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The Relationship Between Premarital Advice, Expectations and Marital Satisfaction

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PREMARITAL ADVICE, EXPECTATIONS
AND MARITAL SATISFACTION

by

Cicile M. Rios

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

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

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(Marriage and Family Therapy)

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2010

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ABSTRACT

The Relationship Between Premarital Advice, Expectations, and Marital Satisfaction

by

Cicile M. Rios, Master of Science

Utah State University, 2010

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Department: Family, Consumer, and Human Development

The purpose of this study was to determine the significance between advice, marital expectations, and marital satisfaction. This study also explored the sources couples use to gather information, or rather where they receive premarital advice, and if it was helpful. Included in this study were husbands ($n = 56$) and wives ($n = 56$) who had been married less than one year, to classify them as newlyweds. The relationship between sources of information and expectations was found to be highly significant for variables related to family of origin. It was also found that a high percentage of couples gather information from informal sources rather than from more formal methods such as premarital education classes and premarital therapy. Expectations were found to be moderately to highly significant determinants of marital satisfaction.

(66 pages)

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Cicile M. Rios

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ninety-three percent of Americans report that obtaining a happy marriage is among the most important of their objectives (Carroll & Doherty, 2003; Waite & Gallagher, 2000). Despite the emphasis on happy marriages, nearly 50% of marriages in the United States end in divorce, and almost two-thirds of the divorces happen within the first ten years of marriage (Amato, Booth, Johnson, & Rogers, 2007; Clark, 1995). Marriage can either be of great benefit to individuals, or if problematic can be detrimental (Cohen, 2004; Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997; Hurdle, 2001). Therefore, it becomes important to understand the interactions foreshadowing happy marriages versus divorce.

Studies have shown that individuals who do not seek formal/professional information, usually gather information from informal sources (Wills & DePaulo, 1991). Advice is one way that researchers claim informal information is passed along, as support to others (Cowen, 1982; Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997; MacGeorge, Feng, Butler, & Budarz, 2004). According to some authors, research on advice is still in a phase of exploration (MacGeorge et al.). Because of the current state of research on advice, Wills and DePaulo commented, “There [was] surprisingly few data on people’s preferred sources of help” (p. 351).

There is a lack of literature about where advice is gathered and information on how advice is used to form expectations. Researchers have found expectations to be salient in their studies because of the “large discrepancy between what many Americans see as the ideal marriage and what actually takes place”(Bonds-Raacke, Bearden,

Carriere, Anderson, & Nicks, 2001, p. 180). Larson and Holman (1994) said expectations affected marital interaction and satisfaction. In other words, an individual takes information or advice and construes their own expectations that are used to evaluate their satisfaction in their own marital relationship.

Expectations towards marriage have been found to be a large predictor of marital satisfaction. Expectations include many things such as attitudes about values and beliefs, as well as gender roles. Having similar or complementary views on each of these things is said to have a positive effect on marital quality and stability (Larson & Holman, 1994). Studies have been done on marital satisfaction, what affects marital satisfaction, and marital expectations. Despite these studies we know little about where that information has come from, and how it may affect marital adjustment, or satisfaction.

Religiosity, family of origin, education, and length of courtship may be contexts that determine how a couple gathers information that affects their marital expectations. Common beliefs and ideas about religion were found to be significantly related with higher scores of marital adjustment (Dudley & Kosinski, 1990; Hunt & King, 1978; Wilson & Filsinger, 1986). Not only does a couples' religious beliefs affect marital expectations, Wills and DePaulo (1991) have found that friends, family, and clergy are the preferred sources of information for couples when the problem is not persistent or extreme. In addition to beliefs and clergy, religious practices have also been shown to give long-term perspective as well as meaning to marriage (Lambert & Dollahite, 2008; Weigel, Bennett, & Ballard-Reisch 2006). It has also been found that couples who court longer have a longer time to negotiate roles and expectations and gather information,

therefore they enter their marital relationship with less stress and discord (Knoblock & Donovan-Kicken, 2006). Jose and Alfons (2007) reported that couples with higher education have more stressors within their marriages that affect their marital satisfaction, as well as whom they choose to marry.

Conceptual Framework

Becvar & Becvar (1999) stated that our views of reality are constructed through our experiences. In other words, what we perceive through our interactions with our environment (system) as well as with others (friends and family) gives us a basis of knowledge from which to construct our own reality. The information we receive about marriage through these interactions helps us determine what our reality or expectations of marriage should be.

A first order cybernetics approach to systems theory says that an individual is part of many different systems, which it must constantly interact with, taking things in both verbally and nonverbally (Becvar & Becvar, 1999). Systems theory not only accounts for the fact that we need to understand what parts of the overall system influence marital satisfaction, but it also accounts for the fact that couples use feedback or information from outside sources. The Systems Framework offers that, “understanding is only possible by viewing the whole” (White & Klien, 2002, p. 122). Larson and Holman stated:

Theory helps us understand that a couple in the mate selection stage of the life course as a developing system that can and does respond to influences from within and without the system. (1994, p. 229)

This relates to our study that couples use feedback or advice/information received from family and friends to create their own reality and rules for their own family in a different phase of the family life cycle. Becvar and Becvar also described that each individual has boundaries that information must pass through to be incorporated into the system. Becvar and Becvar (1999) described open and closed systems to refer to how much information was taken and used. If the boundaries were permeable (open) then information relating to the system would be easily taken in and given out. In contrast, there is little exchange of information in closed systems. Boundaries in new marriages need to be somewhat changeable in negotiating the marital relationship in order for both partners to be satisfied. Systems theory is important when accounting for the effect of information given on marital expectations and satisfaction, because it describes the usage of information in couples.

Purpose Statement

This descriptive study (Leary, 2001) was launched in hopes of gaining an understanding of advice couples received. Using the data collected from couples in their first marriage we hope to: (1) identify where participants received premarital information/advice from, (2) identify how that information associates with expectations, and (3) identify if expectations are related to marital satisfaction.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on information/advice received before marriage, the marital expectations of newlyweds, and how it relates to marital satisfaction. This section will define the major concepts of the study and the relationship between them.

Information/Advice

“Advice was widely recognized by...informants as a form of *helpful* information for making decisions and solving problems; it was also valued for the relational *caring* it expressed” (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997, p. 462; italics in original). Couples receive advice before marriage that they may or may not use during the newlywed transition, to create their expectations. There is a lack of research in the area of advice, and the affect it has on marital adjustment and/or marital satisfaction. In many studies people were more likely to receive advice or social support from informal supports, as long as the problem was not severe or persistent (Reinhardt, Boerner, & Horowitz, 2006; Wills & DePaulo, 1991). Advice is often seen as a way of showing social support. This support was seen as positively related to relationship quality (Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992). MacGeorge et al. (2004), when speaking of advice, stated, “A fuller understanding of social support processes...requires attention to factors that influence how support seekers respond to advice” (p. 43). Such as whether or not support seekers use the advice and whether or not they find it helpful, or merely intrusive (MacGeorge et al.). In a study done by Goldsmith

and Fitch (1997) researchers recorded details of advice they saw in a variety of settings. The researchers recorded 112 interactions where advice was given. Then they conducted interviews with nine college students asking when and to whom they gave advice, and when and from whom they received advice. The students were then asked about the advice. Some felt that advice was supportive where others felt the advice intrusive or even at times threatening. Advice may be unhelpful or even detrimental if it does not: (1) take into account the couples context (Christensen & Jacobson, 2000), (2) Is based on myth or false assumptions (Christensen & Jacobson; Larson, 1988), and (3) When advice seems critical, or created an imbalance of power or knowledge (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997). Advice can also be construed positively. Positive advice often occurs when couples see the advice and giver as caring, helpful, and someone they are close to (Goldsmith & Fitch; MacGeorge et al.). It is assumed that couples are using advice and information from their social supports, and one purpose of this study is to describe how and what advice couples are using, and if it is helpful. Advice has potentially important theoretical implications as it may indicate the openness of the system that will provide support for the new couple. Additionally, advice may serve as an important form of feedback for both the couple as well as their extended network.

Expectations

Barich and Bielby (1996) defined expectations as images of marriage that couples create for themselves within the context of the relationship. Sager (1976) explained that there are contracts each individual brings to a marriage based on their expectations,

or in other words, what they want in their marriage. Expectations consist mostly of what the couple sees as appropriate roles within a marriage, and how their beliefs about how marriage works (Barich & Bielby; Chadwick, Albrecht, & Kunz, 1976; Grant, 2000; Koopman-Boyden & Abbott, 1981). Expectations are important during the first year of marriage because they provide the criteria that couples use to evaluate their marriage and negotiate roles (Odell & Quinn, 1998). Marital happiness is most often obtained where there are complementary expectations (Sager).

Studying the first year of marriage is important because this is a time when couples are learning to negotiate roles and expectations (Odell & Quinn, 1998). Odell and Quinn assessed this by evaluating 100 newlywed couples by survey at, 1 month, 6 months, and 1 year after marriage using a marital inventory in the first mailing and using the same assessment as well as a measure of perceived differences in a number of marital issues in subsequent mailings. The focus of Odell and Quinn's study was the same group as the current study will address. The marital inventory included two parts, one that assessed values and the other assessed role expectations. It was found that the congruence of values was positively correlated with role expectations for marriage, and that initial role expectations remained a factor in marital happiness. The expectations that each spouse brings to the marriage become the "organizing principles" for their marriage and sets the standard for how they will judge their marriage. The results also indicated that conflict over roles and role expectations leads to problems for both individuals and marriages (Odell & Quinn).

Each member of a couple may become unhappy in the marriage because of

unrealistic expectations, and difficulty negotiating these expectations, leading to a higher possibility of marital discord and/or divorce. When comparing questionnaires from the beginning of the study to those taken at six months after marriage, it was found that role expectations continued to be a significant factor in marital happiness (Odell & Quinn, 1998). The ways that roles and expectations are adjusted throughout a marriage are also predictors of marital quality/satisfaction (Barich & Bielby, 1996; Chadwick et al., 1976; Grant, 2000; Koopman-Boyden & Abbott, 1985; Odell & Quinn). Odell and Quinn's study also examined the significance of marital expectations changing over time and found that if couples were able to adjust their expectations of their spouse and his/her role in the beginning of the marriage they were more likely to do so over time. It was shown that initial marital expectations carry less importance to couples as they continue further into their relationship if they are well adjusted and willing to negotiate expectations at the first stages of marriage, which in turn leads to higher rates of marital satisfaction. Couples adjustment at six months was predicted by the adjustment at one month and those who were more willing to change, and had better adjustment at six months had scored even higher on adjustment at 12 months. They also stated that expectations were more salient at the beginning of marriage, and less influential over time. It seems that the new reality of being married helps a couple come up with a shared set of values and role expectations, likely influenced from the feedback from each other as well as their larger support network. Thus, the critical time for couples is during the newlywed transition.

Marital Satisfaction

With over 3,900 articles on marital satisfaction appearing on psycinfo (a search of electronic journals in the social sciences field) it shows that marital satisfaction is an important topic in marital studies. Marital satisfaction has been defined as "...a subjective evaluation of the overall quality of marriage...the degree to which needs, expectations, and desires are met in marriage" (Bahr, Chappell, & Leigh, 1983, p. 797). Marital satisfaction is a term that is often referred to as marital quality, and/or happiness in the literature (Bahr et al.).

Glenn (1990) found that newlywed couples often have high levels of satisfaction and quality that often decreases in the first years of marriage. Glenn's assumption was that couples had yet to make some of life's most stressful transitions such as parenthood, large financial decisions, and have not had to negotiate the roles and expectations to the same extent that couples married for longer periods have. A reason newlywed couples have higher levels of satisfaction because they have not had to deal with as many everyday stressors as couples that have been married longer. Glenn's data were gathered by analyzing the results from several different surveys, giving a general overview of the newlywed population. Research has described how to assess if a marriage is problematic; however research has done little to explore why newlyweds have high levels of satisfaction, why this satisfaction decreases so quickly, and what information they are using to create their criteria for a satisfying marriage.

There are many studies on marital satisfaction, but there were no studies on the association between information/advice received before marriage, expectations, and

marital satisfaction in newlyweds (Filsinger & Wilson 1984; Haws & Mallinckrodt, 1998; Odell & Quinn, 1998). One reason this study is important is, “there is a large discrepancy between what many Americans see as an ideal marriage and what actually takes place” (Bonds-Raacke et al., 2001, p. 180). Newlyweds come to a relationship with a set of ideals and expectations that may or may not coincide with how their relationship will work. The discrepancy between what a couple expects and what actually happens has importance with tendencies toward low marital satisfaction and high rates of divorce. The disconnect between expectations and reality can cause distress not only for a couple, but for an individual (Odell & Quinn). The results of Odell and Quinn’s study have shown that “discrepancies between idealized expectations and marital reality are negatively related to marital well-being” (Bonds-Raacke et al., p. 82). They list this as one of the reasons why marital happiness has been shown to decrease through the first 15 years of marriage. This decline in satisfaction often begins during the formative newlywed transition.

Premarital Education

There are numerous studies on what factors result in a happy marriage versus a problematic or unhappy marriage, as well as studies focusing on preparing couples for marriage (Carrere, Beuhman, Gottman, Coan, & Ruckstuhl, 2000; Renick & Blumberg, 1992; Stanley, Markman, St. Peters, & Leber, 1995). It has been reported that there is a marked increase in marital satisfaction for those who participate in premarital prevention (Carroll & Doherty, 2003). Yet, only 30% of couples are reported to have been involved

in premarital prevention programs (Carroll & Doherty). The majority of couples have not taken part in a premarital prevention program, thus leaving a large group of couples that gather their knowledge about marriage from other places. In the context of advice giving, it is not known how premarital education is used in the context to the larger arena of information that engaged couples receive. It is expected from systems theory that this type of specific feedback for the couple will have an important impact on their expectations.

Religiosity

The study of religiosity as it relates to marriage and family refers not only to the denomination or dogma, but a distinct content area which includes the perceived importance of spirituality (Bjarnason, 2007). Religiosity in relation to an individual's marital adjustment is described as affiliation, attendance, religious belief (intrinsic), religious ritual, religious experience, religious knowledge, and social consequences (extrinsic; Anthony, 1993; Dudley & Kosinski, 1990; Filsinger & Wilson, 1984; Hunt & King, 1978). A review of the literature revealed the idea of spiritual intimacy as part of religiosity-defined as the perceptions of how connected each spouse feels toward their partners beliefs (i.e., the same belief in God; Hatch, James, & Schumm, 1986). Common beliefs and ideas about religion were found to be significantly correlated with higher scores of marital adjustment (Dudley & Kosinski; Hunt & King; Wilson & Filsinger, 1986). In addition to beliefs, religious practices have also been shown to give long-term perspective as well as meaning to marriage (Lambert & Dollahite, 2008; Weigel et al.,

2006). Given the association of common religious beliefs and marital adjustment, this may be a helpful variable to explore to better understand newlyweds and where they gather information to structure their expectations. In our measure we will address the intrinsic, how strongly they adhere to their faith and how important it is to them, as well as the extrinsic, how often they attend their religious meetings. According to Wills and DePaulo (1991), help-seeking literature has identified that family, friends, and clergy were often the preferred source of information when a problem was not severe or chronic. Thus, while the couple's religiosity is a factor in marital adjustment, religious leaders may also influence the beliefs and advice that are related to expectations.

Family of Origin

Family of origin is important to newlywed expectations since people learn about relationships by watching their parents, who are likely to share/give information to the couple that could influence the adjustment to marriage. According to Larson and Holman (1994), not only does the marital quality and adjustment of the family-of-origin influence the marital quality and adjustment of their children, the processes of the family-of-origin also have a significant effect on the marital quality and stability of their children's relationships. Children not only gather information from their parents by the advice they give, but by watching how their parents' relationship works. This research also found that premarital parental support enhances marital quality.

There are several studies that describe the affect that family-of-origin has on marital adjustment and marital expectations. Not only does the advice given directly from

the family-of-origin to the couple effect marital adjustment, but their perceived experience in their family does as well (Sabatelli & Bartle-Haring, 2003). Results of such a study are listed as they pertain specifically to our study. These factors are important because studies have shown that, “husbands’ and wives’ perceptions of their families-of-origin emerge as significant factors in their own marital adjustment” (Sabatelli & Bartle-Haring). Thus, newlyweds collect information from their own perceptions of their family-of-origin to help them negotiate roles within their own marriages. What couples see enacted in their own families gives them a base of knowledge to pull from when they adjust in their own marriage (Larson & Holman, 1994). According to Odell and Quinn (1998) most people approach marriage with a set of expectations and personal values that are formed from their prior experience in relationships and based on observations of marital relations in their own family-of-origin.

Couples draw from their experiences, advice, and information family members have given them on marriage and marital roles. Couples use information and advice received from their family to manage everyday issues. This article also explores the idea that information from their family as well as our cultural myths and values found in our families is what newlywed couples draw upon for information to organize and evaluate their own relationship.

Individuation from family of origin is said to have a significant effect on marital adjustment when the couple is functionally separated from their mother and father, and not conflictually separated (Haws & Mallinckrodt, 1998). Muench and Landrum (1994) studied the family dynamics of 40 undergraduate students and how students’ attitudes

were affected toward marriage. After administering the Family Environment Scale, as well as the Marriage Attitudes Questionnaire, Muench and Landrum found that conflict in the family-of-origin is not significantly related to marital distress, although expressiveness was related to marital satisfaction. In Shulman, Rosenheim, and Knafo (1999), they studied the affect of family-of-origin experiences through the generations, and how it affects marital expectations. The results of this study have shown that parental marital expectations of an adolescent's mother and father account for the marital expectations of the adolescent (Shulman et al.). The information teens gather from their family-of-origin about marital expectations, translates in some way to the expectations the teen has for their own marriage.

The relation between individuation from parents, parents' expectations and expressiveness, and marital satisfaction, expectations, and adjustment show the importance of studying newlywed's family relationships, as well as the advice given from their families. This study explores if and how advice from family effects marital satisfaction. The topic of family-of-origin will be one factor in answering the research question "Where do newlywed couples receive their information and does it affect marital adjustment."

Length of Courtship

Another factor to consider in newlywed marital expectations is the length of courtship, or the amount of time a couple have had to negotiate roles, gather information, and receive advice, and how it effects their marital satisfaction. Couples who court longer

have more similar personality traits as well as similar views, and this, in turn, leads to greater marital satisfaction (Barelds & Barelds-Dijkstra, 2007). Bonds-Raacke (2008) noted that couples that had longer courtships had similar decisionmaking tendencies. Those who had dated less time were not similar in their decisionmaking process. Bonds-Raacke also found that those who had not achieved this similar style did not move onto marriage, or at times moved on to marriage unsuccessfully. Knoblock and Donovan-Kicken (2006) found that couples that have a longer time in the courtship stage will enter a time of higher stress and discord, and then work through their stress and discord by negotiating roles and expectations. If a couple does not have the chance in courtship to negotiate these roles and expectations; they will often go through this stress and discord after marriage, which may lead to divorce. Grover, Russell, Schumm, & Paff-Bergen (1985) found that the length of courtship was positively correlated with marital adjustment. They felt that the longer the courtship, the more time individuals had to determine what the significant issues in their relationship would be and how to manage these issues, the greater their marital satisfaction would be. Grover et al. also referenced back to Bayer (1968), who believed that the length of courtship was even more important than the age at marriage.

During early acquaintance, expectations and one's own myths may get in the way of accurate perceptions of one's partner. With time, partners may get to know each other better and become less biased when assessing their partner (Barelds & Barelds-Dijkstra, 2007). Not only do couples with a longer courtship history have more time to gather information and advice from outside sources, they also have more time to gather, test,

and negotiate the information/advice they receive from each other which in turn affects marital adjustment and/or marital satisfaction. The link between length of courtship and marital adjustment shows the importance of using this as a variable to better understand newlywed relationships. The link between length of courtship and the marriage is when advice is most often sought and given, and the resulting feedback may have theoretical implications.

Education

Education is the amount of schooling an individual has before marriage (Larson & Holman, 1994). Studies have shown that men who have more education before marriage and do not suffer unemployment are more likely to be married after 9 years (Larson & Holman). Conversely, women with graduate degrees rather than undergraduate degrees are found to have higher rates of separation (Larson & Holman). Jose and Alfons (2007) say that highly educated people can have more stressors in their marriages, but if both couples are educated, it reduces their marital adjustment problems. Watson and colleagues (2004) commented that couples use similarities in education to help guide them in their mate selection process. It is of importance to use education as a variable given that education, not only is a way couples evaluate relationships, it also affects their relationship after marriage. Given this link between education and marital stability as well as its implications for role construction and expectations, this may be an important variable to use to gain a better understanding of newlywed couples.

Summary

Expectations have been shown to be a key element in marital satisfaction and adjustment. While there have been many studies on marital satisfaction/adjustment, and expectations, there have been virtually none that test where newlywed couples receive their information, and how they use it to identify their expectations.

Research Questions

1. Where do couples gather their premarital information/advice?
2. How is premarital information/advice associated with marital expectations?
3. Are expectations related to marital satisfaction?

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This section will provide the details of the present study. It will describe the research design, sample, measure, procedure, reliability and validity. The chapter will give a brief overview and reasoning for the aforementioned areas.

Research Design

This study fits best within the concept of a descriptive study (Leary, 2001). Descriptive research is said to “provide information about the physical, social, behavioral, economic, or psychological characteristics of some group of people” (Leary, p. 104). This design was chosen because virtually no information exists on whether information/advice received is a significant factor in marital expectations or marital satisfaction. The independent variable in this study is the amount of information received, education, and length of courtship, religiosity, and family of origin. The dependent variables are marital expectations, and marital satisfaction. This will give us an overview of the strength (if any) of the relationship between the factors.

Subjects

A convenience sample of 56 newlywed couples was gathered. A convenience sample is a procedure where researchers use participants that are readily available, and in numbers they are readily available (Leary, 2001). These couples have been married at least three and no more than 12 months (Haws & Mallinckrodt, 1998) in order to have

had adequate time to experience married life, but married a short enough time to still be considered newlyweds. It has also been found that newlyweds have high levels of satisfaction that decrease after the first year of marriage (Glenn, 1990). Twelve months is a relatively short amount of time so that the couples will remember what information they have received, and also will be able to recount if they used it, and if it has been helpful in negotiating their own new marriage. All participants were over the age of 18. Subjects were recruited from Utah State University and one of its branch campuses. This was done by making announcements in Family, Consumer, and Human Development classes requesting couples willing to share the story of their marriage. These subjects were then asked if they had any other newlywed couples to recommend that may agree to participate. Students who participated received extra credit in the course; while those who did not were give another opportunity for the same points. The sample couples were in their 20s, married slightly over eight months, and had attended some college (see Table 1).

Table 1

Sample Characteristics of Husbands and Wives (n = 56)

Variables	Husbands		Wives	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	23.87	4.36	22.65	3.96
Months married	8.88	3.11	8.86	3.11
Years of education	14.63	1.78	14.29	1.58

Description of Measures

The measure consists of a paper-and-pencil questionnaire with 29 items followed by an interview section. The first sheet included demographic items (e.g., race, sex, religious affiliation) to allow a description of the sample. This was followed by measures relating to expectations, marital satisfaction, and premarital preparation.

Expectation

Expectations were assessed with five Likert-type questions rated on a 5-point scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). These questions were part of the questionnaire and were constructed using the literature and having two family life experts provide feedback. Topics included in-laws, closeness to spouse, maintaining own identity, and household chores (see Appendix B).

Marital Satisfaction

This was assessed with the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS; Schumm, Crock, Likcani, Akagi, & Bosch, 2008). Marital satisfaction was assessed with three questions rated on a likert scale 1-7, one being extremely dissatisfied, and seven being extremely satisfied. The specific questions are: How satisfied are you with your marriage? How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband/wife? How satisfied are you with your husband/wife as a spouse? (Schumm et al.). The three questions have face validity as evidenced by the questions clearly asking about “satisfaction.” The questions asked “how satisfied are you with your marriage,” “how satisfied are you with your husband/wife as a spouse,” and “how satisfied are you with

your husband/wife.” Crane, Middleton, and Bean (2000) reported that the KMSS has “undergone rigorous testing for internal consistency, test-retest reliability, criterion-related validity and concurrent and discriminate validity” (p. 55).

Procedure

Subjects who met our criteria were initially contacted by phone and asked if they would agree to participate in the study. Those who agreed set up a ½ hour interview with a student interviewer. The interviewers were upper class undergraduate students who were majoring in one of the social sciences and each had taken a research methods course. These twelve interviewers all had human subjects training and additional training from one of the two family therapists involved in the project. The measure each participant was asked to complete had been approved for use through the IRB (see Appendix A) at Utah State University. Each participant received a letter of informed consent, and if they agreed to the terms were asked to sign a copy stating their willingness to participate in the study. After signing the informed consent, each participant was asked if they were willing to be contacted in the future to participate in further studies. They were also informed that no detrimental effects were expected, but if any participant felt that it has caused stress, or brought up issues that were difficult to deal with, they were referred to a therapist.

The couples were given the aforementioned measures. The measures were filled out individually. Following this section we administered an interview asking about where they received advice and who they received advice from. Each person in the couple was

interviewed separately. They were then interviewed together on the advice they received as a couple. In this interview they were asked to disclose who gave them the information, did they use the information, how helpful was the information, how close are they to the information giver, the marital status of the giver, the perceived marital quality of the giver, and the gender of the information giver (see Appendix B). We then grouped the identity of the information giver by friends, family (i.e., mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings), and religious leaders.

Procedures to increase reliability were standardizing the administration of the measure, clarifying instructions and questions, and training the interviewers. The measures were given in the same order each time. The interviewers were instructed in the manner in which they are supposed to answer questions, if there were problems with clarity after reading the descriptive informed consent letter (included in the Appendices). The interviewers were trained by either one of the two family therapists who had been trained in interviewing techniques as well as research methodology. During the training sessions the interviewers had the opportunity to role play and clarify any questions about the protocol. The actual interview protocol was given to each interviewer (see Appendix C).

When the questionnaires and interviews were completed, each informed consent and questionnaire/interview was coded and separated. The informed consent with identifying information was stored in a different locked file cabinet than that of the questionnaire/interview papers to ensure participant privacy as well as to ensure that the person coding the interview would not be swayed.

Reliability and Validity

Validity is defined as “the extent to which a measurement procedure actually measures what it is intended to measure” (Leary, 2001). The measure has face validity which is defined as, “the extent to which a measure appears to measure what it’s supposed to measure” (Leary). The questions were directly related to the subjects we were trying to measure. Questions related to expectations or satisfaction were worded as such. When asking about advice or information, the same wording was used for each couple.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter describes the data analyses that were performed for each research question. Data outcomes will be addressed according to the research questions established in the previous chapters. Due to some missing data, as well as procedures in collecting data, we were unable to use some of the tests for statistical significance that we had previously wished to use.

Research Question 1

Where do couples gather their premarital information/advice? This question was answered through data obtained from both the questionnaire and interview with the the husband and wife. Each husband and wife was asked what marriage preparation classes, religious counseling, and therapy sessions they had attended. The couples were also asked who they had received advice from. The questionnaire section was a self-report and the interview was recorded by a trained interviewer.

Data on the formal sources of information (classes, religious counseling, and premarital therapy) came from the questionnaire. Over half the couples (husbands 63% and wives 64%) reported receiving religious counseling. About one third of the couples (husbands 36% and wives 45%) had taken a premarital class. Only one couple reported that they had sought and received premarital therapy.

To identify where couples gather information/advice a frequency table was created. The frequency table reports who received the information (husband or wife), and

where the information came from (premarital classes, family, religious counseling, therapy). Percentages were calculated from the total amount of information sources. Sources of information included friends, mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, religious leaders, classes, therapy, and others. The percentages of sources are illustrated in Table 2. Due to the way that the data was recorded, it was not possible to compare the differences between the sources of information for the husbands and wives.

There were a total of 56 wives and 56 husbands in this study. Out of those 56 couples, three-quarters of the individuals received information from their mother, followed closely by receiving information from religious leaders, fathers, and religious counseling. Husbands relied heavily on religious leaders, while wives relied more heavily on mothers.

Couples received information from 11 different sources. Both husbands and wives have received high percentages of advice from family, as well as religious leaders

Table 2

Husbands and Wives Information: Sources and Percentages

Sources	Husbands		Wives		Total Percentages	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Mothers	36.0	64.3	45.0	80.4	81.0	72.3
Religious Leaders	43.0	76.8	37.0	66.1	80.0	71.4
Fathers	38.0	67.9	34.0	60.7	72.0	64.3
Sisters	10.0	17.9	20.0	35.7	25.0	22.3
Brothers	10.0	17.9	5.0	8.9	15.0	13.4
Grandparents	6.0	10.7	9.0	16.1	15.0	13.4
Others	6.0	10.7	4.0	7.1	10.0	8.9
Aunts/Uncles	3.0	5.4	5.0	8.9	8.0	7.1

and religious classes. Newlyweds were more likely to gather information from their mothers and fathers, than from other family members. The data indicated that the couples in this sample received advice from a number of formal and an even greater amount from informal sources.

Research Question 2

How is premarital information/advice associated with marital expectations? A Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was used to assess this question, because it was the most commonly used correlation and could be squared to report the percentage of variance in one variable that accounted for the variance in another (Leary, 2001). A multiple regression analysis could not be done due to missing data on some questionnaires, and an even larger problem with multicollinearity. Multicollinearity is a situation where the variables are highly correlated that significance is unable to be determined by a regression analysis (Van Den Poel & Larivière, 2004). Moderate significance for a variable of this study size is a .30 pearsons correlation, a strong statistical significance would be .50, and for a sample size of 50-60, minimum statistical significance would be .21-.23 (Leary, 2001). The results are depicted in Tables 3 and 4.

Several demographics were found to be statistically significant in relation to expectations. For both husbands and wives, age, education, income, weeks engaged, and number of relationships were found to be statistically significant. For husbands, religiosity was also found to be a predictor of marital expectations. Demographics in

different areas have been found to be statistically significant when correlated with expectations.

Table 3

Correlations for Husbands and Wives Sociodemographic Data and Expectations Toward Marriage

	Age	Edu	Inc	Mon	Eng	Rela	Rel	MExp	FExp	PExp	IExp
Age		-.162	.328	.030*	.023*	.181	-.221	.011*	.015*	-.303	-.268
Edu	-.040*		-.181	.029*	-.111*	.069*	.492	.048*	.002*	.127*	.299
Inc	.466	-.079*		-.013*	.108*	.193	-.174	.081*	-.023*	.004*	-.038*
Mon	.139*	-.199	.030*		.145	-.069*	-.056*	.130*	-.063*	.180	.113*
Eng	.014*	.108*	.103*	.153		.119*	-.307	.220	-.199	.115*	.240
Rela	.424	.125*	-.221	-.115*	-.138		-.119	.133*	.170	-.024*	.017*
Rel	-.373	.224	.234	-.233	-.153	-.081*		-.229	.157	.033*	.180
MExp p	-.284	-.183	.340	-.077*	-.238	-.372	.168		-.068*	.314	.248
FExp p	.036*	.207	-.123*	.008*	.007*	.137*	.212	.084*		-.092*	.126*
PExp p	-.334	.003*	-.013*	.047*	-.011*	-.353	.336	.096*	.269		.458
IExp	-.274	.024*	-.218	-.028*	-.225	-.103*	.396	.204	.381	.615	

Note. Edu: Education; Inc: Income; Mo: Months married; Eng: Weeks Engaged; Rela: Number of Relationships; Rel: Religiosity; MExp: Marital Expectations; FExp: Family Expectations; PExp: Partner Expectations; IExp: Individual Expectations.

Husbands Correlations: Top half of table, Wives Correlations: Bottom half of table.

* $p < .01$

Table 4

Correlation for Husbands and Wives Sources of Information Reported to be Helpful and Expectations Toward Marriage

	Ma_h	Fa_h	Fr_h	RI_h	Ot_h	MExp	FExp	PExp	IExp
Ma_h		.763	.289	.031*	.272	-.282	.105*	.136*	-.145
Fa_h	.286		-.211	.095*	-.215	-.158	.250	-.153	.039*
Fr_h	.040*	.242		.199	.007*	.029*	-.225	-.235	-.106
RI_h	.015*	.227	.038*		.125*	.051*	.256	.017*	.563
Ot_h	.173	.211	.164	.127*		.008*	-.360	.612	-.226
MExp	.124*	.259	.092*	.108*	.044*		.068*	.314	.248
FExp	.298	.149	.037*	-.139	.155	.084*		.092*	.126*
PExp	.415	.049*	.032*	.116*	.101*	.096*	.269		.458
IExp	.504	.361	.164	.120*	.124*	.204	.381	.615	

Note. MA_h: Mothers Helpfulness; FA_h: Fathers Helpfulness; Fr_h: Friends Helpfulness; RI_h: Religious Leaders Helpfulness; Ot_h: Others Helpfulness; MExp: Marital Expectations; FExp: Family Expectations; PExp: Partner Expectations; IExp: Individual Expectations.

Husbands Correlations: Top half of table; Wives Correlations: Bottom half of table.

* $p < .01$

For both husbands and wives, there were a number of statistically significant relationships between their demographic data and their expectations. In a like manner, there were a number of statistically significant relationships between the helpfulness of the advice and expectations for both spouses. In particular, for the husbands the variables that were statistically significant related to expectations of how helpful the advice was

from siblings and religious leaders. Husbands helpful interactions with their siblings and religious leaders were statistically significant predictors of their marital expectations being met.

There was a correlation between wives education and marital expectations. With a negative correlation, this would suggest that as wives education increases, the extent that their expectations are met lowers. Higher number of relationships also have a negative correlation with marital expectations. Income was found to be statistically significant for wives, accounting for 2.6% of the variance in marital expectations. Thus, results have shown that wives education and number of relationships may hinder the fulfillment of expectations, and that income accounts for some of the variance for wives, and length of engagement for husbands. Wives also had statistically significant correlations with expectations and age, religiosity, helpfulness of mothers advice and helpfulness of fathers advice.

Given the strength of the correlations between expectations, mothers, fathers, and siblings, we can make the link that family-of-origin does indeed have a statistically significant affect on expectations as well as marriage. The advice that couples received before marriage from their families did indeed have an effect on their marriage.

Research Question 3

Are expectations related to marital satisfaction? The analysis will measure the correlation of expectations to marital satisfaction using a Pearson's correlation

coefficient. This analysis will allow a test of the relationship between the husbands and wives marital expectations and their marital satisfaction (Table 5).

For both husbands and wives there was a positive correlation between expectations and marital satisfaction. The variance in husband's expectations accounted for 5.1% of the variance in their marital satisfaction. Wives expectations and marital satisfaction were moderate-highly correlated, where expectations accounts for 29.7% of the variance in marital satisfaction.

When grouped for statistical analysis, the relationship between marital satisfaction and marital and family expectations was not statistically significant for husbands or wives. The relationships between marital satisfaction and partner and individual expectations were statistically significant for both spouses. These trends were the same for both satisfaction with spouse. These trends indicated that that the expectations toward their spouses and themselves were related to marital satisfaction. It was striking that none of the relationships for marital or family expectations were associated with any component of marital satisfaction.

Table 5

Pearson Correlations for Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale and Expectations

Variable	S_M	S_AS	S_S	MExp	FExp	PExp	IExp
S_M		.748*	.818*	.072	-.115	.420*	.463*
S_AS	.839*		.936*	-.007	.016	.272	.335*
S_S	.898*	.790*		-.064	-.048	.348*	.292
MExp	.209	.142	.236		-.068	.314	.245
FExp	.046	.094	-.052	.084		-.092	.126
PExp	.613*	.661*	.610*	.096	.269		.458*
IExp	.479*	.470*	.431*	.204	.381*	.615*	

Note. (S_M: Marital Satisfaction; S_AS: Satisfied with husband/wife as a spouse; S_S: Satisfied with your spouse; MExp: Marital Expectations; FExp: Family Expectations; PExp: Partner Expectations; IExp: Individual Expectations.

Husbands Correlations: Top half of table; Wives Correlations: Bottom half of table.

* $p < .01$

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Summary of Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe where individuals receive information/advice when preparing to marry. In particular, from what sources do couples gather information and does this affect expectations. Also explored in this study is whether or not there is a relationship between marital expectations and marital satisfaction. The following chapter will relate results of this study to the review of the literature. This section will also discuss the implications of the study as well as its limitations.

Research Question 1: Information Sources

As expected, after a review of the literature this study found that couples access information from many different sources (Carroll & Doherty, 2003; Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997; MacGeorge et al., 2004; Wills & DePaulo, 1991). Consistent with the literature it was reported that the largest amount of information came from family members and clergy (Reinhardt et al., 2006; Wills & DePaulo). High percentages of couples received information or advice from their mothers and from their fathers. Religious leaders came in second, followed by religious counseling. These statistics can be reasonably explained by the area we collected data from. We collected data from areas in the state of Utah where the population are predominantly members of The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints (LDS) faith, which requires couples to meet with their religious leader to authorize, or at times, perform their marriage (Ludlow, 1992). Based on anecdotal data it appeared that the quality of the premarital advice varied greatly between the various religious leaders. This can be explained in that leaders in the LDS faith are lay leaders and generally do not have any type of counseling training or experience before they are called (Ludlow).

The percentage of couples that attended premarital classes was slightly higher at 40% than that which we found in the literature of 30% (Carroll & Doherty, 2003). This finding is likely influenced by the LDS influence as well. Associated with most universities are Institutes of Religion for the LDS church and one of the most popular courses is titled "Courtship and Marriage." It is assumed that many of the LDS student couples would have taken that course. The percentage of couples attending classes was much higher than that of those who attended premarital therapy.

Couples received most of their information from informal sources, especially the family. This is consistent with the literature that addresses the importance of the family of origin and social supports as players in the marital relationship (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997; Larson & Holman, 1994; MacGeorge et al., 2004; Wills & DePaulo, 1991). Couples received information from many different sources. Not only do couples receive advice from their mothers and fathers, they also receive advice from the entire community as evidenced in the previous chapter. Because of the expanse of sources couples receive information from it is important to look at them as couples, but part of a much larger system made up of smaller subsystems. Couples blend these systems to create a much

larger system (Becvar & Becvar, 1999). These findings provide evidence that for most of these couples, marriage is seen as a community event that is very open given the large number of people providing advice. The openness of the larger system in supporting these couples may help explain the high levels of marital satisfaction.

Research Question 2: Information and Expectations

Because of missing data (coders did not mark helpfulness as often as needed), as well as high intercorrelations between the variables, we were unable to run the regression analysis as we had initially planned to. In place of the regression, we used a Pearson's correlation. Few of the demographics tested were found to be significantly related to expectations. For wives there was a negative correlation between education and expectations. This is consistent with a review of the literature, where it was found that the higher the amount of wives education the less couples will be satisfied, or have their expectations met in marriage (Larson & Holman, 1994). Income was also found to be statistically significantly related to fulfillment of marital expectations for wives, where as the number of relationships was negatively related to expectations. Husbands reported a significant correlation between weeks of engagement and fulfillment of marital expectations. Similarly, in the literature it was reported that couples who have more time together have more realistic and complementary expectations (Barelds & Barelds-Dijkstra, 2007; Bonds-Raacke et al., 2001; Grover et al., 1985; Knoblock & Donovan-Kicken, 2006). Using the data of newlyweds we are able to predict what is of importance, and what factors are a source of stress for couples in those first months of marriage. It is

important to note the influence of the LDS faith in these results as well. LDS couples tend to have shorter courtships than is common in most other parts of the nation (Ludlow, 1992). Given the relatively short dating and courtship period, the family and community support would seem to be even more important in providing advice for these young couples.

When looking at the variable of advice and how it relates to expectations, one key component kept occurring. Husbands and wives both related advice from their mothers, fathers, and siblings as significant predictors of their marital expectations. Family-of-origin has a significant bearing on a newlywed's marital expectations (Odell & Quinn, 1998; Sabatelli & Bartle-Haring, 2003; Shulman et al., 1999; Wills & DePaulo, 1991). Knowing that advice from family-of-origin is a statistically significant predictor of expectations helps us better understand the role family-of-origin plays in the newlywed transition. It seems intuitive that these couples use the information gathered from each subsystem to create their own contracts and role expectations. This again indicates that the openness of these systems play an important role in preparing young people to have appropriate marital expectations.

Research Question 3: Expectations and Marital Satisfaction

Expectations do have an effect on marital satisfaction. Consistent with the literature it is a positive correlation, meaning that fulfilled marital expectations leads to higher rates of marital happiness, and satisfaction (Barich & Bielby, 1996; Koopman-Boyden & Abbott, 1985; Chadwick et al., 1976; Grant, 2000; Odell & Quinn, 1998). The

most statistically significant area of expectations, is the area of spousal expectations. Both husbands and wives reported that their expectations of their spouse were the highest predictor of their marital satisfaction. It is important to study and explore this variable so that we know how couples come to construe these expectations, and whether or not they are creating realistic or idealized expectations that more often than not won't be met. Based on anecdotal information from the interviewees, the majority of the couples reported that they had prayed and felt like they had received an answer that they were to marry that particular person. This may help explain why satisfaction was so highly correlated with expectations with their partner and themselves. If they felt that God wanted them to marry that particular person it is logical that they would be happy with them and themselves for making that decision. This has an added benefit of allowing the couple to remain committed to each other even when there were the normal transitions of moving from being single to forming a marriage.

Wives also reported that chore expectations were significantly related to marital satisfaction. Sager (1976) confirmed this with his theory on roles and how they are managed, and play a part in marital relationships. The disconnect between husbands and wives and the importance of role expectations in marital satisfaction, may help us better understand conflict in newly married couples. To address the desire of Americans to have satisfying relationships, it is important to study the acquisition and negotiation of expectations in marital relationships (Carroll & Doherty, 2003; Waite & Gallagher, 2000). It is also important to remember that not only expectations about marriage, but

expectations about family relationships, their partner, and themselves are important predictors of marital satisfaction.

Limitations of Study

This study was focused on describing information sources, expectations, and marital satisfaction, so many of the variables could be researched in a deeper, more statistical process. While we know where couples are gathering their information, this study does not elaborate on what that information is, how helpful it was, or if the results are the same across different cultures.

Because we only used couples from rural areas of Utah, our results are not as easily generalized to other cultures. This study could have used a more random sample to get a better representative sample of other cultures (Leary, 2001). More in-depth statistical analysis could be used to create a more generalizable study.

One thing that may have influenced our data is social desirability. Couples may have been more open and honest in filling out a questionnaire and sending it back, knowing that an interviewer was not listening in. This, in fact, may affect the way individuals may have answered the questions (Dooley, 1990).

In reviewing the literature it was discussed that it may be helpful to study the types of advice given, not only who was giving the advice. Couples may respond differently according to the way advice was communicated. Information may also be seen as more effective if it is asked for versus unsolicited advice (Daubman & Lehman, 1993). There was also literature that elaborated on the different types of social support such as

emotional, instrumental, and informational support (Carroll & Doherty, 2003; Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997; MacGeorge et al., 2004; Wills & DePaulo, 1991).

This study was left open to further research. It may be of benefit to reassess these couples further into their relationships to determine if our variables are of any consequence later on. It may also be helpful to rework the interview into a questionnaire format and see if the couples' answers have changed in comparison to the interview.

Implications of Study and Conclusion

Implications for Therapy

Although couples are utilizing more informal forms of information when preparing for marriage, this study also includes important implications for therapists. First, expectations are a strong predictor of marital satisfaction. As couples come into therapy for marital discord, it would be worthwhile to explore each person's role in the relationship, as well as their expectations of their spouses' role in the relationship. As Sager (1976) described, couples often have unwritten and unspoken contracts that they use to negotiate their marital relationship. This means that each person has expectations that they may or may not have discussed. Expectations are an important part of predicting marital satisfaction.

Second, is the importance of a couples system. Couples are relying on people included in their system to help them gather information which they use to create their own set of expectations for marriage. Becvar and Becvar (1999) expounded on the family as a smaller part of a larger system, and that we need to understand how it

functions within those larger influences. These findings provide evidence of that idea as the couples received advice from a number of sources in larger systems. To understand couples, we must first understand their system and also their interactions with their system. It is also of interest because we, as therapists, have an idea of whom couples in therapy could use as supports when they have completed their therapeutic experience. In turn, therapists need to remember that they are also becoming part of the couples system and influencing them in that way, as well as couples having a large system that influences their marriage.

Third, as the research indicated, most couples do not go to premarital therapy, so it is important to remember that the couples we are working with in therapy may have had no previous formal help with their marriage. Also, it would be important to understand why couples have not turned to more formal sources for information, and how we may be able to make premarital therapy more well-known, and available to couples.

Implications for Research

This study gathered statistics on where couples gather information and whether or not it was related to expectations, and from this, many areas of research have opened up. Traditionally, we see mothers as the information givers for couples, yet in this study we found that a statistically significant amount of information was given from fathers. We know little about fathers as information givers, and this would be an area of research to study further.

Our study did not report statistics on rural versus urban data. It would be interesting, and also helpful, for clinicians to understand the differences of information

and expectations of couples in rural areas as compared to couples in urban areas. Because we were unable to run the tests needed to look at couples and pieces of information, there may be other research opportunities that lie within that focus.

General Implications and Conclusion

The first implication from this study is that couples receive information from many sources. Eleven different sources were explored in this study. Most sources couples use are informal sources such as friends, family, and clergy. It is clear that informal sources are the majority of places couples gather information from, yet we know little about what kinds of information they are gathering. In the future it would be advantageous to study what kind of information is being given, as well as the setting in which it was given (Daubman & Lehman, 1994).

Because couples have underutilized more formal sources of information, such as premarital classes, therapy, and religious counseling, a study of why this is may be appropriate (Carroll & Doherty, 2003). Also, weighing the benefits of seeking informal information versus formal information. It may be pertinent to see whether informal sources are as effective as formal sources, and why couples are using informal rather than formal sources.

The high correlation between expectations and marital satisfaction indicate that it would be appropriate to further analyze the role expectations play in marital satisfaction. How are expectations formed? How are expectations formulated and negotiated in a marital relationship? Do expectations have to be similar or complementary? (Sager,

1976). These are all important questions that could be addressed as research becomes more specific.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval




INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD OFFICE
9530 Old Main Hill, Suite 216
Logan UT 84322-9530
Telephone: (435) 797-1821
FAX: (435) 797-3769

USU Assurance: FWA#00003308
Protocol # 943

3/24/2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Scot Allgood UMC: 2700
Cicile Edwards and Adelle Beck

FROM: Truc Rubal, IRB Administrator 

SUBJECT: Continuation Approval of your Protocol:
Marriage Information Given to Engaged Couples

This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file. Any change affecting participants must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. The Institutional Review Board originally approved your protocol on 3/31/2004. As required for yearly continuation review, you have received another year's approval through 2/1/2006. All approved protocols are subject to continuing review at least annually, which may include the examination of records connected with the project. Injuries or any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the IRB Office.

Prior to involving participants, properly executed informed consent must be obtained from each participant or from an authorized representative, and documentation of informed consent must be kept on file for at least three years after the project ends. Each participant must be furnished with a copy of the informed consent document for their personal records.

Appendix B: Measure

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the questions below to help us understand who participated in this project.

Age (in years) _____ Gender: (circle one) Male Female

Ethnicity: ___ Caucasian ___ African American ___ Hispanic ___ other, please specify ___

Education in years (12 = high school graduate) _____ Income _____

Length of time married: months _____

Length of courtship (dating through engagement in weeks) _____

Length of engagement (in weeks) _____ Number of serious dating relationships _____

How long have you lived away from home _____

What is your religious preference? ___ Catholic ___ Mormon ___ Protestant ___
 ___ Other ___ No formal religion

How often do you attend religious services?
 ___ a. Never, or almost never ___ b. Occasionally (less than once a month)
 ___ c. 1-3 times per month ___ d. One or more times per week

Please answer the following questions with this scale.

1= Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree

My relationship with my in-laws is as close as I expected after our marriage: 1 2 3 4 5

My relationship with my family is as close as I expected after our marriage: 1 2 3 4 5

I am as close to my spouse as I expected: 1 2 3 4 5

My expectations for being close to my spouse while maintaining my own identity
 are being met in our marriage: 1 2 3 4 5

Household chores are shared as much as I expected they would be in marriage: 1 2 3 4 5

My faith helps me to know right from wrong: 1 2 3 4 5

My outlook on life is based on my religion: 1 2 3 4 5

Although I believe in my religion, many other things are more important in life. 1 2 3 4 5

All things considered, I am very religious: 1 2 3 4 5

For the following three questions, circle the number that best fits your marriage.

Item	Extremely Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
How satisfied are you with your marriage?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How satisfied are you with your wife or husband as a spouse?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How satisfied are you with your husband or wife?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

What type of premarital preparation did you receive?

Did you and/or your spouse take any classes?

Type of class _____

Number of meetings _____ Total class time (in hours) _____

How helpful was the class? (Use above scale) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Did you receive any premarital counseling? If so, who provided the services?

Church Leader- Number of times: _____ Total time (minutes) _____

How helpful was the counseling? (Use above scale) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Therapist- Number of sessions: _____ Total time (minutes) _____

How helpful was the counseling? (Use above scale) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Other Counselors?

Who? _____ Number of sessions: _____ Total time (minutes) _____

How helpful was the counseling? (Use above scale) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Titles of any books you read to prepare for marriage: _____

Titles of magazines you read to prepare for marriage: _____

Who did they get advice/information from? Wife's Sheet

Friends (1 st Name)	Sex Of Info Giver	Marital Status of Giver	Marital Quality Of Giver	How close to the person?	Did they use the advice?	How helpful was the advice?	Information given (verbatim, if possible)
	M/F	M/S	1-10	1-10	Y/N	1-10	
Family							
Mother							
Father							
Stepmother							
Stepfather							
Grandparents							

Siblings Aunt/Uncle Other (who)								
Religious Leader Name/position Name/position								

Appendix C: Instructions For Interviewer

Instructions to Interviewers for Newlywed Information Study

The first item of business will be to discuss the informed consent. Give each spouse a copy of the sheet and have them sign both copies. Collect one copy and let them keep the other one for their records. Remind them that while you are doing the interview, the data will be turned in without names to maintain the integrity of the research project and to protect their confidentiality.

Make sure both spouses are comfortable and tell them you will be writing their responses on your interview sheet. This should be a low key interview on a subject that most couples like to talk about.

The purpose of these interviews is to determine the amount and type of information that engaged couples receive before they get married. Waiting a few months after marriage provides the couples a chance to evaluate the information. We want you to get details from each spouse as well as the couple together. While the couple will be together, ask each spouse for specific information they received about marriage while they were engaged. “Use the prompts on the interview sheet (e.g. friends, family—including specific members, religious leader-titles only-no names) and provide all the information to complete each line of data. The information for each box in order is:

gender of information giver.

marital status of the giver.

perceived marital quality of the giver.

how close do they feel to the giver.

did they use the information.

how helpful was the information, and

Write down word for word (as close as possible) what the information was.

Before ending the interview ask if there were items not already covered. This may include information related to religious practice, sex, conflict resolution, or communication. After each piece of information is recorded, ask if the same person offered any additional information. We need information on amount as well as type of information.

To provide a context for the interview, we need each spouse to fill out the demographic sheet. Ask them not to compare answers to avoid influencing each other.

Thank them for participating. Before leaving, ask if they know any other couples who have been married 3-9 months who may be interested in participating in this project. If yes, get their names and contact information.