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AN ASSESSMENT OF MARITAL SATISFACTION, MARITAL ADJUSTMENT,

AND PROBLEMATIC AREAS DURING THE FIRST FEW MONTHS OF

MARRIAGE AMONG A SAMPLE OF NEWLYWEDS IN UTAH

by

David G. Schramm

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

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ABSTRACT

An Assessment of Marital Satisfaction, Marital Adjustment,

and Problematic Areas During the First Few Months of

Marriage Among a Sample of Newlyweds in Utah

by

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Utah State University, 2003

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A self-selected sample of 232 newlywed husbands and wives in Utah was

surveyed to assess marital satisfaction, marital adjustment, and problematic areas during

the first few months of marriage. The study utilized the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale

(KMSS) and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS), in addition to a list of 30

potential problematic areas created by Creighton University to measure these constructs.

Although the majority of the newlyweds in this sample were fairly satisfied and

well adjusted, 11% of both husbands and wives scored in the distressed range on the

RDAS, signaling that the first few months of marriage can be a time of tension and strain

for some couples.

Many demographic and interactional history variables were tested as to how well

they predict marital satisfaction and marital adjustment among newlywed husbands and

wives, and only husbands' religiosity and whether a child was brought into the marriage

were significant predictors of both husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores. The most problematic areas for both husbands and wives were balancing employment and marriage and the presence of debt brought into marriage.

When regression analyses were carried out that included demographics and problematic areas, a high degree of religiosity among husbands and wives was the strongest and most consistent predictor of marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. However, it was the problematic areas in the relationship that accounted for the majority of the variance in marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores, rather than the demographic variables alone. Thus, it appears that the demographic variables affect the likelihood that various marital problems would arise, which, in turn, increased the likelihood of lower marital satisfaction and marital adjustment among both husbands and wives.

These findings suggest that educators and others helping engaged couples and newlyweds should focus more on the problematic areas that often arise in marriage, which are noted in this study, rather than the demographic and interactional characteristics couples bring to the marriage. Moreover, it is suggested that marriage education strategies be centered on engaged and newlywed couples to assist them in adjusting to the new roles and expectations they encounter.

(133 pages)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Recent research suggests that between 80-90% of men and women age 15 in 1996 are projected to marry sometime in their lives (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). However, between one third and one fifth of first marriages end in separation or divorce within the first 5 years (Cherlin, 1992; National Center for Health Statistics, 2001), and ultimately one half of all marriages are expected to end in divorce (Cherlin; U.S. Bureau of the Census). The repercussions of marital breakdown carry not only economic consequences for those involved (Forthofer, Markman, Cox, Stanley, & Kessler, 1996; Hoffman & Duncan, 1988; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1990; Weitzman, 1985), but also mental and physical health problems for children (Amato & Booth, 1996; Axinn & Thornton, 1996; Wallerstein & Kelly) as well as adults (Amato, 1996; Evans & Bloom, 1997). Because most people will marry in their lifetime, and many of these marriages will likely end in divorce, research focusing on the early months and years of marriage, and the factors that influence marital stability, are potentially of critical importance.

The newlywed stage of marriage involves many adjustments and risks. Among a sample of divorced men and women, both perceived the marriage as beginning to dissolve fairly early. Fifteen percent of the women reported that the onset of the dissolution occurred within the first three months of marriage, and 36% reported that it began within the first year (Burns, 1984). One study suggests that it is during the first years of marriage wherein half of all serious marital difficulties develop (Lasswell, 1985).

Other research reports that the changes and patterns established within the first two years predict a couple's long-term consequences after 13 years (Huston, Caughlin, Houts, Smith, & George, 2001). For newlyweds in Utah, 18% dissolve their marriage within the first year, 35% within three years, and just over 50% of all marriages endure long enough to celebrate their 5th anniversary (Utah's Vital Statistics, 2002). This rate of dissolution is much higher than national figures, which estimate roughly 20% of divorces occurring within the first 5 years of marriage (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). It is clear that marriages are most vulnerable to breakdown and divorce in the early formative years, and an assessment of what problems couples are dealing with in these early months could enable more effective implementation of marriage education in addition to intervention strategies.

According to Family Development Theory (Duvall & Miller, 1985), one of the critical developmental tasks for newlyweds is to create a functional marital system that is mutually satisfying. This is often a difficult task as both partners come from different family backgrounds and try to merge their own styles of handling roles, communication, and conflict styles. When the norms of the partners are dissimilar, conflicts often arise. A body of longitudinal research suggests that communication problems and destructive methods of handling marital conflict are among the foremost future predictors of divorce (Gottman, 1994; Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 1994; Schneewind & Gerhard, 2002).

Marital research results, even among newlyweds, may well differ according to geographic areas throughout the United States. The research among Utah's newlywed population may reveal different patterns from newlyweds across the nation. There are several reasons for this. First, couples in Utah typically marry younger than couples from

other states. The median age of marriage among Utah couples is 23 for males and 21 for females, respectively (Utah's Vital Statistics, 2002). The median ages for couples across the United States is 26.8 for males and 25.1 for females (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). It is unknown whether this age difference affects marital adjustment and satisfaction scores. However, because Utah's newlyweds marry younger, on average, subsequent age-related issues arise as well. For example, because Utah has a younger newlywed population (age at first marriage) than the national average, couples are less likely to have completed their education, and subsequently less likely to have stable employment when they marry. These factors could play a role in couples' expressions of problematic issues in their first few months of marriage.

Understanding how husbands and wives differ in their perceptions of their marriages, the problems they encounter, and which factors predict overall marital adjustment and satisfaction in the first few months of marriage is imperative if various government and local agencies, among others, are to help prevent marital breakdown. Moreover, while this study recognizes the dyad as a unit of analysis, the central purposes of this study focus on husbands' and wives' separate scores on various measures, and comparisons are made. This is partially because the measures utilized in this study were designed specifically for individuals, rather than the dyad. Additionally, it focused on husbands' and wives' differences, as well as the similarities they shared that aided in furthering methods of providing education and intervention to newlyweds, as well as those in dating and other relationships.

An assessment of early marital adjustment and satisfaction can shed light on the problems that arise during these early months of marriage. Subsequently, this knowledge

will enable marriage educators, marriage therapists, policy makers, clergy, and others, the ability to prevent and/or intervene as necessary. Moreover, knowledge of early marital issues may alter the content and delivery methods of marriage education in the future.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to address the need to understand the newlywed period and the adjustments and stresses that may be predictive of later marital problems. Specifically, there were seven questions guiding the present study among the newlywed population in Utah. These questions will be outlined in sequential order below.

The first objective was to determine whether there were any significant gender differences between husbands' and wives' scores on self-reports of marital adjustment, marital satisfaction, potential problematic areas, and the perceptions and expectations of the newlyweds' first few months of marriage.

The second objective of this research was to assess marital satisfaction and marital adjustment among Utah's newlyweds by using two scales: the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS; Schumm et al., 1986) and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS; Busby, Christiansen, Crane, & Larson, 1995). One element of this purpose was to assess whether a few months of marriage (ranging from 1 to 8 months) was a sufficient amount of time to measure significant differences among husbands and wives regarding marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. Couples in the early romantic months of marriage will likely assess their relationships very positively. However, a wide range of satisfaction and adjustment scores was anticipated. Additionally, it was of

interest to compare responses to the KMSS and the RDAS to establish concurrent validity among newlyweds. It was hypothesized that the two scales would be positively correlated, and husbands' and wives' marital adjustment scores and marital satisfaction scores would be positively correlated as well.

The third objective of this research was to discover how various demographic and life-course characteristics, and interactional history variables, affected husbands' and wives' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. One of the purposes was to look for trends between various demographic and life course factors, such as religiosity and education, and subsequent problematic areas and marital adjustment and satisfaction scores. Specifically, it was of interest to determine whether the same variables that predict divorce also predicted lower marital adjustment and satisfaction scores among husbands and wives during the first few months of marriage.

The fourth objective of this study was to assess whether a positive relationship existed between husbands' and wives' perceptions of their first few months of marriage as being smooth and their actual marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores (higher scores indicate greater adjustment and more satisfaction). The fifth objective of this study, which was similar to the fourth objective, was to assess whether a positive relationship existed between husbands' and wives' perceptions of their first few months of marriage as better than expected, and their actual marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores.

The sixth objective of the study was mainly exploratory; that is, to discover what the most problematic issues husbands and wives in Utah were facing during the early months of marriage. Further, it was of interest to determine whether these reported

problems differed significantly between husbands and wives. It was assumed that problematic marital issues arise during the first few months of marriage; discovery of those early issues may benefit and alter the content and delivery methods of marriage education in the future. Moreover, identifying the problematic issues among Utah's newlywed population allows policy makers as well as marriage, health, and educational professionals to capture a finer, in-depth assessment of what can be done to prevent problems among future marriages.

The seventh and final objective, following Amato and Rogers' (1997) conceptual model, was to assess the extent to which specific marital problems mediate the impact of various demographic and life-course characteristics and interactional history variables, on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction among husbands and wives. Amato and Rogers posited that demographic characteristics influenced the likelihood of problematic areas arising, which, in turn, affected the likelihood of divorce. The demographic and life-course characteristics of interest in this study included age, previous marital history, educational level, religious homogamy and religiosity, place of marriage, and parent's current marital status. The interactional history variables included length of time dating, length of engagement, presence of a child at the time of marriage, and cohabitation prior to marriage.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

This chapter begins with an introduction of the current state of marriage in the United States, including marriage in the early months. It then includes a review of the literature specifically dealing with gender differences in marital satisfaction, marital adjustment, and perception of problematic areas within the marital relationship. This section is followed by a review of the relevant demographic and life-course history variables, as well as the pertinent interactional history variables. The next portion reviews prior research focused on marital adjustment and satisfaction among newlyweds. The chapter then provides an overview of the problematic issues facing newlyweds today, followed by a discussion of the theoretical framework employed to govern the outline and interpretation of this research and its findings. This chapter concludes by presenting research questions and hypotheses tested in this study.

Recent Research on Marriage

In recent decades, social scientists have generated fundamental and groundbreaking research on correlates of divorce (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Burns, 1984; Gigy & Kelly, 1992; Gottmann, 1994; Stanley, Markman, St. Peters, & Leber, 1995; White, 1990). This increased interest in understanding divorce is due, in part, to the fact that divorce rates are around 50% (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). Martin and Bumpass (1989) provided a higher estimate of two thirds of marriages in the United

States eventually ending in divorce. Failure rates for second marriages are close to

60%, with one fourth of these remarriages estimated to end within the first 5 years

(Cherlin, 1992; National Center for Health Statistics, 2002). Undoubtedly, it appears that

this developing trend has become a part of the American experience for many families.

Hence, researching what factors influence marital stability is becoming increasingly

important.

Recent focus on marital disruption has also spurred social scientists to examine

more closely the processes of marital formation, including mate selection (Botwin &

Buss, 1997; Grover, Russell, Schumm, & Paff-Bergen, 1985) and marital interaction

(Cohan & Bradbury, 1997; Gottman, Coan, Carrere, & Swanson, 1998; Karney &

Bradbury, 1997). An emerging component of this line of study is new research focusing

on preventative efforts such as marriage education and divorce prevention (Stanley, 2001;

Stanley et al., 1995). Additional areas of emphasis have been on the role of attachment in

marital satisfaction and adjustment (Cobb, Davila, & Bradbury, 2001; Gallo & Smith,

2001; Senchak & Leonard, 1992), the role of neuroticism in early marital stability

(Karney & Bradbury, 1997; Kelly & Conley, 1987), as well as the intergenerational

transmission of marital instability (Amato, 1996; Feng, Giarrusso, Bengston, & Frye,

1999). Among the vast quantity of marital research is a body of literature suggesting that

what occurs during the early formative years of marriage is predictive of later marital

difficulties and disruption (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Carrere, Buehlman, Gottman, Coan,

& Ruckstuhl, 2000; Gottman et al., 1998; Gottman & Levenson, 2002; Huston et al.,

2001). Thus, according to the enduring dynamics model (Huston et al.), "couples headed

for distress or divorce should have less favorable relationships as newlyweds" (p. 8).

In recent years, Amato and Rogers (1997) proposed a conceptual model of various distal and proximal causes of divorce. The distal causes, or characteristics that individuals bring with them to the relationship, are demographic and life-course variables such as age, education, and prior cohabitation. The proximal causes of divorce, or characteristics of the ongoing relationship, are marital problems such as anger, criticism, and different view on spending money. Amato and Rogers found that these demographic and life-course variables affected the likelihood that certain marital problems would arise, which, in turn, would increase the likelihood of divorce.

Gender Differences and Marital Transitions

For decades researchers have studied gender differences in relation to marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. The central body of this research has focused primarily on division of labor and household work as it relates to marital well-being (Dillaway & Broman, 2001; Greenstein, 1996; Kluwer, Heesink, & Van De Vliert, 1997; Suitor, 1991). Similar research has also centered on work, dual earner couples, and marital satisfaction (Stevens, Kiger, & Riley, 2001; Wilkie, Ferree, & Ratcliff, 1998). More recently there has been an interest in the differences in marital quality between black and white couples (Acitelli, Douvan, & Veroff, 1997; Adelmann, Chadwick, & Baerger, 1996; Timmer, Veroff, & Hatchett, 1996). This portion of the research suggests that white women are more likely to be satisfied with their marriages than black women (Broman, 1993). However, research specifically focusing on gender differences in marital adjustment, marital satisfaction, and perception of problematic areas in the relationship in the early months of marriage appears to be limited.

From the sparse body of research that has focused specifically on the early months of marriage, as it relates to problematic areas, adjustment, and satisfaction, has consistently shown that wives have lower levels of satisfaction than their husbands, both at three months of marriage and at one year (Huston, McHale, & Crouter, 1986). Meanwhile, Tucker and O'Grady (1991) suggested that females may tend to hold more optimistic and romantic notions about marriage and experience greater discrepancy between their expectations and actual marriage experiences. This premise may indicate that husbands and wives enter marriage with different expectations regarding happiness. In general, the euphoric honeymoon attitude tends to wear off sooner than most couples anticipate. This does not imply, however, that couples are utterly dissatisfied with their marriages. Rather, the romantic love appears to diminish sooner than expected (Huston et al.).

One area that has received some attention has been reasons that couples give for divorcing their spouse. Gigy and Kelly (1992), when assessing the most common reasons for divorce, found a variety of gender differences. Women reported more often than men the following reasons: not feeling loved or appreciated, spouse unable or unwilling to meet major needs, feeling put down or belittled, role conflicts, spouse's extramarital affairs, and violence. Furthermore, women reported more reasons for divorce than men. On the other hand, men more frequently reported substance abuse, an unreliable spouse, and spending too much time with friends as reasons for divorce.

The Role of Demographic and Life-Course

Characteristics on Marital Satisfaction

Significant factors to consider when studying marital satisfaction and marital adjustment include demographic characteristics and life course factors. Several studies, including many longitudinal studies, have demonstrated that marital distress can be predicted from demographic characteristics and personality variables (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Bumpass & Martin, 1991; Kelly & Conley, 1987; Kurdek, 1991; Larson & Holman, 1994; Martin & Bumpass, 1989; White, 1990). The demographic and life-course characteristics of interest in the present study include age, previous marital history, educational level, religious homogamy and religiosity, place of marriage, and parent's current marital status. Each of these characteristics is examined in turn.

Age

Among the most analyzed predictors of marital distress and divorce is that of age at marriage. Martin and Bumpass (1989) found that age at marriage was the strongest predictor of divorce in the first 5 years of marriage, and concluded that persons who marry during their teen years are particularly likely to separate or divorce. In a similar vein, a recent study by the National Center for Health Statistics (2002) supported this steady predictor. It was reported that after 10 years of marriage, there were twice as many separations or divorces among brides who were under age 18 when they were married compared with brides who waited until at least age 25 to marry. This is congruent with earlier research that suggested that marital disruption rates were two thirds lower among

women who delayed marriage until at least age 25, compared to women marrying as teenagers (Bumpass & Martin, 1991). Odell and Quinn (1998) found that age at marriage was positively correlated with marital adjustment during the first year of marriage. Amato and Rogers (1997), when focusing on specific problems, discovered that each year couples postponed marriage was linked with an 11% decline in reports of problems due to jealousy, a 7% decline in reports of problems due to drinking or drug use, and a 21% decline in reports of problems due to infidelity.

Several risk factors are found among couples who marry early. Couples who marry early may have spouses with whom they are not properly acquainted, may be ill prepared for new marital roles, and frequently lack sufficient financial assets (Booth & Edwards, 1985). Other studies suggest that young couples often do not have adequate overall life skills when entering the marriage, have lower than average earning abilities, and have more alternatives to the current marriage with fewer barriers to divorce (Bahr, Chappell, & Leigh, 1983). Hence, declines in divorce in the last decade may be attributed to the sharp increase in the age at first marriage, as well as a rise in couples' cohabiting prior to marriage (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000).

Previous Marital History

The research is clear when it comes to studying the stability of second marriages. The likelihood of marital problems and marital disruption is higher for those in remarriages than those in first marriages (Amato, 1996; Amato & Rogers, 1997; Martin & Bumpass, 1989). One study that focused specifically on the first year of marriage and changes in the marital relationship discovered that general marital quality decreased over

the one-year period, and particularly for couples in remarriages (Kurdek, 1991). Some explanations include the tendency of perpetuating the same problems that occurred in the first marriage to subsequent marriages. Similarly, those who have divorced once may not be opposed to the idea, and may not be as committed to preserving the marriage as couples in first marriages. Additionally, children and stepchildren may cause added strain to the relationship (Kurdek, 1999).

Education

Numerous studies confirm the positive correlation between educational level and marital stability. Bumpass and Martin (1991) reported a strong effect concerning education and the probability of divorce, even when controlling for age at marriage. Particularly, they found that compared with women with less than a high school education, marital dissolution rates were one third lower among women high school graduates, and four fifths lower among women college graduates. These trends confirm their earlier findings regarding education and marital disruption (Martin & Bumpass, 1989). Other research suggests that those who obtained a higher education were more likely to marry at a later age, and subsequently reported lower levels of negative sentiment (Feng et al., 1999). Kurdek (1991) looked at marital stability and changes in marital quality among newlyweds, and concluded that those who separated or divorced during the first year of marriage had fewer years of education. Furthermore, the couples that had fewer years of education and yet remained together reported larger decreases in marital quality. Additionally, a recent study conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (2001) found that college graduates were more likely to marry and less likely to separate

than persons who did not graduate from college. Thus, education level is a considerable predictor of marital disruption as well as marital quality.

Religiosity

In one early study, religiosity was the single strongest predictor of marital adjustment, even when controlling for other variables, including social desirability (Filsinger & Wilson, 1984). It appears that the greater the emphasis a couple puts on religion, the greater the marital adjustment. Wilson and Filsinger (1986) further discovered that beyond a relationship between religiosity and marital adjustment, they specifically found that religious rituals, experiences, and beliefs correlated positively with marital adjustment. A longitudinal study of marital problems and subsequent divorce conducted by Amato and Rogers (1997) revealed a strong inverse relationship between church attendance and jealousy, moodiness, infidelity, irritating habits, spending money foolishly, and drinking and drug use. Similarly, having no religious affiliation increases the probability of divorce (National Center for Health Statistics, 2002). Overall, the research suggests that the higher the importance both spouses attach to religion, the lower the likelihood of marital disruption.

Religious Homogamy

Religious homogamy also has been found to influence marital satisfaction (Heaton, 1984). In one study, Bumpass and Martin (1991) reported 40% higher marital disruption rates when one partner was Catholic and the other was not. Moreover, research indicates that denominational affiliation homogamy is the most crucial factor, while church attendance homogamy was less so (Heaton & Pratt, 1990). Religion provides a set

of guidelines and expectations concerning how to live, and marriages tend to run more smoothly when both spouses are in agreement with these religious norms.

Place of Marriage

A seldom-studied variable in the literature on marital satisfaction and adjustment concerns the place a couple marries. This likely relates to a couple's religiosity and religious homogamy, in addition to a couples' religious ideology. In a study involving members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), Heaton and Goodman (1985) found that couples who did not marry in an LDS temple (encouraged for LDS members) were about five times more likely to divorce than those who did.

Parent's Current Marital Status

Research consistently demonstrates that parental divorce increases the probability of adult children's divorce (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Bumpass & Martin, 1991; Bumpass, Sweet, & Cherlin, 1991; Cherlin, 1992; Greenberg & Nay, 1982; McLanahan & Bumpass, 1988). One study reported a 70% increase in odds of divorce within the first 5 years of marriage among Whites and African Americans whose parents were divorced (Bumpass et al.). Moreover, this intergenerational transmission of divorce tends to be more probable for women than men (Feng et al., 1999; National Center for Health Statistics, 2002). Similarly, women from divorced families tend to marry at earlier ages than women raised in intact families (Feng et al.; Glenn & Kramer, 1987). Moreover, the likelihood of marital disruption is especially high when both spouses experienced parental divorce (Amato, 1996; Amato & Rogers; Bumpass & Martin). Furthermore, McLanahan and Bumpass found that women who spent a portion of their childhood in a

single-parent family were more likely to experience a premarital pregnancy, bear children earlier in the marriage, and see their own marriages dissolved. However, Amato noted that selection effects and small effect sizes may contribute to differences in many studies.

From a review of previous research of demographic and life-course characteristics on marital satisfaction and stability, it is clear that these factors directly and/or indirectly influence husbands' and wives' perceptions of marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. The previous research, however, largely failed to focus on the influence of the demographic and life course characteristics in relation to the first few months of marriage, a time when patterns and habits are being established.

Interactional History Variables and Marital Satisfaction

The interactional history variables in this study included the characteristics of the couples that are a feature of the ongoing relationship. The interactional history variables of interest in this study include: length of time dating and length of engagement, presence of a child at the time of marriage, and cohabitation prior to marriage.

Length of Dating and Engagement

Research frequently lends support to the premise that the length of the dating and engagement period decreases the likelihood of marital disruption (Kurdek, 1991). One early study suggested that the length of the dating relationship, prior to the couple marrying, was even a stronger predictor of marital satisfaction than age at marriage (Bayer, 1968). Grover et al. (1985) also found a strong correlation between couples'

length of time spent dating their current spouses and marital satisfaction. They concluded that couples who had dated for more than two years consistently scored higher on measures of marital satisfaction, whereas couples who had dated fewer than two years had a wide variety of scores, ranging from very high to very low. The researchers explained that "the greater the opportunity for couples to know each other prior to deciding to marry and the greater their chance to experience some of the ordinary problems, irritations, and frustrations of intimate relationships, the more informed their choice of a marital partner will be" (p. 383). A review of prior research lacked specific data on length of engagement.

Presence of Children

According to a recent report from the National Center for Health Statistics (2002), having one or more children at the onset of the marriage increases the probability of marital disruption. This assertion has held true for a number of years, and over a number of studies, many of which looked specifically at premarital births and pregnancies (Bumpass & Martin, 1991; Kurdek, 1991; Martin & Bumpass, 1989). Although dealing with a child brings about distinct problems, many other factors that contribute to premarital pregnancy are also likely to contribute to the marital instability such as income, age, education, and previous marital status.

Cohabitation Prior to Marriage

Early research found mixed results on the effect of cohabiting prior to marriage, with much of the research suggesting that cohabitation had little or no effect on marital satisfaction and stability (Jacques & Chason, 1979; Watson, 1983). Some studies found a

positive effect of cohabiting on staying married (White, 1987). It was viewed as a

"training ground" of sorts to test the compatibility of a possible future marriage.

However, the majority of the current research demonstrates a negative impact of

cohabiting prior to marriage (Amato, 1996; National Center for Health Statistics, 2002), a

finding known as the cohabitation effect (Cohan & Kleinbaum, 2002). This term suggests

that couples who cohabit before marriage experience greater marital instability than

couples who do not cohabit. Some studies revealed that couples who cohabit prior to

marriage have 50% higher disruption rates compared to couples that do not cohabit prior

to marriage (Bumpass & Martin, 1991; Bumpass & Sweet, 1989). Stack and Eshleman

(1998) found that being married was nearly three and one-half times more closely tied to

the variance in happiness than was cohabitation. This relationship was consistently strong

in 16 of the 17 nations studied. With regards to communication processes, Cohan and

Kleinbaum found that couples who cohabited before marriage exhibited more negative

problem solving and support behaviors compared to spouses who did not cohabit prior to

marriage, even when controlling for sociodemographic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal

variables.

There is also a body of research that suggests that cohabitation by itself is not the

only determining factor influencing marital instability. This research suggests selective

effects may be present in that men and women who were less committed to marriage and

more accepting of divorce being more likely to cohabit to begin with (Axinn & Thornton,

1992; Bumpass & Martin, 1991). Booth and Johnson (1988) suggested that cohabitation

was not associated with marital happiness. Rather, they found that couples who cohabited

prior to marriage had lower levels of marital interaction, and higher levels of marital

disagreement and marital instability. Other explanations focus on union duration (Cohan & Kleinbaum, 2002). Marital satisfaction tends to decline during the early years of marriage to begin with (Kurdek, 1991), and cohabitors are further along that road when they do get married (Cohan & Kleinbaum). Although there is not a definitive answer to the "cohabitation question," the research to date does suggest a negative effect on marital stability.

The body of literature previously reviewed focuses mainly on demographic characteristics in relation to couples who have been married for more than one year. However, the research involving these same demographic characteristics in relation to the first few months of marriage appears limited. Thus, this study examined the effects these demographic risk factors have on newlywed husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores.

Marital Adjustment and Marital Satisfaction Among Newlyweds

Despite the expectations and illusions of many, including newlyweds themselves, the early years of marriage typically are known for being challenging and a time where a number of adjustments are being made (Huston et al., 2001). Nationally, it is estimated that, on average, first marriages that end in divorce will typically last seven to eight years (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). In addition, 20% of first marriages are expected to end within the first 5 years (National Center for Health Statistics, 2001). Studies repeatedly affirm that marital satisfaction decreases over the course of the first year of marriage, with couples who experience a premarital pregnancy, and couples in a

remarriage, showing the greatest declines in marital quality (Huston et al., 1986; Kurdek, 1991).

Changes and adjustments in the early months and years of marriage often affect couples differently. It has been noted that it is not necessarily the amount of conflict that predicts marital satisfaction, but rather how couples handle the conflict that is key (Gottman et al., 1998; Markman et al., 1994), and more specifically, how males handle conflict (Gottman, 1994). Moreover, research suggests that couples develop their individual habits and styles of resolving conflict, which often perpetuate throughout the marital years, within the first year of marriage (Schneewind & Gerhard, 2002). An additional change in the first years of marriage is that of marital satisfaction. Karney and Bradbury (1997), using the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (Schumm et al., 1986), revealed that although the majority of spouses report high levels of satisfaction early in the marriage, "the variance in this parameter indicates that significant individual differences exist even within 6 months of the wedding" (p. 1087). This finding supports the premise that many couples may be entering marriage with idealistic and unrealistic expectations concerning the "blissful" state of marriage, only to find that it not only may be more difficult, but also quite different than expected. For example, engaged couples, in one study, were found to have had much higher idealized perceptions of marriage than extended-dating individuals or married couples (Bonds-Raacke, Bearden, Carriere, Anderson, & Nicks, 2001).

Often, part of adjusting to the early months of marriage includes a desire to change one's spouse to conform to one's idealistic perceptions. If a spouse does not make these changes, or the pushing becomes too strong for either spouse, conflicts often

arise, as expectations go unmet. Hence, Odell and Quinn (1998) concluded, "Desiring change in one's spouse is at least one contributing factor to a decrease in marital adjustment" (p. 109).

While many studies have focused on the early years of marriage and the adjustments and problems many newlyweds tend to encounter, few studies have specifically focused on the first few months of marriage in relation to marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. Hence, this study focused on husbands' and wives' perceptions of the first few months of marriage, including measures of marital satisfaction and marital adjustment.

Problematic Issues Facing Newlyweds

There are a number of issues in the first few months and years of marriage that influence both partners' satisfaction with the relationship. Huston and colleagues suggest that changes in the first two years of marriage foreshadow their long-term outcomes after 13 years (Huston et al., 2001). Specifically, they found that differences in newlywed romance levels, in addition to the amount of expressed negative affect toward each other, predicted whether or not the couple was happy 13 years later. A longitudinal study with newlyweds revealed that lower levels of positive affect during the first few months of marriage predicted divorces up to 14 years later (Gottman et al., 1998). Other problem areas among newlyweds noted by social scientists included lack of economic stability, emotional dependence, immaturity, and conflicts regarding each of the spouse's family of origin (Quinn & Odell, 1998). Amato and Rogers (1997), using longitudinal data, investigated marital problems and discovered that jealousy, infidelity, spending money

foolishly, and substance abuse were the most consistent predictors of divorce. Additionally, they found that couples who eventually divorced reported a greater number of problems as early as 9 to 12 years prior to the divorce.

Not all research, however, focuses on conflict and communication patterns as predictors of marital satisfaction and marital disruption. In the California Divorce Mediation project, the most frequent reasons for divorcing were neither habitual conflicts nor expression of negative affect. Rather, 80% of the men and women who divorced explained that it was the gradual growing apart that included losing a sense of closeness and not feeling loved and appreciated (Gigy & Kelly, 1992). This research suggested that at least some divorces, rather than ending in a blowout, end in burnout, which implies that the romantic love in the initial stage of marriage becomes more difficult to sustain, requiring more effort from each spouse, which may not be forthcoming.

Huston et al. (1986) studied the first year of marriage and discovered a number of patterns that often emerged following the honeymoon. Specifically, they found that couples showed declines over the first year in the amount of time spent engaging in leisure activities together, the frequency in expression of affectionate behavior (hugging, kissing, etc.), and less significant declines in time spent talking with each other. Possibly the most notable change to occur during the first year was the dramatic decline in couples saying and doing things that brought each other pleasure. Over time, couples simply tended to take one another for granted. They failed, either consciously or subconsciously, to do the little things that brought them together in the first place. Huston and colleagues summarized it this way, "Husbands and wives a year into marriage were considerably

less affectionate, less approving, and less disclosing than they had been as newlyweds" (p. 123).

The Center for Marriage and Family (2000) at Creighton University conducted a study entitled "Time, Sex, and Money: The First Five Years of Marriage" that gives a profile of couples married 5 years or less, and reports on their experiences and problematic issues. This groundbreaking study was unique in that it captured insights from those couples married from one year to five years, a time period generally known as the critical years (Gottman & Levenson, 2000). As the title of the report indicates, the most frequently reported problematic issues among all couples studied were related to time, sex, and money. More specifically, the Center for Marriage and Family reported that the number one problem reported by newly married couples was balancing job and family, followed by frequency of sexual relations, and then debt brought into the marriage. The next three problematic issues reported dealt with the husband's employment, the financial situation, and expectations about household tasks. There were, however, differences found as the variable cohabitation was added, as well as the number of years married. Balancing job and family did not appear problematic for couples who had never cohabited. Moreover, for those married less than a year, the top two problematic issues were related to money; namely, debt brought into marriage, and financial situation. It is clear that money matters in a marriage, perhaps not having to do so much with quantity, but rather the habits concerning how the partners handle the money. This becomes an increasingly fragile issue as more and more newlyweds enter the "age of the credit card" earlier on.

An earlier study conducted by Bentler and Newcomb (1978) revealed similar findings as the Center for Marriage and Family study. Specifically, they found 12 areas that were more problematic for the divorced group compared to the married group. These 12 areas included: attention to another, mutual affection, adultery, sex relations, finances, nonsupport, drug abuse, friends, selfishness, bickering, independence, and career conflicts. Although this newlywed sample was followed up four years later, the key issues among newlyweds appeared fairly consistent over time; namely, time spent together, whether this is due to work or school issues, or spending too much time with friends, affection and sexual relations, and financial issues including debt brought into the marriage.

Despite the abundant amount of research that focuses on areas of disagreement in the early years of marriage, other than the Center for Marriage and Family study (2000), there is clearly a gap in the research pertaining to specific problems newlyweds experience in the early months of marriage. Subsequently, this study aimed to explore and reveal the problematic areas that newlyweds encounter in the early months of marriage.

<center>Theoretical Framework</center>

The approach taken in this study in understanding and explaining marital adjustment, marital satisfaction, and problematic areas among newlyweds was grounded in two related theoretical frameworks; namely, symbolic interactionsim and role theory. According to LaRossa and Reitzes (1993), symbolic interactionsim is a theoretical framework describing how humans, in relation to one another, create symbolic worlds

that, in turn, shape human behavior. In other words, this perspective posits that humans develop self-identities and role expectations through social interaction. Role theory, often viewed as a more structured version of symbolic interactionsim (Burr, Leigh, Day, & Constantine, 1979) viewed behavior as following role expectations, whereas symbolic interactionsim posits that role expectations follow behaviors (LaRossa & Reitzes). From the symbolic interaction perspective, Jeffries (2000) defines a marital relationship as "an ongoing process of meaningful interaction" (p. 232).

Newly married couples likely enter the marriage with two separate concepts of what marriage is and what it means, depending on their prior interaction with others, including family and other married couples. When these views combine, a number of differences may arise and adjustments must be made. According to role theory, marital adjustment includes adjusting to new roles as well as the role expectations of the spouse (Dyer, 1962). Dyer suggests that conflicts often arise according to two scenarios; first, when the conceptions of roles of one spouse are in conflict with those of the other spouse; and second, when the role performance of one spouse differs from the role expectations of the other spouse. Moreover, Burr and colleagues (1979) further argued that marital satisfaction was based on the quality of each spouse's role enactment, which depends, in turn, on couple clarity and consensus in defining role expectations. These various roles are defined by societal norms and are formed from family and other social interaction.

In analyzing marital adjustment and marital satisfaction, it is imperative to understand that both individual and relational factors are operating concurrently. Marital adjustment and satisfaction, as well as the perception of marital problems, are best understood when one considers the interplay between one spouse's perceptions and

understood when one considers the interplay between one spouse's perceptions and expectations of marriage, including the new marital role and how the partner's perception and expectations influences the other's actions regarding what constitutes appropriate behavior. How couples handle problems, in turn, depends, in large measure, on how each spouse perceives the problem, which is based on their construction of their roles as directed by their previous interactions and perceptions. Thus, the differences husbands and wives have regarding marital adjustment, marital satisfaction, and perceived problematic areas, are directly influenced by each spouses' role enactment, which stems from ambiguity in role expectations. Further, the various demographic and life-course characteristics, and the interactional history variables all contribute to the lack of consensus in defining the role expectations.

It was hypothesized that husbands and wives who possessed demographic characteristics such as cohabitation, lower levels of religiosity and education, which have been noted as risk factors for marital adjustment and marital satisfaction, would experience a lack of role consensus and subsequent decision making pertaining to values and affection, as noted by Spanier (1976). This lack of consensus will affect how the husband and wife perceive how well they are enacting their own role and how well their spouse is enacting his/her role. Because marital adjustment, marital satisfaction, and problematic areas are evaluated subjectively, the demographic variables, or risk factors, will contribute to disagreement on important issues, which, in turn negatively affects both spouses' role enactment and perception of the other spouse's role enactment. Further, this study posits that spouses coming to a marriage relationship with the aforementioned demographic characteristics, or negative risk factors, will experience lower levels of

marital satisfaction and marital adjustment because they lack preparation and/or role models for marital role performance. Booth and Edwards (1985) suggested that poor role performance decreases marital satisfaction, which, in turn leads to more problems and marital instability.

<p style="text-align:center">Research Questions and Hypotheses</p>

There were seven central questions that motivated the current study among the newlywed population in Utah. These seven questions are outlined below and subsequent hypotheses are postulated.

1. Are there significant gender differences among newlyweds regarding the following areas of study? It was hypothesized that wives would have lower overall marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores, perceive possible problematic areas as more severe than husbands, perceive their first few months of marriage as more difficult, and perceive their transition to marriage as being more difficult than expected, when compared to husbands.

2. How well do newlyweds in Utah adjust to marriage, and how satisfied were they during the early months of marriage? Specifically, are a few months of marriage a sufficient amount of time to notice significant differences between couples in marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores? Additionally, is there a positive correlation between marital adjustment scores and marital satisfaction scores as measured by the RDAS and the KMSS among newlyweds? It was hypothesized that there would be statistically significant differences among newlywed marital adjustment and satisfaction scores within the first few months of marriage. It was also hypothesized that a positive

correlation exists between marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores as measured by the RDAS and the KMSS among newlyweds, thus establishing concurrent validity between the RDAS and the KMSS among a newlywed sample.

3. How do various demographic and life course characteristics, and interactional history variables affect marital adjustment and marital satisfaction? What variables are the most consistent predictors of lower marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores? The demographic and life course characteristics of interest in this study included age, previous marital history, educational level, religious homogamy and religiosity, place of marriage, and parent's current marital status. The interactional history variables included length of time dating and length of engagement, presence of a child at the time of marriage, and cohabitation prior to marriage. It was hypothesized that these same variables that have been predictive of divorce will also predict lower marital adjustment and satisfaction scores. Specifically, it was hypothesized that the husbands and wives in circumstances outlined below would have statistically significantly lower marital adjustment and marital satisfaction than husbands and wives who did not possess these characteristics.

(a). Husbands and wives who married as teenagers compared to older newlywed couples.

(b). Husbands and wives in remarriages compared with husbands and wives in first marriages.

(c). Husbands and wives who had fewer years of education compared with husbands and wives with more years of education.

(d). Husbands and wives who perceived themselves as "somewhat religious," "slightly religious," or "not at all religious," compared with husbands and wives who perceived themselves as "fairly religious" or "very religious."

(e). Husbands and wives who were of different religious affiliations compared with husbands and wives who belonged to the same religious affiliation.

(f). Husbands and wives who were not married in a religious institution (i.e., church, synagogue, mosque, L.D.S. temple) compared with husbands and wives who were.

(g). Husbands and wives who came from divorced parents compared with husbands and wives who came from intact families.

(h). Husbands and wives who had dated less than three months and had engagement periods of less than three months, compared with husbands and wives who dated for longer periods and experienced longer engagements.

(i). Husbands and wives who brought a child (or children) into the marriage (through a premarital pregnancy or from a previous marriage) compared with husbands and wives who did not have children prior to marriage.

(j). Husbands and wives who cohabited prior to marriage compared with husbands and wives who did not.

4. Is there a statistically significant positive relationship between husbands' and wives' perceptions of their first few months of marriage as being smooth and their actual marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores? It was hypothesized that there was a positive relationship between husbands and wives who perceived their first few months of marriage as "smooth," and higher marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores.

5. Is there a statistically significant positive relationship between husbands' and wives' perceptions of their first few months of marriage being better than expected and their actual marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores? It was hypothesized that there was a positive relationship between husbands and wives who perceived their first few months of marriage as better or much better than expected, and higher marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores.

6. What are the most problematic areas in marriage as perceived by newlywed husbands and wives in Utah? Further, are there significant gender differences in reports of problematic areas? It was hypothesized that significant gender differences did exist in identification of problematic areas.

7. To what extent do marital problematic areas mediate the impact of demographic and life-course characteristics, and interactional history variables on husbands' and wives' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction? It was hypothesized that the demographic variables, life-course characteristics, and interactional history variables characterized in this study predict husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. It was further hypothesized that including the problematic area subscales in addition to the demographic characteristics in the regression analysis would allow greater prediction of marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores than either demographic characteristics or problematic areas alone.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Sample

The survey population for this study included newlywed couples who married in Utah (minus Salt Lake County) between January 2, 2002 and July 31, 2002, a period of 7 months. In total, 485 couples (including both husband and wife) were contacted to participate in the study. Because the focus of the study was specifically on "younger" newlyweds, only couples in which each spouse was 35 years of age or younger were included in the final sample.

Participants included husbands and wives between the ages of 17-35. Ages of the wives ranged from 17 to 35 years (M= 21.12, SD = 3.00) while ages of the husbands ranged from 18 to 35 years (M= 23.94, SD = 3.36). The majority (86%) of the participants, however, were between the ages of 18-26, with a median age for wives of 21 and the median age for husbands of 23 years. In addition, 6% of the husbands and 7% of the wives indicated that this was a remarriage for them. Couples ranged in marriage length from 2 to 10 months with an average of 6 months of being married. The overwhelming majority (92%) of the participants identified themselves as White, non-Hispanic, while 3.5% identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, and the remainder of the participants were of other races. When asked to indicate their present religious affiliation, 85% identified themselves as LDS, 3% identified themselves as Catholics, and the remaining 11% were of other religious affiliations, or had no religious affiliation.

This was a self-selected convenience sample. The survey participants' names were obtained from a brief marriage survey they filled out that was included in a marriage video sponsored by Utah's Governor's Commission on Marriage. Beginning the second day of January 2002, Utah's county courthouses (except for Salt Lake County) began distributing a brief 18-minute marriage education video entitled "The Marriage News You Can Use" to all couples who applied for a marriage license.

Procedures

A packet, including a cover letter explaining the survey, an information sheet, and a survey for the wife and a survey for the husband, was mailed out to the 485 couples who had mailed in their brief marriage survey reply cards (see Appendix A). The packet each couple received contained two copies of two marital instruments: the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS) and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS). The entire survey was five pages long for each spouse, with an additional front page that focused on general demographic characteristics, to be completed by either spouse. The husband and wife were instructed to complete both surveys separately from one another, and to mail the surveys back in a pre-addressed postage-paid envelope. Each survey included an ID number that was used to track the response rate, and was never used to identify the actual participants' names. As an incentive for survey completion, a $2 bill was inserted in each packet. The packets were mailed out first class, and were thus forwarded to all couples who had moved and left an address with the post office.

After 10 days, a card was mailed out to all couples who had not responded, thanking them if they had returned the survey, and encouraging them to do so if they had

not yet returned their surveys (see Appendix A). After another 10 days, a new packet

of surveys (minus the $2 bill) was mailed out, encouraging the couples to complete the

surveys if they had misplaced their first copies. Following another ten days, a final

reminder card was mailed out that encouraged those not heard from to return their

surveys (see Appendix A).

Of the 485 couples that received surveys, 289 returned them. However, 38

couples were over the age of 35, 12 couples were married before 2002 and had obtained a

survey by other means, four couples had incomplete surveys, two couples had divorced,

and one spouse had passed away before completing the survey. All of these couples were

eliminated from the sample, leaving 232 completed surveys. Additionally, there were 52

couples who could not be contacted due to an insufficient address or inability to contact

because there was no forwarding address. Subtracting the undeliverable surveys from 485

left 433. Thus, the 232 completed surveys that qualified for the sample gave a final

response rate of 54%.

Instrumentation

While the primary purpose of the initial survey included in the video was to

gather information in relation to the video, a second purpose, the purpose for this study,

was to obtain names and addresses so that the follow-up survey could be administered by

mail a few months after couples obtained their marriage licenses. Thus, couples were not

aware that they would receive additional surveys.

One of the instruments included in the follow-up survey was the KMSS, which

was used to assess the marital satisfaction of newlyweds, specifically within the first 6

months of marriage. The KMSS (Schumm et al., 1986) was developed to evaluate an individual's satisfaction with their spouse, with their marriage, and with their overall relationship. It was chosen due to its brevity and simplicity in measuring overall evaluation of the marital relationship.

The instrument consists of three questions, each beginning with the phrase "how satisfied are you with..." your husband/wife as a spouse, with your marriage, and with your relationship with your husband/wife. The instrument employs a numeric 7-point scale with response categories ranging from extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied. The final score is obtained by summing the scores for the three individual items. Scores on the KMSS may range between 3 and 21, with higher scores signifying higher levels of satisfaction and lower scores indicating greater dissatisfaction with marriage (see Appendix B). Crane, Middleton, and Bean (2000) established a criterion score of 17 as a cutoff point in distinguishing between distressed and nondistressed couples in relation to marital satisfaction. Scores of 17 and over indicate an individual is nondistressed, while scores of 16 and under indicate distress.

The reliability of the KMSS has been relatively high and consistent over time, with alpha coefficients ranging from .89 to .97 (Callahan, 1997; Mitchell, Newell, & Schumm, 1983; Schumm, Bollman, Jurich, & Hatch, 1997; Schumm, Nichols, Schectman, & Grigsby, 1983). Intercorrelations among items ranged from .93 to .95 (Schumm et al., 1983). Over a 10-week interval, test-restest reliability was found to be .71 (Mitchell et al.).

Evidence for the concurrent and discriminant validity of the KMSS, with alphas ranging from .75 to .93, has been substantiated over the years in correlations with the

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), RDAS (Crane et al., 2000), the Quality

Marriage Index (Schumm et al., 1986), and the Locke Wallace Marital Adjustment Test

(White, Stahmann, & Furrow, 1994). Schumm et al. (1986) concluded that the "scale

seems to be able to assess one dimension of marital quality (satisfaction) with enough

items to estimate internal consistency reliability and to detect subtle differences in

sources of satisfaction while not requiring the space required for longer scales" (p. 385).

A second measure, the RDAS (Busby et al., 1995), was included in the survey to

measure marital adjustment among the newlywed sample. The RDAS is described as "an

improved version of the DAS that can be used to evaluate dyadic adjustment in distressed

and nondistressed relationships" (p. 305). The RDAS is a shorter version of the original

DAS developed by Spanier (1976). The RDAS consists of a total of 14 items (18 fewer

than the DAS), and contains three subscales: the dyadic consensus subscale, the dyadic

satisfaction subscale, and the dyadic cohesion subscale (see Appendix B). Total scores

range from 0 to 69, with a single criterion score being set at 48, with scores of 47 or

below indicating a distressed individual (Crane et al., 2000). The dyadic consensus

subscale measures a couple's level of agreement concerning issues such as religion,

money, household tasks, recreation, friends, and time spent together. Dyadic satisfaction

addresses the level of tension within the relationship and assesses to what extent each

partner has considered leaving the relationship. Dyadic cohesion measures the extent to

which the couple engages in outside interests together.

The RDAS was chosen due to its brevity, its ability to maintain the original

scale's strengths of multidimensionality, and its ability to distinguish between distressed

and nondistressed individuals (Busby et al., 1995). Furthermore, relatively high

correlations have been established between the KMSS and the RDAS, with Pearson correlation coefficients ranging from .78 for the RDAS and KMSS, to .97 for the RDAS and DAS (Crane et al., 2000). The RDAS has shown good internal consistency and reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .90 and a Spearman-Brown split-half reliability coefficient of .95 (Busby et al.).

The foundation of role theory relates well with the instruments utilized in this research. Another reason for selecting the RDAS as the instrument to measure marital adjustment was its ability to assess adjustment on three discrete subscales: dyadic consensus, dyadic satisfaction, and dyadic cohesion. Spanier (1976), originator of the original DAS, defined the dyadic consensus subscale as "consensus on matters of importance to marital functioning" (p. 17). Within the dyadic consensus subscale are three additional subscales: decision making, values, and affection. These are the areas that measure the extent of agreement or disagreement within the relationship, such as making major decisions, conventionality, demonstrations of affection, and career decisions. Thus, from the role theory standpoint in this research, differences and disagreements in the areas outlined in the RDAS can be traced back to a failure in clearly defining the role expectations, or the ambiguity in role performance.

In addition to utilizing the KMSS and the RDAS, a list of 30 potential problematic issues in marriage was listed, and each spouse was asked to indicate how problematic each particular issue was in their marriage. This list was presented simply to assess the most problematic issues that newlyweds face during the early months of marriage. The Likert scale for each issue ranged from 0 (not at all problematic) to 9 (very problematic), and allowed couples to mark "not applicable" if necessary. The original list

of 42 problematic areas was created by the Center for Marriage and Family (2000),
and was used in their study of couples in the first 5 years of marriage. For the sake of
brevity and space, the current study limited the list of problematic issues to 30. To assess
overall perception of the extent to which these 30 areas were problematic, mean scores on
all 30 areas were computed for each individual. These problematic issues were selected
based on their higher response rate for each item, as reported by the Center for Marriage
and Family.

Data Analysis

To answer the seven specified research questions of the study, data analyses were
completed through the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS
version 11.5) computer program. The alpha level was set at .05 a priori. The first research
question focused on possible gender differences between husbands and wives on various
constructs. Gender differences regarding marital adjustment, marital satisfaction, and
perceived problematic areas were measured by using paired samples *t* tests. Other gender
differences involving newlyweds' expectations and perceived transitions to marriage
were analyzed by frequencies, and a subsequent nonparametric Wilcoxon signed ranks
test.

The second research question was aimed specifically at describing husbands' and
wives' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction, by computing and comparing mean
scores. Frequencies for couples that scored in the "distressed" range on each measure
were totaled and reported. The mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and frequency
were calculated for each husband and wife. Additionally, Pearson correlations were

carried out to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between the husbands' and wives' scores on the KMSS and the RDAS.

The statistics used for research question number three, which focused on relationships between various demographic and life course characteristics, and interactional history variables, and predicting marital satisfaction and marital adjustment were independent samples t tests, and analysis of variance.

The fourth research question, determining whether or not a positive relationship existed between wives' and husbands' perceptions of their first few months of marriage as being smooth, and their actual marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores, was measured using a separate correlation analysis for both husband and wife.

The fifth research question, similar to the fourth question, focused on whether a positive relationship existed between wives' and husbands' perceptions of their first few months of marriage as being better than expected, and their actual marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores. This hypothesis was tested using a separate correlation analysis for both husband and wife.

Research question number six had two parts. The first goal, exploring the most problematic areas perceived by newlyweds, was analyzed using frequency analyses, and highlighted in this report are the 10 areas most frequently identified as most problematic in the early months of marriage. The second portion of the question, which focused on gender differences in reports of problematic issues, was analyzed with paired samples t tests, comparing overall problematic perception scores between husbands and wives.

The seventh and final question was to assess the extent to which marital problematic areas mediated the impact of demographic and life-course characteristics,

and interactional history variables on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. This was accomplished by first examining the correlations among the variables and then regressing the demographic variables on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. The problem subscales were then regressed on martial satisfaction and marital adjustment and the variance was compared to the variance explained by the regression analysis involving the demographic variables.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Objective 1

In this study of 232 newlywed couples from Utah, the central purposes were to assess the early months of marriage with regards to marital satisfaction, marital adjustment, and problematic areas. It was also of interest to explore whether significant gender differences existed within these areas, in addition to perceptions and expectations regarding marriage, various demographic characteristics that husbands and wives bring to the marriage from their families of origin and their relationship history. The research questions and results of this study will be systematically detailed in the following pages.

The first question was to determine whether there were significant gender differences between the newlyweds' scores on marital adjustment, marital satisfaction, and perceived problematic areas. Further gender differences were tested on perception of husbands' and wives' transition to marriage and expectations regarding the first few months of marriage. It was hypothesized that wives had statistically significantly lower marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores, perceived problematic areas as more severe in the relationship, perceived their first few months of marriage as more difficult, and perceived their transition to marriage as being more difficult than expected, compared with husbands.

Before scores could be calculated and comparisons made, reliability analyses were carried out for both the KMSS and the RDAS. The internal consistency of the KMSS was fairly high, as the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .88 and .94, for husbands

and wives, respectively. The Cronbach's alpha for the RDAS was lower, yet acceptable for husbands, .85, and wives, .86.

Using the RDAS to measure marital adjustment among the newlyweds, with a possible range of scores from 0 to 69 (higher scores indicating better adjustment), paired *t* tests indicated no statistically significant differences ($p = .05$) between wives' mean scores and husbands' mean scores. The KMSS was used to measure marital satisfaction, with a possible range of scores from 3 to 21 (higher scores indicating more satisfaction), and revealed similar results. Specifically, paired *t* tests indicated no statistically significant differences ($p = .05$) between wives' mean marital satisfaction scores and husbands' mean marital satisfaction scores. Further, with a possible range of scores on the problematic areas from 0 to 270 (higher scores indicating an increase in severity of problems), paired t tests indicated no statistically significant differences ($p = .05$) between wives' scores and husbands' scores.

The remaining questions of the first question focused on gender differences between wives' and husbands' perceptions and expectations of the first few months of marriage. Table 1 provides frequencies that reveal how wives and husbands described their transition to marriage. A total of 12.6% of the wives perceived their transition to marriage as "fairly difficult" or "very difficult," compared to 11.8% of the husbands. However, a Wilcoxon signed ranks test revealed no statistically significant differences ($p = .05$) between wives and husbands' perceptions of their transition to marriage.

Table 1

Frequency of Newlywed Wives' and Husbands' Perceived Transition to Marriage

		Wives			Husbands	
Transition	*n*	Valid %	Cumulative %	*n*	Valid %	Cumulative %
Very smooth	90	39.0	39.0	86	37.6	37.6
Fairly smooth	112	48.5	87.4	116	50.7	88.2
Fairly difficult	19	8.2	95.7	22	9.6	97.8
Very difficult	10	4.3	100.0	5	2.2	100.0
Subtotal	231	99.6		229	98.7	
Missing	1			3		
Total	232	100.0		232	100.00	

Table 2 presents the frequencies of wives' and husbands' expectations concerning the first few months of marriage. A total of 20.1% of the wives described their first few months of marriage as "more difficult than expected" or "much more difficult than expected," compared to 18% of the husbands. Again, a Wilcoxon signed ranks test revealed no statistically significant differences ($p = .05$) between wives' and husbands' expectations concerning the first few months of marriage. Thus, contrary to the first hypothesis, there were no statistically significant differences in scores and perceptions of the first few months of marriage between husbands and wives.

Table 2

Frequency of Newlywed Wives' and Husbands' Expectations of the First Few Months of

Marriage

Expectations		Wives			Husbands	
	n	Valid %	Cumulative %	n	Valid %	Cumulative %
Much better than I expected	54	23.7	23.7	42	18.4	18.4
Better than I expected	56	24.6	48.2	77	33.8	52.2
About what I expected	72	31.6	79.8	68	29.8	82.0
More difficult than I expected	37	16.2	96.1	35	15.4	97.4
Much more difficult than I expected	9	3.9	100.0	6	2.6	100.0
Subtotal	228	98.3		228	100.0	
Missing	4	1.7		4		
Total	232	100.0		232		

Objective 2

The second question was to assess how newlyweds were adjusting to marriage,

and to measure their actual marital satisfaction by calculating and comparing husbands'

and wives' scores from the RDAS and the KMSS. It was hypothesized that a statistically

significant positive relationship existed between marital adjustment scores and marital

satisfaction scores as measured by the RDAS and the KMSS among newlyweds.

Frequency analyses revealed a wide range of marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores. A frequency analysis for wives indicated scores ranging from 3 to 68, with 26 wives (11.3%) scoring in the distressed range. Husbands' scores ranged from 14 to 69, and 26 husbands (11.4%) scored 47 or below. A further frequency analysis for scores on the KMSS for wives indicated scores ranging from 3 to 21, with 15 wives (6.5%) scoring in the distressed range. Husbands' scores ranged from 12 to 21, with 15 husbands (6.6%) scoring in the distressed range.

The second question from question two hypothesized that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between marital adjustment scores and marital satisfaction scores as measured by the RDAS and the KMSS among the newlyweds. These correlations are presented in Table 3.

Correlations between wives' marital satisfaction scores and wives' marital adjustment scores, and correlations between wives' marital adjustment scores and husbands' marital adjustment scores, and husbands' marital adjustment and husbands' marital satisfaction scores were the strongest (see Table 3). Moreover, there were moderate, but still significant correlations between wives' marital satisfaction scores and husbands' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores, and wives' marital adjustment scores and husbands' marital satisfaction scores. These results provide support for the hypothesis that positive correlations existed between husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores.

Table 3

Correlations Among Wives' Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment Scores and

Husbands' Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment Scores

Marital satisfaction & adjustment	Wives' satisfaction	Wives' adjustment	Husbands' satisfaction	Husbands' adjustment
Wives' marital satisfaction		.77•••	.56•••	.58•••
Wives' marital adjustment			.50•••	.67•••
Husbands' marital satisfaction				.67•••

Note. Wives, $n = 231$; Husbands, $n = 229$.

•••$p \leq .001$.

Objective 3

The third question of this research was to determine the extent to which

demographic and life course characteristics, and interactional history variables predict

lower marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores. The first demographic variable

of interest (3a) was age of couples at the time of marriage. It was hypothesized that

husbands and wives who married during their teen years would have statistically

significantly lower marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores than husbands and

wives who married after their teen years. Initial frequency analyses revealed that there

were only 36 individuals (consisting of both husbands and wives) who married as a

teenager. A subsequent test of homogeneity of variances revealed too large of differences

among husbands' and wives' scores on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction to

provide reliable results.

The next variable (3b) that was analyzed was the husbands' and wives' prior marital status. Specifically, the goal was to measure possible differences in marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores between husbands and wives in a remarriage and husbands and wives in a first marriage. It was hypothesized that husbands and wives in remarriages would have statistically significantly lower marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores than husbands and wives in first marriages. Although there were only 25 couples in a remarriage, an independent samples t test revealed statistically significant differences in wives' ($t = 3.10, p \leq .01$) marital adjustment scores only (see Table 4). Thus, only wives in first marriages had statistically significantly higher marital adjustment scores (wives, $M = 55.07$, $SD = 6.77$) than wives in a remarriage (wives, $M = 50.48$, $SD = 8.76$). Statistically significant differences among husbands' and wives' scores on marital satisfaction were not found. Thus, hypothesis 3b was partially supported with wives' marital adjustment scores in first marriages being statistically significantly higher than wives' marital adjustment scores in remarriages.

Educational level (3c) of the husbands and wives was the next variable measured. Due to insufficient sample sizes in each of the education levels, the seven categories (some high school, high school graduate, technical school/certificate, some college, associates degree, bachelors degree, higher than a bachelors degree) were collapsed and combined into three groups from which an analysis of variance and post hoc multiple comparisons were made. Individuals whose highest level of education was high school or less made up one group; individuals that had attended some college, obtained an associate's degree, or had a certificate from a technical school made up the second group;

Table 4

Mean Differences Between Wives' and Husbands' Marital Satisfaction and Marital

Adjustment Scores on First Marriages and Remarriages

Marital satisfaction & marital adjustment	t	df	Mean difference	p
Wives' marital satisfaction	1.44	25.37	1.23	.16
Husbands' marital satisfaction	1.47	25.06	.84	.15
Wives' marital adjustment	3.10	229.00	4.59	.00
Husbands' marital adjustment	1.88	227.00	2.89	.06

Note. Wives in first marriages, $n = 206$, wives in remarriages, $n = 25$; Husbands in first marriages, $n = 205$, husbands in remarriages $n = 24$.

and the third group consisted of individuals that had completed a bachelor's degree or higher. It was hypothesized that husbands and wives with higher education levels at the time of marriage would have statistically significantly higher marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores than husbands and wives with less education.

When an analysis of variance was computed (see Table 5), statistically significant differences were evident between the three groups (high school or less, some college, college graduate), with nonsignificant differences in wives' marital satisfaction scores. Post hoc tests with multiple comparisons revealed specific differences between husbands and wives, and the three levels of education (see Table 6).

Table 6 reveals post hoc multiple comparisons of husbands' satisfaction scores when the wives' highest level of education was measured. First, husbands who had

Table 5

Analysis of Variance Between Wives' Education Level and Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment Scores

Marital satisfaction & marital adjustment	Difference	df	F	MS	p
Wives' marital satisfaction	Between groups	2	1.64	9.34	.20
	Within groups	227		5.68	
Husbands' marital satisfaction	Between groups	2	3.42	11.07	.03
	Within groups	225		3.24	
Wives' marital adjustment	Between groups	2	3.48	173.99	.03
	Within groups	227		50.00	
Husbands' marital adjustment	Between groups	2	9.54	457.75	.00
	Within groups	225		47.98	

statistically significantly lower marital satisfaction scores if their wives had only completed high school or less, when compared with husbands whose wives had completed some college. Further, wives' who had only completed high school or less had marital adjustment scores that were statistically significantly lower than wives who had completed some college. The largest differences, as Table 6 reveals, were between husbands' marital adjustment scores. Husbands' marital adjustment scores were statistically significantly lower if their wife's highest level of education was high school or less, compared with husbands whose wives had some college or were college graduates. Overall, hypothesis 3c pertaining to wives' education was largely confirmed.

Table 6

Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons on Wives' Level of Education and Wives' and Husbands' Marital Satisfaction and Marital

Adjustment Scores

Wives' education level	Wives' marital satisfaction			Husbands' marital satisfaction			Wives' marital adjustment			Husbands' marital adjustment		
	n	Mean*	SD	n	Mean*	SD	n	Mean*	SD	n	Mean*	SD
High school or less	40	19.20^a	3.07	40	19.40^a	2.44	40	51.95^a	10.28	40	50.13^a	9.91
Some college	140	19.96^a	2.15	138	20.19^b	1.61	140	55.29^b	6.26	138	55.50^b	6.17
College graduate	50	19.68^a	2.39	50	19.74^{ab}	1.70	50	54.64^{ab}	6.04	50	55.00^b	5.99
Total	230	19.77	2.39	228	19.95	1.82	230	54.57	7.15	228	54.45	7.18

Note. * Means sharing a superscript are not statistically significantly different at the $p \leq .05$ level.

When wives had completed a high school education or less, both wives' and husbands' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores were lower, and many statistically significantly lower than wives' and husbands' scores when wives had higher levels of education.

When husbands' level of education was examined, an analysis of variance also revealed statistically significant differences between the husbands' scores in the three levels of education (see Table 7). Statistically significant differences were found between wives' marital satisfaction scores, wives' marital adjustment scores, and husbands' marital adjustment scores. The only difference that was not statistically significant when husbands' level of education was measured was husbands' marital satisfaction scores. Table 7 also reveals that wives' marital satisfaction scores and husbands' marital adjustment scores exhibited the most statistically significant differences.

Post hoc multiple comparisons in Table 8 reveal statistically significant differences. In particular, wives' marital satisfaction scores were statistically significantly lower when the husbands' highest level of education was high school or less, when compared with wives' marital satisfaction scores when the husbands' highest level of education was "some college." Similarly, wives' marital adjustment scores were statistically significantly lower when the husbands' highest level of education was high school or less, when compared with wives' marital adjustment scores when the husbands' highest level of education was "some college." Furthermore, husbands' marital adjustment scores were also statistically significantly lower if they had only completed a high school level of education when compared with husbands who had completed some college, or were college graduates (see Table 8). In sum, when husbands' highest

Table 7

Analysis of Variance Between Husbands' Education Level and Marital Satisfaction and

Marital Adjustment Scores

Marital satisfaction & marital adjustment	Difference	df	F	MS	p
Wives' marital satisfaction	Between groups	2	6.39	23.51	.00
	Within groups	223		3.68	
Husbands' marital satisfaction	Between groups	2	1.64	5.00	.20
	Within groups	223		3.05	
Wives' marital adjustment	Between groups	2	4.29	192.30	.02
	Within groups	223		44.81	
Husbands' marital adjustment	Between groups	2	6.10	277.28	.00
	Within groups	223		45.46	

education level was high school or lower, wives' marital satisfaction scores and both

husbands' and wives' marital adjustment scores were statistically significantly lower than

when the husband had some college or was a college graduate. Moreover, these findings

lend more support to hypothesis 3c. However, not all of the differences revealed were

statistically significant, and thus the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Research question 3d focused on couple differences pertaining to religiosity. The

five-response Likert scale of religiosity (very religious, fairly religious, somewhat

religious, slightly religious, not at all religious) was condensed to three categories due to

the small n in each category: very religious, fairly/somewhat religious, and slightly/not at

all religious. It was hypothesized that husbands and wives who indicated higher levels
of religiosity would have statistically significantly higher marital adjustment and marital
satisfaction scores. An analysis of variance indicated statistically significant differences
between the wives' marital satisfaction scores, wives' marital adjustment scores, and
husbands' marital adjustment scores when religiosity was measured (see Table 9).

Table 10 reveals post hoc multiple comparisons that were performed for both
husbands and wives as pertaining to religiosity. For wives, those who indicated they were
"very religious" had statistically significantly higher marital satisfaction scores than
wives who indicated they were "fairly/somewhat religious." However, the statistically
significant differences between all three groups were found within the marital adjustment
scores of both husbands and wives.

Wives who indicated they were "very religious" had statistically significantly
higher marital adjustment scores (M = 56.31, SD = 5.15) than both wives who indicated
they were "fairly/somewhat religious" (M = 52.04, SD = 9.19) and wives who indicated
they were "slightly/not at all religious" (M = 51.86, SD = 7.31). Furthermore, Table 10
reveals that husbands whose wives indicated they were "very religious" also had
statistically significantly higher marital adjustment scores (M = 55.87, SD = 5.61) than
husbands whose wives indicated they were "fairly/somewhat religious" (M = 52.63, SD
= 9.06) or "slightly/not at all religious" (M = 51.50, SD = 7.18).

These results partially support hypothesis 3d. Overall, when wives indicated they
were "very religious," wives, but not husbands' scores were statistically significantly
higher than wives who were fairly/somewhat religious. Additionally, both wives and

Table 8

Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons on Husbands' Level of Education and Wives' and Husbands' Marital Satisfaction and Marital

Adjustment Scores

Husbands' education levels	Wives' marital satisfaction			Husbands' marital satisfaction			Wives' marital adjustment			Husbands' marital adjustment		
	n	Mean*	SD	n	Mean*	SD	n	Mean*	SD	n	Mean*	SD
High school or less	41	19.07[a]	2.96	41	19.56[a]	2.39	41	52.12[a]	10.77	41	51.49[a]	10.23
Some college	154	20.21[b]	1.39	154	20.12[a]	1.41	154	55.56[b]	5.19	154	55.08[b]	5.73
College graduate	31	19.55[ab]	2.42	31	20.00[a]	2.21	31	54.55[ab]	6.42	31	56.58[b]	5.55
Total	226	19.92	1.96	226	20.00	1.75	226	54.80	6.79	226	54.64	6.89

Note. * Means sharing a superscript are not statistically significantly different at the $p \leq .05$ level.

Table 9

Analysis of Variance of Wives' Level of Religiosity on Husbands' and Wives' Marital

Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment Scores

Marital satisfaction & marital adjustment	Difference	df	F	MS	p
Wives' marital satisfaction	Between groups	2	6.00	32.77	.00
	Within groups	228		5.46	
Husbands' marital satisfaction	Between groups	2	1.46	4.80	.23
	Within groups	226		3.28	
Wives' marital adjustment	Between groups	2	11.04	516.68	.00
	Within groups	228		46.79	
Husbands' marital adjustment	Between groups	2	7.17	349.69	.00
	Within groups	226		48.75	

husbands had statistically significantly higher marital adjustment scores when wives indicated they were "very religious" compared with wives' other levels of religiosity. When husbands' level of religiosity was examined, an analysis of variance revealed that statistically significant differences existed between husbands and wives on both marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores (see Table 11).

Table 12 reveals that husbands who indicated they were "very religious" had statistically significantly higher marital adjustment scores than husbands who indicated they were "fairly/somewhat religious" or "slightly/not at all religious." Further, husbands

Table 10

Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons of Wives' Level of Religiosity on Husbands' and Wives' Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment Scores

Wives' religiosity	Wives' marital satisfaction			Husbands' marital satisfaction			Wives' marital adjustment			Husbands' marital adjustment		
	n	Mean*	*SD*	*n*	Mean*	*SD*	*n*	Mean*	*SD*	*n*	Mean*	*SD*
Very	138	20.21[a]	1.77	137	20.10[a]	1.47	138	56.31[a]	5.15	137	55.87[a]	5.61
Fairly/ Somewhat	71	19.08[b]	2.99	70	19.83[a]	2.15	71	52.04[b]	9.19	70	52.63[b]	9.06
Slightly/not at all	22	19.27[ab]	2.99	22	19.45[a]	2.48	22	51.86[b]	7.31	22	51.50[b]	7.18
Total	231	19.77	2.39	229	19.96	1.82	231	54.58	7.13	229	54.46	7.17

Note. * Means sharing a superscript are not statistically significantly different at the $p \leq .05$ level.

Table 11

Analysis of Variance of Husbands' Level of Religiosity on Husbands' and Wives' Marital

Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment Scores

Marital satisfaction & marital adjustment	Difference	df	F	MS	p
Wives' marital satisfaction	Between groups	2	12.42	44.75	.00
	Within groups	230		3.60	
Husbands' marital satisfaction	Between groups	2	15.28	45.18	.00
	Within groups	230		2.96	
Wives' marital adjustment	Between groups	2	18.79	756.83	.00
	Within groups	230		40.29	
Husbands' marital adjustment	Between groups	2	24.30	952.96	.00
	Within groups	230		39.21	

who indicated they were "very religious" had statistically significantly higher marital

satisfaction scores than husbands who indicated they were "slightly/not at all religious."

Moreover, husbands' religiosity was also related to wives' marital adjustment and

satisfaction. Wives of husbands who indicated they were "very religious" had statistically

significantly higher marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores than wives whose

husbands who indicated they were "fairly/somewhat religious" and wives whose

husbands indicated they were "slightly/not at all religious." Overall, the more religious

the husband indicated he was, the higher marital adjustment and marital satisfaction

scores of both husbands and wives. This also largely supports hypothesis 3d.

It was also of interest to determine if there were statistically significant differences in marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores between husbands and wives who were of different religions. Hypothesis 3e posits that husbands and wives who belong to the same religion would have statistically significantly higher marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores than husbands and wives who belonged to two different religious affiliations. An independent samples t test revealed statistically significant differences between the two groups on all the constructs except husbands' marital satisfaction scores (see Table 13). Moreover, husbands' differences in marital adjustment scores were statistically significant.

Wives who shared the same religious denomination with their husbands had marital satisfaction scores that were statistically significantly higher ($M = 20.00$, $SD = 18.71$) than wives who did not share the same religious denomination ($M = 18.71$, $SD = 2.89$). The results, however, t (30.51) = 2.28, $p \leq .05$, were only moderately different. Yet statistically significant differences were found among husbands, t (227) = 3.91, $p \leq .001$, and wives', t (227) = 4.12, $p \leq .001$, marital adjustment scores when religious homogamy was measured. First, wives who shared the same religious denomination as their husbands had statistically significantly higher marital adjustment scores ($M = 55.35$, $SD = 6.00$) than wives who did not ($M = 49.79$, $SD = 10.58$). Similar findings were found for husbands who shared the same religious denomination as their wives ($M = 55.13$, $SD = 6.54$) compared to husbands who did not ($M = 49.64$, $SD = 9.50$).

Hypothesis 3e was thus supported for differences on marital adjustment scores, while failing to find statistically significant differences among husbands' marital

Table 12

Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons of Husbands' Level of Religiosity on Wives' and Husbands' Marital Satisfaction and Marital

Adjustment Scores

Husbands' religiosity	Wives' marital satisfaction			Husbands' marital satisfaction			Wives' marital adjustment			Husbands' marital adjustment		
	n	Mean*	SD	n	Mean*	SD	n	Mean*	SD	n	Mean*	SD
Very	115	20.35[a]	1.45	115	20.37[a]	1.09	115	56.49[a]	5.13	115	57.16[a]	4.21
Fairly/ somewhat	86	19.73	2.09	86	19.93[a]	1.69	86	54.45	5.58	86	53.02	6.60
Slightly/not at all	27	18.37	3.08	27	18.48	3.21	27	48.33	11.62	27	48.19	11.79
Total	228	19.88	2.04	228	19.98	1.79	228	54.75	6.84	228	54.54	7.09

Note. * Means sharing a superscript are not statistically significantly different at the $p \leq$ .05 level.

Table 13

Mean Differences in Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment Scores for Husbands

and Wives Belonging to Different Religions

Marital satisfaction & marital adjustment	t	df	Mean difference	p
Wives' marital satisfaction	2.28	30.51	1.29	.03
Husbands' marital satisfaction	1.58	30.09	.80	.12
Wives' marital adjustment	4.12	227.00	5.57	.00
Husbands' marital adjustment	3.91	227.00	5.49	.00

Note. $n = 201$ homogamous couples; $n = 28$ heterogamous couples.

satisfaction scores. This finding does not provide support for hypothesis 3e, and thus the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

The next variable of interest (3f) was the actual marriage setting, or where the wedding ceremony took place. It was hypothesized that husbands and wives who were married in a religious setting (i.e., temple, church, etc.) had higher marital adjustment and satisfaction scores than couples who married in other places. Table 14 demonstrates that three of the four differences were statistically significant at $p \leq .01$. Wives who were married in a religious setting had statistically significantly higher marital satisfaction scores, $M = 20.07$, $SD = 1.80$; $t (63.03) = -2.53, p \leq .01$, and marital adjustment scores, $M = 55.63$, $SD = 5.49$; $t (64.06) = -3.09, p \leq .01$, than wives who had their marriages performed elsewhere $(M = 18.82, SD = 3.53)$ $(M = 51.20, SD = 10.19)$. Additionally, husbands who were married in a religious setting had statistically significantly higher

Table 14

Mean Differences Between Husbands' and Wives' Marital Satisfaction and Marital

Adjustment Scores on Religious Marital Setting Versus Other Marital Settings

Marital satisfaction & marital adjustment	t	df	Mean difference	p
Wives' marital satisfaction	-2.53	63.04	-1.26	.01
Husbands' marital satisfaction	-1.93	65.47	-.69	.06
Wives' marital adjustment	-3.09	64.06	-4.43	.00
Husbands' marital adjustment	-3.24	63.67	-4.62	.00

Note. $n = 55$ couples not married in a religious setting; $n = 175$ couples married in a

religious setting.

marital adjustment scores, $M = 55.55$, $SD = 5.63$; $t (63.67) = -3.24$, $p \leq .01$, than

husbands who were married elsewhere ($M = 50.93$, $SD = 10.01$). While husbands who

did marry in a religious setting had higher marital satisfaction scores than husbands who

did not, the difference approached significance, $t (65.47) = -1.93$, $p = .058$. As with

several previous hypotheses, three of the four outcomes support hypothesis 3f, while

husbands' marital satisfaction scores did not differ significantly, thus the null hypothesis

cannot be rejected.

   A measure of husbands' and wives' parents' marital status was the next variable

examined (3g). The six possible responses (single and never married, married-first

marriage, remarried, divorced, widowed, other) were collapsed to a dichotomous

variable; namely, husbands and wives whose parents were in their first marriage

compared with husbands and wives whose parents were not in a first marriage. These

variables were collapsed due to an insufficient number of parents in each of the six categories. It was hypothesized that husbands and wives whose parents were in their first marriages would have statistically significantly higher marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores when compared with husbands and wives whose parents were not in their first marriage.

The wives' parents' current marital status was examined first. There were a total of 74 wives whose parents were not in their first marriage, while 156 wives indicated their parents' were in a first marriage. Independent t tests indicated that statistically significant differences did not exist between husbands' and wives' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores based on wives' parents' marital status (see Table 15).

Next, husbands' parents' marital status was evaluated in conjunction with husbands' and wives' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores. A total of 157 husbands indicated that their parents were currently in their first marriage, while 71 indicated that they were not in their first marriage. Table 15 presents the independent t test results, which revealed different outcomes than the wives' parents' marital status results.

It was the wives of husbands whose parents were in their first marriage who had statistically significantly higher marital satisfaction scores ($M = 20.12$, $SD = 1.71$) than wives of husbands whose parents were not in their first marriage ($M = 19.35$, $SD = 2.58$). Further, wives of husbands whose parents were in their first marriage had statistically significantly higher marital adjustment scores ($M = 55.44$, $SD = 6.80$) than wives of husbands whose parents were not in their first marriage ($M = 53.24$, $SD = 6.74$).

Table 15

Mean Differences Between Husbands' and Wives' Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment Scores on Husbands' Parents' Marital Status

Marital satisfaction & marital adjustment	t	df	Mean difference	p
Wives' marital satisfaction	-2.30	98.84	-.77	.02
Husbands' marital satisfaction	-.97	108.12	-.28	.33
Wives' marital adjustment	-2.27	226.00	-2.20	.02
Husbands' marital adjustment	-.89	226.00	-.90	.38

Note. n = 71 husbands whose parents were not in a first marriage; n = 157 husbands whose parents were currently in a first marriage.

Therefore, the only statistically significant differences in scores when parents' marital status was measured, was the marital status of the husbands' parents on wives' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores. Thus, hypothesis 3g was not completely supported.

Length of dating (3h) and length of engagement (3i) were also assessed. It was hypothesized that couples who dated 3 months or less, and couples who had engagement periods of 3 months or less would have statistically significantly lower marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores than couples who dated longer periods of time and had longer engagements.

An analysis of variance on dating length revealed no statistically significant differences between the groups. Therefore, contrary to hypothesis 3h, there were no

statistically significant differences in marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores among couples who had dated three months or less compared to other couples.

An analysis of variance on length of engagement, however, did indicate statistically significant differences between the groups of couples (see Table 16). These differences, however, diverged from hypothesis 3h. Contrary to prediction, for couples engaged three months or less, the wives had statistically significantly higher marital satisfaction scores ($M = 20.10$, $SD = 1.64$) than wives who had engagements of 12 months or more ($M = 18.24$, $SD = 4.66$) (see Table 17). Similarly, wives who had engagements lasting between three and six months ($M = 20.00$, $SD = 1.72$), and between six and 12 months ($M = 19.85$, $SD = 2.28$) also had statistically significantly lower marital satisfaction scores than wives with engagements lasting 12 months or more ($M = 18.24$, $SD = 4.66$).

When marital adjustment scores were analyzed, similar results were found for the wives. Specifically, wives who had engagement lengths between 0 and 3 months ($M = 56.03$, $SD = 4.92$), between 3 to 6 months ($M = 54.85$, $SD = 5.65$), and between 6 to 12 months ($M = 55.54$, $SD = 6.33$), had statistically significantly higher marital adjustment scores than wives who had engagements lasting 12 months or more ($M = 50.52$, $SD = 9.95$). Thus, these trends suggest that the shorter the engagement for wives, the higher the marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores. Conversely, there were no statistically significant differences between husbands' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores, and various lengths of engagements. Therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Table 16

Analysis of Variance for Length of Engagement and Husbands' and Wives' Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment Scores

Marital satisfaction & marital adjustment	Difference	df	F	MS	p
Wives' marital satisfaction	Between groups	3	4.26	20.59	.01
	Within groups	220		4.83	
Husbands' marital satisfaction	Between groups	3	.98	2.92	.40
	Within groups	218		2.98	
Wives' marital adjustment	Between groups	3	4.70	170.15	.00
	Within groups	220		36.24	
Husbands' marital adjustment	Between groups	3	2.37	98.19	.07
	Within groups	218		41.51	

Another interactional history variable (3i) of interest was whether one (or both) of the partners brought a child into the marriage, either from a previous marriage or relationship, or with the person they were marrying. It was hypothesized that couples who brought a child into the marriage would have statistically significantly lower marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores than couples who did not bring a child into the marriage. An independent samples *t* test revealed that statistically significant differences were evident on all constructs (see Table 18).

For couples who did not bring a child into the marriage, both wives and husbands had statistically significantly higher marital satisfaction scores (wives, $M = 20.02$, $SD =$

Table 17

Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons of Length of Engagement on Husbands' and Wives' Marital Satisfaction and

Marital Adjustment Scores

Length of engagement	n	Wives' marital satisfaction			n	Husbands' marital satisfaction			n	Wives' marital adjustment			n	Husbands' marital adjustment		
		Mean*	SD			Mean*	SD			Mean*	SD			Mean*	SD	
0-3 months	77	20.10[a]	1.64		77	20.04[a]	1.60		77	56.03[a]	4.92		77	55.29[a]	6.09	
3-6 months	100	20.00[a]	1.72		99	20.15[a]	1.47		100	54.85[a]	5.65		99	55.19[a]	5.29	
6-12 months	26	19.85[a]	2.27		26	19.77[a]	2.01		26	55.54[a]	6.33		26	53.69[ab]	8.85	
12 months or more	21	18.24	4.66		20	19.50[a]	2.72		21	50.52	9.95		20	51.40[b]	8.96	
Total	224	19.85	2.25		222	20.01	1.73		224	54.93	6.17		222	54.71	6.50	

Note. • Means sharing a superscript are not statistically significantly different at the $p \leq .05$ level.

Table 18

Mean Differences in Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment Scores Between

Couples That Brought a Child into the Marriage and Couples That Did Not

Marital satisfaction & marital adjustment	t	df	Mean difference	p
Wives' marital satisfaction	2.36	28.14	2.06	.03
Husbands' marital satisfaction	3.02	27.81	1.75	.01
Wives' marital adjustment	3.11	28.39	7.53	.01
Husbands' marital adjustment	2.81	27.94	6.34	.01

Note. n = 29 couples that brought a child into the marriage; n = 206 couples that did not

bring a child into the marriage.

1.78; husbands, M = 20.16, SD = 1.50) than wives and husbands who brought a child

into the marriage (wives, M = 17.96, SD = 4.58; husbands, M = 18.41, SD = 2.96).

Similarly, for couples who did not bring a child into the marriage, both wives and

husbands had statistically significantly higher marital adjustment scores (wives, M =

55.53, SD = 5.42; husbands, M = 55.23, SD = 6.03) than wives and husbands who

brought a child into the marriage (wives, M = 48.00, SD = 12.66; husbands, M = 48.89,

SD = 11.53). Thus, support was found for hypothesis 3i.

The final interactional history variable of interest was cohabitation (3j). It was

hypothesized that couples who cohabited before marriage would have statistically

significantly lower marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores than couples who

did not cohabit before marriage. A total of 182 couples (79%) indicated that they did not

cohabit prior to marriage, while 49 couples (21%) reported they had cohabited prior to

Table 19

Mean Differences in Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment Scores Between

Couples That Cohabited Prior to Marriage and Couples That Did Not

Marital satisfaction & marital adjustment	t	df	Mean difference	p
Wives' marital satisfaction	1.55	57.91	.78	.13
Husbands' marital satisfaction	1.46	55.50	.58	.15
Wives' marital adjustment	2.78	57.00	4.18	.01
Husbands' marital adjustment	2.97	55.19	4.56	.01

marriage. An independent samples t test revealed statistically significant differences between the groups (see Table 19).

Specific differences included those wives who did not cohabit prior to marriage having statistically significantly higher marital adjustment scores ($M = 55.46$, $SD = 5.84$) than wives who did cohabit prior to marriage ($M = 51.29$, $SD = 10.05$). Similar differences were found for husbands who did not cohabit prior to marriage ($M = 55.41$, $SD = 5.78$) compared with husbands who did ($M = 50.85$, $SD = 10.23$). Statistically significant differences were not found for marital satisfaction scores for either husbands or wives. Thus hypothesis 3j is only partially supported and the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Table 20

Correlations Between Wives' and Husbands' Perceptions of Their Transition to
Marriage as Being Smooth and Marital Adjustment and Marital Satisfaction Scores

Perceived transition to marriage	Marital adjustment	Marital satisfaction
Wives' transition to marriage	.47**	.42**
Husbands' transition to marriage	.32**	.31**

Note. Husbands N = 234, Wives, N = 237.

**$p \leq .01$.

Objective 4

The fourth question was to test whether there was a significant positive
relationship between wives' and husbands' perceptions of their transition to marriage as
being "fairly smooth" or "very smooth," and their actual marital adjustment and marital
satisfaction scores. Table 20 displays the moderate, but statistically significant
correlations that were found between wives' and husbands' perceptions of their transition
to marriage. Thus, the more wives and husbands perceived their transition to marriage as
being smooth, the better adjustment and more satisfied they indicated they were in the
relationship. The null hypothesis was, therefore, rejected.

Objective 5

The fifth question of this study was similar to Objective 4. That is, to assess
whether or not there was a significant positive relationship between wives' and husbands'

Table 21

Correlations Between Wives' and Husbands' Expectations of Their First Few Months of

Marriage as Being Better Than Expected and Marital Adjustment and Marital

Satisfaction Scores

Expectations	Marital adjustment	Marital satisfaction
Wives' expectations of first few months of marriage	.41**	.35**
Husbands' expectations of first few months of marriage	.35**	.32**

Note. Husbands $N = 232$, Wives, $N = 232$.

** $p \leq .01$.

expectations of their first few months of marriage as being better than expected and

marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores. Table 21 presents the moderate, but

statistically significant correlations found between these variables. Thus, the more wives

and husbands perceived their first few months of marriage as being better than expected,

then the better adjustment and more satisfied they indicated they were in the relationship.

The null hypothesis was, therefore, rejected.

Objective 6

The sixth question of this study was to identify the most problematic issues as

perceived by each spouse during the first few months of marriage. The list of 30 potential

problematic areas each had a subsequent Likert scale to its right, with possible answers

ranging from 0 (not problematic) to 9 (very problematic). Frequency analyses were

Table 22

Most Problematic Areas as Perceived by Newlywed Wives and Husbands

Wives	Mean	SD	Husbands	Mean	SD
1. Balancing job and marriage	2.55	2.69	1. Balancing job and marriage	2.47	2.28
2. Debt brought into marriage	2.41	3.09	2. Debt brought into marriage	2.24	2.85
3. Wife employment	2.19	2.94	3. Time spent together	2.08	2.36
4. Communication with your spouse	2.12	2.29	4. Different recreational interests	1.97	2.22
5. Financial decision making	2.01	2.27	5. Resolving major conflicts	1.95	2.58
6. Resolving major conflicts / Time spent together	1.94	2.40 2.25	6.Wife employment	1.91	2.61
7. In-laws	1.93	2.54	7. Communication with your spouse	1.90	2.12
8. Expectations about household tasks	1.91	2.09	8. Expectations about household tasks	1.88	2.07
9. Husband employment	1.78	2.63	9. In-laws	1.84	2.48
10. Frequency of sexual relations	1.72	2.21	10.Financial decision making	1.82	2.01

Note. Valid *n* for wives (listwise) = 208; valid *n* for husbands (listwise) = 201. Scores

ranged from 0 (not problematic) to 9 (very problematic).

carried out, and means and standard deviations were obtained. Table 22 presents the top

10 problematic issues by spouse, in rank order of severity.

The most problematic issues as perceived by wives and husbands were virtually the same issues in different orders. However, the one exception from this pattern was the fourth issue for husbands, that of different recreational interests. A paired samples *t* test revealed a statistically significant difference between wives' and husbands' scores on this area, $t(225) = -3.92, p \leq .001$. No other perceived problematic areas were statistically significantly different between wives and husbands. It should be noted that none of the problematic areas were ranked in or near the very problematic range.

Objective 7

The seventh question of this study was to assess the extent to which specific groups of marital problems mediated the impact of the demographic and interactional history variables on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. The 30 problematic areas were divided into six groups based on the RDAS subscales (Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Cohesion, and Dyadic Satisfaction) and sub-areas (decision making, activities, affection, conflict, stability, and values). A reliability analysis was conducted for both husbands and wives on each of the six groups of problematic areas, and overall reliability was fairly high, ranging from .62 to .86 (see Table 23). Correlation analyses were also carried out for both husbands' and wives' problematic subscales, with all correlations statistically significant at the .01 alpha level (see Tables 24 and 25).

Regression analyses were completed separately for wives and husbands. Two models were run with the first model testing the effects of demographic variables, and the second model adding in problem subscale variables. The results for marital satisfaction are presented in Table 26 in Model 1 for both wives and husbands. For wives, significant

Table 23

Reliability Analyses for the Six Subscales of Problematic Areas by Wives and Husbands

Subscale and sub-area	Problematic areas	Wives' reliability coefficient	Husbands' reliability coefficient
Consensus (decision making)	Birth control Decision about when to have children Balancing job and marriage Wife employment Husband employment Gender roles Expectations about household tasks Debt brought into marriage Ill health	.80	.77
Cohesion (activities)	Time together Different recreational interests Personality differences Lack of mutual friends Religious differences Lack of mutual affection	.77	.77
Consensus (affection)	Frequency of sexual relations Unsatisfying sexual relations	.80	.62
Satisfaction (conflict)	Use of emotional force Use of verbal force Constant bickering Resolving major conflicts Resolving minor conflicts Financial decision making	.86	.86
Satisfaction (stability)	Respect for each other Showing appreciation Commitment to your marriage Trusting your spouse Communication with your spouse	.86	.84
Consensus (values)	Parents In-laws	.80	.72
Overall reliability for all items		.93	.92

Table 24

Correlation Analysis of the Problematic Subscales for Husbands

Problematic subscales	Cohesion (activities)	Consensus (affection)	Satisfaction (conflict)	Satisfaction (stability)	Consensus (values)
Consensus (decision making)	.69••	.46••	.65••	.71••	.53••
Cohesion (activities)		.42••	.73••	.80••	.56••
Consensus (affection)			.45••	.43••	.39••
Satisfaction (conflict)				.80••	.41••
Satisfaction (stability)					.50••

••$p \leq .01$

predictors of marital satisfaction included those who indicated they were "very religious" (the reference category for religiosity) as opposed to "somewhat religious" on religiosity. A similar significant predictor of wives' marital satisfaction was religious homogamy.

The final significant predictor of wives' marital satisfaction, when demographics alone were accounted for, was cohabitation. Wives who indicated they had not cohabited before marriage were more likely to have higher marital satisfaction. The total variance explained by the demographic variables in Model 1 for wives was 10%.

Similar to wives, Model 1 for husbands also indicated religiosity as a significant predictor of marital satisfaction. Husbands who indicated they were "highly religious" (reference category group) were more likely to have higher marital satisfaction scores

Table 25

Correlation Analysis of the Problematic Subscales for Wives

Problematic subscales	Cohesion (activities)	Consensus (affection)	Satisfaction (conflict)	Satisfaction (stability)	Consensus (values)
Consensus (decision making)	.68••	.56••	.63••	.63••	.41••
Cohesion (activities)		.48••	.74••	.77••	.47••
Consensus (affection)			.52••	.58••	.36••
Satisfaction (conflict)				.81••	.37••
Satisfaction (stability)					.37••

••$p \le .01$

than husbands who indicated they were "somewhat religious" or "slightly/not at all religious." The total variance explained by the demographic variables in Model 1 for husbands was 13%.

In Model 2 (Table 26), for husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction, the six subscales of problematic areas were included in the regression analysis, along with the original demographic variables. In Model 2 for wives, the same three demographic variables remained significant predictors, while wives who indicated they were "very religious" compared with wives who indicated they were "slightly/not at all religious" became a significant predictor of marital satisfaction. Additionally, three of the

Table 26

Summary of Regression Analysis for Demographic Variables and Problematic Subscales

Predicting Wives' and Husbands' Marital Satisfaction

Demographics & problematic subscales	Wives' marital satisfaction				Husbands' marital satisfaction			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p
Previously married	.07	.36	.02	.73	-.11	.96	-.12	.05
Education[a]								
Some college	.11	.27	-.04	.54	.04	.65	-.02	.80
College graduate	-.01	.98	-.05	.53	-.03	.77	-.04	.60
Religiosity[b]								
Somewhat religious	-.18	.03	-.17	.01	-.17	.03	-.15	.03
Slightly/not at all religious	-.11	.13	-.15	.02	-.42	.00	-.25	.00
Religious homogamy	-.16	.04	-.11	.05	.06	.49	.01	.85
Place of marriage	.11	.23	.02	.79	.00	.98	-.05	.47
Parent's marital status	.07	.38	.07	.19	.02	.77	-.02	.71
Length of dating[c]								
3-6 months	-.03	.74	-.01	.88	.00	.96	-.00	.98
6-12 months	-.08	.34	-.07	.27	-.03	.76	.00	.95
12 months or more	-.05	.61	-.04	.56	.05	.54	-.01	.92
Prior cohabitation	.24	.02	.17	.02	.12	.21	.11	.18
Problematic areas								
Consensus (decision making)			.10	.18			.22	.01

(table continues)

Demographics & problematic subscales	Wives' marital satisfaction			Husbands' marital satisfaction		
	Model 1	Model 2		Model 1	Model 2	
		β	p		β	p
Cohesion (activities)		-.26	.00		-.17	.10
Consensus (affection)		-.03	.60		-.17	.01
Satisfaction (conflict)		-.25	.00		.04	.66
Satisfaction (stability)		-.32	.00		-.52	.00
Consensus (values)		.06	.32		-.05	.48
Model R^2	.10	.54		.13	.44	
F, p-value	2.05, .02	13.27, .00		2.76, .00	8.95, .00	

[a]Reference category: high school education or less. [b]Reference category: very religious. [c]Reference category: 0-3 months dating.

problematic subscales were significant predictors of wives' marital satisfaction. Overall, variance in wives' marital satisfaction explained by the demographic and problematic independent variables increased from 10% to 57%.

When the problematic subscales were added to the husbands' demographic variables, one demographic variable became a significant predictor of husbands' marital satisfaction. Model 2 (Table 26) illustrates that husbands in their first marriages were more likely to have higher marital satisfaction scores compared with husbands who had been married previously. Three of the problematic subscales became significant predictors of husbands' marital satisfaction. These included the consensus (decision

making) subscale, consensus (affection) subscale, and the satisfaction (stability) subscale. Overall, variance in husbands' marital satisfaction explained by the demographic and problematic independent variables increased from 13% to 44%.

A regression analysis was also carried out between the demographic variables and wives' and husbands' marital adjustment. The results are presented in Model 1 (Table 27) for both wives and husbands. For wives, significant demographic predictors of marital adjustment included wives who indicated they were "very religious" (the reference category for religiosity) as opposed to "slightly/not at all religious" on religiosity. A similar significant predictor of wives' marital adjustment was religious homogamy. That is, whether the wife was of the same religious background as her husband. The total variance explained by the demographic variables in Model 1 for wives was 13%.

After the problematic subscales were added to the list of variables (see Model 2), and regressions were carried out, the same religiosity factor remained significant, and wives who indicated they were "very religious" became more likely to have higher marital satisfaction scores than wives who indicated they were "slightly/not at all religious." Overall, variance in wives' marital adjustment explained by the demographic and problematic independent variables increased from 13% to 57%.

When the husbands' marital adjustment was regressed on the demographic variables (see Model 1, Table 27), religiosity was a consistent and strong predictor of husbands' marital adjustment. Specifically, husbands who indicated they were "very religious" were much more likely to have higher marital adjustment scores than husbands who indicated they were either "somewhat religious" or "slightly/not at all religious."

Table 27

Summary of Regression Analysis for Demographic Variables and Problematic Subscales

Predicting Wives' and Husbands' Marital Adjustment

Demographics & problematic subscales	Wives' marital adjustment				Husbands' marital adjustment			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p
Previously married	-.06	.42	-.01	.90	-.03	.67	-.06	.24
Education[a]								
Some college	.11	.26	-.01	.88	.11	.19	.06	.38
College graduate	.00	.99	-.01	.89	.09	.77	.08	.20
Religiosity[b]								
Somewhat religious	-.21	.02	-.18	.00	-.25	.00	-.23	.00
Slightly/not at all religious	-.12	.17	-.17	.01	-.37	.00	-.19	.00
Religious homogamy	-.19	.02	-.14	.01	-.03	.71	-.03	.60
Place of marriage	.03	.74	-.06	.35	.02	.81	-.05	.48
Parent's marital status	.00	.95	.01	.88	-.01	.87	-.06	.22
Length of dating[c]								
3-6 months	-.04	.61	-.03	.66	-.04	.59	-.07	.23
6-12 months	-.04	.64	-.02	.69	-.09	.28	-.07	.22
12 months or more	.01	.90	.02	.79	.01	.91	-.08	.24
Prior cohabitation	.05	.64	.01	.95	.02	.81	.03	.71
Problematic areas								
Consensus (decision making)			.06	.42			.00	.98

(table continues)

Demographics & problematic subscales	Wives' marital adjustment			Husbands' marital adjustment		
	Model 1	Model 2		Model 1	Model 2	
		β	p		β	p
Cohesion (activities)		-.34	.00		-.17	.10
Consensus (affection)		-.13	.03		-.29	.00
Satisfaction (conflict)		-.23	.01		-.06	.45
Satisfaction (stability)		-.16	.07		-.23	.02
Consensus (values)		.06	.25		-.05	.43
Model R^2	.13	.57		.20	.57	
F, p-value	2.72, .00	15.51, .00		4.41, .00	15.07, .00	

Note. [a]Reference category: high school education or less. [b]Reference category: very religious. [c]Reference category: 0-3 months dating.

The total variance explained by the demographic variables in Model 1 for husbands' marital adjustment was 20%.

After the problematic subscales were added to the list of variables (see Model 2, Table 27) and regressions were carried out, the same two religiosity variables remained significant predictors, in addition to three problematic subscales: cohesion (activities), consensus (affection), and satisfaction (stability). The overall variance in wives' marital adjustment explained by the demographic and problematic independent variables increased from 13% to 57%. Overall, hypothesis seven was supported, as the problematic areas mediated the influence of the demographics, and it was the problematic areas, more

so than the demographics, that predicted husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of newlywed wives' and husbands' (under 35 years old) marital adjustment, marital satisfaction, and perceived problematic areas in the first few months of marriage. It was of interest to assess whether there were significant gender differences in perceptions of the early months of marriage. The study also explored the relationship between wives' and husbands' perceptions and expectations regarding the early months of marriage and marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. Additionally, this study sought to determine which, if any, demographic, life course, and interactional history variables are better predictors of higher marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores in the first months of marriage. Finally, this study sought to assess the extent to which marital problematic areas mediated the impact of demographic and life course characteristics, and interactional history variables on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction.

Conclusions

The major conclusions of this study are described in order of the research questions. The first question was to ascertain possible gender differences between wives and husbands concerning marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores, perception of problematic areas, and perceptions and expectations regarding the early months of marriage.

There were no statistically significant differences between any of the wives' and husbands' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores, perceived problematic areas, or perceptions and expectations regarding the first few months of marriage. However, there were some notable trends. Overall, wives tended to have slightly lower marital satisfaction scores, scored higher on the perceived problematic areas, described their transition to marriage as "very difficult" more often than husbands, and, overall, described their first few months of marriage as more difficult than expected compared to husbands. This trend supports previous research that suggests wives experience lower levels of satisfaction than their husbands in the marital relationship (Huston et al., 1986). On the other hand, husbands had slightly lower marital adjustment scores than wives. Moreover, this trend commences fairly early in the relationship, suggesting that marriage education may be needed relatively early on in the relationship.

The second question was mainly exploratory, that is, to describe wives' and husbands' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction in the first few months of marriage. It was also of interest to assess whether a positive relationship existed between marital adjustment scores and marital satisfaction scores as measured by the RDAS and the KMSS.

From the wide range of scores on marital adjustment for both wives (3-68) and husbands (14-69), a few months of marriage appear to be enough time to perceive noticeable differences and variations, although mean scores overall were fairly high. Over 11% of both husbands and wives scored in the distressed range on the RDAS during the first few months of marriage. Nevertheless, an overwhelming majority of the newlyweds (89%) had scores indicating they were nondistressed. However, with 26

wives and husbands scoring in the distressed range (scores of 47 and lower), there is evidence that some spouses have a difficult time adjusting to the marriage and their spouse within the first few months of marriage.

When marital satisfaction scores for both spouses were analyzed, 15 wives and husbands (6.5%) scored in the distressed range (16 and below). Thus, the majority of both husbands and wives appear to be highly satisfied with their marriage, their spouse, and their relationship within the first months of marriage with some exceptions. This finding lends modest support to Karney and Bradbury's (1997) assertion that differences in KMSS scores can be detected within the first 6 months of marriage.

The final goal of the second question was to determine whether a significant positive relationship existed between wives' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores, as well as between husbands' respective scores. Relatively high correlations between the two instruments have been found in previous studies with married couples, but none specifically have focused on newlyweds in the first few months of marriage (Crane et al., 2000). Strong and statistically significant positive correlations in this study were manifest between both wives' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores as well as between husbands' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores, indicating strong evidence of concurrent validity between the KMSS and the RDAS when focusing specifically on newlyweds.

Overall, the couples in this limited sample of Utah newlyweds tended to be adjusting well to marriage and are very satisfied with various aspects of their relationship. However, noticeable variability in scores, and some spouses scoring in the distressed

range, indicates that for some couples, marriage may be a more difficult and/or different experience than anticipated.

The third question of this research was to determine whether the same demographic variables that influence and predict marital instability and divorce in later years of marriage have a similar influence on mean differences of husbands' and wives marital satisfaction and adjustment scores in the early months of marriage. The key findings are outlined here. First, only wives in first marriages had significantly higher marital adjustment scores that wives in a remarriage. However, a closer look at the means suggests that, overall, husbands and wives in first marriages had higher marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores than husbands and wives in remarriages, which supports what previous research has found (Amato, 1996; Amato & Rogers, 1997)

Overall, the higher the education of both husband and wife, the higher the marital adjustment and satisfaction scores. This finding supports the work of previous research by Bumpass and Martin (1991), and Kurdek (1991), who conducted studies on marital stability and education and found similar results.

When religiosity was measured, the higher levels of religiosity husbands and wives indicated they held, the higher the marital adjustment and satisfaction scores tended to be. These results were similar to findings from studies conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics (2002). Moreover, it was the husbands' religiosity that was a particularly strong predictor of both husbands' and wives' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction.

Another variable that was measured was religious homogamy. Across both measures of marital satisfaction and marital adjustment, husbands and wives who were of

the same religion scored higher than husbands and wives who were of different religions. This finding was also consistent with previous research findings (Heaton, 1984).

Where a marriage took place was another variable of interest in this study. Husbands and wives who were married in a religious setting (i.e., temple, church) tended to score higher on measures of marital satisfaction and marital adjustment compared with couples that were married elsewhere. However, it is important to note that the actual place of marriage is not likely to contribute to marital adjustment or marital satisfaction. Rather, it is more likely that the behaviors and beliefs that lead to them marrying in certain places is the stronger contributor.

When the husbands' and wives' parents' marital status was measured, few statistically significant differences in scores were found. Overall, the trends suggest that both husbands and wives whose parents were in their first marriage had higher marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores than husbands and wives whose parents were not in their first marriage. These trends are consistent with previous research that has focused on parental divorce and probabilities of children's divorce (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Bumpass et al., 1991; Cherlin, 1992).

When length of dating and engagement were measured, surprising results were found. Contrary to what recent research suggests (Kurdek, 1991) and to what was hypothesized, both husbands and wives who dated three months or less had the highest marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores, though these differences were not statistically significant. Furthermore, the trend suggested that the longer a husband and wife dated before marriage, the lower the marital adjustment and marital satisfaction.

This finding is exactly opposite of a study that found that couples who had dated for more than 2 years consistently scored higher on marital satisfaction than couples who had dated less than 2 years (Grover et al., 1985). Moreover, similar trends were manifested when length of engagement was tested as well. Additionally, husbands and wives who had engagements for 12 months or more had statistically significantly lower marital adjustment scores than all of the husbands' and wives' who had shorter engagement lengths.

One plausible reason for this finding is the assumption that couples who have dated for a shorter length of time, and have shorter engagements may still be in the "honeymoon" phase of marriage throughout the first few months of marriage when the measures were administered, compared with husbands and wives who were dealing with potentially more serious concerns and issues, due to them being married for longer lengths of time. Thus, a follow-up study of these same couples when they have been married two years may show different results. This finding also is likely to be related to this study being conducted in Utah, a state where couples typically have shorter dating and engagement periods. Nevertheless, this finding held true for both length of dating and length of engagement.

Another interactional history variable of interest in this study was whether a couple brought a child into the marriage. This variable was a very strong predictor of both marital adjustment and marital satisfaction for husbands and wives. Husbands and/or wives who brought a child into the marriage had statistically significantly lower marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores than couples who did not bring a child into the

marriage, a finding consistent with previous research (Bumpass & Martin, 1991; National Center for Health Statistics, 2002).

The final variable analyzed in this study was cohabitation. The husbands and wives who cohabited before marriage did not have statistically significant different marital satisfaction scores than husbands and wives who did not cohabit prior to marriage. However, there were statistically significant differences in husbands' and wives' marital adjustment scores. Thus, cohabitation appears to predict differences in marital adjustment scores for husbands and wives in the first few months of marriage, but not marital satisfaction, for this newlywed sample. This may be due to the fact that cohabiting couples have already been living with one another and were satisfied enough with the relationship to then get married. However, marital adjustment consists of how potential differences in the marriage are handled, in addition to how much time couples spend with each other. Because these couples have likely spent more time with each other in the initial stages of cohabiting, they may be more likely to spend more time apart and handle problems differently than newlyweds who have recently started living together.

Overall, it can be concluded that for this sample, many of the demographic and life-course variables found in prior research that predicts divorce can also predict lower marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores in husbands and wives within the first few months of marriage. However, these variables were only measured one at a time, and thus did not control for additional variables or problematic areas--an element that is focused on in research question seven. Additionally, many of the demographics measured in this study may be better predictors of marital satisfaction and marital adjustment, but perhaps not within the first few months of marriage.

Research questions four and five centered on the transition and expectations of the first few months of marriage, and the relationship with subsequent marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. There were moderately high correlations between both husbands' and wives' perceptions of the transition to marriage, expectations of their first few months of marriage, and actual marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores. These findings suggest that husbands' and wives' perception of their transition to marriage as well as their expectations regarding marriage are related to their overall marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. However, these correlations are not highly significant; thus, perceptions of the transition to marriage and expectations of the first few months of marriage are not significant predictors of marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. Rather, it simply describes a husband or wife's shift from being single, or cohabiting, to being united as a "married couple."

The sixth question of this study was to identify the most problematic issues as perceived by each spouse during the first few months of marriage. For both husbands and wives, balancing job and marriage, and debt brought into marriage were ranked as one and two for the most problematic areas in the relationship. These findings are similar to the study conducted by the Center for Marriage and Family (2000), as well as by Quinn and Odell (1998), who found that "lack of economic stability" was a fairly problematic area for newlyweds.

The only issue that was statistically significantly different between husbands and wives was "different recreational interests." Husbands perceive this as much more problematic in the marriage than do wives. These top 10 issues for each spouse gives information (though from a biased and limited sample) on what newlyweds in Utah are

struggling with during the early months of marriage. This information can subsequently be incorporated into marriage education curriculums and programs, marriage therapy, counseling resources for clergy, as well as incorporating this knowledge into high school and college courses. Knowledge of what many couples perceive as problematic areas early in marriage may help other couples preparing for marriage by making them aware of key problematic areas that may arise, and can suggest that these areas can be points of discussion.

The seventh and final question of this research was to determine the impact that a variety of demographic and interactional history variables, tested together, had on husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. Additionally, it was of interest to assess the extent to which problematic areas, which were divided into six subscales, mediated the impact of the demographic variables on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. Husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores were regressed on the pertinent demographic variables in one model, and then the six problematic subscales were added in model 2 to determine the extent to which they mediated the demographic variables in predicting marital satisfaction and marital adjustment.

When regressions on husbands' and wives' demographic characteristics alone were carried out, the only consistent and common demographic variable that predicted higher marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores for both husbands and wives was religiosity. Thus, husbands and wives who indicated they were "very religious" had higher marital satisfaction scores than those who indicated lower levels of religiosity. Furthermore, wives who were of the same religious faith as their husbands were more

likely to have higher marital satisfaction scores and marital adjustment scores than wives who did not share the same religious faith. A similar pattern was not found for husbands. Additionally, wives who did not cohabit prior to marriage were more likely to have higher marital satisfaction scores than wives who did cohabit prior to marriage. This finding only pertained to wives, and specifically, to wives' marital satisfaction and not their adjustment.

The total variance explained by demographic variables alone was relatively low (under 20%) for both husbands' and wives' measures of marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. Thus, there are likely many other factors that are contributing to husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment that are unaccounted for in this study. Additionally, it should be noted that the various demographic variables that were tested individually and found statistically significant in research question three, largely do not appear significant when combined with the other demographic variables and problematic areas.

After regression analyses for both husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment were conducted, the six problematic area subscales were then included in the regression analysis, and they had a slight mediating impact on the demographic characteristics. To begin, wives' marital satisfaction was affected more by the actual problematic areas themselves, than an increase in the influence of demographic characteristics. Further, it was lower scores (indicating the areas were not very problematic) on the cohesion (activities) subscale, the satisfaction (conflict) subscale, and the satisfaction (stability) subscale (for a review of the problematic areas contained in each subscale, (see Table 23) that predicted higher marital satisfaction scores.

For wives' marital adjustment, the cohesion (activities), consensus (affection), and satisfaction (conflict) problematic subscales largely accounted for the increase in variance accounted for by the independent variables, rather than the demographic variables. The overall variance in wives' marital satisfaction explained by the demographic and problematic independent variables increased from 10% to 54% when the problematic area subscales were added, and the overall variance in wives' marital adjustment explained by the demographic and problematic independent variables increased from 13% to 57% when the problematic area subscales were added. Thus, it appears that demographic variables alone have little predictability of marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. Rather, results were similar to those found by Amato and Rogers' (1997), who suggested that demographic variables affected the likelihood that various marital problems would arise, which, in turn, would increase the likelihood of divorce, or in this study, increase the likelihood of lower marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. In sum, it was chiefly the problematic areas that accounted for the majority of the total variance in husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment.

When husbands' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment were regressed on the demographic variables and problematic area subscales, similar results to their wives were revealed. The only statistically significant predictor of both husbands' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment was religiosity. Overall, husbands who indicated they were "very religious" were much more likely to have higher marital satisfaction and marital adjustment scores than husbands who indicated they were "somewhat religious" or "slightly/not at all religious."

When the problem area subscales were added to the demographic variables, and regressions were carried out, little significant impact occurred with the demographic variables. However, with regards to husbands' marital satisfaction, previous marital status was influential and became a statistically significant predictor of marital satisfaction. Husbands who were currently in their first marriage were more likely to have higher marital satisfaction scores when problematic areas were included in the regression analysis than when demographic variables alone were in the regression analysis. Additionally, the consensus (decision making), consensus (affection), and satisfaction (stability) problem subscales were also statistically significant predictors of marital satisfaction in husbands, and likely accounted for the increased variance in husbands' marital satisfaction. Moreover, the cohesion (activities), consensus (affection), and satisfaction (stability) problem subscales were statistically significant predictors of husbands' marital adjustment when added to the demographic variables. These problematic area subscales likely accounted for the increase in total variance from 20% to 57%.

The problematic areas noted by the husbands and wives can be best understood in relation to role theory, which suggests that behavior follows role expectations (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). According to role theory, the problematic areas identified in this study arose due to the norms of role performance of one spouse being in conflict with those of the other spouse. In short, there was a lack of consensus. A review of the problematic areas identified by the newlyweds demonstrates that seven of the problematic areas for the wives, and five problematic areas for the husbands, were problems contained in the consensus subscales. Hence, it was not the demographic variables alone, as previously

mentioned, that influences marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. Rather it was how the demographic variables influence role expectations, role consensus, and role performance. For instance, the couples who held similar levels of religiosity, were religiously homogamous, and had a consensus towards higher education, tended to have higher marital adjustment and marital satisfaction scores. Couples in a remarriage, or couples who brought a child into the marriage, experienced lower levels of marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. This is due, in part, to the added strain that often accompanies these marriages, which affects the role performance of each spouse. It is more difficult to perform the desired role, or adjust to new roles and role expectations of the new spouse when stressors are present. Thus, the quality of each spouses' role performance decreases, which in turn negatively affects marital satisfaction. Thus, one important and challenging task for newlywed couples in the early months of marriage, as predicted by role theory and substantiated by this research, is to successfully negotiate the division of roles and responsibilities while learning to develop, nurture, and maintain the relationship as problems arise.

In conclusion, religiosity was the most consistent and statistically significant demographic predictor of both husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction and marital adjustment for this sample of newlyweds in Utah. This variable likely also impacts other aspects of a married couples' life that contribute to the overall satisfaction and adjustment of the marriage. Overall, role theory provides a good explanation for the finding that marital satisfaction and marital adjustment are not as much affected by the couples' demographic characteristics as they are by the problematic areas that couples encounter.

Limitations

This study has a number of limitations that limits the generalizability to this sample of newlyweds exclusively. First, the sample of newlywed couples is not random, but rather a limited convenience sample. Couples who participated in this study were newlywed couples in Utah (excluding Salt Lake County) who had first received a video and returned a brief survey included with the video. These couples were then sent the large survey that pertains to this study, and only a limited number of these surveys were then returned. Further, these newlyweds were limited to husbands and wives age 35 and under, which does not account for all newlyweds' experiences. Future research would do well to study a state or national random sample of newlyweds to gain better understanding and knowledge concerning marital satisfaction and marital adjustment during the first few months of marriage. Moreover, a longitudinal study that included a qualitative component would help researchers gain a better understanding of the adjustments that newlyweds experience during the first few years of marriage, and assess how they handle the problematic areas that were identified.

Another limitation of this study was the characteristics of the sample itself. The respondent sample was predominantly white couples (92%), and LDS (85%). Hence, racial and ethnic differences could not be measured for this sample. Further, it under represents couples in remarriages, and over represents couples in religiously homogamous marriages, which limits the practical significance of this study. Thus, the results of this study are generalizable only to studies with similar demographic characteristics.

Further limitations include an inability to assure that husbands and wives filled out their surveys separately and honestly as instructed, without consulting with each other. Moreover, it is unknown whether one spouse filled out both surveys, thus causing partially biased results. An additional limitation to this study was the inability to assess the satisfaction level of spouses prior to their marriage, including the dating and engagement period, in addition to other influential premarital factors.

Recommendations and Implications

Based upon the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations and implications are offered. First, it should be noted that approximately 11% of both husbands and wives scored in the distressed range on the RDAS, indicating that some marital troubles continue from dating and courtship and/or develop within the first few months of marriage. Thus, while this sample is one of convenience, and biased, results do indicate that there may be some significant problems that newlyweds in Utah experience, and may need help with, during the first few months of marriage. Knowledge of these problematic areas, as identified by the newlyweds themselves, provides opportunities for marriage educators, clergy, parents, and others to assist newlyweds and those preparing for marriage with an awareness of issues that they could address early in the relationship. Thus, proper preventative measures in the form of marriage education and premarital education may help alleviate problems and potential problems in the relationship. Specifically, a knowledge of problematic areas that many newlyweds experience may be couched into premarital and marital education programs aimed at reducing barriers to marital adjustment and satisfaction.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Cover Letters and Reminder Cards

Dear Newlyweds,   September 6, 2002

Congratulations on your marriage. We hope you find a lifetime of joy in your new journey together. The success of your marriage is also important to our state and society. Perhaps now more than ever, successful marriages are recognized as being critically important to the health of our society.

The Utah Governor's Commission on Marriage in partnership with Utah State University is conducting a study to learn more about the first year of married life. We received your name when you filled out the marriage survey included in the marriage video. You have been selected to participate in this research by completing a survey on preparation for marriage, including questions regarding the recent marriage video, "Marriage News You Can Use", and the new marriage web site www.UtahMarriage.org. In addition, we are interested in the adjustments you may have had to make in your lives, and how these changes relate to your marital happiness. It is important that we hear back from you, no matter the experiences you have had. The information you contribute will help us provide better preparation to people getting married in the future. Your participation in this process will play an essential role.

There are minimal risks from participating in a study such as this. You may find it even provides for some useful discussion with your spouse. We have included a **two-dollar bill** to thank you in advance for taking the time to fill out the survey. Involvement in this research project is strictly voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time. All of your responses are, and will remain confidential. There will be no reference to your identity at any point in the research. The survey # at the top of your survey will be used to track who has turned in their surveys and will not be used to identify you personally. Return of this survey implies consent to participation in this research. Please **DO NOT** put your names on the survey.

This survey takes 15-20 minutes to complete. Please complete the surveys separately, without consulting with each other. After completing the surveys, you are welcome to discuss them together, but please don't change your original answers. When you have completed all of the sections of the survey, please return them in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact us at the numbers listed below. Additionally, if you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact the USU Institutional Review Board office at 435-797-1821. Thank you for your participation and your personal contribution to strengthening the future of marriage in Utah.

Thomas R. Lee Ph.D.	David G. Schramm	Fay Belnap
Project Director	Researcher	Researcher
Utah State University	Utah State University	Utah State University
(435) 797-1551	(435) 797-1542	(435) 797-1542

Dear Newlyweds, September 20, 2002

A week ago we mailed you a marriage survey and our records indicate that we have not received your survey back yet. We would like to remind you, if you have not done so already, to take a few minutes now to complete the survey. If you have completed the survey and mailed it in, please accept our thanks. We appreciate your help in understanding how we can strengthen marriages in Utah. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,
Thomas R. Lee, Ph.D., Project Director
David G. Schramm, Researcher
Fay Belnap, Researcher

October 23, 2002

Dear Newlyweds,

Recently you should have received a marriage survey from the Utah Governor's Commission on Marriage in conjunction with Utah State University regarding your preparation for and adjustment to marriage. Our records indicate that we have not received your survey yet. If you have already completed our survey and have mailed it in, please accept our thanks and do not return this survey. In the case that you may not have received our survey in the initial mailing or have misplaced your original survey, we are including an identical survey with this letter for your convenience. Your response is valuable to us, and we would like to include your responses in our study. We would appreciate your prompt reply and have provided a self-addressed postage paid envelope. Thank you for your cooperation.

We initially received your name when you filled out the marriage survey included in the marriage video "Marriage News You Can Use". You have been selected to participate in this current research by completing the survey provided which addresses your preparation for marriage, including questions regarding the recent marriage video and the new marriage web site www.UtahMarriage.org. In addition, we are interested in the adjustments you may have had to make in your lives, and how these changes relate to your marital happiness. It is important that we hear back from you, no matter the experiences you have had. The information you contribute will help us provide better preparation to people getting married in the future. Your participation in this process will play an essential role.

There are minimal risks from participating in a study such as this. You may find it even provides for some useful discussion with your spouse. Involvement in this research project is strictly voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time. All of your responses are, and will remain confidential. There will be no reference to your identity at any point in the research. The survey # at the top of your survey will be used to track who has turned in their surveys and will not be used to identify you personally. Return of this survey implies consent to participation in this research. Please **DO NOT** put your names on the survey.

This survey takes 15-20 minutes to complete. Please complete the surveys separately, without consulting with each other. After completing the surveys, you are welcome to discuss them together, but please don't change your original answers. When you have completed all of the sections of the survey, please return them in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided. We encourage you as a couple to take a few minutes now to complete the survey.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Thomas R Lee PhD. at (435) 797-1551. Additionally, if you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact the USU Institutional Review Board office at (435)-797-1821. Thank you for your participation and your personal contribution to strengthening the future of marriage in Utah.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Lee PhD., Project Director
David G. Schramm, Researcher
Fay Belnap, Researcher

Dear Newlyweds,   October 15, 2002

A few weeks ago we mailed you a marriage survey and our records indicate that we have not received your survey back yet. We would like to remind you, if you have not done so already, to take a few minutes now to complete the survey. If you have completed the survey and mailed it in, please accept our thanks. We appreciate your help in understanding how we can strengthen marriages in Utah. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,
Thomas R. Lee, PhD., Project Director
David G. Schramm, Researcher
Fay Belnap, Researcher

Appendix B. Instrumentation

Survey # _____

The Utah Governor's Commission on Marriage in partnership with Utah State University is interested in receiving feedback about your first months of marriage, with hopes that we can continually strengthen marriages in Utah. Your information is critical in furthering this vital goal. Please start on the section below together and then complete the husband and wife forms separately. **Please do not put your names on any of the surveys.** Remember, all responses are confidential. Thank you.

A. This first section asks general information about you as a couple. It can be completed by either husband or wife. If possible, we encourage you to take a few minutes and complete it together.

Please indicate who is completing this section of the survey: ☐ Husband   ☐ Wife   ☐ Both

1. Husband: Age: ____   Number of this marriage: ☐ 1st   ☐ 2nd   ☐ 3rd or more

2. Wife: Age: ____   Number of this marriage: ☐ 1st   ☐ 2nd   ☐ 3rd or more

3. Did you or your spouse bring children into the marriage with you? ☐ No   ☐ Yes
   3a. If yes, how many? ☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3 or more

4. About how long did you date prior to becoming engaged?
   0-3 months   3-6 months   6-12 months   12 months or more   Did not get engaged
   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

5. How long was your engagement?
   0-3 months   3-6 months   6-12 months   12 months or more   Did not get engaged
   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

6. Date of marriage: _____ (Month/Date/Year)

7. Did you cohabit (live together) prior to marriage?   ☐ No   ☐ Yes

8. Where were you married?

☐ County Clerk's office/Justice of the Peace chambers
☐ Church, Synagogue, Mosque
☐ LDS Temple
☐ Other facility (country club, reception center, etc.)
☐ Other: _____

HUSBAND'S SURVEY

B. This section is just for **husbands.** Wives complete the pink Wife Survey form. Please complete your sections separately. When you are finished, please seal it in the plain white envelope provided and place the white envelope in the preaddressed envelope provided. Please remember that all of your answers are confidential. **Please do not put your name on the survey.** (check one box per question)

1. Utah is the first state to produce a marriage video to be freely distributed to newlyweds when they apply for a marriage license. Do you feel the marriage video you received was. . .
   ☐ Did not receive a video (please skip the next question)   ☐ Received a video but did not watch it
   ☐ Very helpful   ☐ Somewhat helpful   ☐ Not very helpful   ☐ Not at all helpful

2. How soon after receiving the video did you watch it?
   ☐ Haven't watched it yet   ☐ Within one week   ☐ After 2-3 weeks   ☐ After a month
   ☐ Between 1-2 months

3. Utah has recently created a marriage web site designed to help people have happier marriages.
   (www.UtahMarriage.org) Do you feel the web site is. . .
   ☐ Haven't visited the web site   ☐ Very useful   ☐ Somewhat useful
   ☐ Not very useful   ☐ Not at all useful

The following questions ask for information about marriage preparation you may have had, and how beneficial it may have been. (check one box per question)

4. Did you have any formal education in high school that addressed marriage?
   ☐ No   ☐ Yes

5. Have you enrolled in any formal classes in a technical school or college that focused on marriage?
   ☐ Did not attend college   ☐ No   ☐ Yes

6. Did you take other types of marriage preparation classes/workshops? (religious, community, etc)
   ☐ No   ☐ Yes

The following questions pertain to your preparation & attitudes towards marriage education (check one box per question).

7. Overall, looking back, how prepared do you feel you were, going into the marriage?
   ☐ Very well prepared   ☐ Fairly well prepared   ☐ Somewhat prepared   ☐ Not well prepared

8. How likely is it that you would recommend premarital education to other engaged couples?
   ☐ Definitely Would   ☐ Probably Would   ☐ Probably Would Not   ☐ Definitely Would Not

9. How interested are you now in taking a free class designed for couples at your stage of marriage?
   ☐ Very Interested   ☐ Somewhat Interested   ☐ Somewhat Uninterested   ☐ Very Uninterested

10. At what point do you feel that marriage education would MOST LIKELY benefit you?
    ☐ Prior to dating   ☐ During dating   ☐ During engagement   ☐ 1-6 months into the marriage
    ☐ 6-12 months into the marriage

11. How do you feel about the idea of a statewide educational effort to promote marriages and reduce divorces? Do you think this would be a...
    ☐ Very good idea   ☐ Good idea   ☐ Not sure   ☐ Bad idea   ☐ Very bad idea

12. This next section asks about other things you may have done to prepare for marriage.
For each activity that you participated, please rate its helpfulness to you in preparing you for marriage, and mark <u>Not Applicable</u> (N/A) for activities in which you did not participate. Then, for each activity that you marked "Not Applicable" (N/A), please mark the MAJOR reason why you DID NOT participate in the activity. If there are other reasons you may have not participated in an activity, please leave your comments in the space provided below the table.

Activity	Degree of Helpfulness (check one)						Reason for not Participating (check one)				
	Very helpful	Helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not very helpful	Not at all helpful	N/A	Didn't think was needed	Not available	Took too much time	Spouse wasn't Interested	I was not Interested
a. Read a book on marriage	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
b. Professional premarital/ counseling	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
c. Talked with religious leaders/clergy	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
d. Visited marriage web sites(s)	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
e. Visited with other married couples	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
f. Visited with parents/relatives	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
g. Read pamphlets, magazines, news articles	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
h. Viewed videos/movies on marriage	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
I. Attended a class (2 or more sessions)	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
j. Attended a workshop or lecture (1 session)	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□

If you have additional comments regarding why you DID NOT participate in these or other marriage education activities, please provide them here: _____

Use the following scale to answer the three questions below (check one box per question).

	Extremely Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied
13. How satisfied are you with your *marriage*?	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
14. How satisfied are you with your wife *as a spouse*?	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
15. How satisfied are you with your *relationship* with your wife?	□	□	□	□	□	□	□

Most couples have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your spouse for each item on the following list (check one box per question).

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Agree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
16. Religious matters	□	□	□	□	□	□
17. Demonstration of affection	□	□	□	□	□	□
18. Making major decisions	□	□	□	□	□	□
19. Sex relations	□	□	□	□	□	□
20. Conventionality (Correct or proper behavior)	□	□	□	□	□	□
21. Career decisions	□	□	□	□	□	□

	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
22. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?	□	□	□	□	□	□
23. How often do you and your partner quarrel?	□	□	□	□	□	□
24. Do you ever regret that you are married?	□	□	□	□	□	□
25. How often do you and your mate "get on each others nerves"?	□	□	□	□	□	□

26. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together? (check one box)

Everyday	Almost Everyday	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
□	□	□	□	□

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate? (check one box per question)

27. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas

Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More than once a day
□	□	□	□	□	□

28. Work together on a project

Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More than once a day
□	□	□	□	□	□

29. Calmly discuss something

Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More than once a day
□	□	□	□	□	□

The following questions pertain to the first FEW MONTHS of your marriage. (check one box per question)

30. Which of the following best describes your transition to marriage?

Very Smooth	Fairly Smooth	Fairly Difficult	Very Difficult
□	□	□	□

31. Would you say the first FEW MONTHS of your marriage was . . .

Much better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	More difficult than I expected	Much more difficult than I expected
□	□	□	□	□

32. The following are areas that might be problematic during the early years of marriage. On a scale from **1 to 9**, please indicate for each item the highest level it is <u>or has ever been</u> problematic within your marriage. (Circle **0** if the item has never been problematic or check **NA** if it is not applicable; only circle one number per item).

	Not problematic						*Very problematic*				*NA*
a. Balancing job and marriage	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
b. Birth control	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
c. Constant bickering	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
d. Career											
d1. Wife employment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
d2. Husband employment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
e. Commitment to your marriage	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
f. Communication with your spouse	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
g. Debt brought into marriage	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	.
h. Decision about when to have children	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
i. Different recreational interests	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
j. Expectations about household tasks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
k. Financial decision making	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
l. Frequency of sexual relations	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
m. Gender roles	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
n. Ill health	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
o. In-laws	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
p. Lack of mutual affection (no longer in love)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
q. Lack of mutual friends	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
r. Parents	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
s. Personality differences	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
t. Religious differences	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
u. Resolving minor conflicts	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
v. Resolving major conflicts	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
w. Respect for each other	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
x. Showing appreciation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
y. Time spent together	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
z. Trusting your spouse	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
aa. Unsatisfying sexual relations	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
bb. Use of emotional force	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
cc. Use of verbal force	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
dd. Other (_____)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___

       please specify

Here are some final questions about you (check one box per question).

33. Which of the following racial groups best describes you?

White	Hispanic/Latino	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Asian	Other
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

34. What is your highest level of education?
- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school graduate
- ☐ Technical school/ Certificate
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ Associates degree
- ☐ Bachelors degree
- ☐ Higher than bachelor's degree

35. Approximately how much consumer debt (NOT including a house mortgage) did YOU enter the marriage with?
- ☐ None
- ☐ Under $1000
- ☐ Between $1000-$5000
- ☐ Between $5000-$20,000
- ☐ Between $20,000-$50,000
- ☐ Over $50,000

    35a. If you brought debt into the marriage what was the source(s)? (check all that apply)
- ☐ Medical bills
- ☐ Credit card
- ☐ Auto loan
- ☐ School loan

    Other _____
            (please specify)

36. Are your parents currently in their first marriage?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

37. Please indicate your present religious affiliation
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Catholic
- ☐ Evangelical
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Mormon (LDS)
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ No formal religious affiliation
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

38. Would you consider yourself ...

Very Religious	Fairly Religious	Somewhat Religious	Slightly Religious	Not at all Religious
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you would like to receive a summary of results from this survey, and be included in similar surveys in the future (perhaps every 2-3 years), please fill out the card that was included in the envelope and mail it in separately from this survey. With your help in completing further surveys we hope to further benefit marriages in Utah and beyond.

Thank you for your participation. Please place the survey in the preaddressed envelope and mail it in.

WIFE'S SURVEY

B. This section is just for **wives**. Husbands complete the blue Husband Survey form. Please complete your sections separately. When you are finished, please seal it in the plain white envelope provided and place the white envelope in the preaddressed envelope provided. Please remember that all of your answers are <u>confidential</u>. **Please do not put your name on the survey.** (check one box per question)

1. Utah is the first state to produce a marriage video to be freely distributed to newlyweds when they apply for a marriage license. Do you feel the marriage video you received was. . .
   □ Did not receive a video (please skip the next question)   □ Received a video but did not watch it
   □ Very helpful   □ Somewhat helpful   □ Not very helpful   □ Not at all helpful

2. How soon after receiving the video did you watch it?
   □ Haven't watched it yet   □ Within one week   □ After 2-3 weeks   □ After a month
   □ Between 1-2 months

3. Utah has recently created a marriage web site designed to help people have happier marriages. (www.UtahMarriage.org) Do you feel the web site is. . .
   □ Haven't visited the web site   □ Very useful   □ Somewhat useful
   □ Not very useful   □ Not at all useful

The following questions ask for information about marriage preparation you may have had, and how beneficial it may have been. (check one box per question)

4. Did you have any formal education in high school that addressed marriage?
   □ No   □ Yes

5. Have you enrolled in any formal classes in a technical school or college that focused on marriage?
   □ Did not attend college   □ No   □ Yes

6. Did you take other types of marriage preparation classes/workshops? (religious, community, etc)
   □ No   □ Yes

The following questions pertain to your preparation & attitudes towards marriage education (check one box per question).

7. Overall, looking back, how prepared do you feel you were, going into the marriage?
   □ Very well prepared   □ Fairly well prepared   □ Somewhat prepared   □ Not well prepared

8. How likely is it that you would recommend premarital education to other engaged couples?
   □ Definitely Would   □ Probably Would   □ Probably Would Not   □ Definitely Would Not

9. How interested are you now in taking a <u>free class</u> designed for couples at your stage of marriage?
   □ Very Interested   □ Somewhat Interested   □ Somewhat Uninterested   □ Very Uninterested

10. At what point do you feel that marriage education would MOST LIKELY benefit you?
    □ Prior to dating   □ During dating   □ During engagement   □ 1-6 months into the marriage
    □ 6-12 months into the marriage

11. How do you feel about the idea of a statewide educational effort to promote marriages and reduce divorces? Do you think this would be a...
    □ Very good idea   □ Good idea   □ Not sure   □ Bad idea   □ Very bad idea

12. This next section asks about other things you may have done to prepare for marriage.
For each activity that you participated, please rate its helpfulness to you in preparing you for marriage, and mark <u>Not Applicable</u> (N/A) for activities in which you did not participate. Then, for each activity that you marked "Not Applicable" (N/A), please mark the MAJOR reason why you DID NOT participate in the activity. If there are other reasons you may have not participated in an activity, please leave your comments in the space provided below the table.

Activity	Degree of Helpfulness (check one)						Reason for not Participating (check one)				
	Very helpful	Helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not very helpful	Not at all helpful	N/A	Didn't think was needed	Not available	Took too much time	Spouse wasn't Interested	I was not Interested
a. Read a book on marriage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Professional premarital/ counseling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Talked with religious leaders/clergy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Visited marriage web sites(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Visited with other married couples	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Visited with parents/relatives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Read pamphlets, magazines, news articles	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Viewed videos/movies on marriage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I. Attended a class (2 or more sessions)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Attended a workshop or lecture (1 session)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you have additional comments regarding why you DID NOT participate in these or other marriage education activities, please provide them here: _____

Use the following scale to answer the three questions below (check one box per question).

	Extremely Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied
13. How satisfied are you with your *marriage*?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. How satisfied are you with your husband *as a spouse*?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. How satisfied are you with your *relationship* with your husband?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Most couples have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your spouse for each item on the following list (check one box per question).

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Agree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
16. Religious matters	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Demonstration of affection	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Making major decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Sex relations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Conventionality (Correct or proper behavior)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Career decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
22. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. How often do you and your partner quarrel?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. Do you ever regret that you are married?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. How often do you and your mate "get on each others nerves"?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together? (check one box)

Everyday	Almost Everyday	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate? (check one box per question)

27. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas

Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More than once a day
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. Work together on a project

Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More than once a day
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

29. Calmly discuss something

Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More than once a day
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The following questions pertain to the first FEW MONTHS of your marriage. (check one box per question)

30. Which of the following best describes your transition to marriage?

Very Smooth	Fairly Smooth	Fairly Difficult	Very Difficult
☐	☐	☐	☐

31. Would you say the first FEW MONTHS of your marriage was . . .

Much better than I expected	Better than I expected	About what I expected	More difficult than I expected	Much more difficult than I expected
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

32. The following are areas that might be problematic during the early years of marriage. On a scale from **1 to 9**, please indicate for each item the highest level it is <u>or has ever been</u> problematic within your marriage. (Circle **0** if the item has never been problematic or check **NA** if it is not applicable; only circle one number per item).

	Not problematic							*Very problematic*			*NA*
a. Balancing job and marriage	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
b. Birth control	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
c. Constant bickering	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
d. Career											
d1. Wife employment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
d2. Husband employment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
e. Commitment to your marriage	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
f. Communication with your spouse	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
g. Debt brought into marriage	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
h. Decision about when to have children	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
i. Different recreational interests	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
j. Expectations about household tasks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
k. Financial decision making	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
l. Frequency of sexual relations	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
m. Gender roles	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
n. Ill health	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
o. In-laws	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
p. Lack of mutual affection (no longer in love)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
q. Lack of mutual friends	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
r. Parents	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
s. Personality differences	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
t. Religious differences	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
u. Resolving minor conflicts	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
v. Resolving major conflicts	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
w. Respect for each other	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
x. Showing appreciation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
y. Time spent together	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
z. Trusting your spouse	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
aa. Unsatisfying sexual relations	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
bb. Use of emotional force	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
cc. Use of verbal force	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___
dd. Other (_____)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	___

        please specify

Here are some final questions about you (check one box per question).

33. Which of the following racial groups best describes you?

White	Hispanic/Latino	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Asian	Other
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

34. What is your highest level of education?
- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school graduate
- ☐ Technical school/ Certificate
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ Associates degree
- ☐ Bachelors degree
- ☐ Higher than bachelor's degree

35. Approximately how much consumer debt (NOT including a house mortgage) did YOU enter the marriage with?
- ☐ None ☐ Under $1000 ☐ Between $1000-$5000 ☐ Between $5000-$20,000
- ☐ Between $20,000-$50,000 ☐ Over $50,000

    35a. If you brought debt into the marriage what was the source(s)? (check all that apply)
    - ☐ Medical bills ☐ Credit card ☐ Auto loan ☐ School loan
    Other _____
        (please specify)

36. Are your parents currently in their first marriage?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

37. Please indicate your present religious affiliation
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Catholic
- ☐ Evangelical
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Mormon (LDS)
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ No formal religious affiliation
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

38. Would you consider yourself …

Very Religious	Fairly Religious	Somewhat Religious	Slightly Religious	Not at all Religious
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you would like to receive a summary of results from this survey, and be included in similar surveys in the future (perhaps every 2-3 years), please fill out the card that was included in the envelope and mail it in separately from this survey. With your help in completing further surveys we hope to further benefit marriages in Utah and beyond.

Thank you for your participation. Please place the survey in the preaddressed envelope and mail it in.

How satisfied are you with your *marriage*?

Extremely Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

How satisfied are you with your wife *as a spouse*?

Extremely Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

How satisfied are you with your *relationship* with your wife (or husband)?

Extremely Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Satisfaction scores are calculated by adding the three scores for each question together. Scores may range from 3 to 21. Total scores of 17 and above indicate an individual is non-distressed, while scores of 16 and below indicate distress.

The RDAS

Most persons have disagreements 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.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Agree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
1. Religious matters	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Demonstration of affection	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Making major decisions	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Sex relations	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Career decisions	5	4	3	2	1	0

	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
7. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. How often do you and your partner quarrel?	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. Do you ever regret that you are married?	0	1	2	3	4	5
10. How often do you and your mate "get on each others nerves"?	0	1	2	3	4	5

	Everyday	Almost Every Day	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?	4	3	2	1	0

	Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
12. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas	0	1	2	3	4	5
13. Work together on a project	0	1	2	3	4	5
14. Calmly discuss something	0	1	2	3	4	5

Scores for the RDAS are calculated by totaling the numbers corresponding with each question. Scores may range from 0 to 69. Total scores of 48 and above indicate an individual is non-distressed, whereas total scores of 47 and below indicate an individual is distressed.

Consensus

Decision Making

Item 3. Making major decisions

Item 6. Career decisions

Values

Item 1. Religious matters

Item 5. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)

Affection

Item 2. Demonstrations of affection

Item 4. Sex relations

Satisfaction

Stability

Item 7. How often do you discuss terminating your relationship?

Item 9. Do you ever regret that you married?

Conflict

Item 8. How often do you and your partner quarrel?

Item 10. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?

Cohesion

Activities

Item 11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?

Item 13. How often you work together on a project?

Discussion

Item 12. How often do you have a stimulating exchange of ideas?

Item 14. How often do you calmly discuss something?