

IDEALIZED INTIMACY, OPENNESS IN COMMUNICATION, AND
COPING EFFORTS : PREDICTORS OF MARITAL SATISFACTION

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine, within 60 nonclinical, first-time married, heterosexual couples, whether marital satisfaction is predicted by three key variables: *openness in communication* (self-disclosure); *discrepant intimacy* (difference between perceived and ideal emotional intimacy); and *positive coping efforts*. Despite their importance in marriage, little research exists on the relative strength of each variable's contribution to marital satisfaction. To compare each variable's predictive strength, simultaneous multiple regression analyses were performed on responses to the following measures: Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS), Communication Scale, Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR), and Marital Coping Inventory (MCI). For all participants, discrepant emotional intimacy, self-disclosure, and positive coping jointly contributed to satisfaction. However, discrepant intimacy and self-disclosure were stronger predictors (accounting for greater variance) of marital satisfaction compared to positive coping. Results of analyses for husbands' and wives' data also yielded significant, moderate, negative correlations between discrepant intimacy and marital satisfaction and between discrepant intimacy and self-disclosure. Limitations of this study's findings, suggestions for future research, and implications for counselling are discussed.

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DEDICATION

I consider myself fortunate to have supportive, caring parents (Paulina and Khosrow) and a brother (Houman) who believed in me. Their words of encouragement and hugs lifted my spirits during the most challenging times.

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I dedicate this thesis to my beloved husband, parents, brother, and grandparents. I dedicate myself to academic pursuits and serving humanity in the field of counselling psychology.

Chapter I

Introduction

Marriage remains as popular as ever. The majority of Canadians (more than 85%) marry at least once (Vanier Institute of the Family [VIF], 1990). In 1990, more Canadians (63%) were legally married or living common-law compared to 1921, when 58% were legally married (VIF, 1990). Furthermore, the number of common-law couples more than doubled in the period between 1981 and 1991 as the number of currently married couples increased by 8% (Barr in Statistics Canada, 1993). Due to various sociopolitical factors (such as World War II, the 1942 Conscription Crisis and fluctuating job markets) the marriage rate appears to have had several peaks and troughs since 1921; however, people are marrying at about the same rate as 75 years ago. The difference is that most marriages are remarriages today and first time marriages have declined over the last 40 years (VIF, 1990). Also, over the past two decades, divorce rates have increased. In 1971, the annual divorce rate was 1.4 per 1000 population but in 1991 the divorce rate doubled to 2.8 per 1000 population (Barr in Statistics Canada, 1993). Moreover, projections suggest that up to 40% of marriages entered into today will end in divorce (VIF, 1990). These reported marriage and divorce rates may be underestimates of the number of opposite sex couples being formed in Canada as they do not account for common-law unions. Nevertheless, they present an approximation of the trend in marriage and divorce.

Given today's high divorce rate and increase in remarriage rates, therapists, counsellors, psychologists and clergy have become more concerned about couples' preparation for and ability to sustain a marital relationship. A plethora of books and articles have been produced to offer spouses advice on how to relate to and behave toward each other. Family-life courses in high schools and postsecondary institutions are designed to teach future spouses how to improve communication. Marriage-enrichment programs help couples to enhance aspects of their relationship and marriage counseling continues to be a thriving profession.

Apart from the abovementioned professional endeavors, the importance of marital success has also prompted the growth of research on marriage. Some social scientists are currently devoting their research to measuring marital success according to marital "adjustment" and marital "satisfaction." Over the years, numerous instruments have been developed to measure marital satisfaction, in terms of amount of conflict, degree of agreement, shared activities, personal ratings of happiness, and evaluations of marital quality (Fitzpatrick, 1988). Furthermore, social scientists have been intrigued by predictors of success or failure in marriage and have considered various demographic factors such as income, education, and age at marriage as possible predictors. However, researchers today believe that these factors are less important than relational factors, such as communication between couples (Fitzpatrick, 1988).

In any case, professional helpers are faced with two major challenges. The first challenge is the improvement of relationships between couples so that, as spouses, they will be more likely to abide by the commitments and goals they set in their marriages. The second, and perhaps more important, challenge is the minimization of marital distress which could contribute to marital dissolution. In order to meet these challenges, professional helpers are typically employing counseling procedures which involve an exploration of the couple's issues pertaining to communication, intimacy, or coping strategies used during conflict. Identifying the stronger predictor of these variables of marital satisfaction would be useful for maximizing efficiency, accuracy, and promotion of change during counseling. Satisfaction would be a more valuable factor, than conflict, to measure because conflict itself has not been found as a block to intimacy (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970). Rather, depending on how it is resolved, conflict can even facilitate intimacy (Strong, 1975; Bach and Wyden, 1975; Clinebell and Clinebell, 1970). Also, measurement of conflict is complicated by the great variety in sources of frustration that individuals may experience. For these reasons, marital satisfaction may be a better dependent variable to measure along with intimacy, coping efforts and openness in communication. In any event, even though these variables are recognized as important factors in marriage, the comparative extent to which each of the predictors contributes to marital satisfaction is unclear.

Although the relations between the three variables have not been concurrently and empirically studied, several writers have attempted to describe some of the relationships (Merves-Okin, Amidon, & Bernt, 1991; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989). Lerner has (1989) captured the possible link between the development of intimacy, communication and coping behavior by suggesting that "being who we are" demands that we talk openly about our expectations and take a stand on important issues while "allowing the other person to do the same" by staying emotionally connected to the person without trying to change him/her. Lerner's ideas may be adapted to define communication, intimacy and coping within an integrated context such that one can appreciate their joint contribution to marital satisfaction. However, this can be achieved only after one has an understanding of the background, concepts, theories and research findings for each of the key variables involved.

Marital satisfaction can be studied from a dyadic perspective or from an individualistic perspective. Using husbands' and wives' individual perceptions, this study will explore the links between marital satisfaction and the variables of self-disclosure, positive coping, and discrepancy in intimacy to elucidate the extent of the contribution that each variable offers to marital satisfaction.

Chapter II

Literature Review

The following literature review will separately summarize some key research findings and concepts associated with each of the following: openness in communication (i.e. self-disclosure), intimacy, and coping efforts.

Openness in Communication

Communication has been defined as the transactional process of creating and sharing meanings verbally or nonverbally by transmitting messages (Galvin & Brommel, 1991). It is a transactional process because people who communicate have an impact on each other; partners affect and are affected by each other (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). Communication also implies mutuality in the process of creating and sharing meanings. If meanings are not mutually understood, then messages will not be understood. Therefore, successful communication depends on the partners' shared reality or sets of meanings (Bochner & Eisenberg, 1987).

Each couple creates a worldview of assumptions to organize shared beliefs, expectations and meanings (Reiss, 1981; Stephen, 1986; Brighton-Cleghorn, 1987). Minuchin (1974) suggests that each young couple must go through the process of mutual accomodation where the partners develop ways in which each spouse triggers and observes the other's behavior and is in turn influenced by the previous pattern of behaviors. Eventually,

these "transactional patterns" create a frame of complementary demands that regulate behaviors. To form a marital system, a couple must negotiate a set of shared meanings and expectations through mutual accommodation so that the meanings for one spouse then become associated with the meanings for the other (Galvin & Brommel, 1991). Couples may strive for years to create coordinated mutually meaningful language. If there are general similarities in their backgrounds and social processes, this assures some generalized common meanings because less negotiation of meanings is needed. In any case, communication is important for coordinated meanings.

The effects of communication breakdown may involve living with serious misunderstandings and mistaken assumptions such that partners might, for example, avoid a subject, resist an attempt to explore the subject, or one may make faulty attributions because he/she is unaware of a difficulty the other faces. Daily marital satisfaction ratings given by couples have been highly correlated with daily displeasing communication such as complaining, commanding or interrupting a conversation (Jacobson, Waldron, & Moore, 1980). Above all, poor communication has often been identified by therapists as the most frequently experienced and most common problem facing couples in marital therapy (Geiss & O'Leary, 1981).

In committed and close relationships, one of the characteristics that can show coordination of meanings between two people is openness (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Openness implies verbal and nonverbal accessibility to each other. The

individual's ability to move in and out of private areas of communication in an easy manner is one characterization of openness. However, more importantly in marriage, intimate interactions are also characteristic of openness. When personal, private information is expressed or received, openness occurs so meanings can be effectively shared in a relationship (Montgomery, 1981). Humans are open systems that allow for interchange with their surrounding environments. While closed mechanical systems will break down if new substances are encountered, human systems need the interchange with other people and ideas to remain physically and psychologically functional (Walsh, 1985). Rigidity in a relationship can develop in the absence of openness. Malone and Malone (1987) eloquently stated that, "The most powerful and profound awareness of ourselves occurs with our simultaneous opening up to another human...It is the most meaningful and courageous of human experiences" (p.20). Hence, openness is an aspect of communication which can contribute greatly to the foundation of intimacy. Such openness is experienced through sharing and receiving self-disclosure, which occurs when one person voluntarily tells another things about himself or herself that the other is unable to discern in a different manner (Pearce & Sharp, 1973). This involves a willingness to accept such information or feelings from another. It also allows one to reduce uncertainty about the discloser's personality in terms of similarity, competence and believability (Berger & Bradac, 1982).

Gilbert (1976) has linked self-disclosure and intimacy in her finding that high mutual self-disclosure is usually associated with voluntary relationships characterized by trust and affection. However, high levels of negative self-disclosure may occur in nonvoluntary relationships showing conflict and anger. Thus Gilbert suggests a curvilinear relationship between self-disclosure and satisfaction where increased self-disclosure reduces satisfaction at a point. As a sharp contrast to Gilbert's findings, Jourard (1971) and Lederer and Jackson (1968) view the optimal marriage relationship as one where each partner discloses without reserve. Satir (1972) believed that communication is important for determining relational quality and that if one does not properly communicate personal feelings, then isolation, helplessness and rejection will follow. Levinger and Senn (1967) found that, typically, couples receiving counselling for marital difficulties reported less self-disclosure than non-counselling couples matched for socioeconomic status, marriage duration and number of children. Such latter reports have been the impetus for the development of many current marriage enrichment programs and popular books which support self-disclosure in communication (Galvin, 1985). However, this linear view may occur in only special cases where both partners have high self-esteem and are willing to risk commitment to the marriage (Gilbert, 1976).

Much of the research in self-disclosure has been conducted through questionnaires and self-reports collected from couples, since the actual self-disclosing behavior is not easily

observed. In 1989, Littlejohn summarized some of the findings of research in self-disclosure as follows: (1) disclosure increases with increased relational intimacy; (2) women tend to be higher disclosers than men; (3) satisfaction and disclosure have a curvilinear relationship such that relational satisfaction is greatest at moderate levels of disclosure.

With regards to marital satisfaction, studies consistently suggest that self-disclosure can have a positive effect on intimacy as clearly shared and accepted personal information or feelings enhance intimacy (Hendrick, 1981, Galvin & Brommel, 1991). According to Fitzpatrick (1987), studies show a positive correlation between: 1) the self-disclosures of husbands and wives, and between 2) self-disclosure and marital satisfaction. Levinger and Senn (1967) found that satisfied couples disclosed more than unsatisfied couples. Yet, unsatisfied couples disclosed more unpleasant feelings. Similar findings were obtained by Burke, Weir, and Harrison in 1976. In contrast, recent studies underscore the value of "selective disclosure" (Schumm, Barnes, Bollman, Jurick, & Bugaighis, 1987; Sillars, Weisberg, Burggraf, & Wilson, 1987). In support of this, a high disclosure of negative feelings has been found to negatively relate to marital satisfaction or may not be linked with relational satisfaction (Sillars et al., 1987). In any case, perhaps marital openness in communication is rewarding because it shows the listener that the speaker is willing to trust and share (Fitzpatrick, 1987). Thus the trust, sharing and growth of a marriage can be fostered by openness in communication.

However, openness has not yet been established as the factor central to the development of a satisfying committed relationship; it is a factor among several other factors such as intimacy and fulfillment of role expectations.

Intimacy

The marital research literature is flooded with studies on intimacy. Given the marriage and family enrichment movement, precipitated by notions of "human potential" and "growth," a growing awareness of the importance and value of intimacy in our culture has developed (Schaefer & Olson, 1981). However, despite the view that intimacy is an ideal characteristic of marriage, few have tried to conceptualize, operationalize, or empirically analyze its impact on relationships. Historically, writers such as Bowlby (1958), Erikson (1950) and Sullivan (1953) have described the significance of intimacy to humans. In Angyal's words (1965), establishing an intimate relationship where one "exists in the thought and affection of another" is the "crux of our existence from the cradle to the grave" (p.19). Many people have found such words to be true; however, how intimacy can be incorporated into theory and practice has been difficult to define or empirically test (Gruen, 1964).

In the literature on intimacy, several definitions have been suggested. In 1980, Waring, Tillman, Frelick, Russell and Weisz asked a group of people what intimacy meant to them. They identified four themes: 1) sharing private thoughts, dreams and beliefs; 2) sexuality with an emphasis on commitment and

affection; 3) having a stable sense of self-identity; and 4) the absence of anger, resentment and criticism. Some of these factors are also noted in Feldman's (1979) notion of characteristics of intimacy: 1) a close, familiar and usually affectionate or loving personal relationship; 2) a detailed and deep knowledge and understanding from personal connection or familiar experience; and 3) sexual relations. Then, in 1981, Waring, McElrath, Mitchell, and Derry defined intimacy as a composite of eight qualitative aspects: 1) Affection; 2) Cohesion; 3) Expression of thoughts, feelings and attitudes; 4) Compatibility; 5) Conflict resolution without arguments or criticism; 6) Sexuality; 7) Autonomy; and 8) Identity of the couple. A year later, Kolodny, Masters and Johnson (1982) defined intimacy as a "close, trusting relationship between two people who are both willing to be emotionally open with each other in spite of the risks that may be involved. Intimate partners usually reach an early understanding about the boundaries of their closeness, permitting their relationship to continue under a mutually agreeable set of expectations" (p.236). Wynne and Wynne (1986) defined intimacy as : "a subjective relational experience in which the core components are trusting self-disclosure to which the response is communicated empathy. A key component is the willingness to share, verbally and non-verbally, actions, positive or negative, with the expectation and trust that the other person will emotionally comprehend, accept what has been revealed, and will not betray or exploit this trust" (1986, p. 384-5).

In 1989, Lerner identified intimacy as meaning "that we can be who we are in a relationship and allow the other person to do the same." The most extensive conceptual definitions view intimacy as "a mutual need satisfaction" (Clinebell & Clinebell, 1970) and a closeness to another human being on several levels (Dahms, 1972). Clinebell and Clinebell view intimacy as including the following components: sexual; emotional; aesthetic; creative; recreational; work; crisis; conflict; commitment; spiritual; and communication intimacy. Some may argue that this embodies a "shot gun approach" which attempts to identify facets of intimacy without offering conceptual clarity. Dahms (1972) proposes that intimacy involves a more conceptual hierarchy of three dimensions: intellectual, physical, and emotional. Moreover, he views intimacy as being characterized by mutual accessibility, naturalness, non-possessiveness and the need to view it as a process. An alternative example of a current definition of intimacy is offered by Schnarch (1991), who views intimacy as the experience of confronting aspects of one's self in the presence of the partner as part of an intrapersonal and interpersonal process that involves both the discloser's relationship with the partner as well as his/her relationship with the self. Unfortunately, this conceptual definition of intimacy has not yet been fully operationalized or empirically measured.

Alternatively, perhaps the conceptual definition of intimacy which best integrates some of the above approaches (while being empirically tested) is offered by Schaefer and

Olson (1981). Their operational definition of intimacy is based on Olson's previous work. Schaefer and Olson (1981) have developed a measure of five areas of intimacy: emotional intimacy, social intimacy, sexual intimacy, intellectual intimacy, and recreational intimacy, known as the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR). For the purpose of this paper, Schaefer and Olson's measure (1981) will be used as it is neither too global nor does it confuse intimacy with other closely related but dissimilar concepts, such as self-disclosure. The importance of definitional clarity is reflected in the fact that some research has confused intimacy with self-disclosure. For example, Derlega and Chaikin (1975) equate intimacy with self-disclosure. In addition, Jourard's (1964, 1971) studies suggested that "the act of revealing personal information to others" (Jourard & Jaffee, 1970) includes mutual reciprocity (Jourard & Richman, 1963); and that the most typical intimate disclosure occurs in marital relationships. Hence, self-disclosure scales (Jourard, 1971; Taylor & Altman, 1966) tend to measure respondents' willingness to disclose intimate feelings, but they do not indicate the kind or frequency of intimacy that is experienced. Intimacy is a process which is the outcome of the disclosure of topics and sharing of experiences and so it should be distinguished from self-disclosure (Altman & Haythorn, 1965; Schaefer & Olson, 1981). Concurring with this view, Gilbert (1976) and Cozby (1973) have suggested that the relationship between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction may be curvilinear. Indirect support

of this perspective has been suggested by Chaikin and Derlega (1964) and Schaefer and Olson (1981) who report that appropriateness rather than amount of disclosure may be associated with adjustment in an intimate relationship. Despite such notions, one cannot dispute that intimacy does depend partly on the partner's use of communication to maintain a nurturing relationship. More specifically, it can contribute to intimacy among couples by carrying messages of "I'm aware of you" and "I care about you" (Wilkinson, 1989). With such ideas in mind, an interesting question to be explored in this study is: What is the relationship between openness in communication and intimacy?

In addition to the above question, another question can be asked regarding the nature of the relationship between satisfaction and intimacy. In the past, several studies have alluded to a link between intimacy and adjustment or satisfaction in relationships. In 1953, findings of Harlow's research with primates implied that without some degree of intimacy, humans could not adequately develop. Lowenthal and Haven (1968) also observed that the "happiest and healthiest among [people] often seemed to be the people who were, or had been, involved in one or more close relationships" (p.20). Furthermore, Lowenthal and Haven (1976) found support for their assertion that the depth of intimacy is correlated with a person's ability to adapt over the lifespan. They concluded that most people find energy to live independent and satisfying lives only through the presence of one or more supportive and

intimate dyadic relationships. More recently, unstructured interviews were conducted with fifteen couples and it was found that some couples had disparate perceptions of their relationship and that the spouse whose needs were not being met was resigned but not satisfied (Robinson & Blanton, 1993). In contrast, in couples whose perceptions of the relationship's strength were congruent, both spouses tended to be more comfortable in the relationship. Robinson and Blanton (1993) explain that if couples go through a process of adapting to one another, they will have more congruent expectations of the marriage, which has been found to relate to marital satisfaction (Weishauss & Field, 1988). As final support for the relation between satisfaction and intimacy, Shaefer and Olson (1981) reported correlations exceeding 0.30 between 'perceived scores' on the PAIR (Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships) and the scores on the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (which is a measure of marital satisfaction) for all of the PAIR subscales except for the Spiritual subscale. Such studies seem to suggest that a link exists between degree of intimacy and satisfaction.

Exactly how perceived intimacy may be linked with satisfaction is somewhat unclear. An interesting suggestion is that satisfaction in marriage will occur if one perceives that he/she is involved in an ideal relationship with an ideal partner. However, if one experiences disparity between a partner or level of intimacy that is idealized and that which is real, disappointment may occur. In vague support of this

notion, Hall and Taylor (1976) conclude from their experiments that "marriage involves a validation and reaffirmation of a joint construct of reality, suggesting that a continued high evaluation of the other is critical, not only for survival of the marriage, but for the continuance of one's world view as well." In addition, Scarf (1987) notes that, in a marriage, disenchantment occurs as a "recognition of the mate's essential differentness from the idealized image that one had of him is what is hard to bear. The struggle to get him to conform to that desperately cherished fantasy may be initiated at this point - and lead to a battle without ending..." (p. 13-14).

In line with Scarf's view, Bagarozzi and Giddings (1983, 1984) described a model of mate selection and marital interaction which suggested that a person will marry someone who fits an internal cognitive schema of an "ideal spouse." This ideal could also be referred to as the Imago, the unconscious image of the person that one's childhood has programmed one to fall in love with (Hendrix, 1992). The "ideal" is not a perfect image but rather a lasting standard against which future mates are compared and evaluated. This cognitive matching can be conscious or unconscious and the greater the match is between the ideal spouse and actual spouse, the greater the person's satisfaction will be with his/her spouse (Anderson, Bagarozzi, & Giddings, 1986; Lewis & Spanier, 1979). The congruence between one's ideal and perceived spouse may contribute to marital satisfaction. Similarly, the congruence between one's expected level of intimacy and perceived level of intimacy can contribute

to marital satisfaction. In both cases, the importance of identifying one's expectations and ideals is noted and assessing the degree of discrepancy between an individual's ideal intimacy and perceived level of intimacy may be a more useful predictor of satisfaction in the marriage.

In addition to spouse ideals, one can argue that ideal role behaviors may also contribute to marital satisfaction. Previous studies have identified that compared to non-patient couples, marital therapy patients experienced more individual "role strain," which is the discrepancy between role ideals and role behaviors (Frank, Anderson, & Rubinstein, 1980). However, it may not be role assignments or division of labor per se that contribute to marital satisfaction. Other variables such as open communication of expectations, constructive problem solving and idealization of one's relationship may be more important in determining marital satisfaction. For example, a couple may have different expectations regarding how each partner should enact a role and thus conflict may ensue. Furthermore, researchers have found that incongruent marital expectations (i.e. where either partner feels that the actual role assignments differ from what they would like) are an important correlate of marital disturbance (Bowen & Orthner, 1983; Craddock, 1980; Crago & Tharp, 1968; Li & Caldwell, 1987; Nettles & Loevinger, 1983). However, it is possible that the discrepancy in expectations and conflict are not as important to marital satisfaction as how the couple resolves the conflict by communicating their concerns or how reassured each partner is

regarding the intimacy in the relationship. Hence, relational efficacy may be a plausible explanation for this. In other words, marital success is not defined as much by the frequency of role disagreements as it is by how couples react to and deal with their discrepancies. Couples who perceive adequate intimacy in their marriage and have constructive coping and communication skills may have less marital dissatisfaction even if they are experiencing role strain. In essence, compared to role strain and the ideal spouse, perceived intimacy can be viewed, potentially as a more global and fundamental predictor of marital satisfaction.

Coping Efforts

Apart from the concepts of communication and intimacy, the variables of stress and coping have also received a lot of attention in research and literature. Many definitions exist for stress; however, one of the most popular definitions has been given by Selye (1974), who perceives stress as the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made on it. The emotions and arousal that occur in response to stress are uncomfortable for an individual and thus motivate the individual to respond in a way that alleviates the discomfort (Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith, & Bem, 1993). The process by which people manage stress can be defined as coping. More specifically, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have defined coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and / or internal demands that are appraised as taxing

or exceeding the resources of the person." Coping can be accomplished with actions, feelings or motives (Zimbardo & Weber, 1994). Hence, coping is not a single strategy that applies to all circumstances. There are different means of coping. Also, there may be individual differences in the ways that people cope with hassles, losses and challenges.

What are some of the ways that people typically cope with life's challenges? This question has motivated many researchers to investigate and advance the conceptualizations and measurement of coping (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; Holahan & Moos, 1987; Zimbardo & Weber, 1994). Depending on the specific problem at hand, coping can be viewed as different techniques or behaviors (Wortman, 1983; Bowman, 1990). For example, Shaver and O'Connor (1986) have identified three categories for ways of coping: (1) attacking the problem; (2) rethinking the problem; and (3) accepting the problem but lessening the physical effects of its stress. Alternatively, Sayers, Baucom, Sher, Weiss, and Heyman (1991) review three types of behavior patterns that are associated specifically with changes in marital functioning and can be conceptualized as distinct coping behaviors: (1) conflict and problem-solving (Filsinger & Thoma, 1988; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989); (2) avoidance and withdrawal (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Roberts & Krokoff, 1990); and (3) blaming and withdrawal (Filsinger & Thoma, 1988; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989).

With regards to measurement of coping, targeting particular groups that are experiencing the same type of stress might be

more useful than using more general coping measures designed for the "average" individual (Wills, 1986). For example, married couples encounter and must cope with various specific stressors that are not experienced by single or dating individuals. Pearlin and Schooler (1978) found that marital and parenting stress can be reduced by coping responses and that certain coping responses were especially effective. According to Holmes and Rahe's (1967) Social Readjustment Rating Scale, marriage has been identified as a stressful life event that could potentially contribute to health problems.

Although the investigation of specific marital coping strategies is an important research endeavor, only a small number of studies have investigated coping efforts in marriage (Bowman, 1990; Menaghan, 1982). Moreover, some of the studies on communication between husbands and wives have identified aspects of communication that could be conceptualized as means of coping as well. For example, the study by Gottman and Krokoff (1989) presented positive problem solving, conflict engagement and withdrawal from interaction in the context of communication between husbands and wives. Analogous to these three factors are Bowman's (1990) marital coping factors: positive approach, conflict and avoidance. While there may be some overlap between communication and coping factors, most of the communication inventories and observational methods appear to focus mostly on interpersonal content or sequence of verbal behavior and limited aspects of nonverbal behavior that occur between two people. If one assumes that coping can generally be

accomplished with feelings or cognitions in addition to verbal or nonverbal responses, it may be more appropriate to conceptualize coping in terms of both intrapersonal and interpersonal factors.

For example, coping can be defined in terms of two main strategies: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping (Billings & Moos, 1982) occurs when a person tries to find a way of changing or avoiding the specific problem situation. These strategies can also be focused inward. That is, the person can change something about himself or herself instead of changing the environment (eg. changing aspiration levels or finding alternative gratification resources). On the other hand, emotion-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) involves the person focusing on alleviating the emotions associated with the stressful situation, even if the situation itself cannot be changed. Categorizing coping into one of the above two categories is but one way of generally defining types of coping.

For the purpose of this study, Bowman's (1990) Marital Coping Inventory has been adopted as a measure which conceptualizes coping in terms of five major kinds of strategies employed by married couples: (1) positive approach, (2) conflict, (3) avoidance, (4) introspective self-blame, and (5) self-interest. Bowman's inventory appears to combine intrapersonal coping factors (e.g., introspective self-blame and self-interest) with general interpersonal strategies (positive approach, conflict and avoidance) in order to conceptualize

coping. Although this inventory is not comprehensive in its definition, it does account for some variety in the coping responses of couples.

While the research devoted to measurement of specific marital coping factors is scarce, research devoted to studying the relationship between coping factors and marital satisfaction is also limited. In the literature on marital satisfaction and marital interaction, the most consistent finding is that marital satisfaction is positively related to constructive problem-solving strategies (such as negotiation and compromise) and negatively related to negative problem-solving strategies (such as withdrawal or avoidance) (Bowman, 1990; Noller & White, 1990). Negative interaction (e.g., negative content codes and affects) is more common in the interaction of unhappily married couples rather than happily married couples (Gottman, 1979; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Hahlweg, Revenstorf, & Schindler, 1984; Margolin & Wampold, 1981). Studies comparing distressed couples to nondistressed couples found that problem-solving interactions of distressed couples involve more negative behaviors such as criticisms, hostility, negative nonverbal behavior and denial of responsibility (Baucom, Notarius, Burnett, & Haefner, 1990; Weiss & Heyman, 1990). In contrast, problem-solving interaction appears to be significantly related to couple satisfaction (Birchler et al., 1975; Gottman et al., 1976; Gottman et al., 1977). Programs designed to enhance problem-solving skills have led to increased relationship satisfaction (Jacobson, 1977, 1978). Indirect support for the above studies is also provided

by Bowman's (1990) study which found that significant relations exist between marital happiness ratings and coping scores. According to Bowman, marital happiness was positively correlated with Positive Approach ($r=0.23$) but negatively correlated with: Conflict ($r=-0.27$), Introspective Self-Blame ($r=-0.40$); Self-interest ($r=-0.42$) and lastly Avoidance ($r=-0.23$). In contradiction to Bowman's findings, Cohan and Bradbury (1994) administered the Marital Coping Inventory to newlywed spouses and reported: 1) a negative correlation between Positive Approach and marital satisfaction; and 2) that husbands' marital satisfaction was related only to Conflict for the first administration of the inventory. However, Cohan and Bradbury explain that these contradictory results may have occurred either because of the scale's inadequacies or because of the sampling difference between Bowman's study and their study. With regards to the latter possibility, Cohan and Bradbury (1994) suggest that chronicity of a problem in the marriage of newlywed couples may be different from that of couples married for a longer time. In any case, several other researchers have found that coping responses such as self-reliance and self-assertion covary with marital satisfaction and selective ignoring covaries with lower marital satisfaction (Coyne & DeLongis, 1986; Menaghan, 1982; Sabourin, Laporte & Wright, 1990; Whiffen & Gotlib, 1989).

Although the above studies suggest that there are significant relations between marital satisfaction and negative or positive interactions, researchers suggest that there is a

stronger relationship between marital satisfaction and negative interaction than positive interaction (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; see Gottman, 1979 for a review). Perhaps positive behaviors contribute to marital satisfaction but negative behaviors have a greater effect on marital satisfaction. However, the direction of the relationship between these negative behaviors and marital satisfaction may depend somewhat on length of time. For example, coping has been found to affect later marital satisfaction in longitudinal studies (Markman, 1979; Menaghan, 1983b). Furthermore, longitudinal studies have indicated that negative behaviors may differ in their relationship to future marital satisfaction (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Gottman & Krokoff, 1990; Sayers et al., 1991; Woody & Constanzo, 1990). More specifically, some negative behaviors and affects such as anger and disagreement were negatively related to present marital satisfaction but positively associated with increases in marital satisfaction later in time (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Gottman & Krokoff, 1990; Sayers et al., 1991). In addition, Gottman and Krokoff (1989) found that, for both men and women, conflict engagement predicted current dissatisfaction with marriage but improved marital satisfaction over time. Interestingly, they also found that positive verbal behavior strongly predicted current marital satisfaction in women but it predicted deterioration in marital satisfaction over time. However, for men it was the husband's withdrawal which predicted change in marital satisfaction over time. In 1994, Cohan and Bradbury also found that higher levels of conflict in husbands

was beneficial for their future evaluation of the marriage while wives who showed "Self-Interest" avoided the conflict resolution and this had a negative impact on the wives' future evaluation of the marriage.

Despite these important findings, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine longitudinal effects of all types of coping on marital satisfaction. By virtue of possible unmeasured delayed effects on marital satisfaction, the predictive strength of coping efforts may be affected in comparison with perceived intimacy and self-disclosure. Thus it is important to be aware that the results of the present study are limited to predicting current marital satisfaction with positive coping efforts as one of the predictors.

Interrelationships Among Key Variables

Although the main focus of the present study is the relationship between marital satisfaction and three other variables, it is still important to contemplate possible relationships among the individual variables themselves. By virtue of shared features, strong relationships may arise between key variables. Consequently, questions regarding the discriminant validity of measures are foreseeable. However, the operational definitions of each variable are viewed as being conceptually different. For example, while perceived intimacy and openness in communication may contribute to each other in many ways, they are not the same concept. More specifically, self-disclosure and the perception of idealized intimacy

achieved in the couple's relationship are conceptually distinct. In any case, exploring some of the interconnections among variables presents alternative explanations which are worthy of consideration.

Communication and Intimacy.

During communication, people have an effect on each other (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). As two people interact, each creates a context for the other and relates to the other within that context. In relationships, each person: 1) creates a context for the other; 2) simultaneously creates and interprets messages; and 3) affects and is affected by the other (Galvin & Brommel, 1991). Hence, participation in an intimate relationship transforms reality definitions for both partners and therefore transforms the partners themselves (Stephen & Enholm, 1987). In addition, researchers have found that communication is important in helping couples maintain a sense of connectedness and intimacy (Robinson & Blanton, 1993). From interviews, it was found that some couples experience incongruence in their relationship (Robinson & Blanton, 1993). For example, while one spouse is frustrated because needs are not met, the other spouse could be unaware. Robinson and Blanton (1993) suggest that the incongruence may result from the couple's inability to communicate needs. At the same time, incongruence in perceptions could in turn inhibit communication. For example, spouses who perceive themselves as different from their partners with regards to needs and expectations may try to

avoid any possible conflict by not communicating and remaining quiet.

Studies showing differences between husbands and wives in their views of self-disclosure and intimacy have left researchers with the impression that self-disclosure is an important characteristic of a couple's intimacy (Shaefer & Olson, 1981; Waring & Chelune, 1983). Although it is unclear whether communication precedes or is a byproduct of intimacy, it is plausible that communication can affect and reflect changes in relationships. Long-term, enduring relationships are characterized by agreements between members as to the meanings of things. These people develop a relationship world view reflecting the members' interdependence (Stephen, 1986). The ways in which people exchange messages influence the form and content of their relationships. Communication among family members shapes the structure of the spousal system and provides the couple with its own set of meanings. In their classic work, Hess and Handel (1959) suggest that interpersonal ties reflect these meanings because the closeness or distance between two members derive from the interlocking meanings which occur among them. More specifically, one can argue that the process of openness in communication can affect the attainment of idealized intimacy in that, if spouses disclose their perceptions, expectations, and yearnings to one another, they have a better chance of identifying, understanding and attempting to fulfill each other's needs. Hence, spouses may then experience more satisfaction in a relationship where they perceive that they are

not far off from their idealized intimate relationship. In support of this explanation, Merves-Okin, Amidon and Bernt (1991) administered several instruments to 75 married couples and found that satisfaction was related to intimacy, self-disclosure and the perceptions which partners had of each other's behavior. More specifically, the study's findings provided empirical support for verbal disclosure of feelings in marriage as critical to fulfilling partners' expectations of successful intimacy and ultimately their perceived marital satisfaction.

Communication and Coping.

There may exist an overlap between variables on the Marital Coping Inventory and variables on the Communication Scale. Gottman and Krokoff (1989) presented evidence suggesting that certain aspects of communication interaction (such as positive problem solving, conflict engagement and withdrawal from interaction) may affect satisfaction. Likewise, these behaviors may be viewed as coping behaviors according to Bowman's (1990) inventory. One may pose the question: Are these particular coping behaviors truly distinct from communication interactions ? Based on interviews from fifteen couples, Robinson and Blanton (1993) suggest that couples who could communicate constructively were able to avoid conflict and resolve problems thus enhancing the closeness of their relationship. In this case, coping and communication seem to be closely tied.

Some previous research has demonstrated a link between communication / coping behavior and marital quality. For example, Komarovsky (1962) reported that blue-collar husbands are self-disclosing in happy marriages but withdrawn in unhappy marriages. Lloyd (1987) studied fifty premarital couples and reported that, for women, the greater the self-disclosure anxiety, the greater the number of conflicts seemed to be, while self-disclosure anxiety and resolution of conflicts were significantly correlated in a negative fashion. Lloyd further noted that her data showed some interesting gender differences regarding the relation between self-disclosure anxiety and resolution of conflict. In men, greater perceived resolution of conflicts was related to higher self-disclosure anxiety, thus suggesting that the men may have had a desire to avoid more interactional conflict in order to reach resolution. On the other hand, for women, higher self-disclosure anxiety was associated with lower perceived resolution. This seemed to suggest that fears of disclosing feelings or fears of the husband's anger may have led to a lower tendency in women to attempt conflict resolution. One might then conclude that not being anxious about self-disclosing (i.e. greater self-disclosure) with one's spouse is an aspect of coping with and resolving marital conflict, thereby enhancing satisfaction. Despite some of the evidence that suggests an interaction between communication and coping behavior may exist, one can still argue that for the purpose of the present study, self-

disclosure and coping behaviors are two separate constructs that differ in function.

Intimacy and Coping.

Hobfoll and Lerman (1988) have stated that marriages without intimacy are inherently stressful. Therefore, in marriages lacking intimacy, it seems that very effective coping strategies would be required by the spouses to withstand the stress and sustain the relationship. Unfortunately, few studies have given attention to the link between intimacy and coping. In 1988, Krokoff et al. found that many couples in their sample did not have a companionate set of expectations about marriage and that these couples characteristically avoided conflict in daily life. Thus, there may exist a relationship between expectations (which can stem from ideals) and choice of coping behavior. How expectations or ideals may operate in the relationship with coping behaviors is unknown. Perhaps couples who do not share common expectations or yearnings do not perceive their relationship as ideally intimate. Moreover, along with the sense of intimacy, couples who avoid conflict with each other may never develop a sense of "relational efficacy" or the confidence that they can withstand and successfully cope with conflict together (Notarius & Vanzetti, 1983). In support of this contention, Swensen, Eskew, and Kohlhepp (1984) state that those "who cope actively with problems and conflicts in the relationship, and who have created security in their relationship by a personal commitment to each

other, create a vital, stimulating, and satisfying intimate relationship that does not deteriorate" (p.104).

Consideration of Demographic Variables

The experience of marital satisfaction, and its associated variables, may be influenced by demographic variables such as: culture, SES, education, gender, age, number of years married, and number of children. To begin with, membership in a particular culture could be an influence by means of possible gender-role stereotyping or cultural norms. Cultural heritage has been found to influence the amount and type of disclosure. For example, Jewish families exhibit verbal skill and a willingness to talk about feelings while Irish families find themselves at a loss to describe feelings (McGoldrick, 1982). In another study, a Mexican-American society was found to be more open than an Anglo-American society (Falicov & Karrer, 1980). Thus, spouses may have different expectations regarding intimacy and disclosure depending on what they were exposed to in their family of origin and culture. Apart from cultural heritage, SES may also influence self-disclosing behavior and expectations regarding intimacy, thus acting as a source of variation. Hurvitz and Komarovsky (1977) reported that in a comparison of studies, middle-class respondents were more likely to view spouses as companions, with expectations of sharing activities, leisure time, and thoughts. In contrast, working-class respondents viewed marriages as including sexual union, complementary duties, and mutual devotion, but not friendship.

Also, two-thirds of the wives in this group confided in their mothers, sisters, or friends. In 1989, Crohan and Veroff conducted a study and found a positive association between family income and marital quality. Somewhat contradicting this result, Moore and Waite (1981) found a negative association between wife's income (as a component of total family income) and marital quality. More recently, McGonagle, Kessler, and Schilling (1992) found no association between SES and frequency of marital disagreements. In addition, education (which is a rough index of SES) has been positively associated with marital quality (Spanier & Lewis, 1980). Pearlin and Schooler's study (1978) reported that education is positively related to the use of more effective coping techniques. Suitor and Pillemer (1987) found that education showed a positive relationship with verbal aggression. On the other hand, Bowman (1990) reported that education had no effect with regards to use of five different coping efforts in her study.

Aside from the above demographic variables, gender differences (which may occur due to differences in socialization) can demonstrate different relations with key variables in the present study. For example, female pairs have been seen as more disclosing than male pairs (Cline, 1989). Women tend to generally be higher disclosers than men; they disclose more negative information; they provide less honest information; and they disclose more intimate information (Pearson, 1989). Contrary to some of these findings, Merves-Okin, Amidon and Bernt (1991) found that husbands and wives gave

similar responses to instruments measuring attitudes toward self-disclosure and verbal expression of feelings. Likewise, Antill and Cotton (1987) reported that husbands and wives generally disclosed the same amount of information.

Aside from self-disclosure, Miller and Kirsch (1987) reviewed 200 studies and reported equivocal support for gender differences in the literature on coping. Compared to men's general coping techniques, women have used more external distraction (Sidle et al., 1969); selective ignoring (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978); conflict, introspective self-blame and self-interest (Bowman, 1990). Other studies have found that wives are more likely to confront issues (Burke, Weier, & Harrison, 1976; Ashmore, 1986). In support of this, Kelley, Cunningham, Grisham, Lefebvre, Sink and Yablon (1978) studied conflict and found that women tend to be "conflict-confrontive" while men tend to be "conflict-avoidant." Others have also found that, compared to women, men use avoidance (Bowman, 1990); they withdraw (Levenson & Gottman, 1985) or they rely on conciliatory and factual explanations (Margolin & Wampold, 1981; Raush et al., 1974).

Such different behaviors are bound to influence each partner's perception of intimacy and happiness in the relationship. Gove et al. (1983) found that happiness in women is more related to the relationship's emotional quality while happiness in men is related more to status. In unhappy marriages, women complain that their husbands are too withdrawn while the men complain that their wives are too conflict

engaging (Locke, 1951). Roberts and Krokoff (1990) and Sayers et al. (1991) suggested that husbands' withdrawal was often followed by wives' increasing hostility and that such a pattern was related strongly to the couples' satisfaction. Notarius et al. (1989) suggest that distressed wives may use their negative behaviors to press their issues so that they are heard by their husbands and their concerns are addressed. However, if husbands are uncomfortable with the arousal that is engendered during such interactions, they will withdraw (Levenson & Gottman, 1985). Consequently, women may feel that their husbands do not care. Both partners will most likely experience dissatisfaction in the marriage.

In addition to the above demographic variables, age and number of years married may show an effect in relation to some of this study's variables. Waterman (1979) reported that the research is unclear regarding the effect of age or length of marriage on spouse self-disclosure since the content of discussion might vary over a period of time. More recently, Antill and Cotton reported that disclosure levels decreased with length of the marriage. Also, if newlyweds are overrepresented in the sample, data may be subjected to the "honeymoon effect," which is the strong general tendency to rate one's marriage as successful. Edmonds (1967), who was concerned with this source of confound, claims to have bypassed this issue because most of the participants in his study were married more than five years. Hence, obtaining a representative sample requires awareness of such sources of confounding.

In addition, with respect to marital satisfaction, older couples have been found to experience less marital conflict (Argyle & Furnham, 1983) so it is reasonable to hypothesize that older couples may experience more marital satisfaction. On the other hand, Swensen et al. (1984) found that as length of marriage increases, intimacy and expression of love decreases. Satisfaction will remain as long as couples actively cope with problems, are in the complex stages of ego development, and are personally committed. Researchers (Johnson, White, Edwards & Booth, 1986; McGonagle et al., 1992) have identified a negative relationship between marriage length and frequency of disagreements. However, in contradiction to this view, Gottman and Krokoff (1989) found no difference in marital satisfaction between an older sample of couples married an average of 23.9 years and another younger sample of couples married an average of 4.2 years. As for coping, while Folkman and Lazarus (1980) did not find age effects in general coping, Bowman (1990) found significant differences in use of coping efforts related to age as well as duration of marriage. More specifically, she discovered the following effects on the Marital Coping Inventory: Conflict and Introspective Self-Blame peaked in 20-29 year old participants and fell to a low level with increasing age; Positive Approach was at its lowest in 40 year old participants but it rose with an increase in age; Conflict and Introspective Self-Blame were used more in shorter marriages; Avoidance and Positive Approach were greater in longer marriages. However, some studies found that (as a block) coping

efforts were more powerful than demographic variables as predictors of marital happiness and problems (Bowman, 1990; White, 1983).

Finally, number of children is also an important demographic consideration when assessing marital satisfaction. Recently, Antill and Cotton (1987) reported that disclosure levels between husbands and wives decreased with the number of children. Previously, Spanier and Lewis (1980) found that the presence of children was negatively associated with marital quality. Johnson et al. (1986) reported that couples with children living at home disagree more often than couples who do not have children. The relationship between number of children and marital quality, however, has shown mixed results (Spanier & Lewis, 1980). As for coping, Bowman (1990) found no significant relationship between the number of children and coping efforts. Like some of the other demographic variables, number of children could be related to one of the key variables in this study, but not another.

Given the inconclusive nature of the literature highlighted above, it seems especially important to investigate whether demographics demonstrate any relationships with the key variables of this study; however, specific predictions about interrelations between key variables and demographics will not be ventured.

The following chapter (method) will pose several exploratory research questions and specific hypotheses regarding the correlates and predictors in this study.

Chapter III

Method

Hypotheses and Exploratory Research Questions

In light of the literature reviewed, specific hypotheses and research questions are outlined below.

Question 1 : Is marital satisfaction jointly predicted by self-disclosure, intimacy difference, and positive coping for husbands' and wives' ?

Hypothesis 1: The wives' marital satisfaction will be jointly predicted by self-disclosure, intimacy difference, and positive coping.

Hypothesis 2: The husbands' marital satisfaction will be jointly predicted by self-disclosure, intimacy difference, and positive coping.

Question 2 : Do self-disclosure, intimacy difference, and positive coping each make a separate contribution to marital satisfaction beyond the contribution made by the other two predictors ?

Hypothesis 3: Self-disclosure, intimacy difference, and positive coping each make a separate and distinct contribution to marital satisfaction in wives.

Hypothesis 4: Self-disclosure, intimacy difference, and positive coping each make a separate and distinct contribution to marital satisfaction in husbands.

Question 3 : What is the nature of the relationship between marital satisfaction and positive coping ?

Hypothesis 5: Marital satisfaction and positive coping are positively correlated for the wives.

Hypothesis 6: Marital satisfaction and positive coping are positively correlated for the husbands.

Question 4 : What is the nature of the relationship between marital satisfaction and intimacy difference ?

Hypothesis 7: Marital satisfaction and intimacy difference are negatively correlated for the wives.

Hypothesis 8: Marital satisfaction and intimacy difference are negatively correlated for the husbands.

Question 5 : What is the nature of the relationship between marital satisfaction and self-disclosure ?

Hypothesis 9: Marital satisfaction and self-disclosure are positively correlated for wives.

Hypothesis 10: Marital satisfaction and self-disclosure are positively correlated for husbands.

Question 6 : What is the nature of the relationship between self-disclosure and intimacy difference ?

Hypothesis 11: Self-disclosure and intimacy difference are negatively correlated for wives.

Hypothesis 12: Self-disclosure and intimacy difference are negatively correlated for husbands.

Question 7 : What is the nature of the relationship between self-disclosure and positive coping ?

Hypothesis 13: Self-disclosure and positive coping are positively correlated for wives.

Hypothesis 14: Self-disclosure and positive coping are positively correlated for husbands.

Question 8 : What is the nature of the relationship between intimacy difference and positive coping ?

Hypothesis 15: Intimacy difference and positive coping are negatively correlated for wives.

Hypothesis 16: Intimacy difference and positive coping are negatively correlated for husbands.

Question 9 : Which of the three key predictors (self-disclosure, intimacy difference, positive coping) comparatively makes a greater contribution to (i.e. plays a larger role in) marital satisfaction in wives and husbands?

No hypotheses has been ventured regarding the strongest predictor of the three variables since there is little empirical evidence on this issue. It is worth mentioning, however, that Robinson and Blanton (1993, p.42) identified intimacy as a "central quality of enduring marriages in that all of the other characteristics impacted or were impacted by intimacy." This conclusion was based on the many references made to intimacy and its related concepts in interviews tapping couples' perceptions regarding marital quality. Such evidence hints at intimacy as

being one predictor that will make a greater unique contribution to marital satisfaction.

Question 10 : What are the interrelationships between the key predictors (self-disclosure, intimacy difference, positive coping) and demographic variables (age, years of education, degree, years of marriage, years of premarital cohabitation, culture, number of children, occupation, income) for wives and for husbands?

Question 11 : What are the interrelationships among the demographic variables for wives and for husbands?

Question 12 : Is the joint contribution of self-disclosure, intimacy difference, and positive coping to husbands' or wives' marital satisfaction improved by age, years of education, occupation, years of marriage, number of children, or income?

Participants

The 106 respondents in this study were 52 men and 54 women representing 50 husband-wife pairs and 6 additional respondents. Initially, 58 couples were recruited, but several couples and individuals withdrew from the study. Despite the withdrawal of a spouse, data for the remaining spouses were retained and analyzed. Therefore, for purposes of data analysis, the sample consisted of 52 husbands and 54 wives, or 106 participants. Five of the 52 (9.6%) men and four of the 54 women (7.4%) lived

outside of Vancouver. According to the demographics questionnaire, the mean ages were 41.9 for men and 39.7 for women. Mean length of marriage was 14.2 years (range of 2 months to 49 years), mean length of premarital cohabitation was 10.2 months, and on average the participants had one child. With respect to the men's primary ethnic heritage, approximately 96.2% described themselves as Caucasian, and 3.85% described themselves as Asian. In the sample of women, approximately 94.5% described themselves as Caucasian, and 5.56% described themselves as Asian. Because the majority of the sample was Caucasian, ethnicity was not included as a predictor in the regressions or as a variable in the correlations.

The average length of education was 15.65 years for men and 14.64 years for women. With regards to a highest degree, 15.32% of the men had a high school diploma, 23.1% of the men had a certificate or diploma, 36.5% of the men had a Bachelor's degree, and 19.2% of the men had a graduate or professional degree. In the sample of women, 35.2% had at least a highschool diploma, 20.4% had a certificate / diploma, 33.3% had a Bachelor's degree, and 11.1% had a graduate or professional degree. Of the men in the sample, 13% were unemployed and the average annual income for those employed was \$30,000 - \$50,000. In the sample of women, 42.6% were unemployed and the average annual income for those who were employed was \$10,000 - \$30,000. In terms of most recent occupation, none of the men described themselves as homemakers, 1.92% were students, 15.4% were blue collar (manual) workers, 11.5% were white collar (clerical)

workers, 50% were in a professional or managerial position, 11.5% were self-employed owners of a business, and 5.8% were retired or receiving a pension. In the sample of women, three women did not define their occupation. Of the remaining women, 20.4% described themselves as homemakers, 5.6% were students, 16.7% were blue collar (manual) workers, 11.1% were white collar (clerical) workers, 35.2% were in a professional or managerial position, 3.7% were self-employed owners of a business, and 1.9% were retired or receiving a pension.

Procedure

Data Collection.

Data collection commenced once approval was obtained from the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Sciences Screening Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (see Appendix A). A pilot study of 3 couples was conducted in order to try out the procedures and identify practical issues (such as administration time and ease of comprehending instructions and questions), that might have required changes. For the actual study, it was assumed that, for the purpose of performing multiple regression analyses, approximately fifteen participants would be adequate per variable. According to Wampold and Freund (1987) and Cohen & Cohen (1983), the power of a study depends on the measure of interest (eg. R^2), the size of the sample, the number of independent variables, and the alpha level. Based on power calculations by Wampold and Freund (1987), if larger R^2 's

(eg.0.50) are of interest and one would like to achieve a power level of 0.70 (eg. to have a 70% chance of obtaining a finding that is significant), then 13 participants per variable are necessary in a study that employs three independent variables.

This correlational field study examined marital satisfaction as the dependent variable along with three independent variables: self-disclosure, positive coping efforts, and disparity between real and ideal intimacy. Hence, the initial goal was to recruit 60 couples (15 couples per variable). Some difficulty was encountered in obtaining couples who met the inclusion criteria. Therefore, several out of town (eg. Vancouver Island and interior B.C.) couples were also included to increase the sample size. These couples were sent all six questionnaires by mail because they indicated an interest to participate but could not meet with the investigator. For each of these couples, instructions for participation and a reminder to complete and mail in questionnaires independently were given once by phone and also in written form. After all data was collected, an analysis was done to identify whether these couples differed significantly from local couples in their mean responses on key variables. The results of this analysis are presented in the results section of this thesis.

Recruitment.

Couples were recruited by advertisements in colleges, universities, community centers, restaurants, radio, television

(local community information channel), and several newspapers. In order to participate, the inclusion criteria required that all couples be married for the first time, since previous research has found that marital disagreements are less frequent among remarried couples (McGonagle et al., 1992). In contrast, other research has found no differences in marital happiness between first time married and remarried couples (Veroff, Duval, & Kulka, 1981). The inconsistency in findings warranted caution in including remarried couples in this study.

The couples were also non-patient couples (i.e. not currently receiving marital therapy). This criterion was included for screening in order to avoid confounding that may have been contributed by the responses of couples who may be experiencing extreme problems in communicating or fulfilling their marital responsibilities. Alternatively, couples who seek counseling may demonstrate a strong commitment to their marriage and may be sophisticated in counseling skills. In this respect, they too could be a source for confounding. Also, relative to married heterosexual couples, homosexual couples were found to be less committed to their relationship and more likely to leave an unsatisfying relationship according to Kurdek's (1991) study. This possibility (along with limited generalizability issues which arise from studying homosexual couples) justified excluding homosexual and bisexual couples. Finally, couples were included only if they were English speaking; had no more than three children; and were currently residing together.

Once a couple met the inclusion criteria, informed consent was obtained after the study's procedure was explained and confidentiality was discussed. Couples who participated and gave informed consent, then volunteered approximately three hours of their time. For the first hour, local couples met with the principle investigator to complete the demographics questionnaire, the DAS and the KMS Scale. Couples received these forms one at a time and were instructed to complete each questionnaire independently (i.e. each couple was told not to discuss questionnaire responses). Couples then took home and independently completed three other questionnaires: the PAIR, Marital Coping Inventory, and the Communication Scale. A week after the initial meeting, the couples received a reminder phone call to mail the questionnaires in the self-addressed and stamped envelope provided. Upon receipt of the questionnaires, the investigator then mailed a letter expressing gratitude and a package of marital enrichment information to each couple. In addition, along with the marital enrichment package, twenty of the couples received a prize after a lottery was done to determine winners. Prizes in the lottery include the following : movie passes for twelve couples (valued at \$8.50 for each couple); \$100.00 in cash given to one couple; four gift certificates for The Bay (valued at \$10 each); two gift certificates for Earl's Restaurant (valued at \$20 each); and one gift certificate for The Keg Restaurant (valued at \$25).

Measures

This study involved the completion of one demographics questionnaire and five self-report measures. On the demographics questionnaire (see Appendix B), each spouse was asked to determine his or her age, gender, ethnic background, number of years married, number of children, number of years in premarital cohabitation, years of completed education, highest degree obtained to date, current occupation, current status of employment, parents' occupations and annual income.

The other five measures were selected after reviewing a multitude of measures presented in a handbook of measurements written by Touliatos, Perlmutter and Straus (1990), the Eleventh Mental Measurements Yearbook (Kramer and Conoley, 1992), a review article of survey instruments (Sabatelli, 1988), and the sourcebook of measures for clinical practice by Fischer and Corcoran (1994). Perceived marital satisfaction was measured by two self-report measures: the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), which was developed by Spanier (1976), and the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS) which was developed by Schumm, Paff-Bergen, Hatch, Obiorah, Copeland, Meens, and Bugaighis (1986). For the purpose of this research, openness in communication was defined as the amount of disclosure determined by a summation of responses to 19 items of the Communication Scale, which was developed by Antill and Cotton (1987). Expected and perceived intimacy were measured by the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR), which had been developed by Schaefer and Olson in 1981. Finally, coping efforts were measured by

Bowman's (1990) Marital Coping Inventory. Overall, the measures were chosen after careful consideration of their psychometric properties, reputation, appropriateness for use with married couples, length, and ease of administration.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS).

The DAS is reported to be a reliable and well-validated self-report instrument of choice for measuring global satisfaction with a relationship (Johnson & Greenberg, 1985). Although at least 20 self-report measures of marital adjustment are available (Birchnell, 1988) more than 1000 studies have employed the DAS, typically with married couples between 1976 and 1988 (Spanier, 1988). Also, various studies have used it in marital outcome investigations to demonstrate changes resulting from marital therapy (Baucom & Hoffman, 1986). The use of the DAS has become more widespread now that it has been translated for various cultural groups (Touliatos et al., 1990). Although it is based on the Locke and Wallace (1959) Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS), it does not have the sex bias present in the MAS, and it is appropriate for unmarried cohabiting couples. Due to its good psychometric properties, brevity, and ease in scoring, many researchers have recommended the DAS over other instruments (Bornstein & Bornstein, 1986; Cohen, 1985; Wincze & Carey, 1991).

Spanier (1976) developed the DAS by using a normative group of 218 married (average age being 35.1 years) and 94 divorced (average age being 30.4 years) men and women from a rural

university location. The final scale included 32 Likert-style items which successfully differentiated between the married group (total mean DAS score of 114.8) and the divorced group (total mean DAS score of 70.7) (Fischer & Corcoran, 1994). Possible scores range from 0 - 151 with higher scores showing greater satisfaction. As a result of a factor analysis, there was a total score and four factors: Consensus, Cohesion, Satisfaction, and Affection. Cohen (1985) stated that factor analyzing the DAS has improved its strength.

In the present study, the DAS was scored as follows: items 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 were summed to yield a Dyadic Consensus total; items 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 31, and 32 were summed to yield a Dyadic Satisfaction total; items 4, 6, 29, and 30 were summed to yield a Affectional Expression total; items 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 were summed to yield a Dyadic Cohesion total; and the four scales' totals were then added to yield a grand Dyadic Adjustment total score used as a second index for marital satisfaction.

The reliability of the DAS total score was previously found to be impressive, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.96 (Touliatos et al., 1990). The subscales have demonstrated fair to excellent internal consistency: Dyadic Satisfaction = 0.94, Dyadic Cohesion = 0.81, Dyadic Consensus = 0.90, and Affectional Expression = 0.73. The study by Carey, Spector, Lantinga, and Krauss (1993) has recently provided more support for internal consistency and test-retest reliability of the DAS. Specifically, they studied a sample of 158 middle-aged men and

women, who completed the DAS on two occasions separated by two weeks, and found that alpha coefficients ranged from 0.70 (for the Affectional Expression) to 0.95 (for the Total score). Meanwhile stability coefficients ranged from 0.75 (Affectional Expression) to 0.87 (Total score). Partial correlations suggested that age, education, number of children, length of relationship, and length of the test-retest interval did not affect the stability of the DAS.

As far as validity is concerned, the DAS was first constructed to incorporate content validity and it has also shown discriminant validity by differentiating between married and divorced couples on each item (Fischer & Corcoran, 1994). Finally, the DAS has shown concurrent validity by correlations of 0.86-0.88 with the Locke and Wallace (1959) Marital Adjustment Scale.

Despite its positive reputation and psychometric properties, the DAS is not a perfect measure, as several criticisms of it have appeared in the research literature. First, Heyman, Weiss, and Eddy (1990) criticized the DAS for confounding the measurement of process and outcome thus obscuring accuracy in the relation between marital satisfaction and behavioral changes. By process, one can think of interaction or communication dynamics which can influence marital satisfaction in the future. However, process is different from outcome, which is a reflection of a couple's satisfaction at a specific point in time. The data presented by Heyman et al. (1990) suggested that only 20% of the variance in

the DAS reflected a spouse's marital satisfaction at the time of the measurement.

There is a debate in the literature as to whether or not the DAS measures the unidimensional construct of satisfaction or several dimensions of adjustment. Most studies have supported Spanier's multidimensional model by finding factors similar to the four DAS factors or finding replicated consensus, satisfaction and cohesion factors (Eddy, Heyman, & Weiss, 1991). Eddy et al. (1991) believe that the DAS is not designed to measure satisfaction (a unidimensional construct) but rather it measures the process of adjustment (a multidimensional construct). As evidence for this contention, they reported that DAS data was better represented by a multidimensional model rather than a single-factor model since "Satisfaction" accounted for 19% - 25% of the variance in the DAS.

On the other hand, researchers such as Sabourin, Lussier, Laplante, and Wright (1990) have found that the four factors of the DAS form a higher-order factor, thus supporting the unidimensional hypothesis. Moreover, one could argue that adjustment is defined as accomodation of a husband and wife to each other at a given time (Locke & Wallace, 1959) but that this does not involve a couple's attitude or perception. While proponents of the multidimensional view claim that several adjustment measures have items that are very similar, proponents of the unidimensional hypothesis believe that because self-report measures of marital adjustment, satisfaction, and happiness correlate highly with each other (Schumm et al.,

1986), what is measured is the couple's perception of marital satisfaction (Gottman, 1990). Many researchers question the existence of four factors and the robustness of the factors. For example, Kazak, Jarmas, and Thompson (1982) criticize Spanier and Thompson's (1982) study on the grounds that the four subscales were presented as robust scales even though three factors were substantially related. Also, they review articles (Sharples & Cross, 1982; Norton, 1983) which presented the DAS weighting system as inappropriate. Meanwhile they criticize the factor analytic solution proposed by Spanier in 1976. Kazak, Jarmas, and Snitzer (1988) further found that even though the general pattern of item loadings on the four factors were similar to those of Spanier (1976), the Consensus factor appeared as a stronger factor by accounting for 74.5% of the variance compared to the three weaker factors, each of which accounted for less than 10% of the variance. Consequently, Kazak et al. (1988) encourage researchers to keep such criticisms in mind and use the DAS as a measure for assessing one general marital satisfaction dimension and not use the subscales as indices of satisfaction.

In addition, Kazak et al. (1988) criticize the DAS for not addressing heterogeneity in the samples studied. For example, gender differences were not accounted for in assessing marital satisfaction. However, findings suggest that in men's data, satisfaction is more a function of cohesion or consensus while for women general satisfaction (independent of other relational aspects) is more important (Kazack et al., 1988). As additional

support for the heterogeneity issue, Casas and Ortiz (1985) argued that DAS norms were problematic in generalizing to non-Caucasians, and Schlesinger (1979) reported that marital stage and presence of children were not considered even though marital satisfaction seems to change across the life cycle. Finally, Eddy et al. (1991) state that Spanier's (1976) samples have also included divorced and separated people so that generalizing the data to married couples becomes problematic.

Two other concerns regarding the DAS were also raised in the report by Kazack et al. (1988). First, clinical utility of the DAS could be limited because it was validated based on the discrimination between married and divorced persons, who may experience extreme distress compared to people who typically seek counseling in clinics. Second, although higher scores indicate better adjustment, they can also be problematic. That is, higher scores may reflect greater agreement in individuals who will always agree about sex, friends and recreation, and are possibly enmeshed rather than adjusted. Finally, Roach, Frazier, and Bowden (1981) claim that the DAS focuses a great deal on estimates of frequency and degrees of difference. This can be viewed as a setback because estimates of frequency may involve more cognitive and recall dynamics than attitudinal or emotional responses.

Despite criticisms of the DAS, it was selected for use in the present study because it was reputed to be reliable, valid, brief, easy to administer, easy to score, and a popular measure used with married couples in many studies.

The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS).

In light of reported flaws in the DAS and the potential for confounding, the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale was also used as an additional measure for the dependent variable. The advantage of using two such measures is that one can compensate for the drawbacks of the other. Correlations done between the responses to both scales may show convergent validity. It was hoped that using two measures of satisfaction would provide more support for the validity and reliability of data in this study while compensating for some of the weaknesses evident in each measure.

The KMSS is a 3 item, Likert type self-report questionnaire that has adequate reliability. It can be used with all married populations and it has the advantage of not being as long as the other measures of marital satisfaction. It also has the advantages of being easy to administer and score.

In the present study, responses to the three questions were summed to yield a total marital satisfaction score (with a possible range of 3 - 21) such that higher scores indicated greater satisfaction. The KMSS measures marital satisfaction according to : marriage as an institution, the marital relationship, and the character of one's partner. These items reflect the notion that there are conceptual differences between questions on spouses, marriage and the relationship. It appears that the differences in norm means for each item would

contradict the possibility that these items are the same item worded in three different ways (Schumm et al., 1986).

Although this is a short measure, Cronbach's alpha has been reported as 0.81 - 0.98, with most studies reporting an alpha in the 0.90 and above range. For example, recently, the following alpha values were reported as: 0.96 for wives (Jeong, Bollman, & Schumm, 1992); 0.96 for husbands (Hendrix & Anelli, 1993); 0.98 for wives (Tubman, 1993); 0.95 for husbands and 0.96 for wives (Chang, Schumm, Coulson, Bollman, & Jurich, 1994); and 0.94 for husbands and 0.96 for wives (White, Stahmann, & Furrow, 1994). As for test-retest reliability, there have been reports of 0.71 over a ten week period for wives (Mitchell, Newell, & Schumm, 1983), and 0.62 for wives vs 0.72 for husbands over six months (Eggeman, Moxley, & Schumm, 1985). A Korean version showed an alpha of 0.93. Furthermore, a correlation was found with income (0.42) and with the wife's proficiency in English (0.36) (Touliatos et al., 1990).

In terms of factorial validity, studies were done to investigate the possibility that similar scales measure one concept, such as social desirability, rather than separate concepts such as marital satisfaction or parental satisfaction. For example, Canfield, Schumm, Swihart, and Eggerichs (1990) found that, in husbands' responses, the KMSS factored differently from parental / family items. In 1994, Chang et al. found that the KMSS factored differently from various parental satisfaction items and three scales of the Marital Communication Inventory items responded to by husbands and wives.

With respect to concurrent validity, the KMS scale was found to correlate more strongly with the satisfaction subscale of the DAS than with the other three subscales of the DAS (Schumm et al., 1986). Also, the KMS scale significantly correlated more with the Quality of Marriage Index (0.91) than the DAS (0.83) (Schumm et al., 1986). In 1992, Jeong et al. found that the KMS scale correlated -0.50 with the Marital Status Inventory. Finally, in 1994, White et al. found correlations of 0.80 - 0.84 between the KMS scale and the Locke-Wallace MAT.

As for criterion validity, less research has been done to compare divorced and intact couples. However, Moxley, Eggeman, and Schumm (1987) found that mean KMSS scores of husbands and wives entering a pre-divorce programs were much lower than usual KMSS means. Also, Tubman (1991, 1993) found that wives married to alcohol dependent husbands had significantly lower KMSS means than wives in a comparison group.

Finally, construct validity has been researched for the KMS scale by correlations between the KMSS and other measures. For example constructs with which correlations were conducted were: positive regard (0.42-0.70) (Touliatos et al., 1990); wives' Cohesion (0.42) and Independence (0.19) assessed by Moos' FES (Mitchell et al., 1983); locus of control (0.18-0.31) (Bugaghish et al., 1983); total family income according to wives (0.30) (Grover et al., 1984); Temporal Conflict Scales used with both wives and husbands (0.29 - 0.87) (Eggeman et al., 1985); and emotional intimacy in wives (0.77) vs emotional

intimacy in husbands (0.32) (Hatch, James, and Schumm, 1986). Excellent concurrent validity has been shown in that the KMS significantly correlated with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and the Quality of Marriage Index. Moreover, this measure has been used to differentiate therapy from nontherapy couples while controlling for social desirability, income, age, education, duration of marriage and number of kids.

A disadvantage to using the KMS Scale lies in the possibility that the KMS scale's use of response categories that are related to satisfaction (extremely satisfied to extremely dissatisfied) might yield a spurious correlation with other measures with similar response format by means of common methods variance (Schumm et al., 1986). Also, another problem with using the KMS scale has been given attention by Schumm and his colleagues. They are concerned about the tendency for the response distribution to show skewness and kurtosis (Schumm et al., 1983b). However, these issues typically confront all global measures. Overall, the KMS scale seems to directly measure one aspect of marital quality (marital satisfaction) as a whole with considerable internal consistency and validity despite being much shorter than other scales.

The Communication Scale.

Antill and Cotton (1987) developed the Communication Scale as part of an omnibus questionnaire designed to assess amount of self-disclosure. It is a 20 item self-report questionnaire with some items based on those used by Jourard and Lasakow (1958).

The first 12 items tap 2 scales which measure disclosure of Positive aspects about oneself (6 items) and Negative aspects about oneself (6 items). An example of a positive item is "My personal successes in any sphere of my life" and an example of a negative item is "My main worries and fears". Responses to these items are on a four-point scale from "Nothing" to "Everything" with an additional anchor marked "N/A". The remaining 8 items are part of 2 scales which measure disclosure of Anger (4 items) and Sexual Likes and Dislikes (4 items). An example of an anger item is "Do you feel free to express your anger and irritations?" and an example of a sexual item is "Are you able to communicate to your spouse your sexual dislikes?" Responses to these items are on a five-point scale from "Never" to "Always" with an additional anchor marked "N/A". Higher scores show more self-disclosure on these scales. This instrument appears to be suitable for use with couples of any age, with or without children, and a minimum 7th grade level reading ability.

For the present study, the 19 items of the Communication Scale could not be simply summed to yield a reliable total self disclosure value. Because of the presence of the "Not Available" anchor in the Communication Scale, participants who chose this response often may have shown a low Total Self-Disclosure score, which would not truly reflect the amount of self-disclosure. Thus only valid responses (i.e. numeric responses) were summed. In addition, the first twelve items were responded to on a four-point scale while the last 8 items

were responded to on a five-point scale. Because of the inconsistent scaling, summation of items would not yield an accurate score. Therefore, to give equal weight to each item, the following was done according to the suggestions of R. Conry (personal communication, July 30, 1996): (1) all responses were summed (excluding item thirteen) and divided by the number of valid responses to yield an average; and (2) the average from the previous step was multiplied by 19 to obtain a total self-disclosure score.

With respect to sampling, the Communication Scale was first administered to 108 intact married couples in the metropolitan area of Sydney, Australia. The couples ranged in ages from 19 to 65 years, were primarily middle class, and married anywhere from 2 months to 42 years. Eleven percent of this sample had been previously married and the average number of children was two. Of the males, ninety percent were employed while in the females fifty-two percent were employed. The couples' education ranged from possession of a highschool diploma, a certificate or technical diploma beyond highschool, or a university degree. Other couples either did not complete highschool or were working toward a degree. The characteristics of this sample may limit generalizability of findings somewhat and so caution should be exercised in making interpretations.

Empirical evidence on reliability has shown Cronbach's alpha for males to be 0.85 (Positive scale), 0.87 (Negative scale), 0.46 (Anger scale), and 0.77 (Sex scale). For females the alpha values were 0.85 (Positive scale), 0.85 (Negative

scale), 0.37 (Anger scale), and 0.84 (Sex scale). By removing the thirteenth item from the Anger scale, the alpha values were reported as improving to 0.64 for males and 0.70 for females. Therefore, in the present study, the thirteenth item was also excluded from the analysis.

Intercorrelations among the four disclosure scales ranged from 0.45 - 0.83 (males) and 0.48 - 0.78 (females) with highest correlations between Positive and Negative scales. Hence, the investigators concluded that disclosure is general and not specifically linked to a certain area so they formed a Total Disclosure scale (which combines all 19 items) and found the alpha values to be 0.91 for males and 0.93 for females. Further analyses, which used the four subscales separately, yielded similar results and supported the approach of using the single scale.

A shortcoming in using the Communication Scale is the lack of empirical research on its psychometric properties; although the initial indications are positive. At the same time, the need for scientific research using the Communication Scale appears to be another strong reason for its use in the present study. The Communication Scale was chosen mainly because, in a review of measures, no other short, appropriate, highly reliable, self-report communication inventory specifically measuring self-disclosure (between married couples) as a separate concept was identified. Other measures of communication, such as the Relational Dimensions Instrument and Primary Communication Inventory, do not explicitly claim that a

purpose of the measure is to assess specifically self-disclosure. The Marital Communication Inventory (Bienvenu, 1970) has only six items that measure self-disclosure anxiety and has been criticized as being greatly loaded with either marital adjustment or conventionality so it is not a sole measure of self-disclosure (Schumm and Figley, 1979). Jourard and Lasakow's Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (1958) has been often criticized as lacking correlations with other independent measures of self-disclosure. Taylor and Altman's (1966) scale contained over 400 statements combining intimacy and self-disclosure statements. Given the various shortcomings in each of the abovementioned communication inventories, using the Communication Scale appeared to be the questionnaire that was shortest to administer, easiest to score, and reliable enough to specifically measure amount of self-disclosure.

Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Inventory (PAIR).

The PAIR Inventory was created by Schaefer and Olson in 1981 after an extensive review of literature on intimacy. The PAIR, an acronym for Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships, is used to provide information on five types of intimacy: emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational. There is also a Conventionality scale which is designed to serve as a lie scale. The PAIR is not a measure of one's attitude about marriage but rather looks at a couple's relationship. Intimacy, according to the authors, is more than

self-disclosure and consists of closeness and sharing. Married individuals can describe their relationship from two perspectives: how they currently perceive it (perceived) and how they would like their relationship to be (expected). This 60-item Likert style self-report questionnaire uses a 5 point response format where subjects indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with 10 items for each of six subscales. The inventory takes 20 to 30 minutes to complete and the individual items in subscales are then totaled to get scores for each area. These totals are then converted into percentage scores (with a range from 0 - 96).

The items in this inventory were obtained from an original pool of 75 items which were given to 192 non-clinical married couples married between one and 37 years and ranging from 21 to 60 years of age. Data was collected from 12 separate enrichment weekends, with 12-20 couples participating in each weekend. Items were selected based on a number of criteria. Item and factor analyses were done and only the items with best factor loading on the scales and those that met the item analysis criteria were retained. More specifically, items were required to correlate higher with their own a priori scale than with other scales. Loadings of items on their primary factors ranged from 0.21 to 0.78.

For the present study, the PAIR's 36 raw perceived scores and 36 raw expected scores had to be subjected to calculations (for details on scoring refer to the manual by Olson and Schaefer, 1981) in order to obtain a total perceived and total

expected score for each of five scales: sexual, intellectual, recreational, social and emotional. However, for the purpose of this study, only the score for the Emotional Intimacy scale was used in the regression analyses.

With regards to convergent validity, Schaefer and Olson (1981) found that, except for the spiritual scale, all other subscales had positive correlations greater than 0.30 with the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale responses made by husbands, wives, and couples. Using an adapted version of one of Jourard's Self-Disclosure Scales along with the PAIR, there were correlations of 0.13 - 0.31, which may point to the positive relationship between self-disclosure and intimacy while possibly supporting the finding in the general literature that too much self-disclosure can be damaging. In addition, every PAIR subscale was found to positively and significantly correlate with the cohesion and expressiveness scales on Moos' Family Environment Scale. In contrast, the Control and Conflict scales showed negative correlations with the PAIR's Emotional, Intellectual and Recreational scales.

As for reliability, no test-retest analyses were done by Schaefer and Olson (1981). However, the following significant alphas were found for each scale: 0.75 (Emotional), 0.71 (Social), 0.77 (Sexual), 0.70 (Intellectual), and 0.70 (Recreational). The reliability of the Conventionality scale was found to be 0.80.

Some shortcomings in using the PAIR do exist. The PAIR manual is missing information on how each item loads on other

factors. Also, the manual does not contain any normative information (although Schaefer and Olson's 1981 article presents means and standard deviations for 192 couples). The authors contend that normative information is not relevant to this inventory because it is the discrepancy between ideal and perceived intimacy on each dimension for husbands and wives that are important. Furthermore, in a review of the PAIR by Wolf in the 1992 Eleventh Mental Measurements Yearbook, criticism is levelled at the PAIR manual's lack of guidance for evaluating discrepancy scores. Not much is said about interpretation other than the statement that a discrepancy of less than 5 points between perceptions of husband and wife is not important. Wolf also reminds researchers of the unreliability of discrepancy scores.

Despite the fact that there is little evidential information available, the PAIR is still the measure of choice for this study. It has been carefully planned on the basis of a review of theoretical and research literature, it takes social desirability into account (by means of the lie scale), it has adequate psychometric properties, and it is easy to administer and score. More importantly, it espouses the definition of intimacy that is adopted for this study. It is hoped that the results of this study will in some way remedy the lack of empirical information in the literature on the PAIR.

The Marital Coping Inventory.

Finally, the last measure to be used is the Marital Coping Inventory, which was developed by Bowman in 1990. This 64 item self-report questionnaire measures five kinds of coping which couples could use to deal with recurring marital problems: Conflict, Introspective Self-blame, Positive Approach, Self-interest, and Avoidance. Based on literature, previous coping scales, interviews and questionnaires with married couples, 71 items were initially developed to measure coping efforts (actions, thoughts or feelings). Upon item-response analysis of data from three consecutive versions, items were refined. On the final scale, a factor analysis yielded the five-factor solution and an item analysis identified items meeting conditions for use in the scales. Those items which had factor loadings greater than 0.4 were retained. The final Marital Coping Inventory contains 64 items, based on a normative population of 368 participants from the Vancouver lower mainland region. Although sampling initially included married people with an affiliation to a college or university, an additional random sample was recruited to make data more representative. A randomization technique was used with the Greater Vancouver directory to identify households where a married couple would be residing. The combined sample may have had higher levels of education according to Bowman.

In the present study coding of the MCI began with reverse coding of items 3, 17, 21, 24, 50, and 57. The response to each of these items had to be subtracted from 6 in order to obtain

the reversed value (such that a response of 1 would be changed to a value of 5). Next, items 4, 9, 12, 16, 19, 27, 29, 34, 39, 43, 46, 52, 56, 61, and 64 were summed to yield a Positive Approach score. Items for each of the other four scales were also summed to obtain total scores (for details on scoring refer to Bowman, 1990). For the purpose of this study, however, only the Positive Approach scale score was used in the regression analyses.

In terms of reliability, Cronbach's alpha values were: 0.88 (Conflict), 0.88 (Self-blame), 0.82 (Positive Approach), 0.82 (Self-interest), and 0.77 (Avoidance). There were also adequate correlations between final scale scores and original factor scores: 0.94 (Conflict), 0.95 (Introspective Self-blame), 0.94 (Positive Approach), 0.86 (Self-interest), and 0.89 (Avoidance). Finally, Bowman identified significant correlations between coping scale scores and global ratings of marital happiness and problem severity. More specifically, she found that marital happiness correlated positively with Positive Approach (0.23) but negatively with Conflict (-0.27), Introspective Self-blame (-0.40), Self-interest (-0.42), and Avoidance (-0.23). As for marital problem severity ratings, there were significant correlations with four of the coping efforts: Conflict (0.33), Introspective Self-blame (0.52), Positive Approach (-0.17) and Self-interest (0.36). Finally, Bowman found that sex, number of years together, and age of participants bore significant relationships with coping efforts.

Empirical evidence regarding the psychometric properties is currently being collected. Because this is a relatively new inventory, little evidence exists in the research literature on its merits and drawbacks but, on the whole, the measure appears to be promising. There are, however, a few problems with its use. First, test-retest reliability and the measure's ability to discriminate between clinical and nonclinical couples remains to be established, among other missing empirical pieces of information. Recently, Cohan and Bradbury (1994) evaluated the psychometric properties of the Marital Coping Inventory by administering the MCI to 120 childless, newlywed spouses, observing the spouses' discussion of a problem, and repeating administration of the MCI to 104 spouses six months later. They found that after controlling for negative affectivity and problem severity, there were significant longitudinal results: husbands' higher levels of Conflict predicted higher levels of their satisfaction over six months, while wives' higher levels of Self-Interest predicted their lower levels of satisfaction. They also found that the median test-retest reliability for all reliable subscales was greater than 0.60 for husbands as well as for wives thus showing stability over time. However, a spouse's coping was not consistent with the partner's coping during the first year and this poses a question regarding how a dyad's coping patterns develop over time.

Second, although this measure yielded five types of factors, the literature on coping suggests that there is yet no clear answer as to whether coping efforts can be categorized in

terms of specific means, goals, functions or effects. Compared to the study by Folkman and Lazarus (1980), Bowman's study assessed coping efforts as means rather than ends and by empirical rather than rational scale-construction methods. In addition, Cohan and Bradbury (1994) found that Conflict and Self-Blame correlated with depressive symptoms and that the Self-Blame subscale score correlated with BDI scores. They attribute this relationship to the Self-Blame subscale's measurement of negative affective reactions (such as feelings of depression, failure, and anxiety) rather than coping, which is defined as actions in response to a problem.

Third, Cohan and Bradbury (1994) criticized Bowman's (1990) study for not analyzing the internal consistency of the subscales for husbands and wives separately. Also, Bowman (1990) obtained data from individual spouses rather than both spouses in a couple and could not determine whether one spouse's responses covaried with the responses of the other spouse. It is important to analyze the coping responses at a dyadic level since one spouse's coping may depend in part on the perceptions and efforts of the other's coping. Based on these two criticisms, Cohan and Bradbury's study looked at reports from both spouses in a couple and was intended to investigate whether gender differences occurred for coefficient alpha on MCI subscales before accepting that husbands and wives differed in their reports of coping. They found that overall gender differences were not large. The result that wives reported greater use of Conflict and Self-Blame than husbands did "was

not an artifact of scale reliabilities differing by gender." (Cohan & Bradbury, 1994) * Nevertheless, they recommended that husbands' and wives' data should be analyzed separately for gender differences.

With regards to internal consistency, Cohan and Bradbury's study found that for both husbands and wives at Time 1, coefficient alpha was adequate, between 0.78 and 0.92 for most scales, but the alpha value was low for the Avoidance subscale (0.55 for husbands and 0.34 for wives). At Time 2, most scales once again showed a coefficient alpha of 0.76 - 0.86 for husbands and wives while the Avoidance subscale showed an alpha value of 0.43 (for husbands) and 0.30 (for wives). These results were interpreted as possibly being a function of the sample. The newlywed couples could have interpreted the Avoidance items differently from other couples who were married longer. Alternatively, the scale items or the difficulty in measuring avoidance by means of self-report could explain the low coefficient alpha values.

Finally, Cohan and Bradbury (1994) state that validity of the Marital Coping Inventory is somewhat supported by the covariation between the subscales and specific affective expressions which were observed. For example, in husbands, Conflict covaried positively with anger expression, but negatively with whining during a discussion. In wives, Self-Blame covaried positively with sadness expression. Such pieces of evidence are especially important in light of the fact that self-reporting and problem-solving discussion share no method of

variance. In spite of the above preliminary efforts to investigate psychometric properties, there is a shortage of empirical evidence and caution must be exercised in interpreting the results of the Marital Coping Inventory. Nevertheless, this inventory was selected because the initial reliability values were good; the measure was developed using participants from Vancouver (British Columbia); the measure was brief; it was easy to administer and score; it was the only measure found to assess coping efforts; and more research is needed to identify its psychometric properties.

Data Analysis

Once all data had been collected, questionnaires were scored by the principle investigator. For all participants, responses to every item on each of the six questionnaires were entered along with relevant subscale or total scores in a Microsoft Works spreadsheet. The data were then imported into SPSS for Windows in order to perform statistical analyses appropriate for testing the hypotheses and exploring the questions.

On the demographics questionnaire, ethnic heritage was coded as 1 if the respondent was Caucasian, and 2 if the respondent was not Caucasian (eg. Asian). For degree, the numbers assigned were: (1) elementary school certificate; (2) highschool diploma; (3) postsecondary diploma / certificate; (4) Bachelor's degree; and (5) graduate or professional degree. With respect to occupation, the following numbers were assigned:

(1) homemaker, (2) student; (3) blue collar (manual); (4) white collar (clerical); (5) professional / managerial; (6) self-employed business owners; (7) retired or on a pension program. The annual individual income was coded as: (1) if it was less than \$10,000; (2) if it was \$10 - \$30, 000; (3) if it was \$30 - \$50,000; (4) if it was \$50 - \$70,000; and (5) if it was more than \$70,000. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated for all of the above demographic variables as well as key variables.

The DAS and KMSS scores were subjected to a Pearson bivariate correlation computation to examine whether they were sufficiently related in order to create a single marital satisfaction index.

The responses of local participants for the marital satisfaction, self-disclosure, positive coping, and intimacy variables were compared to responses made by "out of town" participants. A single sample t-test was used to examine whether there were any significant differences.

The normality assumption was checked for husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction, self-disclosure, positive coping, and intimacy variables using a Lilliefors test of normality. Next, coefficient alphas were computed for each of the measures used in order to examine reliability.

Relationships between variables were determined by computing correlations. Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated whenever a ranked categorical variable was encountered or, variables were coded in a categorical manner.

The categorical variables were: number of children, income, highest degree attained, and (specifically for husbands) the recoded Intimacy Difference variable. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated only between continuous variables such as : age, years of marriage, years of premarital cohabitation, years of education, the five types of coping, the four types of self-disclosure, total Self-Disclosure, Perceived Emotional Intimacy, Intimacy Difference (specifically for the wives), and Marital Satisfaction. In addition, eta correlation coefficients were computed between occupation and other variables. This kind of correlation was chosen because occupation is a categorical variable but it is not ranked so a Spearman would be inappropriate (B. Haverkamp, personal communication, September 18, 1996).

With regards to analyzing contributions, simultaneous regressions were performed where, by default, the statistics program entered the variable that showed the greater correlation with satisfaction first while other variables were introduced after. Other regression analyses (eg. forward or backward) were deemed inappropriate for exploring this study's questions based on the report by Wampold and Freund (1987). That is, simultaneous multiple regressions were employed because previous research does not offer a theoretical or empirical basis for entering any one of the predictor variables prior to other predictors. Overall, three predictors were entered into a multiple regression to determine joint contribution to marital

satisfaction : self-disclosure, intimacy difference, and positive coping.

Also, the separate contribution made by each predictor (beyond the contributions of the other two predictors) was assessed by subtracting the Adjusted R -squared value of the regression equation that did not contain the predictor, from the Adjusted R -squared value of the regression equation containing all three predictors (R. Conry, personal communication, July 30, 1996). A similar process was used to analyze separate contributions for each demographic variable. The Adjusted R -squared value of a multiple regression with the three key predictors and one demographic variable was compared to the Adjusted R -squared value of a multiple regression with only the three key predictors present.

Chapter IV

Results

Several hypotheses and research questions were investigated for wives and husbands in this study. It was hypothesized that self-disclosure, intimacy difference, and positive coping would jointly contribute to husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction and that each of these predictor variables would make a unique contribution to satisfaction. Also, it was hypothesized that self-disclosure and positive coping would be positively correlated with marital satisfaction while intimacy difference would be negatively correlated with marital satisfaction. Moreover, it was hypothesized that self-disclosure and intimacy difference would be negatively correlated while self-disclosure and positive coping would be positively correlated. Finally, it was hypothesized that intimacy difference and positive coping would be negatively correlated. Other questions were also posed but no specific hypotheses were ventured for it was hoped that the explorations in this study would yield some tentative answers and suggest new questions for future research.

Creating a Single Index for Marital Satisfaction

Based on previous research it was suspected that the overall scores on the DAS and the KMSS would be related and that scores on these two measures could be combined to yield a single index for marital satisfaction. Combining these two sets of scores would be advantageous in that it offers a more reliable

measure of the dependent variable, marital satisfaction. According to Murphy and Davidshofer (1994), composite scores are typically more reliable even than the tests that have made up the composite. If one adds the scores of several highly correlated tests, this is akin to adding together scores on several positively correlated items to form a single test score. Each test serves as a form of measurement of the same attribute.

To begin with, in order to standardize the DAS and KMSS scores, z scores were computed for every subject's DAS Total score and KMSS Total scores. This was done by subtracting the mean of the scale from the subject's score and dividing by the standard deviation of the respective scale. Then, in order to explore the relationship between the DAS and KMSS, a scatter plot was created using the zDAS and zKMSS scores. This scatter plot displayed a positive, moderate, linear association which may have been even stronger if an outlier were excluded. The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated (using all subjects to give a more accurate indication of strength) and found to be 0.7992 ($p=.000$). Given this strong correlation, a decision was made to combine the DAS and KMSS total scores by averaging their z scores to yield a single measure of marital satisfaction (zKMSDAS). This z-score was used as the dependent variable in subsequent analyses.

Comparison of Local to "Out of Town" Participants

In accordance with the suggestion of R. Conry (personal communication, July 30, 1996) a single sample t-test was

performed for several key variables in the study to determine whether responses of local participants differed significantly from the responses of "out of town" participants. In one series of t-tests, the mean of local husbands ($N = 48$) was used as a population mean and compared to the mean of "out of town" husbands ($N = 4$). This was done by subtracting the mean of local husbands from the "out of town" husbands on a particular variable. The resulting value was then divided by the product that resulted from multiplying the standard deviation of "out of town" husbands by the square root of the number of "out of town" husbands. Given a two-tailed test alpha of .05, t_{crit} of 3.182, and df of 3 ($N-1$), no significant differences emerged between local and "out of town" husbands on total Self-Disclosure, Intimacy Difference, total DAS, total KMSS, and Positive Coping variables. The same formula was also applied to a second series of single sample t-tests that assessed the scores of local vs "out of town" wives. Given a two-tailed test alpha of .05, t_{crit} of 2.571, and df of 5 ($N-1$), no significant differences emerged between local ($N = 48$) and "out of town" ($N = 6$) wives on total Self-Disclosure, Intimacy Difference, total DAS, total KMSS, and Positive Coping Variables.

Descriptive Statistics for the Variables

Table 1 shows the wives' and husbands' means and standard deviations for key variables. The greatest difference between husbands' and wives' raw score means was found for Emotional Intimacy Difference which was 17.00 for husbands and 25.33 for

wives. Annual income of men (\$30 - 50,000) was also found to be different from that of women (\$10 - 30,000).

Table 1. Means and standard deviations for wives and husbands

Variable	Wives (n=54)	Husbands (n=52)
Age	mean = 39.7 sd = 11.1	mean = 41.9 sd = 11.9
Number of years married	mean = 14.20 sd = 12.36	mean = 14.20 sd = 12.2
Years of premarital cohabitation	mean = 0.85 sd = 1.32	mean = 0.85 sd = 1.2
Years of education	mean = 14.64 sd = 3.74	mean = 15.65 sd = 4.2
Annual income	mean= \$10-30,000 sd = N / A	mean= \$30-50,000 sd = N / A
KMSS total	mean = 17.74 sd = 2.96	mean = 18.23 sd = 2.2
DAS total	mean = 112.93 sd = 14.66	mean = 115.79 sd = 12.5
Positive Coping	mean = 38.69 sd = 7.03	mean = 39.08 sd = 8.3
Self disclosure total	mean = 61.87 sd = 10.41	mean = 59.36 sd = 9.1
Perceived emotional intimacy score (PAIR)	mean = 66.22 sd = 20.96	mean = 73.69 sd = 16.4
Expected emotional intimacy score (PAIR)	mean = 91.56 sd = 7.61	mean = 90.69 sd = 6.7
Emotional intimacy difference score (expected - perceived)	mean = 25.33 sd = 18.31	mean = 17.00 ^a sd = 15.5

^a Note that the husbands' mean on this variable was 2.42 with a standard deviation of 1.02 after recoding was accomplished.

Normality Assumption

Key variables were subjected to a Lilliefors test of normality and analyzed separately for the sample of husbands and sample of wives. The Lilliefors test is a commonly used test that is derived from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (SPSS for Windows, 1993). For the sample of wives, the null hypothesis (assumption that the variable showed normality) was retained and no significance was found in the test on the following variables: total Self-Disclosure, Intimacy Difference, Positive Coping, and total DAS. However, the null hypothesis was rejected when there were significant departures from the normal distribution for zKMSDAS ($K-S = .13$, $p=.03$). This may have been because of the KMSS distribution, which also departed from normality ($p=.01$). In spite of this finding, no transformation was performed for the zKMSDAS variable because: 1) the distribution was only slightly skewed ($-.78$) and was not believed to be capable of greatly affecting the correlations; 2) the zKMSDAS was close to not reaching significance (i.e. the significance probability value was not so low as to raise great concern); and 3) although the nature of the three item KMSS may have contributed to a greater frequency of higher satisfaction scores (it was negatively skewed), the 32 item DAS questionnaire did show a normal distribution and was assumed to maintain the integrity of the dependent variable.

With regards to the sample of husbands, the null hypothesis was retained and no significance was found in the test on the following variables: total Self-Disclosure, Positive Coping,

zKMSDAS, and Perceived Emotional Intimacy. However, the null hypothesis was rejected and the distribution was found to significantly depart from the normal distribution for Intimacy Difference ($K-S = .16$, $p=.0012$) and Expected Emotional Intimacy ($K-S = .24$, $p=.0000$). Such extremely low probability levels generated concern (particularly for the Intimacy Difference variable which was to be used in the correlations and multiple regressions). Therefore, several transformations (eg. inverse sine, inverse tangent, base-10 logarithm, base-e logarithm, positive square root, and square) of the Intimacy Difference scores were attempted. All of these transformations yielded distributions which still departed significantly from the normal. As an alternative for analysis, the Intimacy Difference data were recoded into a new independent variable (with four levels): all scores of 0 were recoded as a new value of 1; all scores between 1 and 15 were recoded as a new value of 2; all scores between 16 and 29 were recoded as a new value of 3; and all scores between 30 and 60 were recoded as a new value of 4. In this way, new ranked categories were created for low, low-moderate, moderate-high, and high scores on the Intimacy Difference variable as the data's distribution was transformed to resemble a normal one. The recoded Intimacy Difference variable was employed in all of the husbands' correlations and regressions that would have otherwise used the old Intimacy Difference scores. The advantage of this procedure was that it was easy, fast, helpful in maintaining distinct categories and in keeping this variable useful for multiple regressions while

not allowing the distribution to become affected by extreme values. The disadvantage was that the new distribution was based on cumulative frequency (i.e. the order and position of the scores in the distribution) rather than their actual values so it might have been a less sensitive representation.

Relationships Between Variables

In order to investigate the linear relationships between variables, Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated whenever a ranked categorical variable was encountered or, variables were coded in a categorical manner. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated only between continuous variables. Probabilities were also calculated to establish whether a relationship is significant. Also, eta correlation coefficients were computed between occupation and other variables because occupation is a categorical variable but it is not ranked.

It should be noted that because significance of correlations can often be attributed to sample size, the discussion section will focus only on the associations which demonstrated a moderate magnitude (a correlation coefficient greater than 0.35). However, it is recommended that future studies explore the weaker significant relationships between variables in greater detail.

Table 2 depicts the Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficients and their significance level for wives, while Table 3 shows correlation coefficients and probabilities for husbands.

Table 2. Correlation matrix for wives' responses on key variables.

	Age	Income	Years Married	Years of Education	# of Children	^a z KMSDAS	Self- Disclosure	Positive Coping	Int ^b Perc	Int ^c Exp	Intimacy difference
Age	-										
Income	.02	-									
Years Married	.93*	.00	-								
Years of Education	-.17	.09	-.18	-							
# of Children	.56	-.11	.57*	-.12	-						
^a z KMSDAS	-.08	.02	-.13	-.18	-.26	-					
Self- Disclosure	.35	-.03	-.16	-.18	-.22	.72*	-				
Positive Coping	.18	.07	.12	-.18	-.07	.23	.17	-			
Int Perc ^b	.02	.19	-.09	-.07	-.25	.77*	.69*	.13	-		
Int Exp ^c	-.30	-.10	-.35*	-.03	-.43*	.35*	.59*	-.04	.51*	-	
Intimacy difference	-.14	-.23	-.05	.06	.14	-.73*	-.54*	-.17	-.93*	-.17	-

^a Marital Satisfaction (combined KMSS and DAS z scores)^b Perceived Emotional Intimacy (PAIR)^c Expected Emotional Intimacy (PAIR)* $p < .05$ and a 2 tailed significance level was used

Table 3. Correlation matrix for husbands' responses on key variables.

	Age	Income	Years Married	Years of Education	# of Children	z ^a KMSDAS	Self-Disclosure	Positive Coping	Int ^b Perc	Int ^c Exp	Intimacy difference
Age	-										
Income	.30*	-									
Years Married	.88*	.32*	-								
Years of Education	.06	.18	.06	-							
# of Children	.51*	.55*	.56*	.04	-						
z ^a KMSDAS	.13	-.24	.06	-.14	-.06	-					
Self-Disclosure	.22	.05	.22	-.01	.07	.54*	-				
Positive Coping	.33*	.00	.34*	-.05	.34*	.06	.16	-			
Int Perc ^b	.35*	-.14	.27	-.08	.00	.66*	.62*	.19	-		
Int Exp ^c	.21	.11	.30	.10	.08	.08	.43*	.08	.40*	-	
Intimacy difference	-.32*	.17	-.17	.13	.02	-.56*	-.42*	-.13	-.83*	.07	-

^a Marital Satisfaction (combined KMSS and DAS z scores)^b Perceived Emotional Intimacy (PAIR)^c Expected Emotional Intimacy (PAIR)

* p < .05 and a 2 tailed significance level was used

Wives' Significant Correlations.

None of the correlations for age, number of children, income, highest degree, length of marriage, and education showed a significant relationship with marital satisfaction or a predictor variable. Of the interrelationships among demographic variables, only number of children was significantly related to years of marriage ($r=.57$) and age was related to years of marriage ($r=.93$).

As is evident from Table 2, wives' Marital Satisfaction was strongly positively correlated ($r=.72$, $p=.00$) with total Self-Disclosure (thereby supporting Hypothesis 9) and Perceived Intimacy ($.77$, $p=.00$). Also, Marital Satisfaction was correlated strongly and negatively with the discrepancy between Perceived and Expected Emotional Intimacy ($r= -.73$, $p=.00$), which supported Hypothesis 7.

As part of post hoc analyses, correlations with other variables on each of the measures were also examined. Meaningful significant moderate correlations were also found between Marital Satisfaction and other variables such as Conflict Coping ($r= -.43$, $p=.001$), Self Coping ($r= -.47$, $p=.00$), Blame Coping ($r=-.41$, $p=.002$), Anger Disclosure ($r= .52$, $p=.00$), Negative Disclosure ($r=.52$, $p=.00$), Positive Disclosure ($r= .59$, $p=.00$), and Sex Disclosure ($r=.46$, $p=.00$).

The wives' Perceived Intimacy was strongly and positively correlated with total Self-Disclosure ($r=.69$, $p=.00$). Perceived Intimacy was also found to be significantly correlated with Negative Disclosure ($r=.51$, $p=.00$), Positive Disclosure ($r=.60$,

$p=.00$), Anger Disclosure ($r=.56$, $p=.00$), Sex Disclosure ($r=.35$, $p=.01$), Blame Coping ($r= -.46$, $p=.001$), Conflict Coping ($r=-.42$, $p=.002$), and Self Coping ($r= -.44$, $p=.001$).

The discrepancy between Perceived and Expected Intimacy was correlated significantly with Anger Disclosure ($r= -.43$, $p=.00$), Negative Disclosure ($r= -.31$, $p=.02$), Positive Disclosure ($r= -.45$, $p=.00$), Sex Disclosure ($r= -.29$, $p=.04$), Self Coping ($r=.36$, $p=.01$), Blame Coping ($r=.54$, $p=.00$), and Conflict Coping ($r=.46$, $p=.00$). As was expected, Intimacy Difference also correlated negatively with total Self-Disclosure ($r= -.54$, $p=.00$) thus supporting Hypothesis 11.

The wives' Positive Coping variable was surprisingly not significantly correlated with Marital Satisfaction, total Self-Disclosure, or any of the intimacy variables. Hence, Hypotheses 5, 13 and 15 were not confirmed. For wives, positive Coping was found to be only significantly and weakly correlated with two other independent variables : Avoidance Coping ($r=.38$, $p=.01$) and Self Coping ($r=.32$, $p=.02$).

Husbands' Significant Correlations.

According to Table 3, the husbands' Marital Satisfaction moderately positively correlated with total Self-Disclosure ($r=.54$, $p=.00$) so it supported hypothesis 10. It was also correlated positively with Perceived Intimacy ($.66$, $p=.00$). Furthermore, Marital Satisfaction was correlated strongly and negatively with the recoded discrepancy between Perceived and Expected Emotional Intimacy ($r= -.56$, $p=.00$) thereby confirming

Hypothesis 8. Meaningful moderate correlations were also found between the husbands' Marital Satisfaction and the following variables: Conflict Coping ($r = -.49$, $p = .00$), Self Coping ($r = -.35$, $p = .01$), Blame Coping ($r = -.41$, $p = .002$), Negative Disclosure ($r = .38$, $p = .005$), Positive Disclosure ($r = .36$, $p = .009$), and Sex Disclosure ($r = .32$, $p = .021$).

The husbands' Perceived Intimacy was correlated significantly with age ($r = .35$, $p = .01$), premarital cohabitation ($r = -.37$, $p = .01$), Blame Coping ($r = -.38$, $p = .01$), Conflict Coping ($r = -.46$, $p = .00$), total Self-Disclosure ($r = .62$, $p = .00$), Negative Disclosure ($r = .47$, $p = .00$), Positive Disclosure ($r = .47$, $p = .00$), Self Coping ($r = -.38$, $p = .01$), and recoded Intimacy Difference ($r = -.84$, $p = .00$).

The recoded discrepancy between Perceived and Expected Intimacy was correlated significantly with age ($r = -.32$, $p = .02$), Conflict Coping ($r = .40$, $p = .00$), Negative Disclosure ($r = -.32$, $p = .02$), and Anger Disclosure ($r = -.41$, $p = .00$). The recoded Intimacy Difference variable was also positively correlated with total Self Disclosure ($r = .42$, $p = .00$) so Hypothesis 12 was given support.

The husbands' Positive Coping variable was surprisingly not significantly correlated with Marital Satisfaction, total Self-Disclosure, or any of the intimacy variables. Hence, Hypotheses 6, 14, and 16 were not confirmed. However, Positive Coping was significantly correlated with age ($r = .33$, $p = .02$), years of marriage ($r = .34$, $p = .01$), number of children ($r = .34$, $p = .01$),

Avoidance Coping ($r=.38$, $p=.01$), Blame Coping ($r=.30$, $p=.03$), and Self Coping ($r=.53$, $p=.00$).

With respect to interrelationships among demographic variables, a meaningful significant correlation ($p<.05$) occurred between income and number of children ($r=.55$), suggesting that husbands who had the responsibility of caring for a greater number of children also possessed a higher income. Significant correlations were also found between: age and number of children ($r=.51$), age and years of marriage ($r=.88$), age and income ($r=.30$) and between number of children and years of marriage ($r=.56$).

After examining the correlation matrices, a decision was made not to construct a single SES indicator because income, degree and years of education were not significantly correlated with any of the key independent or dependent variables of interest (R. Conry, personal communication, July 30, 1996). As for the the husbands' and wives' occupation variables, eta correlation ratios (which were greater than .30) were found with the following variables: highest degree attained (husbands' $\eta^2 = .51$, wives' $\eta^2 = .49$); income (husbands' $\eta^2 = .46$; wives' $\eta^2 = .53$); Positive Coping (husbands' $\eta^2 = .31$; wives' $\eta^2 = .42$); Intimacy Difference (husbands' $\eta^2 = .39$; wives' $\eta^2 = .31$); years of education (husbands' $\eta^2 = .63$; wives' $\eta^2 = .49$); years of marriage (husbands' $\eta^2 = .57$; wives' $\eta^2 = .44$); and marital satisfaction (husbands' $\eta^2 = .37$; wives' $\eta^2 = .34$). The approximate significance for these correlation ratios was not offered by the statistics package employed.

Multiple Regression Analyses

For the purpose of this study, simultaneous regressions were performed where, by default, the statistics program entered the variable that showed the greater correlation with satisfaction first while other variables were introduced after. Table 4 summarizes the husbands' and wives' Adjusted R-Squared values (for joint contribution of the three predictors) and the percentage of variance accounted for by the combination of each predictor's unique contribution and its overlap with other predictors.

Table 4. Joint and separate contributions of each variable.

	Husbands	Wives
Adjusted <u>R</u> -squared (Joint contribution)	.41	.67
Intimacy Difference's contribution	15.40 %	16.00 %
Self-Disclosure's contribution	9.34 %	13.85 %
Positive Coping's contribution	- 0.46 %	0.50 %

Wives' Multiple Regressions.

Multiple regressions were executed for Marital Satisfaction using Intimacy Difference, total Self-Disclosure, and Positive Coping scores. The three variables did jointly contribute to wives' Marital Satisfaction as the equation with the three predictors produced an R -squared of .69, and an Adjusted R -squared of .67. This equation reached significance, $F(3,50)=36.36$, $p=.00$. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported. Table 5 depicts, in more detail, the Beta, t values and probabilities for each of the predictors in the joint contribution. These were : $B = .07$, $t(1,50) = .89$, $p=.38$ (Positive Coping); $B = -.47$, $t(1,50) = -5.05$, $p=.00$ (Intimacy Difference); and $B = .45$, $t(1,50) = 4.69$, $p=.00$ (Self-Disclosure). As noted, the contributions by Intimacy Difference and Self-Disclosure were significant.

Table 5. Beta, t , and probability values for each of the predictors in joint contribution to wives' marital satisfaction.

Variable	B	t	p
		($df= 1,50$)	
Self-Disclosure	.45	4.69	.00
Intimacy Difference	-.47	-5.05	.00
Positive Coping	.07	.89	.38

Note: Beta is the standardized regression coefficient.

According to the recommendation of R. Conry (personal communication, July 30, 1996), the separate contribution of a predictor (accompanied by the predictor's overlap with the other two predictors) was calculated by subtracting the Adjusted R -squared value of the regression equation that did not contain the predictor, from the Adjusted R -squared value of .67 (found for all three predictors' joint contribution). As evident from Table 4, hypothesis 3 was partially supported as Intimacy Difference (and its overlap with the other key predictors) made a separate contribution to marital satisfaction by accounting for 16% of the marital satisfaction variance above the amount that was accounted for by Positive Coping and Self-Disclosure. In essence, the Intimacy Difference variable (and its overlap with other predictors) improved the regression equation by accounting for 16% of the variance beyond what Self-Disclosure and Positive Coping had accounted for. However, Self-Disclosure (and its overlap with other key predictors) was also found to make a distinct contribution by accounting for 13.85% of the marital satisfaction variance above the variance that had already been accounted for by Intimacy Difference and Positive Coping. In marked contrast, Positive Coping only made a separate contribution of 0.5% above the contribution made by Intimacy Difference and Self-Disclosure.

Husbands' Multiple Regressions.

Multiple regressions were performed for Marital Satisfaction on (recoded) Intimacy Difference, total Self-Disclosure, and Positive Coping scores. As evident from Table 4, the three variables did jointly contribute to husbands' Marital Satisfaction as the equation with the three predictors produced an R -squared of .48, and an Adjusted R -squared of .41. This equation reached significance, $F(3,48) = 12.96$, $p = .00$. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported. Table 6 depicts, in more detail, the Beta, t values and probabilities for each of the predictors in the joint contribution. These were as follows: $B = -.09$, $t(1,48) = -.78$, $p = .44$ (Positive Coping); $B = -.45$, $t(1,48) = -3.72$, $p = .00$ (Intimacy Difference); and $B = .36$, $t(1,48) = 2.97$, $p = .00$ (Self-Disclosure). As noted, the contributions by Intimacy Difference and Self-Disclosure were significant.

Table 6. Beta, t , and probability for each of the predictors involved in joint contribution to husbands' marital satisfaction.

Variable	B	t ($df = 1,48$)	p
Self-Disclosure	.36	2.97	.00
Intimacy Difference	-.45	-3.72	.00
Positive Coping	-.09	-.78	.44

Note: Beta is the standardized regression coefficient.

Once again, according to the recommendation by R. Conry (personal communication, July 30, 1996), the separate contribution of a predictor (accompanied by its overlap with the other two key predictors) was calculated by subtracting the Adjusted R -squared value of the regression equation that did not contain the predictor, from the Adjusted R -squared value of .41 (found for all three predictors' joint contribution). As evident from Table 4, hypothesis 4 was partially supported because the recoded Intimacy Difference (and its overlap with the other two predictors) made a distinct contribution to marital satisfaction by accounting for 15.40% of the marital satisfaction variance above the amount that was accounted for by Positive Coping and Self-Disclosure. In essence, the Intimacy Difference variable (and its overlap with the other predictors) improved the regression equation by accounting for 15.4% of the variance beyond what Self-Disclosure and Positive Coping had accounted for. However, Self-Disclosure (and its overlap with the other two key predictors) was also found to make a separate contribution by accounting for 9.34% of the marital satisfaction variance above the variance that had already been accounted for by Intimacy Difference and Positive Coping. In noticeable contrast, Positive Coping did not make a distinct contribution (i.e. did not improve the regression) above the contribution made by Intimacy Difference and Self-Disclosure. In fact, the Adjusted R -squared value dropped by 0.46% when Positive Coping

was added to the regression equation that already contained Intimacy Difference and Self-Disclosure.

Multiple Regressions With Demographic Variables.

In order to measure the separate contribution of a demographic variable to marital satisfaction, several of the more important demographic variables were individually added to the regression equation: Marital Satisfaction = Intimacy Difference + Self-Disclosure + Positive Coping + error. Table 7 shows in further detail the Adjusted R-squared (after a demographic variable was added to the equation), Beta, and probability for each of the wives' and husbands' demographic variables. In addition, the table shows the percentage of variance accounted for by each demographic predictor and its overlap with other predictors. The only demographic variable which improved the regression equation a little, was income, which accounted for 4 % of the marital satisfaction variable above the variance that was already explained by the other predictors. However, this result was only true for the husbands' data.

Table 7. Adjusted R-squared values, separate contributions (beyond the 3 predictors' combined contribution), Beta, and significance of demographic variables.

Demographic Variables	Adjusted R-squared	B	p	Contribution to variance in satisfaction
Age	H = .41 W = .67	H = -.08 W = -.12	H = .52 W = .17	H = 0 % W = 0 %
Income	H = .45 W = .67	H = -.21 W = -.08	H = .05 W = .35	H = 4 % W = 0 %
Education (years)	H = .41 W = .66	H = -.07 W = -.06	H = .54 W = .50	H = 0 % W = -1 %
Marriage (years)	H = .41 W = .67	H = -.07 W = -.09	H = .54 W = .27	H = 0 % W = 0 %
Number of Children	H = .41 W = .67	H = -.89 W = -.09	H = .39 W = .28	H = 0 % W = 0 %

Note: H= Husbands' scores while W= Wives' scores. B is the standardized regression coefficient. Each demographic variable's contribution to satisfaction variance is accompanied by possible overlap with other key predictors (Self-Disclosure, Intimacy Difference, and Positive Coping).

Post Hoc Multiple Regression Analyses

Because several initial transformations of the husbands' Intimacy Difference variable had failed to "normalize" the positively skewed distribution, there was a strong implication that little difference existed between real and ideal intimacy for husbands. That is, husbands showed similar moderate to high Expected Emotional Intimacy scores such that homogeneity existed within the variable. It is possible that Expected (or idealized) Intimacy and hence the discrepancy between the Perceived and Expected Intimacy are not predictors which contribute to men's satisfaction in this study; whereas these variables appear to be valid predictors of the women's satisfaction. Because the Expected Emotional Intimacy variable's distribution was not normal, this variable was left out of the correlation and regression analyses (and subsequently the discussion).

As part of post hoc analysis, the Perceived Intimacy variable (instead of the Intimacy Difference variable) of the husbands and wives was entered into regressions along with Self-Disclosure and Positive Coping. This was done because the Perceived Intimacy variable did possess a normal distribution and may have been a more accurate predictor of husbands' satisfaction.

Although the Perceived Intimacy, Self-Disclosure, and Positive Coping variables jointly contributed to satisfaction for all participants (regardless of gender), the R^2 value was larger for women (Adjusted R^2 = .64) than for

men (Adjusted R -squared = .47). Further exploration of the Beta values suggested that such a difference in R -squared values could be explained by the difference in Self-Disclosure where the wives' Beta value was larger and significant. The entry of Perceived Emotional Intimacy did not greatly improve the regression equation (relative to the entry of recoded Intimacy Difference) so it may not matter which variable (Perceived or Discrepant Intimacy) one uses to predict husbands' satisfaction. Table 8 depicts the Beta values and their probabilities for each of the husbands' and wives' key predictor variables.

Table 8. Beta, t, and p for each predictor in the joint contribution (using perceived instead of discrepant intimacy).

Variable	B	p
Self-Disclosure	H = .21 W = .35	H = .12 W = .00
Perceived Emotional Intimacy	H = .54 W = .51	H = .00 W = .00
Positive Coping	H = -.08 W = .10	H = .45 W = .23

Test Reliability Analyses

In order to estimate the internal consistency reliability of the measures, coefficient alpha was computed for each of the scales in the five measures. On the DAS, the husbands' scores yielded the following alphas : .91 (DAS total), .83 (Consensus), .67 (Affectional Expression), .79 (Satisfaction), and .72 (Cohesion). The wives' sample presented alphas of : .93 (DAS total), .83 (Consensus), .73 (Affectional Expression), .87 (Satisfaction), and .79 (Cohesion). With regards to the second measure of marital satisfaction, the three item KMSS, the alpha for the total score was found to be .90 (husbands) and .96 (wives). It was deemed redundant to compute a reliability coefficient for the combined DAS / KMSS scores because Murphy and Davidshofer (1994) claim that composite scores are even more reliable than the tests that make up the composite. Given that the KMSS and DAS are highly correlated, then the reliability of their sum will probably also be highly reliable.

In the sample of husbands, the coefficient alphas for the Marital Coping Inventory were found to be : .84 (Positive Coping), .80 (Conflict Coping), .87 (Self Coping), .32 (Avoidance Coping), and .87 (Introspective Self Blame Coping). In the sample of wives the alphas were : .76 (Positive Coping), .90 (Conflict Coping), .84 (Self Coping), .22 (Avoidance Coping), and .90 (Introspective Self Blame Coping).

The Communication Scale showed the following alphas for husbands' data : .92 (Total Self-Disclosure), .87 (Negative Disclosure), .86 (Positive Disclosure), .44 (Anger Disclosure)

and .81 (Sex Disclosure). For wives' data, the alphas were .94 (Total Self-Disclosure), .91 (Negative Disclosure), .89 (Positive Disclosure), .75 (Anger Disclosure) and .70 (Sex Disclosure).

On the PAIR's Perceived Emotional Intimacy scale, the coefficient alphas were .74 (husbands) and .84 (wives) whereas on the Expected Emotional Intimacy scale the coefficient alphas were .45 (husbands) and .65 (wives). As for the PAIR's Difference scores (discrepancy between perceived and ideal emotional intimacy), reliability was calculated using the following formula suggested by Murphy and Davidshofer (1994) :

$$r_{DD} = [\frac{(r_x + r_y)}{2} - r_{xy}] / 1 - r_{xy}$$

where r_{DD} was the reliability of the difference scores, r_x was the reliability of the perceived scores, r_y was the reliability of the expected scores, and r_{xy} was the correlation coefficient between the perceived and expected scores.

For husbands' scores, the reliability of the Emotional Intimacy Difference scores was found to be .98 while for the wives' scores it was found to be .48. Because of the formula, a higher correlation between perceived and expected scores would yield a lower reliability for the difference scores. Difference scores reflect: 1) differences in true scores, and 2) differences that would be due to measurement error (Murphy & Davidshofer, 1994). If there is a greater overlap between perceived and expected true scores (eg. a higher correlation),

then there would be less of a difference in true scores. Thus the differences between the scores would be due more to measurement error which would render the difference less reliable. For the husbands, the correlation between perceived and expected emotional intimacy scores was .40 but for the wives the correlation was .51.

An alternative explanation is that if the husbands were able to make a sharper distinction between what they perceived and idealized as intimacy while the wives confused these two dimensions, then the higher reliability in the wives' difference scores could affect the reliability of the difference scores. In addition, a smaller range of scores in the husbands' data compared to the wives' could explain the higher reliability in the husbands' difference scores. The range of scores was higher in the wives' Perceived Intimacy (range = 84) and Intimacy Difference scores (range = 72) compared to the husbands' Perceived Intimacy scores (range = 18) and pre-recoded Intimacy Difference scores (range = 48).

Summary of Supported Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were supported by the results of this study :

The wives' marital satisfaction was jointly predicted by self-disclosure, intimacy difference, and positive coping (Hypothesis 1).

The husbands' marital satisfaction was jointly predicted by self-disclosure, intimacy difference, and positive coping (Hypothesis 2).

Self-disclosure and intimacy difference each made a separate contribution to marital satisfaction in wives (Hypothesis 3). Positive coping, however, did not make a noticeable separate contribution to marital satisfaction.

Self-disclosure and intimacy difference each made a separate contribution to marital satisfaction in husbands (Hypothesis 4). Positive coping, however, did not make a noticeable separate contribution to marital satisfaction.

Marital satisfaction and positive coping were positively (though not significantly) correlated for the wives (Hypothesis 5).

Marital satisfaction and positive coping were positively (though not significantly) correlated for the husbands (Hypothesis 6).

Marital satisfaction and intimacy difference were negatively (and significantly) correlated for the wives (Hypothesis 7).

Marital satisfaction and intimacy difference were negatively (and significantly) correlated for the husbands (Hypothesis 8).

Marital satisfaction and self-disclosure were positively (and significantly) correlated for wives (Hypothesis 9).

Marital satisfaction and self-disclosure were positively (and significantly) correlated for husbands (Hypothesis 10).

Self-disclosure and intimacy difference were negatively (and significantly) correlated for wives (Hypothesis 11).

Self-disclosure and intimacy difference were negatively (and significantly) correlated for husbands (Hypothesis 12).

Self-disclosure and positive coping were positively (though not significantly) correlated for wives (Hypothesis 13).

Self-disclosure and positive coping were positively (though not significantly) correlated for husbands (Hypothesis 14).

Intimacy difference and positive coping were negatively (though not significantly) correlated for wives (Hypothesis 15).

Intimacy difference and positive coping were negatively (though not significantly) correlated for husbands (Hypothesis 16).

Overall, the results demonstrated that, for both wives and husbands, intimacy difference and self-disclosure were stronger predictors and correlates of marital satisfaction, while positive coping contributed very little to marital satisfaction.

Chapter V

Discussion

Predictors of Marital Satisfaction

The results of the present study suggest that the linear combination of the discrepancy between perceived and expected emotional intimacy, positive coping, and self-disclosure, jointly accounted for over 25 % of the variance in husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction. Therefore, the first and second hypotheses were supported. Interestingly, the joint contributions showed a gender difference. A larger portion of the wives' marital satisfaction variance (67% adjusted) was predictable from the joint contribution compared to the amount of husbands' marital satisfaction variance (41% adjusted) that was predicted by the three variables. This difference could be partly accounted for by the greater contribution of wives' self-disclosure to marital satisfaction ($B = .45, p=.00$) compared to the husbands' self-disclosure contribution ($B = .36, p=.00$).

With respect to distinct contributions, discrepant intimacy and self-disclosure (along with their respective overlapping with the other key predictors) did make separate contributions to marital satisfaction while positive coping did not. Hence, in response to one of the previously posed research questions, discrepant intimacy was the strongest predictor of marital satisfaction while positive coping was the weakest predictor of marital satisfaction in wives and husbands. Thus the third and fourth hypotheses were partially supported.

In assessing each predictor's separate contribution, the overlap shared between the predictor and the other two key predictors was not removed. Hence, care should be taken not to interpret these separate contributions as unique contributions made only by the one predictor variable. Performing forward multiple regression analyses would further permit one to identify the unique contributions in the absence of a predictor's shared variance with other predictors that contribute to satisfaction. In any event, it was interesting to find that, the separate contributions of discrepant intimacy were similar for husbands and wives; however, the distinct contribution of the husbands' self-disclosure variable (which, accompanied by its overlap with the other two predictors, accounted for 9.34 % of marital satisfaction) was smaller in comparison to that of the wives' self-disclosure contribution (which accounted for 13.85 % of marital satisfaction). The finding that self-disclosure was a stronger predictor of wives' marital satisfaction compared to husbands, might imply that while modern communication skills training may be helpful in improving the wives' satisfaction, the benefits may be less for husbands' satisfaction. Rather, husbands' satisfaction could be improved considerably by other unidentified factors. In any case, the finding that disclosure is an important predictor of marital satisfaction could be explained by previous research that has found a positive correlation between satisfaction and self-disclosure (Burke, Weir, & Harrison, 1976; Hendrick, 1981; Merves-Okin et al., 1991; Rosenfeld & Bowen, 1991).

Although discrepant intimacy and self-disclosure were found to be stronger predictors of marital satisfaction (while positive coping contributed only marginally), it is also possible that marital satisfaction could serve as a predictor for intimacy and self-disclosure. Because of the nature of correlations, one cannot ignore the possibility of bidirectional effects if marital satisfaction were to predict the other variables. This particular question remains to be explored in future studies. Nevertheless, the findings of this study draw attention to the importance of attending to the level of disclosure and the discrepancy between perceived and expected intimacy of each spouse during counselling. While most clinicians and researchers agree that self-disclosure should be attended to in therapy, the value of focusing on the discrepancy between perceived and ideal intimacy during counseling is not as commonly acknowledged by professionals.

On the one hand, Birtchnell (1994) recently addressed the difficulty of defining "intimacy" and stated that marital therapy should focus instead on power and distance regulation because they result in closeness. He defined intimacy as the closeness between equals. On the other hand, one could argue that total equality can never exist in a relationship. Furthermore, it may be possible to experience intimacy (if one defines it as feeling emotionally close to someone) even in a marriage where equality does not exist (i.e. in a traditional marriage). In any case, since this study found that perceived emotional intimacy and emotional intimacy discrepancy made

distinct contributions to marital satisfaction, one cannot deny that intimacy does have an important role in marriage.

Exactly how intimacy affects marital satisfaction remains to be determined. From the findings of this study, one might tentatively infer that intimacy could moderate (or be affected by) marital satisfaction by means of unmet expectations. Indirect support for this assumption is given by Carpenter (1986), who argues that therapists should not embrace marriage as an intimate relationship because this view might entail unrealistic expectations in clients about the ideal of marriage. Instead, he argues that it is more fruitful for therapists to foster the view of marriage as a contract to assist people in acquiring more realistic expectations regarding what they want. Hence the importance of the roles of ideal intimacy and discrepant intimacy are evident and justify greater consideration of these concepts as major predictors of satisfaction in marriage.

Already, some clinicians have attempted to apply the concepts of idealized intimacy to their practice. For example, MATESIM, a computer automated simulation, was designed by Lehtinen and Smith (1985) to help counsellors analyze aspects of marriage (such as what type of person is considered the ideal spouse). In light of the present study's findings, such applications seem highly appropriate for assessing marital satisfaction.

In this study, the distribution of the husbands' intimacy difference variable was not normal. One could interpret this to

mean that intimacy difference is not as useful a predictor as perceived intimacy. However, the post hoc regression analyses of this study indicated that the recoded intimacy difference variable and perceived intimacy variable did not differ greatly in their ability to predict satisfaction. Nevertheless, it is recommended that this finding be subjected to further examination in future studies.

As part of the other predictors yet to be identified, future investigations should consider in more detail the study of specific forms of coping (such as conflict, blame, or self coping), other than positive coping, because these variables were correlated significantly with husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction. The relative contributions of types of self-disclosure (eg. Positive, Negative, Sex, and Anger) to marital satisfaction also merit further investigation in future studies. Furthermore, with respect to discrepant intimacy, it is worth investigating other related concepts that may function as predictors of intimacy (and therefore possibly marital satisfaction). For example, West and Zarski (1986) studied the cross-generational coalition family triangle patterns of sixty-six undergraduates and found that participants who described themselves as emotionally closer to one of their parents, also experienced larger emotional, sexual, and intellectual intimacy discrepant scores on the PAIR. This finding points to the importance of understanding how one may develop beliefs or expectations of intimacy based on experiences in the family of origin. In addition, it is also recommended that further

consideration be given to how discrepancy in expectations between a husband and wife might contribute to satisfaction as this question was beyond the scope of the present study.

Finally, although none of the demographic predictors made a distinct contribution to marital satisfaction (except for husbands' income which contributed 4%), future studies should attempt to refine this study's measures of occupation and income as possible predictors in the regressions.

Correlates of Marital Satisfaction

From the computed correlations it was found that greater satisfaction for husbands or wives was associated with perceived emotional intimacy. This is consistent with previous research by Merves-Okin et al., 1991). Furthermore, the husbands' or wives' marital satisfaction was linked not to their expectation of intimacy per se, but rather to how discrepant their current perceived intimacy was from their ideal intimacy, thereby supporting the seventh and eighth hypotheses. That is, husbands and wives who were more satisfied, also perceived less discrepancy between their current and ideal level of emotional intimacy. This finding was indirectly supported by the research of Murstein and Willimas (1983), who found that smaller discrepancy between an individual's perception of the ideal spouse and the spouse (i.e. by greater degree of conformity to a stereotyped role) was accompanied by greater marital adjustment. In addition, other researchers have also reported that discrepancy between perceptions and ideals in a marriage is

related to marital satisfaction (Spanier, 1979; Craddock, 1980; Anderson et al., 1986).

Most recently, a study by Murray, Holmes, and Griffin (1996) reported that the idealized constructions of one's partner predicted greater satisfaction. Individuals were more satisfied with their relationships if they idealized their partner. This may be attributed to the participants' tendency to generally view the world and its people through rose colored glasses. On the other hand, one could argue that if an individual views his / her partner as being the "right" or ideal person, then the expectations regarding the relationship and partner would be fulfilled and the individual would experience less discrepancy between perceived and ideal states of intimacy. Several interesting questions arise from this assumption. Would perceived idealization of the partner / intimacy affect the individual's satisfaction differently from the intentional idealization by an individual who tries hard to see the partner or relationship in ways that support fantasies and hopes? If the spouse who is idealized is happier (because of special treatment by the partner) in the marriage, could he / she then be more motivated to live up to idealized standards and in turn strengthen the partner's already existing satisfaction? Could idealization of the partner or intimacy ever be damaging for the relationship and an individual's satisfaction? Such questions beg further research.

Interestingly, no strong relationship was found between the husbands' or wives' marital satisfaction and a constructive

positive approach to coping with disagreements, so hypotheses five and six received no support. On the other hand, post hoc analyses found that marital satisfaction did moderately decrease when Conflict, Self, and Blame Coping approaches (which may be more destructive modes of coping) were increasingly utilized. This result is partially supported by previous literature which contends that the capability of resolving differences in opinion without argument, criticism, or refusal to resolve problems has been implicated as a component of intimacy, which ultimately affects marital satisfaction (Hames & Waring, 1980; Waring, McEllrath, Mitchell, & Derry, 1981).

The failure of this study to find a strong relationship between marital satisfaction and positive coping could be attributed to low validity or greater measurement error in the Positive Coping scale (despite its fairly high reliability). Alternatively, positive coping might still contribute to satisfaction, but perhaps only longitudinally. Future studies should assess the relation of positive coping to marital satisfaction over a longer period of time. Alternatively, one can speculate that satisfaction in marriage may not be significantly enhanced by employed methods of positive coping or conflict resolution (although satisfaction can deteriorate if couples engage in conflict, self-blame or means of distracting oneself from the problem). Other factors such as intimacy and disclosure may effectively play a more important role than what may be superficial conflict resolution skills in maintaining marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives. This

explanation is supported by the multiple regression analyses which show that compared to the positive coping variable, the discrepancy intimacy and the total self-disclosure variables individually accounted for a larger portion of the variance in wives' and husbands' marital satisfaction. Positive coping accounted for less than one percent of the variance in husbands' marital satisfaction as well as the variance in wives' marital satisfaction. Alternatively, one may attribute this finding to the particular age of this study's participants. Bowman (1990) reported that positive coping was least used by people in their forties. The mean age of wives in this study was 39.7, while the mean age of husbands was 41.9. Therefore, one cannot ignore the possibility that age may have played a role in the usage of Positive Coping and thereby the negligible contribution it made to marital satisfaction.

Total disclosure amount seemed to be strongly correlated with marital satisfaction for husbands and wives thereby supporting hypotheses nine and ten. This finding is in accordance with those of several studies which found a positive relation to exist between marital satisfaction and self-disclosure (see review by Waterman, 1979; Burke, Weir, & Harrison, 1976; Hendrick, 1981; Merves-Okin et al., 1991; Rosenfeld & Bowen, 1991). It is unclear exactly how self-disclosure could enhance marital satisfaction. One possible explanation is that by disclosing expectations, needs, beliefs and feelings, one can facilitate mutual understanding, decrease conflict and increase intimacy, thereby contributing to marital

satisfaction. This explanation is supported by Russell's (1990) report that describes how fifteen of twenty-four couples experienced an increase in intimacy after they were exposed to a treatment plan where self-disclosure was employed to reduce conflict and enable mutual understanding. Also, Waring (1990) offers more support for this explanation by contending that self-disclosure of personal constructs produces therapeutic change for couples who are distressed.

A second explanation for how self-disclosure could enhance (or be enhanced by) marital satisfaction is inferred from McAllister's (1980) report. According to the self-perception hypothesis, if one self-discloses, then his / her liking and trust for the receiver are attributed by level of perceived intimacy. In turn, the receiver will use the intimacy level of a disclosure as an indicator of trust and positive regard. According to reciprocity norm, the self-disclosure would then be reciprocated, self-disclosure would be repeated and intimacy (presumably along with satisfaction) would increase.

Another interesting finding in the present study was that the magnitude of the relation between marital satisfaction and positive, negative or sex disclosure was smaller for the husbands than it was for the wives. Also, while higher marital satisfaction was accompanied by greater disclosure of anger in the wives' sample, no such significant association was found for husbands. One possible explanation for this finding is that the Anger Disclosure scale of the Communication Inventory did not accurately assess the husbands' amount of anger disclosure (the

reliability coefficient was moderate compared to the stronger reliability coefficient found for the wives' Anger Disclosure scale). An alternative explanation is that because women may have been socialized to adopt an expressive role in marriage, their greater emotional investment might lead them to place more importance on emotional disclosure and thus they would be more motivated to disclose their feelings. Levinger and Senn (1967) lend support to this latter explanation by their finding that wives communicate more unpleasant feelings than husbands do. Pearson (1989) found that women disclose more negative information than men do. It logically follows that if a woman is discouraged or prevented from articulating her feelings and sharing her fears, joys or desires, she may be more likely to be dissatisfied. In contrast, perhaps because of socialization dynamics or perceived inability to express themselves, men may place less emphasis on expression of feelings (such as anger) or sharing likes, dislikes and private aspects of themselves.

Apart from such speculations, it also remains to be seen whether an individual's satisfaction is predicted more strongly by the disclosure of their partner or by their own disclosure. Several studies have already found that the spouse's own self-disclosure is a stronger than the partner's disclosure in predicting marital satisfaction, (Antill & Cotton, 1987; Rosenfeld & Bowen, 1991).

After a review of the broad research on marital satisfaction, additional predictors of marital satisfaction (which were not included in this study) present other avenues of

research. Some of the more notable possible predictors are: 1) boundary and power (described as predictors by Berman and Lief in 1975); 2) affection, cohesion, compatibility, sexuality, autonomy, or couple's identity (which are other components of intimacy); 3) attributions; 4) attitude similarity (which was found to be positively correlated with satisfaction in Hendrick's 1981 study); 5) an individual's construction of the current relationship or partner based on previous experiences of parents' relations (Waring, Schaefer, & Fry, 1994); and 5) beliefs about self, other, and the relationship, which may affect satisfaction. The latter predictor was studied by Epstein and Eidelson (1981), who found that unrealistic beliefs in couples are associated with their expectations and marital satisfaction. It was also surprising to find that none of the demographic variables were significantly related to marital satisfaction in the current study. However, the role of demographic variables such as income, education, degree, age, years of marriage, number of children, and especially occupation should not be discounted. Rather, because of previous inconsistent findings, greater investigation of these variables is required to clarify their relationship to marital satisfaction.

Correlates of Perceived Intimacy

The husbands' perceived intimacy was weakly related to age. Such an association was found only for men but not women. More specifically, it appeared that older husbands scored higher on

perceived intimacy. Thus it could be that time or maturity play important roles in mediating the marital emotional intimacy that is experienced by husbands.

In addition, lower scores on perceived intimacy were achieved by husbands and wives who engaged in blaming, conflict engaging or self distracting styles of coping. It appears that while positive coping is not linked with greater intimacy, reduced emotional intimacy appears to be accompanied by potentially destructive coping styles. Furthermore, if husbands and wives perceive low intimacy and their expectations for intimacy are unmet, it is possible that they learn to engage themselves in distracting activities as an alternate means of coping with disagreements. Such a coping style might be chosen over the other styles of coping if a spouse perceives that his / her expectations for intimacy and disclosure will be unmet by the partner and that it is up to him / her to deal with the issue as best as is possible (i.e. by becoming involved in activities of interest). Alternatively, husbands and wives may engage in blaming or conflict styles of coping in an attempt to coerce the partner into meeting the expectations.

The presence of more positive or negative self-disclosure also appeared to be linked to a greater perceived intimacy. For wives, there may be a link between: 1) all four types of disclosure and marital satisfaction; 2) all four types of disclosure and perceived intimacy. However, for men, only positive and negative disclosure seem related to how they experience intimacy. This could be viewed as indirectly

supported by Waring, Schaefer, and Fry's (1994) report that individuals who disclosed in an intellectual (rather than emotional) manner tended to have higher levels of intimacy. However, in the current study, the wives' intimacy (which was related to anger disclosure) appears to contradict Waring et al.'s (1994) finding that emotional disclosure was not as strongly related to intimacy as intellectual disclosure was. According to a study by Howell and Conway (1989), which observed thirty male college students, disclosure of more intense emotional states were perceived as more intimate. Hence one can assume that by virtue of engaging in greater anger self disclosure, men and women could have perceived greater intimacy and experienced less discrepancy with their ideal intimacy. Such an explanation contradicts previous research (Chelune, Skiffington, & Williams, 1981) that failed to reveal gender differences on emotional expression and attendance to properties of disclosure.

The finding that husbands' and wives' self-disclosure was strongly and positively associated with perceived intimacy, is consistent with findings from previous studies (Prager, 1986; Tolstedt & Stokes, 1984; Waring & Schaefer, 1994). This strong correlation between husbands' and wives' self-disclosure and intimacy suggests that self-disclosure is possibly a behavior directly related to (or a component of) the construct "emotional intimacy." This notion is in line with the writings of various researchers (Hames & Waring, 1980; Waring et al., 1981) that declare sharing private thoughts or attitudes is a qualitative

aspect of intimacy. Also, Jourard (1971), Derlega and Chaikin (1975), Schaefer and Olson (1981) and Waring and Chelune (1983) have stated that self-disclosure is an important factor for intimacy. Hence, the significantly positive correlation between self-disclosure and perceived intimacy for men and women hints at an overlap and reflects construct validity for emotional intimacy. On the other hand, one could argue that the emotional intimacy measured in this study is a multidimensional construct requiring not only disclosure but other factors as well (such as being understood, cared for and closeness to the partner). Two of the six items in the PAIR's Emotional Intimacy scale do address disclosure of feeling and being listened to by the partner, while the other four items are: "I often feel distant from my partner", "My partner can really understand my hurts and joys", "I feel neglected at times by my partner", and "I sometimes feel lonely when we're together". In addition, Waring and Chelune (1983) reported that self-disclosure accounted for more than 50% of the variance in the expressiveness, compatibility and identity aspects of intimacy; nevertheless, they argued that self-disclosure and intimacy are not synonymous.

In any case, the findings strongly indicate that womens' satisfaction and experienced intimacy requires the presence of all four types of specific disclosures. In contrast, mens' perceived intimacy seemed to relate to only two specific types of disclosure: positive and negative. According to Chelune and Waring (1983), self-disclosure can be categorized as expression

of emotion, need, thoughts or attitudes and self awareness. One could conceptualize the disclosure of positive and negative aspects of oneself by husbands as a cognitive style of self-disclosure, which could be contrasted with wives' disclosure that includes emotional expression. A question arises as to whether the concept of intimacy might hold a different meaning (and expectations) for men than it does for women. For example, according to Hendrix (1992), men may view communication as serving the purpose of problem solving, while women believe that communication serves the purpose of enhancing intimacy. In any event, specific studies are required to investigate how change in patterns of self-disclosure could affect aspects of intimacy.

A weak (not significant) but interesting gender difference was also noticed for the relationship between self-disclosure and length of marriage. Self-disclosure appeared to have a positive association with length of marriage for husbands but a negative association with length of marriage for wives. The wives' correlation is consistent with Antill and Cotton's (1987) and Burke et al.'s (1976) findings that with an increase in the duration of marriage, the sharing of problems, feelings or beliefs diminishes. Also previous research by Jourard (1971) and Hendrick (1981) shows a significant negative relationship between self-disclosure and length of marriage for wives (but not husbands). Wives may be reluctant to disclose because they expect their disclosure not to be reciprocated. If self-disclosure is not used often by husbands as it plays a smaller role in husbands' satisfaction, wives might be gradually

discouraged from sharing emotions, which is part of emotional interdependence in earlier stages of marriage. A final explanation for the findings of reduced disclosure could be that disclosure becomes less important and necessary to a wife who has been married for a long time and is familiar with the spouse and the relationship.

Because of the nature of correlations, one cannot ignore the possibility of bidirectional effects if marital satisfaction were to predict the other variables. This particular question remains to be explored in future studies. On the side, an interesting and relevant question to explore in future studies is whether the partner's disclosure predicts an individual's satisfaction. Some studies have found that couples with greater discrepancies in amount of disclosure output (which reflects less reciprocity) also report less marital satisfaction (Hansen & Schuldt, 1984).

Correlates of Positive Coping

Positive coping was not found to significantly correlate with marital satisfaction, intimacy difference or self-disclosure. However, it was found that husbands engaged in greater positive coping if they were older, married for a longer period of time, or had more children. Despite the significance of these correlations, the magnitudes of these correlations were low. Further investigation of these factors is warranted.

Correlates of the Discrepant Intimacy Variable

Wives, who indicated that the perceived emotional intimacy in their marriage did not meet their expected intimacy, seemed to engage in a style of coping that demonstrated more conflict, blaming or self distraction (by pursuing activities of interest). As mentioned in the previous section, perhaps conflict and blaming occur as individuals (who are not experiencing their ideals) pressure their partner to conform more closely with the idealized standards. Alternatively, as Segraves (1982) suggests, each person enters into a marriage with expectations and beliefs (based on the family of origin, culture, and personal experience) about how the marriage should be and that differences in these beliefs becomes a source of conflict between spouses.

An interesting finding was that for the husbands, only a conflict style of coping (rather than introspective self blame or self interest) was significantly positively correlated with intimacy difference. This supports research by Miller and Kirsch (1987) and Bowman (1990), which found that women are more likely to engage in self blame and distraction compared to men. Perhaps while wives may have blamed or distracted themselves in an attempt to cope with unmet expectations, husbands chose to engage in conflict in an attempt to deal with their unmet expectations. Whether husbands take a more active (and aggressive) rather than passive approach to having their expectations fulfilled is an interesting question for future studies.

In addition, participants who experienced a larger difference between perceived and ideal intimacy, engaged in less total self-disclosure, thus supporting hypotheses eleven and twelve. It is understandable that if one does not perceive oneself in an ideal marriage and with an ideal partner, perhaps a lack of trust or an unwillingness to self-disclose would be present as well.

A gender difference was noted in that for husbands, higher intimacy discrepancy was associated with lower negative and anger self-disclosure while for wives a higher intimacy discrepancy was associated with lower scores on all types of self-disclosure. As was noted in the regression analyses, self-disclosure played a larger role in women's satisfaction compared to men's. It is possible that if wives feel they are not married to the ideal partner, and that their expectations are unmet, they will limit their various types of self-disclosure altogether. In contrast, husbands who are experiencing greater intimacy discrepancy appear to significantly lower only their anger and negative disclosures while their positive disclosure about themselves remains unaffected.

Husbands who believe they are not married to the ideal spouse may not feel comfortable or safe in disclosing anger perhaps because they fear that such a disclosure might reveal them as vulnerable or lacking in control. Alternatively, if intimacy is perceived as a missing part of the relationship, each spouse may not trust the other's level of commitment and thus he / she will not jeopardize the status of the relationship

by expressing negative feelings. In any case, this issue also deserves more consideration in future research.

Although husbands and wives (with larger intimacy discrepancy) also demonstrated less tendency to specifically disclose their feelings of anger, and greater tendency to engage in increased conflict, blaming or self coping styles, one cannot draw any cause and effect conclusions. However, one can entertain the possibility that if people attempt to resolve problems by such potentially destructive coping means and furthermore do not disclose their likes, dislikes, expectations, or feelings, then each person's expectations will remain unmet and the gap between experienced and ideal intimacy will be maintained.

POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Although the measures employed were adequate for the purpose of this study, they can present certain problems. In particular, the DAS and KMS Scale can be potentially susceptible to halo effects or "marital conventionalization," which is a term suggested by Edmonds (1967) to describe a sort of social desirability response set. According to Mitchell, Newell, and Schumm (1983), individual social desirability could account for up to 14% of variance in marital satisfaction while marital social desirability could account for up to twice as much. In the past, researchers have used Edmonds's Marital Conventionalization Scale (1967) to measure marital social desirability or the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (1960) to study social desirability. A correlation between marital satisfaction and marital social desirability is probable regardless of the validity of the scale used (although correlations with measures of individual social desirability may be less likely). Those who respond with less social desirability will likely report being very unhappy while those who respond with higher levels of social desirability will probably report being very happy (Schumm, Paff-Bergen, Hatch, Obiorah, Copeland, Meens, & Bugaighis, 1986). This pattern could then show large numbers of subjects in the lower left and upper right corners of a scatterplot of marital satisfaction and social desirability. Therefore, a significant positive correlation seems unavoidable even if the sample did include subjects who describe their marriage as happy but not perfect.

Schumm, Anderson, Benigas, McCutchen, Griffin, Morris and Race (1985) controlled for marital social desirability. They reduced some of the nonnormal characteristics of score distributions, but could not eliminate social desirability altogether. In the present study, it was hoped that social desirability would be somewhat reduced by using the KMSS as a self-administered questionnaire rather than in a face-to-face interview since Schumm, Milliken, Poresky, Bollman, and Jurich (1983) had suggested this as a means of social desirability reduction. Still normality tests showed that the KMSS distribution for wives was not normal (it was negatively skewed). In any case, since one cannot completely control for social desirability, it is important to become aware of its potential relations with measures by reviewing some research findings presented below.

Schumm and his fellow colleagues used the DAS with a shorter version of Edmonds's (1967) Marital Conventionalization Scale (which has items resembling those of classic social desirability scales) and found a correlation of 0.71 (Schumm et al., 1986). They also found a correlation between Edmonds's shorter scale and the KMSS of 0.60. Other studies have found the correlation between the KMSS Scale and social desirability to be in the 0.42-0.54 range. This seems to suggest that use of the DAS and the KMSS is problematic because they are contaminated by social desirability. Although the KMSS Scale has correlated less with marital social desirability compared to the DAS, a threat to validity may still be present due to social desirability.

In contrast, Russell and Wells (1992) examined data from 94 couples and concluded that quality of marriage and social desirability were unrelated in wives. As for husbands, social desirability was found to have a weak beneficial effect on quality of marriage but responses to questions about marital quality were not distorted. Russell and Wells therefore argued that when many couples claim to have a good marriage they actually do. They further attribute the high correlations between Edmonds's Marital Conventionalization Scale and satisfaction scales to the possibility that Edmonds's scale is not a social desirability scale, but a poor scale of marital quality. They state that logically an item such as "My mate completely understands me and sympathizes with my every mood" is an extreme item. Anyone who responds "True" cannot be correct. However, they argue that such items are examples of a poor model of "binary alternatives" and that such forced choice techniques may not capture the true perception of an average person in a good marriage. Furthermore, Messick (1989) found that as a measure of social desirability, marital conventionalization did not correlate highly (0.44) with the MMPI Lie scale as was expected. Instead, the correlation between Edmonds's scale and the Locke-Wallace MAT was 0.63. In any case, although there is mixed empirical evidence regarding the relation between social desirability and scales used by this study, it is still important to be aware of this issue as a possible confound.

Limitations to external and internal validity are imposed by the weak aspects of measures being used (such as low

reliability). For example, because of the lower reliability demonstrated by the wives' difference scores, it is important to keep in mind that the wives' intimacy difference scores may not reflect a lack of disparity between perceived and ideal intimacy. Rather, the scores may reflect potential unreliability of the measure of intimacy difference. Therefore, caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions about the wives' discrepancy between their perceived and ideal levels of intimacy.

Limitations to external and internal validity are also imposed by the sample selection. For example, because the majority of the sample was Caucasian, the findings may not be generalizable to members of other ethnic cultures. Second, implications should be cautiously made regarding the intimacy level in a few of the cases where the PAIR's Intimacy Difference scores were negative (as a result of the perceived score being higher than the ideal score). People with such negative discrepant intimacy scores could be different in the way they perceive their relationship or in what they expect. In addition, because of sample characteristics, caution should be exercised in applying the regression equation to predict marital satisfaction for other new samples since shrinkage and reduced accuracy of the prediction are issues. In any event, while cross validation was not done in the present study, future studies should attempt to cross validate the findings on new samples.

In addition to the generalization, there is a limit to the detail and richness of information obtained. The use of self report questionnaires in this correlational study was valuable, yet some researchers argue that observation and interview methods generally yield a great deal of detailed information and that the richness of such information is lost in artificial experimental testing. On the other hand, the good psychometric properties of certain self-report measures and ease in scoring may compensate for this limit. Furthermore, although some measures may demonstrate a halo effect, observation methods have the potential for encouraging participants to act differently than they normally would. For example, Gottman (1979) found that couples' interaction at home with an observer present showed more negative affect and more negative affect reciprocity than their interaction in the laboratory. Hence, it is important to be aware of the strengths as well as the weaknesses of this study's design and it is recommended that future data collection involve interviews and observations in addition to surveys in order to obtain richer and more detailed information about marital satisfaction and its predictors.

In addition, another aspect to be improved in this study's design is the "snapshot approach" taken to assessing marital satisfaction at one point in time rather than over a period of time. One cannot predict the success of a marriage or future satisfaction simply from this study's results. Marriages may last or disintegrate regardless of satisfaction. That is, marital satisfaction and marital stability are not the same

thing. Likewise, Lewis and Spanier (1979) viewed marital stability and marital quality as two separate and different dimensions. Quality can vary in a marriage and should be considered along with stability in studying or predicting marital success (Glenn, 1990; Robinson & Blanton, 1993).

The same thing can be said for marital satisfaction. That is, perhaps it would be worthwhile to consider stability by studying satisfaction longitudinally. According to Gottman and Krokoff's findings, it may be that the same set of characteristics which define a currently satisfying marriage do not necessarily define a more satisfying marriage over time. Certain factors can change or other factors can become more significant in their contribution to marital happiness over time. For example, consistent with Gottman and Krokoff's (1989) findings, disagreement and anger exchanges can be related to unhappiness and negative interaction at home concurrently, but then can be predictive of improvement in marital satisfaction longitudinally. The issue of longitudinal effects is beyond the scope of this study and begs further research.

Aside from the above issues, some questions are not addressed by this present investigation because they are beyond the scope of this study. For example, exactly how are idealized intimacy, open communication, and coping related? How do the depth, amount, various types and reciprocity of self-disclosure interact to facilitate intimacy, marital satisfaction and marital therapy outcome for individuals and dyads? Is there a causal relationship between self-disclosure and marital

satisfaction or self-disclosure and intimacy? If so, what are the directions of these causal relations? How can these variables be incorporated into a theoretical model? What is the best means of integrating the findings in practice to help maximize a couple's satisfaction? Also, an interesting possibility for future research lies in the question: When marital therapy successfully enhances a couple's satisfaction, does it also produce a simultaneous increase in communication scores, intimacy scores and coping scores?

Finally, this study treated husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction as separate scores but future investigations should also combine the husband and wife scores into a dyadic score that represents the couple. Of course, care should be taken in interpreting and checking the validity of the combined scores since research has identified the validity of such scores to be controversial (Walters, Pittman, & Norell, 1984; White, 1984). Such questions along with the concepts discussed in this paper deserve greater attention in future research.

Implications for Research and Counseling

The present study intended to contribute to research, generate more questions, and offer several recommendations. First, the data could be used to validate and give clinicians exposure to several instruments.

Second, identification of good predictors for marital satisfaction can guide clinicians in their decisions and efforts to help a couple enrich their marriage.

Third, the generation of new information, empirical data and questions will hopefully rekindle research interest in predictors of marital satisfaction such as openness in communication, idealized intimacy and coping efforts. To date, no studies have been done on the combination of such variables. Furthermore, this study's findings will hopefully provide the impetus for research on interactions among communication, marital ideals, and coping behaviors to enable a better understanding of the dynamics by which these variables may contribute to marital satisfaction. Fourth, results provide inferences about the importance of individual perceptions and evaluations of one's spouse and marriage. The question of one's experience of marriage may not be dependent as much on what is reality but what the individual construes as real or ideal.

Finally, the findings may be used to support existing theories and models (i.e. such as the Satir model) about the importance of diving beneath the superficial content level during clinical sessions to explore the deeper yearnings, beliefs and expectations held by individuals. Satir (1967) claimed that marital partners frequently perceive differences in their expectations or desires as evidence of problems in marriage. They may coerce compliance from each other in order to have their ideal expectations met. This in turn affects the harmony and satisfaction in marriage. The individual who evaluates his / her marriage in terms of unrealistic beliefs and expectations is more likely to be disappointed. Instead, based on the results of this study, one could hypothesize that couples

should be encouraged to disclose their expectations of the relationship and lower them to render them more attainable, negotiate them with their partner, or cooperatively work with the partner to fulfill the expectations. Either way, the result will likely be an increase in self-disclosure and positive coping behaviors. In turn, if a bidirectional effect exists, the greater self-disclosure and positive coping will heighten the individual's perception of intimacy and marital satisfaction.

In addition to theoretical implications, several practical implications could follow from the findings of this study. First, the various instruments in this study may serve as good examples of assessment tools for therapists who are contemplating the use of questionnaires (with adequate psychometric properties) in their practice. Second, the data may serve as a guide for prioritizing focus in therapy on issues and factors that contribute to marital problems. Based on the results, it seems appropriate to highlight the importance of perceived discrepancy between idealized and actual intimacy as a stronger characteristic of couples' dissatisfaction with their marriage. This suggests that questions about perceptions and expectations regarding intimacy should have a priority in treatment. Moreover, psychotherapy may maximize change and facilitate improvement in a couple's marriage if the therapist combines affective (eg. by focusing on disclosed feelings such as anger), behavioral (eg. by focusing on the conflict resolution or coping skills), and cognitive (eg. by exploring

unmet expectations and ideals) strategies with the spouses. In particular, a greater focus on the cognitive components might be warranted and therapists may wish to refer to models such as Satir's iceberg (Satir, 1991), which emphasizes that one's expectations are essentially a foundation for distressing feelings, maladaptive perceptions and coping behaviors.

Finally, therapists may benefit from developing an awareness of the comparative importance of attending to: communication skills, explicit communication of expectations and desires, emotional intimacy, and development of coping skills. This awareness will hopefully guide therapists in their use of assessment tools and interventions with clients seeking marital counseling. Many workshops, books, and programs are currently designed to train couples in active listening, self-disclosure or behavioral conflict resolution skills. These features are valuable to target during marital therapy; however, it is important to recognize that one's expectations or ideals regarding intimacy also play pivotal roles in marital satisfaction. Thus therapists should not ignore techniques which focus on facilitating these aspects of intimacy.

In conclusion, the results of this study imply that demographic variables and coping strategies do not necessarily contribute to marital satisfaction. The presence of self-disclosure as well as fulfilled expectations (or idealization of the relationship's intimacy level) are fundamental predictors of marital satisfaction and should thus be viewed as essential components to work with during marital therapy.

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Appendix B
Demographics Questionnaire

DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE



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For statistical purposes and an overall general description of the group of people who will participate in this study, please provide the following information. This information will demonstrate the extent to which our results could be representative of the general population of married couples. Your accurate completion of this questionnaire is very much appreciated.

AGE: _____

SEX: _____

NUMBER OF YEARS MARRIED : _____ NUMBER OF CHILDREN : _____
(Include the months)

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOU PRIMARY ETHNIC HERITAGE / CULTURE ?
(eg. Caucasian, African American, Asian, Latin American, European, etc.)

NUMBER OF YEARS LIVING TOGETHER (PRIOR TO MARRIAGE) : _____

YEARS OF EDUCATION COMPLETED TO DATE : _____

HIGHEST DEGREE / DIPLOMA OBTAINED TO DATE : _____

ARE YOU CURRENTLY EMPLOYED ? YES NO

WHAT IS YOUR OCCUPATION ? _____

WHAT IS / WAS YOUR FATHER'S PRIMARY OCCUPATION ? _____

WHAT IS / WAS YOUR MOTHER'S PRIMARY OCCUPATION ? _____

WHAT IS YOUR ANNUAL INDIVIDUAL INCOME: (please check off a line below)

- _____ less than \$10,000
- _____ \$10, 000 - \$30,000
- _____ \$30,000 - \$50,000
- _____ \$50,000 - \$70,000
- _____ more than \$70,000