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COGNITIVE VARIABLES AND MARITAL SATISFACTION

by

Carol G. Green

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

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Psychology

Approved:

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
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Carol Green

CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	v
ABSTRACT	vi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Problem Statement	1
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	5
Earlier Reviews	5
Primary Studies	12
III. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES	39
IV. METHODS	41
Subjects	41
Procedure	42
Measures	44
Analyses	53
V. RESULTS	54
Descriptive Statistics	54
Scale Development	55
Reliability	57
Intercorrelations Between Subscales	60
Regression Analyses	65
VI. DISCUSSION	68
VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	77
REFERENCES	80

	Page
APPENDICES	99
Appendix A: Consent Form and IRB Statement	100
Appendix B: Map of Voting Districts ...	103
Appendix C: Cover Letter	105
Appendix D: Measures	107
Appendix E: MAS Subscale Composition ..	131
Appendix F: RBI Subscale Composition ..	133
Appendix G: Frequencies, Means, Standard Deviations	135

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Dyadic Adjustment Scale Reliability Coefficients (Spanier, 1976)	46
2. Marital Attitude Survey Reliability Coefficients (Pretzer, Epstein, & Fleming, 1985)	48
3. Marital Attitude Survey Subscale Intercorrelations (Pretzer et al., 1985)	49
4. Relationship Belief Inventory Reliability Coefficients (Bradbury & Fincham, 1993).....	52
5. Relationship Belief Inventory Subscale Intercorrelations (Eidelson & Epstein, (1982) ...	52
6. Relationship Belief Inventory Groupings of Items Within Subscales (Present Sample)	55
7. Marital Attitude Survey Groupings of Items Within Subscales (Present Sample)	56
8. Marital Attitude Survey Reliability Coefficients (Present Sample)	58
9. Relationship Belief Inventory Reliability Coefficients (Present Sample)	59
10. Marital Attitude Survey Subscale Intercorrelations (Present Sample)	61
11. Relationship Belief Inventory Subscale Intercorrelations (Present Sample)	63
12. Intercorrelations Between RBI Subscales and MAS Subscales (Present Sample)	64

ABSTRACT

Cognitive Variables and Marital Satisfaction

by

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Utah State University, 1992

Major Professor: Dr. Jay R. Skidmore
Department: Psychology

Researchers and therapists have given increasing attention and recognition to the cognitive components of marital distress. Numerous investigators have attempted to identify and operationalize key cognitive variables that are related to marital satisfaction. In doing so, researchers have looked at the differences between distressed and nondistressed couples in relation to certain categories of cognitive variables, hoping to demonstrate that a significant relationship exists between certain types of cognition and marital satisfaction. Although investigators agree that certain categories of cognition are directly related to marital satisfaction, there is no clear consensus on the degree of influence that these cognitive variables have on marital satisfaction and to what extent these variables are interrelated.

The present study examined the relationship between marital satisfaction and four categories of cognition:

causal attributions, expectancies, standards, and assumptions. Correlation analyses showed little if any multicollinearity between the independent variables. Stepwise regression analyses failed to yield a statistically significant model for predicting marital satisfaction using strictly these four independent variables. Although previous studies have demonstrated a relationship between scores on assessment measures for these four independent variables and marital satisfaction, the current sample did not follow this pattern.

(145 pages)

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Early studies conducted on marital satisfaction have been summarized as broad attempts by researchers to establish a relationship between demographics, personality, family, and marital satisfaction (Barry, 1970). This early research, according to Barry, provided little more than an overview of the concept of marital satisfaction. During the 1970s and 1980s, researchers began to look more closely at marital satisfaction and in particular at the relationship between marital satisfaction and couples' overt behaviors (Gottman, 1979; Gottman, Markman, & Notarius, 1977; Vincent, Weiss, & Birchler, 1975; Birchler, Weiss, & Vincent, 1975; Rausch, Barry, Hertel, & Swain, 1974). Although informative regarding the nature of couples' overt behaviors and their relationship to marital satisfaction, and methodologically superior to earlier studies, these studies still left researchers and therapists with unanswered questions regarding marital satisfaction and its components. In addition, behavioral changes, although helpful, did not appear to totally suggest how to improve marital quality in distressed relationships. Other unknown variables were apparently affecting marital satisfaction.

In recent years, researchers have begun to recognize a need for more specific and more comprehensive concepts of marital satisfaction. Apparently, differences in marital satisfaction cannot be significantly explained by demographic situation, personality, or family relationships (Barry, 1970), nor does overt behavior fully explain differences in marital satisfaction between maritally distressed and nondistressed couples (Epstein, 1982). Current researchers are examining more closely different classes of covert variables that may have an effect on marital satisfaction. In particular, researchers have focused on the affective and cognitive concomitants of marital satisfaction (Bradbury & Fincham, 1988; Levenson & Gottman, 1983; Jacobson & Moore, 1981; Knudson, Gurman, & Kniskern, 1980; Gurman & Knudson, 1978; Glick & Gross, 1975).

Most recently, the cognitive components of marital distress have received increasing attention and recognition from researchers and therapists (Baucom, 1989; Baucom, Epstein, Sayers, & Sher, 1989; Epstein & Baucom, 1989; Epstein, 1982; Dryden, 1981; Stuart, 1980; Jacobson & Margolin, 1979; O'Leary & Turkewitz, 1978; Ellis & Harper 1975; Hurvitz, 1970). Some investigators have attempted to identify and operationalize key cognitive variables that are related to marital satisfaction (Baucom, 1989). In doing so, these researchers have looked at the differences between

distressed and nondistressed couples in relation to certain categories of cognitive variables, hoping to demonstrate a relationship between certain types of cognitions and marital satisfaction.

To discover what differences, if any, exist between the thought content of distressed and nondistressed couples, Donald Baucom (1989), drawing upon Beck's (1976) and Ellis' (1962) cognitive theories of maladaptive behavior, has identified five classes of cognitive variables that are relevant to marital satisfaction: selective attention, causal attributions, expectancies, assumptions, and standards. Baucom has suggested that maritally distressed couples differ significantly from nondistressed couples on these variables.

Other researchers (Epstein, Eidelson, & Fleming, 1987; Epstein, 1982; Eidelson & Epstein, 1982) have found these five categories of cognitive variables to be consistent with cognitive variables that they have identified as related to marital satisfaction. A certain amount of agreement exists among investigators on categories of cognitive variables that appear related to marital satisfaction and that maritally distressed and nondistressed couples differ significantly on these variables; however, there is no consensus on the degree of influence that these variables have on marital satisfaction or on how these cognitive phenomena are interrelated.

This study examines the relationship between causal attributions, expectancies, standards, and assumptions as associated with marital satisfaction. By using measures that represent each class of cognitive variables and by performing appropriate statistical analyses, this researcher examines associations between each of the independent variables and between the cognitive variables and marital satisfaction. Note that four of the five variables are amenable to self-report assessment but that the fifth, selective attention, requires in vivo observations, which is beyond the scope of this study. Although this limits the scope of the study, the primary objective was to discover the relationship between the four self-reported cognitive variables and marital satisfaction.

The following review of the literature provides support for the hypothesis that certain classes of cognitive phenomena are significantly associated with marital satisfaction; however, most of the published empirical studies have been limited in their theoretical scope by focus on only one or, at the most, two classes of cognitive phenomena. Very few studies look at the interactive effect between classes of cognitive variables.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Original (primary) studies in peer review journals were examined, as were review articles on causal attributions, expectancies, standards, and assumptions in association with marital satisfaction. Earlier reviews, summarized first, will provide a general background for the reader, after which more detailed coverage will be given to the primary studies. For reasons of clarity and organization, the primary studies are organized by the cognitive phenomenon under investigation. An examination of each of the cognitive variables, as they have been defined in the literature, precedes each section of primary studies.

A few cases occur in which one or more of the cognitive variables have been included in a single study, to which the author will call the reader's attention. As noted earlier, however, this practice has been the exception in the research related to marital satisfaction and classes of cognitive phenomena.

Earlier Reviews

Five earlier reviews were identified. Spanier and Lewis (1980) focused on the general concept of marital quality and on the more significant innovations during the decade between 1970 and 1980. The authors who summarized

research trends relative to marital quality, happiness, satisfaction, and marital adjustment during the 1970s found that more husbands participated in marital research during the 1970s and that greater attention was given to the construct of marital satisfaction and to the use of indicators of marital quality as independent variables.

In a more specific and focused review, Thompson and Snyder (1986) reviewed the literature related to the attributional process in intimate relationships. These reviewers found research support that strongly associated attributional processes and relationship satisfaction. This complex relationship is affected by mediating variables, such as the attributed behavior and the type of attribution. The reviewers divided studies into one of four cells: general attributional processes in nondistressed couples, general attributional processes in distressed couples, specific attributional processes in nondistressed couples, and specific attributional processes in distressed couples.

In the first cell, studies of general attributional processes in nondistressed couples, investigations generated mixed results. Most of the studies explored the association between locus of control and relationship satisfaction. Locus of control examines the causal source for an event or behavior. Whether cause is attributed to oneself or to one's spouse or to some other intervening factor appears to relate to marital satisfaction.

Results of studies in this cell were mixed. Some investigators found that locus of control was significantly related to marital satisfaction, whereas others found nonsignificant correlations between locus of control scores and scores of marital satisfaction. In general, results across these particular studies provide some evidence that external locus of control, that is, feeling that the causal source for an event or behavior lies outside oneself, is particularly related to marital distress among wives.

Studies in the second cell, general attributional processes in distressed couples, also support the theory that a relationship exists between locus of control and marital satisfaction, especially for women. Mlott and Lira (1977), who compared attributional processes in both distressed and nondistressed couples, found that women who reported having unstable marriages perceive themselves to be more externally controlled than members of stable marriages. Doherty (1983) found that divorced women display an increase in externality compared to married women.

In studies on specific attributional processes in nondistressed couples, Thompson and Snyder (1986) found that attributions of partners' intent to cooperate, attributions of responsibility for positive activities, and attributions of lack of responsibility for conflict have all been related to marital satisfaction. Their studies on specific attributional processes in distressed couples are also

consistent with previous findings using nondistressed couples, substantiating a relationship between attributions of responsibility, internality, negative intent of the couple, and marital distress.

In particular, studies of specific attributional processes in distressed and nondistressed couples clearly point out that a number of different factors interact to mediate the attributional process in intimate relationships; general measures of attributional processing, such as locus of control, are not sufficient causes. The type of attribution made and the behavior that evokes specific attributions are essential to understanding the attributional process in intimate relationships.

In a review of the recent application of cognitive therapy to the treatment of marital distress, Norman Epstein (1986) identified three categories of cognitive phenomena that can affect marital satisfaction, along with the major methods for assessing each of these categories: automatic thoughts, expectancies, and unrealistic or irrational beliefs. Automatic thoughts are defined as an individual's stream of consciousness thoughts and visual images that are elicited by life events (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979; Beck, 1976). These thoughts, which are usually spontaneous and reflexive, include perceptions of events and interpretations. These automatic thoughts are vulnerable to

distortions in information processing that in turn produce invalid perceptions and misinterpretations.

Spouses' automatic thoughts about their marriage relationship often include information about the causes of events. When this information is distorted, faulty perceptions and misinterpretations may result. Beck's cognitive distortions or distorted information processing are apparently present in the biased, causal attributions that distressed spouses make for positive and negative events in their relationship (Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson, in press; Fincham, 1985; Baucom, Bell, & Duhe, 1982).

Epstein's (1986) definition of expectations involves estimates of the probabilities that one's partner will behave in certain ways in certain situations. Expectancies are essential to everyday functioning and personal interactions. Being able to predict behavior and events enhances the choices that people make in hopes of positive outcomes. The correctness of one's informational processing becomes essential to the concept of expectancies. Because the formation of an expectancy is subject to cognitive distortions, the accuracy of expectancies can vary dramatically within relationships.

Epstein's third category of cognitive phenomena is irrational beliefs, which are extreme beliefs about one's self and one's interaction with the world. Beck refers to these as schemata (Beck, Epstein, & Harrison, 1983; Beck et

al., 1979), whereas Ellis and his colleagues label them irrational beliefs (Ellis & Grieger, 1977). In either case, these beliefs represent general themes that become activated by life events. Although these irrational beliefs are in some cases not clearly articulated, they nonetheless serve as directors for individual behavior and responses. Ellis (1977) proposed that marital distress occurs when spouses hold unrealistic expectations about marriage and then apply extreme negative evaluations when these expectations are not met, thus indicating two components of irrationality-- extreme standards and extreme evaluations. According to Epstein, unrealistic beliefs about marriage relationships can affect marital satisfaction and often elicit dysfunctional behaviors.

Epstein's review clearly identifies some underlying factors associated with marital satisfaction, the most of which is distorted information processing. Such cognitive distortions form the basis for subsequent distortions in expectancies and beliefs that oftentimes result in dysfunctional behaviors; however, this review shows neither a clear distinction between the variables of expectancies, standards, and attributions nor an understanding of how they might overlap.

In an overview and critique of the role of cognitions in marital distress therapy, Donald Baucom (1989) reviewed the empirical status of cognitive variables related to

marital satisfaction. Baucom identified five categories of cognitive variables that are important in understanding and treating marital distress: selective attention, attributions, expectancies, assumptions, and standards. Baucom critiqued the status of those cognitive variables which he considered to be important to marital satisfaction; reviewed current treatment research; and discussed future directions for cognitive behavioral therapy. Moreover, Baucom concluded that little attention has been given to classes of cognitive variables associated with marital satisfaction; that most of the attention has been focused on the relationship between causal attributions and marital satisfaction; and that little attention has been given to the interaction of these cognitive variables associated with marital satisfaction.

In a review and critique of attributions in marriage, Bradbury and Fincham (1990) identified three types of attributions: causal attributions, responsibility attributions, and attributions of blame. Causal attributions refer to explanations given for factors that produce an event, whereas responsibility attributions involve judgments regarding the individual's accountability for an event. Attributions of blame are evaluative judgments concerning the "guilty" individual's liability for censure (Brewin & Antaki, 1987; Shaver & Drown, 1986; Shaver, 1985; Shultz & Schleifer, 1983; Antaki & Fielding, 1981; Fincham

& Jaspars, 1980; Forsyth, 1980; Hamilton, 1980).

Bradbury and Fincham's (1990) review of studies relating to marital satisfaction and the attributional process found that maritally distressed spouses, when compared with nondistressed spouses, make more negative attributions for their partner's behavior. This finding supports the conclusion that attributions may influence marital satisfaction; however, results indicated that this association may vary with the valence of the event being explained and the attributional dimension being examined.

Primary Studies

Causal Attributions

Causal attributions are the explanations that individuals make for events or behaviors involving either one's own behavior and/or the behavior of another individual. Such attribution may be implicit or explicit.

Implicit attributions are the result of what Langer (1978) called mindless or automatic thought processing. Implicit attributions, which resemble the automatic thoughts identified by Beck et al. (1979), are those automatic reasons given for a behavior or an event. Implicit attributions are an essential part of all social transactions in that, as a rule, people need not provide causal explanations or meaning for every event.

Because implicit attributions often result from repeated exposure to familiar stimuli, they are also subject to cognitive distortions. Quite frequently, implicit attributions are the foundation for irrational behavior and distorted expectancies (Epstein, 1986). These distortions usually occur as a result of individuals who respond in similar ways to familiar stimuli, with little attention to entire perceptual fields (Taylor & Fiske, 1978; McArthur & Post, 1977; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Research has shown that frequent and consistent exposure to a particular situation leads to a long-term set of expectancies (Bargh, 1982), which often does not take current information into account.

Explicit attributions, on the other hand, are those thoughtful, nonautomatic explanations or causes that individuals give for events and behaviors. These mindful interpretations of events and behaviors may also be affected by limited perception or attributional bias.

Given that individuals ascribe or attribute meaning to events and behaviors, what is it that triggers or causes an individual to initiate an attributional process? Is there a difference between the initiation of causal attributions in distressed and nondistressed couples?

Factors that initiate the attributional process within the context of the marriage relationship have not been clearly delineated. Findings in other aspects of

attributional research are invaluable to an understanding of when attributional activity occurs within intimate relationships.

Unpredicted behavior within the marriage relationship is one situation that triggers the attributional process (Berley & Jacobson, 1984; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1981; Wong & Weiner, 1981; Lau & Russell, 1980). As a rule, nondistressed married couples expect positive behavior from their spouse and, therefore, seek attributions for behavior that are negative in nature because this behavior is unexpected (Taylor & Koivumaki, 1976).

A mediating factor in the initiation of the attributional process for distressed couples is the length of time couples have been living in distress (Newman, 1981; Fincham, in press). For example, couples who have a history of positive interactions and who begin to experience negative behavior typically engage in attributional processing when one partner behaves negatively. This is because the behavior is out of character with the relationship's history. In order to provide stability and to understand the unpredictable behavior, the partner engages in attributional processing.

On the other hand, couples who have lived for a long period of time in conflict and have interacted in negative ways have begun to expect and predict continual negative behavior (Baucom, 1987). Therefore, couples who have lived

with frequent negative interactions for an extended length of time would be expected to engage in less explicit attributional processing for negative events. The expectation of negative events among distressed couples is likely to be varied, depending upon the relationship stage, which will be a factor in initiation of the attribution process (Newman, 1981; Fincham, in press).

Novel behavior from an important person will also attract the attention of the observer, that is, the spouse, and will trigger attributional activity (Newman & Langer, in press; Baucom, 1981; Baucom, 1987; Fincham & Bradbury, 1987; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1981; Wong & Weiner, 1981; Lau & Russell, 1980; Newston, 1973; Weiner et al., 1971). This novel behavior may result either from the relationship stage or from an actual change in an individual's behavior. For example, newlyweds engage in frequent attributional activity in order to understand a new and novel relationship. This early phase of the marriage relationship is an impressionable time for both partners, when two significant people seek to sort out the meaning of behavior and events within an important relationship (Newman & Langer, in press; Baucom, 1987).

Along with unexpected and novel events, negative behavior, failure, and conflicts of interest are events that also initiate attributional processing (Orvis, Kelley, & Butler, 1976; Schwartz & Clore, 1983; Wong, 1979; Wong &

Weiner, 1981). Negative behavior may initiate attributional processing because behavior is unexpected. In addition to the unexpectedness of an event, the actual impact of a negative behavior or event is often jarring enough to evoke attributional processing. Often referred to as the "splinter effect," this disruption in routine behavior and thought very often becomes the catalyst for attributional activity. In an attempt to identify possible ways to eliminate the pain or discomfort caused by a behavior or event, individuals will consciously initiate a causal attribution process to explain the event or behavior and to make it less painful. Because distressed couples experience more painful negative interactions, they also invite the opportunity for increased attributional processing, in particular for negative events; thus positive marital events are less likely to receive attention and more likely to trigger attributional processing, especially for distressed couples. Even though negative events are not unexpected for spouses in distressed relationships, they may still often engage in attributional processing to find ways to avoid pain.

Nondistressed couples, on the other hand, engage in frequent positive interactions and, therefore, do not seek attribution for positive events (Baucom, 1987). Negative events, which occur less frequently in nondistressed relationships, will evoke attributional responses but not at

the same rate as negative events in distressed relationships (Baucom, 1987).

The importance of a behavior or event can also be a mediating factor that initiates attributional processing. Behavior that an individual defines as important is more likely to evoke attributional responses than events the person perceives as trivial. In addition, the greater the actor's power to control or influence rewards or punishment, the more important it is for the spouse to understand the behavior and, therefore, the higher incidence of attributional activity (Newman & Langer, 1981; Pittman & Pittman, 1980; Berscheid & Graziano, 1979). In the case of intimate relationships, where one spouse depends upon the other for self-esteem or satisfaction, the more likely an increase in the frequency of attributions for that spouse (Baucom, 1981; Goldberg, 1981; Berscheid, Graziano, Monson, & Durmer, 1976; Regan, Straus, & Fazio, 1974).

In summary, a number of factors interact to influence whether an individual will initiate the attributional process. Unpredictable, novel, or negative behaviors, as well as the importance of an event or individual, are all factors that may initiate this causal attribution process in intimate relationships. Thus, maritally distressed and nondistressed couples differ in their initiation of causal attributions.

Understanding what triggers the attributional process is essential to understanding the functions that the process serves. Attributions provide understanding about one's world and increase control over one's life, further self-enhancement and protection, and enhance and protect one's relationship.

Causal attributions create a more predictable, stable world (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967, 1972; Miller, Norman, & Wright, 1978; Pittman & Pittman, 1980; Yarkin, Harvey, & Bloxom, 1981). In the case of married couples, an important part of developing a close, intimate relationship is the ability to know and understand one's partner. Causal attributions are one way of providing understanding about one's spouse and one's relationship.

A second function of the attributional process in intimate relationships is to increase control in one's life (Yarkin et al., 1981; Pittman & Pittman, 1980; Kelley, 1967, 1972; Heider, 1958). In the case of married couples, causal attributions can increase one's control in the marriage, and partners can accomplish this control in a variety of ways. Spouses will often communicate attributions to their partner in hopes of promoting change in the other person through a challenge or even guilt. This sharing may be motivated by a need to influence the partner's emotional state and/or behavior (Fincham, in press). In other instances, a spouse who publicly declares

attributions may simply want to share relational information. Therefore, the social context in which an attribution is made must be considered, along with whether or not the attribution is made publicly, in order to clearly determine its function as a control mechanism (Fincham, in press; Knight & Vallacher, 1981; Orvis et al., 1976).

Frequently, individuals wish to maintain control in relationships by not allowing or not expecting their partner to change, often referred to as a secondary level of control. Secondary control does not involve changing the outside world, but rather bringing one's own behavior into alignment with that world. By not expecting a change in one's partner, secondary control is a protective function which enables one to control one's response to a partner's behavior (Rothbaum, Weiss, & Snyder, 1982). Distressed spouses, who have lived for a long time in a conflictual relationship, may employ this strategy of secondary control. After experiencing frequent negative interactions, they begin to predict their spouses' behavior in order to minimize the negative affect of that behavior (Baucom, 1987).

In addition to this protective function, secondary control in distressed relationships can also eliminate the expenditure of useless energy. Individuals in distressed relationships often make conscious, explicit attributions to justify their own unwillingness to effect change, that is,

being too tired to try to effect a change. Because distressed couples often believe that there is no hope, they make external, stable, uncontrollable attributions for married problems. In doing so, they feel justified in their unwillingness to effect change (Baucom, 1987).

In summary, a second function served by the attributional process is to increase actual or seeming control within the marriage relationship in a variety of ways. First, causal explanations may be made for a spouse's behavior in order to promote some strategy that will change negative behavior and maintain positive behavior. Second, communicating attributions to one's partner may actually manipulate the partner's response set. Third, attributions can help an individual hold on to a sense of secondary control within the relationship, which may in fact be a way of protecting oneself and avoiding pain that comes from the partner's behavior.

This form of secondary control is closely related to the third function of the attributional process, self-protection and enhancement. By making internal attributions for success and external attributions for failure, individuals can maintain or increase their self-esteem (Kelley & Michela, 1980; Miller & Ross, 1975; Zuckerman, 1979).

Orvis et al. (1976) has provided an example of this behavior. When asked to provide explanations for instances

of conflict of interest in their relationships, persons who behaved negatively tried to justify and excuse their own behavior, while partners responded critically, placing responsibility on their spouse.

Similar to Jones and Nisbett's findings (1972) on the actor-observer effect, Orvis et al. (1976) supports the hypothesis that actors attribute their own behavior more to situations, whereas observers attribute the same behavior more to the actor's stable, personal dispositional characteristics.

Individuals who are maritally distressed frequently seek credit when things go well, but blame their spouses for problems. This cross-blaming pattern, one of the most frequently observed communication patterns in maritally distressed couples (Gottman, 1979), appears to denote a need for self-esteem preservation. Partners who live in distressed relationships cannot anticipate positive reinforcement or esteem-building responses from their spouse; therefore, they must find ways to protect themselves and enhance their self-esteem from within. Research has supported the claim that the need to bolster self-esteem varies between distressed and nondistressed couples. Attributions for self-enhancing and self-esteem building are elicited more frequently among distressed than nondistressed couples (Baucom, 1987).

Attributions may help maintain or enhance relationships as well as individuals. Spouses who attempt to maintain a relationship will often distort or misattribute causality for their partner's behavior or for the relationship itself. Relationship enhancing attributions maximize the impact of positive behavior and minimize the impact of negative behavior (Kelley & Michela, 1980; Zuckerman, 1979; Miller & Ross, 1975).

In some cases, individuals will avoid making attributions or will arrive at ambiguous attributions for one's own or another's behavior in order to protect the relationship, one's partner, or one's self. Refusing to attribute causality denies the existence of a behavior (Snyder & Wicklund, 1981).

Spouses may also arrive at ambiguous attributions or avoid making an attribution in order to vary the degree of predictability in relationships that have become routine or boring. Couples in distressed marriages often report that life is too predictable; therefore, they find it unnecessary to further increase the predictability by making attributions. These partners prefer to enjoy the unpredictable behavior. In this context, attribution avoidance or ambiguity may be used to maintain or improve the quality of the relationship (Baucom, 1987).

Researchers who have examined the association between marital satisfaction and causal attributions have

categorized causal attributions along several dimensions, and different investigators have focused on different dimensions. The two that have received the most attention in the literature are focusing on explanations for events, or behavior involving stability and locus of control. The dimension of stability refers to whether or not a property is fixed or variable over time. This dimension focuses on whether the cause of an event or behavior is likely to continue or is changeable (Pittman & Pittman, 1980; Weiner, 1974).

On the other hand, the dimension of locus of control, also referred to as internal/external, examines the causal source for an event or behavior (Doherty, 1981). Locus of control refers to whether or not a causal attribution describes properties that are internal to persons, that is, dispositional or external to persons, that is, situational and environmental. Dispositional, internal explanations are most usually identified as voluntary. These explanations identify the causal source of an event or behavior as residing within the individual and as being under the individual's control. Situational attributions identify the cause of behavior or events as outside the individual and beyond the individual's control, or involuntary.

The attributional dimension of locus of control is often referred to as the intrapersonal dimension, which answers the question "Who or what is responsible for the

conflict?" The focus is on whether the behavior is attributable to an actor or to circumstances outside the actor. This process has also been described as the actor-observer effect (Watson, 1982; Jones & Nisbett, 1972; Jones & Davis, 1965). In extensive studies on locus of control, Nisbett and Jones found that actors give causal attributions for their own behavior that are external to themselves or situational, whereas observers attribute the same behavior to internal, dispositional causes.

In a study conducted by Jacobson, McDonald, Follette, and Berley (1985), investigators assessed one spouse's attributions regarding the partner's behavior. Analyses showed an overall tendency for spouses to report internal causal attributions. Distressed spouses were more likely to offer stable internal attributions for their partners' negative behavior, whereas nondistressed couples were more likely to attribute positive behavior to internal factors.

Madden and Janoff-Bulman (1981), along with Weiner (1979), have posited a third dimension of causal attributions that they also call control. This dimension looks at whether the cause of a behavior or an event is subject to personal influence or not. For example, if one perceives that an event is basically attributable to another individual with whom one is closely associated, a person might also conclude that he or she has a great deal of control or influence over that individual's behavior.

Knight and Vallacher (1981) found that observers who anticipated interacting with actors tended to attribute positive events dispositionally and negative events situationally; however, when observers perceived a lack of control or ability to interact with the actor, the reverse was true.

A fourth dimension of causal attributions, identified by Heider (1958), ascribes meaning to behavior and events in terms of the voluntary versus involuntary nature of the behavior. This dimension explores whether the behavior of an actor is voluntary or involuntary on the actor's part. Researchers frequently use this dimension, which is closely related to the dimension of locus of control, to evaluate the behavior of persons who commit some act (Passer, Kelley, & Michela, 1978).

In addition, Passer et al. (1978) also discussed an additional dimension that explores the factors of positivism and negativism and how these reflect an overall evaluation of another's behavior, specifically, how positive or negative attitudes toward one's spouse reflect an actor's overall evaluation of his or her partner. This dimension is similar to Doherty's (1981) intent dimension, in which a behavior or event is evaluated in terms of whether its intention is perceived as helpful or hurtful, positive or negative.

The idea that attributions result from interactions between individuals lends an additional dimension to causal attributions. This dimension is referred to as an interpersonal dimension (Newman, 1981). The interpersonal dimension relates to explanations involving one's perception of self in relation to others. Attributions are not simply explanations of one's own behavior or one's spouse's behavior but also explanations of the behavior within a relationship.

In view of the fact that attributional processing is clearly influenced by numerous factors and that the attributional process is based on psychological rather than distinct logical principles, it is not surprising to discover that some attributional processing is biased and erroneous. In earlier writings Jones noted that attributional bias was a factor in interpersonal discord (Jones, 1976). As previous sections of this review have noted, couples, in fact, often give explanations for behaviors and events that are based on distorted cognitive processing (Baucom, Sayers, & Duhe, 1989; Epstein, 1986), known as an attributional bias. Numerous researchers have defined and studied causal attributions in relationship to attributional biases.

Kruglanski and Ajzen (1984) have suggested a taxonomy of attributional biases, including motivational and cognitive biases. Motivational biases are those

attributions induced for ego enhancement and defense, effective control, hedonic relevance, belief in a just world, and avoiding harm.

Cognitive biases, according to Kruglanski and Ajzen (1984), are grouped into two subheadings: (a) those based on the salience or availability of data, and (b) those based on preconceptions. Salience and availability biases include sampling bias, selective attention, and selective recall. Individuals at different times will be biased in that they emphasize different aspects of a total field (Locke & Pennington, 1982; Taylor & Fiske, 1978; Beck, 1976).

The second class of cognitive biases, preconceptions, includes presumed covariation, representativeness, and causal theories. Presumed covariation is the assumption that events or characteristics tend to covary or in some way coordinate. Representativeness is placing one object in a class with another according to the extent to which the first object is perceived to represent the second. Causal theories, then, represent people's understanding of factors that should have an effect (Berley & Jacobson, 1984).

Ross (1977) defined attributional bias in terms of a fundamental attribution error. He postulated that individuals have a tendency to overattribute events and behaviors to dispositional or internal causes, rather than to environment or situation. This inclination has long been recognized as a prominent attributional tendency (Jones,

1979; Heider, 1958). However, Jones and Nisbett (1972) have suggested that people actually display an actor-observer bias, in which actors tend to attribute their own behavior to situational causes and the behavior of individuals they observe to more dispositional causes. By explaining one's own behavior as situational, an individual can eliminate self-incrimination because situational behaviors are generally viewed as involuntary (Newman, 1981). Moreover, the belief that the behavior of others is governed by dispositional characteristics is, in fact, a way of making one's world more predictable (Pittman & Pittman, 1980), one of the primary functions of the attributional process.

Actors and observers apparently differ in the types of causal attributions that they prefer. Regan et al. (1974) contended that this type of causal attribution varies with the observer's attitude toward and effect on an actor; in addition, the degree of emotional involvement between the actor and observer has a direct effect on this actor/observer attributional discrepancy. Later studies by Taylor and Koivumaki (1976) found that the content of causal attributions for the behavior of an actor varies depending on whether the observer is acquainted with the actor. Taylor and Koivumaki also found what they termed a positivity effect, where attributors make more situational than dispositional attributions for the negative behavior of others; however, an actor perceived as more intimately

related to the subject was seen as more responsible for positive behavior and less responsible for negative behavior (Knight & Vallacher, 1981). In addition, couples produce causal attributions consistent with their salient effect toward their partners and their relationship (Jacobson et al., 1985; Fincham & O'Leary, 1983; Baucom et al., 1982).

Defining attributional processing in an ongoing intimate relationship requires an awareness of the extent to which the dyad participants perceive their own behavior to be salient to relationship events. In many cases, partners are oblivious to the reciprocal nature of their personal interactions. This phenomenon, labeled punctuation error, is the division of sequential dyadic interactions into arbitrary units of cause and effect (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). This arbitrary division often results in attributional error. Individuals fail to realize the effect of their own behavior on others; and in particular, individuals in intimate relationships often fail to recognize how their own behavior places limits on their partner (Gibbs, 1979; Jones & Nisbett, 1972). Rather than viewing another's behavior in relation to their behavior, partners have a tendency to misattribute behavior to dispositional qualities (Kelley & Stahelski, 1970).

In a similar vein, spouses may also conjure unwarranted interpersonal meaning from their partner's behavior or

create, without any real basis in reality, a biased attributional scheme that takes on a life of its own. Hence, contradicting data are ignored or even altered to fit this biased attributional scheme, with the result that no matter what a spouse does, the behavior is filtered through a biased screen to create a self-fulfilling prophecy (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978).

An additional attributional bias, referred to as scripted (Abelson, 1976) or mindless behavior (Gibbs, 1979), actually initiates as a nonbiased attributional scheme. Langer (1978) defined such behavior as the absence of ongoing information processing. Frequent and consistent exposure to a particular set of stimuli or situation leads to a long-term chronic set of expectancies (Bargh, 1982). This overlearning in effect results in less information processing, and eventually, an individual's response to an event is based on minimal data (Langer, 1978). Individuals engaged in automatic processing of information are responding to perceptual salience cues, rather than to cognitive clues (Taylor & Fiske, 1978). Individuals who anticipate a particular negative event to occur may enter into an automatic processing mode, experiencing a phenomenon of learned helplessness (Doherty, 1981). This person rejects new information and instead proceeds with mindless processing that has developed into an ongoing attributional scheme, which is oftentimes an erroneous scheme.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the differences in the causal attributions of distressed and nondistressed couples. Fincham and O'Leary (1983), using a self-report inventory, found that distressed couples rated the causes of negative behavior as more global than nondistressed couples. Distressed and nondistressed couples also differed on the issue of controllability. Causes of positive events were seen by distressed couples as less controllable than by nondistressed spouses, with a tendency for distressed spouses to view causes of negative acts as more controllable.

Madden and Janoff-Bulman (1981), using an interview technique, found that wives who registered low in marital satisfaction were more likely to blame their husbands for marital conflicts than were wives with high marital satisfaction.

In a laboratory experiment comparing the attributional tendencies of distressed and nondistressed couples, Jacobson et al. (1985) found that distressed couples were likely to attribute their partners' negative behavior to internal factors, whereas nondistressed couples were more likely to attribute their partners' positive behavior to internal factors.

In a study examining when and whether married people engage in attributional activity or form causal attributions to explain their partners' behavior, Holtzworth-Munroe and

Jacobson (1985) found that husbands in unsatisfying relationships reported more attributional thoughts than husbands in satisfactory relationships (wives did not differ); that negative behaviors elicited more attributional activity than positive behaviors; and that distressed couples were more likely to report distress-maintaining attributions and unlikely to report relationship-enhancing attributions, compared with nondistressed couples.

In summary, studies have demonstrated that distressed spouses explain their partner's behavior in ways that focus on the negative aspects of the partner; that distressed couples rate spouse's negative behavior as more global and stable than nondistressed couples do; and that distressed couples blame their spouses for negative marriage events (Baucom et al., 1989; Fincham, 1985; Jacobson et al., 1985; Kyle & Falbo, 1985; Madden & Janoff-Bulman, 1981).

A great deal of research has focused on the relationship between causal attributions and marital satisfaction. Unfortunately, this attention to attributions and their effect on marital satisfaction has resulted in little, if any, attention to other classes of cognitive phenomena that may or may not effect marital satisfaction, and which may or may not be interrelated with causal attributions. This is clearly evident in the paucity of studies related to expectancies, standards, and assumptions and their possible relationship to marital satisfaction.

Expectancies

Expectancies involve the prediction of future events. Along with making attributions about past events, individuals also predict events that are likely to occur in the future, called expectancies. Social learning theorists, Rotter (1954) and Bandura (1977), have described how people learn to anticipate probable consequences of their actions and to alter their behavior accordingly. In a differentiation between outcome expectancy and efficacy expectancy, Bandura explained outcome expectancies as predictions concerning particular consequences that result from a specific action. Efficacy expectancies are estimates of the probability that one will be able to effect a particular outcome through some action. The apparent import of expectancies on marital satisfaction is clearly understated. In a few isolated studies, researchers have attempted to establish the existence of this relationship.

Pretzer, Epstein, and Fleming (1985) found that couples' perceived ability to change and expectancy for change were associated with indices of marital dysfunction and were consistent with theoretical arguments that expectations of low efficacy contribute to relationship conflicts (Doherty, 1981).

In a study conducted by Pyszczynski and Greenberg (1981) on the relationship between disconfirmed expectations and attributional processing, results indicate that

expectancies play an important role in triggering individuals to undertake causal attributions. When the subjects' behavior conformed to, rather than deviated from expectancies, observers in the study were less likely to seek information that could be useful for inferring a cause for the behavior. These results imply that people may engage in less attributional processing when in the presence of expected events, thereby demonstrating a link between attributions and expectations.

In other studies, Huber and Milstein (1985), using cognitive restructuring, found that helping couples create positive expectations for their relationship resulted in increased marital satisfaction. With the exception of these studies, however, scant research exists on the role of expectancies in intimate relationships.

Assumptions and Standards

Assumptions and standards form the basis for how an individual processes the ongoing events in his or her life. Although the two appear closely related, they are, in fact, actually quite dissimilar. Assumptions are those beliefs one holds for how things "are," whereas standards are those beliefs concerning how things "should be."

Individuals within a marriage relationship develop two types of assumptions about marriage. The first, *personae*, involves beliefs about those characteristics or traits that the person who fills the role of husband or wife possesses.

The second, scripts, are those assumptions that individuals hold for how two members of a relationship interact with one another (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). Personae focus on personal characteristics, whereas scripts focus on events. Personae and scripts may be culturally shared by large groups of people or may be individually specific.

Recent studies on assumptions and marital satisfaction have found that distressed couples differ from nondistressed couples in the types of assumptions that they make about persons and events. Epstein and Eidelson (1981) found that more distressed spouses assumed that their partners could not change a relationship and that overt disagreement was destructive to a relationship.

In testing and developing the Relationship Belief Inventory (an instrument to assess certain beliefs about intimate relationships that contribute to relationship distress), Eidelson and Epstein (1982) found that the scales to measure assumptions--Disagreement is Destructive, Mindreading is Expected, and Partners Cannot Change--were negatively correlated with marital adjustment as measured by the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke & Wallace, 1959).

Accurate assumptions permit individuals to rely on past experience to guide their current interactions. Inaccurate assumptions may, on the contrary, be prescriptive of marital discord (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982; Epstein & Eidelson,

1981). Unfortunately, the last two decades have seen very little empirical research that investigates the association between distorted assumptions and marital satisfaction.

In contrast to assumptions, standards are those beliefs that individuals have concerning how things "should be." Standards are essential to governing life because they offer guidelines for personal interaction. In a marriage relationship, spouses often adhere to irrational standards concerning the role and function of their spouse. When taken to extremes, this adherence to specific standards appears related to marital dissatisfaction (Jordan & McCormick, 1987; Eidelson & Epstein, 1982).

In one of very few studies in this area, couples' unrealistic beliefs, or standards, were found to be negatively associated with their overall level of marital satisfaction. In a study of 47 marital therapy couples, Epstein and Eidelson (1981) found that clients' unrealistic beliefs regarding relationships were negatively associated with their desire to improve, rather than to terminate the relationship. Although it appears logical to assume a relationship exists between types of assumptions, standards, and marital satisfaction, there has been very little research conducted in this area.

Summary

Examination of published studies lends support to the suggestion that a variety of cognitive variables may be

related to marital satisfaction. Specifically, the data seem to show that (a) distressed couples explain their partner's behavior in ways that focus on the negative aspect of the relationship and the spouse; (b) low expectancies about a spouse or couple's ability to solve their marital problems are associated with marital distress; (c) marital distress is strongly correlated with couples' unrealistic standards; and (d) dysfunctional assumptions about the nature of intimate relationships are associated with marital distress. This review has also identified those measures commonly used to assess these classes of cognitive variables.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was identified as the most commonly used measure of marital satisfaction (Pretzer et al., 1985). The DAS, which has been used in over 1,000 studies, is recognized for its strength as a general measure of relationship quality (Spanier, 1988). The Marital Attitude Survey (MAS) has been identified as the most widely used measure of attributions and expectancies (Thompson & Snyder, 1986; Pretzer et al., 1985). The Relationship Belief Inventory (RBI) was identified as the measure most suitable for assessing couples' beliefs related to relationship functioning (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). Epstein noted that prior to development of the RBI, the major method of assessing dysfunctional beliefs was self-report inventories that primarily measured irrational

beliefs pertaining to individual functioning, for example, Jones' Irrational Beliefs Test (1968), and not necessarily those irrational beliefs related to relationship functioning. Epstein and Eidelson (1981) found that self-report scales designed specifically to measure unrealistic expectations about relationships were better predictors of clinical couples' level of marital satisfaction than scales from Jones' (1968) measure of Ellis' (1977) irrational beliefs about self.

A review of the literature has shown that most of the research on marital satisfaction and these four classes of cognitive variables, that is, attributions, expectancies, standards, and assumptions, has focused only on that set of cognitions referred to as causal attributions. Thus, there is a lack of research that investigates the relationship between expectancies, standards, assumptions, and marital satisfaction. In addition, very little, if any, research has been conducted on the interaction of these independent variables, their overlap, if any, and the effect of this on marital satisfaction. Therefore, the proposed study will examine the relationship of couples' attributions, expectancies, standards, and assumptions to marital satisfaction.

CHAPTER III

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to discover whether a relationship exists between marital satisfaction and causal attributions, expectancies, standards, and assumptions. More specifically, can some of the variance in marital satisfaction be parsimoniously explained, at least in part, by causal attributions, expectancies, standards, or assumptions? Further, an effort was made to determine which of these four categories of cognitive phenomena, or combination of two or more, are the best predictors of marital satisfaction. Number of years married, previous marriages, previous exposure to marriage counseling, and number of children in the family were controlled.

In order to address these objectives, the following hypotheses were phrased in question format and tested:

1. What is the degree of multicollinearity between the predictor variables? Do the predictor variables in fact measure unique and distinct constructs or is there an overlap between and among subscales on each of the predictor variables?
2. Can a statistically significant portion of the variance in marital satisfaction be accounted for by a linear combination of scores from measures of causal attributions, expectancies, standards, and assumptions, when

controlling for the number of years married, number of times married, number of children, and whether or not the respondent had participated in prior marriage counseling?

CHAPTER IV

METHOD

Subjects

A random representative sample of 111 married persons was drawn from the population of married persons living in Logan, Utah. All subjects gave informed consent prior to participation in the study, as outlined by the American Psychological Association's guidelines for research with human subjects (APA, 1992) and the policies of Utah State University Institutional Review Board. A copy of the consent form, along with the statement to the Institutional Review Board, is included in Appendix A.

Studies on the relationship between marital satisfaction and cognitive variables are typically conducted on a population of married couples. Since it was beyond the scope of this study to draw on a national data set, it was reasonable to assume that the population of married persons in Logan is similar to married couples in other small university communities in the rural Rocky Mountain West. Note that a large percentage of the population of persons living in Logan are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This might mean that the present sample is religiously biased and not representative of a larger

population. A question of religious preference was included in the information questionnaire in order to help identify the percentage of persons responding within individual religious categories.

Procedure

For the purpose of the following narrative, research assistants are identified as those who assisted the project director in the collection of research data. Participants are those persons involved in the study.

Research assistants were used to distribute packets and to collect completed questionnaires. These assistants were interviewed, chosen, and trained by the project director. Research assistants were informed about the nature of the study and about their expected participation. Results of the study were available to them upon request. Because these research assistants were representatives of the USU psychology department and the project director, care was taken in their selection. All research assistants received instruction in interviewing techniques, ethical behavior for researchers, and confidentiality. The project director was responsible for this training.

Participants for the study were randomly solicited from within Logan City's 27 voting districts. Each research assistant was assigned a voting district and then instructed to make contact at 10 homes in that district. Every third

house was established as a site to be sampled. A map of the districts is included in Appendix B.

After introducing themselves and their affiliation with the Psychology Department at USU, the research assistants asked the following questions:

1. Is there a married person between the ages of 25 and 55 living in the home?
2. Would you be willing to participate in a study that is being conducted by the USU Department of Psychology?

Upon receiving a positive response to these questions the research assistant explained the nature of the study to the prospective participant and the extent of the participant's involvement. Participation required completing three questionnaires that related to the participant's thoughts about marriage. Additional information concerning these questionnaires is found in the section on measures, with copies of the measures in Appendix D. The time required for completion of the entire packet was approximately one hour. All questionnaires were completed in the privacy of the participants' homes and at their convenience. Before leaving, the research assistant reassured participants of the confidential nature of the research and arranged to pick up the packets at a later time.

Research assistants returned within 3 days to pick up the completed packet. Before handing the packet to the

research assistant, participants were advised in the packet's cover letter (copy found in Appendix C) to seal the packet, sign over the seal, and then tape over their signatures. Research assistants were provided with tape and pens and instructed not to take possession of the packet until such a process was completed. This was to ensure that the project director would be the only person opening the packet. This also provided the participant with an additional sense of privacy and confidentiality. Research assistants immediately delivered the completed, unopened packets to the project director. Upon receipt of the packet, the project director removed the identifying consent forms from the questionnaire, further ensuring complete confidentiality. All questionnaires were coded numerically.

Measures

Husbands and wives completed four questionnaires: a Demographic Questionnaire, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), the Marital Attitude Survey (MAS), and the Relationship Belief Inventory (RBI), copies of which are included in Appendix D. Permission to copy these measures for research purposes was obtained from the authors of the tests.

1. Demographic Inventory. Information was solicited regarding age, sex, number of years married, whether this is a first marriage or not, the number of children living in

the home, and religious preference. In addition, another question was asked as to whether the participant had ever participated in marital counseling or marital therapy of any kind.

2. The DAS was developed by Graham Spanier in 1976 as a measure of the quality of dyadic relationships. The 32-item scale is designed for use with either married or unmarried cohabiting couples. This survey includes four subscales: (a) Dyadic Consensus, (b) Dyadic Satisfaction, (c) Dyadic Cohesion, and (d) Affectual Expression. Dyadic Consensus assesses the extent of agreement between partners on important relationship issues such as money, religion, leisure-time activities, and so on. Dyadic Satisfaction measures the amount of tension in the relationship and the degree to which they may have considered ending the relationship. Affectual Expression assesses the individual's satisfaction with expressions of affection and sex within the relationship. Finally, the subscale Dyadic Cohesion assesses common interests and activities that the couple share. A total adjustment score is calculated by summing the scores for the four subscales. Scores on the total DAS range from 0 to 150.

Spanier has defined marital adjustment as a process along a continuum that is best evaluated in terms of proximity to good or bad adjustment; therefore, he provides no exact cut-off score that discriminates between distressed

and nondistressed respondents. For the purposes of the present study, scores on the four DAS subscales were summed and a total raw score was used as the unit of analysis, in keeping with the guidelines set forth by the author of the DAS.

The DAS correlates with the much-used Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke-Wallace, 1959). The correlation between these scales is .86 among married respondents. Construct validity was tested through factor analysis of the 32-item scale. By using the Cronbach coefficient alpha (1951) as the reliability estimate, the total scale has a reliability coefficient of .96, which was replicated in studies conducted by Sharpley and Cross (1982). Table 1 summarizes the reliability coefficient for the total scale and its components (Spanier, 1976). The total DAS scale and its components appear to have sufficiently high reliability.

Table 1

Dyadic Adjustment Scale Reliability Coefficients

(Spanier, 1976)

Scale	Reliability	# of Items
Dyadic Consensus	.90	13
Dyadic Satisfact	.94	10
Dyadic Cohesion	.86	5
Affect Expression	.73	4
Total DAS	.96	32

3. The Marital Attitude Survey (MAS) is a 39-item inventory developed by Pretzer et al. (1985) to assess potentially dysfunctional attributions and expectancies regarding relationship problems. The intent of the developers was to develop and validate a self-report measure that assessed attributions regarding marital problems in terms of content categories, rather than in the traditional attribution dimensions of global-specific, stable-unstable, and internal-external previously developed by Abramson et al. (1978). The 39 items on the MAS comprise eight subscales. Four of these assess the extent to which individuals see the causes of their marital problems as originating from themselves versus from their spouses, and two other subscales assess motivations that underlie a partner's behavior. The final two subscales measure the individual's outcome and efficacy expectations. The developers of the MAS intentionally separated these last two subscales. Consistent with Bandura's (1977) distinction between efficacy and outcome expectations, these subscales were constructed to assess both the individual's perception of the couple's capacity for change and his or her expectation that improvement will occur. An outcome expectancy, within a relationship context, would be the belief that the partners have the ability to change, whereas an efficacy expectancy would be the belief that such an improvement will likely occur. A summary of items contained

in each of the eight subscales can be found in Appendix E.

Table 2 shows the reliability coefficients reported by Pretzer et al. (1985) for the eight MAS subscales. Most of the subscales demonstrated moderate to high internal consistency, as assessed by Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

Table 2

Marital Attitude Survey Reliability Coefficients

(Pretzer, Epstein, & Fleming, 1985)

Subscale	N	Alpha
Perceived Ability of Couple to Change	4	.87
Expectancy of Improvement	4	.89
Attribution of Cause to Own Behavior	4	.58
Attribution of Cause to Own Personality	4	.69
Attribution of Cause to Spouse Behavior	4	.72
Attribution of Cause to Spouse Person.	4	.66
Attribution of Mal Intent to Spouse	8	.93
Attribution Lack of Love to Spouse	7	.88

Table 3 presents the intercorrelations among the MAS subscales. The titles of the subscales have been abbreviated as follows: PACC = Perceived Ability of Couple to Change; EOIR = Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship; ACOB = Attribution of Causality to One's Own Behavior; ACOP = Attribution of Causality to One's Own Personality; ACSB = Attribution of Causality to One's Spouse's Behavior; ACSP = Attribution of Causality to One's Spouse's Personality; AMIS = Attribution of Malicious Intent

to Spouse; ALLS = Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse. For the purpose of clarity, these abbreviations are used when space will not allow the entire name of the subscale within the table.

Table 3

Marital Attitude Survey Subscale Intercorrelations

(Pretzer et al., 1985)

Subscale	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. PACC	.88	.34	-.22	-.23	-.38	-.51	-.44
	.75	.18	-.15	-.25	-.36	-.17	-.44
2. EOIR		.43	-.21	-.22	-.38	-.49	-.46
		.27	-.03	-.14	-.23	-.20	-.44
3. ACOB			.37	.03	.10	-.04	-.09
			.50	.29	.16	.13	-.11
4. ACOP				.24	.57	.38	.27
				.48	.54	.31	.14
5. ACSB					.55	.30	.38
					.65	.53	.41
6. ACSP						.35	.40
						.56	.35
7. AMIS							.58
							.48
8. ALLS							

Note. Coefficients on the first line are for males, the second line for females.

These correlations, which range from low to moderate, indicate that although the MAS subscales are designed to assess closely related constructs, their overlap is small to moderate, with each subscale accounting for unique variance (Pretzer et al., 1985).

4. The RBI, developed by Eidelson and Epstein (1982), assesses those beliefs that couples hold about intimate relationships that contribute to relationship distress. The RBI has 40 items measuring five dysfunctional relationship beliefs: Disagreement is Destructive, Mindreading is Expected, Partners Cannot Change, Sexual Perfectionism, and The Sexes Are Different. Disagreement is Destructive measures the degree to which individuals believe that disagreement between couples in intimate relationships is destructive. Mindreading is Expected measures the degree to which one believes that one's spouse or partner should know what she or he needs without verbal communication. Partners Cannot Change assesses the belief that individuals hold about their ability to change the relationship. The Sexual Perfectionism subscale measures the degree to which one believes that sex is a task requiring perfect performance at all times. Sexes Are Different is the subscale that measures the extent to which one believes that males and females can be stereotyped into specific gender groups, with little or no overlap between roles and functions.

The authors of the RBI did not differentiate between assumptions and standards. Eidelson and Epstein's (1982) intent was to assess potentially unrealistic beliefs that commonly seemed to play roles in couples' problems. Baucom and Epstein are currently developing separate inventories

that will assess assumptions and standards within relationships. At the present time the authors have identified two subscales, Mindreading Is Expected and Sexual Perfectionism, to assess standards. The remaining subscales, Spouses Cannot Change, Disagreement Is Destructive, and The Sexes Are Different, measure assumptions. One drawback of the RBI that the authors have identified is that the content covered by the five subscales is limited in scope. By dividing the five scales into assumptions and standard subsets, they are also divided by content; consequently, if one type of cognition happens to better predict satisfaction than the other, this might be due to content rather than the type of schema. New measures will address this issue. In the case of the present study, the five subscales will be examined separately. A summary of the items contained in each of the subscales can be found in Appendix F.

Eidelson and Epstein computed internal consistency for the RBI by calculating the Cronbach alpha coefficient for each of the eight-item subscales, resulting in a range of .72 to .81. Individual subscale alphas were not reported for the RBI by Eidelson and Epstein. Additional studies conducted by Bradbury and Fincham (1993) on the use of the RBI in assessing dysfunctional cognition in marriage yielded separate scores for males and females. Table 4 contains this information.

Table 4

Relationship Belief Inventory Reliability Coefficients

(Bradbury & Fincham, 1993)

	Husbands	Wives
Scale	n=43	n=42
D	.79	.77
M	.72	.73
C	.59	.56
S	.64	.64
MF	.57	.61
Total	.83	.83

Note. D=Disagreement is Destructive, M=Mindreading is Expected, C=Partners Cannot Change, S=Sexual Perfectionism, MF=The Sexes Are Different.

Table 5 contains the correlations obtained between subscales on the RBI. These correlations range from small to moderate with each subscale accounting for unique variance (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982).

Table 5

Relationship Belief Inventory Subscale Intercorrelations

(Eidelson & Epstein, 1982)

Subscale	D	M	C	S	MF
D					
M	.41*				
C	.44*	.42*			
S	.29*	.33*	.27*		
MF	.21*	.24*	.29*	.17*	

Note. N = 200; D = Disagreement Is Destructive, M = Mindreading Is Expected, C = Partners Cannot Change, S = Sexual Perfectionism, MF = The Sexes Are Different. *p<.05

Analyses

Factor analyses with varimax rotation were used to develop scales for the RBI and the MAS, followed by Cronbach alpha reliability analyses. A correlation matrix was developed to examine the degree of colinearity between the predictor variables. Stepwise multiple regression procedures were used. Only those subscales with Cronbach alpha coefficients of .60 or higher were included in the regression analysis. Although a Cronbach alpha of .70 is usually considered as a reliable alpha (Nunnally, 1978), the level of reliability can be determined by nature of the research (Borg & Gall, 1989). By accepting a lower alpha level, additional subscales were included in the regression analysis.

The R-squared change was examined, as well as the standardized Beta weights for each of the independent variables, in order to determine the relative importance of each variable in predicting marital satisfaction.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Two hundred seventy surveys were distributed by research assistants in Logan's 27 voting districts. One hundred eleven completed surveys were returned for inclusion in the present study, for a response rate of 41%.

Forty-two percent of the participants were male and 57% female. They were not recruited as couples, but all were married. The mean age of respondents was 34, with the mean number of years married at 11.2 years. Nine percent of the participants had been married previously. The mean number of children for the respondents was 2.7, with a range in number of children from 0 to 7. Ten percent of the participants reported previous marriage counseling. Seventy-nine percent of the participants listed the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as their religious preference, and 5% listed Catholic as their religious preference. The remaining 17% of the respondents listed either other, none, or no answer.

Descriptive Statistics

Initially, descriptive statistics were computed for each variable on each instrument by gender. Frequencies on categorical variables, along with means and standard deviations on continuous variables, were computed as shown

in Appendix G.

Scale Development

Subscale composition has been discussed previously. The specific groupings of items that form the subscales on the RBI and the MAS, as suggested by the instruments' authors, can be found in Appendices E and F.

To determine whether these groupings of items applied in the present study, a factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed on the items in each instrument. Table 6 contains a summary by subscale of groupings of items that factored together for the current sample on the RBI. Items with a factor loading of .4 or better are included. No attempt was made to break this information down by gender. The authors of the RBI have not done so and, therefore, a comparison would not be possible.

Table 6

Relationship Belief Inventory Groupings of Items Within Subscales (Present Sample)

NAME OF SUBSCALE	ITEM NUMBERS
Disagreement Is Destructive	6, 11, 16, 21
Mindreading Is Expected	2, 12, 17, 22
Couples Cannot Change	8, 18, 28, 38
Sexual Perfectionism	1, 13, 19, 29, 34
The Sexes Are Different	10, 15, 35, 40

Results on the factor loadings for the RBI for this sample are not precisely the same as those identified by Eidelson and Epstein (1982); however, they are similar. Therefore, the RBI subscales constructed by Eidelson and Epstein were also used in this study.

Table 7 contains a summary by subscale of groupings of items which factored together for the current sample on the Marital Attitude Survey.

Table 7

Marital Attitude Survey Groupings of Items Within Subscales
(Present Sample)

NAME OF SUBSCALE	ITEM NUMBERS
Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship	39, 49, 69, 72, 73
Attribution of Causality to One's Own Personality	4, 19, 23, 48, 54
Attribution of Causality to Spouse's Personality	18, 25, 31
Attribution of Malicious Intent to Spouse	7, 14, 33, 57, 59, 65, 74
Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse	1, 30, 35, 50, 52, 58, 62, 68

In the case of the MAS, five of the subscales had almost identical items as those reported by Pretzer et al. (1985). Perceived Ability of Couple to Change, Attribution of Causality to One's Own Behavior, and Attribution of Causality to One's Spouse's Behavior were somewhat dissimilar for this sample. It is not clear whether this

sample differs so dramatically from the sample used by Pretzer et al. in the development of the MAS, or whether the present sample merely interpreted the questions in a way dissimilar to the authors' intent.

With five of the factors having loadings that suggest grouping items as the authors did, the decision was made to use the subscales as constructed by the authors.

When items were combined to form a subscale for the MAS or the RBI, the subscale was computed as the mean of all the items answered, provided that a minimum of 75% of items in that subscale was answered. Otherwise, a missing score was assigned.

Reliability

Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients were computed for the DAS and for each subscale of the MAS and the RBI by gender. The total DAS (32 items) has a reliability coefficient of .80 for males (N=46), and .83 for females (N=56).

Reliability coefficients for the MAS are found in Table 8. Only six of the subscales have a reliability coefficient above .60. In the case of Attribution of Causality to One's Own Behavior, the authors of the MAS also found low internal consistency for a combined sample of males and females. In this case Pretzer et al. (1985) have suggested that the construct may possibly need closer definition. Two of

the subscales in this sample exhibit fairly low internal consistency for both males and females. The low reliability coefficients may reflect a pattern unique to this sample. Respondents in the present sample quite possibly interpreted and evaluated items in these subscales in ways dissimilar to the Pretzer et al. sample. However, for the purpose of further investigation only those subscales with alpha coefficients of .60 or higher will be considered reliable for this sample and will be used in regression analyses.

Table 8

Marital Attitude Survey Reliability Coefficients

(Present Sample)

SUBSCALE	NUMBER OF ITEMS	ALPHA		N	
		M	F	M	F
MAS: Perc Abil Couple to Change	4	.38	.40	46	62
MAS:Exp Improv in Relationship	4	.64	.70	46	62
MAS: Attrib Caus One's Own Behavior	4	.63	.52	45	62
MAS: Attrib Caus One's Own Pers	4	.52	.64	46	61
MAS: Attrib Caus Spouse's Behavior	4	.47	.48	46	62
MAS: Attrib Caus Spouse's Pers	4	.53	.62	45	63
MAS: Attrib Mal Intent to Spouse	8	.86	.87	45	61
MAS: Attrib Lack Love to Spouse	7	.90	.89	45	62

The authors of the RBI calculated the Cronbach alpha coefficient for each of the eight-item subscales resulting in a range from .72 to .81. Alpha coefficients for the present sample are summarized by gender in Table 9. A comparison of these alphas with those obtained by Bradbury and Fincham, Table 4, indicates a similar range in reliability coefficients with some variability between subscales for males and females.

Table 9

Relationship Belief Inventory Reliability Coefficients

(Present Sample)

SUBSCALE	NUMBER OF ITEMS	ALPHA		N	
		M	F	M	F
Disagreement Is Destructive (D)	8	.82	.65	46	61
Mindreading Is Expected (M)	8	.59	.64	46	62
Partners Cannot Change (C)	8	.61	.69	44	62
Sexual Perfectionism (S)	8	.70	.61	44	62
Sexes Are Different (MF)	8	.60	.71	45	62

Possibly this sample was different with regard to the constructs being measured and that different items should be used to measure the construct adequately. This sample was self-selecting in that subjects agreed to participate, which may make this sample disproportionately different from that of Bradbury and Fincham or Eidelson and Epstein.

In summary, the results of reliability analyses indicate limited reliability for two of the primary measures used in this study. Only subscales with Cronbach alpha coefficients of .60 or higher are included in regression analyses.

Intercorrelations Between Subscales

Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients were computed by gender between each pair of subscales in the MAS and the RBI. No correlation coefficients were computed for the DAS subscales because no attempt was made in this study to examine individual subscale scores in this measure. Table 10 summarizes the MAS subscale intercorrelations.

The first two subscales, Perceived Ability of Couple to Change and Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship, measure expectancies. The remaining six subscales measure causal attributions. Perceived Ability of Couple to Change and Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship demonstrate low to moderate degrees of multicollinearity with the remaining six subscales. Although these subscales are measuring constructs that are clearly closely related, these two subscales do, in fact, measure constructs different from causal attributions. Correlation coefficients have been computed by gender for each of the subscales to enable a comparison between those correlation coefficients given by the authors of the MAS and the present sample.

Table 10

Marital Attitude Survey Subscale Intercorrelations

(Present Sample)

Scale	EOIR	ACOB	ACOP	ACSB	ACSP	AMIS	ALLS
1.PACC	.37* .41**	.25 .41**	.30 .19	.31* .25*	-.09 .12	-.00 .16	.03 .12
2.EOIR		.13 .08	-.08 -.20	.11 -.12	-.19 -.23	-.27 .10	-.20 -.11
3.ACOB			.44** .59**	.06 .48**	.04 .30*	-.07 .06	.19 .11
4.ACOP				.05 .43**	.40** .33**	.03 .12	.20 .20
5.ACSB					.40** .34**	.28 .18	.64** .39**
6.ACSP						.46** .22	.37* .18
7.AMIS							.50** .22

Note. Coefficients on the first line are for males, the second line for females. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Results of scores on the MAS indicate a high degree of multicollinearity between two of the subscales for males in this sample. Attribution of Causality to Spouse's Behavior and Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse show a correlation coefficient of .64. The developers of the MAS report a much lower correlation coefficient of .38 for males between Attribution of Causality to Spouse's Behavior and Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse. Further investigation would be necessary to determine whether this sample is unique or whether, in fact, these subscales are measuring overlapping constructs.

Of particular interest is the direction of the relationships between the subscales on the MAS. Table 3 represents the Epstein et al. (1987) summary of intercorrelations of the MAS subscales. A comparison of results of the present correlation analyses indicates some differences. The relationship between Perceived Ability of Couple to Change the Relationship and Attribution of Causality to One's Own Personality, as well as to Attribution of Causality to One's Spouse's Behavior, is reported by Epstein et al. as negatively correlated for both males and females. Likewise, the relationship between Perceived Ability of Couple to Change the Relationship and Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse, along with the relationship between Attribution of Causality to One's Own Behavior and Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse, are both negative. In the present sample, this was not the case; each of these correlations was positive. In addition, Pretzer et al. (1985) reported a negative correlation for males between Expectancy of Improvement and Attribution of Causality to Spouse's Behavior. As in the previous example, this is not true in the current sample for males in which these subscales are positively correlated.

In this sample, a positive correlation was found for females between Perceived Ability of Couple to Change the Relationship and Attribution of Causality to Spouse's Personality; Perceived Ability of Couple to Change the

Relationship and Attribution of Malicious Intent to Spouse; and between Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship and Attribution of Malicious Intent to Spouse. Epstein et al. (1987) reported a negative correlation between these sets of subscales. It is not clear what these differences mean. Low reliability coefficients for the present sample indicate that items on the subscales do not appear to reliably measure the construct under investigation.

A summary of the Relationship Belief Inventory subscales intercorrelations is found in Table 11. Eidelson and Epstein (1982) did not provide a gender breakdown of subscale intercorrelations; therefore, correlation coefficients are given for the present sample without a gender breakdown. This enables a comparison between the Eidelson and Epstein correlation coefficients for their sample and the correlation coefficients obtained in the current sample.

Table 11

Relationship Belief Inventory Subscale Intercorrelations
(Present Sample)

Scales	D	M	C	S	MF
D					
M	.45**				
C	.35**	.10			
S	.45**	.14	.33**		
MF	.13	.15	.13	.18	

*p < .05, **p < .01

Intercorrelations between subscales on the RBI for this sample were low to moderate, which is quite similar to those reported by Eidelson and Epstein (1982). For the present sample, each subscale on the RBI appears to account for a unique variance.

In order to determine the extent of multicollinearity between the independent variables a correlation analysis was conducted to examine the amount of colinearity between subscales on the RBI and the MAS. Table 12 summarizes the results of this analysis by gender.

Table 12

Intercorrelations Between RBI Subscales and MAS Subscales
(Present Sample)

	RBID	RBIM	RBIC	RBIS	RBIMF
PACC	-.17 .19	-.13 .00	.18 .36**	-.07 .06	-.25 -.22
EOIR	.16 .27*	.03 -.14	.49** .58**	.19 .23	.07 -.18
ACOB	-.03 -.10	-.11 -.05	.18 .15	-.11 -.14	-.28 -.12
ACOP	-.22 -.27*	-.16 -.02	-.25 -.13	-.31* -.26*	-.36* -.13
ACSB	-.33 -.34**	-.36 -.11	-.09 -.12	-.19 -.19	-.18 -.05
ACSP	-.11 -.10	-.06 -.08	-.18 -.14	-.08 -.22	-.34* .09
AMIS	-.27* -.20	-.08 -.22	-.14 -.09	-.11 -.25	-.40** -.26**
ALLS	-.47** -.27*	-.33 -.02	-.35* -.21	-.26 -.06	-.29 -.30*

Note. Coefficients on the first line are for males, the second line for females. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

The high correlation found between the MAS subscale of Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship and the RBI subscale of Couples Cannot Change is not surprising; these two subscales are in effect measuring the same construct. With the exception of these two subscales, very little correlation is indicated between subscales on these two measures.

To confirm the appropriateness of a linear model and to closely examine the data for any possible outliers, a pair-wise plot between scores on the DAS and each subscale of the MAS and the RBI was performed. There were no observed nonlinear patterns in the data. A careful examination of the pair-wise plot revealed one outlier in the data. The decision was made to include this subject in the sample. Finding no evidence of nonlinear patterns in the data, multiple regression analyses were conducted.

Regression Analyses

Males: Using Scores on RBI and MAS as Independent Variables

Stepwise regression yielded a model $R^2=.16$ with only one significant predictor variable, after which none of the remaining independent variables contributed significantly to the regression. Attribution of Malicious Intent to Spouse was significant ($p=.0049$), with a positive relationship ($B=.559$).

Females: Using Scores on RBI and MAS as Independent Variables

Stepwise regression yielded a model $R^2=.30$ with three significant predictor variables, after which none of the remaining independent variables contributed significantly to the regression.

Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse was significant ($p=.0209$), with a positive relationship ($B=.529$). Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship was significant ($p=.0015$), with a negative relationship ($B=-1.818$). The RBI subscale, Males and Females Are Different, was significant ($p=.0463$), with a negative relationship ($B=-.481$).

Males: Using Demographics as the Independent Variables

Stepwise regression yielded a model $R^2=.09$ with only one significant predictor variable, after which none of the remaining independent demographic variables contributed significantly to the regression. Number of years married was significant ($p=.0355$), with a positive relationship ($B=.358$).

Females: Using Demographics as the Independent Variables

Stepwise regression yielded a model $R^2=.17$ with two significant predictor variables, after which none of the remaining independent demographic variables contributed

significantly to the regression. Previous marriage counseling was significant ($p=.0081$), with a positive relationship ($B=13.191$). Number of years married was significant ($p=.0397$), with a positive relationship ($B=.3977$).

Males: Using Scores on the
RBI and MAS and Demographics

Stepwise regression yielded a model $R^2=.16$ with one significant predictor variable, after which none of the remaining variables contributed significantly to the regression. Attribution of Malicious Intent to Spouse was significant ($p=.0049$), with a positive relationship ($B=.559$).

Females: Using Scores on the
RBI and MAS and Demographics

Stepwise regression yielded a model $R^2=.43$ with four significant predictor variables, after which none of the remaining variables contributed significantly to the regression. Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse was significant ($p=.0113$), with a positive relationship ($B=.511$). Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship was significant ($p=.0001$), with a negative relationship ($B=-2.173$). Number of years married was significant ($p=.0010$), with a positive relationship ($B=.593$). Previous marriage counseling was significant ($p=.0314$), with a positive relationship ($B=9.121$).

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

Results of correlation analyses between and among subscales on each of the independent variables yielded mixed results. In the case of the MAS, the two subscales, Perceived Ability of Couple to Change and Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship, although not as highly correlated with each other as Epstein et al. (1985) reported in previous investigations of this scale, were also not correlated with the other subscales on the MAS. Perhaps the subjects in this sample differentiated between an expectancy of improvement and the ability to accomplish such an improvement, that is, outcome versus efficacy. In such a case, it is not surprising that these two subscales were not highly correlated since they are, in fact, measuring different types of expectancies.

The high positive correlation for males between Attribution of Causality to One's Spouse's Behavior and Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse (.64, $p = <.01$) is not unusual. If one attributes causality for problems to one's spouse's behavior, it naturally follows that one would also make attributions regarding a partner's love. For example, if an individual believes that his or her spouse is the cause of marriage problems, that person may also externalize

this pattern of causality by attributing lack of love to the spouse. The spouse's behavior becomes the source of the problem, and the explanation for the behavior becomes lack of love. The externalization, or locus of control, outside of oneself allows for subsequent attributions that also focus on circumstances or behavior located outside one's control.

The direction of some of these correlations proved perplexing. When compared with the Epstein et al. (1987) correlation matrix, many of the current correlations were directly opposite. For example, the relationships between Perceived Ability of Couple to Change and Attribution of Causality to One's Own Personality; Perceived Ability of Couple to Change and Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse; Attribution of Causality to One's Own Behavior and Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse; and Perceived Ability of Couple to Change and Attribution of Causality to Spouse's Behavior were positive in the present sample for males and females. Looking at these singularly, in the case of the relationship between Perceived Ability of Couple to Change the Relationship and Attribution of Causality to One's Own Personality, the more one perceives one's relationship can change, the more one reports making attributions of causality to one's own personality. This appears to have some rational explanation. If one perceives the cause of problems to reside within oneself, then the individual may

also perceive oneself to be in control and able to change, the locus of control in this instance being strictly internal. The other positive correlations are more perplexing. In the case of the relationship between Perceived Ability of Couples to Change and Attribution of Causality to One's Spouse's Behavior and the relationship between Perceived Ability of Couples to Change and Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse, identifying the cause of problems as external may not preclude one's overriding expectancy of change. It is also possible that this sample was inclined to make favorable responses to questions regarding expectancy of change and improvement in relationships. The positive correlation between Perceived Ability of Couples to Change the Relationship and Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse was very small, perhaps a misinterpretation of the questions on the part of some respondents. In the case of Attribution of Causality to One's Own Behavior and Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse, the correlation was also quite small (.19 for males and .11 for females). Possibly, viewing one's behavior as the cause of problems in the relationship also carries with it the assumption that one's spouse could not possibly love him or her, therefore attributing lack of love to the spouse. The problem becomes cyclical, so that it becomes difficult to determine which is the primary issue causing the relationship distress, one's behavior or one's spouse's

response to that behavior.

A low positive correlation (.11 for males) between Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship and Attribution of Causality to One's Spouse's Behavior was found for this sample, as opposed to a $-.22$ for males reported by Epstein et al. (1987). The more one expects improvement in the relationship, the higher the scores on the subscales assessing attributions of causality to spouse's behavior. This result, which is difficult to explain, may in fact be idiosyncratic to the present sample. Intuitively, it does not make sense to attribute causality to one's spouse's behavior and still adhere to an expectancy of improvement, unless one also assumes that even though one's spouse's behavior is the cause of the relationship problem, the spouse could change, and the expectancy is that she or he will. Once again, this sample appeared to make favorable, positive responses to questions of expectancy of improvement. For females, a positive correlation was found between Perceived Ability of Couple to Change the Relationship and Attribution of Causality to One's Spouse's Personality; Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship and Attribution of Malicious Intent to Spouse; and Perceived Ability of Couple to Change and Attribution of Malicious Intent to Spouse. As in the case for males, females in the present sample may have believed that their spouses could change, even though they attributed causality for the

distress to their partner's personality and malicious intent.

Intercorrelations between subscales on the RBI for the present sample were low to moderate, in fact, quite similar to those reported by Eidelson and Epstein (1982). Apparently, there is little if any overlap between subscales on the RBI, with each subscale measuring a different construct and accounting for unique proportion of the variance.

In examining the relationship between the independent variables as measured by the MAS and the RBI, only two of the subscales were highly correlated: Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship on the MAS, and Couples Cannot Change on the RBI ($r=.49$ for males, $p<.01$, and $r=.58$ for females, $p<.01$).

Stepwise multiple regression was used to study hypothesis two. Three different analyses were run: Stepwise using scores on the MAS and RBI subscales with Cronbach alphas equal to or greater than .60; stepwise using demographics as the independent variables; and finally, stepwise using both demographics and scores on the RBI and MAS subscales with Cronbach alpha coefficients equal to or greater than .60.

For males, when using scores on the RBI and the MAS subscales, only one variable entered into the regression equation, Attribution of Malicious Intent to Spouse, a

subscale on the MAS measuring causal attributions. This variable accounts for very little of the variance in scores on the dependent variable. Meaning that, more than 80% of the variance in scores of marital satisfaction is affected by variables other than Attributing Malicious Intent to Spouse. This was not a practical model for predicting marital satisfaction.

A similar case is evident for males when using demographics to predict marital satisfaction. The only variable which entered into the equation was number of years married, and this yielded a $R^2=.09$. This variable accounts for very little of the variance in scores on the dependent variable. Intuitively one assumes that marital longevity brings increased stability and personal security for most couples. The exception to this is those couples who remain in distressed relationships for long periods of time, regardless of how unpleasant the relationship. Males in this study apparently fall into the former category. Once again, this model is not an efficient model for predicting marital satisfaction.

When using scores on the RBI and the MAS subscales along with demographic information, regression analyses failed to yield a practical model for predicting marital satisfaction for males in the current sample. The only subscale that entered into the equation was Attribution of Malicious Intent to Spouse ($R^2=.16$). As in the previous

analyses for males, this variable accounts for very little of the variance in marital satisfaction scores. The possible relationship between Attribution of Malicious Intent to Spouse and marital satisfaction is unexpected. One would think that increased attribution of malicious intent to spouse would be associated with decreased marital satisfaction. For this sample this was not the case. Perhaps external attributing makes it possible for couples to report increased marital satisfaction, which at the same time allows a spouse to remain out of touch with any marital distress.

For females, results of regression analyses using scores on the RBI and the MAS subscales yielded a model with three significant predictor variables ($R^2=.30$). Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse, Expectancy of Improvement in a Relationship, and Males and Females are Different were all significant. Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse was positively related to marital satisfaction, as measured by scores on the DAS. Logically this does not appear to make sense. Perhaps one is able to remain removed from a sense of unhappiness by attributing causality to external forces. Therefore, spouses in this sample, although they attributed causality to a spouse's lack of love, still reported high levels of marital satisfaction. It is also possible that some form of halo effect is present, whereby when asked to rate their marriage relationship, these subjects responded

in ways favorable to themselves and their relationship.

High scores on Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship were negatively related to levels of marital satisfaction, as measured by scores on the DAS. The more one expects improvement, the lower one's reported level of marital satisfaction. Possibly, the efficacy expectation, as measured by this subscale, although apparently viewed as positive, is in fact most logically related to low marital satisfaction. That is, if one's relationship were without problems, there would be no expectancy of improvement.

The RBI subscale, Males and Females Are Different, was also negatively related to marital satisfaction, as measured by scores on the DAS. The more one adheres to the unrealistic belief that males and females can be stereotyped into distinct groups with no overlap in roles, the lower marital satisfaction. This finding supports earlier claims by Eidelson and Epstein (1982) that unrealistic assumptions and standards are in fact related to low marital satisfaction.

For females, when using demographics to predict marital satisfaction, two variables entered into the regression equation. Previous marriage counseling and the number of years married were both significant ($R^2=.17$). This model accounts for less than 20% of the variance in scores on the dependent variable, allowing that a variety of other unmeasured variables may be affecting marital satisfaction.

This model would not be a practical one for predicting marital satisfaction.

When combining scores on the RBI and MAS with demographic variables, the regression analysis for females yielded a model $R^2=.43$. Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse, Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship, number of years married, and previous marriage counseling were all significant. These four predictor variables are the same ones which were found to be significant when controlling for one or the other.

It appears that for females in the current sample a combination of scores from two of the subscales from the MAS and two of the demographic variables provide a significant means of predicting marital satisfaction.

CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the current sample, the RBI appears to be of little value in predicting marital satisfaction. The MAS, on the other hand, contains subscales that in combination with certain descriptive information, yielded somewhat interesting, if not significant, results.

For males in this sample there appears to be little predictive value in the RBI or the MAS. In addition, the demographic variables also provide no additional predictive information for males. Results of regression analyses for females, on the other hand, yielded a significant model for predicting marital satisfaction. The combined independent variables, Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse, Expectancy of Improvement in the Relationship, number of years married, and previous marriage counseling, yielded a model $R^2=.43$. Over 40% of the variance in scores on the DAS can be explained by a combination of scores on these four independent variables.

The present sample may be unique and, therefore, not be representative of a larger population. A replication of the present study is advised. Various claims have been made by the authors of the RBI and the MAS concerning their usefulness and their ability to measure certain constructs.

The present research does not support these claims.

In summary, there is very little multicollinearity between subscales on the MAS and the RBI. This means, as suggested by the authors, that these instruments do, in fact, measure unique and different constructs. Stepwise regression analyses failed to yield a practical model for predicting marital satisfaction for males from the four independent variables under investigation. For females the best model was found when the independent variables were used in combination with demographic information.

Several intervening variables might have affected the results of this study. Possibly, the present sample is not representative of the population. It is also possible that the present sample is somewhat unique due to bias. This sample, although chosen from a wide cross section of the community and representative of all voting districts, is self-selecting. Those individuals who returned their questionnaires may in fact differ significantly from those who did not. The sample used by Pretzer et al. (1985) consisted of four distinct groups: couples seeking marital therapy, couples referred for marital evaluation, married student volunteers, and married community volunteers. The present sample included married persons who were not necessarily couples. In addition, Pretzer et al. used a sample that contained a proportionately high number of maritally distressed subjects, which might in fact be very

different from the current sample of self-selecting respondents. It is also important to note that 79% of the present sample reported being members of the same religious denomination. Without additional information, one can only speculate that religion is an intervening factor, since it is not possible to determine whether, in fact, religion plays a part in the way in which respondents in this sample answered items. Respondents in this study appear to have answered questions regarding expectancies of improvement in their relationships and the perceived ability of couples to change in a positive way. It is assumed that (a) either this sample is nontypical; (b) the constructs under investigation are not adequate to measure the concomitants of marital satisfaction; and/or (c) there are constructs yet to be identified that have an intervening effect on marital satisfaction.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM AND IRB STATEMENT

CONSENT FORM

THOUGHTS CONCERNING MARRIAGE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the variation of thoughts which couples hold about marriage and the marriage relationship. Participation requires the completion of several different questionnaires. It is estimated that it will take 45 minutes - 1 hour to complete the questionnaires.

This study does NOT involve deception, nor risk of any kind. However, the questionnaires require self-disclosure of personal attitudes and the marriage relationship. Some people may find it disturbing to disclose information about their attitudes and feelings.

Participation is voluntary and couples may discontinue at any time during the study.

All information is confidential and will be seen only by a research team and the principal investigator. Couple's names or other personal identifiers are NOT used in this study. All questionnaires are submitted anonymously.

To insure complete confidentiality, you are asked to put this consent form on top of all the questionnaires. As your packet is opened, this top sheet will be immediately removed, promptly separating any identifying names from the questionnaire responses. In addition, you are asked to seal the packet envelope and then sign your name over the sealed section, placing a piece of scotch tape over your signature. The volunteer who will pick up your packet will provide scotch tape if necessary. This precaution is to insure that no one, other than the project director, will open your packet.

This research project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Utah State University. Any questions or concerns should be directed to Dr. J.R. Skidmore, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Principle Investigator (801-750-1451). If you wish to participate in this research study, sign below.

I HEREBY AGREE TO VOLUNTARILY PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIBED ABOVE, AND UNDER THE CONDITIONS DESCRIBED.

Print name here

Signature

Date

PLEASE PUT THIS FORM ON TOP

Statement of the PI to the IRB for Proposed
Research Involving Human Subjects

Proposal Title COGNITIVE VARIABLES AND MARITAL SATISFACTION

Principal Investigator* Jan R. Skidmore Dept. psy UMC 2810 Ext. 1457

Student Researcher Carol G. Green Dept. psy UMC 2810 Ext. 1104

- A. Human subjects will participate in this research and be asked to do the following: In one 45 minute session subjects will fill out questionnaires.
- B. The potential benefits to be gained from the proposed research are: The research will contribute to the knowledge of cognitions related to marital satisfaction.
- C. The risk(s) to the rights and welfare of human subjects involved are: None. The subjects are simply asked to fill out questionnaires. No risk or deception is involved.
- D. The following safeguards/measures to mitigate/minimize the identified risks will be taken: The couples are informed that answering the items may be construed as difficult due to the personal nature of self report inventories.
- E. The informed consent procedures for subjects will be as follows: (Explain procedures to be followed and attach an example of the informed consent instrument) Subjects will be instructed as to the nature of the research and all AFA guidelines of consent are followed.
- F. The following measures regarding confidentiality of subjects will be taken: All questionnaires are anonymous. No other personal identifiers will be recorded with research data.
- G. Other: (If, in your opinion no, or minimal, risk to subjects exists, please explain in this section) At most, questionnaires may be perceived as difficult or challenging.

Self disclosure is confidential.

Jan R. Skidmore
Principal Investigator Signature*

Carol G. Green
Student Researcher Signature

* A student researcher should name his/her advisor or chairman as the principal investigator. Both are required to sign this form.

APPENDIX B
MAP OF VOTING DISTRICTS

APPENDIX C
COVER LETTER



UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
Logan, Utah 84322-2810
Telephone (801) 750-1460

Dear Participant:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this Study of Thoughts Concerning Marriage. Enclosed you will find the following items:

1. Consent Form
2. Information Questionnaire
3. Dyadic Adjustment Scale
4. Marital Attitude Survey
5. Relationship Belief Inventory

Please place all completed information into the envelope provided, placing the Consent Form on top. Seal the envelope, sign your name over the seal and place a piece of scotch tape over your signature. The person who picks up the completed packet will have pen and tape available. They have been instructed not to take possession of the packet until this process has been completed. This is for your privacy and to insure that no one other than the project director will open your packet.

If for some reason your packet is not picked up please contact me at my office: 750-1194 or at home: 752-1585. I will make arrangements for your packet to be picked up.

Remember, all responses are confidential and will be seen only by the project director. In fact, your name (on the consent form) will be completely separated from your questionnaire responses.

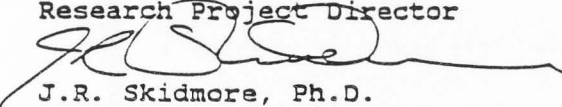
Questionnaires which require the self-disclosure of personal attitudes oftentimes evoke strong feelings within individuals and couples. In some cases individuals request information about available counseling facilities. For information regarding counseling services available at Utah State University you may contact the Psychology Department Community Clinic at 750-3401.

Thank you again for your cooperation and participation.

Sincerely,

Carol Green

Carol Green
Research Project Director


J.R. Skidmore, Ph.D.
Principle Investigator
Assistant Professor, Psychology Dept. USU

APPENDIX D
MEASURES

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following questions. Remember that these and all your responses will be kept in strict confidentiality.

Age _____

Sex _____ (Please mark M for male and F for female)

Number of years married _____ First marriage YES or NO

Have you been married before: YES NO

Number of children living at home _____ (Put 0 if none)

Have you ever participated in marital counseling or marital therapy of any kind? YES NO

Religious preference _____
(Please indicate your religious preference, if none, write none.)

DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE

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. Please check the appropriate response.

1. Handling family finances
 always agree
 almost always agree
 occasionally disagree
 frequently disagree
 almost always disagree
 always disagree
2. Matters of recreation
 always agree
 almost always agree
 occasionally disagree
 frequently disagree
 almost always disagree
 always disagree
3. Religious matters
 always agree
 almost always agree
 occasionally disagree
 frequently disagree
 almost always disagree
 always disagree
4. Demonstrations of affection
 always agree
 almost always agree
 occasionally disagree
 frequently disagree
 almost always disagree
 always disagree
5. Friends
 always agree
 almost always agree
 occasionally disagree
 frequently disagree
 almost always disagree
 always disagree

6. Sex relations
___ always agree
___ almost always agree
___ occasionally disagree
___ frequently disagree
___ almost always disagree
___ always disagree
7. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)
___ always agree
___ almost always agree
___ occasionally disagree
___ frequently disagree
___ almost always disagree
___ always disagree
8. Philosophy of life
___ always agree
___ almost always agree
___ occasionally disagree
___ frequently disagree
___ almost always disagree
___ always disagree
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws
___ always agree
___ almost always agree
___ occasionally disagree
___ frequently disagree
___ almost always disagree
___ always disagree
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important
___ always agree
___ almost always agree
___ occasionally disagree
___ frequently disagree
___ almost always disagree
___ always disagree
11. Amount of time spent together
___ always agree
___ almost always agree
___ occasionally disagree
___ frequently disagree
___ almost always disagree
___ always disagree

12. Making major decisions
 always agree
 almost always agree
 occasionally disagree
 frequently disagree
 almost always disagree
 always disagree
13. Household tasks
 always agree
 almost always agree
 occasionally disagree
 frequently disagree
 almost always disagree
 always disagree
14. Leisure time interests and activities
 always agree
 almost always agree
 occasionally disagree
 frequently disagree
 almost always disagree
 always disagree
15. Career decisions
 always agree
 almost always agree
 occasionally disagree
 frequently disagree
 almost always disagree
 always disagree
16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or termination of your relationship?
 all the time
 most of the time
 more often than not
 occasionally
 rarely
 never
17. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?
 all the time
 most of the time
 more often than not
 occasionally
 rarely
 never

18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?
- all the time
 - most of the time
 - more often than not
 - occasionally
 - rarely
 - never
19. How often do you confide in your mate?
- all the time
 - most of the time
 - more often than not
 - occasionally
 - rarely
 - never
20. How often do you ever regret that you married?
- all the time
 - most of the time
 - more often than not
 - occasionally
 - rarely
 - never
21. How often do you and your partner quarrel?
- all the time
 - most of the time
 - more often than not
 - occasionally
 - rarely
 - never
22. How often do you and your mate get on each others' nerves?
- all the time
 - most of the time
 - more often than not
 - occasionally
 - rarely
 - never
23. Do you kiss your mate?
- every day
 - almost every day
 - occasionally
 - rarely
 - never

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

- all of them
- most of them
- some of them
- very few of them
- none of them

HOW OFTEN DO THE FOLLOWING OCCUR BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR MATE?

25. 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 often

26. Laugh together

- never
- less than once a month
- once or twice a month
- once or twice a week
- once a day
- more often

27. Calmly discuss something

- never
- less than once a month
- once or twice a month
- once or twice a week
- once a day
- more often

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 often

THESE ARE SOME THINGS ABOUT WHICH COUPLES SOMETIMES AGREE OR DISAGREE. INDICATE IF EITHER ITEM CAUSED DIFFERENCES OF OPINIONS OR WERE PROBLEMS IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS.

29. Being too tired for sex

yes
 no

30. Not showing love

yes
 no

31. Check the phrase which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship. The middle point, "happy", represents the degree of happiness of most relationships.

extremely unhappy
 fairly unhappy
 a little unhappy
 happy
 very happy
 extremely happy
 perfect

32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? Check one

I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.

I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.

I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.

It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.

It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.

My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

MARITAL ATTITUDE SURVEY

Please check the response which indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement this week.

1. When we aren't getting along I wonder if my partner loves me.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
2. My partner doesn't seem to do things just to bother me.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
3. If we were more healthy physically we'd get along better.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
4. My personality would have to change for our relationship to improve.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
5. If we had more money we would have a better marriage.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
6. We could improve our relationship if we tried.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree

7. My partner intentionally does things to irritate me.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
8. I think my partner could do something to help us get along better in the future.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
9. I don't think I can do much to make things better between us.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
10. Even if my partner's personality changed we still wouldn't get along any better.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
11. I don't expect our relationship to improve any.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
12. I don't think my partner could do anything to improve our relationship.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree

13. I don't think I'll ever be a better spouse than I am now.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
14. It seems as though my partner deliberately provokes me.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
15. I don't think my partner and I share responsibility for how our relationship goes.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
16. If my partner did things differently we'd get along better.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
17. I doubt that my partner will change for the better.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
18. My partner's personality would have to change for us to get along better.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree

19. Any trouble we have getting along with each other is because of the type of person I am.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
20. I don't think that the things I say and do make things worse between us.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
21. Even if we were more healthy physically our relationship wouldn't be any better.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
22. I don't think there's much my partner can do to cause fewer problems between us.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
23. Any problems we have are caused by the things I say and do.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
24. If we had different friends our relationship would be about the same.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree

25. I don't think our marriage would be better if my partner was a different type of person.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
26. Even if my personality changed, my partner and I still wouldn't get along any better.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
27. Even if our religious beliefs were more similar, that wouldn't improve our relationship.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
28. The way my partner treats me determines how well we get along.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
29. I don't think that my partner and I each contribute to any problems we have with each other.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
30. Whatever problems we have are caused by the things my partner says and does.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree

31. My partner and I would get along better if it weren't for the type of person he/she is.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
32. Problems between my partner and me aren't just his/her fault or just my fault, we both have a part in them.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
33. My partner doesn't intentionally try to upset me.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
34. (If you have children) If we didn't have children we'd get along better.
(If you don't have children) If we had children we'd get along better.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
35. When things aren't going well between us I feel like my partner doesn't love me.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
36. Our friends make a big difference in how our relationship goes.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree

37. I couldn't do anything to improve our relationship if I tried.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**
38. Stress from work influences how we get along.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**
39. I think that our relationship will improve.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**
40. I probably could do something to help us get along better.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**
41. I think my partner and I each contribute to any problems we have with each other.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**
42. Even if we had more money, our relationship wouldn't get any better.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**

43. I don't think my partner will ever improve upon the way he/she is.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
44. I think my partner and I share responsibility for whatever problems come up between us.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
45. I think I will treat my partner better in the future.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
46. Our relatives don't influence our relationship.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
47. (If you have children) Our children have little to do with how we get along.
(If you don't have children) Our not having children has little to do with how we get along.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
48. Whatever difficulties we have are not because of the type of person I am.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree

49. I think our relationship is going to get better in the future.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
50. What difficulties we have don't lead me to doubt my partner's love for me.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
51. If it weren't for our relatives we would have a better marriage.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
52. When things are tough between us it shows that my partner doesn't love me.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
53. Even if work was less stressful, our relationship wouldn't improve.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
54. If I did things differently my partner and I wouldn't have the conflicts we have.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree

55. I think my partner will make positive changes in the future.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
56. My changing how I act wouldn't change how our marriage goes.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
57. I'm sure that my partner sometimes does things just to bother me.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
58. Even when we aren't getting along, I don't question whether my partner loves me.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
59. I think my partner upsets me on purpose.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
60. Our religious beliefs lead to problems between us.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree

61. I don't think I will change for the better in the future.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**
62. When my partner isn't nice to me I feel like he/she doesn't love me.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**
63. I think my partner will treat me better in the future.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**
64. When we have a problem, my partner could do something to make things better between us.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**
65. I'm certain that my partner doesn't provoke me on purpose.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**
66. I don't think it's possible for us to handle problems that come up better than we do now.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**

67. I think I will make some positive changes that will make things better between us.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
68. Even when we have problems I don't doubt my partner's love for me.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
69. I don't think that our relationship is likely to improve.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
70. The things my partner says and does aren't the cause of whatever problems come up between us.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
71. I could do something to make our relationship better.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree
72. There is no way for us to improve this relationship.
 strongly disagree
 disagree somewhat
 neutral
 agree somewhat
 strongly agree

73. Our relationship could be better in the future.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**
74. I doubt that my partner deliberately does things
to irritate me.
___ **strongly disagree**
___ **disagree somewhat**
___ **neutral**
___ **agree somewhat**
___ **strongly agree**

RELATIONSHIP BELIEF INVENTORY

(Roy J. Eidelson and Norman Epstein, 1981)

The statements below describe ways in which a person might feel about a relationship with another person. Please mark the space next to each statement according to how strongly you believe that it is true or false for you, using the following code. **Please mark every one.**

- 5: I **strongly** believe that the statement is **true**.
 4: I believe that the statement is **true**.
 3: I believe that the statement is **probably true**, or more true than false.
 2: I believe that the statement is **probably false**, or more false than true.
 1: I believe that the statement is **false**.
 0: I **strongly** believe that the statement is **false**.

- | | |
|--|---|
| | 1. If your partner expresses disagreement with your ideas, s/he probably does not think highly of you. |
| | 2. I do not expect my partner to sense all my moods. |
| | 3. Damages done early in a relationship probably cannot be reversed. |
| | 4. I get upset if I think I have not completely satisfied my partner sexually. |
| | 5. Men and women have the same basic emotional needs. |
| | 6. I cannot accept it when my partner disagrees with me. |
| | 7. If I have to tell my partner that something is important to me, it does not mean s/he is insensitive to me. |
| | 8. My partner does not seem capable of behaving other than s/he does now. |
| | 9. If I'm not in the mood for sex when my partner is, I don't get upset about it. |
| | 10. Misunderstandings between partners generally are due to inborn differences in psychological makeups of men and women. |
| | 11. I take it as a personal insult when my partner disagrees with an important idea of mine. |
| | 12. I get very upset if my partner does not recognize how I am feeling and I have to tell him/her. |
| | 13. A partner can learn to become more responsive to his/her partner's needs. |
| | 14. A good sexual partner can get himself/herself aroused for sex whenever necessary. |

- 5: I **strongly** believe that the statement is **true**.
 4: I believe that the statement is **true**.
 3: I believe that the statement is **probably true**, or more true than false.
 2: I believe that the statement is **probably false**, or more false than true.
 1: I believe that the statement is **false**.
 0: I **strongly** believe that the statement is **false**.

- ____ 15. Men and women probably will never understand the opposite sex very well.
 ____ 16. I like it when my partner presents views different from mine.
 ____ 17. People who have a close relationship can sense each other's needs as if they could read each other's minds.
 ____ 18. Just because my partner has acted in ways that upset me does not mean that s/he will do so in the future.
 ____ 19. If I cannot perform well sexually whenever my partner is in the mood, I would consider that I have a problem.
 ____ 20. Men and women need the same basic things out of a relationship.
 ____ 21. I get very upset when my partner and I cannot see things the same way.
 ____ 22. It is important to me for my partner to anticipate my needs by sensing changes in my moods.
 ____ 23. A partner who hurts you badly once probably will hurt you again.
 ____ 24. I can feel OK about my lovemaking even if my partner does not achieve orgasm.
 ____ 25. Biological differences between men and women are not major causes of couples' problems.
 ____ 26. I cannot tolerate it when my partner argues with me.
 ____ 27. A partner should know what you are thinking or feeling without you having to tell.
 ____ 28. If my partner wants to change, I believe that s/he can do it.
 ____ 29. If my sexual partner does not get satisfied completely, it does not mean that I have failed.
 ____ 30. One of the major causes of marital problems is that men and women have different emotional needs.
 ____ 31. When my partner and I disagree, I feel like our relationship is falling apart.
 ____ 32. People who love each other know exactly what each other's thoughts are without a word ever being said.

- 5: I **strongly** believe that the statement is **true**.
4: I believe that the statement is **true**.
3: I believe that the statement is **probably true**, or more true than false.
2: I believe that the statement is **probably false**, or more false than true.
1: I believe that the statement is **false**.
0: I **strongly** believe that the statement is **false**.

- _____ 33. If you don't like the way a relationship is going, you can make it better.
- _____ 34. Some difficulties in my sexual performance do not mean personal failure to me.
- _____ 35. You can't really understand someone of the opposite sex.
- _____ 36. I do not doubt my partner's feelings for me when we argue.
- _____ 37. If you have to ask your partner for something, it shows that s/he was not "tuned into" your needs.
- _____ 38. I do not expect my partner to be able to change.
- _____ 39. When I do not seem to be performing well sexually, I get upset.
- _____ 40. Men and women will always be mysteries to each other.

APPENDIX E
MAS SUBSCALE COMPOSITION

Perceived Ability of Couple to Change

(PACC)

Items 6, 66, 72, 73

Expectancy of Improvement in Relationship

(EOIR)

Items 11, 39, 49, 69

Attribution of Causality to One's Own Behavior

(ACOB)

Items 20, 23, 54, 56

Attribution of Causality to One's Own Personality

(ACOP)

Items 4, 19, 26, 48

Attribution of Causality to One's Spouse's Behavior

(ACSB)

Items 16, 28, 30, 70

Attribution of Causality to One's Spouse's Personality

(ACSP)

Items 10, 18, 25, 31

Attribution of Malicious Intent to Spouse

(AMIS)

Items 2, 7, 14, 33, 57, 59, 65, 74

Attribution of Lack of Love to Spouse

(ALLS)

Items 1, 35, 50, 52, 58, 62, 68

APPENDIX F
RBI SUBSCALE COMPOSITION

Disagreement is Destructive (D)

Items 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, 36

Mindreading is Expected (M)

Items 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37

Couples Cannot Change (C)

Items 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38

Sexual Perfectionism (S)

Items 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34, 39

Sexes are Different (MF)

Items 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40

APPENDIX G
FREQUENCIES, MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following questions. Remember that these and all your responses will be kept in strict confidentiality.

Age _____
mean=34.064, standard deviation=7.197

Sex _____ (Please mark M for male and F for female)
47=male, 64=female

Number of years married _____
mean=11.234, standard deviation=7.523

Have you been married before: YES NO
yes=10, no=100

Number of children living at home _____ (Put 0 if none)
mean=2.718, standard deviation=1.604

Have you ever participated in marital counseling or marital therapy of any kind? YES NO
yes=10, no=98, 3=no answer

Religious preference _____
(Please indicate your religious preference, if none, write none.)
88 LDS, 5 Catholic, 11 Other, 5 None, 2 No answer

DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE

	MALES	FEMALES
MEAN	108.49	108.32
SD	9.06	10.85
RANGE	91-132	77-131
N	47	63

MARITAL ATTITUDE SURVEY

		MEAN	SD	RANGE	N
PACC	M	7.85	2.40	4-13	47
	F	7.52	2.37	4-14	63
EOIR	M	6.77	2.42	2-13	47
	F	6.70	2.18	3-12	63
ACOB	M	10.11	2.98	3-16	47
	F	11.11	2.78	4-17	63
ACOP	M	11.19	2.92	5-19	47
	F	11.84	3.10	6-19	63
ACSB	M	12.68	3.04	4-20	47
	F	11.54	2.59	7-17	63
ACSP	M	14.11	2.88	7-20	47
	F	14.06	2.70	9-19	63
AMIS	M	32.68	7.10	15-40	47
	F	32.59	6.70	18-40	63
ALLS	M	29.85	6.65	5-35	47
	F	28.05	6.20	14-35	63

RELATIONSHIP BELIEF INVENTORY

		MEAN	SD	RANGE	N
RBID	M	11.13	5.60	0-23	46
	F	11.79	4.30	2-22	63
RBIM	M	13.83	4.45	5-23	46
	F	14.32	4.70	4-29	63
RBIC	M	10.02	3.93	2-19	46
	F	9.90	4.40	1-19	63
RBIS	M	14.07	5.41	6-25	46
	F	13.43	4.89	3-26	63
RBIMF	M	19.43	5.29	10-32	46
	F	19.03	5.90	4-35	63