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THE EFFECT OF RITUALS ON NEWLYWED  
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT

by

Bryan D. Bingham

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Family and Human Development  
(Marriage and Family Therapy)

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ABSTRACT

The Effect of Rituals on Newlywed  
Marital Adjustment

by

Bryan D. Bingham, Master of Science  
Utah State University, 1996

Major Professor: Dr. Scot Allgood  
Department: Family and Human Development

This study examined the relationship between rituals and marital adjustment among a sample of newlyweds. Rituals and marital adjustment were defined and their importance in family life outlined. Five research questions guided the study: (1) Is ritual activity associated with marital adjustment and length of courtship for newlyweds?; (2) Is ritual activity associated with marital satisfaction and length of courtship for newlyweds?; (3) Is ritual activity associated with cohesion and length of courtship for newlyweds?; (4) Is ritual activity associated with consensus and length of courtship for newlyweds?; and (5) Is there a difference between husbands and wives on the number and types of rituals (family celebrations, family traditions, and family interactions) that couples report are most related to their overall marital quality? Ritual activity was measured

by a new instrument created for the present study: the Ritual Inventory (RI). Marital adjustment and its components (satisfaction, cohesion, and consensus) were measured using the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS). Length of courtship was used as a control variable.

The analysis revealed no relationship between rituals and marital adjustment for newlyweds. Length of courtship was a significant factor with marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. Implications and suggestions for future research are presented.

(94 pages)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I would like to thank Dr. Scot Allgood for helping me in every step of the way on this thesis project and for his support and ideas. I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Thorana Nelson, Dr. Jay Schvaneveldt, and Dr. Tom Lee, for their support and assistance in revising this work.

I give a special thanks to my wife, Taunya, and my two children, Rebecca and Jared, for their patience and support as I worked many long hours away from them to complete this thesis. Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Dan and Ann, and my wife's parents, Dan and Carla Jenkins, for all their support through this long process. Thank you all.

Bryan D. Bingham

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

There has been increased interest in family-related rituals over the past few years, but there are few studies to suggest how to use rituals effectively in family and marital enhancement. The purpose of this study was to examine the association of rituals and marital adjustment, or quality, of newlyweds.

Rationale

Rituals have been theorized to be important in family life as they add stability (Imber-Black, 1989a), are socializing agents (Rosenthal & Marshall, 1988), and help in establishing family identity (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Rituals may be important to newlyweds since they are in the process of establishing their own identity as a couple and solidifying their relationship (Oggins, Veroff, & Leber, 1993). While there has been ample theory, there is little empirical evidence on the effects of rituals in family life. Specifically, a review of Psychological Abstracts from the past 20 years revealed no studies on rituals and newlywed marital satisfaction. This is important because Gottman's (1994) research shows it is easier to identify couples who are on a path toward divorce than those who are happily married. The present study is designed to examine the association between couple adjustment and rituals to assess early indicators of marital dissatisfaction. The findings

from this study have potential implications for both family therapy and family life education.

### Conceptual Framework

Rituals have been studied using a variety of theoretical approaches. Cheal (1988) outlines how the structural-functional, constructionist, and mobilization theories have been used in the study of ritual activity.

In addition, the Symbolic Interaction (SI) framework offers a comprehensive explanation of human interactions (Ephross & Greene, 1991; Schvaneveldt, 1966), which easily includes ritual activity. The SI framework accounts for rituals as symbolic forms of communication that enable family members to establish familial and self-identity, facilitate the socialization process, and provide occasions for the practice of familial roles (Laird, 1984). Accounting for these variables with theory is important because they define the usage of rituals in families. Therefore, this study of rituals was based on a Symbolic Interaction approach.

### Concept Definitions *see book text*

The primary concepts used in this study are rituals and marital adjustment. Rituals are symbolic interactions that are acted out over time as manifestations of a family's belief system and which facilitate individual and family identity and development (Laird, 1984; Roberts, 1988; Rosenthal & Marshall, 1988; Schvaneveldt & Lee, 1983; Wolin &

Bennett, 1984).

Marital adjustment is a general term that encompasses several components (satisfaction, cohesion, and consensus) relating to a spouse's subjective evaluation of how happy they are in their marriage (Spanier & Cole, 1976). It should be noted that the terms marital adjustment, satisfaction, quality, and happiness are used in interchangeable ways in the marital literature (Bahr, Chappell, & Leigh, 1983).

Length of dating history, or courtship, is also a factor that has been shown to contribute to a newlywed couple's perceived adjustment in their marital relationship (Bayer, 1968; Grover, Russell, Schumm, & Paff-Bergen, 1985). Length of courtship is also important in establishing patterns of interaction, which may be linked to ritual development and activity (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). This is a potentially confounding variable to help understand newlywed marital adjustment.

A more formal discussion of each of these concepts is given in the review of literature.

CHAPTER II  
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to examine the association of rituals and marital adjustment among newlyweds. In this section, the major concepts of the study are defined and discussed, and the relationship between them is explicated.

Rituals

The study of rituals has steadily increased in the marriage and family field as they have impact in everyone's lives (Laird, 1984; Roberts, 1988). "Ritual has existed in all cultures, in all ages, and for all time. Yet it remains a notion insufficiently understood, elusive, underutilized but potentially extremely important for mental health professionals" (Laird, 1984, p. 123). While rituals have been shown to be important in family relationships (Bossard & Boll, 1950; Cheal, 1988; Rosenthal & Marshall, 1988; Wolin & Bennett, 1984), they have not been studied in the context of newlywed relationships. This section summarizes the major literature on the phenomenon of rituals in family interactions.

Definitions

Bossard and Boll (1950) brought the idea of rituals to the attention of professionals in the field by claiming that they are the "core of family life" (p. 18). They defined ritual

as "...a system of procedure, a form or pattern of social interaction, which has three unvarying characteristics" (Bossard & Boll, 1950, p. 16). The three characteristics are (1) prescription, or the way a given ritual is done; (2) an element of rigidity or precision; and (3) "a sense of rightness" that comes from past participation in the ritual (p. 16). These three characteristics promote and define familial roles, a basic principle of the symbolic interaction framework (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993; Schvaneveldt, 1966). Role participation through rituals leads to the development and socialization of the self and the familial relationships (Schvaneveldt, 1966).

In one of the first studies of ritual, Wolin and Bennett (1984) defined ritual as "...a symbolic form of communication that, owing to the satisfaction of its repetition, is acted out in a systematic fashion over time" (p. 401). Bossard and Boll's (1950) definitions seems to lean toward more ceremonial or religious rituals with little variance in their enactment. Wolin and Bennett (1984), on the other hand, present a broader definition that allows more flexibility, but still maintains the integrity of the ritual.

Another way of conceptualizing rituals is to examine their purpose or function. Rituals, as symbolic forms of communication, aid in the development of individual and family identity (Laird, 1984; Roberts, 1988; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Specifically, rituals are used in value transmission

(Laird, 1984), to help adapt to new life-cycle stages or family forms (Laird, 1984; Meyer, 1987), to facilitate family interactions (Cheal, 1988), and to provide intergenerational cohesiveness (Bossard & Boll, 1950; Rosenthal & Marshall, 1988; Schvaneveldt & Lee, 1983; Wolin & Bennett, 1984).

Both definitions have merit and are not mutually exclusive. Thus, rituals are defined in this study as symbolic interactions that are acted out over time as manifestations of a family's belief system, and which facilitate individual and family identity development (Laird, 1984; Roberts, 1988; Rosenthal & Marshall, 1988; Schvaneveldt & Lee, 1983; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Ritual activity is defined as ritual involvement in a couple's life, including (a) rituals done, but not discussed or planned; (b) rituals done that were discussed or planned; and (c) rituals never done, but discussed or planned for the future.

#### Categorization of Rituals

There are various ways that rituals are categorized in the literature. Three are discussed here.

Imber-Black (1988b) divided rituals into five categories or themes: (a) membership, (b) healing, (c) identity, (d) belief expression and negotiation, and (e) celebration. These five categories are quite specific and each has its own functions. Alternatively, Schvaneveldt and Lee (1983) have suggested that rituals are of two types: (a) traditional (e.g., church,

holiday ceremonies) or (b) "spontaneous rite" rituals (e.g., bedtime routines, eating meals, etc.) (p. 137). This categorization seems almost too broad, making it difficult to know how to categorize some rituals (e.g., visit to the in-laws).

The categorization of rituals that was chosen for the present study was provided by Wolin and Bennett (1984) since it seemed to fit best with the definition of rituals used in this study. Wolin and Bennett (1984) categorized rituals into three groups: family celebrations, family traditions, and family interactions.

First, *family celebrations* are holidays and/or occasions that are widely accepted and practiced throughout the family's culture and are special to the family members (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Examples of this type of ritual include annual religious celebrations such as Christmas, rites of passage (weddings), and secular holiday observances (President's Day). These types of rituals help to define membership in the family and give the family a connection to the larger culture.

Second, *family traditions* are more unique to each individual family and are not as culture-specific as family celebrations. They tend to be practiced with regularity and are not as organized as family celebrations (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Examples of family traditions include summer vacations, family visits, birthdays, anniversaries, and



parties. "Family traditions seem to say, 'This is the way we are; this is our family'" (Wolin & Bennett, 1984, p. 405).

The last type of rituals, as outlined by Wolin and Bennett (1984), are *family interactions*. Many family interactions occur on a daily basis and are the least organized and most variable of the three groups (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). These rituals help to define roles and responsibilities of the family members and are a way of organizing daily activities (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Examples of these include regular dinner time, customary treatment of guests, discipline of the children, and everyday greetings and or goodbyes (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Family interactions may be described as the "mundane situation[s]" that have been ritualized (Wolin & Bennett, 1984, p. 406). The development of the various types of rituals are similar and will be covered in the next section.

#### Development of Rituals

Rituals are generationally transmitted or adopted by families according to their needs. Those rituals with deep meaning have a greater positive effect on family development (Fiese & Kline, 1993). Ritual development is a process that is impacted by the larger cultural values and adapted to a unique familial style (Laird, 1984). For example, new circumstances may require change or adaptation to a couple's or family's established rituals.

Changes in a family's ritual patterns can be due to immigration, economic resources, broad social change (e.g., dual-career parents), and "rise of a new ritual occasion" (e.g., Civil Rights/Martin Luther King Day) (Rosenthal & Marshall, 1988, pp. 674-676). Marriage would be an example of such a change, as newlyweds face the task of integrating family of origin rituals into their marriage, as well as developing their own (Roberts, 1988). These couples could strengthen or weaken their relationship based on the way they learn to adapt their rituals in establishing a marital identity (Laird, 1984; Oggins et al., 1993; Roberts, 1988; Wolin & Bennett, 1984).

#### Meaning of Rituals

The individual importance of rituals depends upon the interactions in family life and specific ritual activity. Family identity is established and maintained through rituals by clarifying roles, defining boundaries, defining rules, and by preserving ethnic heritage (Rosenthal & Marshall, 1988; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). In short, meaningful family rituals provide an identity and meaning to life (Wolin & Bennett, 1984).

Rituals with little or no meaning, however, may become rigid, rule-bound interactions, while those with deep meaning become times for sharing stories or making future plans (Fiese & Kline, 1993). In addition, rigidly ritualized

symptoms (e.g., binge eating, alcoholic drinking, and/or drug abuse) often appear in families whose rituals lack meaning, making the problems even more severe (Fiese & Kline, 1993; Roberts, 1988). Extremely rigid rituals may also repress and degrade individuals, groups, or entire families (Laird, 1984). Examples of such negative rituals include ritualized drinking and scapegoating (Laird, 1984). Alcoholism, which is ritualistic itself, has been found to alter participation and execution of other rituals, thus leaving adolescent family members more susceptible to the generational transmission of the alcoholic habit (Fiese, 1993; Wolin, Bennett, & Noonan, 1979). One study found that family violence can actually reoccur through "aggression rituals" (Harris, Gergen, & Lannamann, 1986). Imber-Black (1989b) has suggested that many rituals have also been used to subordinate women, such as old marriage rituals of buying the wife and seeing her as the property of her husband. Thus, in both positive and negative ways, rituals give meaning to individuals and families.

#### Importance of Rituals

Besides giving meaning to familial interactions, rituals play a key role in family life and are important for a variety of reasons. For example, Laird (1984) suggested that rituals are useful to families in expressing traditions and values; building cohesion; adapting to transition, unsettling

life events, and catastrophes; and in changing patterns of dysfunctional behavior. More specific areas that make rituals important in family life are explored here.

Rituals can be used as tools in the socialization process of family members (Rosenthal & Marshall, 1988; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Many of the socialization processes occur through symbolic communication, a key characteristic of rituals, which gives rituals the potential for being effective communication mechanisms. Rituals communicate values, beliefs, and boundaries not only to the couple or family, but also to the external world as well (Laird, 1984).

The socialization of family members through ritual activity has been found to be passed from one generation to the next, thus providing a connection between the generations (Bossard & Boll, 1950; Rosenthal & Marshall, 1988; Schvaneveldt & Lee, 1983; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Through this generational transmission characteristic, rituals can produce cohesion among individuals, families, and extended families (Cheal, 1988; Laird, 1984; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). This cohesion leads to stability and consistency in family relations.

Stability and consistency in ritual usage also can aid families or couples during life-cycle changes (Imber-Black, 1989a). Meyer (1987) provided an example of rituals giving "meaning and comfort to family members" as they make the transition to a new residence, roles, and responsibilities through the purchase of a new home (p. 199). Divorce rituals

have been found helpful in the struggle for comfort and identity in the divorce process (Johnson, 1988).

Adolescence is a life-cycle period where identity is a key issue. Rituals can have a positive role (e.g., an adolescent may make a certain dish for a special family dinner, thus enhancing his/her self-esteem by contributing to the meal) in adolescent identity (Fiese, 1992; Rosenthal & Marshall, 1988). Rituals can also have a negative role (e.g., an adolescent who continually gets teased by the other family members about his manhood or her womanhood) in identity formation (Wolin & Bennett, 1984).

The life-cycle event most related to the present study is marriage. Rituals, when used by newlyweds, may aid in socializing them as a couple, building individual identity, and establishing a couple identity as they individuate from their families of origin (Oggins et al., 1993; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). One specific example noted by Imber-Black (1989b) is that many couples plan unique components in their wedding to help establish them as a unique pair.

In sum, family rituals are a way of educating their members, regulating behavior, sharing beliefs and perpetuating them over time, and a means of developing family and individual identity (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). Through these processes rituals give meaning, socialize, and ease the transition from one stage of the family life-cycle to another.

### Research on Rituals

Studies on rituals have focused on alcoholism (Fiese, 1993; Wolin et al., 1979), women's issues (Imber-Black, 1989b), divorced and married couples (Berg-Cross, Daniels, & Carr, 1992), dual-career couples (Paddock & Schwartz, 1986), parenthood (Fiese, Hooker, Kotary, & Schwagler, 1993), adoptive families (Whiting, 1988b), religion (Wilson & Sandomirsky, 1991), and therapy (Imber-Black, 1988b; Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin, & Prata, 1978; Whiting, 1988a).

### Measurement

While the importance of rituals has been empirically and/or theoretically validated (Imber-Black, 1988b; Laird, 1984; Roberts, 1988; Wolin & Bennett, 1984), there have been few instruments developed to measure or evaluate them. Klapp (1959) developed the Family Ritual Index (FRI), which measures 26 family rituals and their importance to respondents. The focus was toward general family rituals and did not address the rituals that are most closely linked to the development of family identity. Thus, the measure seemed to be too narrow for the present study as the literature revealed many more than just 26 rituals.

Another ritual measure is the Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ; Fiese & Kline, 1993). The FRQ focuses on seven ritual settings (dinnertime, weekends, vacations, annual celebrations, special celebrations, religious holidays, and

cultural and ethnic traditions) in which rituals occur. The FRQ describes eight behaviors involved in ritual activity (occurrence, roles, routine, attendance, affect, symbolic significance, continuation, and deliberateness). The FRQ makes it impossible to understand which specific rituals would be tied to family identity and marital adjustment, thus making it impractical for the purposes of this study.

For the purpose of this study, a measure that covered a broad spectrum of rituals was needed. In addition, ritual activity needed to be measured for not only the rituals the couples had done, but also those they plan on doing in the future. There appeared to be no measure that assessed ritual activity for the needs of this study; thus part of the study was to develop a new measure, the Ritual Inventory (RI) (see Appendix C).

#### Rituals in Family Therapy

Rituals have been found to be very useful in family therapy. Quinn, Newfield, and Protinsky (1985) have suggested rituals have the same end purpose as therapy, that is to help facilitate change from one life-cycle stage to another. This is important because change from one life-cycle stage to another is one of the most likely times that a family would present for therapy (Minuchin, 1974). Rituals in therapy can aid a clinician to do a systemic assessment, act as mechanisms to bring about change, and create new

health-promoting family interactions (Roy, 1990; Sand-Pringle, West, & Bubenzer, 1991; Schwartzman, 1983).

Rituals have been theorized to help all phases of the therapy process. Understanding a family's rituals can lead to a systemic analysis (Roy, 1990), specifically by helping understand structure, rules, sequences of interactions, and roles that family members fulfill (Schwartzman, 1983). Following assessment, rituals can be effective mechanisms to bring about change (Roy, 1990), generally by creating a sense of hope in the various family members (Bergman, 1990). Specific ways that rituals have been used include dispelling unhealthy family myths and replacing them with more healthy interactional patterns (Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin, & Prata, 1977); helping families with adolescents and their life-cycle transitions (Quinn et al., 1985); helping strengthen and balance parental subsystems (Palazzoli et al., 1978); and replacing old, less healthy norms with new ones (Palazzoli & Prata, 1988).

Rituals are also used at the end of therapy to reinforce the changes that have been made and to prevent relapse (Roy, 1990; Sand-Pringle et al., 1991). In terms of clientele, rituals have been used with couples (Imber-Black, 1988a), children (O'Connor & Hoorwitz, 1988), women (Laird, 1988), families with adolescents (Lax & Lussardi, 1988), and families with adopted members (Whiting, 1988b). While rituals can be used effectively, they are not simple



solutions or miracle cures; rather, they can become a multiuse tool in therapy (Whiting, 1988a).

### Summary

By combining the two definitions of rituals (symbolic communication and function), a comprehensive definition is proposed. This includes three broad categories: Family Celebrations, Family Traditions, and Family Interactions (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). The development, importance, research, and application to family therapy was reviewed. While the association of rituals and marital satisfaction has previously been established for a sample of young parents (Fiese et al., 1993), a link to marital adjustment in newlyweds has yet to be explored.

### Marital Adjustment

Marital adjustment is an area that receives much attention in the study of marital relations (Crane, Allgood, Larson, & Griffin, 1990; L'Abate & Bagarozzi, 1993; Spanier, 1976, 1985). The term is related to and often used synonymously with marital satisfaction, quality, and happiness (Bahr et al., 1983; Glenn, 1990). Marital adjustment, in the present study, is defined as a global concept and process that includes satisfaction, cohesion, and consensus (Spanier, 1976; Spanier & Cole, 1976). Satisfaction is the specific component of adjustment that carries most of the weight

within concepts that are part of adjustment (Busby, Christensen, Crane, & Larson, 1995). Recent factor analysis of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) reaffirms that consensus and cohesion also are components that help define marital adjustment (Busby et al., 1995). While the terms adjustment and satisfaction are often used synonymously, the measures were generally developed with adjustment in mind (Busby et al., 1995; Lock & Wallace, 1959; Spanier, 1976).

#### Marital Satisfaction

Bahr and his colleagues (1983) defined marital satisfaction as "...a subjective evaluation of the overall degree to which needs, expectations, and desires are met in marriage" (p. 797). Spanier and Cole (1976) viewed marital satisfaction as an important component for having a successful adjustment to marriage. From a Symbolic Interactional perspective, Schvaneveldt (1966) identified marital satisfaction as a dominant goal and value that couples must seek to develop. Marital satisfaction can be judged by a couple on various factors. Miller (1976), in his evaluation of factors in marital satisfaction, included money management, recreation/entertainment, level of affection, chore performance, relationship with in-laws, sexual relations, and religious beliefs and activities.

These definitions, although labeled satisfaction, are more consistent with adjustment, which is defined as two or more

parts adapting or conforming in a means satisfactory to both parties (L'Abate & Bagarozzi, 1993). This is in contrast to satisfaction, which is the fulfillment or gratification of one's needs (L'Abate & Bagarozzi, 1993). Thus, although adjustment has a relationship orientation, satisfaction is more focused on the individual's orientation. In harmony with the above definitions, marital satisfaction is defined as a subjective judgment made by each spouse about his or her overall relationship satisfaction, including components of stability and conflict (Busby et al., 1995; L'Abate & Bagarozzi, 1993; Miller, 1976).

#### Cohesion and Consensus

Cohesion and consensus are two other factors of marital adjustment that need to be defined. Cohesion is defined as the amount of closeness a couple has as measured by their activities and discussion (communication) (Busby et al., 1995). Consensus is the level of agreement couples have on the important matters of marriage (e.g., money management) based on decision making, values, and affection (Busby et al., 1995; Spanier & Cole, 1976). Cohesion and consensus are often considered in conceptually different ways in the family literature. In the context of marital adjustment, however, cohesion and consensus are key components using the above definitions.

Marital adjustment, as perceived by both spouses, is a

predictor of marital success (L'Abate & Bagarozzi, 1993; Spanier & Cole, 1976). Studies on newlywed couples and marital adjustment have revealed high levels of satisfaction and quality (Glenn, 1990; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993). The assessment of adjustment has generally focused on problematic relationships; however, the process of building and maintaining adjustment is not clear.

Although few researchers have focused on newlyweds, there is an indication that rituals may have a positive effect in the development of marital adjustment. As noted earlier, rituals are associated with healthy marital and family relationships (Fiese et al., 1993). A search of the literature revealed no studies on the association between newlywed marital adjustment and rituals. Such a study would be an important test of the theory on the importance of rituals and establishing relationship identity, which is the foundation for marital adjustment (L'Abate & Bagarozzi, 1993; Spanier, 1976).

#### Length of Courtship

Because the subjects are newlyweds, a possible confounding variable to consider in marital adjustment is length of courtship. Bayer (1968) hypothesized that the length of the dating relationship would impact later marital success in terms of satisfaction and stability. Grover et al. (1985) found that a longer dating period before engagement

correlated positively ( $r = .39$ ;  $p < .004$ ) with marital adjustment. They concluded that a longer dating history may give couples the opportunity to resolve issues in ways that are satisfactory to both partners. Lewis and Spanier (1979) also found a positive relationship between length of courtship and marital adjustment. Given the established link with marital adjustment, length of dating history is a moderating variable that may help to better understand newlywed relationships.

#### Summary

Rituals have been shown to be a key element in family life. Their function and purpose contribute to family and individual development and identity formation. Studies and measures of rituals in general have been sporadic and often narrowed to a specific type of strength or dysfunction.

Marital adjustment is a simple, yet effective, overall measure of marital functioning. As noted previously, this concept has well-developed components (satisfaction, cohesion, and consensus). An important variable that may affect marital adjustment is the length of dating history.

#### Research Questions

Although a relationship between rituals and marital satisfaction has previously been established among young parents (Fiese et al., 1993), no research has been published

to date to verify this association among newlywed couples.

Thus, the research questions of the present study are

1. Is ritual activity (A: rituals done, but not discussed or planned; B: rituals done which were discussed or planned; and C: rituals not done, but discussed or planned for the future) associated with marital adjustment and length of courtship for newlywed couples?

2. Is ritual activity associated with marital satisfaction and length of courtship for newlywed couples?

3. Is ritual activity associated with cohesion and length of courtship for newlywed couples?

4. Is ritual activity associated with consensus and length of courtship for newlywed couples?

5. Is there a difference between husbands and wives on the number and types of rituals (family celebrations, family traditions, and family interactions) that couples report are most related to their overall marital quality?

## CHAPTER III

## METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine the association of rituals and the marital satisfaction of newlyweds. The design of the study, population and sample, measures, and data collection procedures are discussed in this section.

## Design

This project is primarily a descriptive study because it attempts to describe the relationship between rituals and marital satisfaction in newlyweds. This study also has elements of exploratory and correlational designs. The study is exploratory in that the author attempted to generate ideas on rituals and newlywed marital satisfaction that have not been studied before (Miller, 1986). Additionally, the study is correlational in that it attempts to assess the degree to which rituals and marital satisfaction "covary or go together" (Miller, 1986, p. 42).

## Population and Sample

The population of interest is newly married couples (3-6 months) who were married in Cache County, Utah during the summer and fall months of 1994. The rationale for selecting newlywed couples is that they are in the process of developing a relationship identity. An added benefit of

limiting length of marriage is that it provides a methodological control for factors that may influence couple identity (e.g., child birth, career change, graduation, etc.) in the newlywed couples (Robison, 1981). In addition, most couples are very focused on their relationship this early in their history.

Names were extracted from the marriage license record list (Cache county, Utah) (350+ couples) in a systematic random sampling method (Miller, 1986). This procedure entailed choosing a number (between one and seven) from a random number table, and then choosing every seventh person from the list. Fifty couples were needed to meet the logistical and statistical power requirements for this study (Kraemer & Thiemann, 1987). There was some difficulty in generating a sufficient number of participants from the county lists (18 couples) as many of the phone numbers and addresses were not current in the phone book, directory information, or campus information.

A snowball sampling technique was then employed to overcome the difficulty of finding participants and to increase the sample size (Miller, 1986). The snowball technique entailed asking participants already in the study for the names of couples who fit the criteria for the sample. If supplied, the names and phone numbers were recorded and the participants were assured that their names would not be revealed to the potential participants. These additional



couples were contacted by phone and 32 more couples participated, making a total of 50 couples. Questionnaires were also mailed to 22 couples who could not come into the Family Life Center due to their schedules. Eight out of the 22 (36% return rate) couples returned their questionnaires. Thus the final sample included 58 couples.

The sample was selected from the Cache County marriage license records with the goal of getting a representative sample from the county. The procedures above reveal that the sample was not representative. Newlyweds were enlisted where both spouses were in their first marriage as screened in the phone conversations. The sample was made up of 58 heterosexual couples. The sample reflects the community and was mostly Caucasian and Mormon. The average age for husbands was 23.5 years and 21.9 years for wives. The average length of courtship as reported by both spouses (Husbands = 13.7, Wives = 13.8) was very similar as expected. See Table 1 for a summary of the sample.

#### Measures

Two measures were used in the study: the Ritual Inventory and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Busby et al., 1995; Spanier, 1976).

#### Ritual Inventory (RI)

The Ritual Inventory (RI) is a measure of positive ritual

Table 1  
Descriptive Summary of the Sample

Variables	Husbands ( $n = 58$ )	Wives ( $n = 58$ )
Age		
<u>M</u>	23.5	21.9
<u>SD</u>	2.7	3.3
Length of Courtship (months)		
<u>M</u>	13.7	13.8
<u>SD</u>	14.7	14.5
Race		
Caucasian	55 (95%)	58 (100%)
Asian	2 (3%)	-
Hispanic	1 (2%)	-
Religion		
Mormon	55 (95%)	55 (95%)
Protestant	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Catholic	2 (3%)	1 (2%)
No religion claimed	0 (0%)	2 (3%)
Religious activity		
Weekly	49 (84%)	49 (84%)
Monthly	3 (5%)	5 (9%)
Periodically	3 (5%)	2 (3%)
Never	2 (3%)	2 (3%)

activity. It is a check list of the three types of rituals (family celebrations, family traditions, and family interactions) that couples may practice (Wolin & Bennett, 1984).

The RI was developed by reviewing the available literature from the past 20 years in the Psychological Abstracts via an electronic search. From the literature, the author compiled a list of 88 rituals, which were then divided by type as listed above (family celebrations = 40 items, family traditions = 17 items, and family interactions = 31 items). Once the inventory was developed, three family educators and/or therapists reviewed the instrument and gave feedback to the author. Several rituals were added to the instrument toward the final 88 and the A, B, C, or X (discussed below) response options were added. After the suggestions were implemented, a pilot test was conducted by administering the RI to seven couples. Following the pilot test, revisions were made to make the instructions more clear.

Since the couples are very recently married, they would not have had time to do many of the rituals on the RI. To compensate for that, possible responses for the first 88 items on the RI include A: ritual(s) done, but not discussed or planned; B: ritual(s) done which you did discuss or plan; C: ritual(s) not done, but discussed or planned for future involvement; or X: ritual(s) never done, discussed, or planned. Only A, B, and C are considered ritual activity; X

is not used except to acknowledge no ritual activity on a particular item. An additional question was added which asked the respondent to identify the rituals that they perceived as having contributed the most to their marital satisfaction. The final version of the RI is an 89-item measure (see Appendix C).

The RI is very simple to score. The first 88 items involve three responses (A, B, & C), which indicate distinctly different levels of ritual activity. The literature indicated that healthy ritual involvement benefits relationships. Thus, as the sample was newlyweds, the instrument measures various levels of ritual activity, including future plans (response C). Responses A, B, and C are individually summed (1 point each) for each of the three types of rituals (family celebrations, family traditions, and family interactions). The last option, X, is not summed nor used as it indicates no ritual activity at any level. The result is nine distinct interval level variables (e.g., celebrations done but not discussed, celebrations planned for the future) for both husbands and wives.

The last item (item 89) on the RI (Is there a difference between husbands and wives on the number and types of rituals [family celebrations, family traditions, and family interactions] that couples report are most related to their overall marital quality?) is scored differently. The rituals identified by a spouse are categorized (family celebrations,

family traditions, or family interactions) and then summed to create three nominal variables for each spouse.

The Ritual Inventory can be seen in the Appendix C. An evaluation of the RI's performance is discussed in the data analysis chapter, including reliability estimates.

#### Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976) was originally designed as a 32-item, self-report scale with scores ranging from 0-151. The higher the total score on the DAS, the higher the rating of marital adjustment. There are reports that over 1,000 studies have used the DAS in evaluating marital adjustment (Crane et al., 1990; L'Abate & Bagarozzi, 1993; Spanier, 1985).

Spanier (1976) used several methods to demonstrate the reliability and validity of the DAS. The DAS has an overall internal consistency reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = .96$  (Spanier, 1976). Construct validity was shown by correlating the DAS with scores on the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale and coefficients of  $r = .88$  (divorced couples) and  $r = .86$  (married couples) were reported. Criterion validity was manifest as the DAS was able to discriminate between divorced and married couples. The overall mean scores for couples were 70.7 and 114.8, divorced and married subjects, respectively. Content validity was determined by three judges' consensus on items that were appropriate to the

subject (L'Abate & Bagarozzi, 1993; Spanier, 1976). A factor analysis showed that the DAS "...partially appears to measure the theoretical construct..." as defined by Spanier (Spanier, 1976, p. 23).

A recent factor reanalysis reveals an improved version of the DAS or the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) (Busby et al., 1995). The RDAS is a 14-item, self-report scale with scores ranging from 0-69 (Busby et al., 1995). All of the questions are based on a Likert scale ranging from 0 to 5, except for number 11, which ranges from 0 to 4. The RDAS is made up of three subscales: Satisfaction, Consensus, and Cohesion. The satisfaction subscale carries the most weight, thus making the total global score of the RDAS a good indicator of marital quality or satisfaction (Busby et al., 1995).

The RDAS is scored by summing the points in each subscale (Satisfaction, 0-20; Consensus, 0-30; Cohesion, 0-19) for subscale scores. A global marital adjustment score is derived by adding all the points from each subscale together. The higher the total score on the RDAS, the higher the rating of marital adjustment.

The RDAS was correlated with the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959) for construct validity. A correlation coefficient of  $r = .68$  ( $p < .01$ ) was reported for the RDAS and the MAT,  $r = .66$  for the DAS and MAT ( $p < .01$ ), and  $r = .97$  ( $p < .01$ ) for the RDAS and the DAS

(Busby et al., 1995). This provides support that the RDAS appears to be better at measuring marital adjustment with less than half the items of the original DAS (Busby et al., 1995). The RDAS also was able to distinguish between distressed and nondistressed couples, thus providing evidence of criterion validity. A copy of the RDAS is included in Appendix D.

#### Data Collection Procedures

Participants were contacted via telephone and a brief explanation of the study was given, including their potential time commitment (i.e., approximately 45 minutes for questionnaires and videotaping segments) and the incentives (i.e., movie tickets, video vouchers, and a summary of the findings). Following a verbal agreement for participation, appointments were set for each couple to complete the two inventories (RDAS and Ritual Inventory) at the Family Life Center (FLC) on the Utah State University campus. Due to the sampling methods used (e.g., snowball), the sample is not random, which decreases the generalizability of the findings.

All of the subjects in the sample completed two assessments: the Ritual Inventory and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Busby et al., 1995; Spanier, 1976). In addition to these measures, each participant signed a consent form and completed a demographics form (see Appendix A & B).

## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

In this chapter, the preliminary analyses and tests for the research questions will be reported.

Since the RI was constructed for this study, the first analyses were reliability tests. Reliability analyses for the RDAS were also performed for the current sample (see Table 2). The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the husbands' scores range from .60 to .83; the range for wives was .61 to .83. Alpha scores range from 0 to 1.0 and the closer to 1.0 the score gets, the better the "internal consistency

Table 2

Reliability Coefficients for the Ritual Inventory and RDAS


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Scores	Husbands	Wives
Family Celebrations	.80	.78
Family Traditions	.64	.61
Family Interactions	.83	.83
RDAS Total Score	.77	.79
Marital Satisfaction	.60	.64
Cohesion	.61	.72
Consensus	.62	.71

---



reliability" of the items in a measure (DeVellis, 1991). As a rule of thumb, scores of .60 or above indicate acceptable consistency in the measure (DeVellis, 1991). The means and standard deviations for the Ritual Inventory and RDAS scores can be seen in Table 3.

### Analysis

The first four research questions are most easily answered with correlation tables. The dependent variables are adjustment, satisfaction, consensus, and cohesion, and the independent variables are ritual activity and length of courtship. The results from the correlation tables also reveal if any further analyses are warranted.

#### Research Question 1

For the first research question (Is ritual activity associated with marital adjustment and length of courtship for newlywed couples?), a correlation table was produced to check for relationships between adjustment, ritual activity, and length of courtship (see Table 4) (Cramer, 1994). The correlation between marital adjustment (RDAS total score) and the total ritual activity score was  $r = .14$ . There were no significant correlations between ritual activity and adjustment for husbands. As explained, many of the ritual categories correlated with each other to statistically significant degrees.

The results were similar for the wives in that there were

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for the Ritual Inventory and the RDAS

Scales	Husbands		Wives	
	M	SD	M	SD
Total Family Celebrations (40 items)				
a) done, not planned	4.43	4.61	4.88	3.57
b) done, planned	15.98	4.59	16.90	4.28
c) not done, planned	2.83	2.74	2.12	2.46
Total Family Traditions (17 items)				
a) done, not planned	2.09	2.38	2.36	2.14
b) done, planned	9.50	3.40	9.48	3.04
c) not done, planned	2.28	1.97	2.19	1.92
Total Family Interactions (31 items)				
a) done, not planned	11.03	6.90	12.62	6.12
b) done, planned	12.26	7.42	10.57	6.65
c) not done, planned	2.55	2.42	2.55	2.17
Total Marital Adjustment (69)	54.26	5.05	55.31	5.13
Satisfaction (20 points)	16.41	1.57	16.69	1.48
Cohesion (19 points)	13.22	2.20	13.52	2.45
Consensus (30 points)	24.63	2.60	25.10	2.80

no significant correlations between marital adjustment and ritual activity (see Table 4). The correlation between marital adjustment and the total ritual activity score was  $-.02$ . There was a significant negative correlation between length of courtship and adjustment ( $r = -.32, p < .01$ ). To understand the effect size of this relationship, or explained variance, the correlation was squared. The result ( $.102$ ) shows that approximately 10% of the variance in the wives' adjustment can be explained by length of courtship. Marital adjustment is not related to ritual activity for either husbands or wives. Length of courtship has a small, but statistically significant, negative relationship with marital adjustment for wives.

#### Research Question 2

The second research question (Is ritual activity associated with marital satisfaction and length of courtship for newlywed couples?) was tested by producing a correlation table. No significant correlations were found between ritual activity and marital satisfaction for husbands (see Table 5). The correlation between marital satisfaction and the total ritual activity score was  $r = .02$ .

Wives also had no significant correlations between satisfaction and ritual activity (see Table 5). The correlation between marital satisfaction and the total ritual activity score was  $r = -.11$ . There was a significant

Table 4

Correlations Between the Ritual Inventory, Marital Adjustment, and Length of Courtship (Research Question 1)

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Husbands ( $n = 58$ )										
1 Adjustment	-.04	.03	-.09	-.12	.24	-.25	-.06	.14	-.28	-.13
2 Celebrations A	--	-.35**	-.26	.33**	-.29	-.04	.36**	-.34**	.18	.02
3 Celebrations B		--	-.21	-.28	.55***	-.16	-.24	.35**	.01	.08
4 Celebrations C			--	-.20	-.10	.46***	-.20	.18	.25	-.25
5 Traditions A				--	-.61***	-.17	.49***	-.43***	.05	-.04
6 Traditions B					--	-.34**	-.39**	.55***	-.25	-.04
7 Traditions C						--	-.16	.09	.65***	-.21
8 Interactions A							--	-.87***	-.07	-.16
9 Interactions B								--	-.05	-.09
10 Interactions C									--	-.12
11 Courtship										--
Wives ( $n = 58$ )										
1 Adjustment	-.12	-.04	.26	-.15	.22	.02	-.18	.18	-.10	-.32**
2 Celebrations A	--	-.30	-.38**	.23	-.11	.06	.27	-.19	.05	-.06
3 Celebrations B		--	-.10	-.15	.39**	-.20	-.15	.37**	-.11	.01
4 Celebrations C			--	-.11	.05	.36**	-.14	.17	.27	-.00
5 Traditions A				--	-.68	.08	.43***	-.38**	-.02	-.17
6 Traditions B					--	-.41***	-.44***	.63***	-.17	-.03
7 Traditions C						--	.09	-.10	.55***	-.23
8 Interactions A							--	-.82***	-.07	.04
9 Interactions B								--	.01	-.23
10 Interactions C									--	.06
11 Courtship										--

Note. A = rituals done, but not planned; B = rituals done and planned; C = rituals not done, but planned for the future.

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

correlation between length of courtship and satisfaction ( $r = -.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ) with an explained variance of  $r^2 = .096$ , meaning that about 10% of the variance in satisfaction can be explained by length of courtship. Marital satisfaction is not related to ritual activity for husbands or wives. Length of courtship has a small negative relationship with marital satisfaction for wives.

#### Research Question 3

The third research question (Is ritual activity associated with cohesion and length of courtship for newlywed couples?) was assessed by producing correlation tables (see Table 6). For husbands, the table revealed no significant correlations between the ritual activity and cohesion. The correlation between cohesion and the total ritual activity score was .14 for husbands. There were also no significant correlations between the ritual activity and cohesion for the wives (see Table 6). The correlation between cohesion and the total ritual activity score was .01 for wives. Therefore, cohesion is not related to ritual activity for husbands or wives. Length of courtship was not related to cohesion for husbands or wives.

#### Research Question 4

For question 4 (Is ritual activity associated with consensus and length of courtship for newlywed couples?), correlation tables were used again to assess the possible

relationship between consensus and ritual activity with length of courtship as an intervening variable (see Table 7). There were no significant correlations between consensus and ritual activity or length of courtship for husbands or wives. The correlation between consensus and the total ritual activity score was .13 and .01 for husbands and wives, respectively. Therefore, there is not a relationship between consensus and ritual activity for husbands or wives. Likewise, length of courtship was not related to consensus for husbands or wives.

#### Research Question 5

Research question 5 (Is there a difference between husbands and wives on the amount and types of rituals [family celebrations, family traditions, and family interactions] that couples report are most related to their overall marital quality?) was explored by calculating the effect size between ritual activity and gender (question 5 based on item 89 from the RI). Effect sizes were used because of the assumption violations for parametric tests. While the effect size for family celebrations and family interactions are relatively large, a mean difference of less than one does not have much practical significance. Wives did report, on average, two more rituals than the husbands, and the effect size indicates this is an important difference. The means, standard deviations, and effect sizes for ritual totals and each of

Table 5

Correlations Between the Ritual Inventory, Marital Satisfaction, and Length of Courtship (Research Question 2)

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Husbands ( $\bar{n} = 58$ )										
1 Satisfaction	.04	-.17	.01	.00	.06	-.18	.06	.02	-.30	-.23
2 Celebrations A	--	-.35**	-.26	.33**	-.29	-.04	.36**	-.34**	.18	.02
3 Celebrations B		--	-.21	-.28	.55***	-.16	-.24	.35**	.01	.08
4 Celebrations C			--	-.20	-.10	.46***	-.20	.18	.25	-.25
5 Traditions A				--	-.61***	-.17	.49***	-.43***	.05	-.04
6 Traditions B					--	-.34**	-.39**	.55***	-.25	-.04
7 Traditions C						--	-.16	.09	.65***	-.21
8 Interactions A							--	-.87***	-.07	-.16
9 Interactions B								--	-.05	-.09
10 Interactions C									--	-.12
11 Courtship										--
Wives ( $\bar{n} = 58$ )										
1 Satisfaction	-.09	-.16	.21	.07	-.03	.03	.05	-.05	-.22	-.31**
2 Celebrations A	--	-.30	-.38**	.23	-.11	.06	.27	-.19	.05	-.06
3 Celebrations B		--	-.10	-.15	.39**	-.20	-.15	.37**	-.11	.01
4 Celebrations C			--	-.11	.05	.36**	-.14	.17	.27	-.00
5 Traditions A				--	-.68	.08	.43***	-.38**	-.02	-.17
6 Traditions B					--	-.41***	-.44***	.63***	-.17	-.03
7 Traditions C						--	.09	-.10	.55***	-.23
8 Interactions A							--	-.82***	-.07	.04
9 Interactions B								--	.01	-.23
10 Interactions C									--	.06
11 Courtship										--

Note. A = rituals done, but not planned; B = rituals done and planned; C = rituals not done, but planned for the future.

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 6

Correlations Between the Ritual Inventory, Cohesion, and Length of Courtship (Research Question 3)

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Husbands ( $n = 58$ )										
1 Cohesion	-.15	.19	-.04	-.21	.27	-.09	-.11	.18	-.10	-.08
2 Celebrations A	--	-.35**	-.26	.33**	-.29	-.04	.36**	-.34**	.18	.02
3 Celebrations B		--	-.21	-.28	.55***	-.16	-.24	.35**	.01	.08
4 Celebrations C			--	-.20	-.10	.46***	-.20	.18	.25	-.25
5 Traditions A				--	-.61***	-.17	.49***	-.43***	.05	-.04
6 Traditions B					--	-.34**	-.39**	.55***	-.25	-.04
7 Traditions C						--	-.16	.09	.65***	-.21
8 Interactions A							--	-.87***	-.07	-.16
9 Interactions B								--	-.05	-.09
10 Interactions C									--	-.12
11 Courtship										--
Wives ( $n = 58$ )										
1 Cohesion	-.18	-.20	.33	-.07	.17	-.00	-.20	.21	-.12	-.20
2 Celebrations A	--	-.30	-.38**	.23	-.11	.06	.27	-.19	.05	-.06
3 Celebrations B		--	-.10	-.15	.39**	-.20	-.15	.37**	-.11	.01
4 Celebrations C			--	-.11	.05	.36**	-.14	.17	.27	-.00
5 Traditions A				--	-.68	.08	.43***	-.38**	-.02	-.17
6 Traditions B					--	-.41***	-.44***	.63***	-.17	-.03
7 Traditions C						--	.09	-.10	.55***	-.23
8 Interactions A							--	-.82***	-.07	.04
9 Interactions B								--	.01	-.23
10 Interactions C									--	.06
11 Courtship										--

Note. A = rituals done, but not planned; B = rituals done and planned; C = rituals not done, but planned for the future.

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$



Table 7

Correlations Between the Ritual Inventory, Consensus, and  
Length of Courtship (Research Question 4)

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Husbands ( $n = 58$ )										
1 Consensus	.02	.00	-.15	-.05	.20	-.30	-.05	.11	-.27	-.05
2 Celebrations A	--	-.35**	-.26	.33**	-.29	-.04	.36**	-.34**	.18	.02
3 Celebrations B		--	-.21	-.28	.55***	-.16	-.24	.35**	.01	.08
4 Celebrations C			--	-.20	-.10	.46***	-.20	.18	.25	-.25
5 Traditions A				--	-.61***	-.17	.49***	-.43***	.05	-.04
6 Traditions B					--	-.34**	-.39**	.55***	-.25	-.04
7 Traditions C						--	-.16	.09	.65***	-.21
8 Interactions A							--	-.87***	-.07	-.16
9 Interactions B								--	-.05	-.09
10 Interactions C									--	-.12
11 Courtship										--
Wives ( $n = 58$ )										
1 Consensus	-.03	-.00	.06	-.25	.26	.02	-.19	.17	.03	-.24
2 Celebrations A	--	-.30	-.38**	.23	-.11	.06	.27	-.19	.05	-.06
3 Celebrations B		--	-.10	-.15	.39**	-.20	-.15	.37**	-.11	.01
4 Celebrations C			--	-.11	.05	.36**	-.14	.17	.27	-.00
5 Traditions A				--	-.68	.08	.43***	-.38**	-.02	-.17
6 Traditions B					--	-.41***	-.44***	.63***	-.17	-.03
7 Traditions C						--	.09	-.10	.55***	-.23
8 Interactions A							--	-.82***	-.07	.04
9 Interactions B								--	.01	-.23
10 Interactions C									--	.06
11 Courtship										--

Note. A = rituals done, but not planned; B = rituals done and planned; C = rituals not done, but planned for the future.

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

the subscales can be seen in Table 8.

#### Summary

The first four research questions were tested by producing correlation tables. No relationships were found between ritual activity and marital adjustment, marital satisfaction, cohesion, or consensus. Length of courtship did correlate negatively with marital adjustment and marital satisfaction for wives. About 10% of the explained variance was attributed to length of courtship for both adjustment and satisfaction. Research question 5 was tested by calculating the effect size of the ritual activity with gender. The results indicated that wives reported more rituals than husbands as contributing to marital quality.

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations for the Ritual Inventory among Husbands and Wives (Research Question 5)

Scales	Husbands		Wives		Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD	
Ritual total	5.50	3.29	7.60	10.71	.30
Celebrations	.95	1.34	.66	1.10	.25
Traditions	.88	1.08	.81	1.10	.06
Interactions	3.63	2.13	4.58	2.16	.44

CHAPTER V  
DISCUSSION

This section will focus on explaining the results of this study. Each research question will be reviewed, implications suggested, suggestions made for marital therapy application, and the limitations of the study will be discussed.

To understand the results, a brief review of the viability for the RI and the RDAS is necessary. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the Ritual Inventory ranged from .64 to .88 for husbands and from .61 to .89 for wives (see Table 2). These coefficients are strong enough to suggest that the RI is a reliable measure. The RDAS also has strong reliability coefficients: .77 for husbands and .79 for wives (see Table 2). These two coefficients suggest that the RDAS is a reliable measure. Thus the measures have adequate reliability to address the research questions.

Research Questions

Each research question will be reviewed in light of the findings. The results will be discussed and a rationale will be provided as to why the research questions were not answered as hypothesized.

Research Question 1

For research question 1 (Is ritual activity associated with marital adjustment and length of courtship for newlywed

couples?), the data do not support a relationship between ritual activity and newlywed marital adjustment. For husbands, there were no significant correlations between the dependent variable (marital adjustment) and any of the independent variables. For the wives, the only significant correlation, using the same variables, was with length of courtship ( $r = -.32$ ).

Length of courtship explained about 10% of the variance in adjustment for wives, but not husbands. This would suggest that length of courtship has some importance to wives' perceptions of their marital adjustment. This coincides with the idea that women are often the gatekeepers in relationships (McGoldrick, 1989), and in gender-stereotyped relationships, gain much of their identity through their marriage (Askham, 1976). Perhaps the longer the courtship, the more a woman is able to establish her gatekeeper role and develop an identity from the relationship. In general, women place more importance on relationships than do men, thus providing a rationale why length of courtship would impact their marital adjustment (Norman, Murphy, Gilligan, & Vasudev, 1982). However, the relationship was negative, suggesting that longer courtships for women in the sample made their adjustment more difficult. This is contrary to the literature, which suggests length of courtship has a positive association with marital adjustment (Grover et al., 1985; Lewis & Spanier, 1979). It could have been that a

shorter courtship encouraged the couples to develop more rituals, which increased their perceptions of adjustment and happiness. Conversely, longer courtships have been shown to have a negative relationship with marital adjustment and happiness (Huston, 1994). Perhaps the courtships in this sample were long enough to not let the wives meet their perceived roles and therefore had a negative association with adjustment.

The data did not show a relationship between rituals and marital adjustment. The most obvious conclusion is that the variables are not related. This, however, is contrary to most of the published theoretical and empirical literature. There are several possible explanations as to why no significant relationship was found between ritual activity and marital adjustment in this study. First, the newlywed sample could have been responding in a socially desirable manner, thus skewing the results toward high ritual activity and high marital satisfaction, which produces too little variance for conclusive results (DeVellis, 1991). High ritual activity was found for all rituals except family celebrations. Many of the family celebration rituals are not practical for the sample culture (e.g., Passover, Barmitzvahs). The possibility of responding in a socially desirable way could be due to the perception that newlyweds are all happy, and the couples in this study wanted to present the same image (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1984).

A second possible conclusion is that there may have been a weakness in the instruments used to measure the variables. There appear to be ceiling effects in both measures (RI and RDAS) as the scores are all skewed toward the high ends except for family celebrations on the RI (see Table 3). Several of the celebrations on the RI are not pertinent to the sample (e.g., Chanukah, Passover) (see Appendix E). If these Celebrations were not on the RI, there would probably be a ceiling effect for family celebrations also. The standard deviations are low on most of the scales, supporting the idea of the ceiling effect (see Table 3). The ceiling effect and the low standard deviations leave no room for variability, thus a possible explanation for no relationships among the variables as a statistical artifact. The RI also did not directly address the meaning of the rituals for the couples, except for the last item. Some minimal meaning may be assessed by looking at how many of the rituals were done and planned or not done but planned for the future (see Appendix E).

Another possible conclusion is that of religion being a confounding variable. Most of the sample (95%) were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), a highly ritualized religion (Ludlow, 1992). With rituals a big part of the religion, the couples may have not given much meaning to rituals or considered them as such. Couples who assign little meaning to their rituals often make them hollow

activities (Fiese & Kline, 1993). Alternatively, due to the highly ritualized religion that emphasizes family, these couples may have a higher than average number of important rituals. Due to most of the sample being actively involved in the Mormon Church, comparison with inactive or other religious groups was not possible.

A fourth possible explanation could be that due to the newness of the newlywed's marital relationship (3-6 months), they did not have enough time to participate in or establish their own rituals. Fiese et al. (1993) pointed out that couples struggle with mixing rituals from their families of origin and making their own for their family of procreation. Grover et al. (1985) found that couples who had dated for more than 2 years reported higher marital satisfaction than those who dated for less than 2 years before marriage. The mean number of months that couples dated in this sample before marriage was 13.8 as reported by the wives. Thus, the premarital dating being less than 2 years could affect the couple's marital adjustment and satisfaction. The shortness of their relationship would probably also be tied to a lack of identity formation as individuals and couples through ritual activity (Wolin & Bennett, 1984). A sample with a longer or shorter length of courtship may produce different results than the newlyweds in this present study.

Finally, the couples' marital adjustment scores, in addition to ritual scores, may be elevated. Huston and

Vangelisti (1991) found couples are more satisfied as newlyweds than even after only 2 years of marriage. Marital quality scores tend to be higher in the preparental years, like in this sample (Glenn, 1990). Couples' overall interactions and satisfaction tend to decline over the first year of marriage (Huston, McHale, & Cronter, 1986), suggesting that a longer-married sample would probably yield different results.

### Research Question 2

The data for research question 2 (Is ritual activity associated with marital satisfaction and length of courtship for newlywed couples?) showed no support for a relationship between rituals and marital satisfaction for husbands or wives. This goes contrary to the findings from the only related study in which there was a relationship established between rituals and marital satisfaction (Fiese et al., 1993). Much of the rationale as to why there was no relationship between ritual activity and marital adjustment for research question 1 can be used as a justification for research question 2. This is because marital satisfaction carries the most weight of all the subscales in the RDAS (Busby et al., 1995).

### Research Question 3

The data for the third research question (Is ritual activity associated with cohesion and length of courtship for



newlywed couples?) revealed no significant relationships between ritual activity and newlywed cohesion. In contrast to the earlier questions, length of courtship was not a significant factor in explaining the variance in cohesion for husbands or wives.

The explanation for no findings on the cohesion subscale is probably due to the newness of the marital relationships. Newlyweds tend to be very close and to do many things together, including rituals (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987), but the process of building cohesion takes an extended amount of time (Berman, Marcus, & Berman, 1994). Thus the couples may have reported artificially high levels of cohesion that may moderate over time. A review of the means and standard deviations reveals that of a possible 19, the couples had average scores of 13 for both husbands and wives (see Table 3). In fact, over 95% of the spouses had scores of 13 or higher, which indicates high levels of cohesion (Busby et al., 1995). With both the cohesion and ritual scores being generally clumped together, there is little possibility to check for relationships. Longer-married couples may manifest more varied results by giving the couple time to establish relationship patterns that may influence marital adjustment.

#### Research Question 4

The data for question 4 (Is ritual activity associated with consensus and length of courtship for newlywed couples?) show

no evidence of a significant relationship between ritual activity and consensus for the sample. Length of courtship also was not a significant variable in relation to consensus for husbands or wives.

Here again, the newness of the marital relationships could be a factor for the lack of a linear relationship. As with the previous question, the couples all had similar answers, toward the high end of possible scores. It therefore is not clear if the lack of relationship is due to measurement problems or that there is not a relationship. Many possible areas of disagreement could be ignored due to social desirability (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987).

#### Intercorrelations of Ritual

##### Activity

There are several interesting correlations among the ritual activity variables (see Tables 4-7). Celebrations B (Celebrations done and planned) is correlated with Traditions B (Traditions done and planned) for husbands ( $r = .55$ ) and for wives ( $r = .39$ ), as is Celebrations C (Celebrations not done, but planned for future) with Traditions C (Traditions not done, but planned for future) for both husbands ( $r = .46$ ) and wives ( $r = .36$ ) at statistically significant levels. This suggests that not only are these couples involved in rituals to be a part of the culture (family celebrations), but they also seem to be building their own identity as a

couple (family traditions). This is consistent with the findings of Wolin and Bennett (1984).

A second point that can be made is there are negative correlations between Traditions A (Traditions done, but not planned) and Traditions B for husbands ( $r = -.61$ ) and wives ( $r = -.68$ ), and between Interactions A (Interactions done, but not planned) and Interactions B (Interactions done and planned) for husbands ( $r = -.87$ ) and wives ( $r = -.82$ ). This was expected in that the person completing the measure could only identify A, B, C, or X. A review of the means in Table 3 shows that a clear majority of the rituals were not only done, but they were also planned. If most of the rituals were planned, by definition they could not do any other activity for the activity in question. These data provide additional support for the idea that these couples may be highly ritualized.

#### Research Question 5

Finally, the data for the last research question (Is there a difference between husbands and wives on the number and types of rituals (family celebrations, family traditions, and family interactions) that couples report are most related to their overall marital quality?) was examined using effect sizes. As noted earlier, this was due to the assumptions for parametric tests being violated. All of the effect sizes were relatively large, but most had little practical use.

The difference of less than one reported ritual between the husbands and wives is of limited importance given the mean size. Overall, it is important to note that the wives identified more rituals than the husbands did. This may be due, in part, to the gatekeeping role noted earlier. An interesting feature from Table 8 is that for both husbands and wives, family interactions accounted for over half of the reported rituals. This indirectly provides some evidence that the newness of the relationship may not have allowed time for the other types of rituals to develop or that this is the ritual development for this life stage.

#### Means and Standard Deviations for Ritual Activity

While the research questions were not supported in the expected directions, a review of the means and standard deviations for the RI and RDAS scores gives some evidence that ritual activity may be somewhat consistent with the literature (see Table 3). Husbands and wives' scores on ritual activity were very similar except for family celebrations (done and planned), family interactions (done and not planned), and family interactions (done and planned). For family celebrations done and planned, wives reported almost one more ritual than did husbands on average. This is interesting because most of the rituals in this category are major life events or celebrations (e.g., wedding ceremony,

Christmas). Husbands may have not put as much importance on some family celebration rituals and therefore did not check them. Traditionally, women tend to be more involved in planning family celebrations, which could contribute to this result (Laird, 1988).

Concerning family interactions, wives reported about one and a half more rituals on average than husbands for those interactions that had been done, but not planned. Wives may be more apt to notice spontaneous interactions than are husbands. Finally, husbands report slightly more interactions that were done and planned than did wives. This could suggest husbands may be more involved in the planning of family interactions than wives (e.g., dating), especially since males traditionally lead in the courtship rituals. None of the ritual activity scores were statistically significantly different, suggesting that the husbands and wives in the sample view their ritual activity in a similar manner.

The RDAS mean scores were all slightly higher (less than one point) for wives than for husbands. These means are different from the literature as husbands usually have higher overall scores for marital adjustment than wives (Huston et al., 1986; Rhyne, 1981). This could be tied to the gatekeeping idea because women get identity from their relationships (Askham, 1976; McGoldrick, 1989). The marital relationships of the participants in this study, still in the

newlywed stage, could have helped the wives in developing some new identity away from their families of origin, thus possibly contributing to their slightly higher adjustment scores. The RDAS scores were comparable, thus suggesting that the couples in this sample saw their adjustment, satisfaction, cohesion, and consensus in a similar way.

### Summary

None of the analyses for any of the research questions produced evidence that rituals contribute to marital adjustment in newlywed couples. Possible reasons were discussed for the lack of support for each research question. The most important explanation appears to be the newness of the relationship. Fiese et al. (1993) found that parents of preschool-age children had more meaningful rituals in their families than those with infants. The explanations, newness of the relationship and others, should be explored in future studies dealing with rituals and newlyweds.

### Implications

There are implications that can be drawn for the potential use of rituals in family therapy and family life education. Those implications are covered in this section.

### Rituals and Family Therapy

Despite the contradictory findings of this study, rituals have been theoretically demonstrated to be useful in family

therapy. Rituals have been helpful in the assessment phase (Schwartzman, 1983) and as interventions in family therapy (Bergman, 1990; Imber-Black, 1988a; Laird, 1988; Lax & Lussardi, 1988; O'Connor & Hoorwitz, 1988; Palazzoli et al., 1978; Whiting, 1988b).

Therapists may get the best use of rituals by focusing on daily interactions as suggested by the findings from research question 5. A discussion of rituals may be helpful in premarital therapy as newlyweds struggle with establishing their own rituals while adapting others from their respective families (Fiese et al., 1993). Using rituals as a topic may be a way to increase communication and problem-solving skills, a key in effective premarital therapy (Notarius & Markman, 1993; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). Ultimately, the findings from this study do not support the use of rituals in family therapy with newlyweds. The findings from this study also show a need for empirical evidence of ritual use and effectiveness in the therapeutic process.

#### Rituals and Family Life Education

Rituals may still be a useful topic to consider in family life education (FLE) courses. The present study, however, raises questions of efficacy when dealing with newlywed couples. More research may provide support for the use of rituals in premarital and newlywed FLE courses.

### Suggestions for Future Research

There are several suggestions for future research in the area of rituals and newlywed marital adjustment. First, a longer-married time frame for the sample, perhaps 3 months to 2 years, could give the couples more time to experience and develop their own rituals. Second, research would probably be improved by having two groups, newlyweds and couples married for a longer duration, to compare and contrast how rituals affect marital adjustment in the two marital groups. Along these lines, a longitudinal study could look at newlyweds early and at different points in their marriages to assess the impact of rituals on their marital adjustment.

Third, more moderating variables could be included for control of extraneous effects on the couples' marital adjustment. Fourth, with a more diversified sample, a comparison could be made between religious or cultural groups. Finally, more attention could be given to the meaning of the rituals instead of just the level of ritual activity for newlyweds. This could be done by revising the RI to assess those who initiated the rituals and in which rituals the couples participated before marriage.

### Limitations

There are several limitations in this study that need to be addressed. First, the sample was not random due to the snowball technique used when not enough participants were



recruited initially. This makes the results specific and generalizability is lost or weakened. Another weakness of this study is a lack of including more potential confounding variables (e.g., pregnancy, job loss, or the importance of the individual ritual).

Another limiting facet of the study is the time frame of the sample (newlyweds 3-6 months of marriage). This time frame is both a strength and a weakness. It is a strength because it controls for potential confounding variables and clearly defines newlyweds. It is potentially also a weakness because the couples may not have had enough time to establish their relationship or rituals. A broader definition of newlyweds from wedding until second anniversary may help clarify the relationship between ritual activity and marital adjustment.

Finally, the present study only assessed the number of rituals in which the couples had been involved. As noted earlier, the meaning of the rituals may be even more important than the number.

#### Conclusion

Rituals have been shown to be useful and important to family life (Fiese et al., 1993; Imber-Black, 1989a; Rosenthal and Marshall, 1988; Wolin and Bennett, 1984). Rituals have been linked to marital satisfaction and seem to logically contribute to relationship happiness (Fiese et al.,

1993). The limitations of the sample and of this study in general are probably what produced no relationship between rituals and marital adjustment (satisfaction, cohesion, and consensus) contrary to other research. More needs to be done to investigate this relationship with newlyweds.

Despite the fact that the research questions were not supported, rituals may still be helpful in family life and appear to be great assets to families. Family therapy and family life education are two avenues where rituals could be used to enhance and facilitate change in family interactions. Rituals have been used and have the potential use as effective intervention tools for clinicians to use in the change process. More research, however, is needed to clarify the use of rituals in therapy and family life education when dealing with newlyweds.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix A. Informed Consent Form

**Marriage and Family Therapy Program  
Utah State University**

**INFORMED CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION**

I understand that research is being conducted regarding newlywed marital expectations and marital satisfaction. I understand that by participating in this research I will be asked to fill out questionnaires and be video-taped while having two 5-10 minute conversations with my spouse. I understand that the purpose of this research is to increase the understanding about newlywed expectations and how that affects marital satisfaction.

I understand that there are potential risks associated with participating in this study such as discussing relationship, psychological, and/or emotional issues that may, at times, be distressing. I understand that there are potential benefits associated with participation in this research, such as gaining more information about my spouses expectation and satisfaction in our marriage.

I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time for any reason without fear of negative consequences from those conducting the research.

I understand that all questionnaires and video tapes will be kept confidential from anyone not involved in this research project. I understand that if anyone involved in this research knows who I am, that person will not be allowed to view me on video-tape.

If you have any questions or concerns about being involved in this research project, please feel free to contact Bryan Bingham (755-0792) or Shawn Edgington (753-2526). We can also be reached at the Family Life Center (753-5696).

This form is to be signed by all willing participants.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B. Demographics Form



## Utah State University Family Life Center

1. Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_
2. Male/Female (circle one)
3. Marriage date \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your religious preference?  
 Mormon  
 Protestant  
 Catholic  
 None  
 Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Please circle the level of activity in your religion.  
 a. not at all  
 b. attend fewer than 6 times per year  
 c. attend one time monthly  
 d. regularly attend (weekly)
6. Please circle the response that best represents your race.  
 a. Caucasian  
 b. African-American  
 c. Hispanic  
 d. Asian  
 e. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many months of courtship (active dating) did you have before you were married? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Please circle the letter for the approximate size of the county you grew up in.    a. under 100,000    b. over 100,000

For the following questions please write in your level of agreement on the line provided.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

strongly disagree    disagree    undecided    agree    strongly agree

- \_\_\_ 9. Everyone is capable of predicting the future.
- \_\_\_ 10. Only God knows the future.
- \_\_\_ 11. Your future is determined and cannot be changed.
- \_\_\_ 12. Anyone can predict the future once they know the secret.
- \_\_\_ 13. The Bible accurately predicts the future.
- \_\_\_ 14. Each person freely determines their own future.

Appendix C. Ritual Inventory

## Ritual Inventory

Rituals are activities or ceremonies that people do in groups, often among family members. Rituals are ways families and others share their beliefs and values. Many times rituals are passed from one generation to the next. Rituals can be a source of family bonding, development, and happiness.

**Instructions:** The following is a list of rituals that are grouped into three categories. Please read over the list and place the appropriate letter (A, B, C or X) in the blank according to the scale below. Choose a letter that reflects the ritual activity that you and your spouse have had together since your relationship began (now and before marriage).

Scale:    A = Ritual(s) done, but not discussed or planned.  
           B = Ritual(s) done which you did discuss or plan.  
           C = Ritual(s) not done, but discussed or planned for future.  
           X = Ritual(s) never done, discussed, or planned.

### Family Celebrations

Annual Major Celebrations:

- \_\_\_\_\_ • Christmas Eve
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Christmas Day
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Chanukah
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Passover
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Easter
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Thanksgiving
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Other(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Other Major Holidays:

- \_\_\_\_\_ • New Year's Eve
- \_\_\_\_\_ • New Year's Day
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Mother's Day
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Father's Day
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Fourth of July
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Twenty-fourth of July (Pioneer Day)
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Civil Rights Day (Martin Luther King Day)

**Family Celebrations (Continued)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ • Memorial Day
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Labor Day
- \_\_\_\_\_ • President's day
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Columbus day
- \_\_\_\_\_ • St. Patrick's day
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Ground hog day
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Other(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Marriage and Family :**

- \_\_\_\_\_ • Wedding ceremony
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Wedding ceremony location (e.g., same as parents) (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Wedding reception
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Wedding reception location (specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Wedding ring exchange
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Cutting the wedding cake
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Wedding breakfast
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Throwing the bouquet
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Removal of the garter
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Honeymoon
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Changing surname (females)
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Opening joint accounts (bank, credit, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Baptisms
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Naming ceremonies or christenings
- \_\_\_\_\_ • First Communion
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Confirmation
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Barmitzvahs
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Graduations or passing of school grades
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Other(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Traditions**

- \_\_\_\_\_ • Vacations
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Weekends (specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Special days of the week (e.g., Sunday)
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Reunions or other annual gatherings
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Family hunting trip
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Recreational activities (picnics, hikes, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Wife's birthday
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Husband's birthday
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Parties (specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Special meals or foods
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Visit to wife's family of origin
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Visit to husband's family of origin
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Anniversaries
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Family pet(s) (specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Buying or building a first home
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Special song(s) ("our song")
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Other(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Interactions**

- \_\_\_\_\_ • Weekly date
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Talk time (specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Regular interactions (specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Regular dinner time
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Meal time prayer (Saying grace)
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Eating out at a restaurant
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Cooking meal(s) as a couple
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Father/husband cooking meal
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Mother/wife cooking meal

**Family Interactions (Continued)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ • Seating at dinner table
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Playing games
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Discipline of the children
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Parent child talks (e.g., bedtime)
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Customary treatment of guests
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Greetings (daily or occasional)
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Goodbyes (daily or occasional)
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Phone calls to spouse
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Phone calls to parents/in-laws
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Family prayer
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Church attendance
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Harvest time/gardening
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Morning routines (specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Bed time routines (specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Shopping together (grocery, clothing, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Housecleaning routines (specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Yard maintenance routines (specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Family exercise
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Family shows (T.V., movies, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Listening to music together
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Sporting events
- \_\_\_\_\_ • Other(s): \_\_\_\_\_ )

Choosing from the list above, list the most important rituals, which you and your spouse have done, that contribute most to your marital quality.

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Appendix D. Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

### Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS)

Most persons have disagreement in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

	Almost Always <u>Agree</u>	Occa- sionally <u>Agree</u>	Fre- quently <u>Disagree</u>	Almost Always <u>Disagree</u>	Always <u>Disagree</u>
1. Religious matters	___	___	___	___	___
2. Demonstrations of affection	___	___	___	___	___
3. Making major decisions	___	___	___	___	___
4. Sex relations	___	___	___	___	___
5. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)	___	___	___	___	___
6. Career decisions	___	___	___	___	___
			More often	Occa- sionally	Rarely Never
	All the <u>time</u>	Most of <u>the time</u>	than not		
7. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?	___	___	___	___	___
8. How often do you and your partner quarrel?	___	___	___	___	___
9. Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together?)	___	___	___	___	___
10. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?	___	___	___	___	___





## Appendix E. Table 9

Frequencies of Ritual Activity for the Ritual Inventory

Table 9

Frequencies of Ritual Activity for the Ritual Inventory

Rituals	Frequencies					
	Husbands (n = 58)			Wives (n = 58)		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
Family Celebrations						
Annual Major Celebrations:						
Christmas Eve	5	51	2	2	52	3
Christmas Day	9	47	1	3	54	1
Chanukah	1	0	0	1	0	0
Passover	0	0	0	0	0	0
Easter	10	17	13	16	15	8
Thanksgiving	3	53	1	3	54	0
Other(s)	1	5	1	1	10	0
Other Major Holidays:						
New Year's Eve	9	45	1	9	44	3
New Year's Day	17	26	2	16	27	4
Mother's Day	13	13	11	20	15	5
Father's Day	16	11	11	17	15	7
Fourth of July	8	33	5	14	33	3
July 24th (Pioneer Day)	13	13	9	15	24	2
Civil Rights Day	5	3	3	9	3	2
Memorial Day	12	15	7	11	15	6
Labor Day	10	10	6	8	12	3
President's day	5	4	4	7	5	0
Columbus day	7	2	0	7	5	0
St. Patrick's day	8	4	6	14	2	3
Ground hog day	6	0	0	9	1	2
Other(s)	1	1	0	0	4	0
Marriage and Family:						
Wedding ceremony	1	57	0	1	57	0
Wedding ceremony location	1	54	0	0	56	0
Wedding reception	2	55	0	0	58	0
Wedding reception location	5	50	0	1	55	0
Wedding ring exchange	14	41	0	12	44	0
Cutting the wedding cake	14	35	0	20	30	1
Wedding breakfast	3	44	0	2	44	1
Throwing the bouquet	18	21	2	14	23	3
Removal of the garter	6	16	4	14	23	3
Honeymoon	2	55	0	1	56	0
Changing surname (females)	11	37	2	20	35	1

(table continues)

Opening joint accounts	4	52	1	5	52	1
Baptisms	5	17	16	3	17	17
Naming ceremonies	2	10	20	2	12	14
First Communion	0	1	2	1	0	0
Confirmation	4	9	16	4	14	14
Barmitzvahs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Graduations	6	18	17	6	25	15
Other(s)	0	2	1	0	0	0

## Family Traditions

Vacations	1	41	13	1	39	16
Weekends	11	39	2	10	42	0
Special days of the week	10	43	2	11	43	0
Reunions/annual gatherings	3	45	3	2	42	5
Family hunting trip	4	8	9	1	9	9
Recreational activities	7	45	4	7	43	5
Wife's birthday	10	38	8	14	35	4
Husband's birthday	12	38	4	16	39	3
Parties	7	30	7	3	40	3
Special meals or foods	8	39	1	15	33	4
Visit to wife's family	10	41	3	5	47	5
Visit to husband's family	10	42	1	7	48	1
Anniversaries	4	25	20	7	24	19
Family pet(s)	2	12	26	7	24	19
Buying/building first home	1	18	30	1	16	31
Special song(s)	10	21	4	11	23	5
Other(s)	0	1	0	0	0	0

## Family Interactions

Weekly date	17	34	4	16	28	7
Talk time	28	21	4	35	15	2
Regular interactions	28	19	3	33	21	0
Regular dinner time	17	14	9	16	14	7
Meal time prayer (grace)	15	33	4	25	24	3
Eating out at a restaurant	24	31	2	25	31	0
Cooking meal(s) as a couple	34	22	1	31	18	1
Father/husband cooking meal	27	23	4	28	23	2
Mother/wife cooking meal	24	28	2	33	22	1
Seating at dinner table	31	14	1	34	11	3
Playing games	23	30	2	29	23	02
Discipline of the children	1	9	36	0	8	42
Parent child talks	1	6	24	0	8	42
Customary guest treatment	26	21	2	37	12	0
Greetings	36	19	0	46	10	0
Goodbyes	34	22	0	45	12	0
Phone calls to spouse	39	19	0	45	10	1
Phone calls to parents	42	15	0	39	18	0
Family prayer	11	36	5	6	43	4

(table continues)

Church attendance	13	39	3	12	41	2
Harvest time/gardening	3	8	14	2	10	16
Morning routines	22	25	2	26	22	1
Bed time routines	20	28	2	23	27	7
Shopping together	23	35	0	24	32	0
Housecleaning routines	26	30	0	30	25	0
Yard maintenance routines	11	08	10	11	4	12
Family exercise	8	26	10	8	18	13
Family shows	15	37	6	20	30	1
Listening to music together	28	23	1	36	18	0
Sporting events	13	34	3	10	37	2
Other(s)	0	2	0	5	2	0

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Note. A = rituals done, but not planned; B = rituals done and planned; C = rituals not done, but planned for the future.

Appendix F. Letter of Approval

**Utah State**  
UNIVERSITY

VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH OFFICE  
Logan, Utah 84322-1450  
Telephone: (801) 797-1180  
FAX: (801) 797-1367  
INTERNET: [pgerity@champ.usu.edu]

DATE: November 16, 1994

TITLE: "The Effects of Rituals on Newlywed Marital Satisfaction"

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Scot Allgood - PI  
Bryan Bingham - Student Researcher

FROM: True Rubal *T.R.*

Our institutional committee expedited the review and approved this proposal on Nov. 16, 1994 contingent upon receiving a revised Informed Consent. This revision was received on Nov. 18, 1994. You may consider this your official approval letter. This approval covers the original protocol and the revised Informed Consent form.

A study status report (continuing review) will be due in one year.

Please keep the committee advised of any changes, adverse reactions or termination of the study.

cc: Bryan Bingham