

KNOWLEDGE OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY CONCEPTS
AND PERCEIVED COMPETENCE OF MARRIAGE EDUCATORS
CONDUCTING MARRIAGE PREPARATION IN TWO
PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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Abstract

Marriage is perhaps the most popular voluntary institution in Canadian society. Fifty-six percent of British Columbians choose to be married in a Christian church. Most of these couples will find that they are required to participate in a marriage preparation program. Little is known about these marriage preparation opportunities, or about the individuals who provide these opportunities. Recent studies (Bader, Riddle & Sinclair, 1981; Ridley, Avery, Harrell, Leslie & Dent, 1982) have begun to demonstrate the effectiveness of the field of marriage preparation, but no studies examine the qualifications of educators. This study had two objectives: 1) to measure the knowledge of marriage and family concepts of marriage educators providing marriage preparation and 2) to re-test Wright's (1976) finding that clergy do not perceive themselves to be competent providers of marriage preparation. A random sample of 25% of Anglican Church in Canada and United Church of Canada congregations in British Columbia (n=117) resulted in 62 marriage educators responding to this study. This represents a response rate of 57.7%. The respondents were asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire which allowed for the collection of demographic information about the congregations and respondents as well as the measurement of the dependent variable perceived competence, six independent variables and four control variables. As no instruments to measure knowledge of marriage and family concepts were available, a measure was developed for this study and is known as the Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts Instrument (KMFC). Respondents were found to have moderate

scores on KMFC and perceived themselves to be reasonably competent providers of marriage preparation. No significant results were found for the relationships between either of the dependent variables and the independent variables. Post hoc analysis determined significant relationships between knowledge of marriage and family concepts and gender, and between perceived competence and total number of hours spent in marriage preparation. This study implies that clergy need increased training in content areas relevant to marriage preparation. Further research studies are suggested.

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And now, let the weak say I am strong,
Let the poor say I am rich,
Because of what the Lord has done,
Give thanks.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

It is estimated that 86% of Canadian women and 83% of Canadian men will marry sometime during their lifetime. Each year in Canada, this represents some 176,00 couples (Adams & Nagnur, 1989). These figures indicate that despite Statistics Canada's current prediction that 28% of Canadian marriages will end in divorce, marriage as an institution is apparently still very popular. Indeed, of those who divorce, 76% of the men and 64% of the women will marry again (Adams & Nagnur, 1989).

In British Columbia, 21,094 couples were married in 1987 (Vital Statistics, 1988). Of these couples, 11,750 (56%) were married in a church ceremony. Most of the couples who chose a church ceremony found that they were either required or strongly advised to participate in some form of marriage preparation. In fact, some churches, such as the Anglican Church in Canada and the Roman Catholic Church, have formal policies which require that all couples married in their jurisdictions participate in marriage preparation. In 1989, a survey of approximately 1,550 British Columbia churches was recently conducted by the British Columbia Council for the Family in order to identify the amount of activity in marriage preparation in the province. Ninety-five percent of those who responded indicated that they required couples to participate in formal marriage preparation (i.e., structured group interviews or group educational sessions), while the remaining 5% strongly recommended that couples take advantage of marriage preparation opportunities offered (B.C. Council for the Family, 1990).

There may be a number of reasons why churches support marriage preparation. Such preparation may be seen as one way to demonstrate the high regard that Christian churches have for marriage. By requiring marriage preparation, churches indicate to engaged couples and to their congregations that they see the marital commitment to be a serious one, not to be entered into lightly. This preparation may be increasingly important with the growing secularization of society (Bibby, 1987), as many clergy find they are asked to conduct marriage ceremonies for couples they do not know. Marriage preparation may provide an opportunity to establish a relationship with these couples and to communicate to them some of the church's beliefs and values about marriage.

Christian churches do not only value marriage, however; they value lasting marriages. Churches may perceive that requiring marriage preparation may be seen as one way to lower the divorce rate and to reduce marital dissatisfaction. Larson (1988) has noted that, at least in part, marital dissatisfaction can be linked to unrealistic expectations about marriage. Through marriage preparation, churches may believe that they can assist couples to examine such expectations and to assess their readiness for marriage.

There is growing evidence that marriage preparation can be effective. Bader, Riddle and Sinclair (1981) report that in a five year follow-up study of couples who had taken a marriage preparation program, couples in the experimental group had less conflict, used more constructive conflict resolution patterns,

made fewer hostile comments to one another and were more likely to exhibit help seeking behaviours than did couples in the control group. In a six month follow-up of an eight week skills development program, Ridley, Avery, Harrell, Leslie and Dent (1982) determined that couples were still using effectively the problem solving, conflict resolution and communication skills learned in the course. In other studies, Larsen and Olson (1989) and Druckman, Waxman and Olson (1981) found that PREPARE, a 125-item inventory used to assess premarital relationships, was effective in working with premarital couples, while Wolfe and Kokes (1988) reported that a weekend Engaged Encounter event had a significant positive effect on the marital adjustment of the participants.

Despite the growing number of studies which indicate the success of marriage preparation, several issues and concerns remain. First, the field lacks a theoretical framework (Schumm and Denton, 1979). The lack of a theoretical base means that few programs in the literature demonstrate "convergence regarding what should be taught or how it could be done effectively" (Miller, Nunnally and Wackman, 1976, p.22). Second, although some evaluation studies have been completed, there is still a lack of comprehensive, longitudinal studies. Such studies are needed to demonstrate and support the effectiveness of the field (Schumm and Denton, 1979).

Finally, questions have been raised about the preparation and qualifications of marriage educators (Leger, 1988). Schumm and Denton (1979) state that "the training of premarital educators continues to be neglected in the literature" (p. 26). Rolfe

(1985) believes that clergy must work to establish credibility in the area of marriage preparation and indicates that particular pastoral skills are necessary. It is these concerns regarding the training of marriage educators which gives rise to this study.

In a national study, Wright (1976) found that ministers involved in marriage preparation in the United States did not perceive themselves to be adequately prepared or competent to provide marriage preparation. Rolfe (1985) believes that a perceived lack of competence on the part of the marriage preparation provider leads to a lack of consumer confidence in their marriage preparation skills. Little is known as to whether or not these perceptions are accurate. To date, no studies have been found which have examined the qualifications of those who provide marriage preparation.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine selected aspects of the qualifications of marriage educators in British Columbia. Since it is estimated that 80% of marriage preparation is conducted in the church (Fournier, 1980), this study focused on marriage educators in selected Christian churches in British Columbia. The study has two objectives: 1) to assess the level of knowledge of marriage and family concepts held by marriage educators, and 2) to re-examine Wright's (1976) finding that ministers involved in marriage preparation do not perceive themselves to be adequately prepared or competent to provide such education.

Definitions

The following are definitions of terms that are used in this study:

1. Congregation. While the official term for United Church of Canada congregations is 'pastoral charge', which may or may not include more than one worshipping body under one clergy, and the official term for Anglican Church in Canada units is 'parish', the more generic term congregation will be used in this study to refer to the worshipping bodies sampled in this study.

2. Marriage Education. All formal educational experiences including family studies courses, marriage preparation and marriage enrichment, which help individuals understand marriage.

3. Marriage Educator. One who conducts formal educational experiences in marriage education.

4. Marriage Preparation. One form of marriage education intended to assist engaged couples to prepare for their own marriage.

5. Premarital Counselling. Therapeutic intervention intended to resolve specific relationship issues before a wedding occurs.

6. Marriage Enrichment. One form of marriage education intended to assist married couples to enhance their relationships.

Limitations of the Study

This study has the following limitations:

1). This investigation was limited to those individuals who provide marriage preparation in the B.C. Conference of the United

Church of Canada and four British Columbia Dioceses of the Anglican Church in Canada (Westminster, British Columbia, Caledonia and Cariboo). Permission was not obtained to contact marriage educators in the Kootenay Diocese of the Anglican Church in Canada.

2). Only two aspects of the qualifications of marriage educators are examined: perceived competence and knowledge of marriage and family concepts. This study does not examine other aspects of competence such as attitudes, beliefs or training.

Basic Assumptions

This investigation was based on the following assumptions:

1). The instruments used were appropriate research tools and provided adequate data for the purposes of this investigation.

2). All respondents in the investigation participated willingly and honestly.

Significance of the Study

This study is perceived to be of importance to the field of family science and in particular to the field of marriage preparation in that it attempts to explore questions which have had little or no attention in the study of marriage educators. This knowledge is important to the development of the field of marriage preparation in that it will provide information of use to those providing initial training and continuing education opportunities for providers of marriage preparation.

Organization of the Remainder of the Thesis

A review of literature relevant to this study is presented in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, the methods of the study and data analysis are described. The findings of the study are outlined in Chapter 4 and the summary, conclusions and implications are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

This review begins with an examination of formal and informal socialization for marriage, and traces the historical development of the field of marriage preparation. Issues in the field arising out of this review are presented. One of these issues, the qualifications of marriage preparation providers is the focus of this thesis. The hypotheses to be tested within this study are also presented.

Rationale for Marriage Preparation

Historically, socialization for marriage has been an informal process, that is, it has occurred primarily through informal learning experiences in one's family of origin and in one's interactions in peer groups. Hill and Aldous (1969) noted that socialization for marriage begins in the family of origin and is the primary means by which individuals learn about the values, roles and interrelationships important in marriage. Through family interactions, children learn about the value of marriage itself and about the importance of children and of family ties. As well, through observation, children may learn about specific processes which are a part of marriage such as marital roles or forms of affection. For example, children may witness their parents as they handle conflict in the marital relationship. While the spouses may not have intended to teach the child about conflict resolution in such situations, the child nevertheless learns some of the norms, values and/or skills of conflict resolution through this observation. As well, through

observation, children learn such things as when and how to express affection.

Although Hill and Aldous (1969) acknowledged that historically the family of origin had been successful as the primary socializing agent for marriage, they did not believe that contemporary families were adequately equipped for this task. They suggested that the difficulty arises because the family of origin "is not a repository of such knowledge about marriage, nor is it able to provide practical on-the-job training in the skills of marriage" (Hill and Aldous, 1969, p.89).

Contemporary families may be less effective in socializing their members for marriage because of several changes that have occurred and are occurring in western society and particularly in western families. These include: the transition from an agrarian society to an industrial one, the transition from a home production economy to an external monetary system, the transition from institutional to companionate marriages, and changes in family patterns and structure.

The most obvious change in Western society during the last century has been the transition from an agrarian society to an industrial one. In the agrarian society, the contributions of all family members were essential for the survival of the family unit, and the roles and division of labour were relatively clear (Ahrons and Rodgers, 1987). The roles of the marital couple tended to centre around the production of goods and services necessary for daily life. As children grew, they became involved in the tasks of the family, learning the roles necessary for

family maintenance as they participated in and observed the enactment of most family roles. In such families, informal socialization for marriage appeared to be sufficient. Because there was little change in families from one generation to the next and little difference between families within a particular community, roles learned in the family of origin could be translated into a new family at marriage.

The rise of an industrial society brought about a transition from a resource or home production economy to an external monetary system. Many husbands began to work outside the home to earn money, affecting not only the husband/father roles, but also those of wives and children as well. These family members were no longer co-labourers in the production of essential goods, but became more or less dependent on the wage earning ability of the husband/father. "Along with this change came an idealization of the home as an expressive location, in contrast to its former identification as an instrumental place - a centre of production" (Ahrons and Rodgers, 1987, p.6). These idealized expressive roles became part of the set of wife and mother roles, furthering changes in the roles of both wife and mother. The roles and experiences of children also changed as formal schooling became the norm. As a result, children had less direct interaction with their parents as they carried out their marital roles; and children were thus less able to learn about these roles through informal socialization processes.

As indicated above, the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society has had an important impact on marital roles. Burgess and Locke note that there has also been a change in the

nature of marital relationships:

...the family in historical times has been, and at present is, in transition from an institution to a companionship. In the past, the important factors unifying the family have been external, formal and authoritarian such as the law, the mores, public opinion, tradition, the authority of the family head, rigid discipline and elaborate ritual. In the new emerging form of the companionship family, its unity inheres less and less in community pressures and more and more in such interpersonal relations as the mutual affection, the sympathetic understandings, and the comradeship of its members. (1960, p.vii).

As marriages in each succeeding generation have become less institutional and more companionate, there has been greater variation in marital patterns.

Eshleman (1974) describes the nature of the companionate (or companionship) marriage. He believes that such a marriage "would focus on the unity that develops out of mutual affection and intimate association of husband and wife, parents and children" (p.125). A marriage based on the companionate model may be characterized by: 1) affection as the basis for its existence; 2) husband and wife with equal status and authority; 3) major decisions made by consensus; and 4) common interests and activities coexisting with division of labour and individuality of interests (Eshleman, 1974). In contrast to the institutional marriage where the relationship between spouses depends on the enactment of specific and defined roles, the companionate marriage is based more on the "skilled management of interpersonal relationships" (Mace, 1975, p.10)

Mace (1975) suggests that while the institutional marriage of the past required no special preparation because of its established roles and because children could directly observe the

enactment of most of these roles, the companionate marriage emphasizing interpersonal relationships does require such preparation. He believes that it is this training (i.e., the skilled management of interpersonal relationships) that the family of origin is unable to provide for its members. Thus, Mace's views support the argument of Hill and Aldous (1969) that the family of origin is not well equipped to train members for the skills necessary in contemporary companionate marriages.

The ability of the family of origin to socialize its members for marriage is further limited in that it can reflect only one 'model' or approach to marital interactions such as decision making, problem solving, the division of tasks and the balance of power (Hill and Aldous, 1969). When couples grew up in the same community, had similar family backgrounds, and roles were more rigid than at present, the limitations of the one 'model' of marriage were not of concern. Today, however, "interethnic, interclass, and inter-religious unions are much more numerous" (Bardis, 1964, p.456), with the likelihood that the models of marriage that each spouse brings from the family of origin will be different.

Several other changes in western families that limit the ability of the family of origin to socialize its members for marriage should also be noted. These include the lengthening of the marital career and the shortening of the parental career, (Hill & Aldous, 1969; Rodgers & Witney, 1981); the growing number of two career or two worker marriages (Ahrons & Rodgers, 1987); the higher incidence of divorce (Huff, 1983); and the greater number of single parent, binuclear, and stepfamilies

(Ahrons & Rodgers, 1987). These changes in families indicate that the realities of contemporary marriage may not correspond to the 'model' of marriage observed in the family of origin.

Hill and Aldous (1969) concluded that because the family of origin was "weak in providing knowledge about marriage and parenthood and inadequate in providing systematic supervision and evaluation of the degree of competence developed in the skills and abilities necessary for marriage" (p.928), there was a need for formal socialization programs to provide a perspective of and systematic knowledge about marriage in our society. One response to this need has been the emergence of a variety of formal educational programs in marriage education. These programs include: 1) general Family Life Education courses offered in high school which may examine basic information on dating, mate selection, marital satisfaction and, interpersonal communication; 2) Marriage Enrichment programs designed to assist married couples to strengthen their marital relationships through gaining new understandings and skills; and 3) Marriage Preparation courses which help engaged couples to prepare for their own forthcoming marriages. It is only the latter form of marriage education which is relevant to this study.

History of Marriage Preparation

An examination of the historical development of the field of marriage preparation helps to provide a setting for this study. Through this examination, one is able to identify those who have contributed to this development and to indicate the major changes which have occurred since its inception.

Sociologist Ernest Groves offered the first university courses in marriage preparation, initially at Boston University in the early 1920's and later at the University of North Carolina (Kerkhoff, 1964). The first community-based premarital education program was developed at the Merrill-Palmer Institute in 1932 (Huff, 1983). In both of these early programs, an educational approach was used to address the goals of preventing and alleviating marital distress and increasing family stability, marital happiness, and the quality of family relations (Huff, 1983). A lecture-style approach was used to educate groups of single individuals who may or may not have been taking the course as part of an engaged couple. While referred to as, and intended to be marriage preparation opportunities, they were essentially what has been defined in this thesis as general marriage education.

Another early intervention which was called marriage preparation was the premarital examination by the family physician (Matheson, 1957 cited in Stahman and Heibert, 1987). These visits traditionally concerned issues regarding sexuality and birth control, but may also have included discussions of other areas related to preparing for marriage.

Through the 1930's and the 1940's, the typical marriage preparation program continued to use an educational approach and focused on the concepts of marital expectations, goals and religious lifestyles (Huff, 1983; Levine & Brodsky, 1949). As with the earlier programs, these courses tended to be conducted in a group lecture approach. The first documented example of small group marriage preparation did not appear until 1949 (Levine & Brodsky, 1949). Small group approaches allowed

opportunities for couple interaction to occur as part of the intended process of the course.

After World War II, changes in the field of psychology and pastoral counselling influenced programs in marriage preparation (Summers & Cunningham, 1989). In psychology, attention shifted from a focus on intrapersonal issues to include interpersonal relationships as well, resulting in the development of the field of marital and family therapy. Through the study of marital interaction and of couples experiencing conflict and dysfunctional relationships, new insights were gained which could be applied to teaching couples approaching marriage. This information had a profound effect on the development of marriage preparation. In pastoral counselling, interest in interpersonal adjustments to marriage were also emerging, and clergy added this focus to their traditional teaching regarding the religious components of marriage (Stahman & Heibert, 1987).

The development of tests and inventories intended to help couples examine their own relationships during the marriage preparation experience emerged during the late 1950's (Huff, 1983). With this development, programs in marriage preparation moved from a focus on passive instructional methods to an experiential approach concerned with the individual couple's actual roles, expectations and sexual and emotional adjustment (Oates, 1958; Tigue, 1958). It was also during this period that the first studies evaluating marriage preparation courses began to appear in the literature (Fairchild, 1959; Mace, 1952; Wiser, 1959).

Leadership in marriage preparation changed during the 1960's as increasing numbers of therapists and other mental health professionals became involved in the area (Summers & Cunningham, 1989). Physicians no longer provided direct marriage preparation but became consultants to other professionals (Schumm & Denton, 1979). Problem-oriented approaches focusing on problem solving and conflict resolution skills were developed to augment the previous instructional and experiential methods (Ellis, 1961; Mitchell, 1967; Rutledge, 1966; Whitlock, 1961).

Developments during the 1970's included the establishment of programs for specific populations such as the handicapped and the disabled (Walker, 1977); the divorced or widowed (Huff, 1983); and couples wherein at least one individual was a minor (Shonick, 1975). More specialized methods of presentation and content were also developed, as reflected by the Minnesota Couples Communication Program (Miller, Nunally & Wackman, 1976); The Conjugal Relationship Enhancement Program (Rappaport, 1976); and Ridley's program in conflict management (Ridley, Avery, Harrel, Leslie & Dent, 1981). As well, evaluation of the effects of marriage preparation on later relationship satisfaction and on couple stability increased in both the secular and religious programs (Microys & Bader, 1977; Miller, Nunally & Wackman, 1976; VanZoost, 1973; Walker, 1977).

As this brief review indicates, the major changes in marriage preparation since the inception of the field include changes in educational programs and approaches, changes in the fields which provided leadership in program delivery, and increasing attention to studies of the impact of marriage

preparation programs. There is some indication that the development of new programs has peaked and that current program development focuses on the modification of previous programs (Stahman & Hiebert 1987; Huff, 1983). At the present time, major leadership in the delivery of these programs is provided by the clergy, by family counsellors, and other family professionals.

Approaches to Marriage Preparation

Although many kinds of programs are called marriage preparation, a brief review of different types of marriage preparation programs will help to clarify the perspective relevant to this study. A review of the literature (Beeson, 1978; Buckner & Salts, 1985; Guldner, 1970; Mace, 1975; Schumm & Denton, 1979) indicates that at the present time there are six major intervention approaches that are labeled as marriage preparation. These include:

1. General Marriage Education. This is the type of preparation which one would receive through a high school family life education unit, a home economics course or a university family studies course. These units and courses include topics such as mate selection, dating, marital satisfaction and family life careers. The goals of such courses are to present marriage as an area of study and to help individuals explore this information in terms of their own potential marriages. General marriage education is usually not intended to assist specific premarital couples in preparing for their own marriages. As stated earlier, such an approach is too general to be classified as marriage

preparation and is included here only because it has been referred to in some literature as marriage preparation (Schumm & Denton, 1979).

2. Therapeutic Counselling. Therapeutic counselling is based on a treatment rather than an educational model and is designed to "meet the needs of couples presenting specific and often distressing problems" (Schumm & Denton, 1979, p.24). Typically, therapeutic counselling is limited to dysfunctional couples who are considered to be in need of crisis intervention (Wright & L'Abate, 1977). Because this method is therapeutic rather than educational in focus, it is the domain of the psychotherapist or counselling psychologist rather than the marriage educator.

3. Group Lecture. In the group lecture approach, large groups of premarital couples are typically brought together for a series of lectures on topics relevant to marriage and weddings. These sessions are designed to convey information and usually do not provide opportunities for couples to discuss the information or to apply the information provided. The lectures may be presented by one instructor, or each individual session may be presented by a specialist in that topic area. Examples of topics that might be covered in this approach include planning for the wedding, building and maintaining close relationships, resolving conflicts budgeting, investing and insurance, meal planning and food storage, interior design, and sexual concerns in marriage (Hoopes & Fisher, 1984).

4. Instructional Counselling. A typical goal of instructional counselling is "preparing couples to adjust realistically their

expectations of marriage by providing them with information and exposure to a variety of frequently occurring marital problems" (Schumm & Denton, 1979, p.24). These programs are offered by the clergy and by counsellors and are typically carried out with individual couples. When offered to groups of couples, these programs tend to be of an educational and skill oriented nature. Instruments such as PREPARE (Olson, Fournier & Druckman, 1986a) and Rolfe's Marriage Preparation Assessment Forms (Rolfe, 1983) are often used to provide initial information for the couple and to provide structure for this approach.

5. Enrichment. The enrichment approach to marriage preparation is "based on the premise that equipping couples to deal with their own concerns is more useful than merely conveying information and advice" (Schumm & Denton, 1979, p.24). The empirical underpinnings of enrichment "can be found in the field of programmed instruction and its theoretical basis in general systems, communication, information and a transactional background" (Wright & L'Abate, 1977, p.178). Enrichment approaches to marriage preparation may also be labeled as preventative education and are generally structured and conducted in a group setting. Couples are given information and instruction and provided with the opportunity to practice skills such as communication, conflict resolution and decision making. Although there are many similarities, the enrichment approach to marriage preparation should not be confused with marriage enrichment programs designed for those who are already married.

6. Post-Wedding Intervention. Post-wedding intervention is a modification of the instructional counselling format. It is

unique in that it utilizes only one pre-wedding meeting. At that meeting, a contract is made with the couple outlining a set of post-wedding sessions (Beeson, 1978; Bullock, 1970; Guldner, 1971; Schumm & Denton, 1979). This format is based on the belief that premarital couples are usually not in a position to examine realistically the state of their own relationship. Guldner (1971) suggests that premarital couples are usually "too starry eyed" (p.115) to be objective about their own feelings and the dynamics of their relationship, either as it exists at the present or as it might be in the future. He suggests that couples need time to adjust to the realities of marriage before they are ready for any external intervention. Approximately six months after the wedding (Bullock, 1970), difficulties and conflicts in a marital relationship are no longer abstract, and couples may be more willing to recognize that the potential for problems exists. Marriage education offered at this time also can use actual situations from the couple's early months of marriage as examples for relationship enhancement exercises.

Although all of these approaches may be called marriage preparation, only the final three approaches (instructional counselling, enrichment and post-wedding intervention) are relevant to this study.

Qualifications of Marriage Preparation Providers

Regardless of the approach to marriage preparation, the qualifications of those providing the education is of major concern. A review of the Family Life Education literature indicates that there are two major issues in all areas of Family

Life Education - the effectiveness of the various approaches and the qualifications of the educators (e.g., Arcus, 1987; National Council on Family Relations, 1984). The marriage education literature suggests that these are also major issues in marriage preparation. According to Bagarozzi and Rauen (1981), contemporary leaders in marriage education appear more and more concerned with the effectiveness of the field and several studies have been undertaken to examine this concern (Eggeman, Smith-Eggeman, Moxley & Schumm, 1986; Fournier, 1980; Huff, 1983; Sabey, 1981; Stuckey, Eggemann, Smith-Eggeman, Moxley, & Schumm, 1986). The issue that has not been adequately addressed in the literature is the training and qualifications of the marriage educators. However, one of the outcomes of the evaluation studies is the need to focus on the training of the leaders and facilitators of the programs (Most & Guernsey, 1983).

As noted by the National Council on Family Relations (1984), "qualified family life educators are critical to the success of programs in family life education because they are responsible for the development and/or implementation of programs as well as interacting directly with those who participate in them" (p.1). With regards to marriage preparation, this concern is reflected by Stahman and Heibert (1987), who believe that marriage preparation providers need specific training, preferably at a graduate level, in the areas of relationship counselling, marital interaction, family studies and relationship assessment. A February, 1988 consultation with marriage preparation providers in Vancouver, British Columbia sponsored by the British Columbia Council for the Family and the British Columbia Ministry of

Health echoed these concerns. At that consultation, professionals in the field reported that they were concerned about the qualifications of those involved in marriage preparation in British Columbia, and requested further training programs and an investigation into the certification of facilitators and programs (Leger, 1988). The qualifications of marriage educators become increasingly important as more and more churches require couples to participate in marriage preparation prior to their wedding. Ensuring that those who offer marriage education are qualified to do so provides important protection for the participants in such programs.

In spite of these concerns, however, very few institutions offer training opportunities in the area of marriage preparation. A review of institutional calendars indicates that Purdue University and the University of Northern Illinois are among the few secular institutions which offer specific training in the field while Fuller Theological Institute, Biola University and the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary are among the few theological institutions which offer courses focusing exclusively on training for marriage preparation. At the present time, the two major theological institutions in British Columbia offer very little in this area. Both the Vancouver School of Theology and Regent College offer a general course in pastoral care or counselling. While Regent College introduced a course in Marriage and Family Ministry in the spring of 1987, only 1 1/2 hours in this semester course deal directly with marriage preparation.

There have been a number of recent attempts to develop

training programs for marriage preparation providers (Curtis & Miller, 1976; Mace, 1975; Most & Guerney, 1983; Salts & Buckner, 1983). However, there are no studies which have examined the qualifications of marriage educators. As previously stated, approximately 80% of all marriage preparation opportunities are provided by members of the clergy (Fournier, 1980). Wright (1976) found that while many clergy report that they are better trained for doing marriage preparation than they were in the past, they still feel inadequately prepared. According to Orthner (1986), only 42% of the clergy he studied perceived that they had 'high competence' in the provision of marriage preparation. Because there is little training available for marriage preparation providers and because of the clergy's stated concerns about inadequate preparation, it is important that an examination of the knowledge and perceived competence of those who provide the bulk of the opportunities in marriage preparation, i.e., the clergy, be conducted. As noted in Chapter 1, only two aspects of the qualifications of marriage preparation providers will be studied: 1) knowledge of marriage and family concepts and 2) perceived competence. These two aspects become the dependent variables for this study.

Independent Variables

A review of the literature indicates that several variables have a potential influence on the dependent variables knowledge of marriage and family concepts and perceived competence. This section will describe these variables.

Position on Staff

Individuals within a church who act as marriage educators do so from potentially different positions. In many churches in British Columbia, congregations are able to employ more than one clergy person (United Church Publishing House, 1988). In such situations, a person is hired based on his or her particular gifts or training in a particular area. For example, a church might employ one minister who specializes in preaching and administration and another who is responsible for pastoral care and christian education. As well, many churches in British Columbia employ individuals other than ordained clergy to conduct some aspects of ministry (United Church Publishing House, 1988). Typically, these individuals are professionals or paraprofessionals who have some specialization in a particular area of ministry such as pastoral counselling or christian education. Some churches also enable lay people to minister and therefore train volunteers from their congregations to conduct specific programs or services such as marriage preparation. Other churches make use of para-church organizations, that is, organizations which offer specialized programs such as pastoral counselling or marriage education which are faith-centred but not directly aligned with any one particular denomination. One example of such an organization is the Interchurch Marriage Project in Burnaby, B.C., a joint effort of several mainline denominations to provide resources to strengthen the marriages of those in their churches. This centre offers marriage preparation courses as well as marriage and family counselling.

Denomination

Denominalationism is defined as devotion to a specific set of principles or interests. Given that denominations vary in the principles or interests which make up their theology, it may be assumed that these principles and interests might affect beliefs about marriage, and therefore, affect beliefs about marriage education. However, clergy in the Anglican Church in Canada and the United Church of Canada train at the same theological institutions and have similar statements of faith. Therefore, it is unlikely that they will differ significantly on the dependent variables of this study.

Theological Orientation

In a study of Methodist pastors in the United States, Orthner (1986) found that those who considered themselves to be theologically conservative had less training in pastoral counselling (including marriage preparation) and were more concerned about its place in the church than those who considered themselves to be theologically liberal. Orthner's findings suggest that one might expect to find that those who are more theologically liberal would be more qualified as marriage educators. In contrast, Wright (1984) found that the theological orientation of Canadian clergy was not a significant indicator of counselling practice. Given these different findings, it is important that further study be conducted in order to clarify the impact of theological orientation.

Level of Education

The National Council on Family Relations (1984) has established a set of criteria for the certification of Family

Life Educators. One of these criteria is the completion of an academic degree in an appropriate discipline. Stahman and Heibert (1987) believe that training at a master's degree level is necessary for marriage educators, with at least some specific training in counselling, marital interaction, family studies and relationship assessment. Curtis and Miller (1976) argue that paraprofessionals conducting marriage preparation need a core of specific academic courses. This suggests that level of education may be related to one's ability to conduct marriage preparation.

Years in Ministry

As indicated in the review of literature, marriage preparation as a profession has evolved over the past 60 years. It has made gains in acceptability and its format has changed greatly. Thus it is possible that those clergy who trained more recently may have had more exposure to marriage and family content during their training and may have had specific seminars on marriage preparation.

Number of Weddings per Year

Schumm and Denton (1979) suggest that one of the reasons that many ministers do not seek further training in marriage preparation is that they do not conduct a sufficient volume of weddings to warrant further training in the area. It is reasonable to suggest that those clergy who conduct very few weddings in any given year would not perceive the need to become well qualified as marriage educators.

Control Variables

The four control variables proposed for this study

included:

Age

Age was used in order to control for possible cohort effects in the variance of the dependent variables.

Gender

Some in the field believe that marriage preparation programs should be offered by male/female teams (Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment, 1984). Aside from the modelling that could be provided by such teams, there appears to be an underlying assumption that males and females differ in how they conduct marriage preparation and that premarital couples would benefit from both approaches. Because of these assumptions, gender was selected as a control.

Marital Status

There are several reasons to include marital status as a control. Some in the field believe that marriage education should only be conducted by those who have personal marital experience (Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment, 1984). Others go as far as to say that only 'successfully' married couples should conduct marriage education. It is possible then that those who are married may know more about marriage. Thus, it is important to control for marital status.

Length of Marriage

If being married does have an effect on one's knowledge about marriage, then length of marriage might have an added effect. Therefore, the total length of all marriages was also used as a control.

Hypotheses: Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts

The following hypotheses related to knowledge of marriage and family concepts will be tested in this study:

Hypothesis 1. Those employed as staff associates or in positions other than general clergy will have a higher level of knowledge of marriage and family concepts than general clergy.

Hypothesis 2. Volunteers trained as marriage educators will have a greater knowledge of marriage and family concepts than either general clergy or other church staff.

Hypothesis 3. Knowledge of marriage and family concepts held by marriage educators will not vary by denomination.

Hypothesis 4. The more theologically liberal the individual marriage educator, the higher the knowledge of marriage and family concepts.

Hypothesis 5. The higher the educational level of the marriage educator, the greater the knowledge of marriage and family concepts.

Hypothesis 6. The greater the number of years in the ministry, the lower the knowledge of marriage and family concepts.

Hypothesis 7. The greater the number of weddings performed annually, the higher the knowledge of marriage and family concepts.

Hypotheses: Perceived Competence

The following hypotheses related to perceived competence will be tested in this study.

Hypothesis 8. Those employed as staff associates or in positions other than general clergy will have a higher level of perceived competence than general clergy.

Hypothesis 9. Volunteers trained as marriage educators will have a greater level of perceived competence than either general clergy or other church staff.

Hypothesis 10. Perceived competence reported by marriage educators will not vary by denomination.

Hypothesis 11. The more theologically liberal the individual marriage educator, the higher the perceived competence in marriage preparation.

Hypothesis 12. The higher the educational level of the marriage educator, the greater the perceived competence in marriage preparation.

Hypothesis 13. The greater the number of years in the ministry, the lower the perceived competence in marriage preparation.

Hypothesis 14. The greater the number of weddings performed annually, the higher the perceived competence in marriage preparation.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Introduction

This study has two objectives, 1) to assess the level of knowledge of marriage and family concepts held by marriage educators, and 2) to re-examine Wright's (1976) finding that ministers involved in marriage preparation do not perceive themselves to be competent in the provision of such education. This chapter describes the methodology of this investigation. The specific procedures used in conducting this study will also be presented.

Subjects

The population for this study included all marriage educators, both lay and ordained, from the pastoral charges of the British Columbia (hereafter B.C.) Conference of the United Church of Canada, and four of the five B.C. dioceses of the Anglican Church in Canada (New Westminster, Cariboo, British Columbia and Caledonia). These two denominations were chosen for study because they were known to be active in marriage preparation in B.C. They also represent the largest protestant populations in Canada. According to Bibby (1987), 10% of Canadians claim affiliations with the Anglican Church and 16% with the United Church. This represents close to 60% of all Canadians who designate a protestant affiliation. These two denominations conduct 30% of the weddings in the province each year, (B.C. Vital Statistics, 1986) thereby having potential influence on a large number of B.C. couples preparing for

marriage.

Although other denominations are also involved in marriage preparation, they were not included in this study. Lists of smaller protestant denominations such as Mennonite Brethren, Nazarine and Four Square Gospel were not available to the researcher. As well, these protestant denominations appear to have smaller numbers of congregations and would thus require that the entire population be studied in order that the sample size be comparable in each denomination.

The Roman Catholic Church was not included in this study because of perceived theological differences which might confound the variables in the study. Differences specifically relevant to marriage preparation include teachings about the purpose of sexual intercourse and ideologies regarding birth control. It was also believed that including Catholic educators in the sample might confound control variables such as length of marriage and marital status, since it is likely that a majority of marriage preparation providers in the Catholic church are priests or other members of religious orders who are required to remain both single and celibate.

Permission to contact individual congregations was obtained in writing from the Executive Secretary of the B.C. Conference of the United Church of Canada and from the Bishop of each individual Anglican diocese. Lists of individual congregations were obtained from the Yearbooks of each denomination (Anglican Book Centre, 1987; United Church Publishing House, 1987). Each congregation was assigned a number. Then using a table of random numbers, a sample of 25% of each denomination was selected.

The number of congregations in this study included 57 United Church pastoral charges and 60 Anglican parishes.

Procedure

After permission to conduct the research study was received from the University of British Columbia Ethics Review Committee, data were collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire. Each congregation in the sample was sent a package containing a letter of introduction, questionnaire instructions and copies of the questionnaire (Appendix A). The number of questionnaires sent to each location was determined by reference to denominational lists which indicated the number of staff in each congregation. Of the 117 congregations in the sample, 109 were sent one questionnaire. Only eight were sent more than one copy. A total of 127 questionnaires were mailed out to 117 congregations. The letter of introduction asked that each individual in the congregation who provides marriage preparation complete a copy of the entire questionnaire. If additional copies were needed for the number of providers, the recipient was asked to either duplicate the number of copies necessary or contact the researcher who would provide additional copies. After one month, reminder letters were sent to all congregations who had not responded.

Research Variables

Two dependent variables were investigated in this study. The first of these is knowledge of marriage and family concepts, or the level of knowledge held by individual marriage educators on selected content areas. The second dependent variable is

perceived competence, or the extent to which the marriage educator perceives himself/herself to be competent in the provision of marriage preparation to premarital couples.

Six independent variables were used in this study. These include position on staff, denomination, theological orientation, level of education, years in ministry and number of weddings per year. In addition, four control variables were measured, age, gender, marital status and number of years married.

Development of Demographic Questionnaire

The research instrument consists of two sections. The first section requested demographic information about the congregation, the marriage preparation programs offered by that congregation, and its policies regarding marriage preparation. In addition, individual marriage educators were asked to provide personal demographic information and information about their training in marriage preparation. The information requested on the demographic section of the questionnaire provided for the measurement of the independent and control variables and one of the dependent variables (perceived competence).

The dependent variable perceived competence was measured by a series of nine-point Likert-type scales. One scale asked the respondents to indicate how competent they felt about providing marriage preparation. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate how competent they felt about working with premarital couples in each of eight major content areas in marriage preparation: communication, conflict resolution, marital expectations, finance, sexuality, leisure/lifestyle, family of origin and general marriage. (These content areas emerged during

the development of the knowledge instrument described below).

Independent variables were measured as follows. To determine position on staff, individuals were asked to indicate in what capacity (i.e. sole clergy, staff associate, lay volunteer) they provided marriage education. Additionally, they were asked if they were employed by the church or were volunteers. Participants were also asked to note their denominational affiliation. To measure theological orientation, respondents were asked to rate on a seven-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they considered themselves to be theologically liberal or theologically conservative. Level of education was measured by the number of years of formal education beyond high school, and ministry experience by the number of years in the ministry.

Development of the Knowledge of Marriage
and Family Concepts Instrument

The second part of the questionnaire was the Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts Instrument (KMFC), an instrument designed specifically for the purpose of this study to measure the dependent variable Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts. A review of the literature indicated that while there are a number of marriage preparation instruments available, none of these were appropriate for the purpose of this study. The PREPARE and ENRICH instruments (Olson, Fournier & Druckman, 1976, 1986a, 1986b.) are designed to help premarital couples explore marital expectations and use attitudinal rather than knowledge statements. The Marriage Quiz (Larsen, 1988) focuses on myths rather than knowledge about marriage. The Survey of Clergy

as Premarital Counsellors Instrument (Cunningham, 1986) does measure knowledge about marriage and family concepts, but it emphasizes parenting skills rather than the more comprehensive content typically found in marriage preparation programs (e.g. communication skills, sexuality, and problem solving). Because an appropriate instrument was not available, it was necessary to develop one specifically for this study.

The first step in the development of this instrument was a review of ten marriage preparation programs (Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett, & Conway 1980; Barnes, 1985; British Columbia Council for the Family, 1980, 1988; Buckner & Salts, 1985; Hoopes & Fisher, 1984; Lees & Simonsen, 1983; Rolfe, 1983; Shonick, 1975; United Church of Canada, 1986). These programs were selected either because they are commonly used in British Columbia or because a full description of the program is available in the literature. In each of these programs, the chapter headings and subheadings were identified and recorded in order to determine the content covered in these courses. This process identified sixteen key content areas which were included in these marriage preparation programs. The content areas for each program are listed in Table 1. As noted in this table, some content areas (sexuality and communication skills) were present in all ten of the programs while others (interior design and nutrition) were present in only one or two. It was believed that in order for the research instrument to be relevant to the majority of marriage preparation programs, only those content

Table 1

Marriage Preparation Programs and Content Areas

<u>Marriage Preparation Programs</u>		<u>Content Areas</u>															
		Budgeting & Finances	Communication	Family of Origin	Future Work & Education	Interior Design	Intimacy	Legal Concerns	Lifestyle/Leisure	Marital Roles & Expectations	Nutrition & Meal Planning	Parenting	Planning the Wedding	Problem Solving Conflict Res.	Sexuality	Spirituality	Values
Bader et al 1980		X	X	X						X				X	X		
Barnes 1985		X	X							X				X	X		
British Columbia Council on the Family 1980		X	X	X					X	X			X	X	X		X
British Columbia Council on the Family 1988		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
Buckner & Salts 1985		X	X	X					X	X			X	X	X		
Hoopes & Fischer 1984		X	X			X					X		X	X	X		
Lees & Simonsen 1983			X	X	X				X	X		X		X	X		X
Rolfe 1983		X	X	X					X	X		X		X	X	X	
Shonick 1975			X		X				X	X					X		
United Church of Canada 1985			X	X			X		X	X				X	X	X	X
No. of programs		7	10	7	3	1	2	1	7	9	2	3	3	9	10	2	4

areas present in at least two thirds of the programs reviewed should be included in the final instrument. Interestingly, the analysis of program content indicated a natural break between 40% and 70%. Thus presence in 70% of the programs was selected as the criterion for the inclusion of a content area. Seven major content areas emerged from this analysis: Sexuality (100%), Communication (100%), Roles and Expectations (90%), Conflict Resolution (90%), Finances (70%), Family of Origin (70%), and Leisure/Lifestyles (70%). One additional content area (Marital Relationships) was implied in these marriage preparation programs but did not appear as a separate topic. This area included general information about marriage, marital adjustment, marital stages and marital satisfaction. Since it was perceived to be an important area of knowledge, it was also included in the instrument.

The next step was to generate a pool of knowledge statements for each of the selected content areas. This pool of statements was developed from a further review of the marriage preparation manuals and from a review of selected introductory marriage and family texts (Clayton, 1979; Cox, 1987; Garrett, 1982; Green, 1986; Gullotta, Adams & Alexander, 1986; Kirkendall & Adams, 1974; Klemmer, 1980; Mastin & Chandler, 1987; Smith, 1970; and Strong & Devault, 1986). These texts were selected because they provide basic information about marriage and family concepts. The key criteria for the inclusion of a statement in this pool were that the questions reflected the content of the marriage preparation programs reviewed and that there was general agreement in the literature concerning "the answer". These

"answers" or appropriate responses (Mostly True or Mostly False) were identified from these manuals and texts and were recorded. There was a total of 128 statements in this initial pool. Examples of questions include "To achieve sexual adjustment in marriage, each partner must understand why the other behaves the way he/she does" and "Holding different value systems is a destructive force in marriage". In order to avoid question set response, some questions were worded in the positive form and some in the negative form.

To reduce the number of statements and to construct a valid final instrument, the entire set of questions was administered to two groups. The first group was drawn from fourth year Family Life Education and Family Science majors in the School of Family and Nutritional Sciences and graduate students in the M.A. program in Family Studies, School of Family and Nutritional Sciences, University of British Columbia and in the M. Ed. program in Marriage and Family Counselling, Department of Counselling Psychology, University of British Columbia. This group included twenty individuals and was labelled 'Student Experts'.

The 'non-expert' group used to develop the KMFC included fourth year Dietetics students and graduate students in the M.Sc. Nutrition program, School of Family and Nutritional Sciences, U.B.C.. This group also included twenty individuals and was labelled 'Student Non-experts'. The 'Student Non-expert' group did not vary significantly from the 'Student Expert' group in age, gender or marital status.

Individuals in these groups were asked to respond to each statement in the pool by indicating whether the statement was 'Mostly True' or 'Mostly False' or whether they were unsure ('Don't Know'). If greater than 25% of the student expert group responded with "Don't Know" that item was discarded. In addition, if the number of Student Non-Experts who designated the correct answer were greater than the number of Student Experts who designated the correct answer, then this statement was also discarded. According to Nunnally (1978), cases where the number of incorrect answers were greater than the number of correct ones suggest either poor wording, a misleading statement, or a statement that could not be considered as fact. These two steps resulted in the deletion of twenty-eight statements.

Reliability

The third step in the analysis was to determine internal reliability, or the extent to which the measurement reflects true differences among the respondents (Sax, 1979). In the case of the Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts Inventory, it is necessary to establish as high a level of reliability as possible as it is likely that only small differences in scores may be found and one needs to be able to claim with confidence that a difference in scores measures a difference in knowledge and cannot simply be explained as measurement error.

The 103 remaining items were then grouped into eight subscales, one for each of the major content areas. In order that subscales have strong and significant alpha coefficients (a method of determining rational equivalence), the least reliable items were systematically deleted until an alpha coefficient of

(>.30) was obtained. While a coefficient of .30 is considered low, for the purpose of the development of a new instrument, especially where the concept has not been measured before, lower alpha coefficients are acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). All 15 items from the subscale FINANCE were deleted before this coefficient was obtained. The alpha scores for the remaining seven subscales are reported in Table 2. The item numbers listed in Table 2 identify the statement number on the final research instrument.

Table 2

Alpha Coefficients for KMFC Subscales

SUBSCALE AND ITEM #	ALPHA
Communication (6, 11, 24)	.5598
Conflict (5, 10, 18)	.5194
Leisure/Lifestyle (9, 15, 26)	.3857
Sexuality (2, 12)	.3620
Expectations (14, 19, 21)	.5564
Family of Origin (7, 25)	.5444
General Marr. (4, 20, 27)	.8732

Validity

After the reliability of the instrument had been determined, it was necessary to establish its validity or the degree to which the instrument measures what it purports to measure (Borg and Gall, 1983). To establishment validity, a third group was used. This panel of nine experts consisted of faculty from the University of British Columbia School of Family and Nutritional Sciences, staff of The British Columbia Council for

the Family, marriage preparation specialists in the province and one faculty member from the University of Alberta's Department of Family Studies. All experts had a doctoral degree in family studies, marriage and family counselling or an area related to marriage education. This group, labeled 'Faculty Experts' completed the same questionnaire as the two student groups. These responses were used to create a second expert category.

Table 3

Group Means and Tests of Significance for KMFC Subscales

SUBSCALE AND ITEM #	FACULTY EXPERT MEANS	STUDENT EXPERT MEANS	NON EXPERT MEANS	SIGNIFICANCE OF EXPERT VS. NON-EXPERT MEANS
Communication (6, 11, 24)	0.89	0.77	0.53	0.008
Conflict (5, 10, 18)	0.78	0.68	0.50	0.035
Leisure/ Lifestyle (9, 15, 26)	0.81	0.77	0.55	0.015
Sexuality (2, 12)	0.83	0.65	0.42	0.020
Expectations (14, 9, 21)	1.00	0.85	0.73	0.350
Family Origin (7, 25)	0.92	0.82	0.17	0.000
General Marr. (4, 20, 27)	0.96	1.00	0.80	0.016

The seven remaining subscales were analyzed using analysis of variance. A subscale is considered to have content validity when the difference between expert and non-expert means is significant at the 0.050 level, indicating that the instrument discriminates between those who know and those who don't know the content being measured. Table 3 presents these results.

Analysis of the Data

The data related to hypotheses 3, 8, 9, 10, and 12 were tested by means of analysis of variance, while hypotheses 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, and 14 were tested through the calculation of Pearson Correlation coefficients. Post hoc analyses consisting of Anova and multiple regression were also carried out. A significance level of 0.05 was used in all analyses.

CHAPTER 4

Findings and Results

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented. A description of the respondents is provided, and findings are reported in relation to each of the fourteen hypotheses. The results of post hoc analyses of the data are also presented.

Response Rate

Packages containing questionnaires and instructions were mailed to the 117 United Church of Canada and Anglican Church in Canada congregations in the sample. Since some of the packages contained more than one questionnaire, a total of 127 questionnaires were mailed. However, none of the congregations returned more than one questionnaire. Six packages were returned by Canada Post as undeliverable. Of those remaining, 64 (57.7%) congregations responded. Two questionnaires were not useable as not all sections had been completed, leaving 62 as the final number of congregations in the study.

Description of Sample Congregations

Tables 4 and 5 present a demographic description of the sample congregations. Responses were received from all regions of the province as designated by the Ministry of Regional Development, Province of British Columbia (1988). The Greater Vancouver Area was represented by the largest number of congregations (n=22), followed by the South Vancouver Island Region (n=10). Thirty six of the congregations were in urban locations, with 15 in semi-urban and 11 in rural locations.

Table 4

Demographic Description of Sample Congregations

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Range
Size of Congregations	434.407	296.900	59-1,050
Total Number of Weddings per Year	24.050	40.836	0-101

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of Sample Congregation
Demographics

Variable		N	%
Denomination	United	27	45.8
	Anglican	28	47.5
	Other	4	6.8
Region in the Province	Greater Vancouver	20	33.9
	Fraser Valley	6	10.2
	South Van. Island	9	15.3
	Central/North Van. Island	6	10.2
	Kootenays	5	8.5
	Okanagan	4	6.8
	Cariboo	4	6.8
	Northern B.C.	5	8.5

Of the 62 useable responses, an equal number (n=29) were received from each of the two denominations studied. The remaining four questionnaires were returned from congregations where individuals from more than one denomination meet together as a worshipping community, for example, a congregation consisting of members and adherents of the United Church of Canada, Anglican Church in Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church meeting under the leadership of a United Church clergy. There was considerable variation in the size of the congregations within the sample. The number of members and adherents (including children) in these congregations ranged from a low of 59 to over 1000. Most of the congregations, (69.4%) employed only one staff person.

The number of weddings per congregation in 1988 ranged from 0 to 101, with an average of 25 weddings per congregation. The majority of the marriage educators (58.1%) report that they plan six or more hours of marriage preparation with each couple. Forty-five percent held interviews or private counselling sessions with premarital couples. Of these, 11% could be considered as instructional counselling as they use an assessment instrument during their counselling sessions. Fifty-two percent request that couples participate in group enrichment programs, while only one respondent indicated that they conducted post-wedding intervention.

Description of Marriage Educators

The majority of the marriage educators who responded to the questionnaire were male. They ranged in age from 33 to 67, with a mean age of 50.8 years. Seventy nine percent (n=49) were

married to their first spouse, and of those remaining, 2 had never been married, 3 were separated or divorced and 8 had remarried. The mean total number of years married (all marriages) was 23.69.

All of the respondents were employed by the church and the majority (91.9%) were employed full time. Nearly three-fourths (72.3%) reported being the sole clergy in their congregation. Only one respondent reported being employed as a Marriage and Family minister. These respondents had been ordained an average of 20 years and 54% (n=31) had obtained a master's degree. Four were in their first pastorate, 20 in their second or third, while 21 had held four or more pastorates.

Table 6

Demographic Description of Respondents

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Range
Age of Respondents	50.759	8.529	33-67
Total Number of Years Married	23.431	9.919	0-42
Total Number of Years Ordained	20.328	9.729	2-37
Hours of Marriage Preparation Offered	5.917	2.132	1-8+

Table 7

Frequencies and Percentages of Respondent Demographics

Variable		N	%
Gender	Male	50	84.7
	Female	9	15.3
Marital Status	Never Married	2	3.4
	First Spouse	46	81.4
	Separated/Divorced	3	5.1
Employment Status	Full Time Staff	54	91.5
	3/4 Time Staff	1	1.7
	1/2 Time Staff	2	3.4
	Less than 1/2 Time Staff	2	3.4
	Volunteer	0	0.0
Position on Staff	General Clergy	55	93.2
	Specialized Ministry	4	6.8
Level of Education	College	8	14.0
	Bachelor's	16	28.1
	Master's	31	54.4
	Doctorate	5	8.7
Type of Marriage Preparation Offered	Informal Interview	21	35.0
	Instructional Counsellin	7	11.7
	Interview and Enrichment	25	41.6
	Instruc. Coun. and Enrichment	3	5.0
	Enrichment with Post-Wedding Intervention	1	1.6

Dependent Variables

Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts Instrument

The development of the instrument to measure the level of knowledge of marriage and family concepts was described in Chapter Three. During that development, an alpha of .6278 was established in order to determine internal reliability, and the instrument was shown to discriminate between those with and without knowledge of marriage and family concepts.

The data from the respondents in this study were also used to determine whether the Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts (KMFC) Instrument was a reliable measure of knowledge for this sample. The alpha score for the respondents in this study was .2187, suggesting that for these respondents, the 19-item KMFC Instrument was not a reliable measure. In order to determine which of the items were detracting from a significant alpha score, all items were analyzed for their individual contribution to this scale. By removing two items (#10 from the subscale sexuality and #12 from the subscale conflict resolution), an alpha score of .6890 could be obtained, thus increasing the reliability of the scale. The revised 17-item scale was thus determined to be a reliable measure of knowledge of marriage and family concepts for this study.

In addition, alpha scores were calculated for each of the subscales in the KMFC Instrument. These scores are presented in Table 8. It should be noted that in the original instrument development, six subscales (communication, conflict resolution, lifestyle, marital expectations, general marriage and family of

origin) were found to be reliable and valid measures. For this study, only the sub-scales communication, marital expectations, leisure/lifestyle, family of origin, and general marriage are considered reliable. The subscale sexuality does not appear in Table 8 because in the revised KMFC instrument, only one item remains in this subscale.

Table 8

Reliability of KMFC Subcales

Subscale/Item Numbers	Alpha
Communication (6, 11, 22)	.4652
Conflict Resolution (5, 17)	.1567
Marital Expectations (13, 18)	.3575
Leisure/Lifestyle (9, 14, 25)	-.6925
Family of Origin (7, 24)	.4111
General Marriage (4, 19, 23, 26)	.6798

A factor analysis was then carried out on the revised Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts Instrument. The purpose of this analysis was to confirm that the KMFC inventory is a multidimensional scale (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner & Bent, 1975). A Principal - Components Analysis for the Revised Knowledge of Marriage Concepts Instrument is found in Appendix B. This Table reveals that six factors are present in the Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts Inventory, indicating that it is indeed a multidimensional scale.

Table 9 presents the Eigenvalue calculations for the factor analysis of the revised KMFC. These statistics indicate that the six factors combined explain only 67% of the variance, or that 33% of the variance would be lost if a factor analysis approach were used to revise the KMFC Instrument. In contrast, through the establishment of a strong Cronbach Alpha, only two variables were lost. Thus the 17-item inventory developed through the latter approach was adopted and used as a multi-dimensional measure of knowledge (KMFC).

Table 9

Factor Analysis of KMFC Items: Eigenvalue Greater than 1.00000

Item	Factor	Eigenvalue	Percent of Variance	Cumulative Variance
6	1	3.12093	18.4	18.4
11	2	2.07366	12.2	30.6
22	3	2.00692	11.8	42.4
5	4	1.65144	9.7	52.1
17	5	1.46386	8.6	60.7
13	6	1.06662	6.3	67.0

Results : Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts

Scores for the dependent variable Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts ranged from 7 to 16, with a total possible score of 17. The higher the score, the greater the knowledge of marriage and family concepts. This variable had a mean of 12.6, indicating that the average respondent scored 74% on the KMFC Instrument. The mode and the median were both 13.00. The skewness was $-.698$. As 69% of the scores lie within one standard deviation (1.994) of the mean and 95% of the scores lie

Table 10

Distribution of KMFC Subscales and Individual Items

Subscale/Item#	N	Incorrect	Correct	Mean
Communication	62	-	-	.677
1	62	19	43	.694
11	62	25	37	.597
22	62	16	46	.742
Conflict Resolution	61	-	-	.815
5	62	22	40	.645
17	61	1	61	.984
Marital Expectations	62	-	-	.863
13	62	11	41	.823
18	62	6	56	.903
Leisure/Lifestyle	61	-	-	.557
9	62	11	51	.823
14	62	44	18	.290
25	61	27	34	.557
Family of Origin	61	-	-	.590
7	62	36	26	.419
24	61	15	46	.754
General Marriage	62	-	-	.844
4	62	7	55	.887
19	62	16	46	.742
23	62	16	46	.742
26	62	6	56	.903
Sex	NA			
2	62	11	51	.823

within 2 standard deviations of the mean, this variable can be considered to fit a normal curve which allows one to clearly interpret the statistics calculated (Kerlinger, 1973).

An examination of responses to the KMFC Instrument as presented in Table 10 reveals that respondents scored highest on subscales Marital Expectations ($x=.863$) and General Marriage ($x=.844$) and lowest on subscales Leisure ($x=.555$) and Family of Origin ($x=.590$). The item with the greatest number of correct responses was item #17 "A married couple who are experiencing conflict are probably experiencing a marriage that is falling apart" ($n=61$). Item #14 "Holding different value systems is a destructive force in marriages" had the most incorrect responses ($n=44$).

Results: Perceived Competence

The dependent variable Perceived Competence had an alpha score of .888 for this sample. The range of possible scores for this variable is from 1 to 72. For this variable, the higher the score, the lower the level of perceived competence in marriage preparation. For these respondents, the Perceived Competence scores ranged from 9 to 54 with a mean of 25.8, a standard deviation of 9.893 and a median of 13. On the nine-point scale used to measure overall Perceived Competence, the average respondent rated himself/herself at 3.7, with 1 = very competent and 9 = not very competent.

Table 11 presents respondents' perceived competence in working with premarital couples on individual content areas. These marriage educators report that they feel the most competent

Table 11

Distribution of Perceived Competence Subscales

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Median
Communication	2.871	1.385	3.000
Conflict Resolution	3.328	1.535	3.000
Sexuality	3.590	1.883	3.000
Marital Expectations	2.855	1.389	3.000
Leisure/ Lifestyle	3.557	1.747	3.000
Family of Origin	3.210	1.549	3.000
General Marriage	3.150	1.482	3.000
Finance	3.918	1.696	4.000

about working with couples in the areas of Communication ($x = 2.871$) and Marital Expectations ($x = 2.855$). They feel least competent in the area of Finances ($x = 3.918$).

Research Hypotheses: Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts

The first objective of this study was to measure the knowledge of marriage and family concepts held by marriage educators providing marriage preparation. The first seven hypotheses of the study refer to the dependent variable knowledge of marriage and family concepts. Hypotheses 1 and 2 relate to position on staff, that is, whether the marriage preparation provider is employed by the church in a position of general clergy or in a specialized ministry such as marriage and family or serves in a lay volunteer capacity.

Hypothesis 1

Those employed as staff associates or in positions other than general clergy will have a higher level of knowledge of marriage and family concepts than general clergy.

Hypothesis 2

Volunteers trained as marriage educators will have a greater knowledge of marriage and family concepts than either general clergy or other church staff.

Results.

As reported in Table 5, only four respondents were employed in positions other than general clergy and none were volunteers. Thus neither hypothesis could be tested, and the null hypotheses cannot be rejected. It is interesting to note however, that the one individual in the sample who was employed in a specialized

ministry in marriage and the family scored the highest on the Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts Instrument.

Hypothesis 3

Knowledge of marriage and family concepts held by marriage educators will not vary by denomination.

Results.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for the purpose of testing this hypothesis. ANOVA is a means for measuring the difference in variability about the mean. A total of 57 cases were analyzed to test the effect of the independent variable denomination on knowledge of marriage and family concepts. Five cases were not useable due to missing data or because their denomination was not clear. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts by Denomination

Category	Mean	N
Total Population	12.47	57
Anglican Church	12.75	29
United Church	12.21	29

Variable	SS	dF	F	P
Denomination	4.2021	1	1.005	.321

While the cell means indicate that a difference occurs between the two denominations with regards to knowledge of marriage and family concepts, this difference is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is supported.

Hypothesis 4

The more liberal the theological orientation of the individual, the higher the knowledge of marriage and family concepts.

Results.

Theological orientation is an ordinal scale variable. According to Labovitz (1972), Pearson Correlation coefficients and other statistics originally intended for use with interval scale data may be used on data which satisfy the assumptions of ordinal-level measurement. For this variable, a Pearson Correlation coefficient was calculated, but this correlation $-.1581$ ($p=.120$) was not significant. Since Long, Convey and Chwalek (1985) indicate that correlations with a probability of less than .20 may suggest a trend, this correlation suggests then that the direction proposed in the hypothesis may be correct, that is, the more liberal the individual, the higher the knowledge of marriage and family concepts.

Hypothesis 5

The higher the educational level, the greater the knowledge of marriage and family concepts.

Results.

The distribution of the independent variable, level of

education, is reported in Table 7. An analysis of variance was computed to determine if individuals who have higher educational levels score higher on the Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts Inventory. (See Table 13). As no significant differences were found between educators with various educational levels, the null hypothesis fails to be rejected.

Table 13

Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts by Level of Education

Category	Mean	N
Total Population	12.50	60
College Certificate	12.60	10
Bachelor's Degree	12.13	16
Master's Degree	12.69	29
Doctorate Degree	12.40	5

Variable	SS	df	F	P
Level of Education	3.443	3	.268	.848

Table 14

Means, Standard Deviations and Ranges of Independent Variables;
Theological Orientation, Number of Weddings and Number of Years
of Experience in the Ministry.

Variables	Mean	SD	Range
Theological Orientation	4.167	1.638	1 - 7
Number of Weddings	14.500	16.789	0 - 57
Number of Years In the Ministry	20.328	9.729	2 - 37

Hypothesis 6

The greater the number of years of experience in the ministry, the lower the knowledge of marriage and family concepts.

Results.

In Table 14, the distribution of the independent variable number of years experience in the ministry is presented. As this hypothesis consists of two interval scale variables, a Pearson Correlation is the appropriate statistic to be calculated for the purpose of testing the hypothesis. While a correlation coefficient of $-.1130$ indicates that the proposed direction of the hypothesis was correct, the probability of the correlation being significant is low ($p=.199$). Thus no significant differences in the knowledge of marriage and family concepts can be predicted by knowing the number of years of experience an individual has in the ministry. Thus the null hypothesis fails to be rejected.

Table 14

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges of Independent Variables: Theological Orientation, Number of Weddings and Number of Years of Experience in the Ministry

Variables	Mean	SD	Range
Theological Orientation	4.167	1.638	1-7
Number of Weddings	14.500	16.789	0-57
Number of Years In The Ministry	20.328	9.729	2-37

Hypothesis 7

The greater the number of weddings performed annually, the higher the knowledge of marriage and family concepts.

Results.

Again, the calculation of a Pearson Correlation coefficient is the appropriate test for this hypothesis. The correlation coefficient of .1391 ($p=.151$) indicates that while no significant variation in the dependent variable knowledge of marriage and family concepts can be explained by knowing the number of weddings performed in a year, the direction of the hypothesis is correct. The null hypothesis, however, fails to be rejected.

Research Hypotheses: Perceived Competence

The second objective of this study was to examine how competent these marriage educators perceived themselves to be in the provision of marriage preparation. The final seven hypotheses examine the interactions of the independent variables with the dependent variable perceived competence. Hypotheses 8 and 9 relate to the staff position of the individual marriage preparation providers.

Hypothesis 8

Those employed as staff associates or in positions other than general clergy will have a higher perceived competence than general clergy.

Hypothesis 9

Volunteers trained as marriage educators will have a greater perceived competence than either general clergy or other church staff.

Results.

As only four of the respondents were employed in positions other than what could be classified as general clergy and none of the respondents conducted marriage preparation as lay volunteers (Table 7), these hypotheses could not be tested. Because the hypotheses could not be tested, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. It is interesting to note, however, that the four individuals employed in specialized ministries perceived themselves as significantly more competent than did general clergy.

Hypothesis 10

Perceived competence in the provision of marriage preparation will not vary by denomination.

Results

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test this hypothesis. Table 15 presents a summary of this analysis. As shown in this table, no significant difference in perceived competence can be predicted by knowing the denomination of the marriage educator. Thus, the null hypothesis as predicted is not rejected.

Table 15

Perceived Competence by Denomination

Category	Mean	N		
Total Population	23.63	58		
Anglican Church	23.38	29		
United Church	23.89	29		

Variable	SS	df	F	P
Denomination	3.751	1	.046	.831

Hypothesis 11

The more theologically liberal the individual, the higher the perceived competence in marriage preparation.

Results.

The independent variable theological orientation is an ordinal scale variable. In order to test this hypothesis, a Pearson Correlation coefficient was calculated. This coefficient, $-.1003$ ($p=.227$) indicates that knowing an individual's perception of theological orientation will not help to predict perceived competence in providing marriage education opportunities to premarital couples. Thus the null hypothesis fails to be rejected.

Hypothesis 12

The higher the educational level, the greater the perceived competence in marriage preparation.

Results.

As indicated by the analysis in Table 16, knowing an individual marriage educator's level of education will not enable one to determine that marriage educator's perceived competence in providing marriage education.

Table 16

Perceived Competence by Level of Education

Category	Mean	N
Total Population	23.63	61
College Certificate	20.23	10
Bachelor's Degree	25.00	15
Master's Degree	23.83	31
Doctorate Degree	25.13	5

Variable	SS	df	F	P
Level of Education	156.041	3	.661	.579

Hypothesis 13

The greater the number of years of experience in the ministry, the lower the perceived competence in marriage preparation.

Results.

As the testing of this hypothesis involves two interval scale variables, the calculation of a Pearson Correlation coefficient was appropriate. The correlation coefficient of $-.0175$ ($p=.448$) is not significant. Thus the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Hypothesis 14

The greater the number of weddings performed annually, the higher the perceived competence in marriage preparation.

Results.

The Pearson Correlation coefficient for the relationship between these two variables is $-.1063$ ($p=.211$). Neither the hypothesis nor the direction of the hypothesis are supported. Thus the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Post-Hoc Analyses

According to the preceding analysis, the theoretical views that guided the development of the hypotheses in this thesis have failed to explain either differences in scores on the KMFC Instrument or differences in perceptions of competence of marriage preparation providers. This suggests that there may be other factors which explain the variance in the knowledge of marriage and family concepts and the perceived competence of these educators. To determine whether other factors did exist, a further analysis of the data was carried out. For this

purpose, a Pearson Correlation matrix was computed. This matrix included the dependent variables and their respective subscales, the independent variables and the four control variables. As well, data which had been collected for descriptive purposes regarding number of hours per couple spent in marriage preparation (an ordinal scale variable) and type of marriage preparation offered (an ordinal scale variable) were included in the matrix.

Results

The initial statistic examined in the post-hoc analysis was the correlation between the two dependent variables, knowledge of marriage and family concepts and perceived competence. This correlation ($-.0477$, $p=.390$) was not a significant relationship.

A significant correlation ($.2135$, $p=.05$) was found between the dependent variable knowledge of marriage and family concepts and the control variable gender. Interpretation of this statistic must be carried out with caution due to the low number of female respondents ($n=9$). A further significant correlation ($-.3343$, $p=.005$) was found between perceived competence and total number of hours per couple spent in marriage preparation. Those who reported a higher perceived competence required premarital couples to spend a greater number of hours in marriage preparation.

From the correlation coefficient matrix, any independent or control variable which had a correlation probability of 0.2000 or lower (Table 17) with one of the dependent variables was placed into a multiple regression equation. "Multiple regression analysis is a method of studying the effects and the magnitude of

Table 17

Pearson Correlation Matrix: Dependent, Independent, Control and Select Descriptive Variable Correlation Under Probability .2000.

	Know. of Marr. and Fam. Concepts	Perceived Competence
Level of Education	-.0377 (57) p=.390	.1305 (58) p=.164
Theological Orientation	-.1581 (58) p=.120	.1003 (58) p=.227
# of Weddings per Year	.1391 (57) p=.151	-.1063 (59) p=.211
# of Years in Ministry	-.1130 (58) p=.199	-.2298 (59) p=.448
Marital Status	.1382 (59) p=.148	-.1089 (60) p=.204
# of Years Married	-.1693 (58) p=.102	-.1606 (59) p=.112
Age	-.1144 (58) p=.196	-.1351 (59) p=.154
Gender	.2135 (59) p=.052	-.1713 (60) p=.095
# of Hours in Marriage Preparation	.0041 (57) p=.488	-.3343 (59) p=.005*

the effects of more than one independent variable on the dependent variable using principles of correlation and regression" (Kerlinger, 1973, p.603). This means that it provides estimates of the values of the dependent variable from the independent variable and it provides measures of error involved in using the regression line as a basis of estimation and gives correlations to determine the association of variables. It should be noted that while multiple regression is best carried out on interval scale data, ordinal and binary scale data can be assumed to be interval scale for the purposes of multiple regression without affecting the statistical outcomes too greatly (Labovitz, 1972).

Two regression equations were conducted. The first equation included the dependent variable knowledge of marriage and family concepts as well as theological orientation, number of weddings conducted per year, number of years in the ministry, number of years married, age and gender. The second equation consisted of perceived competence with level of education, number of years married, age, and gender. Tables 18 and 19 respectively outline the unstandardized regression coefficients (B), the standardized regression coefficients (Beta), probabilities (p), R, and R squared for these equations. The adjusted R square is also presented, as R-Squared can only be reported as a positive value and thus may not accurately portray the direction of a relationship between variables (Borg & McGall, 1983).

The regression results in Table 18 indicate that the seven variables combined explain only 4% of the variance in knowledge of marriage and family concepts. It is interesting to

Table 18

Multiple Regression of Marital Status, Theological Orientation, Gender, # of Weddings per Year, Age, # of Years in the Ministry and # of Years Married on Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts.

Variables	B	Beta	t	P
Marital Status	.417186	.158846	1.096	.2793
Theological Orientation	-.262865	-.231495	-1.522	.1354
Gender	2.079331	.331741	2.054	.0461*
# of Weddings per Year	.019994	.144441	.971	.3370
Age	.002690	.012357	.038	.9698
# of Years In the Ministry	.027565	.131999	.605	.5481
# of Years Married	.005286	.026704	.095	.9249
R Square .17442			F= 1.29777	
Adjusted R Square .04002			P= .2745	

Table 19

Multiple Regression of Level of Education, Gender, Age and # of Years Married on Perceived Competence

Variables	B	Beta	t	P
Level of Education	.344187	.028432	.186	.8535
Gender	-4.030940	-.120994	-.764	.4489
Age	.050545	.043680	.161	.8726
# of years Married	-.290046	-.275682	-.967	.3384
<hr/>				
R Square	.05691	F=.69392		
Adjusted R Square	-.02519	P=.6000		

note that even when marital status, theological orientation, total number of weddings, total number of years of experience in the ministry and total number of years married are controlled, gender is still a significant predictor of variance in this dependent variable (.0461). Again caution must be exerted in the interpretation of this statistic due to the low number of female respondents (n=9).

The regression equation in Table 19 indicates that the independent variable level of education and the control variables gender, age and total number of years married combined explain only 2.5% of the variance in the dependent variable perceived competence. None of the correlations calculated are significant.

A third post hoc analysis was conducted to determine if there were relationships between the subscales of the two dependent variables, knowledge of marriage and family concepts and perceived competence. The only significant correlation found was between the subscales of perceived competence in working with premarital couples in the area of communication and knowledge of communication (-.2034, $p=.05$).

Other statistical analyses were conducted to examine relationships among independent and control variables. Table 20 reports that there is a significant relationship between total number of years ordained and gender, indicating that female respondents have been ordained a significantly shorter period of time than male respondents. Significant correlation coefficients were also found between theological orientation and total number of years ordained (.3126, $p=.008$) and between level of education and total number of years ordained (-.2298, $p=.04$).

Table 20

Analysis of Variance: # of Years Ordained by Gender

Category	Mean	N
Total Population	20.43	61
Male	21.89	53
Female	10.75	8

Variable	SS	df	F	P
Gender	8.62097	1	10.756	.002*

* indicates significance at .005

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter will present a summary of the study, a discussion of the results, and conclusions that can be drawn from these results. In addition, the limitations of the study will be noted. The chapter will conclude with recommendations for future research.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine selected aspects of the qualifications of marriage educators in British Columbia congregations of the United Church of Canada and of the Anglican Church in Canada. The specific objectives of the study were: 1) to assess the level of knowledge of marriage and family concepts held by marriage educators and 2) to re-examine Wright's (1976) finding that ministers involved in marriage preparation do not perceive themselves to be competent providers of marriage preparation.

Questionnaires were sent to a random sample of twenty-five percent of the United Church and the Anglican Church congregations in the province of British Columbia (n=117). Sixty four (57.7%) of these congregations responded. Since two of the questionnaires were incomplete, the final number of congregations in the study was 62.

An equal number of questionnaires was received from the two denominations. The greatest number of these were returned from the Greater Vancouver Area followed by the South Vancouver Island Region of the province. The size of the congregations varied considerably, with a mean of 434 members or adherents.

The majority of the respondents were male (84.7%) with a mean age of 50.8 years. Three-fourths reported that they were the sole clergy in their congregation. Only one respondent reported being employed as a Marriage and Family Minister and none of the respondents were lay volunteer providers of marriage preparation.

The average marriage educator in this study officiated at 14 weddings in 1988. Forty-five percent held interviews or private counselling sessions with couples approaching marriage and 11% could be classified as instructional counselling as an assessment instrument was used to guide their work. Fifty-two percent requested couples to attend a group enrichment program. Only one respondent conducted a post-wedding intervention with the couples. The mean number of hours of marriage preparation these marriage educators offered to premarital couples was 5.9.

Two dependent variables were investigated in this study: knowledge of marriage and family concepts and perceived competence (the extent to which one perceives oneself to be competent in providing marriage preparation to premarital couples). The six independent variables used in this study included position on staff, denomination, theological orientation, level of education, number of years in ministry and number of weddings performed per year. In addition, four control variables were proposed. These included age, gender, marital status and number of years married.

Discussion: Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts

Since no appropriate instruments were available, it was

necessary to develop an instrument to measure the dependent variable knowledge of marriage and family concepts. A nineteen-item scale was found to be a reliable measure during the initial development of the instrument. However, for the respondents in this sample, a revised 17-item inventory was found to be a reliable measure of knowledge of marriage and family concepts.

The mean score on the KMFC Instrument indicated that the marriage educators in this sample had a reasonable level of knowledge of marriage and family concepts. It is of concern, however, that the average respondent answered 26% of the items on the KMFC incorrectly and that as many as 15% answered less than 60% of the items correctly. This indicates that many couples may be receiving incorrect information during their marriage preparation experience. It is not surprising that the respondents appeared to be the most knowledgeable in the areas of Marital Expectations and General Marriage, as these are established areas within marriage preparation, and not surprising that they were the least knowledgeable in the areas of Leisure/Lifestyle and Family of Origin, content areas which are relatively new in marriage preparation.

It had been hypothesized in this study that those marriage preparation providers who held specialized staff positions or who were lay volunteers would have a greater knowledge of marriage and family concepts. Since only 4 of the respondents were employed in positions other than general clergy, it was not possible to test these hypotheses. It was somewhat surprising that most responses came from general

clergy, since it is known that there are many lay volunteers and staff associates involved in providing marriage preparation in British Columbia. It is unclear whether these individuals simply did not appear in the random sample or whether for some reason the questionnaires were not directed appropriately to staff associates or lay volunteers.

The hypothesis that knowledge of marriage and family concepts would not vary by denomination was supported. As noted earlier, clergy in the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church in Canada train at the same theological institutions and have similar statements of faith. Therefore it is not surprising that they do not differ significantly in knowledge of marriage and family concepts.

It was also hypothesized that marriage preparation providers would have a greater knowledge of marriage and family concepts if they were more theologically liberal, had a higher level of education, had fewer years of experience in the ministry, and performed a greater number of weddings per year. None of these hypotheses were supported. Although the first of these (that those who were more theologically liberal would have a greater level of knowledge) was not significant ($p=.120$), the direction of the correlation was as predicted. This trend is in agreement with the findings of Orthner (1986).

The lack of significant correlation between level of education and knowledge of marriage and family concepts was disappointing, as it might be presumed that additional education would be reflected in greater knowledge. It is

possible, however, that specific attention to marriage and family concepts may not have been different in the various levels of education attained by this sample. This is particularly important since the respondents were all clergy, and it was noted earlier that little attention is given to marriage preparation in training programs for the clergy. A similar explanation may be given for the lack of correlation between years of experience in the ministry and level of knowledge. It is possible that those who were trained more recently have had no greater training in marriage and the family than did those who trained at an earlier time.

It is unclear as to why there was not a significant correlation between number of weddings per year and knowledge of marriage and family concepts. It was expected that those clergy who perform a greater number of weddings would recognize a need for further knowledge based on the demands for their services as marriage educators. However, perhaps these same clergy also have high demands on them in other areas of their ministry, and do not have the time to pursue specialized training.

The directions of the correlations between knowledge of marriage and family concepts and the two independent variables number of years of experience in the ministry and number of weddings performed annually are as predicted, that is, those with a greater number of years in the ministry would have lower KMCF scores and those with a greater number of weddings per year will have higher KMFC scores. It is possible that with a larger sample size, these findings would be significant.

It is possible that the lack of significant correlations between the dependent and the independent variables may be a function of the similarity of the sample, given that nearly all of the respondents were clergy from two similar denominations. The small sample size may also have been a limitation on the outcomes of the study.

The post hoc finding that females scored higher on the KMFC instrument than males must be interpreted with caution because of the small number of female respondents in the study. This finding, however, is strengthened by similar findings in the multiple regression analysis which indicated that gender was a significant predictor of knowledge of marriage and family concepts. Additional studies are needed, however, to further examine this finding.

Discussion: Perceived Competence

The finding that the marriage educators in this sample generally perceived themselves to be competent providers of marriage preparation does not support the finding of Wright (1976) that American clergy did not perceive themselves to be competent in this role. It is unclear whether this difference is related to differences in measurement, differences in content or type of program or to some other variable. (It should be noted that details of Wright's methodology were not available to the researcher, but it appears that Wright used a one item scale).

These marriage educators perceived themselves to be most competent in the areas of Communication and Marital

Expectations. This finding is not surprising since these are essential skills in the ministry, and ones in which they would likely have received considerable training. The specific scale on which they reflected the least competence is Finances. This might have been anticipated since in many marriage preparation courses a bank manager or accountant is invited to address this subject area. This lack of perceived competence in Finances, however, does raise concerns in situations where clergy conduct individual marriage preparation sessions.

Marriage preparation providers in positions of specialized ministry and lay volunteers were hypothesized to perceive themselves to be more competent providers than general clergy. These hypotheses were not testable as only four respondents were employed in positions other than general clergy and none of the respondents were volunteers. As mentioned previously in this chapter, it is surprising that the sample group of respondents did not include more staff associates and/or volunteers.

The predicted hypothesis that no significant relationship would exist between denomination and perceived competence was confirmed. The reasons for this finding are similar to those discussed regarding the relationship between knowledge of marriage and family concepts and denomination, that is, clergy in both denominations are trained at the same theological institutions and have similar statements of faith.

The hypothesis that those who were more liberal theologically would perceive themselves to be more competent as providers of marriage preparation was not supported. The

proposed direction for this hypothesis was based on the findings of Orthner (1986) who found that theological orientation was a significant determinant of perceived competence in pastoral counselling in a study of American clergy in a denomination similar to the United Church. However, Wright (1984) in a study of the pastoral ministry of Canadian clergy had found that theological orientation had no effect on pastoral counselling practice. The findings of this thesis support the work of Wright in this regard.

The hypotheses that those who have a higher level of education, had fewer years of experience in the ministry, and performed a greater number of weddings per year would report a greater perceived competence were also not supported. The proposed reasons why these were not supported are similar to those discussed for the relationships of these variables to knowledge of marriage and family concepts, that is, attention to marriage preparation may not have been included in the training of these individuals, regardless of the time the training was obtained.

In post hoc analysis, a significant correlation was found between perceived competence and the total number of hours per couple spent on marriage preparation (including referrals to external sources). This correlation ($-.3343$, $p=.008$) was in the expected direction and indicates that those respondents with higher perceived competence require couples to spend more time preparing for their marriage than those with lower levels of perceived competence. It is possible that those with a

greater level of perceived competence may place a higher value on marriage preparation, thus encouraging couples to spend more time preparing for their married lives. Conversely, it is also possible that those who require couples to spend more time in marriage preparation may feel the need to report feelings of perceived competence in order to justify their requirements.

In the post hoc analysis, there was no significant correlation between the two dependent variables, knowledge of marriage and family concepts and perceived competence. The correlation was in fact so weak that one cannot comment on the direction of the relationship. It was anticipated that a correlation would exist between these two variables such that the higher the knowledge of marriage and family concepts, the greater the perceived competence. One possible explanation for this lack of a significant relationship may be that those with a greater knowledge of marriage and family concepts are more cognizant of the complexity of the field and therefore have a more moderate perception of their competence.

To further examine the relationship between these two measures, the subscales relating to knowledge of marriage and family concepts were correlated with their respective perceived competence subscales. The only significant correlation was between the scale perceived competence in working with premarital couples in the area of communication and the subscale knowledge of communication, that is the higher the knowledge of communication, the higher the perceived competence in preparing couples in the area of communication. This significant correlation between the two communication

subscales may reflect the importance of communication in the practice of ministry. Clergy are trained to be good communicators and should therefore have an accurate perception of their competence in this subject area.

In the post hoc analysis of relationships among independent variables, a significant relationship was found between the number of years ordained and gender, indicating that female respondents have been ordained a significantly shorter period of time than male respondents. This finding is not surprising given that the entry of women into the ministry is a somewhat recent trend. It will be interesting to monitor the effect of gender on various aspects of ministry as women continue to enter the professional ministry.

Conclusions and Implications

The major conclusions of this study are that most marriage preparation providers in the sample have a reasonable knowledge of marriage and family concepts and that they perceive themselves to be competent in providing marriage education. The findings of this study do not support the findings of Wright (1976) concerning perceived competence. Neither knowledge of marriage and family concepts nor perceived competence were significantly correlated with the independent variables used in this study.

This study does raise clear implications for the training of marriage educators. For the most part, these respondents obtained moderate scores on the KMFC Instrument. At first glance these scores may appear to be adequate. However, when

one considers the amount of false information that could be provided to premarital couples when approximately one-quarter of that information was incorrect, the gravity of the situation becomes more obvious. Theological schools need to include more information related to marriage and family concepts in their curricula. In particular, these clergy need more information in the area of Leisure, Family of Origin and Finances. Continuing education agencies should also consider including content information in conferences and workshops.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study provides important baseline data and suggests the need for future studies. There is a need for continued development of the Knowledge of Marriage and Family Concepts Instrument. A revision of test items may result in a more reliable measure. It would also be helpful if standardized scores were developed such that one could evaluate scores on the measure.

Secondly, it would be important to re-test the perceived competence of marriage educators, given that the findings of this study contradict those of Wright (1976). A study of this nature might include a measure of social desirability in order to more accurately assess perceived competence.

A replication of this study with a larger sample size would be valuable given that the directions of a number of the hypotheses were supported although the findings themselves are not significant. A stratified sample which sought out volunteers and specialists and female marriage educators would also be beneficial. It would be useful to study marriage

educators from different denominations and religions as well as secular marriage educators. Given the difference in theological orientation between Canadian and American studies, it would be interesting to include respondents from both countries in the same study. Future studies will need to give attention to covariance among independent variables such as relationships found here between number of years ordained and theological orientation as well as education.

Finally, there is a need for further study into various aspects regarding the qualifications and competence of marriage educators providing marriage preparation such as skills, attitudes and training. Further studies should be conducted measuring the variables of knowledge and perceived competence, in addition to studies investigating training, couple perceptions and satisfaction as well as ethnographic studies examining practice.

Although this study used a select sample and although there were few significant findings on the hypotheses proposed, this study does provide important baseline data for the field of marriage preparation and suggests directions for future research. Such studies are needed before adequate theory in the field can emerge.

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-Appendix A _
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
SCHOOL OF FAMILY AND NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES
2205 EAST MALL
VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA
V6T 1W5

DIVISION OF FAMILY SCIENCES

April 3, 1989

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a graduate student in Family Studies at the University of British Columbia studying in the field of marriage preparation. I am particularly interested in marriage preparation as it is conducted within religious communities in British Columbia. My purpose in writing is to seek the participation of your pastoral charge in a study for my master's thesis.

Permission to solicit participation has been obtained from Gordon How at the B.C. Conference Office of The United Church of Canada. Your pastoral charge has been selected as part of a random sample. Because the sample is random, it is very important that you choose to participate.

I would ask that each person in your pastoral charge who is actively involved in the provision of marriage preparation (i.e., officiating clergy, volunteer couples, staff social worker or family minister) complete one copy of the entire questionnaire. If any additional copies of the questionnaire are required, please duplicate a sufficient number or contact me at the address above, and I will provide them to you. I expect the questionnaire to take less than one hour to complete.

When each individual involved in marriage preparation has completed the questionnaire, please seal it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided, and return them to me.

Any individual may, of course, choose not to participate in this study, and may withdraw at any time. It is important to note, however, that only fully completed questionnaires are useful for analysis. Confidentiality is assured. Individual pastoral charges will not be identifiable in the reporting of data.

I wish to thank you for your time. If you would like to receive a summary of the results, please indicate such at the end of the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Rosanne Farnden

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
SCHOOL OF FAMILY AND NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES
2205 EAST MALL
VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA
V6T 1W5

DIVISION OF FAMILY SCIENCES

April 3, 1989

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a graduate student in Family Studies at the University of British Columbia studying in the field of marriage preparation. I am particularly interested in marriage preparation as it is conducted within religious communities in British Columbia. My purpose in writing is to seek the participation of your parish in a study for my master's thesis.

Permission to solicit participation has been obtained from the appropriate local Diocese office of the Anglican Church in Canada. Your parish has been selected as part of a random sample. Because the sample is random, it is very important that you choose to participate.

I would ask that each person in your parish who is actively involved in the provision of marriage preparation (i.e., parish priest, lay volunteer couples, staff social worker or family minister) complete one copy of the entire questionnaire. If any additional copies of the questionnaire are required, please duplicate a sufficient number or contact me at the address above, and I will provide them to you. I expect the questionnaire to take less than one hour to complete.

When each individual involved in marriage preparation has completed the questionnaire, please seal it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided, and return them to me.

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I wish to thank you for your time. If you would like to receive a summary of the results, please indicate such at the end of the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Rosanne Farnden

MARRIAGE EDUCATORS IN THE CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION ONE: PASTORAL CHARGE DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Denomination of your pastoral charge or parish.

1. Anglican Church in Canada
2. United Church of Canada
3. Other (please specify) _____

2. Number of individuals in your pastoral charge.

1. Number of members _____
2. Number of adherents _____
3. Number of children
(if not included above) _____

3. Number of paid ministry and/or program staff in your congregation.

- | | |
|----------|-----------------|
| 1. One | 4. Four |
| 2. Two | 5. Five or more |
| 3. Three | |

4. Number of staff mentioned above who are full time.

- | | |
|----------|-----------------|
| 1. One | 4. Four |
| 2. Two | 5. Five or more |
| 3. Three | |

5. Number of weddings celebrated *in your parish* in 1988.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Jan - March _____ | 3. July - Sept. _____ |
| 2. April - June _____ | 4. Oct. - Dec. _____ |

The number of weddings in 1988 was:

1. typical of other years
2. more than other years
3. less than other years

SECTION TWO PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

6. Date of Birth _____ day _____ month _____ year

7. Gender.
1. Male
 2. Female
8. Present marital status.
1. never married
 2. married to first spouse
 3. separated or divorced
 4. remarried
 5. widowed
 6. other (please specify) _____)
9. Total number of years married (all marriages).
- _____ years.
10. Your title or position in your pastoral charge (eg.Senior Clergy, Pastoral Care Worker etc.) _____
11. If you are ordained or commissioned, please indicate the year in which this occurred. _____
- The age you were at that time _____
12. Number of pastorates you have held.
1. one
 2. two to three
 3. four to seven
 4. eight or more
13. If employed by the church, are you considered
1. full time
 2. 3/4 to full time
 3. 1/2 to 3/4 time
 4. less than 1/2 time
14. Number of weddings *you personally* performed in 1988.
- Jan. - March _____ July - Sept. _____
- April - June _____ Oct. - Dec. _____
- Not applicable _____
- The number of weddings I performed in 1988 was:
1. typical of other years
 2. less than other years
 3. more than other years
15. Number of years you have been conducting marriage preparation _____.
16. The capacity in which you conduct marriage preparation is:
1. Ordained Clergy
 2. Commissioned Clergy
 3. Lay Staff Associate
 4. Lay Volunteer
 5. Other (please specify) _____

17. How many other individuals conduct marriage preparation in your pastoral charge ?

18. The number of premarital couples *I personally* offered marriage preparation to in 1988 was:

- | | |
|-----------|---------------|
| 1. None | 4. 10 to 14 |
| 2. 1 to 4 | 5. 15 to 19 |
| 3. 5 to 9 | 6. 20 or more |

19. On a scale of 1 (theologically very liberal), to 9 (theologically very conservative), please place yourself by circling the appropriate number.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Very
Liberal

Very
Conservative

SECTION THREE: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

20. The highest degree you have obtained:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| 1. High School Diploma | |
| 2. College Certificate | Major _____ |
| 3. Bachelors Degree | Major _____ |
| 4. Masters Degree | Major _____ |
| 5. Doctorate | Major _____ |

21. From what institution did you obtain your highest degree? _____

22. Please indicate the training in the field of marriage preparation you have obtained in the last five years from the following sources:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Number of Marriage Preparation texts read | _____ |
| 2. Hours in Marriage Preparation Training | |
| workshops or courses | _____ |
| 3. Hours in lectures on Marriage Preparation | _____ |
| 4. Other (please specify | _____ |

Please list the three which have been the most beneficial, in the space below.

23. What other educational experiences have you had in the past three years that would enhance the marriage preparation you offer?

PART FOUR MARRIAGE PREPARATION OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR PASTORAL CHARGE

24. Are you required by your denomination to provide marriage preparation to all engaged couples?

1. Yes
2. No

If no, what is the policy of your pastoral charge?

25. Please indicate the number of hours a typical couple in your pastoral charge or parish will spend on marriage preparation.

1. _____ hours as an individual couple
2. _____ hours as part of a group of couples
3. _____ hours as an individual couple referred to an external source
4. _____ hours as part of a group of couples referred to an external source
5. _____ other (please specify)

Of the above hours, how many are spent on wedding ceremony preparation ?

26. Please outline the typical program of marriage preparation for couples wedded in your charge.

If you are not satisfied with this program of preparation, how would you like to change it ?

27. For each of the following topic areas that might be a part of marriage preparation, please indicate how *competent* you feel about working with premarital couples by circling the number on the scale at the right that seems most applicable to you.

	Very Competent							Not Very Competent	
Communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Conflict resolution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Sexuality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Marital Expectation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Use of Leisure Time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Finances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
The influence of family they grew up in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
General Marriage Issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Using the same scale, how competent do you feel about providing Marriage Preparation to couples ?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

For questions 28 and 29, please use the following scale:

1 = not important, 2 = slightly important 3 = moderately important, 4 = very important.

28. Rate the priority of yourself as provider of marriage preparation in relation to your other professional roles (eg. teacher, administrator)

1 2 3 4

29. In marriage preparation, how important is your attention to each of the following:

	Not important		Very important	
a. Education (ie giving information)	1	2	3	4
b. Enrichment (ie relationship enhancement)	1	2	3	4
c. Evangelism (ie enrichment or personal faith)	1	2	3	4
d. Moral Teaching (ie the sacred nature of marriage)	1	2	3	4
e. Rehearsal (ie preparation for the ceremony)	1	2	3	4
f. Resource Identification (ie to identify clergy others as sources of potential support)	1	2	3	4
g. Screening (ie assessment of preparedness for marriage)	1	2	3	4
h. Facilitator (ie to encourage couple disclosure)	1	2	3	4

30. The following are statements about marriage and family life which might be included as part of the content in a course on marriage preparation. For each of the statements, please indicate which of the following you understand to be the best response, based on current knowledge:

Circle T (Mostly True) if the statement is true or is true in most situations.

Circle F (Mostly False) if the statement is false or is false in most situations.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| T | F | Happiness has replaced stability as a goal in marriage. |
| T | F | To achieve sexual adjustment in marriage, each partner must understand why the other behaves the way he/she does. |
| T | F | The key to understanding family financial conflict lies more in the concepts of what is valued than in the amount of income. |
| T | F | A wedding is the same thing as a marriage. |
| T | F | The solution to marital conflict lies more in learning to live with a problem than in eliminating it. |
| T | F | The desire to communicate means having the desire to talk. |
| T | F | In-law relationships appear to cause more difficulty in early marital adjustment than do adjustments to sex. |
| T | F | The tendency to select a person who fulfills an idealized parental image as a mate is the most influential factor in mate selection. |
| T | F | Social class does not appear to be a significant factor in instances of family violence. |
| T | F | The elimination of marital conflict is a matter of will and desire; conflict can be avoided if partners are willing to give and take in marriage. |
| T | F | Frank "confessions" tend to strengthen engagements and help establish a sound basis for marriage. |
| T | F | The link between sex and affection is more frequently a problem for men than for women. |
| T | F | Role expectations in marriages are determined more by personal preference than by cultural influences such as socioeconomic status or ethnic background. |
| T | F | Holding different value systems is a destructive force in marriage. |
| T | F | There is about a 50% chance that a sexually active, fertile woman will become pregnant within one year if she does not use contraceptives. |
| T | F | A potential spouse who is a child of an alcoholic parent has at least a 25% greater chance of becoming an alcoholic than if they did not have a parent who was an alcoholic. |
| T | F | A married couple who are angry with one another are probably experiencing a marriage that is falling apart. |
| T | F | Over time, the societal views of appropriate masculine and feminine roles are becoming more and more firmly fixed. |
| T | F | If a couple is really in love, their marriage relationship will have a few problems. |
| T | F | In the majority of marriages where the wife works outside the home, the husband shares equally in the household chores. |
| T | F | Most couples know why they manage their resources in the way they do. |
| T | F | Spouses who love each other develop a "sixth sense" that allows them to know each other's needs and feelings without specific feedback. |

- T F Spouses who love one another know instinctively what makes the other happy.
- T F Ritualistic patterns formed in childhood (ie our family always spends Christmas together) often develop into inlaw conflict.
- T F Marriages between partners from the same cultural group tend to be more stable because the couple has the same values.
- T F Childless couples are frustrated and unhappy.

If you refer couples to another individual or agency for some aspect of their marriage preparation, please supply me with a contact address below .

THANK YOU

Appendix B

Principle Components Analysis Factor Matrix for Individual Items of the KMFC Instrument

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
6	.45651	.36447	-.03106	.39766	-.17542	-.37677
11	.34625	.49350	-.16822	.00064	.20765	.11068
22	.45221	.32749	-.37673	-.05393	.09712	-.18436
5	.52757	-.65077	-.27376	.41417	.10643	.16222
17	.66599	.05715	.24033	-.22811	-.18829	.15253
13	.35654	.15192	-.26618	-.17216	-.31761	-.35196
18	.49997	.25196	.05676	-.35572	-.18583	.40521
20	.62668	.17123	-.04426	.06299	.01472	-.30711
14	.18316	.52978	-.33385	.16704	.21133	.50932
9	.14262	-.19671	.44810	.01419	-.71594	.07500
5	.52757	-.65077	-.27376	.41417	.10643	.16222
2	.09888	-.24415	.49140	-.43414	.33707	-.03252
7	.12480	.12295	.34749	-.12024	.61227	-.03471
24	.58200	-.28136	.30601	-.13460	.34912	-.28801
4	.60758	-.08509	.15742	-.33925	-.10976	.15443
19	.17382	.22702	.652476	.47922	-.03709	.20094
26	-.02775	.30305	.57745	.58416	.07598	-.07528