

379
N81d
No. 1518

THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SELF-ESTEEM,
MARITAL COMMUNICATION, AND
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Warren Leslie Carter, B.A., M.Ed.

Denton, Texas

February, 1980

236

Carter, Warren Leslie, The Relationships Among Self-Esteem, Marital Communication, and Marital Adjustment.

Doctor of Philosophy (Counseling and Student Personnel Services), May, 1980, 129 pp. 27 tables, bibliography, 67 titles.

This investigation seeks to determine the correlations among the three factors of self-esteem, marital communication and marital adjustment to determine if these factors are evidenced similarly in the marital system, and to determine if their relationships are consistent among a wide range of marriages. In addition, several demographic variables are isolated in order to determine their influence on the three factors under investigation.

The investigation was conducted as a survey in order to determine the nature of the relationships of the factors of self-esteem, marital communication, and marital adjustment with individuals in typical marriages. The subjects for the survey were selected by six individuals who were designated to be selectors. Each selector was instructed to choose as subjects fifty individuals of varying backgrounds who would be willing to participate in a research study about typical marriages. Each subject was selected on the basis of having been married for at least one year, without having had a marital separation during the previous year. Of the original

three hundred subjects, two hundred and twenty-seven completed the survey material and mailed them in.

The Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (Short Form), Bienvenu's Marital Communication Inventory, and Hoffmeister's Self-Esteem Questionnaire were utilized to assess each subject's level of marital adjustment, marital communication, and self-esteem, respectively. In addition, a general information sheet was administered to gather demographic data on each subject.

The results from the Pearson product-moment correlations showed that there were positive correlations at the .001 level of significance between marital adjustment and marital communication, between marital adjustment and self-esteem, and between self-esteem and marital communication. In addition, the results from the Pearson product-moment correlation showed that regardless of the demographic variables isolated, the relationships among the three factors remained positively correlated at the .001 level of significance.

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that marital adjustment is dependent on married individuals' level of self-esteem and the ability to communicate effectively. It was also concluded that when there is a high level of either self-esteem, marital communication, or marital adjustment, the other factors will also be at a high level. In addition, the consistency of the relationships among marital

adjustment, marital communication, and self-esteem apparently transcend demographic factors.

The findings of this study justify the following recommendations:

1. That practitioners of marriage counseling develop a therapeutic strategy with the goal of improving both the factors of marital communication and self-esteem.

2. That leaders of marriage enrichment workshops incorporate teachings regarding both communicative skills and skills for building self-esteem into their workshop material.

3. That a similar study be conducted with individuals representing different segments of the American culture, specifically minority groups and lower socioeconomic groups, to determine the consistency of the findings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	v
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study	
Hypotheses	
Background and Significance	
Definition of Terms	
Basic Assumptions	
Limitations	
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	19
The Family as A System	
Marital Communication and Marital Adjustment	
Marital Adjustment and Self-Esteem	
Summary	
III. DESIGN OF THE STUDY	60
Organization of the Study	
Population	
Instruments Selected for the Study	
Collection and Presentation of Data	
Selection of Selectors	
Selection of Subjects	
Collection of Data	
Subjects	
Scoring Procedures and Treatment of Data	
IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA	76
The Problem and General Hypotheses	
Presentation and Analysis of Data	
V. SUMMARY, RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	98
Discussion and Conclusions	
Recommendations	

APPENDIX	Page 107
BIBLIOGRAPHY	124

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Between the <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> and the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u>	77
II. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Between the <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u>	78
III. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Between the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> and the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u>	79
IV. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Male Respondents	81
V. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Female Respondents	81
VI. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents Married 1-5 Years	82
VII. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents Married 6-13 Years	83
VIII. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents Married 14-24 Years	83

Table	Page
IX. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents Married 25-52 Years	84
X. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents Aged 20-29	85
XI. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents Aged 30-37	85
XII. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents Aged 38-48	86
XIII. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents Aged 49-80	86
XIV. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents with No Children	87
XV. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents with One Child	88
XVI. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents with Two Children	88
XVII. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents with 3-6 Children	89

Table	Page
XVIII. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents with a High School Education	90
XIX. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents with Some College Education	90
XX. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents with a Bachelor's Degree	91
XXI. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents in the Annual Income Range of \$10,000-20,000	92
XXII. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents in the Annual Income Range of \$20,000-30,000	92
XXIII. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents in the Annual Income Range of Above \$30,000	93
XXIV. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents in Families with an Employed Wife	94
XXV. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the <u>Marital Communication Inventory</u> , <u>Marital Adjustment Test</u> , and the <u>Self-Esteem Questionnaire</u> for Respondents in Families with an Unemployed Wife	94

Table	Page
XXVI. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the Marital Communication Inventory, Marital Adjustment Test, and the Self-Esteem Questionnaire for Respondents Living at Current Address for 0-5 Years	95
XXVII. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Among the Marital Communication Inventory, Marital Adjustment Test, and the Self-Esteem Questionnaire for Respondents Living at Current Address for 6 or More Years	96

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the past few decades the field of marriage counseling has gained considerable attention in the United States. Treating marital relationships is no longer a practice carried out in obscurity by a small number of practitioners. The mushrooming interest in marital counseling is reflected by the number of books and articles in the field, as well as the greater number of mental health clinics providing marital counseling. Increasingly, the general public has become aware of these services and is eager to learn from the experiences of those who have studied marital relationships (Olson, 1976).

Part of the task of marriage counselors traditionally has been to assist couples in determining how they have contributed to the breakdown of their marital communication system. Depending on the theoretical approach of the counselor, one of several factors might be focused upon in the attempt to help the couple restore satisfaction to their relationship. Perhaps the factor most consistently cited in regard to marital adjustment by researchers and theorists is the factor of marital communication. There seems to be general agreement from professionals in the field of marriage and family counseling that

the communication process is a significant factor in determining the success or failure of a marital system (Haley, 1976; Skynner, 1976; Beavers, 1977; French, 1977). This assumption has been supported by research which has identified family and marital communication as a significant correlate of family wellbeing (Bateson et al., 1956; Lewis et al., 1976; Beavers, 1977; Latham, 1979).

Another factor that has often been linked with marital and family wellbeing is self-esteem. Like the communication factor, self-esteem has generally been considered to be a significant contributor to the success or failure of a marital system (Satir, 1967; Skynner, 1976; Ables and Brandsma, 1977). This assumption has been verified by limited research (Webb, 1972; McCahan, 1973).

Theorists have concluded that the two factors of self-esteem and marital communication are closely related, but their conclusions are based mostly on clinical experience, not research. Marriage counselors are assuming that communication skills and self-esteem are important to the success of a marital system, but their assumptions have not been empirically verified (Gilbert, 1976). Because there seems to be a consensus among several prominent theorists that self-esteem and communication skills play complimentary roles in achieving marital adjustment, research is necessary to substantiate their assumptions.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were to (1) investigate the correlation among the three factors of self-esteem, communication, and marital adjustment, (2) to determine if these factors were evidenced similarly in the marital system, and (3) to determine if their relationships were consistent among a wide range of marriage relationships. In addition, several demographic variables were factored out to determine their influence on the correlations.

Hypotheses

To carry out the purposes of this study, the following hypotheses were formulated.

1. There will be a significant positive correlation between the factors of marital adjustment and marital communication.
2. There will be a significant positive correlation between the factors of marital adjustment and self-esteem.
3. There will be a significant positive correlation between the factors of self-esteem and marital communication.

Since there may be significant relationships within subgroups of the population, the following questions were examined:

1. Does the length of marriage significantly affect the relationship between marital adjustment and marital communication?

2. Does the length of marriage significantly affect the relationship between marital adjustment and self-esteem?
3. Does the length of marriage significantly affect the relationship between self-esteem and marital communication?
4. Does the sex of the respondent significantly affect the relationship between marital adjustment and marital communication?
5. Does the sex of the respondent significantly affect the relationship between marital adjustment and self-esteem?
6. Does the sex of the respondent significantly affect the relationship between self-esteem and marital communication?
7. Does the wife's employment status significantly affect the relationship between marital adjustment and marital communication?
8. Does the wife's employment status significantly affect the relationship between marital adjustment and self-esteem?
9. Does the wife's employment status significantly affect the relationship between self-esteem and marital communication?
10. Does the respondent's age significantly affect the relationship between marital adjustment and marital communication?

11. Does the respondent's age significantly affect the relationship between marital adjustment and self-esteem?
12. Does the respondent's age significantly affect the relationship between self-esteem and marital communication?
13. Does the number of children significantly affect the relationship between marital adjustment and marital communication?
14. Does the number of children significantly affect the relationship between marital adjustment and self-esteem?
15. Does the number of children significantly affect the relationship between self-esteem and marital communication?

Background and Significance

An important area of investigation which has begun to receive considerable attention in the past decade is that of communication styles. It is significant to note that while the most consistent communications have been found to occur in marital relationships (Jourard and Lasakow, 1958) there have been relatively few studies that have focused on factors that influence communication among marital partners. It is evident in the literature that many personality theorists and marital systems theorists have assumed that communication skills and high levels of self-esteem are highly correlated,

meaning that good communication is not likely to occur unless the individuals have high levels of self-esteem (Skynner, 1976).

Rogers (1951), a leading personality theorist, has theorized that the person who accepts himself will have better interpersonal relationships with others. His theory of personality, which has influenced the thinking of many other theorists and practitioners, is a basic philosophy of human capabilities. On one hand it emphasizes the individual's realization of his self-concept and of becoming the type of person that satisfies the self. On the other hand it speaks of the need to relate to others in a caring, open manner which would facilitate a fluid style of personal interaction. Rogers' conceptualization represents a philosophical attempt to integrate assumptions about the inner self-concept with the outer self-behavior.

Rogers' views regarding the effect of the self-concept on one's interrelations with others were shared by several of his professional predecessors. Adler (1926) assumed that those who themselves feel inferior tend to depreciate others. In addition, he proposed that one's feelings toward oneself would become consistently integrated in one's style of life, which in turn influenced the way that individual interacted with others. Horney (1936) considered love of self and love of others to be positively related. Her assumption, which was similar to Adler's, was that depending on the nature of the

person's perception and feeling toward self, the person would acquire a fixed behavior pattern that would organize interactions with others. In part, her assumptions were elaborated by Fromm (1939) who proposed that the most basic striving a person has is to be part of an intimate relationship. The ability to establish such a relationship was considered to be dependent on one's feelings of self-love.

Given the fact that marriage provides one of the most natural milieus for the development of an intimate communication pattern, it would follow that there is a need to substantiate the degree to which one's self-concept or level of self-esteem affects the marriage relationship. Brown (1966) has observed that a growing body of evidence suggests that communication failures and breakdowns are prevalent in marriage. Complaints of lack of understanding, frequently heard from couples, is a common cause of breakdown in marriage communication. However, there is a lack of evidence that would indicate why the communication breaks down in the first place. If the assumptions of personality theorists, such as Rogers (1951), Adler (1926), and Horney (1936) were considered, it could be hypothesized that one's self-concept plays a significant role in the communication process in marriage.

In light of the work by early personality theorists, many current theorists have integrated philosophical ideas about self-esteem with ideas about the marital communication process. Good communication is hypothesized to be a key to

family adjustment, and a positive relationship is thought to exist between communication and self-esteem. According to Satir (1967) self-esteem is closely linked to the individual's ability to communicate in a manner that enhances marital and family relations. Her assumption has been that individuals with low self-esteem base their opinion of themselves on what others think of them, which in turn cripples their autonomy and individuality. She further proposes that low self-esteem has direct implications for the individual's ability to communicate to another because the fear and anxiety will be too high. When one or both marital partners experience a low sense of self-esteem or has difficulty in communicating, the marital system would become unsatisfactory and marital disharmony would occur. It is assumed that once the factors contributing to the malfunctioning system are understood, efforts could be made to correct the problem areas contributing to it (Skynner, 1976).

Glick and Kessler (1974) have proposed that difficulty in communicating is closely linked to an individual's self-perception. That is, not only do marital partners and family members develop inadequate means for communication, but the recipients of the communication receive the content of those messages as being devaluating. Consequently, in their viewpoint, low self-esteem feeds into dysfunctional communication, while dysfunctional communication feeds low self-esteem. Ideally, then a marital relationship would

presuppose a commitment to a joint outcome, an agreement that each partner would sacrifice a little of his own interests in order to reach a benefit for both. If one or both of the partners has a poor perception of self, any sacrifice of self would be intolerable.

Ard (1976) has stated that faulty communication is one of the reasons why so many couples do not function at their optimal level. He believes that communication problems frequently turn out to be disagreements about the nature of the relationship involved, rather than conflicts over specific content. Such a conceptualization of the communication process is dependent on each partner's perceived needs and objectives in marriage. According to Skynner (1976), one's perceived needs are based in part on one's feelings of adequacy and worth.

Ables and Brandsma (1977) suggest that an impasse in marital growth is reached when one or both spouses suffer from feelings of inadequacy or the fear of blame. With such individuals there is a tendency to draw unnecessarily bleak conclusions about themselves if their mate is not fully satisfied. Consequently, the person with a poor image of self tends to feel responsible for the stress of his spouse, when indeed it is inappropriate. Eventually, the individual who does not feel a strong sense of self-acceptance may develop feelings that could cause harm to the communication process and the marriage.

It is evident that a large number of personality theorists and marriage counselors share the viewpoint that satisfactory communication is dependent on reasonable levels of self-esteem in the individuals involved in a relationship. Not only does this basic belief affect the practices of marriage counselors, but it has implications for those who involve themselves in preventative counseling or instruction. A recent trend in marital counseling has been the development of marriage instruction and enrichment programs in which an attempt is made to help couples with reasonably stable marriages achieve positive movement and increased potential in their own relationship. Mace (1976), who is considered to be a leader in the marital enrichment movement, has concluded that a major hinderance to marital growth is poor couple communication, and that communication should be emphasized most heavily in the marital enrichment programs.

A review of the literature on marital enrichment programs shows that virtually all of the marital enrichment programs heavily emphasize the communication aspects of the marital relationship, with some minor emphasis on the self-esteem factor (Bruder, 1972; Miller et. al., 1976; Nadeau, 1976; Rappaport, 1976; Gurman and Kriskern, 1977; Latham, 1979). In most cases the couples are trained in specific interpersonal skills by a trainer who uses both didactic and modeling learning principles to demonstrate the desired behaviors.

It is apparent that there is an abundance of literature that suggests that good communication is a necessary ingredient for a successful relationship. Likewise, there are many who have proposed that self-esteem must be at an appropriate level in order to solidify one's chances for a successful relationship. Yet, with all that has been written about the factors of communication and self-esteem and their importance to marital adjustment, there is very little research to fully substantiate the assumptions that have guided so many professionals in their endeavors to help make marriages better. There is a mildly significant amount of evidence in the literature that confirms that there is a positive correlation between self-esteem and successful relationships. Likewise, there have been several studies conducted which have focused on the relationship between marital adjustment and communication. Few studies, though, have actually examined the relationship of self-esteem and communication to marital adjustment. Consequently, the absence of conclusive research data on the relationships among self-esteem, communication, and marital adjustment requires supportive data if practitioners are to continue justifying the use of a counseling or instructional approach that emphasizes these factors.

Gilbert (1976) has cautioned that it has not been concretely established that both self-esteem and communication skills are sufficient factors for an intimate relationship to occur. She proposed that two people can know a great deal about one another, and they can each experience high

levels of self-esteem and still not be well-adjusted in their marriage. This proposed belief is one that is rarely entertained by personality theorists, but there is a distinct possibility that it can happen. Gilbert went on to suggest that a successful marriage needs to be one in which the husband and wife learn how to deal with information, conflicts, and disappointments when they occur. In her view it might be possible for couples to have high self-esteem levels and appropriate communication skills and still fail in their marriage, if they do not know how to integrate those factors in dealing with natural, normal marital problems. Her reason for proposing such an idea was to expose the fact that there is no current evidence to firmly support or refute the popular notions about the nature of self-esteem and communication skills in a marriage relationship.

Gilbert (1976, p. 225) has made the following statement: "The relationship between self-esteem and self-disclosure needs to be more carefully delineated before accurate predictions can be made as to the outcomes they are likely to exert on human relationships." A comprehensive review of the literature revealed a continued absence of research in the area suggested by Gilbert.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to provide some conclusive evidence regarding the association of the factors of self-esteem and communication skills as they exist in marriage relationships.

Definition of Terms

1. Marital Communication - As used in this study, marital communication was defined as the interaction or transaction that takes place among marital partners. Such communication includes those symbols and cues used by spouses in giving and receiving meaningful messages (Satir, 1967). Backus (1975) has suggested that from a systems perspective, communication is: (a) processing internal information; (b) sending congruent messages; (c) receiving and feeding back accurate data; (d) assessing needs, setting goals, exploring alternatives; (e) entering into commitments and making decisions; and (f) implementing, evaluating, and modifying the union to make it mutually satisfying and enjoyable. Marital communication was operationally defined as the score achieved on the Marital Communication Inventory.

2. Self-esteem - As used in this study, self-esteem was defined as the individual's feeling of value and worth. Hoffmeister (1976) has described high self-esteem to mean the feeling that a person is capable, significant, successful, and worthwhile. Self-esteem was operationally defined as the score achieved on the Self-Esteem Questionnaire.

3. Marital Adjustment - As used in this study, marital adjustment was defined as the degree to which the marital partners believe that their marriage relationship is meeting their basic needs and expectations for marriage. Marital adjustment was operationally defined as the score achieved on the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test.

4. Marital System - As used in this study, marital system was referred to as the concept of the marriage as a feedback system designed to maintain a relatively stable state so that when the whole system or any part of it is subjected to a disequilibrating force, the system will operate to restore the pre-existing equilibrium (Glick and Kessler, 1974).

Basic Assumptions

The following assumptions underlie this study:

1. That communication skills, self-esteem and marital adjustment can be measured adequately by the instruments selected.
2. That the selection of subjects from a wide range in background will provide the most likely safeguard against systematic bias of the data.
3. That the factors of communication and self-esteem are important factors in maintaining homeostasis within the marital system.

Limitations

One of the natural limitations of virtually any study that relies on self-report inventories is that the information gathered will be subjective in nature, allowing for some inconsistency in the response-sets between individuals participating. There may have been a tendency for some individuals to give the "right" answer in order to give a more favorable impression of their marital situation. However,

the anonymity of the subjects should have alleviated much of the biased responses.

Since the research project was one in which the subjects were participating on a voluntary basis, it is possible that the results could be more indicative of the more positively adjusted individual. This limitation, too, is only minimal since any statistical results that provide information about positively adjusted individuals will have implications for the individual who is not positively adjusted.

Although an effort was made to draw a sampling from a wide range of individuals, it is likely that the results are not typical of every marriage relationship. The results are most pertinent to white, middle-class marriages.

The tests were chosen on the basis of two major criterion, their validity and reliability and their brevity. Because the nature of the study called for self-administered questionnaires, it was believed that there would be a stronger likelihood to gain the subject's full cooperation by administering instruments that would not take a long time to answer. Consequently, the test instruments were selected on a more limited basis. However, the tests included in the study have been statistically analyzed and have been found to be both valid and reliable.

CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ables, Billie S. and J. M. Brandsma, Therapy for Couples, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1977.
- Adler, Alfred, The Neurotic Constitution, New York: Dodd, Mead, 1926.
- Ard, Ben N., in Handbook of Marriage Counseling, B. N. Ard and C. C. Ard (Eds.) Palo Alto, Cal.: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1976, 17-21.
- Bateson, Gregory, Don Jackson, Jay Haley, and John Weakland, "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia," Behavioral Science, I (1956), 251-264.
- Beavers, Robert, Psychotherapy and Growth: A Family Systems Perspective, New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1977.
- Beck, Dorothy F., "Research Findings on the Outcomes of Marital Counseling," Social Casework, 56 (March, 1975), 153-158.
- Backus, Frank, "A Systems Approach to Marital Process," Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling, I (July, 1975), 251-258.
- Bruder, A. H., "Effects of Marriage Enrichment Program Upon Marital Communication and Adjustment," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, 1972.
- Buros, O. K., Tests in Print, II, Highland Park, N. J.: The Gryphon Press, 1974.
- Cohn, Ann R., "Self-Concept and Role Perception as Correlates of Marital Satisfaction," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, Ill., 1975.
- Dillon, Joseph D., "Marital Communication and Its Relation to Self-Esteem," unpublished doctoral dissertation, United States International University, San Diego, California, 1976.

- Elliott, M. W., "Communication and Empathy in Marital Adjustment," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Texas Women's University, Denton, Texas, 1974.
- French, Alfred P., Disturbed Children and Their Families, New York: Human Sciences Press, 1977.
- Fromm, Eric, "Selfishness and Self Love," Psychiatry, 2 (1939), 507-523.
- Gilbert, Shirley J., "Self-Disclosure, Intimacy and Communication in Families," The Family Coordinator, 25 (July, 1976), 221-231.
- Glick, Ira D. and David Kessler, Marital and Family Therapy, New York: Grune and Stratton, 1974.
- Gurman, Alan S., and D. P. Kriskern, "Enrichment Research On Marital Enrichment Programs," Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling, III (April, 1977), 3-12.
- Haley, Jay, Problem Solving Therapy, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1976.
- Hoffmeister, James K., Some Information Regarding the Characteristics of the Two Measures Derived from the Self-Esteem Questionnaire, Boulder, Colorado: Test Analysis and Development Corporation, 1976.
- Horney, Karen, New Ways in Psychoanalysis: New York: Norton Press, 1936.
- Latham, Noreen V., "The Effect on Marital Adjustment of Teaching Basic Marital Communication in a Group Using Videotape Feedback," unpublished doctoral dissertation, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1979.
- Lewis, Jerry M., Robert Beavers, J. T. Gossett, and V. A. Phillips, No Single Thread: Psychological Health in Families, New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1976.
- Mace, David and Vera, "Marriage Enrichment-A Preventative Group Approach for Couples," in Treating Relationships, David H. L. Olson (Ed.), Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., 1976, 321-336.
- McCahan, George R., "The Relationship Between Self-Concept and Marital Satisfaction," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1973.

- Miller, S., E. Nunnally, and D. Wackman, "Minnesota Couples Communication Program" in Treating Relationships, David H. L. Olson (Ed), Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., 1976, 21-39.
- Nadeau, K. G., "An Examination of Some Effects of the Marital Enrichment Group," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 1971.
- Navran, Leslie, "Communication and Adjustment in Marriage," The Family Process, VI (September, 1976), 173-184.
- Olson, David H. L. in Treating Relationships, David H. L. Olson (Ed.) Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., Inc., 1976, 3-17.
- Rappaport, Alan F., "Conjugal Relationship Enhancement Program," in Treating Relationships, David H. L. Olson (Ed.), Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., Inc., 1976, 41-66.
- Rogers, Carl R., Client-Centered Therapy, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951.
- Rubin, R. H., "Family Structure and Peer Group Affiliation as Related to Attitudes about Male-Female Relations Among Black Youth," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, 1970.
- Satir, Virginia, Conjoint Family Therapy, Palo Alto, Cal.: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1967.
- Skyner, A. C. Robin, Systems of Family and Marital Psychotherapy, New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1976.
- Webb, Donald G., "Relationship of Self-Acceptance and Self-Disclosure to Empathy and Marital Need Satisfaction," unpublished doctoral dissertation, United States International University, San Diego, California, 1972.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature is presented in the following manner: (1) the family as a system, (2) marital communication and (3) self-esteem.

The Family as a System

One of the major emphases of family systems research has been on the communication process and its effects on marital and family satisfaction. Early family systems theorists and researchers (Bateson, 1956; Walzlowich, 1970; Haley and Mudd, 1971; Weakland, 1976) have identified faulty family communication as a contributing factor in maladjustment in family members. A more recent study (Lewis et al., 1976) was able to show that family well-being correlated with open, flexible family communication.

The theoretical framework for research has pictured the entire family as a system composed of a complex network of interacting subsystems, whether they be individual members or groups of members. After much clinical observation, Bowen (1976) found the family to be a triangular system that has definite relationship patterns that predictably repeat in periods of stress and calm. In periods of calm, the triangle is made up of a comfortably close twosome and a less comforta-

ble outsider. The twosome works to preserve the togetherness, lest one becomes uncomfortable and forms a better togetherness elsewhere. The outsider seeks to form a togetherness with one of the others, drawing upon numerous maneuvers to accomplish this. The emotional forces are constantly in motion from moment to moment, even in periods of calm. In periods of stress, the outside position is the most comfortable and desired position. In stress, each person works to get the outside position to escape tension, consequently, setting up new twosomes and new tensions. Over time, the emotional forces tend to move from one active triangle to another, finally remaining mostly in one triangle as long as the total system is fairly calm. In Bowen's clinical observations, the most healthy families were those who were able to attain a reasonably high level of differentiation of self from the triangular family system.

In an early landmark study conducted by Bateson et al., (1956), the communication process of schizophrenics in a VA hospital was observed as were the communication patterns of their families. The researchers were able to identify a common communication pattern in the families of schizophrenics which was labeled the "double bind." The double bind was defined specifically as a situation in which three conditions were always present: (1) an intense interpersonal relationship, (2) one person in the relationship expressing two orders or messages, one of which denied the other, and (3)

the "bound" individual's inability to comment on the messages to correct the discrepancy (Weakland, 1976). Although the Bateson study was considered significant in that it focused on the family as a whole, it was not without its weaknesses. No details of the research methodology or design were explicitly reported, meaning that the credibility of the study would rest on the fact that it was a longitudinal study conducted by a reputable research team. Several related studies, however, based on Bateson's assumptions have demonstrated scientific evidence of the double bind and its relationship to family dysfunction (Landis, 1947; Katz, 1955; Friedman and Friedman, 1970; Haley and Mudd, 1971; Knox, 1971). Because of this early research in family systems, family communication became the focus of researchers and clinicians who were seeking to find ways of improving family functioning in order to create more stable individual members.

A variety of studies have been conducted to determine the effects of the communication process on the family system. In one such study, Cheek and Anthony (1970) observed family communication and found that normal families could be distinguished from families with schizophrenic members by observing their use of personal pronouns. In the study, a total of 123 families were sampled, with sixty-seven pathological families and fifty-six normal families used. The data were collected by a questionnaire developed by the researchers and a taped interview which was rated by the

researchers. The parents of the schizophrenics were found to be high on the accusatory, second person singular pronoun, "you" statements, and low on third person singular statements. The parents in the normal families were higher on first person singular pronouns, and much lower on the second-person singular pronouns. The authors suggested that the schizophrenic family operated within a restrictive climate, relying heavily on authority. The absence of the first or third person pronouns, which would lead to an internal locus of control in their children, seemed to account for the schizophrenics attitude that standards and behavior of others are simply not applicable to their situation. The findings gave credence to the assumption that the communication process is of great importance in the family system.

Watzlowich et al. (1970) investigated family communication in the form of protection and scapegoating. The sample included forty-eight white, middle-class families, all of whom contained at least one schizophrenic member. Each family participated in a video-taped interview. Raters were trained to identify blaming and critical statements, and the receipt of such statements was tallied for each member. The findings of the study showed that the schizophrenic members were less protected and more scapegoated than other family members. To further substantiate this finding, the family members were asked to write a statement about each of the other family members present at the interview. The result was that the

schizophrenic members tended to be more accurate in identifying items written to them by other family members and were significantly more open and vulnerable in items they wrote to other members. The study concluded that schizophrenic members did give and receive different types of communication than did the other members of the family.

Friedman and Friedman (1970) used a projective technique of joint story telling to study the clarity of communications within families. Participating in the study were forty families matched according to parents age and education. The twenty control families were considered to be normal, average families, while the twenty experimental families contained at least one schizophrenic member. Each family was given ten minutes to jointly develop a story based on a picture stimulus. Trained observers watched the family interaction process as the members joined together in the story-telling task. The observers' ratings of the story content served as the measurement criterion. Findings revealed that the experimental families experienced significantly greater conflict, failure, and confusion than did the control families.

Approaching family systems research from the case study method, Meissner (1970) sought to identify factors of pathological communication in a family containing two schizophrenic daughters and one normal daughter. After compiling an extensive history of the family, it was concluded that both of the parents in the family had personality deficiencies

that were exhibited in their verbal interaction with the eldest daughter from the time of her birth. Consequently, this first born child was drawn into the family system pathology and later became schizophrenic. The middle daughter did not develop schizophrenia which caused Meissner to conclude that the system was stable at the time she was born. However, with the birth of the third daughter, the system became unbalanced, causing her to be "required" to develop pathological responses in order to restore stability to the family system. Based on this case study, Meissner concluded that family pathology is a function of the interaction between parental pathologies including unbalanced, unclear communication.

In a landmark study, Lewis et al. (1976) assessed the functioning of the healthy family. Healthy family functioning was defined as being the absence of pathologies in family members. A seven-year project was designed to identify significant characteristics of functional as compared to dysfunctional families. In a pilot study, Lewis matched families with an adolescent psychiatric inpatient member with families who had not received inpatient treatment and were considered functional. The experimental group consisted of twelve families, each having one adolescent in treatment. The control group consisted of eleven families who were matched demographically with the experimental group. Video tape segments of family interactions were rated by a panel of judges whose interrater reliability was .39 ($p > .05$). The results indi-

cated that trained observers could distinguish dysfunctional families from functional families with a high degree of accuracy simply by observing communication patterns. Based on the results of this pilot study, the researchers decided to focus specifically on the healthy families in an attempt to distinguish levels of family health, from marginally healthy to very healthy. A sample of forty-four families participated in the project, which followed the design of the pilot study, to identify specific characteristics of the healthy family. The findings revealed the following:

- (1) Leadership in healthy families is provided by the parental coalition but it is not exercised in an authoritarian manner.
- (2) The affectional bond between parents was clear, though not necessarily accompanied by high levels of sexual activity.
- (3) Closeness was apparent yet individual ego boundaries were clearly defined for each family member.
- (4) High levels of personal autonomy were present.
- (5) Thoughts and feelings were freely expressed, and the communication process was clear and spontaneous.

The significance of the Lewis study lies in the fact that it was a major attempt to research healthy families. As in the earlier research on pathological families, communication was considered to be a major descriptor of the degree of family adjustment.

Many practitioners of marriage and family counseling have developed psychotherapeutic techniques that have been influenced by family systems research. Satir (1967) has presented a model of therapy that is widely accepted and widely used. One of her major assumptions is that the marital unit sets the tone for the entire family. That is, the children are more likely to be influenced by those on whom they are physically and emotionally dependent. Consequently, those who use Satir's method of intervention focus on communication and the family system.

Beck (1975) conducted a large survey at a family service agency to test the hypothesis that communication is a major problem in family functioning. He studied case reports of 1919 cases presented as family problems at the clinic, making note of the therapists' opinion of each of the families' primary dysfunction. Of the cases surveyed, 1257 actually had communication as a primary dysfunction within the marital unit. Although there are weaknesses to such a survey, such as the therapists' biases and subjective case reporting methods, the survey lends credence to Satir's presupposition that communication is a vital factor in the family system.

To summarize, family research has confirmed the general systems theory and yielded some significant evidence to indicate that pathological families can be distinguished from functional families by observing the level of interaction within the family unit. Such confirmation implies that the

communication system of a family plays a key role in family functioning. As a result, practitioners of marriage and family counseling have utilized the family systems research to develop psychotherapeutic approaches to improve the level of satisfaction among family members (Satir 1967).

Marital Communication and Marital Adjustment

One of the basic hypotheses that this study sought to measure was that marital communication is positively correlated to marital adjustment. A number of theorists support this hypothesis. Many authorities have advanced the thesis that good communication is the key to family interaction as well as the lifeblood of the marriage relationship. It has been found that when a couple makes deliberate and frequent efforts to converse, a successful marriage is more likely to follow (Locke, 1951; Ort, 1950).

A number of authorities have drawn conclusions based on simple clinical observation procedures conducted to either confirm or deny their assumptions. Although details of many of the observational procedures have not been reported, conclusions have been drawn and reported. Ard (1976) made a series of clinical observations with the assumption that one of the most serious problems in marriage is a lack of communication. He concluded that as marital partners become more fully capable in communicating their objectives in a rational manner to each other, major differences and disagree-

ments can be resolved in a more mutually satisfying way. Based on his clinical observations, Haley (1978) found that it is not enough for couples to just express their emotions to each other or to insightfully understand why they are behaving as they do. In his conclusions, he proposed that a person must come to discover that he is a part of a sequence, and he can alter his style of relating within a destructive sequence. Lederer and Jackson (1968) deduced that within a marriage there is no such thing as "no communication" since all behavior is communication and couples communicate no matter what they do.

Katz et al. (1963) conducted a study to determine whether an individual's feeling of marriage satisfaction would influence the quality of interaction within the marriage. Fifty-nine paid volunteer couples who had no children and were under 30 years of age were used in the experiment. Initially, each subject was administered the Edward's Personal Preference Schedule, a 20-item self-disclosure questionnaire, and an 80-item adjective check list. The test instruments were given in order to determine each couple's level of need satisfaction. Each couple was then instructed to participate in a "test" of two-person coordination, which actually was the experimenter's way of setting up a situation in order to provide a chance to observe the couples' interaction skills. The couples' interaction skills were rated by a panel of judges, though no interrater reliability coefficient was reported, and their interaction scores were com-

pared with their need satisfaction scores. The experimenters found that achievement on the two-person coordination task was significantly higher for those couples who experienced high satisfaction in their marital needs, and there was more acceptance among these couples of the suggestions made to each other during the task. The experimenters concluded that their results supported the general hypotheses that the degree to which personality needs are satisfied in marriage is reflective in one's ability to interact effectively in marriage.

A survey study was conducted by Petersen (1969) to investigate the nature of husband-wife communications and its relationship to their problem-solving abilities. The analysis was based upon data obtained by questionnaires administered to 116 married couples who were students living in a university housing area. Only students under 30 years of age were surveyed. The instruments used were the Hobart-Klausner Communication Scale and a role-specific problem list developed by Brim. The problem list was designed to measure the couple's ability to cope with child-rearing, husband-wife relations, style of life, community involvement, and religion. The couples were divided into "high" and "low" communication families based on their questionnaire responses, and their scores from the problem solving checklist were correlated with the communication scores. The results showed that effective communications were significantly related

to the low incidence of 14 (41 percent) of the family problems listed on Brim's check-list. Specifically, the categories relating to husband-wife relations and child-rearing problems were most closely related to the couple's effectiveness in communicating. Peterson concluded that this study indicated that there is a relationship between husband-wife communication and problem-solving and problem occurrence in the family setting. It was hypothesized that this could also mean that husband-wife communications would have a strong influence on the satisfaction of the couple with their marriage.

In an attempt to identify an area which would be directly related to marital satisfaction, Luckey (1966) studied 26 couples to determine the relationship between disclosure and marital happiness. A questionnaire form developed by Luckey was used to gather the needed information and direct observations were made of the interaction styles of each couple. In analyzing the questionnaire scores and the direct observations, Luckey found two clusters of disclosure items associated with marital satisfaction: "shared activities" and "children and careers." The strongest positive association was between marital satisfaction and disclosure and was directly related to a couple's discussion of desired time spent together and the kinds of activity in which they wished to engage. The second cluster was associated with disclosure on approaches to child-rearing

and on future plans and personal goals. Luckey concluded that not only does disclosure per se in a marriage have a direct relationship to marital satisfaction, but disclosure in regards to a few key areas, such as the nature of the relationship and the methods of child-rearing, are vital for marital satisfaction to occur.

In one of the few studies of marital communications using a large number of subjects, Navran (1967) examined the relationship between marital communication and marital adjustment using 228 subjects. In order to delineate two groups of subjects, each individual was administered the Marital Relationship Inventory (MRI). To be considered happily married, the subject would have to score 110 or higher on the MRI. The mean score for the happily married group was 113.8. The unhappily married individuals were selected on the basis of consecutive visits for marriage counseling at the psychiatric clinic. Their mean MRI score was 75.0. The critical ratio of difference of 38.8 proved to be significant at the .001 level. An analysis of the MRI responses was made to determine the factors necessary for both good communication and marital adjustment. Navran found that happily married couples talked more to each other; conveyed the feeling that they understood what was being said to them; had a wide range of subjects available to them; preserved communication channels and kept them open; showed more sensitivity to each other's feelings; and made more use

of supplementary non-verbal techniques of communication. Navran concluded that it would be reasonable to expect that any damage to the couple's ability to communicate effectively would operate to damage their relationship to each other. The reduction of verbal and non-verbal communication could conceivably promote misunderstandings which would cause greater alienation and start a circular reaction which could eventually lead to marital difficulty.

In an attempt to understand the marital adjustment between male alcoholics and their wives, Gorad (1971) studied the communication process as a function of their marital system. Two groups were drawn for this study. The experimental group consisted of twenty alcoholic males and their wives, and the control group was comprised of twenty non-alcoholic males and their wives. The two groups were demographically matched for age, length of marriage and education. An interaction game was devised by Gorad in order to observe each couple's communication patterns which could be judged as either "Win," "Share," or "Secret Win." Each couple played the game for approximately thirty minutes which allowed fifty attempts at a winning situation. Each couple was rated by two judges who were observing their communication style during this process. Control group couples were found to use cooperation in order to win significantly more times than experimental couples. Communication between experimental couples during gameplaying tended to be more

rigid and lacked the spontaneity displayed by control couples. Gorad concluded that at least part of the marital breakdown in the experimental couples was due to the lack of ability to communicate properly with one another.

Mendelson (1970) examined the direct relationship between marital communication patterns and marital adjustment. Using the Locke Marital Adjustment Test, thirty couples were selected as participants in the experiment, fifteen of which were characterized by high marital adjustment and fifteen by low marital adjustment. Live marital communication between spouses was recorded on video-tape and communication patterns were measured by two judges, with interrater agreement being 85 percent. The Mann-Whitney UTest was used to determine if there was a significant difference between the two groups of subjects with respect to their communication patterns. Mendelson concluded that:

1. There was no significant difference between the rigidity of communication in the status relationship of high and low maritally adjusted couples.
2. There was a significant difference between the rigidity of communication in the emotional relationship of low and high maritally adjusted couples.
3. There was a significant difference between the congruency of the status and emotional aspects of couple relationships in low and high maritally adjusted groups.

4. High maritally adjusted groups were clearly more husband dominant or more wife dominant.
5. Couples in the high marital adjustment group had significantly smaller differences in their positive emotional exchanges. The low group had more instances in which one of the spouses was more negative.

The conclusion of Mendelson was that a couple would be less likely to achieve marital adjustment if the communication process was not mutually satisfying. Special attention must be paid to the ways that emotions were communicated, both verbally and non-verbally.

A survey was designed by Elliott (1974) to examine the relationships between measures of empathy, communication and marital adjustment. The sample included 105 couples representing a wide range of marital adjustment. Ministers had selected adjusted couples and marriage counselors had selected maladjusted couples. The three instruments utilized were: (1) the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (Short Form), (2) Bienvenu's Marital Communication Inventory, and (3) Buerkle's and Badgley's Yale Marital Interaction Inventory. The data obtained from these instruments showed that marital communication was significantly correlated with marital adjustment, both for individuals and couples. However, no significant correlation existed between empathy and marital communication or between empathy and marital adjust-

ment either for couples or individuals. Significant differences between maritally well-adjusted and maritally maladjusted couples existed for fifteen of the selected sixteen communication inventory items. Elliott concluded that the process or system of interaction was a key ingredient in marital adjustment. As Haley (1973) had observed, it did not seem that it would be enough to simply learn to express empathy, but it would be necessary for the couple to understand the systematic sequence in the marital communication style.

In recent years, attempts have been made to teach communication skills to married couples desiring improvement or enrichment in their marriage. Patterson (1975) examined the effects of communication training on the marital satisfaction of ten couples who were experiencing conflict to the extent that divorce had been considered. However, none of the couples at the time of the experiment were separated or divorced. Six, one and one-half hour training sessions were conducted over a six-week period. The training sessions were designed to teach the couples to use nonaversive vocabulary, negotiate behavior changes, and to engage in "love days" where one spouse would triple the positive reinforcement given to the other on a specific day. The instructors made special use of video-tapes for the purpose of feedback and evaluation. The findings which were the results from ratings of the video tape, showed a significant

improvement in facilitating behavior in eight of the couples. In addition, a two-year follow-up report showed that of the five couples located, four seemed to be happier, had resolved the earlier conflict, and were currently experiencing fewer conflicts. Patterson's conclusion was that communication skills can be effectively taught, and when learned appropriately, they can have a positive effect on marital satisfaction.

Dillon (1976) studied the effects of an educational program for marital communication by conducting an experiment to determine whether a four-week, twelve-hour course in marital communication skills would result in a significant increase in communication effectiveness and marital adjustment. The study also sought to determine if there were significant correlations between communication and self-esteem and communication and marital adjustment. A measurement derived from the Minnesota Couples Communication Program was used in determining the level of change. The test was given before the instruction and two weeks after the course was completed. The population sample consisted of 37 middle-class couples, and a control group of 21 couples was drawn for comparison. The results indicated that as a result of the communication training, the experimental group showed a significant increase in self-esteem, a significant correlation between communication and marital adjustment, and a significant correlation between self-esteem and marital

adjustment. The control group showed no similar correlations. In the Dillon study, it was also found that there was no significant positive correlation between self-esteem and communication in the experimental group. However, there was a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and communication in the control group. Dillon concluded that communication is an integral part of marriage and has significant effects on the couple's level of marriage satisfaction. Although the results did not fully substantiate it, there was some reason to believe that good communication skills can increase a person's self-esteem.

Latham (1979) designed a marital enrichment program to train married couples in basic communication skills using video-tape feedback with a program model entitled Marriage Skills Training Program (MSTP). Two treatment groups were formed with five couples in each group, and two control groups were formed with five couples in each group. Each couple was administered the Primary Communication Inventory, the Semantic Differential which measured communication, and the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (Short Form). The experimental groups participated in the MSTP which emphasized experiential learning of communication skills with the aid of a videotape recorder. The control group was advised that they would receive the testing procedure before entering the program, thus providing a comparison basis for the scores gathered from the experimental group. The results

of the study indicated that the experimental group demonstrated a significant difference from the control group on the Primary Communication Inventory, and there was also a significant difference in the level of marital adjustment. Latham concluded that effective communication skills can be taught, and that as a couple learns to increase communication effectiveness, marital adjustment can increase.

In an effort to clarify the assumption that self-disclosure in the marriage relationship is directly related to marital satisfaction, Gilbert (1976) conducted a literature search which lead her to bring together ideas that had been theoretically proposed and ideas that had been empirically validated. In her search she discovered that conflicting reports exist in regard to the influence self-disclosure, or communication, is likely to exert on a relationship. On one hand, some professionals were advocating that all aspects of life, regardless of topic or affect, should be openly communicated if the greatest amount of satisfaction was to be felt in the relationship. On the other hand, a conflicting body of information suggested that effective communication in marriage was rare, and while communication was helpful to a good marriage, it was not the only avenue by which marital adjustment could be achieved. Her conclusion, based on the findings of specific empirical reports in the literature, was that the relationship between self-disclosure and marital satisfaction

may be curvilinear. By combining the results and conclusions of others who had studied relationship adjustments, she surmized that there exists a point at which increased disclosure actually reduces satisfaction within the marriage. Furthermore, Gilbert stated that she believed that couples refrain from expressing their feelings because they are insecure about their marriage. Based on these deductions, she suggested that if a couple desires to go beyond a conventional marital relationship, they would be committing themselves to intimacy. Because intimacy requires a great capacity to risk, it would indicate that the couple would need to transcend curvilinear cautions. Presumably, the ability to achieve a totally intimate marriage depends on whether each marital partner has sufficient self-esteem to take high risks. The strength of Gilbert's study lies in the fact that it is an attempt to combine the conclusions of other studies which have focused on relationships. The weakness of her study is that it was not one in which her conclusions could be emperically validated.

Not all researchers will conclude that risky communication in marriage is good. Rutledge (1966) followed ten young newlywed couples in a case study method to determine the effects of the intensity of their love relationship on their communication. After observing and interviewing each couple systematically over a period of one year, Rutledge noted that as the intensity of love increases following mar-

riage, restraints tend to be relaxed, manners forgotten, truth emerges, and frankness overrides tact. As the total interaction intensifies and continues, it may become so upsetting that it becomes intolerable. In his study, he noted that this process began to take place in some of the young couples under observation. He concluded that a disclosure balance is necessary for a marriage to become mutually satisfying without being threatening or unpleasant. In his estimation, too much emphasis on communication could lead to a downfall in the stability of the marriage.

In summary, the literature seems to have a fairly broad range of evidence to substantiate the fact that communication plays a key role in the marriage relationship. However, research has still not confirmed what factors influence the couple's ability to learn communication skills appropriately. The Dillon (1976) study seemed to indicate a connection between communication skills and self-esteem, but there was uncertainty regarding the nature or the degree of their influence upon one another.

Marital Adjustment and Self-Esteem

As the field of marriage counseling has come into prominence, psychological assumptions about the self-concept and self-esteem have been included in the marital systems school of thought. Research relating self-esteem to marital adjustment is beginning to evaluate the assumption that the

marital structure is influenced by the partner's feelings toward themselves.

An early study was conducted by Luckey (1964) to test the premise that interpersonal relationships depend in large part on what an individual thinks he is and what he thinks the other person is. She made the underlying assumption that perception of self and of others is the basis on which understanding and communication are largely dependent. A sample of 80 couples representing a fairly wide cross section of age and socioeconomic status, were given Locke's Marital Adjustment Scale and the Interpersonal Check List. The Interpersonal Check List was divided into eight distinct categories and the scores in each category were correlated with the Marital Adjustment Scale score. The results showed the following:

- (1) Persons in satisfactory marriages tended to see both themselves and their spouses as being able to make requests of others without seeming domineering, while persons in unsatisfactory marriages saw themselves and their partners as being forceful when interacting with others.
- (2) Persons in unsatisfactory marriages considered themselves to be shrewd in their relationships because they felt it was necessary.
- (3) Persons in satisfactory marriages reported themselves to be stern but just, while those in un-

satisfactory marriages were impatient and aggressive.

- (4) Persons in unsatisfactory marriages did not trust themselves or others.
- (5) Persons in satisfactory marriages showed modesty, but not self-effacing modesty.
- (6) People who were outgoing and friendly were likely to see their marriages as happy.
- (7) Persons who were in unsatisfactory marriages considered themselves to be somewhat selfish, while those in satisfactory marriages were considerate and helpful toward their spouse.

Luckey concluded that the findings suggested that indeed many personality characteristics that were often assumed to be associated with marital satisfaction were perceived by subjects who scored high on the Marital Adjustment Scale as being part of their selves as well as a part of their spouses. It was concluded that when married couples have reasonable perceptions of themselves and their spouses, they would have a higher likelihood of achieving marital satisfaction. Lack of marriage satisfaction, then, would be associated with feelings of coldness and hostility that an individual might have. Although it was not solidly verified in the study, Luckey theorized that perception of self forms the basis of marital communication, and this important factor should engage the counselor's efforts rather than problem situations in marriage.

Goodman (1964) designed a survey to determine how one's self-acceptance and "interpersonal" needs influenced one's mate selection. Two hundred and ten couples who had been married for twelve months were randomly selected from a housing facility at a large state university. Of these couples, 102 chose to participate. The Index of Adjustment and Values was administered to the subjects to provide a measurement of self-acceptance, and the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule was used to provide a measurement of interpersonal needs. In addition, a background information sheet was administered to provide pertinent information about the subjects. An analysis of the data showed that those mates who had high self-acceptance marriages were complimentary in their need structures. Goodman concluded that the individual who was low in self-acceptance was attracted to persons from whom he presumably sought sources for completion of self. That is, the low self-acceptance person's need gratification seemed to be heavily dependent upon external sources. On the other hand, individuals with high self-acceptance were attracted to persons with similar needs because there was a similar outlook on life and desire to learn in appropriate ways. Consequently, Goodman considered self-acceptance to be an important indicator of marital adjustment.

Kotlar (1965) conducted a study to: (1) compare a group of adjusted and unadjusted middle-class married couples

with respect to their perception of themselves as husbands or wives, as well as their perceptions of their spouses, and (2) to compare the two groups in terms of discrepancies between perception of self and perception by spouse. The results of the self-perceptions and other-perceptions were then compared to their marital adjustment test scores. The sample consisted of 100 middle-class, urban couples. Fifty well-adjusted couples were selected from eighty-eight couples who had scored high on the Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale. Fifty unadjusted couples were chosen by marriage counselors and were characterized by low scores on the Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale. The two groups were matched in terms of social class, education, age, and number of years married. The instrument used for the self and mate role perceptions was the Interpersonal Check List. The results showed that positive self-perceptions of both the husbands and the wives were significantly higher in the adjusted group than those of the unadjusted group. The wives in the adjusted group perceived their husbands as being significantly higher in the dominance dimension than did the wives in the unadjusted group. Likewise, the husbands in the adjusted group perceived their wives as being higher in the dominance dimension than did husbands in the unadjusted group. The husbands in the unadjusted group perceived their wives as being significantly less affectionate than did the adjusted husbands. The findings also showed a positive congruence

between husband-wife perceptions and good interpersonal relations. Kotlar concluded that not only was it important for couples to perceive themselves positively, but apparently, an "expressive" factor was necessary among well-adjusted couples in order to allow for congruence in husband-wife perceptions. In addition, similarity among spouses in role conceptualizations was considered to be a key differentiation between adjusted and unadjusted couples.

Hawkins (1966) conducted a study to determine how significantly the factor of social desirability affected the measurement of marital adjustment. His assumption was that those individuals who had a strong need to find social approval would have lower levels of marital adjustment due to the strains that this need would put on the marriage. A sample of 48 couples was chosen, 19 through a psychiatric clinic and 29 from a suburban neighborhood. The husbands' ages ranged from 23 to 45 and wife's ages ranged from 20 to 45. Scores on the Locke Short Marital Adjustment Test were correlated with scores on the Marlow-Crown Social Desirability Scale for each spouse in the sample. The results showed that the correlation between social desirability and marital adjustment were significant but small. Hawkins concluded that one's feelings toward oneself was not the sole determinant of the variance in marital satisfaction scores. Consequently, he asserted that one's feeling of social desirability was only one of several factors which influenced

marital adjustment, and to understand marital adjustment more comprehensively, more efforts were needed to isolate further factors.

Murstein (1967) designed a survey to investigate whether an individual's mental health has any significant influence on a young couple's marital choice or courtship progress. Ninety-nine couples who were either engaged or going steady with someone they were considering marrying volunteered to participate in a study on marital choice conducted simultaneously at several northeastern colleges. Each subject was administered the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, which was chosen as a measurement of one's mental health and stability. Six months later each person who had taken the personality inventory was asked, "Is the relationship between you and your partner different from what it was last autumn when you filled out the questionnaire?" The possible choices were: "Yes, we are married," or "We are nearer to being married;" "No, it is about the same;" or "Yes, we are further from being married." The results showed that (a) most couples showed a high correlation in mental health status, (b) couples similar in mental health progressed further in courtship than dissimilar couples, and (c) the mental health of the man, but not the woman was related to courtship progress. Murstein concluded that it is important for individuals considering marriage to find partners who are of like mind in personality characteristics.

Similarity in personal stability seemed to be one of the single most important factors in determining a suitable match for marriage.

A later study by Murstein (1971) was designed more specifically to determine how the self-esteem factor influenced an individual's mate selection. He based this study on the assumption that an individual that is highly satisfied with himself, as determined by a high self-ideal-self-correlation, will marry someone whom he perceives as highly similar to himself. If, on the other hand, he is dissatisfied with himself (low self-ideal-self-correlation), Murstein hypothesized that the individual would want to marry someone whom he perceives as close to his "ideal spouse" and ideal self. The sample consisted of 99 couples who were engaged to be married and who attended one of three Connecticut Universities. The Edwards Personal Preference Schedule was administered to each subject four times from four different points of view: self, ideal self, fiance', and ideal spouse. Analysis of the data confirmed that couples showed significantly high correlations with respect to their respective reports of self-ideal-self-correlations. The data also showed that the fiance's self-ideal self-correlation was significant for those individuals who scored high in self-satisfaction. Murstein concluded that the findings strongly support the assumption that the psychological factor of self-esteem figures greatly into an indivi-

dual's mate selection. The importance of such a finding was considered to be that it would imply that a person with positive self-esteem would choose as a mate a person who also has a high sense of self-esteem, which theoretically would lead to a more satisfactory marital relationship. Likewise, a person with low self-esteem would choose another person with low self-esteem which would more easily lead to marital dissatisfaction. The individual's level of self-acceptance would presumably affect the entire marital adjustment process.

Murstein and Beck (1972) conducted a study designed to test the hypothesis that self-acceptance leads to marital adjustment because there would be less strain in relating to another person when the individual felt adequately about himself. The researchers enlisted 60 volunteer couples, all of whom had been married for more than one year, and all having at least a high school education. Each subject was administered the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale, the Edmond's Marital Conventionalization Scale, and the Norman's Bipolar Adjective List. Correlations among the test scores showed a significant positive correlation between self-perception and marital adjustment, and they showed that a couple need not be highly compatible in their personal interests to have a well-adjusted marriage. Murstein and Beck concluded that intraperceptions were more important than interperceptions. That is, as marriage partners felt

more comfortable about themselves in their role as husband or wife, they would be more likely to demand less from their spouse, causing a more pleasant atmosphere to exist in the home.

Matteson (1974) conducted a survey to determine the relationship between adolescents' self-esteem and their perception of appropriate communication among their parents. One hundred and eleven subjects, 14 and 15 years of age, were administered the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, and two questionnaires, modified from Bienvenu's Adolescent Communication Inventory, eliciting adolescents perceptions of their communication with both parents. The 10 males and 10 females with the highest self-esteem scores, and the 10 males and 10 females with the lowest scores were identified to form two groups. Parents of these students completed questionnaires, developed by Matteson, concerning parent-adolescent communication and marital communication and adjustment. Data from the questionnaires was gathered and analyzed producing the following results:

- (1) Adolescents with low self-esteem viewed communication with their parents as less facilitative than did adolescents with high self-esteem.
- (2) Parents of adolescents with low self-esteem perceived their communication with their spouses as less facilitative, and rated their marriages as less satisfying, than did parents in the high self-esteem group.

- (3) There was a lack of congruence between the perception of adolescents with low self-esteem and those of their parents.

Matteson concluded that facilitative marital communication and adjustment has a direct influence on the level of "familial" self-esteem. She determined that it was imperative to first have established an appropriate pattern of communication among married couples before their children can develop high levels of self-esteem. In her view dysfunctional marital communication affects all relations in the family to some degree, and it affects the feelings of self-esteem at all levels of the family.

Kawash and Scherf (1975) stated that there is probably no personality trait more significant in the context of total psychological functioning than self-esteem. Because of scarcity of research reporting on the relationship between self-esteem, locus of control, approval motivation, and marriage, they conducted a study to determine the relationship of these factors with each other. Questionnaires were distributed by mail to 300 parents of college students, and 170 filled them out and returned them. Each subject completed the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, the Marlowe-Crown Social Desirability Scale, and Rotter's I-E Scale. In explaining the results of the analysis of the data, it was determined that the self-esteem score described the individual's feeling of worth and value; locus of control described

the individual's philosophy of leadership and decisiveness in the marriage; and approval motivation described whether a person behaved for the approval from others or approval from self. The test scores showed, contrary to expectations, that a higher need for approval manifested higher self-esteem scores. They also showed that the locus of control tended to be external in the marriages surveyed, even the ones exhibiting high levels of self-esteem. That is, the individuals reported that it was typical for spouses to focus on one another's behaviors without necessarily considering their feelings. The results of this study were unexpected, causing Kawash and Scherf to draw some conclusions based on what they perceived to be the mind-set of the individuals responding. Because there was a high report of self-esteem coupled with an equally high report for the need for other-approval, they tentatively concluded that it would be common for married couples to have a "defensive self-esteem" allowing them to have sufficient coping mechanisms in their marriages, but not necessarily having a totally satisfying marital experience. The weakness of this study was that there was no measurement of marital adjustment, which rendered their conclusions as tentative at best.

Nevill and Damico (1975) conducted a survey in an effort to understand the impact of the marital relationship on a woman's self-perception. Five-hundred and eighteen women,

representing a fairly wide range of marital experience, were randomly selected from a university setting to respond to a self-perception questionnaire developed by the researchers. The women included students, housewives who were married to students and instructors, faculty members and custodial workers. The questionnaire responses of this group were compared to the responses of 119 women who were not married. The questionnaire included 252 problem statements to which the subjects would respond based on their level of satisfaction with themselves in dealing with the problems. The questionnaire also included specific questions designed to give the researchers a measurement of the respondent's self-concept. The results showed that the nature of intrapersonal conflict is of greatest stress when the woman's self-concept is low, but it is not necessarily affected by one's marital status. The survey also showed that married women experienced significantly more conflict than unmarried women which meant that there was greater interpersonal stress in the married woman's life. Nevill and Damico concluded that the introduction of marriage can be a stressful situation for women which means that before a woman is able to experience satisfaction in marriage, her self-concept must be sufficiently strong to withstand the interpersonal pressure.

Ferguson and Allen (1978) investigated the congruence between parental self-perception, marital satisfaction, and child adjustment. The purpose of their study was to test

the assumption that children who exhibit deviant social behavior come from families characterized by marital dissatisfaction and discrepant parental attitudes. Questionnaires were sent to parents of 204 children of kindergarten, first-, and second-grade. Parents of 95 children (51 males and 44 females) completed the questionnaires and returned them. The questionnaires used were the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale, the Interpersonal Checklist, and the Children's Behavior Checklist. Correlation of the test scores showed that the marital adjustment scores were skewed negatively with the child's adjustment scores. Parental agreement in viewing their child was closely associated with parental agreement in their perceptions of each other. And spouses who perceived themselves similarly to the way their spouses perceived them had a significantly higher likelihood of having a child who was not perceived as a behavior problem. The authors concluded that when parents see their child as possessing the characteristics of well-adjusted children, they tend to have more satisfaction in their marriage and a more accurate perception of themselves. Consequently, as individuals are more positively adjusted, their family life will be more satisfactory.

The results found in the literature demonstrate that self-esteem and intrapersonal adjustment are positively related to marital and familial adjustment. This has been demonstrated by correlating marital adjustment with measure-

ments of self-concept, self-acceptance, mental stability, and self-perception. However, there remains a void in the literature as to the specific relationships among marital adjustment, self-esteem and communication.

Chapter Summary

Marital adjustment has been a topic of human concern for many years, but it has only been in the past two decades that much research has been conducted to study the factors which influence marital adjustment. The majority of investigations of marital adjustment have been correlational in nature and have generally focused either on communication or on self-esteem and other related concepts. There seems to be a sufficient body of research that demonstrates that communication is a significant factor in marital adjustment, and there seems to be a sufficient body of research that demonstrates that self-esteem is a significant factor in marital adjustment.

Based on the research, several theorists have concluded that self-esteem and communication are consistently related to marital adjustment (Satir, 1967; Haley, 1976; Skynner, 1976; Ables and Brandsma, 1977). However, there is no substantial research that specifically has sought to determine whether the two factors of communication and self-esteem are indeed consistent in their relationship with marital adjustment. At best, a few studies have implied in their

conclusions that there must be a relationship among these two factors, but their conclusions are not always well-founded. The need for such research has been expressed (Kotler, 1965; Gilbert, 1976), but thus far, there has been no single study that has implicitly sought to meet this need.

CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ables, Billie S. and J. M. Brandsma, Therapy for Couples, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1977.
- Ard, Ben N., "Communication in Marriage: Batacas or Civility?" in the Handbook of Marriage Counseling, Ben N. and C. C. Ard (Eds.), Palo Alto, Cal.: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1976, 361-366.
- Bateson, Gregory, Don Jackson, Jay Haley, John Weakland, "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia," Behavioral Science, 1 (October, 1956), 251-264.
- Beck, Dorothy F., "Research Findings on the Outcomes of Marital Counseling" Social Casework, 56 (March, 1975), 153,158.
- Bowen, Murray, "Family Therapy and Family Group Therapy," in Treating Relationships, David H. L. Olson (Ed.), Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., 1976, 219-274.
- Cheek, Francis E. and Richard Anthony, "Personal Pronoun Usage in Families of Schizophrenia and Social Space Utilization," Family Process, 9 (December 1970), 431-448.
- Dillon, Joseph D., "Marital Communication and Its Relation to Self-Esteem," unpublished doctoral dissertation, United States International University, San Diego, California, 1976.
- Elliott, M. W., "A Study of Communication and Empathy in Marital Adjustment," unpublished master's dissertation, Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas, 1974.
- Ferguson, Lucy R., and D. R. Allen, "Congruence of Parental Perception, Marital Satisfaction, and Child Adjustment," Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 46 (April, 1978), 345-346.
- Friedman, Jack C., and Alfred S. Friedman, "Characteristics of Schizogenic Families During a Joint Story-Telling Task," Family Process, 9 (September, 1970), 333-354.

- Gilbert, Shirley, "Self-Disclosure, Intimacy, and Communication in Families," The Family Coordinator, 25 (July, 1976), 221-231.
- Goodman, Marvin, "Expressed Self-Acceptance and Interpersonal Needs: A Basis for Mate Selection," Journal of Counseling Psychology, 11 (1964), 129-135.
- Gorad, S. L., "Communication Styles and Interactions of Alcoholics and Their Wives," Family Process, 10 (December, 1971), 475-490.
- Haley, Jay, Problem Solving Therapy, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1978.
- Haley, Jay and E. H. Mudd, "Recurring Problems in Marriage Counseling," The Journal of Marriage and Family Living, 21 (1971), 121-125.
- Katz, Irwin, J. Goldston, M. Cohen, and S. Stucker, "Need Satisfaction, Perception, and Cooperative Interactions in Married Couples," Marriage and Family Living, 25 (May, 1963), 209-213.
- Katz, M., "Agreement on Connotative Meaning in Marriage," The Family Process, 4 (March, 1955), 73-74.
- Kawash, George F., and G. W. Scherf, "Self-Esteem, Locus of Control, and Approval Motivation in Married Couples," Journal of Clinical Psychology, 31 (October, 1975), 715-720.
- Knox, D., Marriage Happiness, Champaign, Ill.: Research Press, 1971.
- Kotlar, Sally L., "Middle Class Marital Role Perceptions and Marital Adjustment," Sociology and Social Research, 49 (April, 1965), 283-293.
- Landis, J. T., "Adjustments after Marriage," The Journal of Marriage and Family Living, 9 (May, 1947), 33-34.
- Latham, Noreen V., "The Effect of Marital Adjustment of Teaching Basic Marital Communication in a Group Using Videotape Feedback," unpublished doctoral dissertation, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1979.
- Lederer, W. J. and D. D. Jackson, The Mirages of Marriage, New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1968.

- Lewis, Jerry M., W. R. Beavers, J. T. Gossett, and V. A. Phillips, No Single Thread: Psychological Health in Families, New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1976.
- Locke, H., Predicting Adjustment in Marriage, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1951.
- Luckey, Eleanore B., "Marital Satisfaction of Self and Spouse, Journal of Counseling Psychology, 11 (Summer, 1964), 129-145.
- Matteson, Roberta, "Adolescent Self-Esteem, Family Communication, and Marital Satisfaction," Journal of Psychology, 86 (1974), 35-47.
- Meissner, W. W., "Sibling Relations in a Schizophrenic Family," Family Process, 9 (March, 1970), 1-25.
- Mendelson, L. A., "Communication Patterns in High and Low Marital Adjustment," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, 1970.
- Murstein, Bernard, "The Relationship of Mental Health to Marital Choice and Courtship Progress," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 29 (August, 1967), 447-451.
- Murstein, Bernard I., and Gary D. Beck, "Person Perception and Marriage Adjustment," Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 39 (December, 1972), 396-403.
- Navran, Leslie, "Communication and Adjustment in Marriage," The Family Process, 6 (September, 1967), 173-184.
- Nevill, Dorothy and S. Damico, "Role Conflict in Women as a Function of Marital Status," Human Relations, 28 (July, 1975), 487-498.
- Ort, R., "A Study of Role Conflicts as Related to Happiness in Marriage," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 45 (1950), 692-699.
- Patterson, G. R., H. Hops, and R. L. Weiss, "Interpersonal Skills for Training Couples in Early Stages of Conflict," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 37 (May, 1975), 295-303.
- Peterson, David M., "Husband-Wife Communication and Family Problems," Sociology and Social Research, 53 (April, 1969), 375-384.
- Rutledge, A. L., Premarital Counseling, Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishers, 1966.

- Satir, Virginia, Conjoint Family Therapy, Palo Alto, Cal.: Science and Behavior Books, Inc. 1967.
- Skygger, A. C. Rohn, Systems of Family and Marital Psychotherapy, New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1976.
- Walzlowich, Paul, Janet Beavin, Linda Sikorski, and Betty Mecia, "Protection and Scapegoating in Pathological Families," Family Process, 9 (March, 1970), 27-40.
- Weakland, John, "Communication Theory and Clinical Change," in Family Therapy, Philip J. Guerin (Ed.) New York: Gardner Press, Inc., 1976, 111-128.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study was designed to determine the relationships among self-esteem, marital communication, and marital adjustment by conducting a survey of married individuals representing a cross section of marital experiences. A review of the literature yielded sufficient data to support the conclusions that marital communication has a significant effect on marital adjustment. In addition self-esteem has been shown to have a significant effect on marital adjustment. However, there has been no singular study that has sought to determine the relationships among the three factors of marital communication, self-esteem, and marital adjustment. Therefore, this study was implemented in order to measure the relationships among the factors of marital communication, self-esteem, and marital adjustment in order to determine whether they are consistent with one another in typical marriages. This chapter presents the design of the study.

Organization of the Study

In organizing the study, the population to be studied was determined, and three testing instruments were chosen which would secure valid measurements of self-esteem, marital communication and marital adjustment. The survey was

then organized in the following manner:

- (1) Selectors of subjects were chosen.
- (2) Subjects were screened and selected by the selectors.
- (3) The testing materials were hand-given to the subjects and self-administered.
- (4) The subjects mailed the test materials to the author in a pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope.
- (5) The tests were scored.
- (6) Statistical analysis of the data was conducted.

Population

Because the intent of this study was to focus on the typical marriage, an extensive effort was made to select the subjects from a population that represented a wide range of marital experience. The population consisted of caucasian individuals who would be considered as lower-middle class, middle-class, and upper middle-class socio-economically. Their educational range was from high school through graduate school.

The population consisted of individuals who lived in a large metropolitan area, had been married for at least one year, had not experienced a marital separation within the past year of their marriage, and had not experienced a recent personal trauma that would hinder them in answering questions about their marriage.

Instruments Selected for the Study

The three standardized instruments used in the study were the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test, Bienvenu's Marital Communication Inventory, and Hoffmeister's Self-Esteem Questionnaire. Since the instruments would be voluntarily completed by the subjects in their home, a major consideration was to select instruments that would be self-administered, brief, and precise.

Marital Adjustment Test

As indicated in the review of the literature in Chapter II, marital adjustment seems to be related to both marital communication and to self-esteem. Since one of the independent variables in this study was marital adjustment, selection of an instrument which would measure an individual's overall adjustment in marriage was in keeping of the purposes of this study.

The Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (Short Form) (MAT) was selected as a measurement of overall marital adjustment. The MAT (Short Form) was developed by condensing an earlier marital adjustment test developed by Locke (Kimmel, 1974). In developing this test, Locke and Wallace identified 15 highly discriminatory items that measured marital adjustment on a broad basis ranging from the level of satisfaction with one's marital choice to the amount of agreement on such topics as family finances, sexual relations, and

dealing with in-laws. The fifteen discriminatory items were selected because they were assumed to be representative of separate and distinct areas in marital functioning. The test was standardized with 236 individuals, 118 husbands and 118 wives, who represented a cross-section of marriages in the lower middle-class to upper middle-class socio-economic range. The reliability coefficient of the test, computed by the split-half technique and corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula, was .90. To determine the validity of the test, the mean adjustment score for a sample of 48 marriages in known difficulty was matched for age and sex with 48 marriages judged to be exceptionally well-adjusted in marriage by friends who knew them well. The mean adjusted score for the group with known difficulty was 71.7, whereas the mean adjusted score for the well-adjusted group was 135.9. This difference in scores was considered to be very significant for the critical ratio had been computed to be 17.5. Only 17 percent of the maladjusted group achieved scores of 100 or more, whereas 96 percent of the well-adjusted group achieved scores of 100 or more, indicating that the MAT measures what it purports to measure (Kimmel, 1974). Strauss (1969) has stated that the validity and reliability of the MAT is well established and has long been considered by researchers and practitioners in marriage counseling to be an accurate measure of marital adjustment. This test has been used in research when a measure of marital adjustment

was desired (McCahan, 1973; Kimmel, 1974; Latham, 1979). Scoring procedures can be found in the Appendix.

Marital Communication Inventory

Communication with one's spouse is considered an important and basic part of the marital system. As indicated in the review of the literature in Chapter II, faulty communication has been found to be one of the major reasons why marriages do not operate at their optimal level. Ard (1969) has stated that communication problems frequently turn out to be disagreements about the nature of the relationship involved. Presumably, then, as communication difficulties worsen within a marriage, the couple's marital adjustment would worsen. And as the communication process improves, marital adjustment would improve.

In order to evaluate the quality of the subjects' marital communication, the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI) was selected. This inventory has been used by marital systems researchers (Bienvenu, 1970; Elliott, 1974; Nevran, 1967) and is also used by marriage counselors (Bienvenu, 1969). The MCI is a 46 item inventory which can be administered to a single subject, a couple, or to a group of subjects. It is a self-administered form requiring the subjects to respond by simply checking one of four possible answers to each question. The four responses to each question, which are "Usually," "Sometimes," "Seldom," and "Never," are scored

from zero to three with a favorable response (the one indicative of good communication) given the higher score (see Appendix). In some instances the "Usually" response may be favorable, in others, unfavorable. This depends on the wording of each item. The 46 questions of the MCI were written after a thorough review of the literature on marital communication and a study of existing instruments dealing with interactions. Those aspects of marital communications that were considered significant in the literature review were included in the selection of items. To test the validity of the instrument, Bienvenu selected two groups of 23 couples each. Each person in the first group was receiving marital counseling through a marriage counseling agency. The second group was matched with the first group in terms of age, length of marriage, and education, but were without significant marital communication problems. Using the Mann-Whitney U-Test, a significant difference at the .01 level was found between the test scores of the two groups in favor of the group with no apparent communication problems, thus demonstrating that the inventory was able to determine whether good communication is evident in a marriage. For cross-validation purposes, the scores from the group with no apparent communication problems were compared with scores earned by a comparable group of 60 subjects. The mean score of the first group was 105.78 while the mean score of the second group was 105.68, indicating the consistency of the test. Furthermore the reliability of the instrument

was computed with 60 respondents on the odd-numbered and even-numbered items. Using the Spearman-Brown formula, a split-half correlations coefficient of .93 was revealed (Bienvenu, 1970).

Self-Esteem Questionnaire

By definition, self-esteem is based on an individual's feelings of worth and opinions of himself (Satir, 1967). As indicated in the review of the literature in Chapter II, self-esteem has been shown to be related to marital adjustment. If an individual has a low sense of self-esteem, it presumably would put a strain on the marriage relationship because of the demands made on the marriage partner. Conversely, if one's sense of self-esteem was high, the marriage theoretically would have a much higher likelihood of success due to the scarcity of intrapersonal tensions.

Hoffmeister's Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SEQ) was selected as a measurement of the individual's level of self-esteem. The instrument is made up of 21 questions that provide information regarding how persons feel about various aspects of themselves such as their capabilities, worth and acceptance by others. The 21 questions were selected from an original pool of 55 questions which had been administered to 1460 subjects ranging in age from junior high school students through adulthood, the majority being adults. Once the 1460 subjects had answered the original 55 questions, the sample

of data was cluster analyzed using Tryon's procedures. Tryon's procedures utilized a statistical means to determine the consistency and homogeneity of the items under examination. The results yielded a rotated oblique factor coefficient for all selected items on their respective cluster ranging from .51 to .70. In further statistical analysis, the Scott's Homogeneity Ratio ranged from .25 to .50, and Cronbach's coefficient alpha ranged from .80 to .96. In essence, these statistics indicate that the SEQ has a relatively high degree of internal consistency, allowing for a succinct yet precise measurement of self-esteem. Of the original 55 questions evaluated, the 21 items with the highest measures of internal consistency were chosen as test items. In a correlation between the SEQ and Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Questionnaire, a coefficient of .81 was obtained, demonstrating that it was consistent with another well-established measurement of self-esteem. To determine the reliability of the SEQ, 250 subjects were tested on two different occasions approximately two weeks apart. The Pearson correlation between the test scores was .70, and 70 percent of the students scored within the same range (Hoffmeister, 1976). Buros (1974) has stated that the SEQ is a respected test that is capable of giving a measurement of an individual's overall self-esteem in a succinct manner. The SEQ has previously been used in research dealing with family related matters (Hoffmeister, 1976).

Collection and Presentation of Data

Data for this study were collected and plans were executed according to the following sequence: (1) Selectors of subjects were strategically chosen from a cross-section of the population. (2) Subjects who met the criteria for the study were identified and enlisted by the selectors. (3) The testing materials were hand-given to the subjects and self-administered. (4) The subjects mailed the test procedures to the investigator in a pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope. (5) The Marital Communication Inventory and the Marital Adjustment Test were hand-scored by the investigator, and the Self-Esteem Questionnaire was computer scored. (6) The data were keypunched on IBM cards and processed in the North Texas State University Computer Center.

Selection of Selectors

The first step in the process of selecting the subjects was to obtain the cooperation of six individuals who represented a cross section of white, middle-class communities in a large metropolitan area to serve as selectors of subjects. The selectors were chosen on the basis of two criteria: (1) the ability to contact a wide range of individuals representing a cross-section of the population, and (2) the willingness to assist the investigator in locating approximately fifty diversified individuals in the population who would be willing to participate in a survey about

the typical marriage. The selectors included a minister, a bank officer, a school counselor, an office secretary, a housewife, and the author.

Selection of the Subjects

Each of the six selectors were given fifty pre-addressed pre-stamped envelopes containing the testing instruments, a general information sheet, and a cover letter explaining the nature of the study (see Appendix A). They were instructed to contact individuals of varying ages, educational level, and socioeconomic status who they thought would be willing to complete the survey material as a part of a research project about typical marriages. It was emphasized that they were to contact a wide range of married persons and to avoid persons whom they knew to have recently experienced a recent marriage separation or a recent personal trauma such as a death in the immediate family. The selectors were instructed to choose married individuals, meaning that it was not necessary to choose both partners of a marriage as subjects. Each subject sought by the selector must have been married for at least one year to their current spouse without having had a separation with their spouse in the previous year. The selectors were instructed to verbally ask the potential subject the following questions:

1. Have you been married to your present spouse for at least one year?

2. Have you and your spouse experienced a marital separation within the past year?
3. Have you experienced any recent personal trauma that would hinder your ability to objectively respond to questionnaires regarding your marriage?
4. Would you be willing to anonymously complete a set of questionnaires as a part of a research study about typical marriages?

Once the selector received satisfactory replies to each of the questions, the individual was considered a subject and the selector proceeded with the presentation of the data. Three hundred subjects were selected in this manner.

Collection of Data

After selection of the subjects, the selector would assure the subject of the confidential nature of the questionnaire responses, explaining that the information would be scored and processed anonymously and pooled into a large group of information. A numbered envelope containing the survey material was then hand-given to the subject. No other method of delivery of the envelope was deemed permissible. The subject was assigned the number of the test envelope, giving name, address, and telephone number. This personal information was gathered only for the possible need of a follow-up contact if it was evident after ten days that the return rate of the envelopes was insufficient to meet the requirements.

Each subject was then instructed by his selector to complete the test instruments and the general information sheet in a private place where there would be no interruptions. Each of the instruments was self-administering and it was estimated that it would take less than thirty minutes to respond to all of the items. The subjects were instructed to place the completed forms back into the envelope, which was pre-addressed and pre-stamped, and to place the envelope into the mailbox within three days of receiving the material. It had previously been determined that if after ten days the rate of mail response was insufficient, a follow-up letter would be sent to each subject who had failed to return their envelope. However, the rate of response was of such sufficiency that a follow-up letter became unnecessary.

Subjects

Of the three hundred subjects originally selected, data were received from 227. Demographic data on the final subjects showed the following:

- (1) There were 111 males and 116 females.
- (2) The average length of marriage was approximately 16 years with the range being one to 51 years.
- (3) The average age of the respondent was approximately 40 years, with the range being 20 to 80.

- (4) The average number of children in the marriages surveyed was 1.69, with the range being zero to six.
- (5) The average age of the oldest child in the marriages surveyed was 12.72, with the range being zero to 51.
- (6) The average age of the youngest child in the marriages surveyed was 9.42, with the range being zero to 41.
- (7) Forty-eight of the respondents had a high school education or less; 50 had received some college education; 101 had received college degrees; 28 had received or were working toward graduate degrees.
- (8) One respondent was in the combined family income range below \$10,000; 87 were in the income range of \$10,000-20,000; 80 were in the income range of \$20,000-30,000; 59 were in the income range of over \$30,000.
- (9) One hundred of the marriages represented had working wives, 127 had non-working wives, (i.e. Income Producing Employment).
- (10) The Average length of time that the respondents lived at their present address was 6.56 years, with the range being one to 32 years.
- (11) Of the respondents, 48 had been previously married, 178 had not been previously married.

Scoring Procedures and Treatment of Data

The MCI and the MAT were handscored by the investigator and the SEQ was computer scored. Each of the questionnaires scores were matched with the demographic data obtained from the individuals' general information sheet, and were then keypunched and processed on IBM cards in the North Texas State University Computer Center.

The Pearson product-moment correlation was computed between the scores derived on each of the tests. Scores from the SEQ were correlated with MAT scores, then with the MCI scores. Scores from the MCI were correlated with the MAT scores. In addition, several demographic variables were isolated to determine the correlations among the test scores for various subgroups of the population. The following demographic variables were isolated and correlated with the test scores:

1. Sex of the respondent.
2. Number of years married.
3. Age of the respondent.
4. Number of children.
5. Age of the youngest child.
6. Age of the oldest child.
7. Wife's employment status.
8. Educational level of the respondent.
9. Socioeconomic level of the respondent.
10. Number of years at the current address.
11. Whether the respondent had previously been married.

CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ard, Ben N., "Communication Theory in Marriage Counseling," in Handbook of Marriage Counseling, Ben N. Ard and C. C. Ard (Eds.) Palo Alto, Cal.: Science and Behavior Books Inc., 1969, 218-224.
- Bienvenu, Millard J., A Counselor's Guide to Accompany A Marital Communication Inventory, Durham, N.C.: Family Life Publications, 1969.
- Bienvenu, Milard J., "Measurement of Marital Communication," The Family Coordinator, 19, 1970, 26-31.
- Buros, O. K., Tests in Print, Volume II, Highland Park, N.J.: The Gryphon Press, 1974.
- Elliott, M. W., "Communication and Empathy in Marital Adjustment," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Texas Women's University, Denton, Texas, 1974.
- Hoffmeister, James K., Some Information Regarding the Characteristics of the Two Measures Derived from the Self-Esteem Questionnaire, Boulder, Colorado: Test Analysis and Development Corporation, 1976.
- Kimmel, Douglas, "Factors of Marital Adjustment in the Locke Marital Adjustment Test," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 36, 1974, 57-63.
- Latham, Noreen V., "The Effect of Marital Adjustment of Teaching Basic Marital Communication in a Group Using Videotape Feedback" unpublished doctoral dissertation, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1979.
- McCahan, George R., "The Relationship Between Self-Concept and Marital Satisfaction," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, New York, New York, 1973.
- Navran, Leslie, "Communication and Adjustment in Marriage," The Family Process, VI, September, 1976, 173-184.
- Rubin, R. H., "Family Structure and Peer Group Affiliation as Related to Attitudes about Male-Female Relations Among Black Youth," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University.

Satir, Virginia, Conjoint Family Therapy, Palo Alto, Cal.:
Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1967.

Strauss, Murray, Family Measurement Techniques: Abstracts
of Published Instruments, 1935-1965, Minneapolis:
University of Minnesota Press, 1969.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The procedures followed in gathering the data by which the hypotheses could be tested were described in Chapter III. This chapter presents the data obtained from a statistical treatment of the raw data and an analysis of the results in terms of the hypotheses presented in Chapter I. In order to facilitate the continuity of the study, the problem and general hypotheses are stated as a way of introducing the presentation of the obtained results.

The Problem and General Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to determine the association of the factors of self-esteem and marital communication as they exist in marriage relationships. The general hypothesis was that individuals who have high levels of marital adjustment would have high levels of self-esteem and marital communication; and likewise that individuals who have low levels of marital adjustment would have low levels of self-esteem and marital communication.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Hypothesis I

Hypothesis I was: There will be a significant positive correlation between the factors of marital adjustment and

marital communication.

The results of the analysis of the mean scores on the Marital Adjustment Test and the Marital Communication Inventory are presented in Table I.

TABLE I

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST AND THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY

<u>Inventory</u>	<u>Cases</u>	<u>Mean Scores</u>	<u>Pearson Product-Moment Correlation</u>	<u>Level of Significance</u>
<u>MAT</u>	227	111.87	.889	.001
<u>MCI</u>	227	100.35		

Each of the mean scores for the MAT and MCI presented in Table I are in the average range. An average score for the MAT is 100, with 136 considered to be a very high score and 71 considered to be a very low score (Kimmel, 1974). An average score for the MCI is 105, with 125 considered to be a very high score and 85 considered to be a very low score (Bienvenu, 1970).

As can be seen in Table I, the Pearson product-moment correlation was high, and the level of significance was very high. According to the statistical results, there was a significant correlation between the scores; therefore, hypothesis I was retained.

Hypothesis II

Hypothesis II was: There will be a significant positive correlation between the factors of marital adjustment and self-esteem.

The results of the analysis of the mean scores on the Marital Adjustment Test and the Self-Esteem Questionnaire are presented in Table II.

TABLE II

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE

Inventory	Cases	Mean Scores	Pearson Product-Moment Correlation	Level of Significance
<u>MAT</u>	227	111.87	.778	.001
<u>SEQ</u>	227	3.90		

The mean score for the SEQ presented in Table I is in the average range. An average score for the SEQ is 3.70, with 4.25 considered to be a moderately high score and 3.00 considered to be a moderately low score (Hoffmeister, 1976).

As can be seen in Table II, the Pearson product-moment correlation was high, and the level of significance was very high. According to the statistical results, there was a significant correlation between the scores; therefore, Hypothesis II was retained.

Hypothesis III

Hypothesis III was: There will be a significant positive correlation between the factors of self-esteem and marital communication.

The results of the analysis of the mean scores on the Self-Esteem Questionnaire and the Marital Communication Inventory are presented in Table III.

TABLE III

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY

<u>Inventory</u>	<u>Cases</u>	<u>Mean Scores</u>	<u>Pearson Product-Moment Correlation</u>	<u>Level of Significance</u>
<u>SEQ</u>	227	3.90	.780	.001
<u>MCI</u>	227	100.35		

As can be seen in Table III, the Pearson product-moment correlation was high, and the level of significance was very high. According to the statistical results, there was a significant correlation between the scores; therefore, Hypothesis III was retained.

In addition to the hypotheses presented, several demographic variables in the data obtained were isolated to determine the correlations among the tests when each demographic variable was considered individually. Those factors tabulated from the General Information Sheet that were pertinent to

subgroups of approximately 50 or more subjects were isolated and correlated with test scores. The factors thus selected were:

1. Sex of the respondent.
2. Number of years married.
3. Age of the respondent.
4. Number of children.
5. Education level of the respondent.
6. Annual family income level of the respondent.
7. The wife's employment status.
8. The number of years at the current address.

The following questions were posed to determine the correlations among the test scores for those variables that were isolated.

Question I

Question I was: Are the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ significant when the sex of the respondent is isolated?

The results of the correlations of the scores on the MCI, MAT, and SEQ after the sex of the respondent has been isolated are presented in Tables IV and V.

TABLE IV

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR MALE RESPONDENTS

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	111	100.63	-	.889*	.760*
<u>MAT</u>	111	112.34	.889*	-	.762*
<u>SEQ</u>	111	3.94	.760*	.762*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE V

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR FEMALE RESPONDENTS

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	116	100.08	-	.890*	.799*
<u>MAT</u>	116	111.41	.890*	-	.795*
<u>SEQ</u>	116	3.85	.799*	.795*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

As can be seen in Tables IV and V, all the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ were high and statistically significant at the .001 level for both the male respondents and the female respondents. Therefore, Question I was answered in the affirmative.

Question II

Question II was: are the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ significant when the number of years married of the respondent is isolated?

The results of the correlations of the scores on the MCI, MAT, and SEQ after the number of years married of the respondent had been isolated are presented in Tables VI, VII, VIII, and IX.

TABLE VI

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS MARRIED 1-5 YEARS

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	55	102.47	-	.868*	.769*
<u>MAT</u>	55	113.75	.868*	-	.784*
<u>SEQ</u>	55	3.97	.769*	.784*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE VII

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS MARRIED 6-13 YEARS

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	56	96.27	-	.887*	.779*
<u>MAT</u>	56	105.25	.887*	-	.784*
<u>SEQ</u>	56	3.75	.779*	.784*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE VIII

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS MARRIED 14-24 YEARS

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	58	100.09	-	.899*	.799*
<u>MAT</u>	58	111.62	.899*	-	.758*
<u>SEQ</u>	58	3.90	.799*	.758*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE IX
 PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS MARRIED 25-52 YEARS

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	58	102.53	-	.892*	.745*
<u>MAT</u>	58	116.72	.892*	-	.797*
<u>SEQ</u>	58	3.96	.745*	.797*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

As can be seen in Tables VI, VII, VIII, and IX, all the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ were consistently high and statistically significant at the .001 level for each of the subgroups isolated for the length of years married. Therefore, Question II was answered in the affirmative.

Question III

Question III was: Are the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ significant when the age of the respondents is isolated?

The results of the correlations of the scores on the MCI, MAT, and SEQ after the age of the respondents had been isolated are presented in Tables X, XI, XII, and XIII.

TABLE X

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS AGED 20-29

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	59	100.46	-	.837*	.764*
<u>MAT</u>	59	110.03	.837*	-	.738*
<u>SEQ</u>	59	3.89	.764*	.738*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE XI

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS AGED 30-37

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	56	96.43	-	.908*	.806*
<u>MAT</u>	56	108.13	.908*	-	.783*
<u>SEQ</u>	56	3.85	.806*	.783*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE XII

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS AGED 38-48

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	56	102.66	-	.919*	.821*
<u>MAT</u>	56	112.91	.919*	-	.809*
<u>SEQ</u>	56	3.91	.821*	.809*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE XIII

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS AGED 49-80

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	56	101.82	-	.893*	.728*
<u>MAT</u>	56	116.50	.893*	-	.786*
<u>SEQ</u>	56	3.93	.728*	.786*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

As can be seen in Tables X, XI, XII, and XIII, the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ were consistently high and statistically significant at the .001 level for each of the subgroups isolated for the age of the respondents.

Question IV

Question IV was: Are the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ significant when the number of children of the respondents is isolated?

The results of the correlations of the scores on the MCI, MAT, and SEQ after the number of children of the respondents had been isolated are presented in Tables XIV, XV, XVI, and XVII.

TABLE XIV

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR RESPONDENTS WITH NO CHILDREN

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	49	102.06	-	.789*	.689*
<u>MAT</u>	49	114.27	.789*	-	.765*
<u>SEQ</u>	49	4.00	.689*	.765*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE XV

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS WITH ONE CHILD

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	56	101.29	-	.918*	.755*
<u>MAT</u>	56	111.71	.918*	-	.717*
<u>SEQ</u>	56	3.87	.755*	.717*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE XVI

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS WITH TWO CHILDREN

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	61	98.52	-	.925*	.781*
<u>MAT</u>	61	109.36	.925*	-	.771*
<u>SEQ</u>	61	3.80	.781*	.771*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE XVII

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS WITH 3-6 CHILDREN

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	61	99.93	-	.886*	.833*
<u>MAT</u>	61	112.59	.886*	-	.854*
<u>SEQ</u>	61	3.94	.833*	.854*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

As can be seen in Tables XIV, XV, XVI, and XVII, the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ were consistently high and statistically significant at the .001 level for each of the subgroups isolated for the number of children of the respondents. Therefore, Question IV was answered in the affirmative.

Question V

Question V was: Are the correlations among the MCI, MAT and SEQ significant when the educational level of the respondents is isolated?

The results of the correlations of the scores on the MCI, MAT, and SEQ after the educational level of the respondents had been isolated are presented in Tables XVIII, XIX, and XX.

TABLE XVIII

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS WITH A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	48	98.37	-	.922*	.827*
<u>MAT</u>	48	110.04	.922*	-	.819*
<u>SEQ</u>	48	3.78	.827*	.819*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE XIX

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS WITH SOME COLLEGE EDUCATION

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	50	97.82	-	.906*	.806*
<u>MAT</u>	50	107.24	.906*	-	.801*
<u>SEQ</u>	50	3.80	.806*	.801*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE XX
 PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	101	100.84	-	.862*	.723*
<u>MAT</u>	101	113.07	.862*	-	.765*
<u>SEQ</u>	101	3.96	.723*	.765*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

As can be seen in Tables XVIII, XIX, and XX, the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ were consistently high and statistically significant at the .001 level for each of the subgroups isolated for the educational level of the respondents. Therefore, Question V was answered in the affirmative.

Question VI

Question VI was: Are the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ significant when the annual family income level of the respondents is isolated?

The results of the correlations of the scores on the MCI, MAT, and SEQ after the annual family income level of the respondents had been isolated are presented in Tables XXI, XXII, and XXIII.

TABLE XXI

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS IN THE
 ANNUAL INCOME RANGE OF \$10,000-20,000

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	87	96.60	-	.906*	.790*
<u>MAT</u>	87	106.39	.906*	-	.793*
<u>SEQ</u>	87	3.72	.790*	.793*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE XXII

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS IN THE
 ANNUAL INCOME RANGE OF \$20,000-30,000

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	80	101.66	-	.873*	.795*
<u>MAT</u>	80	114.17	.873*	-	.806*
<u>SEQ</u>	80	3.92	.795*	.806*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE XXIII

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS IN THE
 ANNUAL INCOME RANGE OF ABOVE \$30,000

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	59	104.76	-	.848*	.629*
<u>MAT</u>	59	117.51	.848*	-	.655*
<u>SEQ</u>	59	4.17	.629*	.655*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

As can be seen in Tables XXI, XXII, and XXIII, the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ were consistently high and statistically significant at the .001 level for each of the subgroups isolated for the annual family income level of the respondents. Therefore, Question VI was answered in the affirmative.

Question VII

Question VII was: Are the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ significant when the wife's employment status is isolated?

The results of the correlations of the scores on the MCI, MAT, and SEQ after the wife's employment status had been isolated are presented in Tables XXIV and XXV.

TABLE XXIV

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS IN FAMILIES WITH AN EMPLOYED WIFE

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	100	100.23	-	.884*	.793*
<u>MAT</u>	100	111.69	.884*	-	.787*
<u>SEQ</u>	100	3.94	.793*	.787*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE XXV

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS IN FAMILIES WITH AN UNEMPLOYED WIFE

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	127	100.44	-	.895*	.774*
<u>MAT</u>	127	112.01	.895*	-	.777*
<u>SEQ</u>	127	3.86	.774*	.777*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

As can be seen in Tables XXIV and XXV, the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ were consistently high and statistically significant at the .001 level for each of the subgroups factored out for the wife's working status. Therefore, Question VII was answered in the affirmative.

Question VIII

Question VIII was: Are the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ significant when the respondent's number of years at the current home address is isolated?

The results of the correlations of the scores on the MCI, MAT, and SEQ after the respondents' number of years at the current home address had been isolated are presented in Tables XXVI and XXVII.

TABLE XXVI

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR RESPONDENTS LIVING AT CURRENT ADDRESS FOR 0-5 YEARS

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	145	99.36	-	.854*	.783*
<u>MAT</u>	145	109.51	.894*	-	.785*
<u>SEQ</u>	145	3.86	.783*	.785*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE XXVII
 PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS AMONG THE
MARITAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY,
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST,
 AND THE
SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE
 FOR RESPONDENTS LIVING AT CURRENT ADDRESS FOR 6 OR MORE YEARS

Inventory	No. of Cases	Mean Score	Correlations with:		
			<u>MCI</u>	<u>MAT</u>	<u>SEQ</u>
<u>MCI</u>	82	102.10	-	.882*	.769*
<u>MAT</u>	82	116.04	.882*	-	.762*
<u>SEQ</u>	82	3.96	.769*	.762*	-

*Significant at the .001 level.

As can be seen on Tables XXVI and XXVII, the correlations among the MCI, MAT, and SEQ were consistently high and statistically significant at the .001 level for each of the subgroups isolated for the respondents' number of years at the current home address. Therefore, Question VIII was answered in the affirmative.

CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bienvenu, Millard J., A Counselor's Guide to Accompany a Marital Communication Inventory, Durham, N.C.: Family Life Publications, 1969.
- Hoffmeister, James K., Some Information Regarding the Characteristics of the Two Measures Derived From the Self-Esteem Questionnaire, Boulder, Colorado: Test Analysis and Development Corporation, 1976.
- Kimmel, Douglas, "Factors of Marital Adjustment in the Locke Marital Adjustment Test," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 36, 1974, 57-63.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Results

This research study was a survey developed to investigate the relationships among the factors of self-esteem, marital communication, and marital adjustment. The purposes of the study were threefold: (1) to investigate the correlation among the three factors of self-esteem, marital communication, and marital adjustment; (2) to determine if these factors were evidenced similarly in the marital system; and (3) to determine if their relationships were consistent among a wide range of marriage relationships.

Subjects for the survey were selected by six individuals who were designated to be selectors. The selectors hand-delivered the survey material to three hundred married individuals. The subjects were instructed to complete the self-administered questionnaires and mail them in a pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope to the investigator. Of the original 300 individuals chosen, 227 completed the survey material and mailed them in. The demographic data showed that the subjects represented a wide range of married individuals.

The Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (Short Form) (MAT), Bienvenu's Marital Communication Inventory (MCI), and Hoffmeister's Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SEQ) were utilized

to assess each subject's level of marital adjustment, marital communication, and self-esteem, respectively. In addition, a general information sheet was administered to gather demographic data on each subject.

The general nature of the research hypotheses was that there would be a significant, positive relationship among each of the three factors under investigation. In order to statistically analyze the obtained data, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There will be a significant positive correlation between the factors of marital adjustment and marital communication.
2. There will be a significant positive correlation between the factors of marital adjustment and self-esteem.
3. There will be a significant positive correlation between the factors of self-esteem and marital communication.

The results from the Pearson product-moment correlations showed that there were positive correlations at the .001 level of significance between marital adjustment and marital communication between marital adjustment and self-esteem and between self-esteem and marital communication. Therefore, each of the three hypotheses was retained.

In addition, to the three hypotheses, several demographic variables were factored out to determine their influence on

the correlations. Those demographic variables that could be appropriately subgrouped into sets of approximately 50 subjects or more, included the following:

1. Sex of the respondent.
2. Number of years married.
3. Age of the respondent.
4. Number of children.
5. Educational level of the respondent.
6. Annual family income level of the respondent.
7. The wife's working status.
8. The number of years at the current address.

The results from the Pearson product-moment correlations showed that regardless of the demographic variables that were isolated, the correlations among the MAT, MCI, and SEQ remained positively correlated at the .001 level of significance.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study was designed to determine the relationships among the factors of marital adjustment, marital communication and self-esteem. There was statistical evidence that a significant relationship exists between marital adjustment and marital communication, between marital adjustment and self-esteem, and between marital communication and self-esteem. Though this study drew its results from a different type of population, the findings are similar to the findings of Mendenson (1970) who determined that there was a high correlation between poor marital adjustment and poor communication processes.

The findings also upheld the conclusions drawn by Dillon (1976) who concluded that communication is an integral part of marriage and has significant effects on the couple's level of marriage satisfaction.

The fact that self-esteem and marital communication were found to be highly correlated supports the theory proposed by Luckey (1964) that perception of the self forms the foundation of marital communication and marital adjustment. Likewise, the results found in this study are in agreement with the conclusions drawn by Hawkins (1966) and by Murstein (1971) who stated that the psychological factor of self-esteem figured greatly into a couple's feeling of satisfaction with a marriage relationship.

In essence, this study helps to bridge the gap between two closely associated but separate bodies of research that show a relationship between marital adjustment and communication and between marital adjustment and self-esteem. The results show that each of the three factors under consideration are consistently related, and that neither marital communication nor self-esteem should be excluded when marital adjustment is being investigated. The results confirm the assumptions of Satir (1967) who theorized that self-esteem is a key factor in marital adjustment and it is closely related to the communication process among married couples.

Since the relationships among marital adjustment, marital communication and self-esteem remained consistently

significant when each of the demographic variables was factored out, it is apparent that the importance of both the communication factor and the self-esteem factor are vital to marital adjustment regardless of years married, age, sex, socioeconomic status, number of children, educational level, working status of the wife, and the number of years at the current home address.

Due to the diversity of the subjects' demographic backgrounds, the high level of consistency among the subgroup correlations was not expected. It could readily be construed that due to the consistency of scores and correlations among each of the subgroups factored out that the statistical results were drawn from a population sample that offered a small range of scores. However, the scores on each of the test inventories were quite diverse with MAT scores ranging from 49 to 149, MCI scores ranging from 58 to 129, and SEQ scores ranging from 2.00 to 5.00. (See appendix) Each of these ranges is considered to be quite wide, meaning that there was a great diversity of responses in the population sample. It would seem that the presence of such a wide range of scores would upset the consistency of the correlations when each of the demographic variables is isolated. However, since this did not occur, it is apparent that the correlations among each of the three factors under observation remain consistent whether scores are high, average or low.

This finding is consistent with the research findings presented in the review of the literature in Chapter II, which reviewed a variety of studies that draw similar conclusions. For example, communication was found to be a significant correlate of marital and family adjustment among schizophrenic families (Bateson et al., 1956), alcoholic couples (Gorad, 1971), and healthy families (Lewis et.al., 1976). It is apparent that family background or social factors are not powerful enough to cancel the consistency of marital communication and self-esteem as they relate to marital adjustment.

Based on the results of this study, it could be speculated that marital adjustment is not very likely to occur if only one of the two factors of marital adjustment and self-esteem is measured at a high level. However, before this speculation can be considered as a definitive conclusion, further research would be required. This tentative assumption would be consistent with Skynner's (1976) belief that marital adjustment cannot occur unless communication levels and ego strength are sufficient.

Although correlations do not infer cause and effect, based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are made:

1. Marital adjustment is dependent on married individual's level of self-esteem and the ability to communicate effectively.

2. When the level of marital communication is high, it is likely that there will also be a high level of self-esteem.

3. When there are high levels of marital communication and self-esteem in marital partners, marital adjustment is likely to occur.

4. The consistency of the relationships among marital adjustment, marital communication, and self-esteem transcend demographic factors.

These conclusions have strong implications for professionals who practice marriage counseling. Although it is possible that when a counselor focuses exclusively on the clients' communication skills, the clients' sense of self-esteem would rise accordingly (and vice versa), the implication is that marital adjustment would be most successfully achieved when the counselor focuses on both the communication skills and the self-esteem levels. Likewise, when professionals conduct marital enrichment programs, their purpose would be best achieved by focusing on both the communication factor and the self-esteem factor without the exclusion of either.

Recommendations

On the basis of reported research and findings of this investigation, it is recommended:

1. That practitioners of marriage counseling develop a therapeutic strategy with the goal of improving both the factors of marital communication and self-esteem.

2. That leaders of marriage enrichment workshops incorporate teachings regarding both communicative skills and skills for building self-esteem into their workshop material.

3. That a similar study be considered with individuals representing different segments of the American culture, specifically minority groups and lower socioeconomic groups, to determine the consistency of the findings.

CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bateson, Gregory, Don Jackson, Jay Haley, John Weakland, "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia," Behavioral Science, October, 1956, 251-264.
- Dillon, Joseph D., "Marital Communication and Its Relation to Self-Esteem," unpublished doctoral dissertation, United States University, San Diego, Cal., 1976.
- Gorad, S. L., "Communication Styles and Interactions of ALcoholics and Their Wives," Family Process, 10, December, 1971, 475-490.
- Hawkins, James L., "The Locke Marital Adjustment Test and Social Desirability," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 28, May, 1966, 192-196.
- Lewis, Jerry M., W. R. Beavers, J. T. Gossett, and V. A. Phillips, No Single Thread: Psychological Health in Families, New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1976.
- Luckey, E. B., "Marital Satisfaction of Self and Spouse," Journal of Counseling Psychology, 11, Summer, 1964, 129-145.
- Mendenson, L. A., "Communication Patterns in High and Low Marital Adjustment," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, 1970.
- Murstein, Bernard, "The Relationship of Mental Health to Marital Choice and Courtship Progress," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 29, August, 1967, 447-451.
- Satir, Virginia, Conjoint Family Therapy, Palo Alto, Cal.: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1967.
- Skynner, A. C. Robyn, Systems of Family and Marital Psychotherapy, New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1976.

Appendix A

Cover Letter to Participants

Dear Participant,

Let me begin by thanking you for your willingness to take the time to help in this research project. By participating in this study you will be helping us understand more fully the nature of the marriage relationship. The information gathered from the people responding to these questionnaires will help us know more about the characteristics that contribute to the typical marriage.

There are three short questionnaires and a general information sheet to fill out, and they should take only about 30 minutes to complete. As you answer each question, keep in mind that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Answer them as they best describe you.

To ensure the confidential nature of your responses, let me ask that you not put your name on any part of the questionnaires. When you see a space asking for your name, do not fill it in. The information obtained from your responses will be pooled with the information obtained from approximately 200 other individuals.

When you finish, please place the questionnaires back into the pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelope. Seal the envelope and place it in the mail as quickly as possible. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!

If you have any questions, please call me at either 214/243-6554 or 214/245-8022.

Respectfully,

Les Carter, M.Ed.
Marriage and Family Therapist

Appendix B

General Information Sheet

GENERAL INFORMATION

Male _____ Female _____

Number of years married _____ Age _____

Number of Children _____ Ages of Children _____

Educational Level _____

Income Range (yearly combined for couple):

Below 10,000 _____; 10,000-20,000 _____;

20,000-30,000 _____; above 30,000 _____;

Does wife work? Yes _____ No _____

Number of years at current address _____

Have you ever been previously married? Yes _____ No _____

Appendix C

Marital Communication Inventory

A MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY

Developed by

MILLARD J. BIENVENU, SR.

1. Please answer each question as quickly as you can according to the way you feel at the moment (not the way you usually feel or felt last week).
2. Please do not consult your spouse while completing this inventory. You may discuss it with him/her after both of you have completed it. Remember that counseling value of this form will be lost if you change any answer during or after this discussion.
3. Honest answers are very necessary. Please be as frank as possible. Your answers are confidential. Your name is not required.
4. Use the following examples for practice. Put a check in one of the four blanks on the right to show how the question applies to your marriage.

	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Some- times</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>
1. Do you and your spouse discuss the manner in which the family income should be spent?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
2. Does your spouse discuss work and interests with you?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
3. Do you have a tendency to keep your feelings to yourself?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
4. Is your spouse's tone of voice irritating?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
5. Does your spouse have a tendency to say things which would be better left unsaid?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Some- times</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>
6. Are your mealtime conversations easy and pleasant?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
7. Do you find it necessary to keep after your spouse about faults?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
8. Does your spouse seem to understand your feelings?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
9. Does your spouse nag you?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
10. Does your spouse listen to what you have to say?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
11. Does it upset you to a great extent when your spouse is angry with you?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
12. Does your spouse pay you compliments and say nice things to you?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
13. Is it hard to understand your spouse's feelings and attitudes?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
14. Is your spouse affectionate toward you?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
15. Does your spouse let you finish talking before responding to what you are saying?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
16. Do you and your spouse remain silent for long periods when you are angry with one another?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
17. Does your spouse allow you to pursue your own interests and activities even if they are different from his/hers?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>
19. Do you fail to express disagreement with him/her because you are afraid he/she will get angry?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
20. Does your spouse complain that you don't understand him/her?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
21. Do you let your spouse know when you are displeased with him/her?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
22. Do you feel your spouse says one thing but really means another?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
23. Do you help your spouse understand you by saying how you think, feel and believe?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
24. Do you and your spouse find it hard to disagree with one another without losing your temper?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
25. Do the two of you argue a lot over money?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
26. When a problem arises that needs to be solved are you and your spouse able to discuss it together (in a calm manner)?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
27. Do you find it difficult to express your true feelings to him/her?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
28. Does your spouse offer you cooperation, encouragement and emotional support in your role (duties) as a wife/husband?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
29. Does your spouse insult when angry with you?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Some- times</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>
30. Do you and your spouse engage in outside interests and activities together?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
31. Does your spouse accuse you of not listening to what he/she says?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
32. Does your spouse let you know that you are important to him/her?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
33. Is it easier to confide in a friend rather than your spouse?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
34. Does your spouse confide in others rather than in you?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
35. Do you feel that in most matters your spouse knows what you are trying to say?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
36. Does he/she monopolize the conversation very much?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
37. Do you and your spouse talk about things which are of interest to both of you?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
38. Does your spouse sulk or pout very much?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
39. Do you discuss intimate matters with your spouse?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
40. Do you and your spouse discuss your personal problems with each other?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
41. Can your spouse tell what kind of day you have had without asking?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
42. Does he/she fail to express feelings of respect and admiration for you?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Some-</u> <u>times</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>
43. Do you and your spouse talk over pleasant things that happen during the day?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
44. Do you hesitate to discuss certain things with your spouse because you are afraid he/she might hurt your feelings?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
45. Do you pretend you are listening to your spouse when actually you are not really listening?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
46. Do the two of you ever sit down just to talk things over?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

Appendix D

Marital Adjustment Test

MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST

Check the dot on the scale line below which best describes the degree of happiness, everything considered of your present marriage. The middle point "happy," represents the degree of happiness which most people get from marriage, and the scale gradually ranges on one side to those few who are very unhappin marriage, and on the other, to those few who experience extreme joy or felicity in marriage.

1.	0	2	7	15	20	25	35
	Very			Happy			Perfectly
	unhappy						happy

State the appropriate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your mate on the following items. Please check each column.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occa- sion- ally Disa- gree	Fre- quently Disa- gree	Almost Always Disa- gree	Always Disa- gree
2. Handling family finances	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Matters of recreation	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Demonstrations of affection	8	6	4	2	1	0
5. Friends	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Sex relations	15	12	9	4	1	0
7. Conventionality (right, good, or proper conduct)	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Philosophy of life	5	4	3	2	1	0
9. Ways of dealing with in-laws	5	4	3	2	1	0

10. When disagreements arise, they usually result in:
 Husband giving in 0 Agreement by mutual
 give and take 10
 Wife giving in 2
11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?
 All of them 10 Very few of them 3
 Some of them 8 None of them 0
12. In leisure time do you generally prefer to
 Be "On the go" _____ Stay at home 10 Both stay
 at home
 Does your mate generally prefer to 3 Both on the
 go
 Be "on the go" Stay at home _____ 2 Opposite
13. Do you ever wish you had not married?
 Frequently 0 Rarely 8
 Occasionally 3 Never 15
14. If you had your life to live over, do you think you would:
 Marry the same person 15
 Marry a different person 0
 Not marry at all 1
15. Do you confide in your mate:
 Almost never 0 In most things 10
 Rarely 2 In everything 10

Appendix E

Self-Esteem Questionnaire

SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME										NUMBER										LOCATION									
IDENTIFICATION																													
NUMBER																													
LOCATION NUMBER																													
MISCELLANEOUS																													
SEX					M1					M2					M3					M4					M5				
CODES																													

Use only a #2 pencil to mark your responses.

Mark only one response for each question.

Erase completely any response you wish to change.

Answer choices are: 1 = Not at all
2 = Only a little

3 = Depends or Not Sure

4 = Pretty much
5 = Yes, very much

I feel sure of myself.	1	2	3	4	5
Most of my friends accept me as much as they accept other people	1	2	3	4	5
Does the situation described in number 2 upset you?	1	2	3	4	5
Most people who are important to me, who know me, think I do most things well.	1	2	3	4	5
Does the situation described in number 4 upset you?	1	2	3	4	5
Most persons my own age seem to be able to do things better than I.	1	2	3	4	5
Does the situation described in number 6 upset you?	1	2	3	4	5
I'm usually a lot of fun to be with.	1	2	3	4	5
Does the situation described in number 8 upset you?	1	2	3	4	5
Most persons who I want to do things with really want me to do things with them.	1	2	3	4	5
Does the situation described in number 10 upset you?	1	2	3	4	5
I'm satisfied with the way I handle most situations.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm popular with most people.	1	2	3	4	5
Does the situation described in number 13 upset you?	1	2	3	4	5
Most people my own age seem to be able to do things easier than I.	1	2	3	4	5
Does the situation described in number 15 upset you?	1	2	3	4	5
Other people who are important to me really accept me.	1	2	3	4	5
Does the situation described in number 17 upset you?	1	2	3	4	5
Most people my own age are more satisfied with themselves than I am with myself.	1	2	3	4	5
Does the situation described in number 19 upset you?	1	2	3	4	5
I am very self-confident.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix F

Range of Scores

Marital Communication InventoryLow

58

High

128

Marital Adjustment TestLow

49

High

149

Self-Esteem QuestionnaireLow

2.00

High

5.00

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Ables, Billie S. and J. M. Brandsma, Therapy for Couples, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1977.
- Adler, Alfred, The Neurotic Condition, New York: Dodd Mead, 1926.
- Beavers, Robert, Psychotherapy and Growth: A Family Systems Perspective, New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1977.
- Buros, O. K., Tests in Print, II, Highland Park, N.J.: The Gryphon Press, 1974.
- French, Alfred P., Disturbed Children and Their Families, New York: Human Sciences Press, 1977.
- Glick, Ira D., and David Kessler, Marital and Family Therapy, New York: Green and Stratton, 1974.
- Haley, Jay, Problem-Solving Therapy, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1976.
- Horney, Karen, New Ways in Psychoanalysis, New York: Norton Press, 1936.
- Knox, D., Marriage Happiness, Champaign, Ill.: Research Press, 1971.
- Lederer, W. J. and D. D. Jackson, The Mirages of Marriage, New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1968.
- Lewis, Jerry M., Robert Beavers, J. T. Gossett, and V. A. Phillips, No Single Thread: Psychological Health in Families, New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1976.
- Rogers, Carl R., Client-Centered Therapy, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951.
- Rutledge, A. L., Pre-Marital Counseling, Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishers, 1966.
- Satir, Virginia, Conjoint Family Therapy, Palo Alto, Cal.: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1967.

Skygger, A. C. Robin, Systems of Family and Marital Psychotherapy, New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1976.

Strauss, Murray, Family Measurement Techniques: Abstracts of Published Instruments, 1935-1965, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969.

Articles

Ard Ben N., "Assumptions Underlying Marriage Counseling," in Handbook of Marriage Counseling, Ben N. Ard and C. C. Ard (Eds.), Palo Alto, Cal.: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1976, 361-366.

-----, "Communication Theory in Marriage Counseling," in Handbook of Marriage Counseling, Ben N. Ard and C. C. Ard (Eds.), Palo Alto, Cal.: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1976, 361-366.

-----, "Communication Theory in Marriage Counseling," in Handbook of Marriage Counseling, Ben N. Ard and C. C. Ard (Eds.), Palo Alto, Cal.: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1976, 218-224.

Backus, Frank, "A Systems Approach to Marital Process," Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling, I (July 1975), 251-258.

Bateson, Gregory, Don Jackson, Jay Haley, and John Weakland, "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia," Behavioral Science, I (October, 1956), 251-264.

Beck, Dorothy F., "Research Findings on the Outcomes of Marital Counseling," Social Casework, 56 (March, 1975), 153-158.

Bienvenu, Millard J., "Measurement of Marital Communication," The Family Coordinator, 19 (1970), 26-31.

Bowen, Murray, "Family Therapy and Family Group Therapy," in Treating Relationships, David H. L. Olson (Ed.) Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., 1976, 219-274.

Cheek, Francis E. and Richard Anthony, "Personal Pronoun Usage in Families of Schizophrenics and Social Space Utilization," Family Process, 9 (December, 1970), 333-354.

- Ferguson, Lucy R., and D. R. Allen, "Congruence of Parental Perception, Marital Satisfaction, and Child Adjustment." Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 46 (April, 1978), 345-346.
- Friedman, Jack C., and Alfred S. Friedman, "Characteristics of Schizogenic Families During a Joint Story-Telling Task," Family Process, 9 (September, 1970), 333-354.
- Fromm, Eric, "Selfishness and Self-Love," Psychiatry, 2 (1939), 507,523.
- Gilbert, Shirley J., "Self-Disclosure, Intimacy, and Communication in Families," The Family Coordinator, 25 (July, 1976), 221-231.
- Goodman, Marvin, "Expressed Self-Acceptance and Interpersonal Needs: A Basis for Mate Selection," Journal of Counseling Psychology, 11 (1964), 129-135.
- Gorad, S. L., "Communication Styles and Interactions of Alcoholics and Their Wives," Family Process, 10 (December, 1971), 475-490.
- Haley, Jay and E. H. Mudd, "Recurring Problems in Marriage Counseling," The Journal of Marriage and Family Living, 25 (1971), 121-125.
- Katz, Krwin, J. Goldstein, M. Cohen, and S. Stucker, "Need Satisfaction, Perception, and Cooperative Interactions in Married Couples," Marriage and Family Living, 25 (May, 1963), 209-213.
- Kawash, George F. and G. W. Scherf, "Self-Esteem, Locus of Control, and Approval Motivation in Married Couples," Journal of Clinical Psychology, 31 (October, 1975), 715-720.
- Kimmel, Douglas, "Factors of Marital Adjustment in the Locke Marital Adjustment Test," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 36 (1974), 57-63.
- Kotlar, Sally L., "Middle Class Marital Role Perceptions and Marital Adjustment," Sociology and Social Research, 49 (April, 1965), 283-293.
- Landis, J. T., "Adjustments after Marriage," The Journal of Marriage and Family Living, 9 (May, 1947), 33-34.

- Luckey, Eleanor B., "Marital Satisfaction of Self and Spouse," Journal of Counseling Psychology, 11 (Summer, 1964), 129-145.
- , "Number of Years Married as Related to Personality, Perception, and Marital Satisfaction," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 28 (1966), 44-48.
- Mace, David and Vera Mace, "Marriage Enrichment: A Preventative Group Approach for Couples," in Treating Relationships, David H. L. Olson (Ed.), Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., 1976, 321-336.
- Matteson, Roberta, "Adolescent Self-Esteem, Family Communication and Marital Satisfaction," Journal of Psychology, 86 (1974), 35-47.
- Miller, S., E. Nunnally, and D. Wackman, "Minnesota Couples Communication Program" in Treating Relationships, David H. L. Olson (Ed.), Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., 1976, 21-39.
- Meissner, W. W., "Sibling Relations in a Schizophrenic Family," Family Process, 9 (March, 1970), 1-25.
- Murstein, Bernard, "The Relationship of Mental Health to Marital Choice and Courtship Progress," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 29 (August, 1967), 447-451.
- , and Gary D. Beck, "Person Perception and Marriage Adjustment," Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 39 (December, 1972), 396-403.
- Navran, Leslie, "Communication and Adjustment in Marriage," The Family Process, 6 (September, 1967), 173-184.
- Nevill, Dorothy and S. Damico, "Role Conflict in Women as a Function of Marital Status," Human Relations, 28 (July, 1975), 487-498.
- Olson, David H. L., "Treating Relations: Trends and Overview," in Treating Relationships, David H. L. Olson (Ed.), Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., 1976, 3-17.
- Ort, R., "A Study of Role Conflicts as Related to Happiness in Marriage," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 45 (1950), 692-699.
- Patterson, G. R., H. Hops, and R. L. Weiss, "Interpersonal Skills for Training Couples in Early Stages of Conflict," Journal of Marriage and The Family, 37 (May, 1975), 295-303.

- Petersen, David M., "Husband-Wife Communication and Family Problems," Sociology and Social Research, 53 (April, 1969), 375-384.
- Rappaport, Alan F., "Conjugal Relationship Enhancement Program," in Treating Relationships, David H. L. Olson (Ed.), Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., 1976, 41-66.
- Welzlowich, Paul, Janet Beavin, Linda Sikorski, and Betty Mecia, "Protection and Scapegoating in Pathological Families," Family Process, 9 (March, 1970), 27-40.
- Weakland, John, "Communication Theory and Clinical Change," in Family Therapy, Philip J. Guerin (Ed.), New York: Gardner Press, Inc., 1976, 111-128.

Reports

- Bienvenu, Millard J., A Counselor's Guide to Accompany a Marital Communication Inventory, Durham, N.C.: Family Life Publications, 1969.
- Hoffmeister, James K., Some Information Regarding the Characteristics of the Two Measures Derived from the Self-Esteem Questionnaire, Boulder, Colorado: Test Analysis and Development Corporation, 1976.

Unpublished Materials

- Cohn, Ann R., "Self-Concept and Role Perception as Correlates of Marital Satisfaction," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, Ill., 1975.
- Dillon, Joseph D., "Marital Communication and Its Relation to Self-Esteem," unpublished doctoral dissertation, United States International University, San Diego, California, 1976.
- Elliott, M. W., "Communication and Empathy in Marital Adjustment," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Texas Women's University, Denton, Texas, 1974.
- Latham, Noreen V., "The Effect on Marital Adjustment of Teaching Basic Marital Communication in a Group Using Videotape Feedback," unpublished doctoral dissertation, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1979.

- McCahan, George R., "The Relationship Between Self-Concept and Marital Satisfaction," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1973.
- Mendelson, L. A., "Communication Patterns in High and Low Marital Adjustment," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, 1970.
- Nadeau, K. G., "An Examination of Some Effects of the Marital Enrichment Group," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 1971.
- Rubin, R. H., "Family Structure and Peer Group Affiliation as Related to Attitudes about Male-Female Relations Among Black Youths," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, 1970.
- Webb, Donald G., "Relationship of Self-Acceptance and Self-Disclosure to Empathy and Marital Need Satisfaction," unpublished doctoral dissertation, United States International University, San Diego, California, 1972.