

AN EVALUATION OF FACTORS ASSOCIATED
WITH AFRICAN AMERICANS' DECISIONS
TO ATTEND OR NOT ATTEND A
MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT
PROGRAM

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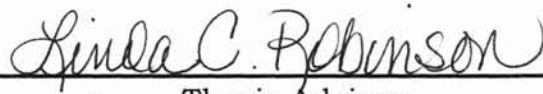
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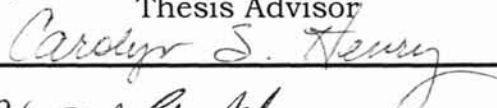
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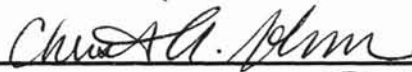
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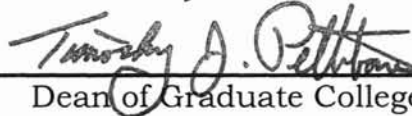
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that approximately 50% of new marriages among the younger generation will eventually end in divorce (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2002). Not only will many marriages end in divorce, but current evidence also suggests that marital distress negatively affects physical health (Burman & Margolin, 1992), mental well-being (Halford & Markman, 1997), and work productivity. The staggering cost of marital failure has led many political and religious leaders, persons in the media, and public policy advocates to issue calls for family life educators and marriage therapists to do something with a marriage movement. The movement is gaining momentum in the U.S.

In addition, the United States Census Bureau (1991) shows that in terms of divorce and separation there has been an increase in the divorce rate. In 1990 the divorce rate was 28.2 divorces per 100 marriages among Blacks, compared to 13 per 100 marriages for Whites. This rate of divorce represented an increase of 403% for Whites and 455% for Blacks between 1960 and 1990 (Baca-Zinn & Eitzen, 1993). United

States Census Bureau (2002) reports that the divorce rate leveled off in the 1990's but the patterns of marriage for the last half of the twentieth century can be described as periods of increase in divorce and delays in marriage. Overall, marriages that began in the second half of the century did not last as long as those that had begun in the first half of the century. Baca-Zinn and Eitzen maintained that by the age of 16, two out of three African American children will experience the dissolution of their parents' marriage compared to one out of three Caucasian children. According to Thornton and Freedman (1993) and U.S. Census Bureau (2002), if the present trends continue, about half of recent marriages among Whites and two thirds of the marriages among Blacks will end in divorce. The effects of divorce can often have damaging effects on children and families in providing adequate educational and health care.

These current trends in the U.S. are evidence that there is little question left regarding whether couples have had a more difficult time establishing and maintaining stable relationships with each other over the last few decades. Because of this trend, advocates of Marriage Enrichment see it as a promising approach to reducing risk for divorce. It is important that we change the perspective of marriage from being burden-laden to being more desirable as a positive, healthy union in which there are more reasons to stay in it. Since, unlike a driver's license, marriage does not come with instructions, more often than not,

marriages require extra support to be successful. Marriage Enrichment can help married couples get through the peaks and valleys of marriage successfully.

Marriage Enrichment seeks to educate couples in techniques that help prevent problems before they emerge. Its aim is to increase marital satisfaction while decreasing marital distress. Marriage Enrichment began as a branch off of Marital Therapy in the 1960s (Hunt, Hoff, & Demaria, 1998). Over the last 30 years, the impact of enrichment has grown significantly. Through research and study, a number of programs have become more effective at identifying characteristics that lead to marital distress and also characteristics that lead to marital satisfaction and quality. The programs are designed to help couples eliminate the negative characteristics and promote the positive characteristics. This study contributes to the limited body of literature on marketing factors—barriers and promoters of participation—in Marriage Enrichment by being one of the first studies to evaluate factors related to Marriage Enrichment participation in the African American population.

The importance of preventing marital dissolution is apparent in the literature. Marriage potentially provides a two-family income, emotional support, and a safe haven or support network for many stressors in life. Yet with the high occurrences of divorce, many women, men, and children are isolated and left with little support. In 1996, 64% separated and 57% of divorced women lived with their children under 18. Both

separated and divorced women are often followed by sharp declines in income due to the absence of spousal income. Twenty-nine percent of recently divorced or separated women are below the poverty line compared to 12% of men (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2002). Families below the poverty level are often unemployed or stuck in low paying, dead-end jobs. They are too often undereducated, over-represented in prisons, and less healthy. The negative effects of divorce are especially damaging to African American children and families. Given such a poor outlook, these children are disadvantaged at the start. Because African American families tend to be less advantaged economically than Euro American families, it is no surprise that low economic resources and hardships have a tremendous effect on marital and interpersonal relationships of African Americans (Combs, 1991).

Knowing the effects that broken marriages can have on adults as well as children, there is a strong need to strengthen the marriage by educating the family using empirically tested techniques that can bring about marital harmony. Empirically tested Marriage Enrichment programs tend to help strengthen marriages by teaching very specific, very structured behavior models that are designed to help foster effective communication and problem solving among the couple. Cognitive training is often taught in the program. Couples are reminded of their tendency to distort what the partner is saying and are given exercises to help each other identify, evaluate, and share experiences and

expectations of one another (Stanley, Markman, St. Peters, & Leber, 1995). However, the entire population often underutilizes marriage enrichment.

Why is Marriage Enrichment participation for African Americans so low? Better yet, what are the barriers to program participation and what are some of the protective factors?

Guerney and Maxson (1990) stated that although empirical evidence exists for the effectiveness of Marriage Enrichment programs, the attendance at seminars is low and attendance for African Americans is even lower. Guerney and Maxson also indicated that marketing research is almost nonexistent and cries out for development. Giblin, Sprenkle and Sheehan (1985), Guerney and Maxson , and Stahmann and Salts (1993) state that the use of predominantly Euro American middle class samples is a reoccurring limitation in both marriage enrichment and family life education which prevents generalizations to other populations. They all noted that future directions in research should include the study of minority populations.

Problem Statement

Some agree that marriage and family relationships are the foundation for our communities. As marriages continue to break down at high rates in the United States and family members separate from one

another, we see family support systems weakening and failing. In fact, the National Center for Health Statistics (2002) reports that despite marital divorce rates decreasing throughout the 80s and 90s, couples marrying for the first time have a 50% chance of divorce during their lifetime. McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, and Wilson (2000) noted that the divorce rate of African American couples continues to be higher than the divorce rates of the general population. As a result of this trend, individuals are turning to government programs to provide economic assistance, social support, and other services that they need which cannot replace the quality of healthy, family support. However, there is promising news: more information is available to couples regarding developing and maintaining healthy marital relationships than ever before. This information is vital to preventing marital breakdown. Through education and enrichment programs, we can help strengthen marriages by preventing divorce. To date, there have been no studies examining what attracts African American couples to attend marriage enrichment programs. Thus, we do not know if current marketing strategies are appropriate or effective for African American couples. Due to the lack of research concentration on African American consumers of marriage enrichment programs and products, the purpose of this study is to conduct an evaluation of factors potentially associated with African American individuals' decisions to attend or not attend a marriage enrichment program.

Purpose of the Study

The focus of the present study is to research African American married individuals' decisions to attend or not attend a marriage enrichment program. Specifically, the research looks at their reports on ten variables: 1) marriage satisfaction, 2) marital and family strengths, 3) communication satisfaction, 4) commitment to change, 5) level of self esteem, 6) perceptions of marriage enrichment purpose, 7) constraints to attendance, 8) fears of attendance, 9) knowledge about the facilitator, and 10) locus control. The research examines whether these ten variables will vary according to participation status and gender.

Theoretical Framework

The roots of the desire for success in marriage is associated with Exchange Theory, which states that a person will seek what he or she assesses to be the best possible outcome, based upon perceptions of the rewards and or cost.

Historically, the first noted development in exchange began with George Homan (1958). Sabetelli and Shehan (1993) noted Homan is the individual most often credited with the emergence of exchange theory in sociology. Through a series of publications spanning from 1958 to 1974, the exchange theory emerged. Homan's perspective of exchange is a

reductionist theory of operant learning. He sees social behavior as being shaped by reinforcement. Sabetelli and Shehan (1993) also pointed out that Homan predicted that individuals are more likely to pursue relationships with others who possess desirable and valued characteristics.

Exchange Theory is built on several disciplines, including economics, sociology, and behaviorism. Yet, Sprecher (1998) noted that most social exchange models share three basic assumptions: (a) social behavior is a series of exchanges; (b) individuals attempt to maximize their rewards and minimize their cost; and (c) when individuals receive rewards from others, they feel obligated to reciprocate. Vital to understanding these three basic assumptions is a clear understanding of what is meant by rewards, reciprocity, and cost in exchange theory. Rewards are defined as exchanged resources that are pleasurable and gratifying. Resources are sometimes used synonymously with rewards. Costs are defined as exchanged resources that result in a loss or punishment and also include foregone opportunities because of being in a particular relationship or interpersonal transaction. Sprecher (1998) states that reciprocity refers to the notion that we give something back to those who have given to us.

Peter Blau published information on his view of Exchange Theory in 1964. Boss et al (1993) stated that his framework relies more on economic principles; thus, he sees social life as a marketplace whereby

participants negotiate with each other in an effort to make a profit. Rewards, costs, expectations, and alternatives are all considered in the negotiating process. In addition, Blau focused his theory on power and how it shapes behavior. Power, according to Blau, is the product of controlling valued resources and/or rewards. Thus, power comes from an imbalance in resources and/or the ability to provide rewards.

John Thibaut and Harold Kelly (1959) published the Social Psychology of Groups in which they presented the major conceptual premises of their theory. In their framework is the belief that in order to obtain rewards for oneself in social relationships, some needs of the partner also must be fulfilled. Sabetelli and Shehan (1993) note that exchange theorists assume that the actions of each individual in a relationship are designed to maximize the greatest rewards for the individual. Thibaut and Kelly's perspective is different because the emphasis is on the interdependence of actors in a relationship.

Emerson (1976) notes that the concept of Exchange Network Analysis was fully developed in 1965 in which he focused on developing a more integrated approach to exchange theory through the use of networks. The concept of control in his theory evolved around the basic concepts and principles of operant psychology. Emerson's framework differed from traditional Exchange Theory by focusing on relational concepts of dependence, power, and balance rather than individual concepts of ratio of rewards exchanged among individuals. McDonald

(1986) states that although social exchange emerged as a major framework in sociology and social psychology in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the systematic application in the study of family related phenomena occurred somewhat later. With focused attention from scholars such as Edwards, Blood, Wolfe, Scanzoni, Nye, and McDonald, from the 1960s through the 1980s the exchange framework has methodically worked its way into the mainstream of family studies. The strength of Exchange Theory is the theory's ability to explain a wide range of social and interpersonal issues that are important to family scholars.

A couple's decision to attend or not attend a marriage enrichment program can easily be described by Exchange Theory. According to the theory each potential participant is analyzing the cost and/or rewards of attending. If the perceived rewards outweigh the perceived cost, then the individual is more likely to attend. If the rewards do not outweigh the perceived cost, the individual is less likely to attend.

The Exchange Theory provides an excellent justification for this study. It is important that we examine African Americans' decision to attend or not attend marriage enrichment programs. By evaluating individuals' motives and decision processes, we can better market and facilitate marriage enrichment programs so that African Americans perceive and obtain the rewards necessary for them to attend.

Definition of Terms

To understand the issues involved in the research study, the following concepts will be used throughout the study and are defined as follows:

Marriage Enrichment is an educational experience to bring change and growth to a couple's marriage (Hof & Miller, 1981; Mace, 1982).

Marital Quality is the overall subjective impression given by an individual regarding the value of their marriage (Adelman, Chadwick & Baerger, 1996).

Objectives of the Study

The following objective has been developed for this research:

To determine whether the perceptions of African Americans who participate in Marriage Enrichment differ from those of African Americans who do not participate regarding the factors (i.e., marital satisfaction, marital and family strength, communication satisfaction, commitment to change, self-esteem, perceptions of marriage enrichment purpose, constraints on attendance, fears of marriage enrichment attendance, knowledge about the facilitator, and locus of control) that promote or serve as barriers to Marriage Enrichment attendance and to explore whether differing perceptions vary by gender

Research Questions

Educating couples on how to strengthen their relationships and prevent dissolutions is vital to new and seasoned couples. Marriage Enrichment provides an avenue for couples to learn skills and practice proven techniques that can enhance a relationship. The responses of African Americans regarding barriers or promotive factors to attendance at Marriage Enrichment programs is the focal point of the research. The main research question of the study is:

Is there a significant difference between African American non-participants and participants responses to perceptions of factors (i.e., marital satisfaction, marital and family strength, communication satisfaction, commitment to change, self-esteem, perception of Marriage Enrichment, constraints to attendance, fears of attendance, and knowledge about the facilitator) which serve as barriers or promoters to attending marriage enrichment, and do differing perceptions vary by gender? In addition, we will look at locus of control as another potential factor.

Summary

African American couples are at risk for divorce at higher rates than their Euro American counterparts. However, no substantial

attention has been focused on studying the population as it relates to Marriage Enrichment attendance and results. Marriage Enrichment is aimed at equipping married couples with information, techniques, and skills that will help improve their marital relationship, while reducing conflict and preventing problems from arising. Committing to a lifetime relationship with another person (someone with different thoughts, habits, and baggage) is a journey that often involves challenges, which require adaptation and communication, at least on the part of the members of the marriage. Empirically founded, Marriage Enrichment programs are not the cure-all for all problems of couples, but they are a mechanism that can be used to help couples navigate successfully through their relationship.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Marital quality is also known as marital satisfaction or marital well-being and is a vital component of healthy marriages. Durodoye (1997) defines marital quality as an individual's subjective impression of the specific components within his or her marital relationship. Often, the assessment of marital quality includes asking each partner to rate his or her overall satisfaction with the marriage. Research as well as logic suggests that declines in marital satisfaction are often present before separation and or divorce (Gottman, 1994). Marital quality and satisfaction are important to healthy marriages.

Adelman, Chadwick, and Baerger (1996) researched the descriptive information on marital quality, length of marriage, and ethnicity to further assess the difference between whites and blacks. They looked at five factors to assess marital satisfaction/marital quality: 1) overall satisfaction with the marriage, 2) expressions of love and affection in the relationship, 3) mutual satisfaction in working out disagreements, 4) how the spouse makes the respondent feel loved and cared for, and 5) how much the spouse is willing to listen to worries and problems. Their index

was coded so that higher scores reflect greater satisfaction. They found that the Whites were married longer than Blacks by approximately 4 years and that Blacks had generally lower positive marital quality and higher negative marital quality than Whites on all measures.

Broman (1993) in his study of race differences in marital well-being used a national sample of 2059 married individuals to investigate marital well-being between Whites and Blacks. Marital well-being was assessed using two measures. One measure consisted of a four-item scale designed to measure harmony in the marriage was one of the two ways. This scale asked respondents to indicate, on a scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” their responses to the following statements: (1) “There is a great deal of love and affection expressed in our marriage;” (2) “My spouse doesn’t treat me as well as I deserve to be treated;” (3) “I sometimes think of divorcing or separating from my spouse”, and (4) “There have been things that have happened in our marriage that I can never forgive.” The second measure was a single item question used to measure marital satisfaction. The researchers asked, “Taking all things together, how satisfied are you with your marriage?” Responses ranged from 1 (“not very” or “not at all satisfied”) to 4 (completely satisfied). The results from the study were that Blacks significantly felt that their marriages were less harmonious, and Blacks were significantly less likely to be satisfied with their marriages. From what the literature says about marital quality, these results may lead to marital dissatisfaction or

marital dissolution over time.

Marital dissatisfaction, which is the opposite of marital satisfaction, is a problem that often contributes to marital dissolution and low marital quality. Miller (1976) and White (1983) note that there is empirical evidence documenting the importance of three specific factors in marital well-being and marital quality. They found that *spousal emotional support* is important to marital quality. Their research provides evidence that the greater the emotional support by the spouse, the greater the marital well-being and marital quality. *Financial strain and stress*, which is indicated by lack of financial satisfaction has also been shown to decrease marital well-being. In addition, *large numbers of household responsibilities*, such as cooking, cleaning, childcare, and other household work is associated with lower marital quality (Yogev & Brett, 1985).

Broman's (1993) research on race differences in marital well-being looked at how emotional support, financial strain, and the number of household works related to marital quality. Blacks were more likely than whites to perform a larger number of household chores and were less likely to be satisfied with their family finances. Race, spousal support, and financial situations have a direct affect on marital quality and marital harmony. Although Blacks have lower marital well-being, greater spousal support and satisfaction with family finances increases marital quality.

Overall, how an individual rates the quality of his or her marriage is a vital factor in marital satisfaction and happiness. The more an individual views his or her marriage as having low quality, the greater the likelihood of feeling dissatisfied with the relationship. Providing a couple with skills to address and enhance the relationship can help the couple find their way through current problems and hopefully prevent some future ones from occurring.

Marriage Enrichment

The desired goal of Marriage Enrichment is to help couples reach their fullest relationship potential (Arcus & Thomas, 1993; Hawley & Olson, 1995; Hof & Miller, 1981; Otto, 1976). Marriage enrichment is designed to help individuals and couples expand their awareness, increase healthy self-disclosure of thoughts and feelings, improve mutual empathy and intimacy, and develop and enhance the use of effective interpersonal skills, including communication, problem solving and conflict resolution.

In a review of family life programs that included marital as well as enrichment programs, Arcus and Thomas (1993) reviewed the practicing of family life progress. The review was an evaluation of three enrichment programs, and looked at new perspectives of marriage and family enrichment. They explained that marital and enrichment education is

intended to assist family systems with: 1) gaining knowledge about concepts and principles relevant to family matters; 2) exploring, understanding, and accepting personal attitudes and values of others; and 3) developing the interpersonal skills necessary to contribute to successful family well-being.

Harley and Olson (1995) and Hof and Miller (1981) state that in Marriage Enrichment there is a strong emphasis on developing interpersonal skills to enhance the relationship and establish and maintain open communication. Hof and Miller (1981) noted that Marriage Enrichment involves a variety of program options and is a philosophy. Behind the philosophy is a positive, dynamic view of marriage that is growth-oriented.

According to Guerney and Maxson (1990), marital and family enrichment programs are comprised of psycho-educational programs designed to strengthen couples or families to promote a high level of present and future family harmony and strength, and hence the long-term psychological, emotional and social well-being of family members. Simply put, marriage enrichment programs are designed to equip couples with techniques that help them prevent problems before they occur and also aids in helping couples navigate through problems that might arise.

Hunt et al. (1998) note that the beginnings of Marriage Enrichment are meshed with the evolution of marital therapy practice, which

emerged in the 1930s. However, it was not until the 1960s that the Marriage Enrichment movement took hold and began developing programs, and not until 1965 that Marriage Enrichment reached the United States.

Marriage Enrichment developed out of a need to help families function well together. In addition, there is an added belief that the marital relationship is the best system to address the needs of the family. Since the 1960s, many professionals have explored work in the area of marriage communication and enrichment and developed specialized program to address their findings. The focus of Marriage Enrichment and couple programs has moved from looking at individuals and their relationship in isolation to helping couples together (Zimpfer, 1988).

Although an evaluation of marketing factors in Marriage Enrichment program promotion has been previously concluded by Roberts and Morris (1998), this study expands on their work by specifically examining how the marketing factors identified in their study relate to participation of African American married individuals in Marriage Enrichment programs.

Marriage Enrichment is a brief, focused, prevention-intervention program provided in a variety of formats. Many programs have designated durations of six to twenty weeks. These weeks allow couples to focus on a specific skill or area in the marriage. As noted by Guerney and Maxson (1990), enrichment combines psychology and education

methods to nurture insight and behavioral change. In addition, the programs are most often in the form of weekly group settings or retreats. These forums are designed to create an atmosphere that supports growth toward individual and marital health, while establishing networks and links to other couples that can provide support.

The Marriage Enrichment retreat or conference format can last from one weekend to five days. It has an advantage of allowing an opportunity for couples to get away from normal routines, common distractions, and demands, while intensely evaluating their relationship in an atmosphere of leisure with other married couples (Mace & Mace, 1974). This advantage is also a disadvantage because of the format. Although the seclusion from life demands is appealing, it does not take into account the need to practice the skills learned in the day-to-day atmosphere. Once the couple returns to day-to-day living, the pressure of everyday life can overwhelm the couple's attempt to improve their relationship by using new skills. The skills gained over a weekend can quickly subside, allowing frustration, disappointment, and feelings of hopelessness to set in. An ongoing support group and /or follow up is needed to foster and maintain the skills learned in the initial experience.

A weekly group-meeting format for Marriage Enrichment has the advantage of allowing couples to learn and practice new skills over a series of weeks. This format allows continual follow up, as well as reinforcement of skills. Homework assignments can be given to reinforce

relationship satisfaction. Couples are taught skills that have been identified in research as predictors of healthy relationships. In addition, they are taught ways to stop behaviors that have been predicted as causing marital distress.

Overall, according to Guerney and Maxson (1990), enrichment programs have been effective. They reviewed a decade of marriage enrichment research contributions and summarized the findings. The first area of summarization included methodology, interpretation, subject characteristics, population format composition process, and leadership. The next area of summary is in component effectiveness comparisons. And finally, authors the summarized program effectiveness comparisons. Guerney and Maxson noted that the major methodological accomplishment of the marriage and family enrichment for the decade was the introduction of meta- analysis as an empirical study by Giblin, Sprinkle, and Sheehan (1985). Using meta-analysis allowed for comparisons, observations, and judgment that were not possible with the traditional approaches (i.e., summaries and tables in the article).

The contributions of Giblin et al. (1985) to the field is there finding that, on average, enrichment programs led to significant improvements that were often sustained for many months in the areas of premarital, marital, and family capabilities. This was found to be true in many individual studies performed in the 1980s and 90s. Additionally, they found that, although marriage and family enrichment programs are not

without the need for improvement, there is no doubt that, as a whole, enrichment programs work, and the field is an entirely legitimate one. From these findings, Guerney and Maxson (1990) concluded that no further research or energy needs to be devoted to the basic concern of proving the basic worth of marital and family enrichment. In addition, the meta-analysis study performed by Giblin et al. provided benchmarks against which new programs can and should be compared for effectiveness.

Other researchers, Stahmann and Salts (1993), noted that positive outcomes were especially true when the enrichment programs were longer, involved participants' interpersonal experiences, and included their behavior rehearsal. Additionally, they found that booster programs to ameliorate the diminishing enrichment effects over time reinforced relational growth.

Stahman and Salts (1993) provided a critical overview of the literature related to educating for marriage. The general education model, premarital counseling, and marital enrichment are three approaches to educating for marriage that they reviewed. Through their review of literature, the authors found that a focus on strengths for marriage rather than on problems or dysfunctions of marriage is one of the most effective approaches. Also, helping individuals to look at themselves, their spouse, intended spouse, their families or origin, interpersonal skills, marital expectations, and so on as a foundation for

healthy and functional marriages, appears to be the productive and justified marriage preparation model. This process is most often a part of improved marriage enrichment programs.

Fournier and Olson (1986) evaluated a preparation for marriage workshop which revealed that communication training and focus on sexual relationships are key elements of a successful program. On average according to Giblin et al. (1985), empirically based enrichment programs led to significant improvements in premarital, marital, and family capabilities and these gains often were sustained for many months.

Overview of Major Programs

There are a variety of Marriage Enrichment programs. However, only four major programs (i.e., Prevention and Relationship Enhancement (PREP), Couples Communication Program (CCP), Relationship Enhancement, and Marriage Encounter) will be examined to assess their structure, main emphasis, and relative effectiveness.

PREP (Markman et al., 1991; Renick, Bulmberg, & Markman, 1992) noted that this program is an empirically-based person and

designed to help couples develop the skills that prevent marital distress and divorce. PREP provides current information on the vital factors associated with relationship functioning. The program is a six-week program (one session a week). Each of the sessions lasts two and one-half hours. Small groups of four to eight couples or large groups of 20 to 40 couples at a time hear series of brief lectures on communication skills and or relationship issues. The couples are provided an opportunity to test the skills and resolve relational issues with an assigned communication consultant or by their own, depending on the format. The philosophy behind the skills training is that couples over time will learn the skills they practice and will walk away with a different resource to approach communication and conflict differently.

PREP was designed to prevent marital distress and divorce by using empirically based intervention techniques. Renick et al. (1992) looked at the long term and short-term effectiveness of the program, using results from a 10-year longitudinal study of 135 couples. The couples participated in preassessment and follow up throughout the years, which included a comparison between the short term of PREP and another program, which involved 24 other couples planning to get married. These couples participated in three research sessions over a 4-month period.

A major finding of the longitudinal study is relationship stability. Those who had participated in PREP have maintained significantly more

stable relationships than the couples in the control group.

The short-term study revealed that PREP couples, when compared to the control group couples, showed an increase in overall positive communication, as well as problem solving and support. Also, the PREP couples revealed a trend toward being happier than the couples in the control group.

PREP is a good example of a program that encompasses many of the elements that are proven to be effective. Renick et al. (1992) noted that, "ongoing work with PREP has proven that the program can be successful with moderately distressed couples, and couples who have been married many years before seeking intervention" (p. 146). Thus, it appears from the research that, on average, couples who participate in empirically based enrichment programs fair better than couples who do not participate in enrichment programs. Yet there are still many areas in marriage enrichment that need more research.

According to Miller, Nunally, and Wackman (1991) the Couples Communication Program was developed at the University of Family Study Center in the 1970s. The program was redesigned and updated in 1991 (Hunt et al., 1998). The goal of the program is to develop self and other- awareness skills, as well as communication skills between partners in a relationship. The program format usually involves seven or less couples meeting for three hours one night a week for 4 weeks. A trained instructor is available to facilitate experiential learning through

activities, exercises, readings, small group discussion, and a variety of other techniques. The program incorporates the weekly session format, which has been identified as having a more lasting effect on couples than one-time formats.

The Relationship Enhancement Program was developed by Dr. Bernard Guerney, Jr. and has been updated and refined by him and his associates for over 30 years (Hunt et al., 1998). It is highly structured with short-term education models. The format of the program ranges from weekend marathon groups to a series of weekly, one-hour meetings. The emphasis of the program is Rogerian, client-centered therapeutic principles which include direct expression of feelings and empathetic listening concepts (Hunt et al., 1998). An individual or couple practice the skills taught in each session as well as at home between classes. Giblin's (1996) meta-analysis of several Marriage Enrichment program found that Relationship Enhancement had the most significant effects (effect size) in the study. A study at Purdue University of 12 major Marriage Enrichment Programs also revealed Relationship Enhancement to result in the most powerful improvement of all the programs investigated (Hunt et al., 1998).

Marriage Encounter was developed in the 1960s under the leadership of Father Gábrriel Calvo in Barcelona Spain. Since its development, it has reached more couples than all other Marriage Enrichment programs combined (Hunt et al., 1998). The program is

structured as a weekend experience with the aim of raising consciousness. The emphasis of the program is to raise consciousness through letter writing and sharing. At the end of the program, couples renew their vows. The program reaches its goal of raising consciousness, but does not employ some of the more lasting techniques, such as role-playing or active listening. The Marriage Encounter retreat experience has the same disadvantages of all other weekend retreats, which is the difficulty with retaining the effects of the program over time.

Hunt et al. (1998) add that the banner of Marriage Enrichment includes many types of theoretical perspectives. These programs and formats have an emphasis on increasing couples' marital health, satisfaction, and positive functioning. In summary, Marriage Enrichment programs serve to help couples focus on developing and enhancing a particular skill over a specific time span with the hope that the skill will enhance the relationship of the married couples, curtailing the occurrence of significant problems in the future.

Participation in Self-Help Programs

Because of the variety of different self-help programs offered throughout communities, self-help programs may give us insights that are helpful in understanding Marriage Enrichment. The Epidemiological Catchment Area (ECA) study (Robins & Reiger, 1991) is a community

survey using a sample of 20,000 individuals. The study was conducted to determine the occurrence of psychiatric disorders and to understand who uses self-help programs and how often. They found that the Caucasian rate of attendance was 3.6%, Hispanic rate was 2.2% and African American was 1.1%. An additional analysis of social class indicated that self-help group use increased with higher socioeconomic status. Specifically related to African Americans, the ECA information provides strong evidence of the underutilization of self-help groups by African American.

Related to African American culture, Snowden and Liberman (1994) noted in their study of African American participation within self-help groups that, overall, African Americans were about one-third as likely as Whites to indicate involvement in self-help groups over the course of their lifetime and only about one seventh as likely to report involvement in the past year. Several explanations were given for this low involvement, a major factor being the need for members and facilitators to be from the same culture. Another factor is the different program facilitation style used by Whites as oppose to Blacks. The disclosure of intimate details about one's life in the company of others who are not related or close friends may hold less appeal for different ethnic groups and, thus, the format may contribute to the lack of attendance. Yet, another factor related to African American underrepresentation in Marriage Enrichment studies is presented by Roberts

and Morris (1998), noting that predominantly Euro American, middle class women report attendance at Marriage Enrichment and therefore, are more likely to be included as research subjects in studies seeking to evaluate Marriage Enrichment programs.

Marketing Research in Marriage Enrichment

The literature identifies several areas in marriage enrichment that need more research. For example, Cole and Cole (1999) stated that there is a strong need for family life educators and practitioners to re-evaluate their assumptions and theories and move forward by developing a solid, grounded theory for marriage and couple intervention. In addition, a common acknowledgement is for research to clarify which programs work best for what populations, what makes them best, and how they and new programs can be made more efficient and less costly and better marketed to reach those who need prevention methods most (Guerney & Maxson, 1990; Morris, Cooper & Gross, 1999; Zimpfer, 1988).

Although empirical support exists on the effectiveness of marital enrichment programs in preventing divorce and strengthening marriages (Giblin, Sprenkle, & Sheehan 1985; Guerney & Maxon, 1990), attendance at such seminars and workshops continues to be relatively low overall (Bowman & Kieron 1985; Spoth, Redmond, Hockaday, & Shen, 1996). In addition, Kiersen and Doherty-Poirus (1993) suggest

that, historically, white middle-class women have predominantly attended family life education programs.

Why is attendance at Marriage Education programs low?

Furthermore, why is attendance for minority couples, specifically African American couples, low? Regarding program promotion of Marriage Enrichment programs, Guerney and Maxson (1990) stated that the area of enrichment marketing research is almost non-existent and seems to cry out for development. In an effort to partially answer the call from Guerney and Maxson, Roberts and Morris (1998) conducted an evaluation of factors potentially associated with couples' decisions to attend or not attend a marriage enrichment program. In addition to this study, Morris et al. (1999) examined the relative influence of 'process-focused' predictor variables and how they are associated with marketing a marriage education workshop experience (i.e., participants' perceptions of product, place, price, people, and promotion) by looking at the criterion variable of participants' overall satisfaction with the workshop. An assumption associated with promoting any service, program or product is overall satisfaction with the five Ps of marketing: 1) price, 2) product, 3) place, 4) people, 5) promotion (Pribilovics, 1985). The blending of these five factors positively or negatively influences overall satisfaction in the consumer. If blended well, the factors help promote the program and services and will also aid in enhancing current and future attendance. If blended poorly, without assessing the needs of the

population in the five areas, the factors serve as barriers to current and future attendance.

Roberts and Morris' (1998) study which evaluated marketing factors in Marriage Enrichment program promotion took an in-depth look at factors potentially associated with couples' decisions to attend or not attend a marriage enrichment program. The six factors examined were 1) marital relationship, 2) self-esteem, 3) perception of marriage enrichment purpose, 4) constraints to attendance, 5) fears of attendance, and 6) knowledge about the facilitator. The sample consisted of 142 participants (71 husbands and 71 wives), and 93 non participants (41 husbands and 52 wives). Based on the study, the researchers identified that women who attended reported low self-esteem at the onset of the program. In addition, the research suggested that actively promoting Marriage Enrichment as education, and not therapy, might increase attendance rates. Time, interest, and the need for information were also identified as attendance constraints. This research study suggests that potential anxiety of marriage enrichment as an invasion of marital privacy should be addressed in the initial stages of the program, as well as in promotion of the program to improve attendance. In addition, the early disclosure of facilitator traits was recommended to increase attendance.

Both studies, Morris et al. (1999) and Roberts and Morris (1998) yielded informative results and insight into how to enhance marketing

strategies for marriage enrichment consumers. Yet the sample (n = 235) for both studies was a convenience sample that was 96% Caucasian. Therefore, generalizability from these studies to other populations is cautioned.

Spoth et al. (1996) offered detailed information on barriers to participation in assessment and motivation components of a family skills preventive intervention evaluation project. They found that there were greater concerns among lower socio economic status families regarding privacy issues, which is reflected in low attendance at these programs.

These trends, according to Giblin et al. (1985), Guerney and Maxson (1990), and Stahman and Salts (1993), may actually be a result of primary intervention such as Marriage Enrichment being most appealing and available to the homogenous population.

To date, there have been no studies examining what attracts African American couples to attend Marriage Enrichment programs. Thus, we do not know if current marketing strategies are appropriate or effective for African American couples. Due to the lack of research concentration on African American consumers of Marriage Enrichment programs and products, the purpose of this study is to conduct an evaluation of factors potentially associated with African American couples' decisions to attend or not attend a Marriage Enrichment program. This study is an expansion of Roberts and Morris' (1998) evaluation of marketing factors in Marriage Enrichment program

promotion. This study is different from Roberts and Morris' (1998) study in a several ways: 1) its target population is the African American population, whereas Robert and Morris study represented a 96% Caucasian population; 2) this study, unlike their study, does not include in its methodology the offering of a Marriage Enrichment program. Instead, this study surveys members of churches that have a Marriage Enrichment program offered at the church, and ask whether or not they have participated in a Marriage Enrichment program; 3) The Roberts and Morris study had three distinctions of participants in the study: study participants (persons who participated in the study by completing the questionnaire), program participants, and program non-participants (persons who either attended or did not attend the marriage enrichment program that was offered as part of their study). This study only has two distinctions: program participants (persons who report that they have attended a Marriage Enrichment program) and program non participants (persons who report that they have not attended a Marriage Enrichment program); 4) this study includes the Rotter I-E locus of control instrument, whereas their study did not; 5) this study includes two questions assessing commitment to change, whereas their study included only one; and 6) a two-way analysis of variance was used to examine whether there were significant interaction effects among participation status and gender in this study, whereas in their study T-test and correlations were conducted to compare means or the sums of

responses.

Like Robert and Morris' (1998) study, comparisons between program participants and non-participants in terms of their marital relationships, self-esteem levels, perceptions of marriage enrichment purpose, constraints to participation, fears of attendance, and preferred knowledge about the program facilitator will be examined.

So, much research is still needed in the Marriage Enrichment field in order to design effective programs for all populations, and there is a specific need to target the African American community. For the purpose of this research, my specific focus is on evaluating African American individuals' decisions to attend or not attend a Marriage Enrichment program and the extent to which differences in perceptions of participants and non-participants vary by gender. However, there is not enough support in the literature to hypothesize directions of differences in most of the studied areas.

Conceptual Hypothesis

1. Levels of perceptions reported in marital satisfaction will vary according to participation status and gender
2. Perceptions of marital and family strength will differ according to participation status and gender.
3. The perceptions of the levels of commitment to change will not

differ according to participation status and gender.

4. Perceptions of the level of ability to communicate will differ according to participation and gender.
5. Perceptions of the levels of self-esteem will vary according to participation status and gender.
6. Perceptions of marital enrichment will vary according to participation status and gender of African Americans.
7. Perceptions of constraints against attendance will vary according to participation status and gender.
8. Perceptions of the levels of anxiety regarding fears of Marriage Enrichment attendance will vary according to program participants and gender.
9. Perception of the levels of knowledge about the facilitator will vary according to participation status and gender.
10. Perceptions of levels of external locus of control will vary according to participation status and gender.

In summary, marital dissolution often has very serious and far-reaching effects on families, especially African American families. In order to help prevent the problems associated with marital distress and divorce (i.e., poverty, depression, and low educational attainment) and health marital relationships, educating couples is crucial. Attendance at Marriage Enrichment programs overall is low and is even lower for African Americans who, according to the literature, have higher rates of

marital dissatisfaction and divorce than Whites. An evaluation of factors associated with attendance specifically focusing on the African American population will help educators understand how best to market marital education programs to African American so that attendance rates at such programs will go up.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The study is designed to evaluate African American married individuals' decisions to attend or not attend a Marriage Enrichment program. It examines the individual's report on ten variables: 1) marriage satisfaction, 2) marital and family strengths, 3) communication satisfaction, 4) commitment to change, 5) level of self esteem, 6) perceptions of marriage enrichment purpose, 7) constraints to attendance, 8) fears of attendance, 9) knowledge about the facilitator, and 10) locus control.

As previously stated, few studies have examined the potential factors associated with Marriage Enrichment program participation. This study specifically examines the African American populations' reported barriers and protective factors to Marriage Enrichment attendance. The findings from this study add to the literature and provide a better understanding of factors associated with African Americans' decisions to attend or not attend Marriage Enrichment programs.

Type of Research

In order to conduct an evaluation of factors potentially associated

with married individuals' decisions to attend or not attend a marriage enrichment program, a two-way analysis of variance was used. The researcher considered gender and willingness to participate. The purpose of the research is descriptive. The aim is to describe a phenomenon as it exists. Because the evaluation is to be made on the factors that are potentially associated with attendance or non-attendance, the analysis of variance is the most appropriate for the study. In addition, due to the study's primary focus being marketing factors affecting African American Marriage Enrichment consumers in general, and not specific couples, the unit of analysis is the individual married person. Since the study will be conducted by looking at the African American married population at a single point in time, the time dimension of the study is cross-sectional.

Sampling

The target population consists of African American married persons in a Southwestern Metropolitan area that have access to marriage education or marriage enrichment programs through their churches. To obtain a convenience sample of the population for the study, recommendations from pastors, associates, friends, and family were obtained until 10 separate, predominantly African American populated churches were listed. All churches were contacted and

distinguished according to whether a marriage enrichment or education program is offered at the church. From the list of churches that offer Marriage Enrichment programs, the pastors of the churches were contacted and asked to grant permission for the survey to be conducted at their church. Three pastors agreed to allow their members to participate in the study. The three churches were the only churches out of the ones given and listed that had a Marriage Enrichment program. The total combined active (regularly attending) adult membership reported at the churches was 440. The estimates given by church officials of active married members were 235 collectively. One hundred and thirteen surveys were turned in; initial response rate of 48%, however, 15 of them were missing vital information or were completed with the spouse, so the information could not be included. The sample consists of 98 persons (75 participants (76.5%) and 23 non participants (23.5%)) for a response rate of 42%. Of the 98, 45 (45.9%) were males and 51 (53.1%) were female. One (1%) participants did not report his or her gender.

The sample (N= 98) included 94 (95.9%) Black or African American and 4 (4.1%) African American and another race. The sample averaged 43.54 years of age (range 24 – 69 years) and had been married for an average of 15.08 (range .08 – 45 years). Ninety-one (92.9 %) of the sample were in their first marriage, one (1%) was married and had been separated, five (5.1%) reported that they had been divorced and

remarried, and one (1%) did not report his or her marital status. Study participants were educated, with 83.3% having attended some college. In addition, 50% of participants reported working in professional or technical occupations. The most commonly reported pre-tax household income of the study participants was over \$60,000. The majority of the sample reported that they were members of a protestant religion: 61 (62.2%) Baptist; 27 (27.5%) non-denominational; ten (10.2%) did not report).

Research Method

For the purpose of the research, the method chosen is instrument administration (survey research). The observations were made by self-administered questionnaires. Survey research was chosen due to its ability to enhance understanding by collecting data from many people in a small amount of time at minimal cost. It allowed the researcher to obtain separate perceptions of participants, non-participants, husbands, and wives on their views of how the ten variables related to their decisions to attend or not attend a Marriage Enrichment program. In addition, the survey design allowed the researcher to obtain specific characteristics of a large population.

The churches selected were asked to allow a member of the church or the primary investigator to announce before the church service the

need for married individuals to stay after service to complete the survey. All measures were taken to have the need for participants announced twice, but the researcher respected the traditions and preferences of each particular church.

Each church announced the following:

Our church has been selected to participate in a research study that will be conducted today immediately following service. All married persons (individuals present with or without their spouse) are asked and encouraged to participate. We are excited that our church has been selected and want to participate in great numbers. So, if you are married, please remain in the sanctuary immediately following service. You will be given a questionnaire that should only take 15 to 25 minutes to complete. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

Married persons that remained for the survey were asked to separate from their spouse and spread out throughout the sanctuary. Once everyone was situated, the consent forms and questionnaire were distributed. The consent form was read aloud and participants were asked to sign them. The primary investigator or appointed church member stated, "If you agree to participate, please sign and date the consent form. If you feel uncomfortable or do not wish to participate, feel

status, number of children in the household, education level, religious denomination, profession, employment status, current position/title, pre-tax income level, years of employment, living arrangements, and perception of financial situation. Assessment of the primary variables in the study will be discussed separately.

Perception of marital relationship was measured by survey participants completing questions regarding four main aspects: 1) marital satisfaction, 2) marital and family strengths, 3) communication satisfaction, and 4) commitment to change.

Marital Satisfaction. Marital satisfaction was measured by study participants completing the Kansas Marital Satisfaction scale (Schumm, Milliken, Poresky, Bollman, & Jurich, 1983). The three-item scale asks the respondents how satisfied they are with 1) their marriage, 2) husband and wife as a spouse, and 3) their relationship with their husband or wife. The response choices were on the following seven-point scale: (1) "extremely dissatisfied", (2) "very dissatisfied," (3) "somewhat dissatisfied," (4) "mixed," (5) "somewhat satisfied," (6) "very satisfied," and (7) "extremely satisfied." The Cronbach's alpha level reported in the Robert and Morris' study was .93. The Cronbach's alpha level for this scale in the current study is .97. The instrument has historically been proven to be an accurate measure of marital satisfaction.

Marital and Family Strengths. Marital and family strengths was measured by respondents rating on 5-point Likert-type scale their level of

agreement with two statements: "My marriage is strong," and "My family is strong." The response choices on the scale are: (1) "strongly disagree," (2) "disagree," (3) "neutral," (4) "agree," and (5) "strongly agree." The Cronbach's alpha level for this scale in the Robert and Morris study was .83. The Cronbach's alpha level for this scale in the current study was .84. Face validity for the instrument is present according to a panel of family science scholars.

Communication Satisfaction. Communication satisfaction was assessed by respondents rating their level of agreement on a 1 item, 4-point Likert-type scale which asked "Over the past 6 months, I have been satisfied with my ability to communicate with my spouse." The response choices are:

(1) "strongly disagree," (2) "disagree," (3) "agree," and (4) "strongly agree." The researcher was unable to test reliability due to this being a one item scale. The instrument appears to have face validity according to a panel of family science scholars.

Commitment to Change. Commitment to change was assessed by using Morris's 1998 perception of Marriage Education scale), which asked respondents to select their level of agreement to two statements measured on a 4 point Likert-type scale. Morris (1998) reported using one of the items which stated, "I am committed to changing anything in my life that would make my marriage more satisfying." His second

question was used in the current study which is, "My spouse is committed to changing anything in their life to make our marriage more satisfying." For each question, the response choices included: (1) "strongly disagree," (2) "disagree," (3) "agree," (4) strongly agree. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was not given in the previous study most likely because it was a one-item scale. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale in the current study was .65. The instrument appears to have content and face validity according to a panel of family science scholars.

Level of Self Esteem. Level of self-esteem was assessed using Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). The scale asks respondents to rate their level of agreement to ten items related to self-esteem. The instrument asks questions such as, "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. The response choices include: (1) "strongly disagree," (2) "disagree," (3) "agree," (4) "strongly agree." The Cronbach's alpha for the scale in the previous study is .86. The Cronbach alpha for this study is .78. Content validity for this instrument has been historically proven.

Perceptions of Marriage Enrichment Purpose. Respondents rated five separate items on a 4 point Likert-type scale assessing the variable perceptions of marriage enrichment purpose. The statement asks, "Marriage enrichment should primarily be..." and specifically included the following purposes: education, therapy, recreation, social interaction, and career advancement. The response choices are: (1) "strongly

disagree,”

(2) “disagree,” (3) “agree,” (4) “strongly agree.” Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was not given in the previous study. Cronbach’s alpha for the current study is .61. The validity of this instrument was questionable because a panel of three family science scholars reported that the instrument was more of a checklist than an actual scale.

Constraints to Attendance. Respondents indicated their level of agreement assessing the amount of constraints to attendance on a 4-point Likert-type scale that included five separate statements regarding constraints on their participation (i.e., lack of time, money, interest, childcare, and information about the program) was sited. The scale presents statements such as, “There was too much pressure to attend.” The response choices were: (1) “strongly disagree,” (2) “disagree,” (3) “agree,” (4) “strongly agree.” The Cronbach’s alpha was not reported in the previous study. Cronbach’s alpha for the scale in the current study was .90. The face validity of the scale was present according to a panel of family science scholars.

Fears of Attendance. The variable amount of fears of marriage enrichment attendance was assessed using a 13-item anxiety scale developed by Morris in 1995. Respondents selected their level of agreement on a 4-point Likert-type scale, with each item beginning, “I was afraid...” and covered topics such as invasion of privacy and the

perception that marriage is in trouble. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale in the previous study was .93. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale in the current study was .92. According to a panel of family science scholars, the scale appears to have face validity.

Knowledge About the Facilitator. To measure this variable respondents indicated their level of agreement with a 4-point Likert-type scale with 17 individual items. Each item began with the statement, "It is important for me to know the seminar facilitator's ..." Specific topics included age, marital status, religious belief system, media attention, and previous experience in leading marriage enrichment program and seminars. Response choices are: (1) "strongly disagree," (2) "disagree," (3) "agree," and (4) "strongly agree." The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was not reported in the previous study. Cronbach's alpha for this scale in the current study is .88. According to a panel of family science scholars, the scale appears to have face validity.

Locus of Control. To measure the variable locus of control, the religious version of Rotter's Internal—External Scale (1966) was administered. The scale consists of 23 forced-choiced pairs of statements keyed in an external direction, with six other filler items designed to disguise the nature of the test. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale historically in the literature is .73. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .51. The literature reports that the scale is an accurate measure of external and internal control.

As mentioned earlier, the questions are taken from the study conducted by Robert & Morris' (1998) study. In addition, respondents were asked questions about locus of control and any other deviation from the instruments used in Roberts and Morris' (1998) were noted above. For the purpose of the research, it was important that subjects take the instrument individually and were not influenced by a spouse or a friend, which may cause respondents to answer differently under the pressure of being seen or from pressure from others sitting closer to them than they want. Because of this, it was important that couples were asked to separate from one another and all respondents were asked to spread out.

Operational Hypothesis

1. Scores on the three-item Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (Schumm, Milliken, Poresky, Bottman, & Jurich, 1983) will vary according to participation status and gender.
2. Scores on the two-item global scale assessing marital and family strength will differ according to participation status and gender.
3. Scores on the two-item scale assessing personal commitment to change and the perception of spouses' commitments to change will not differ according to participation and gender.
4. Scores on the single item scale assessing communication satisfaction will differ according to participation status and gender.

5. Scores on Rosenberg's Self- Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) will vary according to participation status and gender.
6. Scores on the five-item purpose of Marriage Enrichment scale will vary according to participation status and gender.
7. Scores on five-item constraints to attendance scale will vary according to participation status and gender.
8. Scores on Morris' (1998) anxiety scale measuring fears of Marriage Enrichment attendance will vary according to program participation and gender.
9. Scores on the 17-item knowledge about the facilitator scale will vary according to program participation status and gender.
10. Scores on Rotter 's (1996) 29-item locus of control scale will vary according to participation status and gender.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis of the data included frequency distributions, testing reliability with Cronbach's alpha, and a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). According to Shavelson (1996), the ANOVA is used to analyze data from designs that produce two or more groups of subjects on one independent variable. In this study there are four groups: 1) male participants, 2) female participants, 3) male non-participants, 4) female non-participants. Using the ANOVA, we can compare the means between

groups to assess whether the observed difference is by chance or a real effect. The research will report significant interactions between participation status and gender when looking at the ten variables. The strength of association will be assessed by calculating η^2 for significant effects (Talsachnick & Fidell, 1983). $\eta^2_{alt} =$

$$\frac{SS_{effect}}{SS_{effect} + SS_{error}}$$

If no significant interaction exists then the researcher will look for and report main effects (Shavelson, 1996). Because the study assesses married individuals and not married couples, there is no need to have equal numbers of males and females in the study. Both members of a couple may respond since the study measures individual responses and does not match the results by married couples.

Data Collection Procedures

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved procedures prior to administration of the instruments. Data collection began in April 2002. The primary investigator traveled to two churches and administered the instrument directly. One church preferred that their own church couple administer the questionnaire, so the couple was trained and briefed on the methodology.

Ninety-eight questionnaires and consent forms were completed

correctly. The consent form explained the benefits of participation and stressed that confidentiality would be maintained. The consent forms were collected separately from the questionnaire to also ensure confidentiality. Respondents were not asked to include their name on the questionnaire, which also helped ensure confidentiality.

Data Coding

Each questionnaire was given a tracking number to assist with data entry. The data on each questionnaire was coded to a numbered format. The numerical codes represent the responses given by the participants in the study. The responses were entered into the SPSS (version 10.0 for Windows). After entering in the numerical codes, the data entered was checked for inaccuracies.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study is designed to examine African American married individuals' decisions to attend or not attend a marriage enrichment program. Ten variables will be analyzed by differences in gender and willingness to participate. The descriptive characteristics of study participants are presented (see Table 1). Data from ninety-eight married individuals were examined in this study.

Hypothesis 1: Levels of perceptions reported in marital satisfaction will vary according to participation status and gender. A two-way analysis of variance was used to examine this hypothesis. Neither the interaction of participation status and gender ($F = .45$, $p = .50$) nor the main effect for participation status ($F = .01$, $p = .89$) was significant. However, the main effect for gender was significant ($F = 4.89$, $p = .02$). Males reported a higher level of marital satisfaction ($M = 17.64$) than females ($M = 15.73$). The amount of variance explained by gender was five percent ($\eta^2_{\text{alt}} = .05$).

Hypothesis 2: Levels of perceived marital strength and family strength will not differ according to participation status and gender.

A two-way analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis. From the results of this test, there was no significance interaction effect ($F = .91$, $p = .34$) and no significant main effects: attendance ($F = 1.21$, $p = .27$); gender ($F = 3.18$, $p = .07$)(see Table 3).

Hypothesis 3: The perceptions of the level of commitment to change will not differ according to participation status and gender.

A two-way analysis of variance indicated a significant interaction effect for participation status by gender for African Americans ($F = 4.11$, $p = .045$)(see Table 4). A plot of the interaction revealed that female and male program participants had similar views on their personal commitment and spousal commitment to change, whereas female program non-participants' reported lower levels of commitment to change than male non participants (see Figure 1). Plots of the responses to separate items (i.e. personal commitment to change and spousal commitment to change) revealed similar patterns (see Figures 2 and 3). The interaction of participation by gender accounted for four percent of the variance in perceived levels of commitment to change ($\eta^2_{alt} = .04$).

Hypothesis 4: Perceptions of the level of satisfaction with the ability to communicate will differ according to participation and gender.

A two-way analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis. The results from the test indicate that there is no significant interaction effect ($F = .60$, $p = .43$) and no significant main effect: attendance ($F = .60$, $p = .43$); gender ($F = .88$, $p = .35$) (see Table 5).

Hypothesis 5: The perceptions of the level of self-esteem will vary according to participation status and gender.

A two-way analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis. From the results of this test, there was no significant interaction effect among groups ($F = .15$, $p = .69$) and no significant main effect: attendance ($F = .50$, $p = .47$); gender ($F = .28$, $p = .59$) (see Table 6).

Hypothesis 6: Perceptions of marital enrichment will vary according to participation status and gender.

A two-way analysis of variance indicated a significant interaction effect for participation status by gender for African Americans ($F = 5.94$, $p = .017$). A plot of the interaction revealed that female and male program participants had similar views on the purpose of marriage enrichment, whereas female program non-participants' views of the purpose of marriage enrichment differed from male non-participants (see Table 7) (see Figure 4). The interaction of participation by gender accounted for six percent of the variance in perceptions of Marriage Enrichment ($\eta^2_{\text{alt}} = .06$)

Hypothesis 7: Perceptions of the level of agreement regarding constraints to attendance will vary according to participation status and

gender.

A two-way analysis of variance indicated no significant interaction effect and no significant ($F = 2.29$, $p = .13$) and no main effect: attendance ($F = 3.89$, $p = .052$); gender ($F = .17$, $p = .67$) (see Table 8).

Hypothesis 8: Perceptions of the levels of anxiety regarding fears of Marriage Enrichment attendance will vary according to gender.

A two-way analysis of variance was used to examine this hypothesis. Neither the interaction of participation status and gender ($F = 2.62$, $p = .10$) nor the main effect for gender ($F = .05$, $p = .82$) was significant. However, the main effect for participation was significant ($F = 4.75$, $p = .03$). Non-participants reported a higher level of anxiety regarding fears of marriage enrichment attendance ($M = 27.14$) than participants ($M = 23.72$) (see Table 9). Participation accounted for five percent of the variance in fears of attendance ($\eta^2_{\text{alt}} = .05$)

Hypothesis 9: Perceptions of the level of knowledge about the facilitator will vary according to participation status and gender.

A two-way analysis of variance indicated no significant interaction of participation status and gender ($F = 2.64$, $p = .10$) nor a significant main effect for participation status ($F = 1.77$, $p = .18$). However, the main effect for gender was significant ($F = 5.87$, $p = .01$). Males reported a higher level of the need for knowledge about the facilitator ($M = 32.20$) than females ($M = 29.67$). Gender accounted for six percent of the variance (see Table 10).

Hypothesis 10: Perceptions of levels of external locus of control will vary according to participation status and gender.

A two-way analysis of variance indicated no significant interaction of participation status and gender ($F = .95$, $p = .33$) nor a significant main effect of participation status ($F = 2.59$, $p = .11$). However, the main effect for gender was significant ($F = 4.37$, $p = .03$) (see Table 11). Females reported a higher level of external locus of control ($M = 9.34$) than males ($M = 8.34$). Gender accounted for five percent of the variance.

TABLE I
CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBJECTS

Characteristics (98)	N	%
<hr/>		
Age		
20 – 30	09	09.2
31 – 40	33	33.6
41 – 50	31	32.0
51 – 60	20	20.2
61 – 70	04	04.0
Missing data	01	01.0
Sex		
Male	45	45.9
Female	52	53.1
Missing data	01	01.0
Ethnic background		
African American	94	95.9
African American and another race reported	04	04.1
Present Marital Status		
Married	91	92.9
Married and Separated	01	01.0
Divorced and Remarried	05	05.1
Missing data	01	01.0
Length of Marital Status		
00 – 05	28	28.6
06 – 10	20	20.4
11 – 15	14	14.3
16 – 20	02	02.0
21 – 25	10	10.2
26 – 30	10	10.2
31 – 35	04	04.1
36 – 40	05	05.1
41 – 45	03	03.1
Missing data	02	02.0

TABLE I
CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBJECTS

Characteristic (98)	N	%
<hr/>		
# of Children		
0 children	15	15.3
1 child	22	22.4
2 children	24	24.5
3 children	16	16.3
4 children	03	03.1
5 children	02	02.0
6 children	02	02.0
Missing data	14	14.3
Highest level of Ed		
Elementary	00	00.0
Junior High	00	00.0
High School	16	16.7
Some College	43	44.8
Bachelors	29	30.2
Masters	06	07.3
Doctorate	01	01.0
Other	00	00.0
Denomination		
Baptist	61	62.2
Non Denominational	26	26.5
Other	01	01.0
Missing data	10	10.2
Employment Status		
No employment	06	06.1
Part-time	06	06.1
Full-time	80	81.6
Other	05	05.1
Missing data	01	01.0

TABLE I
CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBJECTS

Characteristic (98)	N	%
Hours worked a week		
00 - 20	04	04.0
21- 30	03	03.0
31- 40	51	52.0
40+	26	26.5
Missing data	14	14.3
Type of occupation		
Professional	49	50.0
Managers	09	09.2
Clerical	12	12.2
Craftspeople	03	03.1
Machine operators	02	02.0
Service worker	04	04.1
Laborers	03	03.1
Farmers and miners	03	03.1
Homemaker	08	08.2
Missing data	05	05.1
Household pretax income		
00,000-19,999	05	05.1
20,000-39,999	16	16.3
40,000-59,999	33	33.7
60,000+	38	38.8
Missing data	06	06.1

TABLE II
Analysis of Variance for Marital Satisfaction

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Attendance	00.34	1	0.01	0.89
Gender	90.53	1	4.89	0.02
Attendance x gender	08.49	1	0.45	0.50
Error	1701.89	92		

$\eta^2_{\text{alt}} = .05$

TABLE III
Analysis of Variance for Marital and Family Strength

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Attendance	04.96	1	1.21	0.27
Gender	12.99	1	3.18	0.07
Attendance x gender	03.73	1	0.91	0.34
Error	379.10	93		

TABLE IV
Analysis of Variance for Commitment to Change

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Attendance	00.18	1	0.09	0.75
Gender	07.43	1	3.96	0.049
Attendance x gender	07.71	1	4.11	0.045
Error	174.46	93		

$\eta^2_{\text{alt}} = .04$

Figure 1

Commitment to Change

Gender by Participation

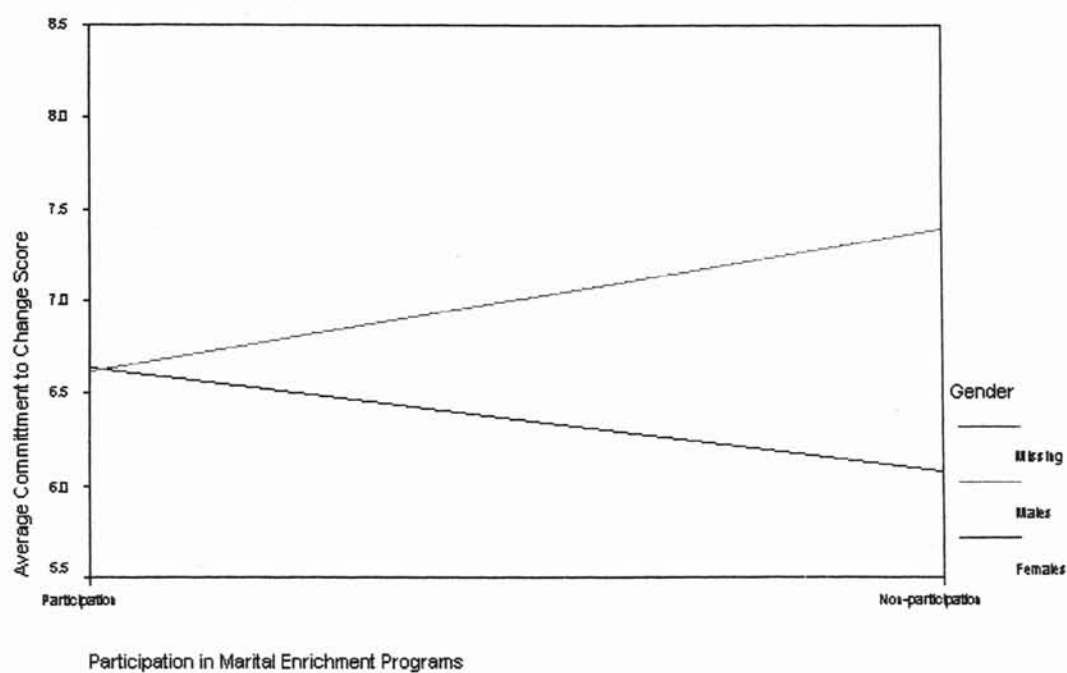


Figure 2

Personal Commitment to Change

Gender by Participation

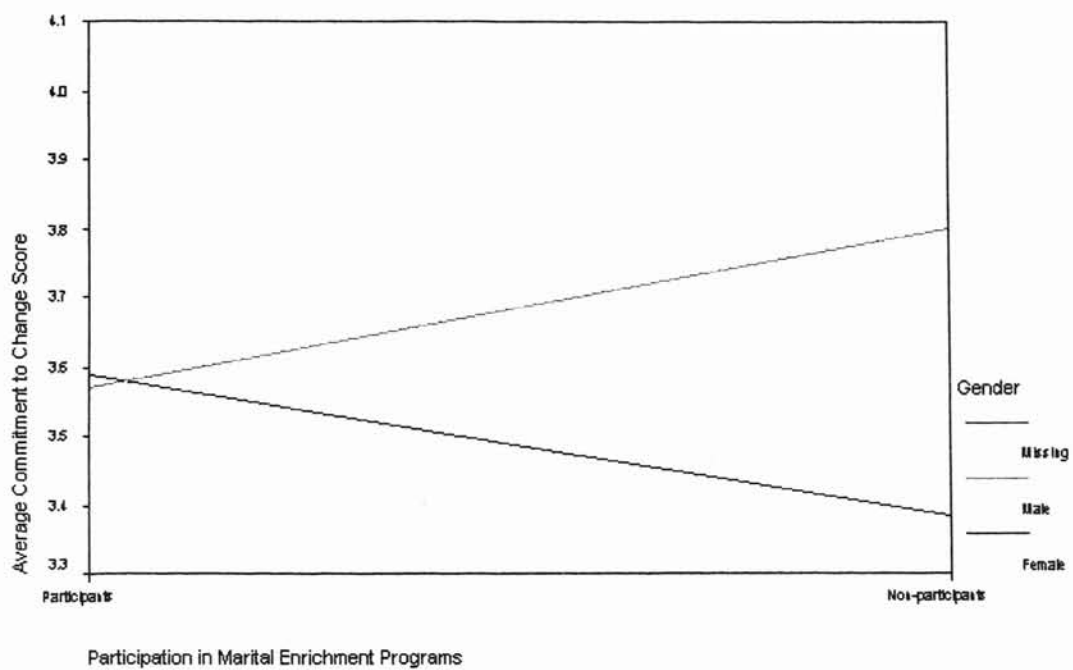


Figure 3

Spousal Commitment to Change

Gender by Participation

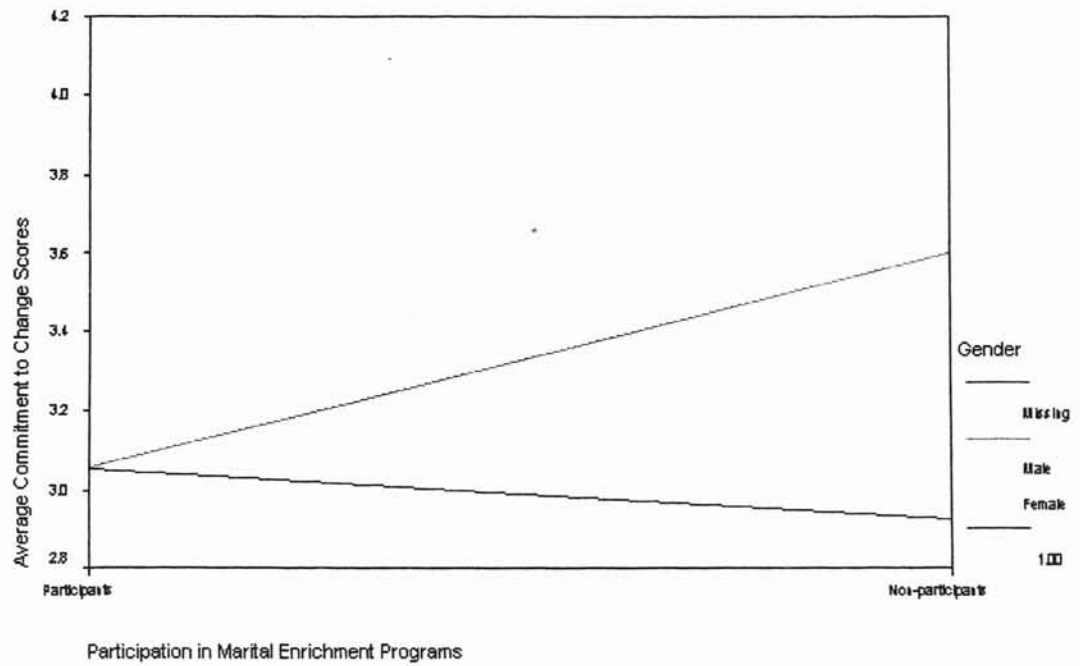


TABLE V
Analysis of Variance for Communication Satisfaction

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Attendance	00.38	1	0.60	0.43
Gender	00.56	1	0.88	0.35
Attendance x gender	00.38	1	0.60	0.43
Error	59.73	93		

TABLE VI
Analysis of Variance for Self Esteem

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Attendance	03.97	1	0.50	0.47
Gender	02.22	1	0.28	0.59
Attendance x gender	01.21	1	0.15	0.69
Error	731.51	93		

TABLE VII
Analysis of Variance for Perceptions of Marriage Enrichment

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Attendance	569.11	1	5.49	.021
Gender	612.67	1	5.91	.017
Attendance x gender	615.84	1	5.94	.017
Error	9632.80	93		

$$\eta^2_{\text{alt}} = .06$$

Figure 4

Perceptions of Marital Enrichment

Gender by Attendance

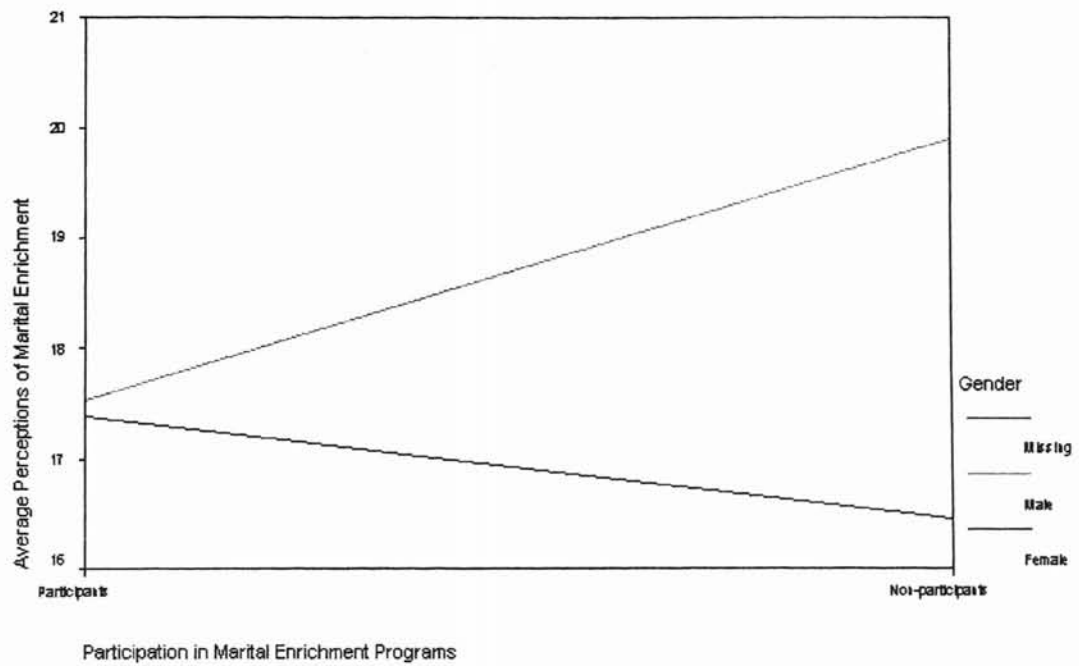


TABLE VIII
Analysis of Variance for Constraints to Attendance

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	F	p
Attendance	33.52	1	3.89	0.052
Gender	1.52	1	0.17	0.67
Attendance x gender	19.73	1	2.29	0.13
Error	792.62	92		

TABLE IX
Analysis of Variance for Fears of Attendance

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Attendance	186.63	1	4.75	0.03
Gender	2.00	1	0.05	0.82
Attendance x gender	102.90	1	2.62	0.10
Error	3613.23	92		

$\eta^2_{\text{alt}} = .05$

TABLE X
Analysis of Variance for Knowledge about the Facilitator

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Attendance	083.70	1	1.77	0.18
Gender	277.70	1	5.87	0.01
Attendance x gender	124.89	1	2.64	0.10
Error	4392.67	93		

$\eta^2_{\text{alt}} = .06$

TABLE XI
Analysis of Variance for Locus of Control

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	F	p
Attendance	16.74	1	2.59	0.11
Gender	28.17	1	4.37	0.03
Attendance x gender	06.12	1	0.95	0.33
Error	580.20	90		

$$\eta^2_{\text{alt}} = .05$$

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study examines African American married individuals' decisions to attend or not attend a marriage enrichment program. Specifically, the study considers ten variables: 1) marriage satisfaction, 2) marital and family strengths, 3) communication satisfaction, 4) commitment to change, 5) level of self esteem, 6) perceptions of marriage enrichment purpose, 7) constraints to attendance, 8) fears of attendance, 9) knowledge about the facilitator, and 10) locus of control. The hypotheses given in this study were generated from the findings from Roberts and Morris' (1998) study on nine of the variables. The locus of control instrument was added to this study. The researcher used the findings from that study to hypothesize on the African American population in this study.

As mentioned previously, this study is different from Roberts and Morris' (1998) study in several ways: 1) its target population is the African American population, whereas Robert and Morris' study represented a 96% Caucasian population; 2) this study, unlike their study, does not include in its methodology the offering of a Marriage

Enrichment program. Instead, this study surveys members of churches that have a Marriage Enrichment program offered at the church, and asks whether or not they have participated in a Marriage Enrichment program; 3) the Roberts and Morris study had three distinctions of participants in the study: study participants (persons who participated in the study by completing the questionnaire), program participants, and program non-participants (persons who either attended or did not attend the marriage enrichment program that was offered as part of their study). This study only has two distinctions: program participants (persons who report that they have attended a Marriage Enrichment program) and program non-participants (persons who report that they have not attended a Marriage Enrichment program); 4) this study includes the Rotter I-E locus of control instrument, whereas their study did not; 5) this study includes two commitment to change questions in the instrument, whereas their study included one; and 6) a two-way analysis of variance was used to examine whether there were significant interaction effects among participation status and gender in this study, whereas in their study T-test and correlations were conducted to compare means or the sums of responses.

Using Exchange Theory as a guide for the study, the aim of the study was to assess the perceptions of married individuals as they related to the ten variables. The goal is to use the information to help promote marriage enrichment as more attractive to married individuals

in hopes of increasing attendance. The findings are a step in the right direction of promotion among African American married individuals.

Data from the study indicated that the means for female non participants was lower than the mean for non participating males on their commitment to change; whereas, the means for females and males who did attend were very similar. This is a different finding than Roberts and Morris' (1998) study. They found no significant difference in the means between males and females by participation status. The results from this study help promote the speculation of Roberts and Morris' (1998) study that commitment to change as well as other variables may influence an individual's decision to attend or not attend a Marriage Enrichment program; thus, these factors should be researched more fully.

The findings on commitment to change are important. Among participants, there are no significant differences among men and women in commitment to change. However, among non-participants, females are less committed to change than males and perceive their spouses as less committed to change. Conversely, males who do not attend report a higher level of commitment to change than females and perceive their partner as having a higher level of commitment to change. These findings suggest that women may play the key role in whether a couple attends marital enrichment. Although men report that they are committed to change, they are not attending; and females who are not

attending are less committed to change. It is interesting that males who do not attend perceive a need for change in the relationship yet do not act upon that perception; whereas when women perceive a need for change, they are more likely to attend.

Males overall (participants and non participants) reported higher levels of marital satisfaction than females. This finding adds to the dispute in the literature regarding marital satisfaction levels by participation status. Giblin et al. (1985) found that many programs assume that individuals choosing to participate in Marriage Enrichment have higher levels (above average) of marital satisfaction. Silverman and Urbanak (1983) found this to be true in their study. There were no significant differences between program participants and non-participants on marital satisfaction. Yet, males did report higher levels than females. Marital and family strength did not show any significant interactions between the groups nor did levels of satisfaction with the ability to communicate.

Data from the study indicated that non-participants reported higher levels of anxiety regarding fears of attendance. This finding differs from Robert and Morris' (1998) research. In their study, they found that overall, all the respondents in their study, regardless of participation status, reported low levels of anxiety about marriage enrichment, whereas this study did find differences between participation status.

Spoth et al. (1996) documented the existence of fears of invasion of privacy in family prevention education, which may help us understand this finding. The higher levels of anxiety regarding fears of attendance among non-participants may be related to a fear of invasion of privacy. Non-participants may be nervous about what actually goes on in Marriage Enrichment and because of this, they are keeping their distance.

Males reported a higher level of the need to know about the facilitator than females. Duncan, Box, and Silliman (1996) reported that being recommended by a personal or trusted source was very important to promotion of marital programs and may shed light on the finding. Males having a stronger need to know about the facilitator suggests that perhaps men are more concerned about whether the facilitator will be able to relate to them, yet women are less focused on this aspect of the enrichment experience.

Males who did not attend Marriage Enrichment had higher means than females who did not attend Marriage Enrichment on their perceptions of the purpose of Marriage Enrichment ; whereas, female participants' views of the purpose of marriage enrichment were very similar. Mace (1982) and Hoff and Miller (1981) report that the primary purpose of marriage enrichment is to be educational yet, there seems to be a misconception that Marriage Enrichment is therapeutic or social in nature. This could explain the difference of males who did not attend

having higher means than females who did not attend. Thus, it is likely that targeting realistic and unrealistic expectations of marital enrichment may help couples develop a more congruent perception and increase the likelihood of attendance.

One of the strengths of the study is that it, like Roberts and Morris' (1998) study, compares marriage enrichment participants and non-participants, using married individuals who have access to marriage enrichment programs. Krug and Ahadi (1986) and Powell and Wampler (1982) conducted studies prior to the Roberts and Morris (1998) study and looked at comparisons of non-participants and participants from the general population. By ensuring that the subjects have access to marriage enrichment programs, the results of the study speak more clearly to reasons for non-attendance and attendance when programs are available.

Targeting the African American population is another strength of the study. Guerney and Maxson (1990) and Staltman and Salts (1993) reported that marriage enrichment has predominantly been attended by Euro American, middle class women and state that the study of minorities is a gap in the literature. In addition, by using a few churches as opposed to one church, the results are more generalizable.

Limitations

1. As mentioned previously, the method of sampling is a weakness to the design. Due to a lack of a sampling frame for African American churches, recommendations from friends and family were used. This method may limit generalizability of the findings.
2. Although the study hopes to generalize to African Americans in the U.S., it may be limited by the differences among African Americans in different regions of the United States, as well as with different affiliations of religious groups.
3. Over 30% of the African American population surveyed reported income of over 60,000 and a mean education level of at least attending some college. This may also affect generalizability of the findings.
4. The reliability of the two-item Commitment to Change instrument, Perceptions of Marriage Enrichment Instrument, as well as the locus of control instrument may affect the consistency of the results.
5. The validity of the Perception of Marriage Enrichment Instrument is also questionable, which could affect future findings. According to family science scholars, the scale was more of a checklist than a scale.

6. The length of the questionnaire was also a limitation.

Respondents were asked to completed a total of 101 questions.

The length of the questionnaire could have resulted in some respondents rushing through some of the questions, which may effect the results

Implications

Based on the study the following recommendations are made:

1. Future studies on minority populations are needed in order to get more data about factors that encourage or discourage marriage enrichment attendance. There is a need to replicate and extend the research in this area. Marriage Enrichment can provide preventive help for families, but we have to get African American married individuals there first.
2. Further research on these factors, as well as other factors, should be conducted on other minority populations to see if they will yield similar results.
3. It is important to promote marriage enrichment to males as well as females. As practitioners, we should ask the question, "Is this program appealing to males and females?" If not, what does the literature say is important? Even better, what do our

assessments of our target populations indicate? We must become marketing specialist with the goal to eliminate the barriers to non-attendance at our programs. In order to do this, we must know our target audience and cater to it.

4. Marriage Enrichment should be promoted as a way to prevent problems and maintain or enhance a good relationship. Rather than perceiving enrichment as intervention for problem marriages, an emphasis on marital growth as an essential aspect of marriage may help foster a perception of enrichment that is less threatening to couples.
5. It is important that practitioners and researchers make efforts to identify which programs or techniques work best for what population, why, and how to get those programs in the hands of the population.

Summary

In summary, this study contributed to the existing body of knowledge by providing data on factors that promote or inhibit participation of African American married individuals at marriage enrichment programs. The need for marriage enrichment in all communities is vital to the success of marriage, as well as community and family development. Evaluating these factors should shed light on

attendance at these programs.

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APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

The study you have been asked to participate in focuses on how husbands and wives respond to a variety of questions involving marriage and family. Your church was chosen because it has promoted a Marriage Enrichment activity. We hope that having more information of this nature will help us better address the needs of couples and families such as yours. We are hoping that you will agree to participate in this research project. The survey takes approximately 15- 25 minutes to complete. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and time.

An anticipated benefit for you may involve a better understanding of yourself and your spouse's perceptions of your family situation. We would like for you to understand our commitment to the following safeguards in your interest:

1. The confidentiality of information about you may be maintained by the use of code numbers. Your signed consent form will be turned in separately from your questionnaire so that names cannot be matched with a particular questionnaire.
2. The data gathered will be reported in summary form with no reference to you personally. Individual data and participants' identities will not be shared with anyone.

You are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation in the study at any time for any reason or you can elect not to participate without penalty.

We do not anticipate the participation in our project will involve risks for anyone, but if responding to the questionnaire creates concern for you and/or your spouse, we will be happy to refer you to a trained professional. In addition to the insight you may gain from reflecting on yourself and your family, the group results from this study may be of interest to you and will be available upon your request.

Answers to any questions you may have about the procedure of this study are available from:

Nicole Holman-Alexander
507 E. Latimer Pl.
Tulsa, Ok 74106
(918) 584-6113

Linda Robinson, Ph.D.
OSU Family Relations and Child Development
Stillwater, Ok 74078
(405) 744-8356

YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ THIS FORM AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX B
MARRIAGE INFORMATION INVENTORY

Marriage Information Inventory

1. Have you ever attended a program (i.e., seminar, workshop, retreat, regular group meeting, or an instructional program) designed specifically for enriching relationships?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, did you complete the program? _____ Yes _____ No

If no, please briefly explain why you discontinued.

Participants often choose to attend a marriage enrichment program based upon the characteristics of the leaders. Considering what you would find important in an enrichment leader, please indicate your agreement with items 2 - 14 using the following choices:

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 2. Leader's age would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. Leader's gender would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 4. Leader's marital status would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. Leader's educational level would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. Leader's social maturity would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. Leader's income level would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. Leader's race or ethnic background would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 9. Leader's occupational status would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 10. Leader's previous experience in leading marriage enrichment programs would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 11. Leader's membership in professional organizations/affiliations would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 12. Endorsements of the leader from professional agencies (church or agency staff) would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 13. Leader's religious belief system would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 14. Leader's professional expertise would influence my decision to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |

Please continue onto next page

Sometimes people prefer to participate in programs that have been recommended by others. Think of the extent to which the recommendations of others listed in items 15 - 18 would likely influence your decision to attend marital enrichment, using the following choices:

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 15. Media endorsements (newspaper editorials) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 16. Media advertisements (newspaper/television ads) | 1 2 3 4 |
| 17. Recommendations from employer | 1 2 3 4 |
| 18. Recommendations from friends | 1 2 3 4 |

Directions: We know that every marriage has its ups and downs. Please circle your answers to items 19 - 22 using the following choices:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 19. How satisfied are you with your marriage? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 20. How satisfied are you with your husband as a spouse? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 21. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

Directions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the items 22 - 33 using the following choices:

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 22. Over the past 6 months, I have been satisfied with my ability to communicate with my spouse. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 23. I am committed to changing anything in my life that would make my marriage more satisfying. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 24. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 25. At times, I think I am no good at all. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 26. I feel that I have a number of good qualities. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 27. I am able to do things as well as most other people. | 1 2 3 4 |

Please continue onto next page

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
------------------------	---------------	------------	---------------------

28. I feel I do not have much to be proud of. 1 2 3 4
29. I certainly feel useless at times. 1 2 3 4
30. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane as others. 1 2 3 4
31. I wish I could have more respect for myself. 1 2 3 4
32. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. 1 2 3 4
33. I take a positive attitude toward myself. 1 2 3 4

Directions: Indicate your agreement with items 34 and 35 by circling the appropriate response to each item using the following choices:

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

34. My marriage is strong. 1 2 3 4 5
35. My family is strong. 1 2 3 4 5

Directions: Please indicate your level of agreement with items 36 – 42 using the following choices:

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
------------------------	---------------	------------	---------------------

36. I am committed to changing anything in my life that would make my marriage more satisfying. 1 2 3 4
37. My spouse is committed to changing anything in their life to make our marriage more satisfying. 1 2 3 4
38. Marriage enrichment should primarily be an **educational learning** experience that will bring/begin change and growth in a person's marriage. 1 2 3 4
39. Marriage enrichment should primarily be a **recreational learning** experience that allows members to have a good time with other couples. 1 2 3 4
40. Marriage enrichment should primarily be a **social learning** experience that will enable me to make new friends. 1 2 3 4
41. Marriage enrichment should primarily be a **career advancement** experience that will allow members to make new business contacts. 1 2 3 4
42. Marriage enrichment should primarily be a **therapeutic learning** experience that enables members to receive help with moderate to severe marital problems. 1 2 3 4

Please continue on next page

Some people are reluctant to attend marriage enrichment seminars for a variety of reasons. Thinking about your own thoughts about attending marital enrichment, please indicate the extent to which you agree with statements 43 - 60 using the following choices:

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 43. The topics discussed would invade my sense of privacy. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 44. The group activities done during the seminar could invade the privacy of my marriage. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 45. The couple activities could invade the privacy of our marriage. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 46. People would think our marriage was "in trouble" if we attended. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 47. There was too much pressure to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 48. Our marriage relationship might become more complicated if we attended, because some things are better left alone in marriage. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 49. I am too reluctant to try new things...even when there is a chance that it might be helpful. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 50. I am too enthusiastic to try new things...even when there is a chance that it might be harmful. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 51. Marriage enrichment seminars probably would not help our marriage. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 52. Attendance might indicate that I lack interpersonal skills with people. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 53. I would have to do things that would embarrass me. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 54. I would not be accepted by others attending the seminar. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 55. I would say something dumb. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 56. I would not have enough time to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 57. I would not have enough money to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 58. I would not have enough interest to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 59. I would not have adequate child care to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 60. I would not have enough information about the program to attend. | 1 2 3 4 |

Please continue onto next page

Many people view life events and circumstances differently. Please choose the one sentence of the two-paired sentences that best describes your view. Circle the letter in front of the sentence that best describes your view. Please choose only one per question number, and do not leave any blank.

61. a. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.
b. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.
62. a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to powerful others.
b. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.
63. a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.
b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.
64. a. In the long run, people get the respect they deserve in this world.
b. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.
65. a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is non-sense.
b. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings
66. a. Without God's help, one cannot be an effective leader.
b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.
67. a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.
b. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.
68. a. Heredity plays the major role in determining one's personality.
b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like.
69. a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
b. Trusting in spiritual assistance has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.
70. a. In a case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.
b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.
71. a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, no other forces are at work.
b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
72. a. The average citizen can have influence in government decisions.
b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.
73. a. When I make plans, I am almost certain I can make them work.
b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.
74. a. There are certain people who are just no good.
b. There is some good in everybody.

Please continue onto next page

75. a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with spiritual guidance.
b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by relying on powerful others
76. a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was fortunate enough or chosen to be in the right place at first.
b. Getting people to do the right thing depends on ability: powerful spiritual forces have little or nothing to do with it.
77. a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand, nor control.
b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.
78. a. Most people can't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by happenings determined by supernatural happenings which man can't understand.
b. There really is no such thing as providence or fortune.
79. a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.
b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.
80. a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.
b. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.
81. a. In the long run, the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.
b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.
82. a. With enough effort, we can wipe out political corruption.
b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.
83. a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.
b. There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.
84. a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.
b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what his or her jobs are.
85. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
b. It is impossible for me to believe that supernatural or spiritual forces play an important role in my life.
86. a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.
b. There's not much use trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.
87. a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.
b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.
88. a. What happens to me is my own doing.
b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.
89. a. Most of the time, I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.
b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.

Please continue onto next page

Researchers use the following type of information to describe general characteristics of the group responding to their study. **Your individual information will not be revealed to anyone**, but it will help us understand the range of characteristics to those who participate in this study.

90. Age: _____
91. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female
92. Which of the following represents your ethnic or racial background? (You may choose more than one)
- _____ White/American, Caucasian
_____ Black American
_____ American, Indian
_____ Latin American, Hispanic
_____ Oriental American, Asian Pacific
_____ Other, Specify: _____
93. Present Marital Status:
- _____ Married and Separated
_____ Divorced and Remarried
_____ Widowed and Remarried
_____ Married and not Separated
94. Length of present marital status: _____
95. Number of children currently living in your household:
- _____ Daughters Ages: _____
_____ Sons Ages: _____
96. Highest level of education achieved:
- _____ Elementary school (grades K-5)
_____ Junior High (grades 6-8)
_____ High School (grades 9-12)
_____ Some College
_____ Bachelors
_____ Masters
_____ Doctorate
_____ Other _____
97. What is your denominational affiliation? (Please give the full name of your denomination) _____
98. Which of the following best describes your employment status?
- _____ No employment
_____ Part-time
_____ Full-time
_____ Other
99. If employed, how many hours do you work per week on this job? _____
Please continue onto next page

100. In which of the following categories would you say your current job fits?
(Please check only one category)

☐ Professional, technical, and kindred workers
☐ Managers, officials, and proprietors, except farm
☐ Clerical, sales, and kindred workers
☐ Craftspeople, crew managers, and kindred workers
☐ Machine operators
☐ Service workers, including private household
☐ Laborers, except farm and mine
☐ Farmers and miners
☐ Homemaker
☐ Other, Explain: _____.

101. What is your household's pre-tax income:

☐ 0 to \$19, 999
☐ \$20,000 to \$39,999
☐ \$40,000 to \$59,999
☐ Over \$60,000

Thank you for participating in the study. Please do the following:

- Quickly review your questionnaire for any missed items.
- Turn in your consent form separately from your questionnaire.
- Exit quietly.

APPENDIX C
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPROVAL

**Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board**

Protocol Expires: 3/27/03

Date: Thursday, March 28, 2002

IRB Application No HE0243

Proposal Title: AN EVALUATION OF FACTORS POTENTIALLY ASSOCIATED WITH AFRICAN
AMERICANS' DECISIONS TO ATTEND OR NOT ATTEND A MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT
PROGRAM

Principal
Investigator(s):

Nicole Holman-Alexander
507 E. Latimer Place
Tulsa, OK 74106

Linda Robinson
333F HES
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 203 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 3/27/03

Date : Wednesday, April 03, 2002

IRB Application No HE0243

Proposal Title: AN EVALUATION OF FACTORS POTENTIALLY ASSOCIATED WITH AFRICIAN
AMERICANS' DECISIONS TO ATTEND OR NOT ATTEND A MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT
PROGRAM

Principal
Investigator(s) :

Nicole Holman-Alexander
507 E. Latimer Place
Tulsa, OK 74106

Linda Robinson
333F HES
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) : Approved

Modification

Please note that the protocol expires on the following date which is one year from the date of the approval of the original
protocol:

Protocol Expires: 3/27/03

Signature :



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Wednesday, April 03, 2002

Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.