplished in little time, the associated challenges can be gratifying in the short term, but if persistent over time, threaten well-being (Cavanaugh et al. 2000; Nahrgang et al. 2011). Studies have also shown that the stressful effects of leadership are related to the degree of associated control, such that leaders in positions with high power exhibited lower cortisol levels and less anxiety than those with less powerful positions, and the relationship was explained by their greater sense of control (Sherman et al. 2012). It goes without saying that there is little power, and potentially ongoing lack of control, in managing a portfolio with charges like finding and retaining reliable childcare, ensuring that rides are arranged to all practices, scheduling something for all kids for summer months, reaching out to teachers about the "mean kid," and cajoling a sullen teenager to open up and share.

Additionally, studies have documented both greater amounts, as well as greater costs of, multitasking at home among mothers than among fathers. In the 2000 U.S. National Survey of Parents, 67% of married mothers indicated that they multi-tasked "most of the time," as opposed to only 42% of married fathers (Bianchi et al. 2006). Gender differences were more pronounced among dual-earner couples where both parents worked at least 50 hours: almost 86% of mothers and 59% of fathers (Bianchi and Wight 2010). Similarly, Galinsky and colleagues (2005) reported that differences in multitasking account for the higher rates of women of feeling overworked as compared to men.

There is also evidence of this over-burdening among upper-middle class mothers specifically. Offer and Schnieder (2011) used both survey data and experience sampling to examine the effects of multi-tasking in different contexts—at home, at work, and in public. Their sample consisted mostly of highly educated parents in white collar professions—among the most time pressured segments of the population (Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Schneider and Waite 2005)—and a sample similar to ours. Results showed that as compared to fathers, mothers spent 10 more hours a week multitasking and that these additional hours were generally related to time spent on housework and childcare.

More importantly, for mothers, multitasking activities at home and in public were linked with higher levels of negative emotions, stress, distress, and work-family conflict. By contrast, fathers' multitasking at home involved less housework and childcare and did not have negative ramifications (Offer and Schnieder 2011). These authors further noted that gender differences in reported multitasking may actually be underestimates because mothers are generally more likely than fathers are to take for granted, and thus to underreport, their household chores and childcare activities (Schneider 2006; see also Yavorsky et al. 2015).

Moreover, along with evidence that women take on more mental labor associated with household management (Offer 2014; Winkler and Ireland 2009), women are more likely than men are to take on the mental labor and multitasking of others. For example, Ahn et al. (2017) reported that men were less likely than were women to help their partner remember tasks on their to-do list; tended to do so primarily when the tasks personally benefited them; and provided reminders that are less helpful for their partners than for themselves. Collectively, these findings resonate with reports that mothers feel rushed, overwhelmed, and mentally fatigued more frequently than do fathers (Bianchi et al. 2006; Mattingly and

Sayer 2006; Roxburgh 2004; Walzer 1996), and they underscore the risks faced by mothers given the breadth of normative expectations of them in their role as household managers (Offer and Schneider 2011)

Managing the Household versus Finances

As we expected and consistent with recent research (LeBaron et al. 2018), women were far less likely to indicate that they were primarily responsible for family financial decisions; in these instance, the most common response was both partners, equally. The percent endorsed for "Mostly Me" ranged from 12% to 18%, values much smaller than those reported for the other aspects of household management. Also as expected, responsibility for household finances was not associated with mothers' personal distress indices. As we noted at the outset of our paper, financial decisions, although potentially stressful, may be associated with a greater sense of agency in terms of allocating major family resources. This is consistent with previously cited evidence in business management that when managers are responsible for things that they perceive as important, consequential, and over which they have some sense of control, satisfaction with their positions tends to be high. On the other hand, when the responsibilities are tedious, continuous, and beyond one's sense of control, this can engender stress (Sherman et al. 2012).

However, unexpectedly, primary responsibility for household finances was negatively associated with partner satisfaction. This unexpected association may reflect a cumulative effect of increasing levels of dissatisfaction in relation to carrying an unequal burden across several types of household responsibilities (Ogolsky et al. 2014). It is unlikely that partners who do not contribute equally to financial decisions would otherwise contribute sufficiently to the management of the household, thus resulting in a relationship that is much less a shared partnership than was, for many women, originally desired (Ely et al. 2014), leading to growing dissatisfaction. This finding is consistent with a 2014 online financial survey that showed that as wives take a more active role in financial planning for the family (as a function of increasing economic contribution to the family income), the changing dynamics around being the breadwinner and financial decision-making is associated with increased spousal conflict over both money and the division of household labor (*Money* Magazine 2014). Further, it is also possible that even though these families had high-earnings, there may have been some financial stress or instability not captured in the data that prompted women to take on a larger role in financial planning that contributed to stress in the relationship (Thorne 2010).

Interestingly, whereas men in the *Money* Magazine (2014) survey reported increased marital satisfaction when women earned as much or more money than they (attributed to increased financial security), higher-earning women reported less marital satisfaction, which may reflect increased stress and role overload associated with managing the majority of household responsibilities and, possibly, increased resentment towards partners. The response from one participant in the *Money* Magazine (p. 11) survey keenly summarizes the discord:

> It's a constant struggle to be the best at my job, the best mom, the best wife, the best financial planner for our lives, the best homeowner, the best coach. Sometimes

> I feel like there is so much expected of me that I may just explode.[My partner] is helpful, but since I earn more and worry more, I feel it's onmy shoulders.

Unfortunately, in the current study, the proportion that mothers contributed to the household income could not be determined from the data. For future research, it would be helpful for analyses to consider how much each partner contributes to the household income and examine how the proportion of women's earnings may affect perceptions of well-being and the romantic relationship.

Dimensions of Intimacy

Findings of our study support prior suggestions on the critical aspect of what Luthar and Ciciolla (2015) called the "big four" correlates of mothers' adjustment across domains (i.e., feeling seen/loved for one's true self, comforted when in need, satisfaction with friendships, and feeling authentic in close relationships). After considering demographics and household management variables, most of these indices were significantly related to three of four outcomes, with feeling comforted related to two (i.e., life satisfaction and emptiness). Even when entered last into the model after controlling for demographics, physical intimacy, and household management, these four variables uniquely explained 8% to 27% of the variability in the maternal adjustment outcomes. Conceptually, it is logical that feelings of intimacy (more so than division of labor) would have stronger links with personal distress, partner satisfaction, and overall life satisfaction, and it is notable that these feelings are so strongly associated with the degree to which women feel stretched thin with their everyday responsibilities in the parenting role.

Finally, with regard to physical intimacy, unique associations were found for both sexual and non-sexual intimacy with partner satisfaction as the outcome, and sexual intimacy was also linked with overall life satisfaction. Interestingly, the magnitudes of the associations with partner satisfaction were not just equivalent, but slightly higher, for nonsexual as compared to sexual intimacy (Beta values of .30 and .23, respectively). For future research on marital relationships, it may be useful to explore the relative degree of contributions from satisfaction with being held and hugged in addition to quality and frequency of sex, among mothers as well as fathers.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the sole reliance on self-report data could be seen as a limitation, this methodology is consistent with our goal of understanding mothers' subjectively experienced perceptions about their everyday lives. We sought to capture women's own feelings about sole versus shared responsibility for different aspects of running the home and of diverse facets of intimacy with partners, and then disentangling the relative salience of each of these in terms of ramifications for well-being or distress. This said, it will be useful to also obtain partners' perceptions in future research, comparing both levels of captaincy as reported by each as well as implications for their respective adjustment.

We cannot presume generalizability of our findings nor can we assume causality. Our sample consists largely of upper-middle class U.S. mothers, mostly White, and in mixed-gender marriages. In future research it will be useful to ascertain the generalizability of

findings across different racial/ethnic groups, among same- versus other-sex couples, and among mothers from lower educational and income groups. With regard to causality, our cross-sectional data are correlational and there remains the possibility of bidirectional and reverse associations. For example, it is plausible that satisfaction with partners leads to greater physical intimacy rather than the reverse.

Limitations of our work are offset by several strengths. The dataset is relatively unique in its oversampling of a group known to face particularly high time pressures in managing household management tasks (i.e., well-educated mothers) (Christensen and Schneider 2010; Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Offer 2014; Kalil et al. 2012; Ramey and Ramey 2010). Measures were psychometrically sound and data analyses sophisticated, with multiple imputation of missing values. In addition, it is worth reiterating that the associations between household management and women's adjustment were seen after controlling for educational level, employment status, and number of children, so that it was not just the mothers without paid employment, nor the majority who were employed, nor just those with three or more children, for whom this dimension was linked with negative adjustment.

Most importantly, ours is one of few studies that has quantified what has been called the "invisible labor" of mothers (Darrah et al. 2007; Eichler and Albanese 2007; Hochschild 1989; Offer 2014; Shaw 2008), which is implicated in running a household with multiple commitments and chores. Most prior division of labor analyses have involved simply the number of hours that mothers and spouses estimate as having spent on childcare, housework, and so on; few have attempted to capture the mental and emotional dimensions of household labor (Erickson 2005). To our knowledge, studies that have documented high invisible labor among mothers have not systematically tested whether this might have negative repercussions for well-being, over and above feelings of low emotional and physical intimacy in the marriage, nor have they examined different aspects of household management including financial responsibilities.

The importance of further research on this construct is also seen in findings on U.S. Millennial fathers who are reportedly much more involved in caring for children compared to prior generations of fathers (30% in 2015 versus 25% in 2011; Harrington et al. 2016). Even as most Millennial fathers believe that men should in fact share equally in childcare, many of them reported that their main reason for undertaking childcare was to "help" their spouse, perceiving themselves to be "back up" rather than primary caregivers; one in three fathers reported believing that their spouses should provide the majority of childcare (Harrington et al. 2016).

As such, we hope that in future research on division of household labor, scientists will more fully consider the psychological aspects of being responsible as the primary household manager along with actual hours spent on household tasks and multitasking, as well as the proportion of earned income contributed by each partner. Aside from considering the division of household labor from the perspectives of mothers themselves as well as their partners, it would also be useful to incorporate measures more sensitive to everyday patterns such as daily diaries.

Practice Implications

From a practice standpoint, it would seem useful to heighten awareness among today's mothers of the degree to which and areas in which they might unwittingly shoulder disproportionate household responsibilities as compared to men, along with the potential fallouts. As Ahn and colleagues (2017) have argued, given that society expects women more so than men to be communal, women may tend to take on more invisible work in the service of others, and this tendency may spread beyond the household and into the work setting as well. Consistent with this suggestion and as an example, research has shown that among married/partnered physicians with children, women spend the equivalent of a full work day per week on domestic activities as compared with men (Jolly et al. 2014), and when both partners were employed, were about three times as likely as men to take time off when childcare arrangements were disrupted (Dyrbye et al. 2011). At the same time, in the work setting, female physicians provide better quality care to patients than men do (Tsugawa et al. 2017), and in a range of professional settings, women are more likely to take on communal and invisible labor to keep the workplace running smoothly (Heilman and Chen 2005; Holt and Lewis 2009; Kanter 1993). Thus, there are likely psychological and emotional costs linked with shouldering such additional responsibilities at work that should be acknowledged and mitigated.

Additionally, the present findings on dimensions of intimacy support the importance of "mothering mothers" (Luthar and Ciciolla 2016, p. 1820). Reviews of resilience research have repeatedly shown that to foster the well-being of children, especially when under stress, it is essential that mothers receive the nurturance, care, and replenishment that they are expected to put out for so many others (Luthar and Eisenberg 2017). Among well-educated, employed mothers contending with high demands both at home and at work, our intervention research has shown that the ongoing availability of reliable authentic connections in mothers' everyday work settings can significantly reduce caregiving burnout and parenting stress, while improving mental health and even reducing levels of the stress hormone cortisol (Luthar et al. 2017). It would seem useful, therefore, for society to consider not just the magnitude of responsibilities mothers take on at home and at work, but equally, the degree to which mothers have opportunities to prioritize and make time for authentic connections with others to replenish themselves.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the results of our study underscore the need for greater societal recognition of invisible labor among mothers, particularly labor associated with caregiving. When women feel disproportionately responsible for ensuring the well-being of their children, in relation to their partners, there can be associated strains on the mother's personal well-being as well as her satisfaction with the marriage. Ultimately, greater acknowledgement that the invisible burden of household management is in fact real, with associated costs for adjustment, can be beneficial for mothers themselves, for the quality of their marriages, and inevitably, for the well-being of children for whose care they are primarily responsible.

Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

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Table 1

Sample Characteristics

Variable	*n*	%	Variable	*n*	%
Education			Mother's age (yrs)		
High school	87	22.1%	21 to 30	87	22.1%
College	107	27.2%	31 to 40	162	41.2%
Some grad school	40	10.2%	41 to 50	111	28.2%
Master's	112	28.5%	51 to 60	32	8.1%
Doctorate	47	12.0%	61 or older	1	0.3%
Family income			Marital status		
Less than $50,000	58	15.1%	Legally married	352	90.0%
$50,000 to $75,000	70	18.2%	Not married	39	10.0%
$75–100,000	76	19.8%	Partner: Male	379	96.4%
$100–200,000	96	25.0%	Female	14	3.6%
$200–500,000	56	14.6%	No. of Children		
>$500,000	28	7.3%	1	138	35.1%
Ethnicity			2	147	37.4%
Black	14	3.7%	3+	108	27.5%
White	312	83.0%	Community		
Hispanic	27	7.2%	City	103	26.3%
Asian	23	56.1%	Suburb	255	65.2%
Employed	255	64.9%	Rural	33	8.4%
Not Employed	138	35.1%	Region		
			Northeast	221	56.2%
			Midwest	56	14.5%
			South	38	9.9%
			West	70	18.2%

Note. Total number of survey respondents, $n = 393$.

Table 2

Percent Endorsements of Each Individual Item for Household Management Variables

	Factor Loadings			Percent Endorsed		
	1	**2**	**3**	**Mostly Me**	**Mostly Partner**	**Both Equally**
(a) Factor 1: Responsible for Household Routines						
Organizing schedules for the family.	.62	.05	.03	88%	2%	10%
Being the “captain of the ship;” ensuring that various tasks are appropriately covered.	.75	.17	.17	70%	5%	25%
Assigning tasks needed to keep the household running smoothly.	.78	.16	.12	74%	3%	23%
Maintaining standards for routine and order in the home.	.63	.38	.04	76%	3%	22%
(b) Factor 2: Responsible for Child Adjustment						
Being vigilant of the children’s emotions.	.16	.78	.07	64%	1%	35%
Knowing the children’s school teachers or administrators.	.25	.62	.03	78%	2%	20%
Instilling values and shaping character in your children.	.02	.66	.38	27%	1%	72%
Willing to give up things personally important, for the welfare of the household.	.21	.59	.17	50%	3%	47%
(c) Factor 3: Responsible for Household Finances						
Where to make a major financial investment.	−.01	.22	.71	15%	32%	53%
Where the family should have an expensive vacation.	.13	.17	.79	18%	5%	77%
Whether an extension should be constructed on your house.	.11	.09	.91	12%	9%	80%
Whether you should buy a new car for your family.	.12	.13	.86	10%	16%	74%
Whether you should have your kitchen extensively remodeled.	.14	.07	.85	15%	8%	77%

Note. n = 393. Factor loadings for Household Management Items based on a Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation.

Table 3

Descriptive Data: Number of Respondents Completing Each Measure, Alphas, Descriptive Statistics, and Correlations Among Study Variables

Variables	*n*	α	*M* (*SD*)	Range	Correlations											
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Routines[a]	391	.73	3.07 (1.26)	0–4	--											
2. Child adjust[a]	392	.65	2.07 (1.30)	0–4	.48**	--										
3. Finances[a]	389	.84	0.69 (1.39)	0–5	.20**	.28**	--									
4. Feel seen-loved[b]	345	–	3.94 (1.27)	1–6	−.19**	−.35**	−.08	--								
5. Feel comforted[b]	334	–	3.75 (1.26)	1–6	−.19**	−.34**	−.07	.68**	--							
6. Friend Satis.	393	.82	12.13 (3.04)	4–16	−.07	−.18**	.00	.44**	.53**	--						
7. Authenticity	385	.89	20.71 (4.90)	6–30	−.10*	−.11**	.03	.45**	.39**	.30**	--					
8. Quality of sex[b]	341	–	2.61 (1.01)	1–4	−.18*	−.26**	−.09	.38**	.38**	.20**	.24**	--				
9. Satis.-held	393	.89	8.82 (2.85)	3–12	−.15**	−.36**	−.07	.47**	.43**	.38**	.26**	.42**	--			
10. Partner Satis.	393	.90	29.33 (7.45)	8–40	−.20**	−.44**	−.19**	.60**	.53**	.28**	.37**	.51**	.57**	--		
11. P-Role Overload	391	.89	23.86 (6.18)	7–35	.17**	.15**	.06	−.32**	−.34**	−.41**	−.32**	−.17**	−.20**	−.18**	--	
12. Life Satis.	374	.91	24.95 (7.10)	5–35	−.14**	−.36**	−.13*	.60**	.59**	.42**	.36**	.36**	.41**	.65**	−.23**	--
13. Emptiness	348	.86	2.39 (1.07)	1–5	.20**	.34**	.12*	−.59**	−.61**	−.40**	−.43**	−.32**	−.31**	−.51**	.34**	−.65**

Note. Satis = Satisfaction; Satis.-held = Satisfaction with being held; P-Role Overload = Parenting Role Overload.

[a]Responsible for Household Routines, Responsible for Child Adjustment, and Responsible for Household Finances: scores represent sum of “Mostly Me” endorsements across items in each scale, respectively.

[b]Single item questions

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression of Demographics, Emotional Intimacy, Physical Intimacy, and Household Management Regressed on Life Satisfaction

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
Variables	**β**	***b***	***t***	**β**	***b***	***t***	**β**	***b***	***t***	**β**	***b***	***t***
Demographics												
Education	.15	.11	2.68**	.10	.07	2.12*	.13	.09	2.86**	.13	.09	2.88**
Family income	.18	.12	3.11**	.14	.10	3.15**	.13	.09	3.01**	.13	.09	2.97**
Employed[a]	.03	.07	0.63	.04	.08	0.93	.04	.08	0.90	.04	.09	1.05
No. of children	−.07	−.09	−1.34	−.04	−.05	−0.99	−.04	−.06	−1.09	−.03	.04	−0.73
Emotional Intimacy												
Feeling seen/loved				.33	.33	5.66**	.27	.27	4.56**	.25	.25	4.27**
Feeling comforted				.24	.23	4.18**	.19	.19	3.44**	.18	.18	3.29**
Sat. with friends				.12	.13	2.63**	.12	.12	2.46*	.12	.12	2.49*
Authenticity				.06	.06	1.33	.05	.05	1.06	.06	.06	1.41
Physical Intimacy												
Quality of sex							.13	.13	2.74**	.12	.12	2.58*
Sat. with being held							.08	.09	1.74	.05	.05	1.09
Household Management												
Resp. house routines										.07	.07	1.63
Resp. child adjust										−.14	−.15	−3.03**
Resp. house finances										−.02	−.02	−0.56
F		9.01**			67.15**			8.49**			3.82*	
df		4			4			2			3	
df_{error}		379			375			373			370	
R^2		.09			.47			.49			.51	
ΔR^2					.38**			.02**			.02*	

Note. *n* = 393. Sat = Satisfaction; Resp. house routines = Responsible for household routines; Resp. child adjust = Responsible for childhood adjustment; Resp. house finances = Responsible for household finances.

[a]1=employed, 0=not employed.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Table 5

Hierarchical Regression of Demographics, Emotional Intimacy, Physical Intimacy, and Household Management Regressed on Partner Satisfaction

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
Variables	**β**	***b***	***t***	**β**	***b***	***t***	**β**	***b***	**t**	**β**	***b***	***t***
Demographics												
Education	.03	.02	0.43	−.04	−.03	−0.87	.04	.03	0.89	.03	.03	0.81
Family income	.13	.10	2.17*	.11	.08	2.34*	.08	.06	2.01*	.08	.06	2.07*
Employed[a]	−.05	−.11	−0.90	−.05	−.12	−1.26	−.06	−.15	−1.76	−.06	−.13	−1.55
No. of children	−.08	−.11	−1.36	−.04	−.05	−0.87	−.04	−.05	−0.96	−.02	−.03	−0.57
Emotional Intimacy												
Feeling seen/loved				.43	.48	7.04**	.28	.32	4.99**	.25	.28	4.55**
Feeling comforted				.21	.22	3.84**	.11	.12	2.07*	.09	.09	1.67
Sat. with friends				−.05	−.05	−0.98	−.09	−.10	−2.05*	−.08	−.09	−1.94
Authenticity				.10	.11	2.18*	.08	.08	1.83	.10	.11	2.53*
Physical Intimacy												
Quality of sex							.23	.25	5.23**	.21	.23	4.91**
Sat. with being held							.30	.35	6.85**	.26	.30	5.94**
Household Management												
Resp. house routines										.04	.05	1.08
Resp. child adjust										−.19	−.22	−4.27**
Resp. house finances										−.08	−.09	−2.06*
F		2.11			60.35**			54.33**			10.22**	
df		4			4			2			3	
df_{error}		379			375			373			370	
R^2		.02			.40			.54			.57	
ΔR^2					.38**			.13**			.04**	

Note. n= 393. Sat = Satisfaction; Resp. house routines = Responsible for household routines; Resp. child adjust = Responsible for childhood adjustment; Resp. house finances = Responsible for household finances.

[a]1=employed, 0=not employed.

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

Table 6

Hierarchical Regression of Demographics, Emotional Intimacy, Physical Intimacy, and Household Management Regressed on Parenting Role Overload

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
Variables	**β**	***b***	***t***	**β**	***b***	***t***	**β**	***b***	***t***	**β**	***b***	***t***
Demographics												
Education	.03	.02	0.51	.05	.04	1.04	.06	.04	1.10	.07	.05	1.26
Family income	−.04	−.02	−0.61	−.01	−.00	−0.13	−.00	−.00	0.09	.00	.00	0.00
Employed[a]	.06	.13	1.20	.04	.08	0.86	.04	.07	0.77	.04	.09	0.93
No. of children	.00	.00	0.04	−.01	−.01	−0.19	−.01	−.01	−0.12	−.00	−.00	−0.00
Emotional Intimacy												
Feeling seen/loved				−.09	−.09	−1.26	−.10	−.10	−1.38	−.10	−.10	−1.34
Feeling comforted				−.12	−.10	−1.75	−.13	−.12	−1.76	−.11	−.10	−1.55
Sat. with friends				−.26	−.25	−4.77**	−.27	−.26	−4.88**	−.28	−.27	−4.98**
Authenticity				−.15	−.14	−2.76**	−.15	−.14	−2.73**	−.15	−.14	−2.72**
Physical Intimacy												
Quality of sex							−.02	−.02	−0.40	−.01	−.01	−0.20
Sat. with being held							.06	.06	1.02	.06	.06	0.97
Household Management												
Resp. house routines										.11	.11	2.14*
Resp. child adjust										−.03	−.03	−0.51
Resp. house finances										.02	.02	0.42
F		0.54			27.42**			0.60			1.85	
df		4			4			2			3	
df_{error}		379			375			373			370	
R^2		.01			.23			.23			.24	
ΔR^2					.23**			.00			.01	

Note. n = 393. Sat = Satisfaction; Resp. house routines = Responsible for household routines; Resp. child adjust = Responsible for childhood adjustment; Resp. house finances = Responsible for household finances.

[a]1=employed, 0=not employed.

*p< .05.

** $p < .01$.

Table 7

Hierarchical Regression of Demographics, Emotional Intimacy, Physical Intimacy, and Household Management Regressed on Emptiness

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
Variables	**β**	***b***	***t***	**β**	***b***	***t***	**β**	***b***	***t***	**β**	***b***	***t***
Demographics												
Education	−.06	−.05	−1.06	−.01	−.01	−0.15	−.01	−.01	−0.31	−.01	−.01	−0.23
Family income	−.02	−.02	−0.39	.02	.01	0.40	.02	.01	0.34	.01	.01	0.32
Employee[a]	−.10	−.21	−1.91	−.11	−.23	−2.69*	−.11	−.24	−2.78**	−.12	−.25	−2.89**
No. of children	.02	.02	0.33	−.01	−.01	−0.21	−.00	−.00	−0.08	−.01	−.02	−0.28
Emotional Intimacy												
Feeling seen/loved				−.26	−.26	−4.23**	−.26	−.26	−4.04**	−.24	−.24	3.71**
Feeling comforted				−.30	−.20	−4.98**	−.29	−.28	−4.67**	−.27	−.26	−4.36**
Sat. with friends				−.10	−.10	−2.11*	−.11	−.11	−2.31*	−.12	−.12	−2.47*
Authenticity				−.17	−.17	−3.56**	−.17	−.17	−3.40**	−.18	−.18	−3.79**
Physical Intimacy												
Quality of sex							−.08	−.08	−1.72	−.07	−.07	−1.55
Sat. with being held							.04	.04	0.80	.07	.07	1.41
Household Management												
Resp. house routines										−.01	−.01	−0.25
Resp. child adjust										.11	.12	2.30*
Resp. house finances										.06	.06	1.37
F		1.96			76.90**			2.07			3.95*	
df		4			4			2			3	
df_{error}		379			375			373			370	
R^2		.02			.46			.47			.48	
ΔR^2					.44**			.01			.02*	

Note. *n* = 393. Sat = Satisfaction; Resp. house routines = Responsible for household routines; Resp. child adjust = Responsible for childhood adjustment; Resp. house finances = Responsible for household finances.

[a]1=employed, 0=not employed.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.