A COMPARISON OF TWO INSTRUMENTS FOR DIAGNOSING
MARITAL DIFFICULTIES

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There has been an ever increasing demand for marriage counseling. Many practicing therapists appear to feel that tests for diagnosing marital difficulties would offer many advantages to both the client and the therapist. A survey of the literature revealed few tests designed for the diagnosing of marital difficulties and few validity studies on existing tests. Before any test can be considered a valuable instrument its validity must be demonstrated. An attempt was therefore made to further establish the validity of the Polyfactor Test of Marital Difficulties, a relatively new, yet potentially valuable sentence completion, self-rating marital difficulties test. Another test, the Marital Adjustment Inventory was also used for comparison purposes. It was hypothesized that across Group I (marriage counseling group) and Group II (non-marriage counseling group) there would be significant differences between female total scores and male total scores, and between couple total and total difference scores for both the Polyfactor and the MAI. It was further hypothesized that there would be significant
positive correlations within Group I and Group II between the Polyfactor and the MAI scores.

In order to test these hypotheses, sixty married couples were given the Polyfactor and the MAI. These sixty couples comprised two groups. Group I was composed of thirty married couples who had voluntarily sought marriage counseling. Group II was composed of thirty married couples who were not in marriage counseling and who volunteered for this research.

All $t$ values except for the one corresponding to the Polyfactor total couple difference scores were significant at the .01 level. On the basis of the $t$ values, it was concluded that both the Polyfactor and the MAI do differentiate between those who have significant marital difficulties and those who do not.

All correlations were non-significant in Group I, but were significant in Group II for all scores except the Polyfactor total couple difference scores. Thus, within a marriage counseling group these measures do not order the individuals in a similar fashion.

For further research on the Polyfactor, it is recommended that more subjects be used. In addition, ideally subjects should be more representative of the general population, and important sub-groups of the population should be used.
in separate standardizations. Another fruitful approach would be to determine whether scores change as a function of the couple having received marriage counseling, particularly for couples whose behavior, by other indices, has been modified.
A COMPARISON OF TWO INSTRUMENTS FOR DIAGNOSING
MARITAL DIFFICULTIES

THESIS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF TABLES.</th>
<th>iv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypotheses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. RELATED RESEARCH</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. METHOD AND PROCEDURE</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Treatment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX.</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY.</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Means, Standard Deviations, ( t ) Values and Probabilities for the Four Comparisons on the Polyfactor and the MAI.</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Correlations Between the Polyfactor and the MAI Scores within the Two Groups.</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although marriage counseling has been practiced informally through the ages, only in the past few decades has it developed as a significant clinical specialty. As Locke has said, "Interest in success or failure in marriage has had a long history, but scientific inquiries into the factors involved in marital adjustment or maladjustment are of recent origin" (7, p. 1).

The earliest research on marriage or marital problems dates back about fifty years and Hill has stated, "Most systematic, scholarly, and scientific studies of love, courtship, marriage, and parenthood have been done within the last forty years" (6, p. 20). Locke summarized research investigations from 1920-1950 in chart form (7, pp. 388-392). Hicks and Platt have edited a decade review of research pertaining to marital happiness and stability during the 1960's (5).

The latest edition of Buros' Sixth Mental Measurements Yearbook lists several marital prediction scales, but only seven tests for diagnosing marital difficulties (2).
In the literature there is evidence of a great deal of controversy concerning the value of these tests. In a study designed to investigate the use of psychological instruments in marriage counseling, Hagerty's 1969 survey of the clinical membership of the American Association of Marriage Counselors indicated that 73 per cent of the counselors used some form of psychological instrument and that 31 per cent of the counselors used predictive instruments in their work (4). It is estimated that in the United States one in every four marriages ends in divorce. In referring to marital prediction tests, Terman and Wallin commented, "If they reduce by the slightest fraction the enormous gamble marriage is today their employment is justified" (8, p. 504).

The task of developing an instrument which can accurately predict success in marriage or accurately diagnose the areas of difficulty within a marriage is a most difficult one. Adams stated that "Too little research has been done on factors relating to marital success to state with any assurance just what qualities or traits should be included in any instrument purportedly predicting the outcome of marriage" (1, p. 55). And to further complicate the task, any instrument which accurately predicts or diagnoses must consider not only specific qualities and traits, but
must consider and evaluate combinations of qualities and traits and most importantly the interpersonal relationship of the marriage partners. Corsini pointed this out when he stated, "Those studies which evaluate marital happiness in terms of the characteristics of one individual without considering the partners appear to be inadequate and represent a naive point of view, entirely discounting the factor of interaction. The couple is a group, and the happiness of either can hardly be considered without taking into account the other person" (3, p. 240).

Two tests which are designed to consider and assess relationships as well as individual traits and characteristics in the diagnosing of marital difficulties are the Marital Adjustment Inventory (MAI) and the Polyfactor Test of Marital Difficulties (Polyfactor). The MAI consists of 157 question problems each of which are phrased negatively to emphasize an attitude, feeling, or behavioral attribute that would indicate marital unhappiness or maladjustment. The unpublished Polyfactor test consists of 85 incomplete sentence stems which are to be completed by the counselee. Each completed sentence which represents an attitude, feeling, or behavioral attribute of counselee is then to be rated by him as to the amount of difficulty such attitude, feeling, or behavioral attribute represents in his marriage.
Purpose of the Study

Before any test can be considered a valuable instrument to the clinician, its validity must be demonstrated. The purpose of this study was to attempt to further establish the validity of the Polyfactor test. The MAI was used as a criterion measure.

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference between the means of the counseling group and the non-counseling group with the mean of the counseling group being significantly higher than the mean of the non-counseling group. Specifically four comparisons of difference were made between the counseling group and the non-counseling group on the Polyfactor test and the MAI: total female scores of the Polyfactor and the MAI; total male scores of the Polyfactor and the MAI; total couple scores of the Polyfactor and the MAI; and total couple difference scores of the Polyfactor and the MAI.

It was hypothesized that for both the counseling group and the non-counseling group there would be significant positive correlations between the Polyfactor test scores and the MAI test scores. Specifically four measures of relationships were made between the Polyfactor test and the
MAI: total female scores of the Polyfactor and the MAI; total male scores of the Polyfactor and the MAI; total couple scores of the Polyfactor and the MAI; and total couple difference scores of the Polyfactor and the MAI.

Definition of Terms

Counselor was operationally defined as the therapist both marriage partners were seeing for marriage counseling at the time of testing.

Counseling Group I was operationally defined as the group of people who voluntarily came to a therapist for marriage counseling and who were given both the Polyfactor test and the MAI.

Non-Counseling Group II was operationally defined as the group of people who volunteered to participate in this study and who were not presently in marriage counseling.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

RELATED RESEARCH

In the area of marriage counseling as true in other areas of psychological assessment valid and reliable instruments are needed. The phenomenal growth of marriage counseling has created an ever increasing need for valid and reliable instruments that are designed to diagnose areas of marital difficulties for the purposes of making accurate predictions and planning successful treatment.

In this chapter research studies relevant to marital happiness and stability as well as the diagnosing of marital difficulties are reviewed. The values and practicalities of marriage prediction schedules and marital diagnostic schedules as evaluated by both researchers and practicing professionals are presented. Criticisms of prediction and diagnostic schedules and their reliability and validity are discussed in detail. The problem of interpretation of results because of questionable meaningfulness of criteria is discussed. The relationship of several variables to marital adjustment are examined.

Hahn and MacLean have stated, "Because the development, interpretation, and use of tests has been experimental,
they have bred hot controversy..." (12, p. 118). Such a view is representative of professionals concerning the use and value of marital prediction and diagnostic tests. In general it appears that many professionals agreed with Ellis (10) that tests are most useful in supplementing counseling interviews but do not serve as a substitute for them. Skidmore and McPhee (29) agreed that tests are not adequate in themselves but have suggested that tests do facilitate the establishing of rapport. They have also stated that tests are useful in pointing up specific attitudes and behavior patterns of individuals which might affect their marriage in a negative way so that an attempt can be made to work through the problems. Terman and Wallin (33) appear to share this viewpoint when in referring to the use of prediction tests they pointed out that a competent counselor by utilizing both test evidence and clinical evidence could better orient the client toward his marital prospects than would be possible on the basis of clinical data alone.

As reported in Hagerty's (11) 1969 survey of the use of psychological instruments in marriage counseling, those 73 per cent of the clinical membership of the American Association of Marriage Counselors who used tests gave their reasons. The respondents reported that the tests helped
them to understand the client and the marital situation. The material furnished by the tests was used in planning the treatment and as a starting point in counseling. In this same investigation Hagerty (11) was also interested in the rationale of those counselors who stated that they did not use psychological instruments. Those counselors stated that the instruments were too expensive in time and money and did not give them any information that could not be gained from a clinical interview.

Burgess, who recognized both advantages and disadvantages of using marriage tests stated the following advantages:

1. Couples testify that filling out a schedule has a therapeutic and educational effect. It makes them realize the factors to be considered in a successful marriage.
2. Time is saved for the counselor and the person counseled by eliminating certain points that then need not be covered in an interview.
3. The schedules seem to reduce, as compared at least to short interviews, the personal and social equation of the interviewer. Each interviewer has a theoretical frame of reference which he is likely to overemphasize in his analysis of a case.
4. The schedules may locate problems that might be overlooked if there were only one or two interviews.
5. The prediction that may be made from the schedule tends to put the interviewer on his guard against his intuitive prognosis.
6. The predictive schedule may serve as a desirable screening device, picking out the persons or couples whose lower scores indicate their special need of one or more interviews, and setting aside those whose high scores show that they do not need much interviewing (4, p. 54).
Cookerly and Foster stated a related advantage:

Anything which would help determine who is most and least likely to be helped by marriage counseling would come as a great boon to those of us who are doing such counseling. The case load is often staggering and the screening and initial exploratory work done with couples who really will not beneficially use marriage counseling is quite wasteful. Hence, tests which would ferret out the wasters of time and help us reach the ones who could really benefit from marriage counseling would be welcomed with great joy (6, p. 5).

Burgess stated the following disadvantages of using marriage tests:

1. One of the most important is its application of mass statistical findings to the individual case. (An example is the interpretation of the probable effect of the parents' happiness. This factor has been found in all studies to be one of the best single items associated with success of the son or daughter in marriage, as conversely the unhappiness of the parents in marriage is one of the items correlated with the failure of the children in marriage. But in a particular case, the unhappy marriage of both sets of parents may actually operate to make for the happiness of the couple in marriage. This outcome is most probable if they are intelligent and adaptable, and if this fact of their parents' marital unhappiness makes them the more determined to achieve success by seeking more information, knowledge, and advice.)

2. The statistical prediction does not give the configuration of dynamic factors which is found in an interview.

3. A third disadvantage, from the standpoint of non-directive counselors, is the tendency of predictive schedules, as well as personality tests, or other types of materials, to lead to a directive relation. The person tends to ask the counselor, "What do you tell me to do to be saved?" rather than to be thrown back upon himself for his analysis of the relationship and his plan for working it out (4, pp. 54-55).

After considering both the advantages and disadvantages of marriage tests, Burgess (4) concluded that their
advantages outweigh their disadvantages and advocated their use. He stated that all studies that have compared statistical prediction and clinical prognosis have shown that predictive schedules take less time and are superior to clinical predictions.

Concerning the values and limitations of marriage prediction scales Ellis reported,

1. The scales often consist of items many of which have been selected on an armchair basis without benefit of item validation, and some of which are of questionable relevancy to the problem of marital prediction.
2. The validity studies made on prediction scales have been almost invariably done with small, atypical, biased samples.
3. The validation procedures used with the scales have frequently been inadequate, and have especially failed to employ suitable outside performance measures of success or failure in marriage.
4. There is an important possibility that, because of the factor of differential sub-group bias, the obtained validity coefficients of the prediction scales give little factual and much artifactual evidence of causal connections between premarital background factors and postmarital adjustment factors that the scales purport to measure; and that consequently the obtained validity coefficients provide little or no evidence of success in marriage prediction.
5. The obtained validity coefficients of the marriage prediction scales, even assuming that they give genuine evidence of prediction possibilities, are certainly high enough to warrant continued experimentation with this kind of a testing instrument, but, as yet, they are far from being sufficiently high to have much practical value in predicting the marital adjustment of normal individuals (10, pp. 717-718).

Terman and Wallin (33) have presented a rebuttal to the methodological questions about marriage tests raised by Ellis.
Ellis made several criticisms pertaining to the content of marriage tests (10). He pointed out that the content of marriage tests was of questionable value since it included many items identical with or similar to items in the Bernreuter and Thurstone personality inventories which only about half the time differentiated between clinical groups (10). Terman and Wallin (33) argued that even though Bernreuter trait scores differentiated only slightly between happily married and unhappily married subjects, individual items were predictive of happy or unhappy marital adjustment. They stated that in two different populations, 792 and 567 couples respectively, forty items of the same type as used in the Bernreuter were in fact predictive of scores on a marital happiness test. Terman and Wallin cited another study in which most of the forty-two items in the abbreviated Thurstone neurotic inventory were related to adjustment in engagement and predictive of marital success.

Ellis (10) questioned the validity of marriage success scores derived from attitudinal questions such as how often husbands and wives regretted their marriage, how often they quarrelled and how often they kissed each other. Terman and Wallin (33) contended that these questions pertaining to behavior of the spouses do indeed discriminate different degrees of marital success.
Terman and Wallin (33) agreed with Ellis that the marital tests to some degree

... fail to tap unconscious or unfaced feelings of hostility, affection, or ambivalence which may be more germane than the consciously accepted feeling in determining a respondent's marriage adjustment score (10, p. 71),

but they contended that psychoanalysis is not the purpose of these tests. Ellis (10) questioned the validity of predictive tests which were validated against marital happiness scores which can be faked if subjects choose to answer questions untruthfully. Terman and Wallin (33) reasoned that it is unlikely that subjects who volunteer for research under conditions of anonymity would deliberately respond falsely, but as a check they suggested the possibility of devising a projective type marital happiness test.

Concerning sampling procedures, Ellis (10) criticized marriage prediction scales on the basis that they were validated with small samples of college level, happily married subjects and questioned their clinical application to wider segments of the general population. Terman and Wallin (33) were in accord with Ellis' judgement, but reported that the same items were found to have predictive value in two dissimilar groups, the native American of the Burgess-Cottrell sample, and young, middle-class urban Chinese couples. Terman and Wallin recommended that marriage research should be extended to the non-college segment of the
population and also the effect of weighting the sample with happily married couples should be investigated. These authors also suggested the possibility that a greater spread of success scores could reveal higher correlations between marriage prediction and marital success scores.

In referring to the possibility of differential sub-group bias Ellis discussed the hypothesis that

... the obtained "validity" coefficients for the existing marital prediction scales seem to mirror differential sub-group bias rather than causal connection between pre-marital background factors and post-marital adjustment; and more specifically that the factor common to the premarital and post-marital test items seems to be the conservatism of the individuals answering both sets of items (10, p. 716).

Terman and Wallin (33) related that correlations in any area of human behavior are not presented as, or implied to be, proof of a cause-and-effect relationship. They cited for example that there is a relationship between early marriage and divorce, but certainly no cause-and-effect is implied, but rather early marriage is just an index of some conditions of marital unhappiness. The possibility exists that differential response-biases could affect correlation and a prolonged clinical study would determine the reality of that hypothetical factor and the extent of its influence on correlations.
Concerning the validation procedures used in marriage prediction studies, Ellis (10) pointed out that prediction tests must be validated against an outside criterion of marital success as well as marital adjustment scores. As an outside criterion measure Ellis suggested ratings of the happiness of each marriage by friends or acquaintances (10). Terman and Wallin (33) stated that this very criterion had been employed in the Burgess-Cottrell and the Burgess-Wallin studies.

Terman and Wallin (33) have recognized several of the limitations as stated by Ellis, but they disagreed with others and concluded that despite the present somewhat limited validity, these tests serve some useful purposes. Skidmore (29) agreed with Terman and Wallin in the Ellis-Terman-Wallin controversy by supporting the continued use of marriage prediction scales.

Terman, Wallin, Burgess, Cottrell and other marriage investigators do not consider the use of marriage prediction scales to sanction or disapprove the marriage of a particular couple justifiable with the possible exception of those individuals who have extremely high or excessively low scores on the tests (29, p. 126).

Skidmore (29) has emphasized that marriage counselors must be cognizant of the validation limitations of existing marriage scales.
In a study concerned with validation, Terman (32) compared scores from three different tests (1) marital happiness, (2) sex adjustment, and (3) marital aptitude. The subjects were 643 gifted persons and their spouses. The marital happiness test was composed of fifteen items and "the assignment of weights to the individual items was based in part on the correlation of each with the entire test, in part on its average correlation with other items, and in part on other considerations" (32, p. 51). Internal consistency was high as indicated by its split-half reliability of .89 for both husbands and wives. The correlation between husbands and wives was only .52 and Terman concluded that there was a wide divergence as to satisfaction with marriage as rated by spouses. Terman interpreted this finding as indicating that a persons' marital happiness is largely a reflection of a generally happy temperament. The sex adjustment score was based on subjects' responses to questions based on the sexual aspects of marriage. The criterion for item selection was correlation with marital happiness scores, but the degree to which an item allowed factual reporting was in some cases a deciding factor. Correlation with marital happiness scores determined the assignment of score weights to responses to an item. The resulting correlation of sex score and marital happiness
score was below .50 for each spouse. The correlation between husband-wife-sex score was .59. The marital aptitude test were merely labeled "Personality and Temperament." It consisted of 150 items and the "maximum assigned to each item was roughly proportional to the item's discrimination between happily married and the unhappily married subjects" (32, p. 52). Criterion of marital dissatisfaction was divorce or separation. Terman stated the following conclusions:

1. For all three sets of scores and for both sexes the broken-unbroken (marriages) differences between the means are highly reliable.
2. All scores are more predictive for wives than husbands.
3. Predictive rank order for three sets of scores for husbands is happiness, sex, and aptitude and the predictive rank-order for wives is happiness, aptitude, and sex (32, p. 53).

Terman (32) raised the question of whether a marital aptitude test given before marriage would have equal predictive value. He suggested the possibility that test values obtained after marriage might be spurious because of the possible halo effects of existing marital happiness or unhappiness.

Concerning this point, Burgess (5) stated that the relationship between predictive data from engaged couples before marriage and marital success after marriage needs to be determined. He emphasized the importance of having a sharp division between "before" and "after" marriage. Ellis agreed and stated when married couples are asked
"... about their mutual interests after marriage, their handling of finances, their philosophy of life, their manner of dealing with inlaw questions..." (10, p. 711) that the resulting correlation between such items answered before marriage and the marital happiness scores of these couples may have a very insignificant relation to the problem of predicting marriage success.

With this purpose in mind, Kelley (15) undertook an investigation in which the subjects (300 couples) were interviewed and administered tests before marriage. The success of the marriage was evaluated by means of a blank similar to the scale of marital happiness used by Terman. The pertinent question in this investigation was whether Terman's prediction measure actually predicted happiness for these 300 couples who answered questions before there was any possibility of marital unhappiness being present. Kelly computed total prediction scores (personality and background) for eighty-two couples who had been married for two years and computed for these couples the correlation between prediction scores and marital happiness scores at the end of two years. The resulting correlations were .50 for husbands and .56 for wives. Terman's corresponding correlations were .54 for husbands and .48 for wives (32). Kelley commented "In spite of theoretical objections to assigning prediction weights on the basis of mere
'correlation,' Terman's weights seem to be valid for an entirely different population which responded to the items before marriage" (15, p. 203).

Locke and Wallace (18) conducted a study which had as its purpose the development of short but reliable and valid marital adjustment and prediction tests. The authors reasoned that reliable and valid adjustment and prediction tests could be developed from a limited number of the more significant items taken from previous studies. The sample was white, middle-class, Protestant, urban, white-collar and professional. Mean length of marriage was 5.3 years for wives and 5.6 years for husbands. The short marital adjustment test had high reliability, .90 as computed by the split-half technique and corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula. The mean adjustment score for the well-adjusted group was 135.9, the mean score for the maladjusted group was 71.7. This is a very significant difference with a critical ratio of 17.5. Locke and Wallace concluded that the short marital adjustment test possessed validity since it clearly differentiated between well adjusted and maladjusted couples and therefore measured what it purported to measure, marital adjustment. The reliability coefficient of .84 for the prediction test was also computed by the split-half technique and corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula. The authors
stated that this coefficient is approximately the same as that of longer tests. Since a longitudinal study was not feasible, the prediction scores were correlated with adjustment scores for the couples. The resulting coefficient of correlation between prediction and adjustment was .47. The correlations obtained in the Burgess-Cottrell and Terman studies respectively were .48 and .54 for husbands and .47 for wives (18).

In referring to the validation of marriage tests, Ellis made the following recommendations for future research:

1. In the construction and perfection of such scales, special care should be given to the selection of suitable prediction questions, rather than merely to questions which seem to be intimately related to marriage adjustment.

2. When prediction questions are selected for a marriage prediction scale, every care should be taken for the proper validation of both the individual items and the entire scale. Adequate sampling, the pre-testing of items, repeated item validations, test validations with fresh samples, and adequate outside performance measures of validity should all be properly arranged for and effectively carried out.

3. When prediction scales are finally standardized, they should also be re-standardized on important sub-groups of the population with which they are to be used. If necessary, separate standardizations should be made for college and non-college respondents, urban and city dwellers, religious and regional sub-groupings and so on.

4. Marriage prediction scales should be designed realistically for the practical purposes for which they seem to be most logically applicable namely, for supplementing intensive and extensive marriage counseling interviews . . . " (10, p. 718).

Possibly the greatest difficulty incurred in the development of improved marriage tests for the empirical
investigation of marriage is selecting a suitable criterion measure. Happiness and separation or divorce were used in many of the previous studies. Burgess and Cottrell (5) stated that the notion that happiness is the principal criterion of the success of marriage is deeply rooted in the common sense philosophy of the American people. Perhaps that is the rationale for choosing "happiness" as a criterion for the success of a marriage although many investigators have stated the need for a more satisfactory criterion. Separation and divorce have likewise been used as a criterion for the failure of a marriage although again many investigators have found this to be unsatisfactory. In the past it has often been assumed that happiness in marriage and stability in marriage are interdependent. This assumption resulted in the conclusion that happiness leads to stability and unhappiness leads to instability. There seems to be agreement among those doing research in the field of marriage that unhappiness leads to instability, but recent data has suggested that stability is not as dependent on happiness as was assumed in the past (8).

Many variables and their relationships to marital adjustment have been examined. Personality traits, background, and similarity have been considered as important factors in marital happiness by many investigators.
Corsini (7) has reported the results of a study the purpose of which was to compare the relative and combined effectiveness of predictors of marital happiness based on personality, background, and similarity. Four tests were administered to the subjects. Test one measured marital happiness as reported by the subject and was the criterion. Test two measured favorable early background. Test three measured normality of personality and test four measured the degree of similarity of self perceptions. Marital happiness was correlated with personality, background, and similarity. "All combinations of these three predictor tests were tested for adequacy of prediction against the criterion of marital happiness" (7; p. 241). The results of these correlations are presented below:

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<td>Background</td>
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<td>Similarity</td>
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<td>.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Background and similarity</td>
<td>.76</td>
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<td>.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Similarity, background, and personality</td>
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<td>.87</td>
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Johnson and Terman (14) stated that happily married persons were characterized by such traits as emotional stability, social adaptability, conservative tendencies, and uplifting interest. Conversely unhappily married persons were characterized by neurosis, introversion, intolerance, and volitional inadequacy. Murstein and Glaudin (25) found that a predominance of desirable characteristics was necessary for marital happiness and that there was a relationship between undesirable personality traits and unhappiness in marriage. However, they stated that they have not determined whether the negative personality characteristics produced marital problems or marital problems produced personality types. There may be no causal relationships at all. Landis (17) concluded with others that age at marriage, education, income, and health were associated with happiness in marriage. Adams (1) reported that such factors as inability to earn a living, in-law interference, alcoholism, and other escapist or dependency habits must be considered also.

Burgess (4) theorized that often the determining factor of whether or not a marriage was successful was the adaptability of one or both partners. He further stated that a better definition and measure of adaptability was needed. Adams (1) reported that the adaptability of an individual can be
determined from the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory). Buerkle, et al. (3) obtained a positive correlation between adaptability and flexibility with marital happiness. Dean (9) reported that there was a positive correlation between emotional stability and marital happiness. Matthews and Mihanovich (23) stated that empirical trends of data suggested that fulfillment of each others needs and the kind of interaction which existed between the spouses if basic needs were not satisfied were two most significant areas of dissatisfaction in unhappy marriages.

In studies designed to investigate role perceptions, Luckey (19, 20, 21) had two groups of subjects who were highly differentiated on the Locke and Terman marital happiness scales. Each subject completed the Leary Interpersonal Check List for self, ideal self, spouse, mother, and father. Luckey concluded that there was a positive relationship between satisfaction in marriage and the congruence of the husband's self concept and that held of him by his wife. There was no corresponding relationship between marital happiness and concepts of wives. Also happiness was related to the congruence of the husband's self concept (which tended to be like his father) and his concept of his father and the congruence of the wives' concept of her husband (which tended to be like her father).
and her concept of her father. Studies by Stuckert (30), Taylor (31), and Kotlar (16) supported Luckey's findings. In a study with a somewhat similar purpose Mudd et al. (24) used two groups of subjects. The "unhappy" group included 150 individuals who came for marriage counseling. The "happy" group included seventy-five clients who came for pre-marital counseling, but who showed no indications of problems found in the counseling group. Six months after marriage, these individuals were contacted to participate in this investigation. Mudd et al. found that the "unhappy" group habitually saw themselves as different from their spouses while the "happy" group habitually saw themselves as similar to their spouses.

Investigating the length of marriage, Burgess and Cottrell (5) found that marital satisfaction declined with the increase in number of years married. Blood and Wolfe (2) obtained evidence that for wives marital satisfaction declined with an increase of years married. Matthews and Milhanovich (23) however, concluded that the number of marital problems did not decrease with the length of time married. Luckey (22) found an increase in unfavorable perceptions of spouse in both happy and unhappy marriages was related to length of marriage. Rollins and Feldman (28) found for both husbands and wives that marital satisfaction
was related to stages of the family life cycle. These authors reported that there was a decline from the beginning with fluctuation through the child rearing stages and that after the husband's retirement there was a substantial increase in marital happiness for both the husband and wife.

In an investigation of the effect of children on marital happiness, Hurley and Palonen (13) found a negative relationship between marital happiness and a high ratio of children per years of marriage. The population of this study was university students and these results may not be found in other populations. Renée (27) found that couples raising children, experienced more marital dissatisfaction than couples with no children or whose children had left home. This finding held regardless of age, race, or income level.

In a study designed to investigate the effect of the wife's employment, Orden and Bradburn (26) studied three groups of wives: non-working wives, wives who worked by choice, and wives who worked from necessity. Orden and Bradburn concluded that both the husband and wife experienced more marital unhappiness when the wife worked from necessity rather than from choice. The authors were not able, on the basis of marital adjustment, to differentiate between wives who worked by choice and wives who did not work.
An analysis of the data further suggested that a better marital adjustment occurred in those wives who worked part-time versus those who worked full time or not at all.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER III

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Subjects

Two groups of subjects were employed in this research. Counseling Group I was composed of sixty individuals constituting thirty married couples who had voluntarily sought marriage counseling at a neuropsychiatric center consisting of a small psychiatric hospital, psychiatric out-patient clinic, and psychological services center located in a large southwestern metropolitan area. Non-counseling Group II was composed of sixty individuals constituting thirty married couples who were not in marriage counseling and who volunteered to participate in this research. Group I was comprised of the first thirty couples, seeking counseling, for which scores were available on both the Polyfactor and the MAI. The age range of the subjects in Group I was 20 to 54 years, with a mean age of 34.7 years. The number of marriages per person ranged from 1 to 4, with a mean number of marriages being 1.5. The number of years married ranged from 1 month to 34 years and the mean number of years married was 11.5 years. The number of children for each couple varied from 0 to 5, with a mean number of
2.5 children. Group II was composed of members of a young adult group who belonged to a community center, faculty members at a local college, and acquaintances. The age range of the subjects in Group II was 26 to 40 years, with a mean age of 29.6 years. It was a first marriage for all couples in Group II. The number of years married ranged from 1 to 11 years and the mean number of years married was 6.2 years. The number of children for each couple varied from 0 to 4 with a mean number of 1.6 children.

Instruments

There have been more research studies done on the MAI and the Polyfactor than on any other marital difficulties instruments with the exception of the Multiphasic Marital Inventory. The MAI was chosen because it appeared to measure marital problems which are similar to those measured by the Polyfactor.

The MAI manual (7) states that the standardization group consisted of 237 individuals. The mean age of men was 37.6 years and the age range was 21 to 61 years. The mean age of women was 35.8 years and the age range was 17 to 63 years. Other data for the standardization group is presented below:
The Polyfactor test was designed to measure the amount and type of difficulties that are present in a marriage. It is a projective instrument which incorporates both the sentence completion technique and the rating scale method.

Concerning projective tests, Ruch stated

Projective tests are difficult to fake because there are no obviously right or wrong answers, and have the further advantage of tapping deeper levels of needs and fears than other measurement methods (9, p. 402).

Although most studies have shown that projective tests have very low validity and reliability, many psychologists depend on them as "... their best tools for gaining insights into the total personality dynamics of the individual" (1, p. 48). The basic concept of sentence-completion tests is that

... each subject will project various aspects of himself into this completed sentences. The extent to which his responses actually do reflect his attitudes, fears, or desires depend primarily upon his spontaneity and his willingness to cooperate wholeheartedly with the examiner and the test situation (1, p. 54).
It appears that this method of testing may provide information concerning marital adjustment that would be impossible to obtain from a more structured or direct method. Rohde stated that an advantage of the sentence completion technique is that "... latent needs, sentiments, feelings, and attitudes which the subject would be unwilling or unable to recognize or to express in direction communication" (8, p. 169) will be revealed.

Rating scales prove most valuable in areas lacking sufficient objective measurements because they result in more objective evaluations than reliance on unsystemized impressions. In order to use rating scales to good advantage, it is essential to be aware of their inherent limitations:

a. Raters tend to rate their own sex high on desirable traits and low on undesirable ones.
b. Men are more lenient raters than women.
c. Two ratings by the same rater are no more valid than one.
d. Self-ratings tend to be high on desirable traits and low on undesirable ones.
e. In doing self-ratings, superior people tend to underestimate, and inferior people overestimate themselves. Inferior people are less accurate in their self-ratings (6, p. 163).

In a marriage test, Burgess and Cottrell (2) employed a rating scale. Each subject was asked to rate his marriage on a five-point scale which ranged from "very happy" to "very unhappy." Each subject had three ratings; self-rating, rating of spouse, and rating of a close acquaintance.
The authors stated that their results confirmed that the rating scale was valid and reliable in differentiating between good and poor marital adjustment.

A concurrent validity study was done on the Polyfactor (3). The subjects in this study were forty-nine married couples who were in marriage counseling. Four Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were computed between each of the four Polyfactor scores and counselors' estimation of these scores which represent amount of marital difficulties. The results were a correlation coefficient of .62 significant at beyond the .01 level for the husbands' total scores, a correlation coefficient of .70 significant at beyond the .01 level for wives' total scores, a correlation coefficient of .81 significant at beyond the .01 level for the couples' total scores, and a correlation coefficient of .10 which was not significant for the total couple difference scores.

A split-half reliability study has also been done on the Polyfactor (4). Fifty married couples who were in marriage counseling were the subjects in this study. Four Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were computed between the two halves of the Polyfactor test. The results were as follows a correlation coefficient of .95 significant at beyond the .01 level for the husbands'
total scores, a correlation coefficient of .92 significant at beyond the .01 level for wives' total scores, a correlation coefficient of .97 significant at beyond the .01 level for the couples' total scores, and a correlation coefficient of .84 significant at beyond the .01 level for the total couple difference scores.

The results of a third study on the Polyfactor "... supported the contention that the self-rating of finished sentence-completion items is a fruitful method of testing for marriage difficulties and that this method also contains advantages over the other types of marriage testing reviewed" (10, p. 51).

Procedure

The two tests were administered according to standard testing procedure. The subjects were told to read the instructions for both the Polyfactor and the MAI. Any questions were answered and the subjects were told that there was no time limit for completing the tests.

The first page of the Polyfactor test contains blanks which the subject was to fill in with background information concerning the subject (full name, age, length of marriage, current marital status, number of marriages, and age and sex of children) and test instructions. (See Appendix.)
Statistical Treatment

Fisher's $t$ tests were used to test the significance of difference between the means of the groups. Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were used to test the relationships between the two tests within each group.


CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As presented in Chapter I, two hypotheses were tested in this research. It was hypothesized that there would be significant differences between the means of Group I and Group II, with the means of Group I being significantly higher than the means of Group II on the Polyfactor and the MAI. Comparisons were made across groups between female total scores, male total scores, couples' total scores, and couples' total difference scores.

Secondly, it was hypothesized that within both Group I and Group II there would be significant positive correlations between the Polyfactor scores and the MAI scores. Specifically four measures of relationships were determined between the Polyfactor and the MAI: total scores for females on the Polyfactor and the MAI, total scores for males on the Polyfactor and the MAI; total couple scores on the Polyfactor and the MAI; and total couple difference scores on the Polyfactor and the MAI.

To test hypothesis one, four Fisher's $t$ tests for both variables, the results of which are presented in Table I, were computed to test the significance of the differences
between the means for Group I and Group II (4). There was a significant difference between the means of Group I and Group II, with the means of Group I being significantly higher than the means of Group II on all test scores with the one exception of the Polyfactor total couple difference score. There is a possibility that this difference would have been significant in larger groups, since the difference was in the predicted direction.

TABLE I

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, t VALUES AND PROBABILITIES FOR THE FOUR COMPARISONS ON THE POLYFACTOR AND THE MAI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Group I</th>
<th>Group II</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Adjustment</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34.7667</td>
<td>22.8544</td>
<td>13.7667</td>
<td>13.3718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28.7000</td>
<td>20.6584</td>
<td>14.1333</td>
<td>10.9410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>63.4667</td>
<td>39.4380</td>
<td>25.3667</td>
<td>24.2664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>15.8000</td>
<td>11.0747</td>
<td>6.8333</td>
<td>7.0958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyfactor</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>134.5333</td>
<td>38.5565</td>
<td>46.8000</td>
<td>32.6437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>114.7667</td>
<td>29.3533</td>
<td>46.6667</td>
<td>30.8727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>249.3000</td>
<td>55.5730</td>
<td>93.4667</td>
<td>53.6037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>32.6333</td>
<td>30.1862</td>
<td>23.3333</td>
<td>24.5137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consistent with Terman's (20) results, the results of this study revealed that in Group I the female mean score was higher than the male mean score on the marital difficulties tests. This could possibly be interpreted to mean that males have a tendency to repress emotions and knowingly or unknowingly withhold information about their emotions more than women do. However, in Group II, female and male mean scores were not appreciably different. One explanation for this finding could be that more happily married males were able to recognize and express attitudes, unlike the males in Group I, and therefore score more like the females. The results of this study would lead to the conclusion that both marital difficulties tests differentiate between those who have significant marital difficulties and those who do not. This finding was comparable to and consistent with findings of Buerkle and others (1), Cuber and Haroff (2), Dean (3), Hurley and Palonen (5), Johnson and Terman (6), Kelley (7), Kotlar (8), Locke and Wallace (9), Luckey (10, 11, 12, 13), Mudd (14), Murstein and Glaudin (15), Orden and Bradburn (16), Renée (17), Stuckert (18), Taylor (19), Terman (20), and Terman and Wallin (21), who also found a significant difference between the means of groups of happily married and unhappily married couples.
To test hypothesis two, eight Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were computed to determine the relationships between the Polyfactor and the MAI (4). These correlations are presented in Table II. Correlations were calculated for male and female total scores and for couple total and total difference scores within each group.

**TABLE II**

**CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE POLYFACTOR AND THE MAI SCORES WITHIN THE TWO GROUPS**

| Scores Correlated | Group I | | | Group II | | |
|-------------------|---------|---|---|---------|---|
|                   | Correlation Coefficient | P | Correlation Coefficient | P |
| Female            | 0.3121 | .. | 0.6076 | .01 |
| Male              | 0.0087 | .. | 0.5456 | .01 |
| Couple Total      | 0.1879 | .. | 0.7165 | .01 |
| Couple Difference | -0.0072 | .. | -0.0958 | .. |

In Group I, all correlations coefficients between the Polyfactor and the MAI were non-significant. In Group II, the correlation coefficients between the Polyfactor and the MAI were significant for total female, total male, and total couple scores, but non-significant for total couple difference scores. These results indicate that the Polyfactor and the
MAI cannot be used interchangeably to characterize a couple's position within a group of couples in marriage counseling.

It would seem that the Polyfactor, an open-ended projective test would reflect more kinds of marital difficulties than the structured MAI. Therefore correlations might be expected to be low, but positive. In addition, the variability of Group I is smaller than the variability of Group II which would tend to depress the size of the correlation for this group.


CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There has been an ever increasing demand for marriage counseling. Many practicing therapists appear to feel that tests for diagnosing marital difficulties would offer many advantages to both the client and the therapist. A survey of the literature revealed few tests designed for the diagnosing of marital difficulties and few validity studies on existing tests. Before any test can be considered a valuable instrument its validity must be demonstrated. An attempt was therefore made to further establish the validity of the Polyfactor Test of Marital Difficulties, a relatively new, yet potentially valuable sentence completion, self-rating marital difficulties test. Another test, the Marital Adjustment Inventory was also used for comparison purposes. It was hypothesized that across Group I (marriage counseling group) and Group II (non-marriage counseling group) there would be significant differences between female total scores and male total scores, and between couple total and total difference scores for both the Polyfactor and the MAI. It was further hypothesized that there would be significant positive correlations within Group I and Group II between the Polyfactor and the MAI scores.
In order to test these hypotheses, sixty married couples were given the Polyfactor and the MAI. These sixty couples comprised two groups. Group I was composed of thirty married couples who had voluntarily sought marriage counseling. Group II was composed of thirty married couples who were not in marriage counseling and who volunteered for this research.

All t values except for the one corresponding to the Polyfactor total couple difference scores were significant at the .01 level. On the basis of the t values, it was concluded that both the Polyfactor and the MAI do differentiate between those who have significant marital difficulties and those who do not.

All correlations were non-significant in Group I, but were significant in Group II for all scores except the Polyfactor total couple difference scores. Thus, within a marriage counseling group these measures do not order the individuals in a similar fashion.

For further research on the Polyfactor, it is recommended that more subjects be used. In addition, ideally subjects should be more representative of the general population, and important sub-groups of the population should be used in separate standardizations. Another fruitful approach would be to determine whether scores change as a function
of the couple having received marriage counseling, particularly for couples whose behavior, by other indices, has been modified.
APPENDIX

THE POLYFACTOR SENTENCE COMPLETION

SURVEY OF MARITAL DIFFICULTIES

FULL NAME: Mr., Mrs., __________________________ AGE: __________

LENGTH OF MARRIAGE: __________ CURRENT MARITAL STATUS __________

NO. OF MARRIAGES: __________ AGE & SEX OF CHILDREN: __________

INSTRUCTIONS

All items must be completed.

Step 1 - Finish each sentence that has been started with whatever you wish to say. Do not leave any of the sentence stems incomplete or blank. Leaving any of the sentence stems incomplete or blank invalidates sections of the survey and this makes other sentences which you have completed much less useful.

Step 2 - Answer item 86 with a brief paragraph or list.

Step 3 - Read what you have written for each sentence; one sentence at a time. As you do this, make a judgment of how much difficulty this sentence represents in your marriage.

You will make this judgement by circling one of the 4 capital letters found in front of each sentence. (M, S, L, N) The letters and the amount of difficulty they stand for are as follows:

M - much difficulty
S - some difficulty
L - little difficulty
N - no difficulty

Again every sentence must receive a judgment. No sentence should be left unjudged, since any sentence without one of the 4 preceding letters circled invalidates an entire
section of this survey. Therefore, you must make some
judgment for each sentence.

REVIEW

1. FINISH EACH SENTENCE

2. Answer question 86

3. Judge every sentence with one of the 4 letters

After you have finished this survey check over your answers
and see that nothing has been left blank or incomplete.

THE POLYFACTOR SENTENCE COMPLETION SURVEY OF MARITAL DIFFICULTIES

M S L N 1. Our honeymoon was

M S L N 2. The place we live in is

M S L N 3. My spouse's education

M S L N 4. Our hobbies are

M S L N 5. Our health

M S L N 6. Our marriage is

M S L N 7. A marriage should not be

M S L N 8. The best thing about marriage is

M S L N 9. The worst thing about marriage is

M S L N 10. In marriage

M S L N 11. Marital love is

M S L N 12. My spouse loves

M S L N 13. My love

M S L N 14. Our love is really

M S L N 15. Can love

M S L N 16. I like my spouse to
We both share.

We fight about.

My spouse wants me.

Getting along.

Our sex life.

Sexually I.

Sex with my spouse.

With sex one should.

About sex I wonder.

My spouse is.

My spouse really makes me feel.

My spouse and I.

My spouse treats me.

Why can't my spouse.

To my spouse I.

With my spouse I can.

With my spouse I can't.

I am really.

I wonder if I.

To feel a personal freedom.

In marriage our best.

I contribute.

The rewards of marriage.

Can fulfillment.

Children are.
A child needs
My spouse feels toward children
My feelings toward children
Can children
Money is
Our finances are
Our debts
Managing our money
When we have money troubles
God
The church
To me religion
To my spouse religion
In religion I wonder
I need
My spouse needs
The marriage requires
Our needs are great
We both seem to need
When my spouse and I talk
Our communications are
I feel I can say
Talking is
To really communicate
Please use the rest of this page to write an analysis of what you think are the best factors in your marriage. You may say anything you wish. Finish this question before you judge the sentence you have already completed.
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