

PREMARITAL EXPECTATIONS OF
STEPFAMILY COUPLES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| Conceptual Framework | 3 |
| Conceptual Hypotheses..... | 11 |
| Definition of Terms..... | 12 |
| II. LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 14 |
| Studying Stepfamilies | 14 |
| Normative Ideals | 16 |
| Normative Expectations | 20 |
| Ideals and Expectations: A Comparison of First-Marriage/Remarriage Couples With Remarriage/Remarriage Couples..... | 25 |
| Literature Review Summary | 29 |

| Chapter | Page |
|--|------|
| III. METHOD..... | 33 |
| Design..... | 33 |
| Sample..... | 34 |
| Instrument..... | 37 |
| Hypotheses..... | 42 |
| Operationalization..... | 42 |
| Analysis..... | 47 |
| Summary..... | 49 |
| IV. RESULTS..... | 51 |
| Partner Difference And Combination Scores..... | 52 |
| Positive Couple Agreement..... | 54 |
| Item Analyses..... | 56 |
| Summary..... | 57 |
| V. DISCUSSION..... | 59 |
| Nonsignificant Results..... | 59 |
| Significant Results..... | 65 |
| Limitations..... | 67 |
| Implications..... | 69 |
| REFERENCES..... | 74 |

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| APPENDICES | 78 |
| APPENDIX A--TABLES 1 - 8..... | 79 |
| APPENDIX B--PREMARITAL PERSONAL AND RELATIONSHIP EVALUATION MARRIAGE WITH CHILDREN EDITION . | 100 |
| APPENDIX C--DETERMINATION OF ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS ITEMS..... | 109 |
| APPENDIX D--OPERATIONALIZATION OF PARTICIPANT SELECTION..... | 111 |
| APPENDIX E--INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL..... | 118 |

LIST OF TABLES

| Table | Page |
|---|------|
| I. Exclusion Demographics..... | 80 |
| II. Demographics Used For Structured Sampling Plan..... | 81 |
| III. Reliability Of PREPARE-MC Norms And Sample Males And Females..... | 82 |
| IV. Sample Demographics..... | 83 |
| V. Mean Couple Idealistic Distortion And Realistic Expectations Scale Scores..... | 86 |
| VI. Mean Scores For Positive Couple Agreement..... | 87 |
| VII. Results Of Chi-Square Test For Male Expectations Patterns..... | 88 |
| VIII. Results Of Chi-Square Test For Female Expectations Patterns..... | 94 |
| IX. SPSS Text For Creation Of Research Groups..... | 113 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many couples are faced with the questions of what to expect of their partner during courtship before remarriage and early remarriage (Ganong & Coleman, 1989; Keshet, 1990). Almost a third of all Americans will go through the process of marrying, divorcing, and remarrying during their lifetime (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994). Wilson and Clarke (1992) studied remarriage rates from 1980 to 1988. During that time, remarriage rates for divorced women decreased from 113.8 per 1,000 to 90.5 per 1,000, a decrease of 20.5%. Remarriage rates for divorced men also decreased from 176.3 per 1,000 to 122.2 per 1,000, a 31% decrease. Divorced women married divorced men more often (61%), than single men (35%). These percentages were identical for previously divorced men. Although remarriage rates have dropped, almost 1.5 million divorced women and men remarried in 1988. Given the variety of challenges involved in remarriage, few societal guidelines are available to guide these new couples (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994).

Research on stepfamilies has shown that, in the absence of established stepfamily norms (Cherlin, 1978; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994), couples in stepfamilies often refer to norms and expectations common to first-marriage families (Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons, 1985; Keshet, 1990; Pink & Wampler, 1985; Visher & Visher, 1990). Expecting self and spouse to live up to first-marriage family norms often leads to conflict (Cherlin, 1978; Keshet, 1990); and, expecting one's self and spouse to be different from first-marriage families can increase marital satisfaction (Keshet, 1990), and feelings of

success (Kvanli & Jennings, 1987; Visher & Visher, 1990). Much work remains to be done in the study of expectations. Although, expectations and idealism have been studied, research has not considered how joint remarriages (both partners remarrying after having been previously divorced) compare with single remarriages (one partner marrying for the first time and one partner remarrying after divorce) on expectations and idealism.

This paper studies expectations of partners planning remarriage. As a factor comparable to expectations, idealism is also considered. Single remarriages and joint remarriages, using the couple type abbreviations from Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley (1986), are referred to as FR and RR remarriages, respectively. The current study investigates how spouses in FR remarriages and RR remarriages differ in their expectations and idealism. Keshet (1990) suggests the two factors of expectations and idealism are similar. Inasmuch as expectations can lead to conflict (Cherlin, 1978; Keshet, 1990) or marital satisfaction (Keshet, 1990), the purpose of this study is to understand how couples planning to enter a remarriage utilize expectations of their partner. Specifically, the current study will investigate the following two-part question: how do partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples compare in (a) societal level idealism, and (b) in corresponding expectations of their partner. The specific objectives of this paper are to understand: (a) how remarriage couples' idealism and corresponding expectations of their partner, differ across two couple types, FR and RR; and, (b) how partners in FR couples and RR couples are similar to or different from each other in their idealism and corresponding expectations of their partner.

Conceptual Framework

Systems theory concepts. One theory that provides a framework for thinking about stepfamilies, expectations, and idealism is systems theory. Systems theory suggests thinking about parts of a whole as interacting in a connected fashion. The interaction, also referred to as interconnection, usually occurs in repetitive patterns. The results of the interactions of the parts of a system are different from the results of the parts acting separately. The patterns are more complex in some systems than others. Greater complexity is present whenever a greater variety is present among the system's parts. This variety could occur in any way that the parts of the system can change. When two or more systems interact there is a hierarchy between them that is a diversity in the patterns of a system. The degree of diversity is governed by rules called boundaries. When hierarchy exists in a system, some parts of the system are more complex and interconnected with each other than with other parts and constitute subsystems of a whole system.

These systems concepts can be illustrated by thinking about one type of system--stones dropped in a pond--from a narrow, broad, and moderate focus. A narrow focus could be when a single stone is dropped in a pond generating a regularly recurring patterned system of concentric circles that moves away from the point of origin. A broad focus could be when several stones are dropped in the pond, creating a system of ripples. This group of ripples is composed of several single ripple systems that each started as a separate system of concentric circles and moved out toward the other ripple systems. When a system of ripples contacts another system of ripples or the boundary of the shore,

the circles interconnect and change rather than simply overlapping. The circular patterns change, forming a new and more complex pattern of shapes. The height and depth of the ripples also change. These changes occur as the motion from the waves rebounding off the shore or blending with the motion of other waves feeds back the motion in a new direction. This feedback accounts for the new and complex patterns.

Initially, systems of ripples interconnect more with systems of ripples closer to them--a moderate focus--than with systems of ripples that are more distant. Closely acting ripple systems interconnect and thus constitute a subsystem of the entire group of all ripples from stones that were dropped in the pond. The patterned ripples from this subsystem travel outward and interconnect with ripples from other subsystems forming new and more complex patterns. If a few solitary stones were subsequently dropped into the pond, their ripples would have more sway on the patterns of the ripples that were already in the pond, as they would have more energy.

This example of a mechanical system helps to illustrate how parts of a whole interconnect in patterned movement. The interaction of partner's relationships within families can also be understood from a systems perspective. Although humans in family systems are far more complex and able to adapt to feedback than ripples caused by stones dropped in a pond, the same systems theory concepts can be used to discuss family interactions.

Family systems. Family relationships and structures can be understood through systems concepts. Family members also have a system of interactions occurring at a variety of hierarchical levels. Inasmuch as humans are more complex than stones, a narrow, moderate, and broad focus is also more complex. The current study considers the

individual for a narrow system focus, a couple within a family for a moderate focus, and societal norms for a broad focus. The literature supports the idea that a focus on the family system could include at least three levels: (a) individual (Keshet, 1990), (b) relationship (Keshet, 1990), and (c) societal (Cherlin, 1978; Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1994). Each level can be understood within the systems paradigm.

At an individual level, the metaphor concept of mapping is used to represent individual mental processes as using symbols, abridgments, and filters to process information and build perceptions. Each person's map constitutes a set of boundaries that filter information to build perceptions; perceptions that the individual uses to make decisions about behavior. Individual's patterns of behavior are recurring. The regular behavior produced by mapping is like the pattern of concentric ripples produced by dropping a single stone in a pond.

Two core parts of an individual's perceptions are the individual's ideals and corresponding expectations. Within family literature ideals have been used to refer to broad beliefs about what families should be like; beliefs that are drawn from societal norms (Brady & Ambler, 1982; Cherlin, 1978; Pink & Wampler, 1985). Expectations have been used to refer specific behaviors which one partner desires the other to do (Chadwick, Albrecht, & Kunz, 1976; Keshet, 1990). Keshet (1990) speaks of norms and expectations as connected. Inasmuch as the mentioned literature uses ideals in a broader focus than expectations, the current study will use the concepts of ideals and expectations in a similar manner.

An individual's actions, like the ripples from a single stone, are part of an interaction with others with whom the individual interacts. When ideals and expectations involve others and self, feedback occurs, like the blending of the motion of ripples, in which individual actions and expectations are modified as part of relationship interaction. New patterns are formed, maps can be changed, and relationship processes can be altered.

Understanding relationship processes can start by considering the interaction between family subsystems, particularly the couple subsystem. What two people expect their self and the other to do plays a part in their behavior. Their perceptions about their relationship produce behavior different from behavior outside their relationship. This occurs as one or both act on their expectations. As they associate, their perception about their interaction provides grounds for modifying or preserving expectations across time. This interaction is similar to the more closely grouped stones that modified each other's ripples to form more complex patterns of interaction. These interactions are governed by hierarchy.

Hierarchy is present in all families. Systems interacting at less complex levels are often referred to as subsystems of more complex levels. The family system plays an interconnected part with society, which is a higher level; thus, the family is a subsystem of society. Within a stepfamily, those who are biologically related constitute a subsystem of the family because they are interconnected by perceptions about biological and emotional ties. The spouses in the family constitute a subsystem because they are tied by perceptions about legal and emotional ties. As an individual, a spouse is a subsystem within the couple dyad.

Relationships in families can be compared to the ripples from stones that fall in a pond. Ripples that occur more closely together are like first-marriage nuclear families. The family members interconnect in their patterns of behavior over time. The blending of patterns between partners is more complex than the blending of ripples in a pond. Through interaction with a partner or another family member, a person can change the way they map perceptions and the boundaries that constitute filters in their mapping process can be changed. Partners can change their behavior patterns and think differently about ideals and expectations. The perceptions of both partners about: (a) their current relationship, (b) their past relationships, and, (c) their family structure may be used to map perceptions about their current relationship experience.

Partners in first-marriage families build perceptions in a relatively simple family structure, and have some common experiences with marriage relationships. Both partners in first-marriage nuclear families share the experience of having been married solely to the other partner. Often, the two spouses are the subsystem that leads the family and have all of their children in common. Their ideals and expectations are mapped in a context that does not include past experience with divorce of either partner.

Families of partners who are remarrying after divorce are like the ripples that started farther apart, then moved together and interconnected, creating greater complexity in patterns. They are more complex than first-marriage families. Visher and Visher (1990, p. 6) explain six typical stepfamily challenges which add to the complexity of stepfamilies:

1. Adults and children are coming together at very different places in their individual, marital and family life cycles.
2. All members of the new family unit brings [sic] ways of doing things which are different because of their previous family patterns.
3. Parent/child bonds precede rather than follow the formation of the couple relationship.
4. There is a biological parent in another household or in memory.
5. Fifty percent of children in stepfamilies move back and forth between parental households.
6. Stepparents have little or no legal relationship with their stepchildren.

Remarriage families are also more complex than first-marriage families in the partner subsystem; at least one partner has the experience of a past divorce as a context for their perceptions about the new relationship. The experience with multiple marriage relationships adds complexity to the ideals and expectations of remarrying partners.

The spousal dyad level is often the level at which expectations are addressed in current literature; but expectations are sometimes also considered from a broader viewpoint. Cherlin (1978) indicates that remarried couple interaction occurs in a societal context. In this context, expectations are drawn from perceived normative ideals each partner believes to be common to many other people. A combination of one's expectations for a relationship, perceptions about interactions with one's partner, and what each partner considers to be normal for relationships conjointly forms a couple relationship.

Some remarriage families have one partner who divorced after a previous marriage and one partner who is marrying for the first time (FR). When a first-marrying partner begins a relationship with a remarrying partner, first-marriage family patterns intertwine with remarriage family patterns. Partners in FR couples are like the ripples that started out closer together, intertwined, and then moved out to interweave with the ripples from a single stone. Patterns of interaction would be less complex than those of two remarrying partners, but more complex than those of two first-marrying partners. Only one partner has the experience of having previously divorced to map into perceptions about idealism and expectations. The other partner has the experience of working towards creating a first-marriage family. Because changing relationship patterns is more difficult with only one person having the experience of divorce to map into perceptions, both may more easily slip into the naive idealism and unrealistic expectations typical of two first-marrying partners. Their experience is likely to differ from that of couples with two remarrying partners.

Some remarriage families have two partners who are remarrying after divorce (RR). During their previous marriages, the remarrying partners formed interaction patterns that involved a interactions with their spouse. Their map had developed ideals and expectations of their previous spouse for familiar behaviors. Many of the same ideals and expectations will still be used to construct perceptions in the new relationship. Even when a remarrying spouse hopes their new spouse will have different behavior than their previous spouse, the unfulfilled expectations about the previous spouse's behavior are still the map's filter because the hope is still defined in comparison with the previous

spouse's behavior. Because both partners have had the experience of being divorced, they are likely to perceive as unacceptable each other's negative behaviors that contributed to the demise of their previous relationship. By working together, they are likely to build a relationship that does not include the problems experienced in their respective previous marriages. They are more likely than couples with only one remarrying spouse to hold realistic expectations, and be less idealistic.

The following example of couple interaction demonstrates one way partners in FR couples could be more idealistic and have lower realism in their expectations than partners in RR couples. A first-marrying partner in an FR couple might expect that the couple will both travel to pick-up and drop-off the remarrying partner's children for visits, thus maximizing their family and couple time. The remarrying partner might expect to travel alone, maximizing individual and biological family time. When they discuss who will go, they each have a perception about their interaction. Perhaps they argue and both map a perception like, "This shows how you don't understand how important my way is to our family." The next time the issue of traveling to pick-up children comes up, their perception of their previous experience will play a part in their expectation for what will happen now. Perhaps they each think that the other was having a bad day (perception). Partners in FR couples are likely to perceive the incident as an exception. partners in RR couples are likely to perceive the incident as an important stepfamily issue that will need to be discussed. They might talk about the matter and decide to take the needs do the other's way every other time.

The partners traveling for visitation (mentioned above) could be examined from a larger, societal perspective. A societal perspective is similar to the interconnecting

patterns of all the ripples in the pond. From a societal perspective, one might see how each partner acts with expectations that come from perceptions about what each partner believes to be normal. The remarrying partner may believe that he or she should spend time with his or her own biological children apart from time spend with the stepparent. The first-marrying stepparent may believe he or she should take extra time to nurture any children, even though they are not biologically related. These perceptions about societal level idealistic norms play a key role in what couples expect in their relationship (Cherlin, 1978).

In sum, norms with ideals and expectations can be defined in a systems theory context. Systems theory offers ways of considering these factors on different hierarchical levels. Couples in families formed by remarriages may be considered on multisystems levels of FR and RR couples. Comparing these two couple types may increase understanding of how premarital stepfamily couples hold ideals and expectations of their spouse.

Conceptual Hypotheses

Partners in RR couples and partners in FR couples differ in their expectations and ideals. Both partners in RR couples have the opportunity to use the experience of having gone through a divorce as context for the map of their ideals and expectations of their partner. With this mutual experience, partners in RR couples can more easily change, because both are likely to provide feedback, and maintain boundaries that promote less idealism and greater realism in their expectations. Partners in FR remarriages do not have the same advantage. Because they do not have two partners mapping perceptions

from a context of the similar experience of having gone through a divorce, they are less likely to maintain boundaries that promote less idealism and greater realism in their expectations. Therefore, the differences between RR partner's idealism levels will be less than the difference between that of FR partners. The same would be true for the expectations levels of FR and RR partners.

FR partners are more likely than RR partners to be idealistic. The combination of FR partner's idealism is likely to be higher than the combination of RR partners idealism. Because FR partners are more likely to have unrealistic levels of expectations than RR partners, FR partners' combined levels of realism in expectations are likely to be lower than those of RR partners.

Finally, because RR partners have the common experience of having gone through a divorce they are more likely to agree with each other about expectations of their partner than are FR partners. Additionally, their agreement is more likely to be positive for the couple relationship, because in their mapping of perceptions they are likely to be more aware of expectations that are unrealistic. Therefore, partners in RR couples are likely to have more positive couples agreement about expectations of their partner than are partners in FR couples.

Definition of Terms

Norms are ways of interacting which are similar to ways other families would interact in similar circumstances. Cherlin (1978) indicates that American first-marriage families have norms that they use to make decisions in family relationships. Because

these norms are common. Cherlin referred to the norms as being institutionalized, or in other words common to the institution of marriage.

Ideals are related to one's perception of norms for families and have been discussed as how couples or family members want their family to be (Pink & Wampler, 1985).

Expectations are the system of anticipations of some behavior which one perceives their spouse should perform. Expectations can be drawn from norms (Rodgers & White, 1993) for family and marital relationships.

First marriage/remarriage (FR) couples are couples in which one partner is marrying for the first time and one partner is remarrying after having divorced (Ihinger-Tallman & Pasley, 1986).

Remarriage/remarriage (RR) couples are couples in which two partners are both remarrying after divorce (Ihinger-Tallman & Pasley, 1986).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will survey stepfamily literature comparing first-marriage families and remarriage families and address the way subsystems of mapped ideals and expectations play a part in remarriage family functioning. The review will focus more specifically on differences between FR and RR couples in idealism and expectations.

Studying Stepfamilies

Cherlin and Furstenberg (1994) indicate that, of all Americans, almost a third will go through the process of marrying, divorcing, and remarrying during their life. Given the high rate of remarriage, stepfamilies constitute a normative family type in contemporary American family life (Visher & Visher, 1990). Even though remarriage is a moderately common transition, research on remarriages was scant until recently. Several scholars have recognized a lack of research on remarriage families (e.g., Hetherington, 1988; Oh, 1986; Rodgers & Conrad, 1986). This recognition has compelled many to consider the stepfamily an important unit of study.

When one contrasts the first-marriage family structure and complexity with stepfamily structure and complexity, questions come to mind. In what ways are stepfamilies different from or similar to first-marriage families? To what extent is research on first-marriage families applicable to remarriage families? Some believe both similarities and differences exist between the two family types (Hobart, 1991). Some first-marriage family research, but not all, could presumably be applicable to stepfamilies when stepfamilies are in some ways similar to first-marriage families.

Hobart (1989) indicated that, although the experiences of stepfamilies are, in some ways, quite similar to those of first-marriage families, their experiences are, in other ways, quite different. In general, stepfamilies are similar to first-marriage families in that both family types have adults raising children and leading the home. Typically, the adults both in first-marriage families and in remarriage families expect both adults to act as parents of children in the household (Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons, 1985; Visher & Visher, 1990). Both remarriage and first-marriage families typically expect love to be a part of family relationships (Visher & Visher, 1990). Either a biological parent or a stepparent may be participating as the provider in remarriage families, just as either parent in a first-marriage family may provide financially (Visher & Visher, 1990).

Remarriage families are different from first-marriage families in many ways. The differences are more clearly described as heightened complexity in stepfamily relationship interaction patterns than as opposite interaction patterns. Many of the similarities between the two family types are interconnected with differences, resulting in heightened complexity:

1. Biological children might live inside or outside the home; and, stepchildren might live inside or outside the home (Hobart, 1991).
2. A parent might be simultaneously providing financial support for their current family and for one or more previous families with whom the parent does not live (Ganong, Coleman, & Mistina, 1995).
3. Couples in first-marriage families sometimes have children before marriage.

Complexity is added when one partner begins a relationship with another partner who

already has children. In this situation, the partners have no child-free time to focus on developing their couple relationship before children is part of the family (Keshet, 1990). However, this may provide the "trial parenting" (MacDonald & DeMaris, 1995, p. 389) period before marriage during which potential spouses can begin to build a stepparent relationship.

In short, as research applicable to remarriage families has become more available, some key questions have begun to be answered. One question that has been addressed is how remarriage families are different from or similar to first-marriage families. The awareness of the need to understand similarities and differences between first-marriage families and remarriage families is an important refinement of family research. Continued refinement of the research is needed. One refinement would be to consider how norms and corresponding ideals and expectations of partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples are similar or different.

Normative Ideals

Normative ideals may be used to guide family behavior to socially appropriate development. However, remarriage families do not have a clear set of societal level norms to which they can refer, other than those of first-marriage families (Cherlin, 1978; Keshet, 1990). Cherlin (1978) took the position that the absence of norms led to family conflict. MacDonald and DeMaris (1995) suggested that lack of institutionalization may have some benefits. MacDonald and DeMaris (1995) felt that a lack of norms for stepfamily relationships provides both challenges and opportunities for unconventional solutions to unique stepfamily problems.

The importance of the lack of norms was identified by Cherlin in 1978. He believed that remarriage was an incomplete institution because the institution lacked norms that were comparable to societal level norms for first-marriage families. The lack of norms is also discussed in recent writings (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994) in which the authors assert that remarriage is still not institutionalized. The lack of institutionalization can be shown in the related ideals of remarriage and first-marriage families.

Brady and Ambler (1982) studied family idealism in two groups of stepfamily couples. Both groups completed a pretest questionnaire on their real and ideal views of their families. After the pretest, one group participated in a group discussing stepfamily issues. The authors hypothesized that stepfamily education would bring participants' ideal view of their stepfamily closer to the real view of their stepfamily. The group of families who participated in the education, and the group of families who did not participate in the education repeated the questionnaire. The view of the ideal family of both groups was significantly different from their real view of their family, both before and after the discussion groups. When both completed the questionnaire, both still held ideal views that were different from their real views of their stepfamily; however, both groups had ideal views that were closer to their real view. This suggests that stepfamily views are idealistic. However, this study leaves open the question of how ideals of partners in FR couples might compare with ideals of partners in RR couples. Also left unaddressed was the question of how stepfamily ideals might compare with first-marriage family ideals.

Pink and Wampler (1985) empirically studied remarriage families and used first-marriage families as a control group. They found no significant differences between what stepfamily and first-marriage family members wanted for ideal family functioning. This indicates that remarriage families are indeed using ideals that are typical for first-marriage families; they seem to have few or no consistent norms, from which to draw ideals, on which many remarriage families agree.

The studies of Brady and Ambler (1982), and Pink and Wampler (1985) suggest that remarriage families are mapping their perceptions with the norms and ideals first-marriage families typically use. Their studies leave unanswered whether remarriage family norms are absent from American society, or whether norms are available, but not commonly used by the majority of remarriage families.

Some authors (Ganong, et al., 1995; Keshet, 1990) have searched for norms among the remarried. They have tried to find particular expectations upon which many remarried couples agree. Their assumption appeared to be that a high level of agreement about a particular expectation constituted a norm. In their search for norms, Ganong, et al. (1995) studied respondent's expectations about the obligation of stepfathers and divorced fathers to support special education needs of their (step)children. Respondents were given vignettes about stepfathers and divorced fathers and asked to indicate their expectations of these two types of fathers. Many respondents expected when divorced mothers have dependent children living with them, that the biological father should contribute support money for children's special education needs at least until the mother

is remarried. They also expected stepfathers to provide financially for special education needs of their wife's children while the couple was married.

Ganong, et al., (1995) found some normative beliefs upon which many couples agreed, though not with enough agreement among respondents to constitute consensus. No significant differences were found between how remarried, and first-married respondents answered the questions. The study did not examine whether mothers or stepmothers in similar situations would be expected to provide in the same way if the stepfathers had custody. The study also did not consider what mothers would be expected to do if fathers had children living with them most of the time. One possible explanation for the lack of difference is that both remarried and first-married husbands may have relied on norms for first-marriage families in answering the questions. Although marital status was not shown to be related to the participants' responses, the study did not investigate whether respondents who were in remarriage families were from FR or RR couples. Any difference that couple type would have made would not have been found. Additionally, the question studied by Ganong, et al. (1995) was narrowly focused, limiting opportunities for finding norms to the question they studied. Notwithstanding the limitations of Ganong, et al. (1995), their study supported the findings of Brady and Ambler (1982), and Pink and Wampler (1985). Again, the findings of Ganong, et al. (1995) suggest that remarriage families are using first-marriage family norms to map their perceptions.

In summary, some authors (Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons, 1985; Keshet, 1990; Visher & Visher, 1990) argue that remarriage families do not have a set of commonly

held societal level norms that would provide ideals. Remarriage families have been found to refer to normative ideals common to first-marriage families (Brady & Ambler, 1982; Pink & Wampler, 1985). These normative ideals are used to help them map their perceptions about the couple relationships. Not having remarriage family norms, some have begun the search for normative ideals families may hold for remarriage family functioning (Ganong, et al., 1995).

Keshet (1990) suggests that stepfamilies lack institutionalization that would establish social norms and expectations. Keshet said, "Institutionalization would provide a set of expectations and norms for stepfamily life that most people would recognize" (p. 201). Considering Keshet's (1990) connection of norms and expectations, the possibility for conflict (Cherlin, 1978) or unconventional solutions (MacDonald & DeMaris, 1995) connected to norms would make understanding how remarrieds use normative expectations consequential.

Normative Expectations

Expectations have received some attention in remarriage family literature. Both anecdotal and empirical reports have been offered. Using anecdotal support, some authors assert that stepfamily couples often expect their remarriage to be like a first-marriage (Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons, 1985; Visher & Visher, 1990). This proposition is supported by empirical research (Chadwick, et al., 1976; Keshet, 1990).

The way families use expectations in their relationships has been found to have an impact on their satisfaction with family roles (Chadwick, et al., 1976). A study by Chadwick, et al. (1976), looked for correlations between marital satisfaction and eight

specific marital roles and four corresponding dependent variables: (a) one's own evaluation of performance in the roles, (b) spouse's evaluation of performance in the roles, and (c) conformity of one spouse to the other spouse's expectations for performance in the roles. They found that conforming to expectations of one's spouse was the strongest correlation, followed by evaluation of spouse's and one's own performance. Although, the relationship of marital satisfaction to specific role expectations was significant it was also weak. Unfortunately, this study did not provide information about whether sampled couples were in remarriage or first-marriage families. Still, a connection between marital satisfaction and conforming to spousal expectations is indicated.

The link between marital relationship and expectations has been studied. Following-up on a group of remarrieds who had previously been studied when they were divorced, Keshet's (1990) empirical research looked for consensus among remarrieds' expectations about stepfamilies. This research added to the search for norms. This search was focused at the interpersonal expectation level. Keshet (1990) found that some agreement exists among remarriage couples about issues unique to stepfamilies. Keshet found that, although remarriage couples lack societal level norms, couples do have some level of consensus. Concurrence was examined among four sample configurations: females, males, within couples, and within the whole sample. Sample consensus was defined as when both females and males had agreement on a particular question. Consensus was achieved when a sample configuration showed a level of agreement that was likely to have occurred by chance less than 5% of the time. Each of 16 questionnaire

items presented an attitudinal statement about a common stepfamily challenge. Keshet (1990) reported females and males achieved consensus on the following attitudinal statements:

1. "Children frequently play their natural parents and stepparents against each other." (p. 200). (Men 70% agreed; women 72% agreed; couple agreement of 70% of couples; $p < .01$)
2. "Raising children part time is much more difficult than full-time." (p. 200). (Men 85% agreed; women 71% agreed; couple agreement of 68% of couples; $p < .01$)
3. "It is harder to be a stepparent than a natural parent." (p. 200). (Men 67% agreed; women 65% agreed; couple agreement of 62% of couples; $p < .05$)
4. "Generally, remarried people have more difficulty disciplining their spouse's children than their own." (p. 200). (Men 64% agreed; women 66% agreed; couple agreement of 52% of couples; $p < .05$)

Keshet found that these questions grouped on a factor that addressed attitudes about biological ties. Some gender differences occurred in which men were more likely to agree and women to disagree with statements implying that biological relationship ties are stronger than stepfamily relationship ties. Although each of the above statements achieved a level of consensus for both males and females in the sample, Keshet did not indicate that unison on these statements constituted norms for stepfamilies. He found less agreement among couples on the same questions for which the sample had less concurrence. Only four of the sixteen attitudinal statements reached a significant level of consensus for the sample as a whole.

Keshet (1990) found a substantial amount of disagreement between groups in his sample. While discussing couple agreement or the lack thereof, Keshet indicates people may choose partners who do not agree with their views on stepparenting. Keshet implied couples that did not achieve couple agreement had a first-marriage family model as their preferred model for stepfamilies. The current study has argued that more lack of agreement would exist between FR partners than RR partners. However, Keshet's study did not consider FR couples and RR couples as distinct couple types.

Another unaddressed issue regarding Keshet's sample may be noted. The sample included both couples who were cohabiting (23% of the sample) and couples who were remarried, some for five years. No mention is made whether the cohabiting couples were planning to marry nor whether their responses differed significantly from remarriage couples. Apparently, cohabiting couples were assumed to be equivalent to remarried couples. Still, his study did illuminate some pertinent questions on which some remarriage families seemed to hold common expectations.

The results of Keshet (1990) pertaining to satisfaction with the marital relationship, were similar to those of Chadwick, et al. (1976) in highlighting the importance of expectations. One difference between the two studies was that Keshet (1990) focused on the expectations partners had about stepfamilies, rather than the role expectations spouses held for each other (Chadwick, et al., 1976). Another difference between the two was that Keshet's results indicated that expecting a family to be different from a first-marriage family promoted marital satisfaction whereas the results of Chadwick, et al. (1976) implied that conforming to the expectations of one's spouse

promoted marital satisfaction. Both studies indicated the importance of expectations as a factor.

Expecting stepfamily relationships to be different from first-marriage relationships may have some potential benefits. Expecting remarriage family relationships to be different from first-marriage family relationships improves stepfamily couples' feeling of family success (Visher & Visher, 1990). Kvanli and Jennings (1987) studied 10 successful stepfamily couples. They found remarried spouses used their previous marital relationship as a standard for their current spousal relationship in a positive way. They learned from past mistakes and decreased conflict. These spouses found change to be a natural occurrence in remarriage. Each spouse expected both themselves and their spouse to change; separately as individuals, and together in their relationship. Another helpful way of using expectations was knowing what they wanted: knowing what they wanted helped these couples to feel marital satisfaction.

Kvanli and Jennings (1987) provided valuable information about how couples may benefit by using the context of a previous marriage to map perceptions about expectations for a new partner and for one's self. An important limitation was that their sample size was 10 couples. Although their study supported the importance of expectations, more research using larger sample sizes would be helpful.

To summarize, some studies have focused on expectations indicating that remarriage couples often expect their family to be like a first-marriage family (Visher & Visher, 1990). For families, there is some connection between marital satisfaction and expectations (Chadwick, et al., 1976). In remarriage families, expecting remarriage

families to be different from first-marriage families corresponded to feelings of marital satisfaction (Keshet, 1990) and family success. Furthermore, being able to learn from past mistakes and expect changes in the remarriage relationship can help avoid conflict (Kvanli & Jennings, 1987).

Hence, the way partners in couples use expectations to map perceptions is likely to play a part in remarriage families. Partners in FR and partners in RR remarriages may have differences in ideals and in expectations. Understanding how partners in FR and partners in RR remarriages are different will set the stage to study how they use ideals and expectations differently.

Ideals and Expectations: A Comparison of First-Marriage/Remarriage Couples With Remarriage/Remarriage Couples

Differences and similarities. Wilson and Clarke (1992) considered demographics of remarriages and used FR and RR couples as comparison groups. They referred to the two couple types as joint remarriages and partial remarriages and found differences between the two couple types. Differences were indicated in the following ways:

1. Divorced men and women under the age of 30 were more likely to marry a never married woman or man than one who was previously divorced. Between age 30 and age 64 divorced men and women were more likely to marry another previously divorced woman or man.
2. Divorced Caucasian men and women were less likely to choose a spouse who was single than were divorced men and women of other races.

3. Previously divorced men and women are more likely to marry another previously divorced woman or man than one who has never been married.
4. Spouses in RR couples are closer to each other's age than are spouses in FR couples.

Wilson and Clarke (1992) studied divorce rates of FR and RR marriages in 1988. They reported two important statistics. First, FR remarriages lasted slightly longer, (7.8 years when the first-marrying spouse was male, 8.1 years when the first-marrying spouse was female) than RR remarriages (6.5 years). Second, in 1988, more RR remarriages (20%) ended in divorce than FR remarriages (19%). Wilson and Clarke (1992) did not offer information about the ratio of FR remarriages to RR remarriages. Awareness of these statistics implies that FR and RR couples may be studied as different types and that demographics need to be considered when analyzing and generalizing data.

Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley (1986) analyzed how FR and RR couples may be similar or different in community integration. They searched for differences between FR and RR couples. Their key variables were: (a) visits from others' to one's home, (b) how often troubles were shared with others, and (c) how often respondents felt torn between various activities and relationship demands. The two types of marriages did not differ significantly at the couple level on any of the three integration variables. However, a difference was found at the individual level: wives in RR remarriages were significantly more prone to have frequent visitors than wives in FR couples ($p < .01$). None of the variables distinguished between husbands in the two couple types. For both couple types, the presence of children increased the number of visitors to the home over couples who did not have children. Although their study did not consider differences in expectations

or ideals. they did show that FR and RR couples have similarities and differences in patterns of community integration.

Pink and Wampler (1985) suggest that finding a fair comparison group for stepfamilies is difficult. Focusing on two types of remarried couples allows comparison of similar yet different stepfamilies. Both types have the same lack of norms, and face similar challenges of starting a family with children already present (Cherlin, 1978; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994). However, they differ demographically (Wilson & Clarke, 1992), in patterns of community integration (Ihinger-Tallman & Pasley, 1986), and in the types of experiences that spouses bring to the new family (Kvanli & Jennings, 1987). Given these differences and a general absence of norms, what these couples expect their relationships to be like is of particular interest.

Ideals and expectations of first-married/remarried and remarried/remarried couples. Keshet (1990) indicates that relationships may vary considerably from stepfamily to stepfamily. One way that support for this idea has been found is by examining FR and RR couples. Using a subset of the 1987-88 National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) dataset, MacDonald and DeMaris (1995), found that partners in RR couples had less open disagreement between spouses than partners in FR couples. The authors suggest as an explanation for their results that partners in RR couples use their experience in previous marriage relationships to come up with more realistic expectations for their current relationships. Although the remarrying partners in FR couples potentially have some positive and negative experiences, the potential benefit their experience brings may be nullified by the inexperience of their first-marrying

partner. Though not stated, the authors seem to assume that the RR spouses' expectations are similar enough to not cancel each other out.

MacDonald and DeMaris (1995) used ideas about differences in expectations of partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples to explain their results, but these ideas were not empirically tested. Still, their findings did show that one way stepfamily relationships vary widely (Keshet, 1990) might be seen in how partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples handle expectations differently. Another way might be in levels of consensus about societal level ideals.

Keshet (1990) examined consensus levels among stepfamily members: in so doing he investigated their beliefs about stepfamilies. Little agreement exists about stepfamily issues and expectations (Ganong, et al., 1995; Keshet, 1990). Considering consensus levels between couples can provide more complex information than considering only individual information about each partner. Considering differences between FR and RR couples is another way of providing more complex information. However, neither Keshet (1990) nor MacDonald and DeMaris (1995) studied FR and RR couples as distinct types. However, considered together, their ideas intimate that partners in FR couples vary significantly from partners in RR couples such that: (a) within couples, the difference between partners' expectations will be greater in FR couples than RR couples; (b) within couples, partners in RR couples will have greater agreement about realistic expectations than partners in FR couples; and (c) between couple types, expectations used by partners in FR couples will be less realistic than expectations used by partners in RR couples. Keshet (1990) found the same questions that had the least

consensus between partners also had the least consensus between males and females for the sample as a whole. This implies that the way couples hold expectations of their partners may parallel ideals held at a societal level.

At a societal level, a key question would be to what extents are remarriage couples influenced by societally held ideals. Pink and Wampler (1985) found that couples in stepfamilies and first-marriage families had similar ideals for family functioning. However, Pink and Wampler (1985) did not study FR and RR couples as distinct couple types. The current study has argued that FR and RR couples have differences in ideals and expectations. Therefore, Pink and Wampler's (1985) findings may be more true of partners in FR couples than of partners in RR couples. This study has suggested that, because only the remarrying partner in FR couples has the context of a previous divorce to change perceptions, partners in FR couples are more likely than partners in RR couples to use first-marriage family ideals to map perceptions about ideals and expectations. Furthermore, partners in FR couples are likely to be less alike in ideals than partners in RR couples. Specifically, these ideas imply that: (a) within couples, the differences between FR partners' levels of idealism will be greater than RR partners; and (b) between couple types, partners in FR couples will be more idealistic than partners in RR couples. Taken together, these ideas support the position indicated in the conceptual hypotheses. However, that position has not been tested.

Literature Review Summary

Divorce and subsequent remarriage have become so common that almost a third of all Americans will go through this process at some point in their lives (Cherlin &

Furstenberg, 1994). Given the prevalence of divorce and remarriage, continuing study of remarriage families is important. In research to date, remarriage families and first-marriage families have been found to have similarities and differences. Many of the ways that first-marriage families and remarriage families are similar are overlapped by added complexity for remarriage families so that the difference is a difference of greater complexity in family relationships.

Partners in remarriage families often have a first-marriage family as their ideal family. Some authors have suggested that remarriage families are incompletely institutionalized (Cherlin, 1978) or not institutionalized at all (Keshet, 1990), indicating a need for a set of norms to guide family behavior. Without norms to provide ideals for their more complex remarriage families, partners in remarriage families hold ideals and expectations based on ideals and expectations of first-marriage families.

For both first-marriage families and remarriage families, when one spouse's behavior corresponds to the role expectations of the other spouse, the couple may experience increased marital satisfaction (Chadwick, et al., 1976; Keshet, 1990). Some common expectations for remarriage families have been studied (Keshet, 1990). This study has shown that partners in remarriage families who are comfortable with having a model of the family different from a first-marriage family model experienced greater marital satisfaction than those partners who were not. Other benefits of expecting one's family to be different from a first-marriage family have been found and suggested. Such expectations may help families to have: (a) increased feelings of family success (Visher & Visher, 1990), and (b) reduced conflict (Kvanli & Jennings, 1987).

Remarriage couples use ideals and expectations to map their perceptions about their stepfamilies. When they expect their remarriage families to be different in complexity from first-marriage families, they are able to have more realistic expectations. This is a task that may be more difficult for partners in FR couples than for partners in RR couples.

Some authors have studied FR and RR couples as distinct couple types in the remarriage family literature. Differences have been found in choice of marriage partner: differences and similarities have been found in patterns of community integration. Given that partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples have both similarities and differences they are better suited to be comparison groups than spouses in first-marriage families and remarriage families.

In the study of expectations, MacDonald and DeMaris (1995) suggested that partners in FR couples hold expectations that are less realistic than expectations of partners in RR couples. However, their explanation was not empirically tested. Ideals and expectations were intimated to be connected in comparable research (Keshet, 1990). Combining ideas from the above research leads to support for the conceptual hypotheses suggesting that partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples do indeed differ in levels of ideals and expectations.

Summary justification can be offered for the current study. Some research literature has considered similarities and differences between FR and RR couples. Other research has considered ideals and expectations of couples in stepfamilies without considering differences between or similarities of partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples. Understanding how partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples

differ in expectations and idealism would move stepfamily research towards a more thorough understanding of how to help stepfamilies with marital satisfaction or conflict resolution. Until now, no research has empirically considered how premarital expectations of partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples differ.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Empirical support of the conceptual hypotheses, which were generated from the review of literature, was sought to accomplish the purposes of the current study. The design is considered, and sets the stage for explanation of the selection of the sample. The selection of subjects, and the demographic results of the selection process are detailed. The properties of the instrument matched to the subjects are reviewed. Operationalization of the hypotheses and variables derived from the study and the instrument are also discussed. Finally, the analysis to be performed is presented.

Design

The current study used a comparative design with survey techniques and secondary analysis. The instrument used in this study was PREPARE-MC, a paper-and-pencil, survey type instrument. The sample was a non probability sample because it was not randomly drawn; therefore, the chances for any particular American to be included in the sample were not equal.

The subjects in the current study were unmarried, and were entering either FR remarriages or RR remarriages. The primary independent variable was marriage type, which can have the values of FR or RR. Respondents can not be assigned to a particular marriage type group--to do so would be unethical--so the comparative nature of the current study was quasi-experimental rather than experimental. Whereas the data used in this study were previously collected for premarital enrichment, the analysis of the current study represents a secondary analysis (Miller, 1986).

Sample

PREPARE-MC was administered to 1,809 couples entering their marriage with children. These couples were engaged or about to be remarried. The PREPARE-MC database contains data from administrations done nationwide between 1988 and 1996. Although administrations were done in areas across the United States, no attempt was made to randomly select participants. The couples voluntarily received premarital counseling at a church or counseling center that utilized PREPARE-MC. The data from the current study were drawn from the PREPARE-MC database.

The population of couples who have taken PREPARE-MC includes various marital statuses. The marital status of both partners was considered when drawing the sample. In order for a couple to be included in the current study, both partners had to meet specific criteria and have complete data for the research variables. The two main criteria were: (a) Couples were planning to marry into stepfamilies, and (b) partners' demographic characteristics were similar to demographic characteristics of partners in a large ($n = 536,727$), national report from the National Center for Health Statistics (Clarke, 1995). Rationales for this strategy are detailed below.

1. The first main criterion was that couples had to be planning to marry into stepfamilies. Couples had to meet the following three subcriteria to be included in the research sample: (a) One or both of the partners had previously divorced, (b) neither of the partners was previously widowed, and (c) both partners were single. These three subcriteria were used so that participants would be as similar and comparable as possible while allowing both FR and RR couples to be included.

The second main criterion was that partners' demographic characteristics resemble demographic characteristics of partners in the National Center for Health Statistics (Clarke, 1995) report. This report covered a large part of the nation. Whereas the participants who took PREPARE-MC were not randomly recruited, a structured sampling plan was used with those couples that met the marital status criterion. This technique was intended to build a sample that would approximate demographic figures of a large, nationally representative database. Data from the National Center for Health Statistics (Clarke, 1995) report was chosen as a guide because the report used a large representative sample ($n = 536,727$) from a wide geographical area, and the demographics provided in the study were entirely focused around divorces and remarriages. Additionally, their dataset had three demographic categories comparable to PREPARE-MC's demographic categories. These categories were ethnic background, number of children, and age.

Comparison of ethnicity was made between participants in the PREPARE-MC sample and the National Center for Health Statistics (Clarke, 1995) report. Within the ethnic background category, Caucasians and all other races except African-Americans were over represented in PREPARE-MC, while African-Americans were underrepresented. The number of Caucasians used would have to have been sharply reduced to approximate the number of African-Americans within Clarke's (1995) report. Maintaining a high number of participants was considered preferable to having a closer approximation of the ethnicity of divorced individuals across the nation.

A comparison was made between the number of children per couple in the PREPARE-MC sample, and the number of children per divorce in the National Center for Health Statistics report. The PREPARE-MC sample was not modified to have an equal mean number of children as the National Center for Health Statistics report. The number of children was not altered because the mean number of children per divorce or annulment was lower ($M = 0.9$) than the minimum number of children--at least one--required to be a stepfamily. Because stepfamily couples have at least one child, a structured sample could not bring the mean number of children per couple below one. Additionally, structuring a sample only with couples who have one child would eliminate many cases. However, the numbers of children were seen to be close enough to be considered equivalent. Therefore, no modifications were made to the number of children per couple in the PREPARE-MC sample.

Age was considered a category that could be adequately approximated. Partners with their age at the outside of the distribution of age were excluded from the sample as detailed below (Table 1). Using National Center for Health Statistics data for 1988, Wilson and Clarke (1992) found that at age 45, marriages to divorced partners occurred less frequently than marriages to widowed partners. In order to include participants who were more likely to have only had experience with remarriage after divorce, as compared with remarriage after the death of a previous spouse, and also to maintain a broad age range, participants had to be aged 17 to 55 years to be included in the sample.

Insert Table 1 about here

Advantages and disadvantages were considered in using Clarke's (1995) data to structure the sample for the current study. One advantage, was that Clarke's (1995) demographic information was gathered both at the time of marriage or remarriage, and at the time of annulment or divorce. Although published together, marriage or remarriage and annulment or divorce demographics constitute two data sets because individuals were not longitudinally followed from marriage or remarriage to divorce or annulment. Some demographics were only gathered at the time of marriage or remarriage, and others were only gathered at the time of annulment or divorce dataset. The data for the current study were gathered between the time of divorce and remarriage. Because of this, neither the option of the divorce dataset nor the remarriage dataset was clearly a better comparison dataset for the PREPARE-MC sample. However, to stay consistent only one of the two data sets was chosen. The divorced partners' dataset was used because recent data pertaining to the comparison categories discussed above were more available in the dataset of divorced partners. A second consideration was that, although only one of the comparison categories was used for the sampling technique, Clarke's (1995) data provided demographics for comparison with PREPARE-MC demographics (Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

Instrument

PREPARE-MC is a premarital inventory used with couples planning to marry, or who have recently married who have children. PREPARE-MC is a survey type questionnaire. The inventory is designed to assist couples in discovering couple strengths

and work areas. This process is accomplished by highlighting issues of couple positive agreement (respondents' answers indicating consensus in a positive direction about the relationship issue), negative agreement (respondents' answers indicating consensus in a negative direction about the relationship issue), issues of disagreement, and undecided issues.

PREPARE-MC contains 125 items in fourteen scales. The twelve PREPARE-MC scales, comprising 115 items are: Realistic Expectations, Personality Issues, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Financial Management, Leisure Activities, Sexual Relationship, Children and Parenting, Family and Friends, Equalitarian Roles, Religious Orientation, Idealistic Distortion. Items from each of the first 12 scales are interspersed throughout the inventory. The Idealistic Distortion scale is composed of five questions that measure an individual's tendency to answer personal questions in a societally favorable way. The last two scales, with five items each, represent a shortened version of the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES, Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985). FACES asked questions about each partner's family of origin, that were used in feedback sessions.

Items from the first twelve scales make statements about the couple's relationship. Partner's were asked to respond based on their ideas about how much they agree that the statements were descriptive of their couple relationship. Partners answer all questions using a five-point Likert-type scale. On all scales except the FACES scales possible answers range from one to five. One indicates participants "Agree Strongly", two indicates they "Agree", three indicates they are "Undecided", four indicates participants "Disagree", and five indicates they "Disagree Strongly". Rather than asking about degree

of agreement, the possible answers on the Cohesion and Adaptability scales were used to indicate how frequently certain relationship interactions occurred in the family in which participants grew up. Possible answers range from one to five. One indicates the interaction asked about in the item "Almost Never" occurred, two indicates the interaction occurred "Once In A While", three indicates the interaction "Sometimes" occurred, four indicates the interaction occurred "Frequently", and five indicates the interaction "Almost Always" occurred. Some items are reverse scored, so that response bias can be reduced.

For the purposes of this study, the Realistic Expectations scale and the Idealistic Distortion scale were the principal scales used. A sample item from the Realistic Expectations scale is: "My partner and I are adequately prepared for the realities of blended family living." A sample item from the Idealistic Distortion scale is: "My partner has all of the qualities I've always wanted in a mate."

Reliability and validity. Measures of reliability demonstrate the stability and internal consistency of scales in an instrument. To measure the reliability of PREPARE-MC's scales, both before and after subjects were excluded, stability was assessed using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (Table 3). The scales were shown to be internally consistent, both before and after subjects were excluded. The Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha scores were high enough for research purposes and for determining general comparability between couples (Fournier, Olson, & Druckman, 1983).

Insert Table 3 about here

By definition, validity is a determination of whether an instrument measures what the instrument's creator(s) believe the instrument is measuring. Different types of validity address different ways of answering the question of how the PREPARE-MC inventory measures validly. Validity is discussed below.

According to Fournier, et al. (1983) the items in PREPARE-MC were specifically developed to assess couple interpersonal processes. PREPARE-MC categories reflect those which most commonly appear in the literature. Additionally, PREPARE-MC items and categories were reviewed by practitioners, which suggests face validity. Factor analysis was also performed and revealed 11 unique factors for the 12 scales. Questions around Personality Issues and Communication correlated highly ($r = .76$), loading on the same factor.

Construct validity was reviewed in two ways. PREPARE-MC items were submitted to a correlational analysis that examined the relationships between PREPARE-MC scale scores and the scale scores of over 100 other established scales. All 12 of the PREPARE-MC scales correlated significantly with the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke & Wallace, 1959). PREPARE-MC's Realistic Expectations scale and Idealistic Distortion scale also correlated significantly with other scales addressing cohesion, and relationship expectations. The details of these comparisons are recorded elsewhere (Fournier, 1979, p. 192).

Procedure. PREPARE-MC is a paper-and-pencil inventory. The inventory was administered by approved mental health and family professionals across the country. Couples usually completed the inventory as part of locally administered marriage

preparation programs. The family professional sent the couple's response forms to the PREPARE-ENRICH office; data were then processed, and added to a national database. Results were then returned to the family professional. Couples taking the inventory were more likely to be seeking family life education or enrichment than psychotherapy services.

Couples take the inventory at the same time but apart from each other. Couple's results were presented to them at a follow-up session two weeks from the time the inventory was administered. Completion of the inventory takes approximately 25 - 30 minutes.

Error variance was considered as follows. PREPARE-MC was administered using instructions from a counselor's manual that indicates how the survey is to be delivered. Although those who administer the inventory were required to receive training, the lack of any method of assuring non deviance from administration guidelines presents a threat to internal validity, and may contribute to error variance. However, the current study's large sample size ($n = 1,072$) compensates for some of the threats to validity. Additionally, that the sample includes administrations done in locations across the nation suggests PREPARE-MC can approximate a national population, and especially those who receive marriage enrichment services.

Limitations. Whereas the instrument was designed for a purpose other than the current study, some issues that would be addressed had this study used an original questionnaire, might not be fully answered. One example is that how many times a person has been remarried cannot be determined. Knowing how many times a person had

been married could show a trend in changes in realism and idealism if sample cross sections were used. Also, the length of time between divorce and remarriage cannot be determined. Knowing the duration of the length of singlehood might relate to expectations or idealism.

Hypotheses

1. FR couples will have higher mean couple difference scores on the PREPARE-MC Idealistic Distortion scale than RR couples.
2. FR couples will have higher mean combined PREPARE-MC Idealistic Distortion Scale scores than RR couples.
3. FR couples will have higher mean couple difference scores on PREPARE-MC Realistic Expectations scale than RR couples.
4. RR couples will have higher mean positive couple agreement scores on the PREPARE-MC Realistic Expectations scale than FR couples.
5. FR couples will have lower mean combined PREPARE-MC Realistic Expectations scale scores than RR couples.

Operationalization

To determine whether partners in FR couples compared with partners in RR couples, idealism and expectations responses were utilized to create a variety of scores.

Operationalization of dependent variables was needed for each hypothesis.

Operationalization was needed for the following dependent variables: (a) an idealistic distortion partner difference score. (b) a combined idealistic distortion score. (c) a realistic expectations partner difference score. (d) a realistic expectations positive couple

agreement score, and (e) a combined realistic expectations score. The process of developing scores for each hypothesis is indicated below.

Idealistic Distortion scale scores. The Idealistic Distortion scale examined the tendency of subjects to idealize aspects of marriage. PREPARE-MC contains a five-item scale that measured each subjects tendency to answer questions in a societally favorable way. This scale is comprised of Items 34, 42, 64, 70, and 101 (see Appendix B).

Subjects responded to Idealistic Distortion scale items by indicating their level of agreement with a given statement. Items 34, 42, 64, and 101 were phrased so that low agreement, indicated by marking a "4" or a "5", was the less idealistic response. For Item 70 agreement, indicated by a "1" or "2" was the less idealistic response. To calculate a score, Items 34, 42, 64, and 101 were recoded so that a "5" was changed to a "1", a "4" was changed to a "2", a "3" was left as a "3", a "2" was changed to a "4" and a "1" was changed to a "5".

The current study examined the difference between the Idealistic Distortion scale scores of each partner. To calculate an Idealistic Distortion partner difference score, individual item difference scores were calculated. The value of the female's score was subtracted from the value of the male's score for each corresponding item. The absolute value of the difference between the two values was calculated. Each item for a couple could vary from 0 (when both partners marked the same answer) to 4 (when partners responded at opposite ends of the scale). The difference score from all five items were summed to create the Idealistic Distortion partner difference score. If partners marked the same value on all five items, they could achieve an Idealistic Distortion scale

difference score of 0. If couples responded at the extreme opposite ends of each item they could achieve a score of 20. Therefore, the theoretical range of responses for the Idealistic Distortion scale difference score was 0 to 20. A low score indicated that partners were very similar in the levels of normative idealism they used to map their perceptions. A high score indicated that couples were fairly different in the levels of normative idealism they used to map their perceptions.

Combined Idealistic Distortion scale scores were calculated to allow a quantitative view of idealism for the couple. After items were recoded in the same fashion as the difference scores, they were summed to create an Idealistic Distortion scale score. Because each item could receive a value from one to five, the theoretical ranges of individual scores were 5 to 25. Individual scores were summed and stored as a combined score with a theoretical range from 10 to 50. A high score indicated that couples were extremely idealistic in the mapping of their perceptions. A low score indicated that couples had little idealism in the mapping of their perceptions.

Realistic Expectations scale scores. The Realistic Expectations scale examined the interconnections of subjects with normative expectations. In PREPARE-MC the Realistic Expectations scale measures partners' degree of realism in expectations of their partner. The 10 items on the Realistic Expectations scale are Items 14, 19, 32, 36, 52, 53, 82, 88, 99, and 113 (see Appendix B).

Difference scores for the Realistic Expectations scale were calculated in the same fashion as the difference scores for the Idealistic Distortion scale. An important difference between the two scales is that the Realistic Expectations scale has 10 items so

the possible range of responses was broader. In summary, if partners marked the same value on all 10 items, they could achieve a Realistic Expectations scale difference score of 0. If couples responded at the extreme opposite ends of each item they could achieve a score of 40. Therefore, the theoretical range of responses for the Realistic Expectations scale difference score was 0 to 40. Low scores indicated that partners were more similar in their levels of realism used in their mapping of perceptions. Higher scores indicated that partners were more different in their levels of realism used in their mapping of perceptions.

Combined Realistic Expectations scale scores were also calculated with the same procedure used to calculate combined Idealistic Distortion scale scores. Since each item could receive a value from one to five, the theoretical ranges of individual expectations scores after all 10 items were summed was 10 to 50. Individual scores were summed and the theoretical range of combined expectations scores was 20 to 100. Lower scores indicated less realism in the mapping of perceptions; higher scores indicated greater realism in the mapping of perceptions.

Positive couple agreement. Positive couple agreement was examined to be able to compare FR and RR couples. Positive couple agreement scores address to what extent partners agree with positive statements or disagree with negative statements. As with the Idealistic Distortion scale and Realistic Expectations scale, some answers were recoded so that all items can be scored in a positive direction by summing the value of each response. Positive couple agreement was calculated for all 10 item scales, and the

process was the same for all 10 scales. This process will be detailed using the Realistic Expectations scale as an example.

The male and female partner responses to each item were compared. After items were reflected so that high responses ("4" or "5") were realistic, an item was counted as a positive agreement item if both partners had a "4" or a "5" for the item. After all items for the Realistic Expectations scale were evaluated for positive agreement, positive items were summed, divided by 10 and multiplied by 100 to create a positive agreement percent. The theoretical range of responses for Realistic Expectations scale positive couple agreement was 0% to 100%. Lower positive couple agreement scores indicated that partners did not agree in a positive manner on items on the scale. These could have been a result of partners answering questions at different ends of the scale, or partners answering questions in negative directions. Higher positive couple agreement scores indicated that partners agreed and answered questions in positive directions. A couple with higher positive couple agreement scores was likely to have expectations with greater levels of shared realism than couples with lower scores.

Additional PREPARE-MC expectations items. Some PREPARE-MC scales other than the Realistic Expectations scale contain items that address partner expectations within the theme of the particular scale. Questions that addressed expectations were gathered from any of the 10-item scales that had such items. The purpose of this grouping was to broaden the horizon on which expectations were examined. These questions were referred to as PREPARE-MC expectations. Items selected and the process used can be found in Appendix C.

Selecting couples. Each of the hypotheses indicates a score that required identification of couple type before analyses could be performed. Identifying partner characteristics helped create the independent variable used in each hypothesis.

Selection was accomplished as follows. First, couples were selected if both partners had indicated "Single, never married" or "Single, previously married" for marital status. Second, remaining couples were selected if both partners in the couple had indicated their respective ages to be greater than or equal to 17 and less than or equal to 55. Finally, at least one partner had to indicate they had at least one child. (See Appendix D for a detailed summary.)

Analysis

Two ways of considering whether partners in FR couples have higher idealism and were less realistic in their expectations than partners in RR couples were considered for Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 5. A t-test was performed for each hypothesis utilizing the .05 alpha significance level that compared FR and RR couple types. The consideration of mean differences between partners was intended to provide an understanding of how much partners differed from each other. This was intended to show how RR partners were more similar to each other than FR partners. Considering mean combined scores was not anticipated to provide information about differences between partners, but to help show whether partners in RR couples were less idealistic and more realistic, on the whole, than partners in FR couples. Analysis of mean differences was intended to show how the distance between FR spouse's levels of idealism and realism differed from that of RR spouses. Using difference scores and combined scores together was expected to:

(a) help compare the extent of differences between partners in FR couples with the extent of differences between partners in RR couples, and (b) help compare how distant partners in FR couples were from partners in RR couples overall.

Support for Hypothesis 4 was sought in two ways. First, a t-test was performed to compare FR couples' mean positive couple agreement scores with that of RR couples. Second, positive couple agreement scores from 10 other PREPARE-MC scales were considered as addressing expectations because PREPARE-MC questions help participants consider their future marriage relationship. The scales utilized include: Personality Issues, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Financial Management, Leisure Activities, Sexual Relationship, Children and Parenting, Family and Friends, Equalitarian Roles, and Religious Orientation. T-tests were run for each of the scales utilizing the .05 alpha significance level with FR and RR couple types as the two groups. The purpose of the t-tests was two-fold: (a) to show that RR couples were significantly more realistic in their expectations than FR couples, and (b) to illuminate the particular issues on which RR couples may be more realistic than FR couples.

To gain further understanding of how RR couples may be more realistic than FR couples, as predicted in Hypothesis 5, the PREPARE-MC expectations were used. Item analyses were performed on each item. Chi-square item analyses were performed on each of the PREPARE-MC expectations items. The Pearson chi-square was the test statistic that was used to determine whether partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples differed significantly on any of the items. The data met the requirements for a Pearson chi-square: "(1) one variable has more than two categories; (2) fewer than 20 per cent of the cells have an expected frequency of less than 5; and (3) no cell has an expected

frequency of less than 1." (Cramer, 1994, p. 83). The following items did not meet the requirements and were excluded from the results: (a) Item 43 for the males and females, and (b) Item 23 for the females only. Item data from PREPARE-MC were ordinal; notwithstanding, a test statistic for nominal data, such as the Pearson chi-square, may be used with ordinal data (Hickey, 1986). Additionally, a t-test was performed on each PREPARE-MC expectations item in order to find patterns of differences. Whereas the data for item analyses were ordinal, this t-test was only intended to: (a) suggest patterns of ways RR couples may be more realistic than FR couples, and (b) illuminate possible gender differences.

Summary

The design of the current study was comparative using survey techniques with secondary analysis. The study utilized PREPARE-MC, a premarital inventory for partners who have a child(ren) and are planning to marry. To investigate the hypotheses, participants marrying either for the first time or after a divorce were selected. The sample was similar to a large national sample (Clarke, 1995) and limitation of the age range of the PREPARE-MC sample was performed to make the sample resemble a national sample. The resulting sample was uncharacteristic in some demographics, such as socio-economic class.

PREPARE-MC was detailed with description of the physical instrument and scales. Reliability and validity considerations indicated that PREPARE-MC was adequate for the purposes of the current study. Discussion of consistency in administration of the inventory indicated that administration of PREPARE-MC is

unregulated, but a large sample size ($n = 1,072$) may compensate for the possibility of error variance in administration. Other limitations to the generalizability of the use of the instrument were indicated: some based on the sample of the current study. Other limitations were based on demographic information that might prove useful but that was not collected as part of the inventory.

Operationalization of the hypotheses was detailed. The process of preparation of the dependent variables was indicated, including partner difference scores, and combined couple scores for the Idealistic Distortion scale and the Realistic Expectations scale. Positive couple agreement scoring was discussed using the Realistic Expectations scale as an example.

Finally, to empirically test the operationalized hypotheses, the analysis that was performed was described. T-tests were performed for the hypotheses, which used difference and combination scores, as well as for positive couple agreement on 10 scales. Chi-square analysis was performed to consider patterns of responses to the PREPARE-MC expectations items. The results of these analyses are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Using the above mentioned marital status criterion and the age limit guidelines based on Clarke's (1995) data, the sampling technique for the current study yielded a sample of 2,144 subjects (1,072 couples). The age range of the sample was 19 to 55 ($M = 34.15$) after all the criteria were utilized. RR couples composed 41.9% of the sample ($n = 449$); FR couples composed 58.1% of the sample ($n = 623$). In 56.7% ($n = 353$) of the FR couples, the males were the first-marrying partner. Females were the first-marrying partner in 43.3% ($n = 270$) of the FR couples. Other sample demographics are indicated in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here

Some demographic categories were somewhat atypical. The sample had a high number of Catholics (42.5% of men and 45.0% of women). Participants had high income with a majority of the men (54.2%) earning over \$30,000 per year and a majority of the women (56.3%) earning over \$20,000 per year. The sample was well educated with 80.7% of the men and 82.7% of the women having attended at least some college.

After the sample was selected and the variables for each hypothesis were created and scored, analyses were run. Hypotheses 1 through 3 and 5 utilize t-tests to investigate partner difference and combination scores. T-tests are also used in analyzing positive couple agreement scores. Item analysis is used to consider gender and couple type response patterns for Hypothesis 5. Results for each hypothesis are indicated.

Partner Difference And Combination Scores

Hypothesis 1 predicted that FR couples would have greater differences between partners' Idealistic Distortion scores than RR couples. This prediction was made because the interaction of the two partners was believed to use boundaries that would prevent the remarrying partner from mapping perceptions with the first-marriage family ideals of the first-marrying partner. In RR couples, the interaction of the partners would differ because each had previously gone through divorce. Both would create boundaries that would discourage the partners from mapping perceptions with first-marriage family ideals.

Hypothesis 1 was not supported. The results of the t-test showed that, for the participants of the current study, FR couples did not have significantly greater mean Idealistic Distortion score differences between partners than RR couples. FR Partners had higher mean difference scores ($M = 4.34$) than RR couples ($M = 4.21$, $p < .17$); although FR partners were higher, the t-test results were not significant (Table 5).

Insert Table 5 about here

Hypothesis 2 predicted that FR partners would have higher combined Idealistic Distortion scores than RR partners. The rationale offered for Hypothesis 1, also explains Hypothesis 2. RR partners have boundaries that they use to map perceptions with lower levels of normative ideals than FR couples. Because the scores of individual partners are believed to be lower in RR couples than FR couples, combined partner scores would also be lower

Hypothesis 2 was not supported. The results of the t-test indicated that, within the current study, partners in FR couples did not have significantly higher combined Idealistic Distortion scores than partners in RR couples. The FR couples' mean was actually lower ($M = 34.04$) than the mean of RR couples ($M = 34.15$, $p < .392$). The results of Hypotheses 1 and 2 may suggest that, for this sample, partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples were homogeneous, because neither the differences between partners, nor the combined levels of partners were significantly different.

The prediction of Hypothesis 3, that FR couples would have greater differences between partner's Realistic Expectations scores than RR couples, relied on a similar rationale as Hypothesis 1. The partners in RR couples have boundaries around the mapping of perceptions involving expectations of one's partner. Both RR partners have the common experience of divorce as a context for the mapping of their perceptions involving expectations. Partners in FR couples do not have that common experience and, as a result, map their perceptions involving expectations with lower realism levels than partners in RR couples.

Hypothesis 3, that FR couples would have higher mean couple difference scores on the Realistic Expectations scale, was not supported. The t-test indicated that the FR couples in this study did not have significantly greater differences between partner Realistic Expectations scores than the RR couples in this study. Although FR couples did have higher mean difference scores ($M = 8.79$) than RR couples ($M = 8.53$), the difference was not statistically significant ($p < .10$).

To study Hypothesis 5, and determine whether partners in FR couples had lower combined Realistic Expectations scores than partners in RR couples, the following rationale was utilized. Partners in RR couples are believed to map their perceptions involving expectations with lower realism levels than partners in FR couples. Therefore, partners in FR couples will have lower combined levels of realism than partners in RR couples. The results of the t-test revealed that the hypothesis was not supported. Contrary to the direction predicted in Hypothesis 5, FR couples actually had significantly higher combined Realistic Expectations scores ($M = 74.71$) than RR couples ($M = 73.71$, $p < .048$).

Overall, none of the hypotheses were supported by the t-tests on the Idealistic Distortion and Realistic Expectations scales. The only significant finding, which ran contrary to the expected direction for Hypothesis 5, was that partners in FR couples had higher combined couple scores than partners in RR couples. Partial results of the t-tests are reported in Table 5.

Positive Couple Agreement

That RR couples would show higher positive couple agreement than FR couples was the prediction of Hypothesis 4. Because partners in RR couples were believed to use the common experience of having gone through a divorce as context for mapping their expectations of their partner, they were believed to be both more positive than partners in FR couples and more similar to each other than partners in FR couples. Therefore, RR couples were believed to have higher positive couple agreement than FR couples.

Hypothesis 4 was analyzed with two foci. First, a t-test was run with positive couple agreement scores from the Realistic Expectations scale (Table 5). Second, t-tests were run on the mean positive couple agreement scores of FR and RR couples from 10 other scales (Table 6). The t-test on the Realistic Expectations scale failed to support that RR couples have higher positive couple agreement ($M = 52.87$) on Realistic Expectations scale questions than FR couples ($M = 52.49$, $p < .384$). For this sample, the means for positive couple agreement were only separated by 0.38.

Insert Table 6 about here

The comparison of positive couple agreement scores from the other PREPARE-MC scales showed that FR and RR couples had significantly different positive couple agreement scores on four scales. RR couples achieved significantly higher scores on each of the four. Using t-tests with pooled variance estimates, the following was found:

1. RR couples' mean scores on the Communication scale were significantly higher ($M = 58.64$) than FR couples ($M = 55.79$, $p < .05$).
2. RR couples also scored significantly higher ($M = 56.30$) than FR couples ($M = 52.83$, $p < .02$) on the Conflict Resolution scale.
3. RR couples scored higher ($M = 71.65$) than FR couples ($M = 68.78$, $p < .02$) on the Sexual Relationship scale.

4. The greatest difference in mean scores was on the Religious Orientation scale. On this scale, RR couples again scored higher ($M = 64.57$) than FR couples ($M = 57.34$) with highly significant results ($p < .001$).

Item Analyses

In addition to the t-test, Hypothesis 5, which stated that RR couples would have higher combined realistic expectations scores than FR couples, was examined by utilizing item analyses. These analyses consisted of t-tests and chi-square tests for each item in the PREPARE-MC expectations group. Results from the chi-square tests showed that males (Table 7) in FR couples were significantly more realistic than males in RR couples on Items 19, 29, 55, 59, and 80. While males in RR couples were significantly more realistic than men in FR couples on Items 76, and 20, females in FR couples were more realistic than females in RR couples in Items 19, and 59 (Table 8). Furthermore, Females in RR couples were more realistic than females in FR couples on only Item 76. Significant tests are reported in Table 7 for males and Table 8 for females. Responses to items were considered to be significantly different if their was a .05 or less probability that the differences occurred by chance.

Insert Table 7 about here

Insert Table 8 about here

Some themes were noted among items on which FR and RR couples were significantly different. Themes are noted here if two or more items with a similar theme were significant at a $p < .05$ level of probability.

1. Males and females in FR couples were significantly more realistic than males and females in RR couples on two items addressing stability in relationships (Items 59 and 19).
2. Males and females in FR couples were significantly more realistic than males in RR couples in issues around equalitarian roles (Items 29, 55, 80 for both and also 105 for males).
3. Females and males in RR marriages were more realistic than females and males in FR marriages on one item (76) pertaining to the importance of religion in marriage.
4. Males in RR marriages were more realistic than females and males, respectively, in FR marriages on one item (20) which addresses having a monthly money plan.

Summary

T-tests used for Hypotheses 1 through 5 did not support the hypotheses. Analyses for Hypotheses 2, and 5 indicated that means occurred in the direction opposite of the predicted direction. On Hypothesis 5 the result in the opposite direction was significant ($p < .048$) indicating that partners in FR couples had higher combined Realistic Expectations scale scores than partners in RR couples.

Positive couple agreement was used to investigate expectations. RR couples were found to have significantly higher positive couple agreement scores than FR couples on four PREPARE-MC scales, not including the Realistic Expectations scale. The scales on

which RR couples scored higher than FR couples were: Communication, Conflict Resolution, Sexual Relationship, and Religious Orientation.

Following the examination of positive couple agreement, item analyses using PREPARE-MC expectations were run. These analyses revealed patterns between genders and couple types. Patterns included findings that both genders and both couple types have patterns of expectations in which they are more realistic than the other gender or couple type respectively. The meanings of these results are discussed in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of the current study was to understand how couples planning to enter a remarriage utilize expectations of their partner. Documenting the differences or lack thereof between FR and RR couples was critical to furthering our knowledge of ideals and expectations within stepfamilies. The current chapter will consider and suggest interpretations of the nonsignificant results found, followed by the possible meanings of the significant results that were found. Limitations and suggestions for helping professionals, as well as suggestions for future research are offered.

Nonsignificant Results

Interpretation of the meaning and possible explanation of nonsignificant results is discussed. Several possible explanations are offered at a systemic level. General explanations are also offered with demographic extremes of the sample and design weaknesses.

Idealism. FR couples and RR couples did not differ significantly in combined idealism. This may suggest that partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples are similar in their idealism levels. Part of an explanation for these findings is that, at an individual level, both couple types have similarly ideal views about premarital relationships. Additionally, partners in FR couples were as different from each other in idealism as were partners in RR couples. This indicates that the patterns of couple interaction that maintain ideals may be orchestrated, by first-marrying and remarrying partners alike, back into interaction patterns that are familiar. This seems to occur

regardless of previous having the experience of divorce in the context of ones map for perceptions about ideals.

Although the partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples differ demographically (Wilson & Clarke, 1992), and in patterns of community integration (Ihinger-Tallman & Pasley, 1986) idealism seems to be a sphere in which the two couple types are primarily homogeneous. Perhaps all partners map their perceptions of the remarriage as a starting-over and perhaps the partners' interaction maintains this mapped perception. Any deviation from an ideal could be filtered out, or modified to be perceived and mapped as a negative behavior.

Perhaps both couple types are more similar than different in the extent to which they hold first-marriage family ideals, as implied by the findings of Pink and Wampler (1985), who did not study FR and RR couples separately. This may be the case because levels of idealism may be less hierarchically interconnected with levels of realism in expectations than previously assumed in the current study. Although considering levels of idealism did not indicate differences between couples, considering expectations seems to have yielded a variety of differences.

Expectations. Partners in FR couples did not show significant differences when comparing couples in the difference in expectations between partners. Partners might work at being more similar to their partner's views on stepfamilies to preserve harmony in the relationship. Additionally, the tendency of a system is to move into stable patterns. Stable patterns of differences between partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples might be very similar, which would account for the lack of hypothesized differences.

This would suggest that the two couple types are more similar than different in levels of complexity. Although there were not differences in within-couples measurements, combined couple measurements did show significant differences; however, these results occurred in opposite the predicted direction. These significant, though antithetical results will be discussed below.

In summary, none of the hypotheses about difference scores or combined scores were supported by the t-test results for the Idealistic Distortion and Realistic Expectations scales. Partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples seemed to be mapping the perceptions about ideals and expectations in ways that were not discernible as different by the current analyses. Some explanations other than the couple interaction may account for the general lack of differences.

Lack of differences. Some characteristics of the current study could help explain the lack of differences in the t-tests. The sample was demographically unusual and homogenous. Some of the following demographic characteristics were high: (a) the percentage of Caucasians, (b) the percentage of Catholics and members of other Christian religions, and (c) the economic status, including education. Partners in any of these groups could have a particular map and related perceptions about ideals and expectations that interacted with possibly similar experience of being in the context of being Caucasian, Catholic, or having higher economic status. For example, the Caucasians might be more likely as a group to map their perceptions of ideals and expectations like first-marriage families (Visher & Visher, 1990). Taking religion into account might indicate that many of the partners in the sample were more conservative, and possibly

somewhat traditional. Being more traditional might be more likely for RR couples because FR couples indicated greater realism in some questions about equalitarian roles. Furthermore, having higher economic status might create a context in which couples have higher work force expectations of their partner.

Other demographic differences could have been a factor in the lack of results. Another explanation of the differences between MacDonald and DeMaris (1995) and the current study could be offered. Perhaps the sample of the current study did not approximate the NSFH sample used by MacDonald and DeMaris (1995) close enough to produce the author's predicted differences in expectations.

The couples in this sample had known each other for several months before completing the PREPARE-MC inventory. Many of the partners in both couple types had known each other for two years or longer; 48% of the males and 47.3% of the females had known each other for this length of time. The incongruence in the amount of time partners reported having known each other is likely to be accounted for by either different perceptions about what constituted knowing each other or by partners remembering the date they met differently. Notwithstanding the difference in the length of time partners reported knowing each other, almost half of the sample indicated knowing each other long enough to have more than a good start in their relationships. After two years or more, the newness of the relationship having passed, the idealism and expectations of partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples may have become more similar than they were in the early phases of the relationship. The possibility exists that the partners in many of these couples knew each other before the divorce of any remarrying partners.

This possibility has been suggested by Wilson and Clarke (1992) regarding the general remarrying population in America. If the couples did indeed know each other, they could have had experiences related to a current uncomfortable relationship that would prompt them to incorporate boundaries into their mapping of ideals and expectations. This process could have allowed partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples to become more similar to each other.

Creating additional homogeneity was part of the design of the current study. The purpose of seeking homogeneity in the sample was to be able to focus the study on a sample of partners in FR and partners in RR couples who would have comparable complexity in their experience. However, the homogeneity may have worked against the overarching goals of the current study to find differences in the two couple types. Perhaps greater diversity in the sample would have provided the differences predicted. The sample was not only homogeneous demographically, the sample was also fairly homogeneous in ideals and expectations.

The above mentioned explanations for the general lack of differences were related to characteristics of the subjects. Some of the lack of results as hypothesized may also be due to the design of the current study. The current study utilized secondary analysis with data from the existing PREPARE-MC database. Some demographic information that could potentially have influenced the results was unavailable. For example, the number of months the couples had known each other was known, however, the number of months that had passed following the divorce of a remarrying partner was not known. Also, the number of previous divorces, or relationships and the amount of time spent in them or the

lack thereof was not known. Couples with more relationships may have had more extreme levels of idealism or expectations. Had the current study either: (a) used a different demographics questionnaire, or (b) followed-up to see whether and when couples had married, and what their current relationship history was, some of the answers to these relationship history questions might have been factored considered.

Another possible explanation that could explain the lack of significant findings would be the role that parental divorce played in expectations. Ganong, et al., (1995) found that whether one's parents had previously divorced was a factor that mediated the findings of their study about normative beliefs about fathers supporting children with special education needs. For comparison, one might note that they did not find marital status to be a mediating factor. Furthermore, although MacDonald and DeMaris (1995) suggested a difference in expectations as an explanation for partners in RR couples experiencing less open disagreement than partners in FR couples, MacDonald and DeMaris did not consider parental divorce a mitigating factor. Therefore, experiencing a divorce and remarriage as a child may be another opportunity for partners in either couple type to have the experience of divorce as context for their mapped perceptions about ideals and expectations. Unfortunately, the current study did not control for this potential effect.

Some other explanations might account for the lack of results. Some of the analyses that yielded significant results might have influenced the outcomes of idealism and expectations. Some of these differences might be accounted for by the potential influence of the variables in the analyses that had significant results.

Significant Results

Although FR and RR couples did not have differences in partner's realistic expectations, they were different in total combined realistic expectations. This finding parallels the finding that FR partners showed a pattern of greater realism in equalitarian roles than RR partners. The condition of partners living up to each other's marital role expectations has been found to be connected with family role satisfaction (Chadwick, et al., 1976). These findings might be explained by considering couple interaction. Their couple interaction around expectations may bring them to similar realistic expectations levels. Having a first-marrying spouse present seems to help increase levels of realism for the couple as a whole. The first-marrying partner might seem more likely to be perceived as someone with a fresh perspective while the remarrying partner might seem to the first-marrying partner to represent someone with experience. Remarrying couples might have difficulties avoiding repetition of interaction patterns from their previous marriage since both have been through the divorce process. They would thus be more likely to repeat behaviors based on unrealistic expectations, rather than creating new interaction patterns around realistic perceptions of stepfamily life.

FR couples were, in combined realistic expectations, slightly and significantly more realistic than RR couples. This finding runs contrary to the assumption of MacDonald and DeMaris (1995). They indicated that FR couples' higher levels of open disagreement came from the first-marrying spouse's inexperience. They suggested that this inexperience limited the overall realism of the couples' expectations. The findings of

the current study may suggest that interaction with a first-marrying partner actually increases overall levels of realism.

The departure from the suggestion of MacDonald and DeMaris (1995) might be accounted for by the fact that RR couples scored higher in positive couple agreement than FR couples in conflict resolution and communication. These results parallel the findings of MacDonald and DeMaris (1995) that RR couples had less open disagreement than FR couples. This would suggest that the common experience of RR partners both having gone through a divorce helped them map boundaries that would be more amenable to resolving conflict. However, differences in realistic expectations, as MacDonald and DeMaris (1995) suggested, might not be the best explanation.

A more likely explanation than that given by MacDonald and DeMaris (1995) may be that partners in RR couples do better with communication, as found in the current study, a strength which could potentially help partners in RR couples resolve conflict more easily, and continue with better communication in the next interaction. This may be a result of new RR partners consciously deciding and discussing how they wanted their current relationship to be different from their previous relationship (Kvanli & Jennings, 1987) and thus avoid repeating old patterns.

Expectations differentiated more clearly between partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples. Some ways of attempting to show that partners in RR couples were more realistic than partners in FR couples were either not supported, or showed a pattern of partners in FR couples being more realistic than partners in RR couples. Equalitarian values may be an area in which men and women in FR couples tend to be

more realistic than to men and women in RR couples. Stability in the partner relationship may be an area in which males in FR couples are more realistic than males in RR couples. The newness to marriage of the FR partner may make the difference in how these couples hold realistic expectations about equalitarianism and relationship.

Males in RR couples may be more realistic about expectations for financial planning. Because money management is often a source of conflict to which remarriage families are especially vulnerable (Hobart, 1991), perhaps the RR males' strength in realism in financial matters combined with demands of support payments, helps couples to remain aware of the importance of financial management. Additional strong points for partners in RR couples include communication, conflict resolution, religious orientation, and sexual relationship. Apparently these are key issues that both the RR partners have incorporated into their maps. The increased communication and conflict resolution may come from greater attention to spiritual values. These issues may also benefit from having the context of previous marital experience as part of their current maps. Additionally, seeking a stabilizing belief system may have been a way that partners in RR couples met.

Limitations

Some potentially useful implications for future research are suggested by the limitations of the current study. Caution needs to be taken in generalizing the findings of the sample: since the vast majority of members of the sample were Caucasian, the findings should be generally thought to be reflective of that ethnic group. Furthermore, since the sample was composed of two premarital groups, the results might not be applicable to married persons. Although a honeymoon period may, for a limited duration

after marriage, approximate attitudes before remarriage, ongoing relationships are likely to change with time (MacDonald & DeMaris, 1995). Therefore, the results of this study can only be safely applied to premarital couples, and perhaps those who are recently married. Moreover, this limitations suggests the need to examine postmarriage ideals and expectations of FR and RR couples. Expectations and idealism after remarriage are not addressed by the current study.

The current study sought to produce empirical information about ideals and expectations of partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples that could expand knowledge about couples in remarriage families in general. The ideal sample would have included partners both couple types of a greater age range and also with percentages of ethnic groups more closely matched to national levels. The ideal sample would also have included more participants of lower educational achievement, more diverse religious background, and lower economic status. Given the current sample, the study's generalizability was limited primarily to middle and upper class Caucasians between the ages of 17 and 55 who were Catholic, Christian, or Protestant. Being more religious, sample members may also be more conservative. Results might not be applicable partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples with more liberal views.

The PREPARE-MC data set lacked potentially important information about the relationship histories of participants. Information about the length and the number of previous marriages, relationships, and cohabitations was not available. Without this information the effects of number of relationships and relationship length on idealism and expectations can not be determined. Therefore, consideration of what the current findings imply should be given with the indicated cautions in mind.

Implications

The lack of statistical significance suggests the potential for partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples to be similar in many ways. However, the reader should be cautious when assuming that lack of significant results, except in combined expectations, indicates that the two groups are essentially similar in those four areas. Although, they seem to be similar in the ways indicated by the current study, the similarities need to be further clarified and strengthened by future research.

The findings that neither of the hypotheses about idealism were supported, and the hypotheses about expectations received mixed support is significant information. Apparently, interaction with a first-marrying partner does not have the impact on idealism previously thought. That FR and RR couples did not have significant amounts of difference in idealism when partners were contrasted, nor when couple types were contrasted is a significant fact. This fact implies that neither the context of having gone through the experience of a previous marriage, divorce and remarriage changes how couples map their perceptions about ideals and expectations of partner. Although idealism did not differentiate between partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples, some ways of looking at expectations did, and should be considered in working with couples of either type.

Helping remarrying couples. Given the widespread lack of consensus, Keshet (1990) posits the importance of remarried couples discussing expectations and constructing a customized reality. Constructing such a reality may be inherently stressful for any couple type. However, open discussion of expectations can be extremely helpful for couples using functional boundaries in their mapping of perceptions with idealism and

expectations. To do customize boundaries, couples must deal with role ambiguity over a family situation in which remarried stepparents (Whitsett & Land, 1992) and partners often do not know what to expect (Keshet, 1990).

Counselors attempting to prepare engaged stepfamily couples may wish to first determine whether couples have similarities to those in the current study. For example, the couples in the current study had strengths in realism in several previously indicated ways. If similar issues related to idealism and expectations are present, the results of the current study may prove useful as follows.

When working with partners in RR couples, counselors may especially consider the part past break-ups play in the new couples' relationship. Many may fear a relationship break-up and may easily hold idealistic views about the new relationship. Partners in FR couples may also be very idealistic about the new relationship. Characteristics that seem positive during engagement might be remapped and seen as a negative after the couple is married and the honeymoon period is concluded. Counselors may be able to help couples remember the positive perceptions that brought them together. These remembrances might be used to give couples hope. Additionally, counselors may be able to help clients keep the excitement of the engagement period, while simultaneously helping them have realistic expectations for their couple type.

What became clear in the current study was that some issues may be more pertinent to the expectations of partners in FR couples, while others are more pertinent to the expectations of partners in RR couples. Counselors may be able to use more realistic expectations within communication and financial planning of males in RR couples, to

help RR couples see past some of the typical idealism that most engaged couples have. Counselors helping partners in FR couples should attempt to explore whether the wife may hold traditional values that could be integrated with the husband's potential desire to have an equalitarian relationship. Again, financial planning may be a strength that can help the couple avoid some conflict. Such help can direct stepfamilies to a successful future relationship.

Future research. The hypotheses about expectations received mixed support. However, where support was found, significance levels were often strong. A complete lack of institutionalization with accompanying norms (Keshet, 1990) should be shown by low or no significance levels. This would indicate that the presence of a first-marrying spouse would make no difference in what couples expected in their relationships. Such a condition would fit with the explanation that all couples, whether first-married or remarried, are using similar norms. However, the support in specific topic areas suggests that norms may be developing for Caucasians in FR and RR couples. In the same way that Pink and Wampler (1985) indicated that first-marriage families are not the best comparison group for remarriage families, perhaps the search for differences in norms should be between two types of stepfamily couples: FR and RR. This question remains to be expanded and addressed by future research.

The course of the current study could be continued by identifying how post marriage expectations and idealism change with time and/or when partners have multiple marriages, relationships, and cohabitations. This could be further facilitated by including an additional comparison group of spouses who were both first-marrying, as was done by MacDonald and DeMaris (1995). This could show to what extent idealism and

expectations of remarriage families deviated from or were similar to idealism and expectations of first-marriage families. This could help support the findings that remarriage families hold ideals similar to first-marriage families (Pink & Wampler, 1985).

The current study's course could also be extended by considering the part children play in a new family. The presence of children may influence the creating of new boundaries (Keshet, 1990; MacDonald & DeMaris, 1995). Whereas remarrying stepparents are often expected to fill a parental role, instrumentally and nurturatively (Visher & Visher, 1990), expectations of one's partners might be organized more around family roles than marital roles. A focus on helping children can also draw partner's attention away from forming the new marital relationship. However, having a premarital period in which children are present can allow a period of time to practice being a stepparent before that role is taken.

Others to consider in expanding the current study could include a variety of ethnic groups. Since Caucasians were over represented, the idealism and expectations of partners in FR couples and partners in RR couples in other ethnic groups remain to be studied. The context of living within different subcultures may lead to different ways mapping perceptions about ideals and expectations of one's partner. Alternately, perhaps the lack of norms (Cherlin, 1978; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994) may be so pervasive that American subcultures are also without stepfamily norms to guide ideals and expectations of remarriage partners. In either case, awareness of the potential differences can be helpful to remarriage couples and to those working with remarriage couples.

The results of this study suggested that FR couples and RR couples may have some specific differences as well as general similarities. More detailed analysis could ferret out other specific differences not shown in the results of the current investigation. Another way of discovering differences would be to study FR and RR couples over time. Perhaps some differences earlier in the relationship of each, or after they have been married for some time would find additional differences. This could be an additional part of any future study.

Future research should consider stepfamily couples as a variety of family types, including FR and RR. Research other than idealism or expectations might be more fruitful in finding differences between the two couple types. Additionally, Crosbie-Burnett (1984) suggests the importance of stepparents clarifying their expectations with other family members. The helpfulness of this suggestion is supported by others. Successful spouses may perceive greater marital satisfaction (Keshet, 1990), less conflict (Kvanli & Jennings, 1987) and more effective parenting practices (Visher & Visher, 1990) by communicating expectations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TABLES 1 - 8

Table 1

Exclusion Demographics

| Exclusion Criteria | Males | | Females | |
|---|-------|-------------------|---------|-------------------|
| | % | <u>n</u> | % | <u>n</u> |
| Excluded By Marital Status Criteria | | (<u>n</u> = 669) | | (<u>n</u> = 665) |
| Single, never married | 50.5 | 338 | 50.8 | 338 |
| Single, previously married | 11.1 | 74 | 10.1 | 67 |
| Single, previously widowed | 12.6 | 84 | 14.7 | 98 |
| Married, first marriage | 10.8 | 72 | 8.7 | 58 |
| Married, previously married | 7.3 | 49 | 10.5 | 70 |
| Married, currently separated | 3.1 | 21 | 1.8 | 12 |
| Missing marital status info. | 4.6 | 31 | 3.3 | 22 |
| Excluded By Ethnicity, Number of Children, And Age | | (<u>n</u> = 124) | | (<u>n</u> = 103) |
| Ethnicity | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 |
| Number of Children | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 |
| Age | | | | |
| Less than 17 | 0.8 | 1 | 2.9 | 3 |
| 56 - 65 | 46.0 | 57 | 32.0 | 33 |
| 66 - 75 | 6.5 | 8 | 8.7 | 9 |
| Over 75 | 2.4 | 3 | 1.0 | 1 |
| Missing Age | 44.4 | 55 | 55.3 | 57 |
| Missing Research Data | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 |

Note. Demographics of some partners who were excluded because their partner did not qualify are not shown.

Table 2

Demographics Used For Structured Sampling Plan

| Category | PREPARE-MC ^a | | Clarke (1995) ^b | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| Age | 35.48 (<u>SD</u> = 7.70) | 32.82 (<u>SD</u> = 6.93) | 36.8 ^c | 34.3 |
| Number of Children | 1.25 (<u>SD</u> = 1.31) | 1.38 (<u>SD</u> = 1.18) | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Race by percent | | | | |
| Afro-American | 2.7 | 2.6 | 11.83 | 11.52 |
| Caucasian | 91.0 | 90.8 | 86.29 | 86.39 |
| Other | 5.5 | 6.0 | 1.88 | 1.90 |

^a $n = 1,072$ males and females each. ^b $n = 536,727$ males and females each. ^cStandard deviations were not listed in Clarke (1995).

Table 3

Reliability of PREPARE-MC Norms and Sample Males and Females

| Subscale | Norms ^a | FR And RR Couples ^b | |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------|
| | Males and Females | Males | Females |
| Children and Parenting | .67 | .68 | .65 |
| Communication | .83 | .83 | .83 |
| Conflict Resolution | .79 | .79 | .78 |
| Equalitarian Roles | .71 | .68 | .71 |
| Family and Friends | .75 | .75 | .73 |
| Financial Management | .76 | .76 | .77 |
| Idealistic Distortion | .76 | .77 | .76 |
| Leisure Activities | .65 | .61 | .65 |
| Personality Issues | .82 | .82 | .80 |
| Realistic Expectations | .65 | .65 | .63 |
| Religious Orientation | .85 | .87 | .83 |
| Sexual Relationship | .68 | .67 | .70 |

^aN = 1,809 couples. ^bn = 1,072 couples.

Table 4

Sample Demographics

| Category | Males ($\underline{n} = 1.072$) | Females ($\underline{n} = 1.072$) |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Education by Percent | | |
| Graduate/professional | 20.6 | 15.4 |
| Four year college | 22.3 | 23.3 |
| Some college/technical | 37.8 | 44.0 |
| Finished high school | 16.3 | 14.7 |
| Some high school | 2.8 | 2.5 |
| Finished elementary | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Income by percent | | |
| No income | 0.2 | 2.6 |
| Under \$5,000 | 0.9 | 4.0 |
| \$5,000 - \$9,999 | 1.4 | 6.4 |
| \$10,000 - \$14,999 | 6.8 | 13.6 |
| \$15,000 - \$19,999 | 9.8 | 17.0 |
| \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 26.6 | 27.9 |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 21.5 | 15.7 |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 10.3 | 6.5 |
| \$50,000 - \$74,999 | 14.5 | 4.3 |
| \$75,000 or more | 7.9 | 1.9 |

(Table continues)

Table 4 (continued)

| Category | Males | Females |
|---------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Months known partner by percent | | |
| Less than 12 | 27.8 | 28.1 |
| 12 - 23 | 24.8 | 24.8 |
| 24 - 35 | 17.3 | 17.2 |
| 36 - 47 | 11.1 | 11.1 |
| 48 - 59 | 4.9 | 5.3 |
| 60 - 71 | 4.7 | 4.0 |
| 72 - 83 | 3.0 | 2.7 |
| 84 - 95 | 1.3 | 1.1 |
| More than 96 | 5.7 | 5.9 |
| Religion by percent | | |
| Assembly of God | 2.6 | 2.6 |
| Baptist | 7.9 | 6.3 |
| Catholic | 42.5 | 45.0 |
| Christian | 17.6 | 17.2 |
| Episcopal | 4.9 | 7.1 |
| Jewish | 0.4 | 0.3 |
| Lutheran | 3.0 | 2.4 |
| Methodist | 9.0 | 9.3 |
| Other Protestant | 5.9 | 5.1 |

(Table continues)

Table 4 (continued)

| Category | Males | Females |
|------------|-------|---------|
| Not listed | 6.1 | 4.8 |

Table 5

Mean Couple Idealistic Distortion and Realistic Expectations Scale Scores

| Hypotheses | F:R | | R:R | | Range | p |
|---|--------|-------|--------|-------|-----------|------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | | |
| 1. F:R couples higher individual difference scores on Idealistic Distortion than R:R couples. | 4.34 | 2.23 | 4.21 | 2.38 | 0 - 13 | .170 |
| 2. F:R couples higher combined Idealistic Distortion scores than R:R couples. | 34.04 | 6.05 | 34.15 | 6.64 | 16 - 50 | .784 |
| 3. F:R couples higher individual difference scores on expectations than R:R couples. | 8.79 | 3.23 | 8.53 | 3.37 | 0 - 22 | .101 |
| 4. R:R couples higher positive couple agreement scores on expectations than F:R couples. | 52.87% | 20.76 | 52.49% | 20.76 | 0% - 100% | .768 |
| 5. F:R couples lower combined expectation scores than R:R couples. | 74.71 | 7.97 | 73.71 | 8.38 | 45 - 96 | .048 |

Table 6

Mean Scores For Positive Couple Agreement

| Scale | FR | SD | RR | SD | Range |
|------------------------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-----------|
| Children and Parenting | 60.32 | 21.28 | 58.51 | 21.99 | 0% - 100% |
| Communication | 55.79 | 27.88 | 58.64* | 28.28 | 0% - 100% |
| Conflict Resolution | 52.83 | 26.74 | 56.30* | 27.53 | 0% - 100% |
| Equalitarian Roles | 60.00 | 21.50 | 57.91 | 22.37 | 0% - 100% |
| Family and Friends | 64.41 | 23.69 | 63.32 | 25.00 | 0% - 100% |
| Financial Management | 47.21 | 25.67 | 49.42 | 26.59 | 0% - 100% |
| Leisure Activities | 58.28 | 21.53 | 60.40 | 22.12 | 0% - 100% |
| Personality Issues | 53.82 | 27.51 | 55.95 | 28.33 | 0% - 100% |
| Religious Orientation | 57.34 | 30.77 | 64.57*** | 29.53 | 0% - 100% |
| Sexual Relationship | 68.78 | 21.37 | 71.65* | 21.39 | 0% - 100% |

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 7

Results of Chi-Square Test For Male Expectations Patterns

| PREPARE-MC Expectation | Type | Column Percentages | | | | | χ^2 | Most Realistic ^a |
|--|------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 59. Children add strain to the relationship. | FR | 6.6 | 22.0 | 15.2 | 41.6 | 14.6 | 19.23*** | FR ^b |
| | RR | 10.2 | 26.7 | 20.0 | 32.1 | 10.9 | | |
| 19. Partner fears relationship breakup. | FR | 8.5 | 27.6 | 13.2 | 36.9 | 13.8 | 15.35** | FR ^b |
| | RR | 7.8 | 38.3 | 13.4 | 29.8 | 10.7 | | |
| 80. If children, wife stays home. | FR | 2.2 | 12.7 | 14.8 | 54.1 | 16.2 | 10.38* | FR ^b |
| | RR | 3.3 | 18.0 | 16.7 | 49.4 | 12.5 | | |
| 55. Wife work outside, still run house | FR | 1.4 | 8.0 | 8.8 | 53.3 | 28.4 | 10.23* | FR ^b |
| | RR | 2.2 | 13.1 | 8.2 | 53.0 | 23.4 | | |
| 29. More important husband satisfied | FR | 2.9 | 13.0 | 8.5 | 45.9 | 29.7 | 10.14* | FR ^b |
| | RR | 3.1 | 13.8 | 12.0 | 49.2 | 21.8 | | |
| with job. | | | | | | | | |

(Table continues)

Table 7 (continued)

| PREPARE-MC Expectation | Type | Column Percentages | | | | | χ^2 | Most Realistic ^a |
|------------------------------------|------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 105. Wife not encouraged to work. | FR | 2.4 | 16.5 | 17.3 | 50.7 | 13.0 | 6.19 | FR ^b |
| | RR | 3.3 | 21.8 | 16.9 | 46.3 | 11.6 | | |
| 14. Unprepared for blended family. | FR | 2.1 | 7.1 | 13.0 | 54.3 | 23.6 | 5.17 | FR |
| | RR | 0.9 | 9.6 | 13.8 | 51.0 | 24.7 | | |
| 75. Live where husband's job. | FR | 5.5 | 14.1 | 14.8 | 48.3 | 17.3 | 3.87 | FR |
| | RR | 5.8 | 18.0 | 12.5 | 47.7 | 16.0 | | |
| 12. Woman's place is in the home. | FR | 1.6 | 7.4 | 5.3 | 41.9 | 43.8 | 3.75 | FR |
| | RR | 1.1 | 8.0 | 5.8 | 46.5 | 38.5 | | |

(Table continues)

Table 7 (continued)

| PRI:PAR:MC Expectation | Type | Column Percentages | | | | | χ^2 | Most Realistic ^a |
|---|------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 26. Previous marriage financial is a problem. | FR | 1.1 | 6.7 | 10.1 | 43.7 | 38.4 | 3.61 | FR |
| | RR | 1.3 | 8.9 | 10.9 | 45.2 | 33.6 | | |
| 97. Not need both agree decisions. | FR | 0.5 | 5.9 | 4.3 | 45.6 | 43.7 | 3.12 | FR |
| | RR | 0.7 | 8.5 | 3.6 | 45.4 | 41.9 | | |
| 36. Adjusting to blended family hard. | FR | 1.9 | 14.8 | 15.2 | 54.6 | 13.5 | 2.53 | FR |
| | RR | 2.4 | 15.4 | 12.2 | 57.2 | 12.7 | | |
| 30. Partner should drink, drugs less. | FR | 7.9 | 15.4 | 14.1 | 24.6 | 38.0 | 2.26 | FR |
| | RR | 10.2 | 13.8 | 14.7 | 24.1 | 37.2 | | |
| 76. Religion not nec. in marriage. | FR | 0.3 | 4.5 | 13.2 | 48.5 | 33.5 | 11.47* | RR |
| | RR | 1.1 | 4.9 | 9.4 | 43.4 | 41.2 | | |

(Table continues)

Table 7 (continued)

| PREPARE-MC Expectation | Type | Column Percentages | | | | | χ^2 | Most Realistic ^a |
|--------------------------------------|------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 20. No monthly money plan. | FR | 7.9 | 40.9 | 16.1 | 25.4 | 9.8 | 9.56* | RR |
| | RR | 4.5 | 45.4 | 12.0 | 27.8 | 10.2 | | |
| 21. Custody, visitation is problem. | FR | 3.2 | 14.3 | 15.7 | 41.1 | 25.7 | 6.13 | RR |
| | RR | 1.1 | 13.8 | 14.3 | 42.5 | 28.3 | | |
| 23. Both work, unequal chores O.K. | FR | 0.2 | 2.9 | 5.6 | 48.2 | 43.2 | 5.01 | RR |
| | RR | 0.0 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 45.0 | 47.2 | | |
| 94. Partner will not be good parent. | FR | 1.3 | 1.6 | 2.4 | 37.6 | 57.1 | 3.90 | RR |
| | RR | 0.4 | 1.1 | 3.1 | 40.8 | 54.6 | | |
| 17. Wish more recreation. | FR | 3.5 | 22.0 | 11.6 | 51.2 | 11.7 | 3.83 | RR |
| | RR | 3.8 | 19.6 | 9.4 | 52.6 | 14.7 | | |

(Table continues)

Table 7 (continued)

| PRI:PAIRE-MC Expectation | Type | Column Percentages | | | | | χ^2 | Most Realistic ^a |
|--|------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 66. Wish partner share feelings. | FR | 5.8 | 31.6 | 9.5 | 42.7 | 10.4 | 3.77 | RR |
| | RR | 4.2 | 28.5 | 9.4 | 45.0 | 12.9 | | |
| 61. Wife accepts husband's judgments. | FR | 8.8 | 37.1 | 12.4 | 35.5 | 6.3 | 3.64 | RR |
| | RR | 7.3 | 36.5 | 12.0 | 35.0 | 9.1 | | |
| 98. Not share negative, fear partner. | FR | 2.9 | 29.9 | 7.7 | 50.1 | 9.5 | 3.42 | RR |
| | RR | 2.7 | 26.3 | 8.7 | 50.1 | 12.2 | | |
| 15. Some sex activities unwilling try. | FR | 2.9 | 11.1 | 11.6 | 44.0 | 30.5 | 2.34 | RR |
| | RR | 2.9 | 8.7 | 10.7 | 47.4 | 30.3 | | |
| 113. Difficulties fade after married. | FR | 4.0 | 19.6 | 17.8 | 47.8 | 10.8 | 2.30 | RR |
| | RR | 2.9 | 19.6 | 16.0 | 48.8 | 12.7 | | |

(Table continues)

Table 7 (continued)

| PREPARE-MC Expectation | Type | Column Percentages | | | | | χ^2 | Most Realistic ^a |
|--|------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 52. Not confident relationship succeed. | FR | 0.8 | 2.9 | 3.2 | 25.4 | 67.7 | 2.21 | RR |
| | RR | 0.4 | 1.8 | 3.8 | 26.5 | 67.5 | | |
| 16. Wish partner careful with money. | FR | 6.9 | 21.5 | 11.1 | 44.3 | 16.2 | 1.66 | RR |
| | RR | 5.8 | 20.9 | 12.7 | 42.8 | 17.8 | | |

^a“Most Realistic” indicates that the indicated couple type had the higher mean of the two couple types. ^bSignificantly different on the t-tests at $p < .05$ or better; p values are not indicated because the t-tests were only utilized to find patterns of differences.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Table 8

Results of Chi-Square Test For Female Expectations Patterns

| PREPARE-MC Expectation | Type | Column Percentages | | | | | χ^2 | Most Realistic ^a |
|---|------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 59. Children add strain relationship. | FR | 6.6 | 30.0 | 12.4 | 36.9 | 14.1 | 32.24*** | FR ^b |
| | RR | 13.8 | 30.7 | 18.5 | 26.7 | 10.2 | | |
| 19. Partner fears relationship breakup. | FR | 5.1 | 29.7 | 10.6 | 35.5 | 19.1 | 21.01*** | FR ^b |
| | RR | 7.8 | 35.6 | 13.6 | 32.5 | 10.5 | | |
| 75. Live where husband's job. | FR | 6.4 | 24.4 | 14.9 | 41.9 | 12.4 | 8.70 | FR ^b |
| | RR | 10.7 | 26.9 | 14.7 | 36.5 | 11.1 | | |
| 80. If children, wife stays home. | FR | 4.5 | 15.1 | 12.2 | 48.3 | 19.9 | 7.65 | FR ^b |
| | RR | 5.3 | 19.2 | 14.3 | 46.3 | 14.9 | | |
| 29. More important husband satisfied with job. | FR | 5.5 | 18.8 | 7.4 | 45.1 | 23.3 | 7.04 | FR ^b |
| | RR | 8.9 | 18.7 | 9.4 | 42.5 | 20.5 | | |

(Table continues)

Table 8 (continued)

| PREPARE-MC Expectation | Type | Column Percentages | | | | | χ^2 | Most Realistic ^a |
|---------------------------------------|------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 36. Adjusting to blended family hard. | FR | 1.9 | 16.9 | 14.0 | 55.2 | 12.0 | 6.77 | FR |
| | RR | 3.1 | 14.3 | 18.0 | 51.0 | 13.6 | | |
| 94. Partner will not be good parent. | FR | 1.6 | 1.0 | 4.0 | 30.0 | 63.4 | 6.72 | FR |
| | RR | 0.7 | 1.6 | 4.5 | 35.6 | 57.7 | | |
| 113. Difficulties fade after married. | FR | 1.4 | 13.2 | 9.8 | 56.8 | 18.8 | 5.25 | FR |
| | RR | 0.9 | 15.8 | 12.5 | 51.2 | 19.6 | | |
| 30. Partner should drink, drugs less. | FR | 6.9 | 13.2 | 11.6 | 27.0 | 41.4 | 4.88 | FR |
| | RR | 9.4 | 12.9 | 13.1 | 22.3 | 42.3 | | |
| 12. Woman's place is in the home. | FR | 3.5 | 11.2 | 5.1 | 43.0 | 37.1 | 4.44 | FR |
| | RR | 3.8 | 14.7 | 4.0 | 44.3 | 33.2 | | |

(Table continues)

Table 8 (continued)

| PREPARE-MC Expectation | Type | Column Percentages | | | | | χ^2 | Most Realistic ^a |
|---|------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 105. Wife not encouraged to work. | FR | 2.1 | 11.7 | 14.0 | 55.4 | 16.9 | 3.56 | FR |
| | RR | 3.3 | 12.9 | 11.1 | 56.1 | 16.5 | | |
| 61. Wife accepts husband's judgments. | FR | 10.6 | 37.2 | 14.0 | 31.6 | 6.6 | 2.93 | FR |
| | RR | 9.6 | 40.8 | 12.0 | 29.6 | 8.0 | | |
| 26. Previous marriage financial is a problem. | FR | 1.1 | 6.3 | 8.3 | 42.1 | 42.2 | 2.86 | FR |
| | RR | 1.8 | 6.9 | 7.8 | 45.4 | 38.1 | | |
| 52. Not confident relationship succeed. | FR | 0.2 | 1.4 | 2.4 | 25.0 | 70.9 | 2.75 | FR |
| | RR | 0.2 | 2.0 | 3.8 | 26.3 | 67.7 | | |
| 14. Unprepared for blended family. | FR | 1.6 | 8.5 | 13.6 | 49.8 | 26.5 | 2.70 | FR |
| | RR | 1.8 | 8.7 | 16.7 | 49.4 | 23.4 | | |

(Table continues)

Table 8 (continued)

| PREPARE-MC Expectation | Type | Column Percentages | | | | | χ^2 | Most Realistic ^a |
|---------------------------------------|------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 21. Custody, visitation is problem. | FR | 2.4 | 11.2 | 13.6 | 44.9 | 27.8 | 2.52 | FR |
| | RR | 3.6 | 11.6 | 15.4 | 41.4 | 28.1 | | |
| 76. Religion not nec. in marriage. | FR | 0.2 | 4.2 | 10.6 | 49.8 | 35.3 | 13.73** | RR |
| | RR | 0.4 | 4.2 | 9.1 | 40.3 | 45.9 | | |
| 20. No monthly money plan. | FR | 9.0 | 39.2 | 13.2 | 28.1 | 10.6 | 8.71 | RR |
| | RR | 6.7 | 36.5 | 10.0 | 35.0 | 11.8 | | |
| 98. Not share negative, fear partner. | FR | 1.9 | 23.1 | 4.5 | 49.4 | 21.0 | 7.74 | RR |
| | RR | 1.3 | 20.5 | 6.0 | 55.9 | 16.3 | | |
| 16. Wish partner careful with money. | FR | 5.9 | 22.3 | 8.2 | 43.5 | 20.1 | 6.92 | RR |
| | RR | 3.6 | 18.5 | 10.5 | 46.1 | 21.4 | | |

(Table continues)

Table 8 (continued)

| PREPARE-MC Expectation | Type | Column Percentages | | | | | χ^2 | Most Realistic ^a |
|--|------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 17. Wish more recreation. | FR | 2.7 | 19.9 | 6.9 | 48.3 | 22.2 | 3.64 | RR |
| | RR | 3.1 | 16.9 | 7.6 | 53.0 | 19.4 | | |
| 15. Some sex activities unwilling try. | FR | 4.2 | 16.4 | 13.5 | 46.4 | 19.6 | 3.16 | RR |
| | RR | 4.5 | 12.7 | 12.9 | 48.6 | 21.4 | | |
| 66. Wish partner share feelings. | FR | 7.9 | 30.8 | 5.5 | 43.3 | 12.5 | 3.05 | RR |
| | RR | 7.3 | 29.4 | 6.9 | 41.0 | 15.4 | | |
| 97. Not need both agree decisions. | FR | 0.3 | 9.0 | 3.0 | 44.1 | 43.5 | 2.50 | RR |
| | RR | 0.9 | 7.8 | 3.3 | 42.3 | 45.7 | | |

(Table continues)

Table 8 (continued)

| PREPARE-MC Expectation | Type | Column Percentages | | | | | χ^2 | Most Realistic ^a |
|---|------|--------------------|------|-----|------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 55. Wife work outside, still run house. | FR | 3.7 | 17.7 | 9.8 | 47.0 | 21.8 | 1.03 | RR |
| | RR | 3.1 | 16.7 | 8.7 | 48.3 | 23.2 | | |

^a“Most Realistic” indicates that the indicated couple type had the higher mean of the two couple types. ^bSignificantly different on the t-tests at $p < .05$ or better; p values are not indicated because the t-tests were only utilized to find patterns of differences.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

APPENDIX B
PREMARITAL PERSONAL AND RELATIONSHIP EVALUATION
MARRIAGE WITH CHILDREN EDITION

prepare mc

marriage with children

PREPARE-MC is for unmarried couples who do have children.

PREPARE-MC was designed to help you learn more about yourself, your partner and your relationship. PREPARE-MC can identify some of the strengths in your relationship and problematic issues for you to discuss with your partner.

PREPARE-MC results are not intended to predict your chances for marital success or to determine when or whether you should be married.

PREPARE-MC is not a test and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Please answer all questions according to your point of view. The usefulness of PREPARE-MC depends upon your willingness to respond fully and honestly.

The results of PREPARE-MC are confidential and will be seen by only you, your partner and your clergy/counselor. A couple identification number will be assigned and will be used in place of your names.

While you are taking PREPARE-MC, we request that you not discuss these items with your partner. After you have completed PREPARE-MC, we encourage you and your partner to discuss the items as well as feelings you experienced while taking PREPARE-MC.

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| RESPONSE CHOICES | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Disagree |
| Strongly | | | | Strongly |

1. I sometimes feel pressured to participate in activities that my partner enjoys.
2. It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my partner.
3. It is hard for me to have complete faith in some of the accepted teachings of my religion.
4. In order to end an argument, I usually give in too quickly.
5. We have discussed the responsibilities of both parents in raising children and step-children.

-
6. When we are having a problem, my partner often gives me the silent treatment.
 7. Some relatives or friends have concerns about our marriage.
 8. There are times when I am bothered by my partner's jealousy.
 9. I am completely satisfied with the amount of affection my partner gives me.
 10. My partner and I have different ideas about the best way to solve our disagreements.
 11. Religion has the same meaning for both of us.
 12. I believe the woman's place is basically in the home.
 13. Sometimes I am concerned about my partner's temper.
 14. My partner and I are adequately prepared for the realities of blended family living.
 15. I would be willing to try almost any sexual activities my partner would like to do.

-
16. Sometimes I wish my partner was more careful spending money.
 17. I wish my partner would have more time and energy for recreation with me.
 18. I'd rather do almost anything than spend an evening by myself.
 19. My partner is sometimes fearful of another relationship breakup.
 20. We do not have a specific plan for how much money we can spend each month.
-

| RESPONSE CHOICES | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Disagree |
| Strongly | | | | Strongly |

21. Custody and visitation arrangements will not cause problems for us.
22. Sharing religious values helps our relationship grow.
23. If both of us are working, the husband should do the same amount of household chores as the wife.
24. At times, I am concerned that my partner appears to be unhappy and withdrawn.
25. I feel uncomfortable about being seen nude by my partner.

-
26. Financial settlements from a previous marriage will be a problem for us.
 27. My family fully accepts my plans for this marriage.
 28. I am concerned that my partner does not have enough interests or hobbies.
 29. It is more important that the husband be satisfied with his job because his income is more important to the family.
 30. My partner should smoke, drink or use drugs less often.
 31. My partner and I enjoy all the same type of social or recreational activities.
 32. I have more stress in my present relationship than before we got together.
 33. My idea of a good time is different than my partner's.
 34. My partner and I understand each other completely.
 35. We have discussed and agreed on how to discipline our children and step-children.

-
36. The difficulties adjusting to a blended family are more than I expected.
 37. At times, my parnter is not dependable or does not always follow through on things.
 38. I am satisfied with our decisions about how much we should save.
 39. When discussing problems, my partner always understands my opinions and ideas.
 40. My partner sometimes makes comments which put me down.
-

| RESPONSE CHOICES | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Disagree |
| Strongly | | | | Strongly |

- | RESPONSE CHOICES | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Disagree |
| Strongly | | | | Strongly |
41. It is very easy for me to talk with my partner about sexual issues.
42. My partner completely understands and sympathizes with my every mood.
43. In our marriage, the husband should be as willing to adjust as the wife.
44. When we are with others, I am sometimes upset with my partner's behavior.
45. We both know exactly what our financial position as a couple is at the time.
-
46. My religious beliefs are an important part of the commitment I have to my partner.
47. I am concerned about the previous sexual experiences that my partner has had.
48. I think my partner is too involved with or influenced by his/her family.
49. I have some concerns about how my partner will be as a parent or step-parent.
50. The child(ren) have a positive attitude towards our marriage.
51. I have some concerns about whether our income will be sufficient.
52. I feel very confident our relationship will succeed.
53. I bothers me that my partner sometimes thinks about previous relationships/marriages.
54. I am sometimes afraid to ask my partner for what I want.
55. Even if the wife works outside the home, she should still be responsible for running the household.
-
56. My partner and I disagree on how to practice our religious beliefs.
57. I do not enjoy spending time with some of my future relatives and in-laws.
58. When we are having a problem, I can always tell my partner what is bothering me.
59. Having children will probably not put additional strain on our marriage relationship.
60. We never have concerns about the types of T.V. programs or the time spent watching television.

| RESPONSE CHOICES | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-----------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Agree Strongly | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Disagree Strongly |

61. The wife should trust and accept the husband's judgements on important issues.
62. My partner and I freely talk about our sexual expectations and interests.
63. Sometimes my partner is too stubborn.
64. Every new thing I have learned about my partner has pleased me.
65. It is important for me to pray with my partner.

-
66. I wish my partner was more willing to share his/her feelings with me.
67. I have shared all my concerns about having children and step-children.
68. My partner likes all of my friends.
69. I am sometimes reluctant to be affectionate with my partner because it is often misinterpreted as a sexual advance.
70. There are times when my partner does things that make me unhappy.
71. Sometimes we have serious disputes over unimportant issues.
72. I like the amount of time and leisure activities my partner and I share.
73. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my partner tells me.
74. I go out of my way to avoid conflict with my partner.
75. The husband's occupation should be first priority in determining where we live.

-
76. I believe that our marriage should include active religious involvement.
77. One of us has unpaid bills which causes me concern.
78. My partner is often critical or has a negative outlook.
79. At times, I feel some of our differences never seem to get resolved.
80. If there are (were) young children, the wife should not work outside the home.
-

| RESPONSE CHOICES | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-----------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Agree Strongly | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Disagree Strongly |

81. Sometimes my partner does not understand how I feel.
82. It is difficult for others to understand the complexity of a blended family.
83. To avoid hurting my partner's feelings during an argument, I tend not to say anything.
84. I do not seem to have much fun unless I am with my partner.
85. Deciding what is most important to spend our money on is sometimes a problem.
-
86. Sometimes my partner spends too much time with friends.
87. My partner and I agree on the religious education for our children and step-children.
88. There are times when I feel left out when my partner is with his/her children.
89. In loving my partner, I feel that I am able to understand the concept that God is love.
90. I am worried that past relationships will present a problem for us.
91. I am very satisfied with how my partner and I talk with each other.
92. I am worried that one of our families may cause trouble in our marriage.
93. We always agree on how to spend our money.
94. My partner seems good with children and will be a very good parent.
95. Sometimes I have difficulty dealing with my partner's moodiness.
-
96. At times, my partner does not take our disagreements seriously.
97. Both of us should jointly agree on all important decisions.
98. I do not always share negative feelings with my partner because I am afraid she/he will get angry.
99. My partner and I have worked out any issues or hurts from our past relationships.
100. My partner and I disagree about some of the teachings of my religion.
-

RESPONSE CHOICES

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-----------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Agree Strongly | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Disagree Strongly |

101. My partner has all of the qualities I've always wanted in a mate.
102. Both of our families raised their children in similar ways.
103. I really enjoy being with all of my partner's friends.
104. My partner and I feel closer because of our religious beliefs.
105. In our marriage, the wife will be encouraged to work outside the home.
-
106. Sometimes I am concerned that my partner's interest in sex is not the same as mine.
107. I am sure about the best methods of family planning or birth control for us.
108. I have concerns when my partner spends time with friends or co-workers of the opposite sex.
109. My partner is always a good listener.
110. I have some concern about who will be most responsible for our money.
111. I believe my partner may be too interested in sex.
112. When we argue, I usually end up feeling responsible for the problem.
113. I believe most difficulties we experience before marriage will fade once we are married.
114. My partner and I have a good balance of leisure time together and separately.
115. At times I think my partner is too domineering.
-

PLEASE CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

YOUR FAMILY OF ORIGIN

Please answer the following ten questions in terms of how you perceived your family when you were growing up as a teenager.

Please notice the following response scale is different from the one used in the previous questions.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ALMOST NEVER | ONCE IN A WHILE | SOMETIMES | FREQUENTLY | ALMOST ALWAYS |

116. Family members asked each other for help.
117. Different persons acted as leaders in our family.
118. Family members liked to spend free time with each other.
119. Our family changed its way of handling tasks.
120. Family members felt very close to each other.
121. Rules changed in our family.
122. Family members consulted other family members on their decisions.
123. We shifted household responsibilities from person to person.
124. Family togetherness was very important.
125. It was hard to identify the leader(s) in our family.

WE WISH YOU A HAPPY & SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE!

DEVELOPED BY:

David H. Olson, Ph.D.
David G. Fournier, Ph.D.
Joan M. Druckman, Ph.D.

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APPENDIX C
DETERMINATION OF ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS ITEMS

The following process was used to select items for the group of items referred to as PREPARE-MC expectations. All questions were rated with an "A", "B", or "C". A rating of "A" indicated that questions seemed to have a future focus. "A" items were considered the most likely candidates for inclusion in the PREPARE-MC expectations. A rating of "B" indicated that questions seemed to refer to the past and/or present as well as to the future. "B" items were considered as possibilities for inclusion in the PREPARE-MC expectations. "C" items were questions that seemed to be asking about something other than expectations. One example is a question that asks about current actions. Items marked with a "C" were considered to be the least likely candidates for inclusion in the PREPARE-MC expectations. Items were submitted to peers for determination of face validity. Revisions were made based on peer comments. Items 16, 17, and 66 were added. Items 25, 51, 90, 92, and 110 were excluded because they seemed to be addressing worries and concerns rather than expectations with a future focus. The final list of items included the following items: 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 26, 29, 30, 36, 43, 52, 55, 59, 61, 66, 75, 76, 80, 94, 97, 98, 105, 113 (see Appendix B for the wording of these questions).

APPENDIX D
OPERATIONALIZATION OF PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Three steps were used to identify couple types. The first step was the creation of two variables, one for males (MWTYEM) and one for females (MWTYEF). These variables were named MWTYEM/F because they kept track of the marriage type of each partner in each couple as follows. Each subject was assigned a "1" or "2" based on their current marital status and whether they had ever divorced. Six possibilities for the question "Marital Status" were available on the PREPARE-MC answer sheet. Participants could mark "1" for "Single, never married," a "2" for "Single, previously married," a "3" for "Single, widowed," a "4" for "Married, separated," a "5" for "Married, previously married," and a "6" for "Married, first marriage." Two possibilities were available for the question "Have you ever been divorced?". Respondents could indicate a "1" for "Yes" and a "2" for "No." Some subjects indicated a marital status that was incongruent with their indication of whether they had ever been divorced. The two incongruencies were marking a "1" on both "Marital Status" and "Have you ever been divorced?" or a "2" both on "Marital Status" and "Have you ever been divorced?". Subjects who indicated a divorce on either question were counted as having been previously divorced. Subjects who marked a "3" or higher for the question "Marital Status" were not included in the study as they did not meet the inclusion criteria. If subjects marked "1" for marital status and "2" for question "Have you ever been divorced?", they were assigned a "1" for MWTYEM/F, indicating that they were first-marrying spouse. Subjects who marked any other combination, with "Marital Status" of "2" or less, were assigned a value of 2 for MWTYEM/F, indicating that they were a remarrying spouse (Table 9).

Table 9

SPSS™ Text for Creation of Research Groups

| SPSS Text | Operational Action |
|---|---|
| IF ((STATUS EQ 1) AND (EVERDIV EQ 2)) MWTYPEM = 1 | Single, never married, never divorced male assigned "1" |
| IF ((STATUS EQ 1) AND (EVERDIV EQ 1)) MWTYPEM = 2 | Single, previously married, divorced male assigned "2" |
| IF ((STATUS EQ 2) AND (EVERDIV EQ 1)) MWTYPEM = 2 | Single, previously married, divorced male assigned "2" |
| IF ((STATUS EQ 2) AND (EVERDIV EQ 2)) MWTYPEM = 2 | Single, previously married, divorced male assigned "2" |
| IF ((STATUSF EQ 1) AND (EVERDIVF EQ 2)) MWTYPEF = 1 | Single, never married, never divorced female assigned "1" |
| IF ((STATUSF EQ 1) AND (EVERDIVF EQ 1)) MWTYPEF = 2 | Single, previously married, divorced female assigned "2" |
| IF ((STATUSF EQ 2) AND (EVERDIVF EQ 1)) MWTYPEF = 2 | Single, previously married, divorced female assigned "2" |
| IF ((STATUSF EQ 2) AND (EVERDIVF EQ 2)) MWTYPEF = 2 | Single, previously married, divorced female assigned "2" |

(Table continues)

Table 9 (continued)

| SPSS Text | Operational Action |
|---|---|
| IF ((MWTYEM EQ 2) AND (MWTYEF EQ 2)) CPLTYPE = 3 | Divorced male and divorced female assigned "3" (RR) |
| IF ((MWTYEM EQ 1) AND (MWTYEF EQ 2)) CPLTYPE = 1 | Never married male and divorced female assigned "1" (FR with male first-marrying spouse and female remarrying spouse) |
| IF ((MWTYEF EQ 1) AND (MWTYEM EQ 2)) CPLTYPE = 2 | Never married female and divorced male assigned "2" (FR with female first-marrying spouse and male remarrying spouse) |
| COMPUTE RESTYPE = CPLTYPE | A new variable. RESTYPE set equal to CPLTYPE |
| RECODE RESTYPE (1, 2 = 1) (3 = 2) | Both types of FR couple assigned "1", RR couples assigned "2" |

(Table continues)

Table 9 (continued)

| SPSS Text | Operational Action |
|--|---|
| SELECT IF ((STATUS LE 2) AND (STATUSF LE 2)) | Selects couples if both are never married or divorced |
| SELECT IF (RESTYPE LE 2) | Selects couples if they are FR or RR remarriages. RESTYPE of "1" and "2" |
| SELECT IF ((AGE GE 17) AND (AGE LE 17) AND (AGE LE 55)) | Selects males between age 17 and 55, inclusive. |
| SELECT IF ((AGEF GE 17) AND (AGEF LE 17) AND (AGEF LE 55)) | Selects females between age 17 and age 17 and 55, inclusive. |

Note. Some subjects indicated a marital status which was incongruent with their indication of whether they had ever been divorced. Subjects who indicated a divorce on either question were counted as having been previously divorced.

After each participant was assigned a value for MWTYPEM/F, the second step in identifying couple types was performed. A variable called CPLTYPE was created with three possible values. The variable was so named because the variable was assigned a value indicating the remarriage type of the couple. If a male was marrying for the first time and a female was marrying after divorce, the couple was assigned a value of "1" indicating that the pair constituted an FR couple. If a male was remarrying and a female was marrying for the first time, the couple was assigned a "2" also indicating that the pair constituted an FR couple. If a male and a female were both remarrying the couple was assigned a "3" indicating the pair constituted an RR couple.

After CPLTYPE was given a value for each couple, the third step was performed. A variable called RESTYPE was created. The variable was so named because the variable contained the value indicating the couple type for the current research as follows. RESTYPE was first set equal to each couple's current value for CPLTYPE, then recoded with new values. RESTYPE values of "1" and "2" were both given a value of "1" as both represented FR couples. FR couples in which the first-marrying partner was male were seen as interacting with their remarrying female partner at a level of complexity similar to that of FR couples in which the genders were the other way around. This type of equivalence was also used by Pink and Wampler (1985). After "1"'s and "2"'s were both set equal to "1", RESTYPE values of "3" were given a value of "2" representing RR couples. The process detailed above created the independent variable RESTYPE that was based on couple type.

After the independent variable was created, couples were selected using the inclusion criteria noted above. Couples, rather than separate individuals, were selected because males and females in the PREPARE-MC database have separate variables assigned on the same case ID for each item for each partner. Therefore, this selection excluded entire couples if either partner did not have a value that met each particular criterion.

Selection was accomplished as follows. First, couples were selected if both partners had indicated a value less than or equal to "2" for marital status. Second, remaining participants were selected if they had a value less than or equal to "2" for RESTYPE. Theoretically, partners could only have a value less than or equal to "2" for RESTYPE if they also had a value less than or equal to "2" for marital status. Because any couples who had either partner with a value greater than "2" for marital status would not have been assigned a value of "Missing" for RESTYPE, this selection was a back-up for the first. Third, remaining couples were selected if the male in the couple had indicated his age to be greater than or equal to 17 and less than or equal to 55. Finally, remaining couples were selected if the female in the couple had indicated her age to be greater than or equal to 17 and less than or equal to 55. After cases were selected, statistical analyses were performed.

APPENDIX E
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 08-09-96

IRB#: HE-97-004

Proposal Title: PREMARITAL EXPECTATIONS OF STEPFAMILY COUPLES

Principal Investigator(s): Kathleen Briggs, Mark Ward, Dave Fournier

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

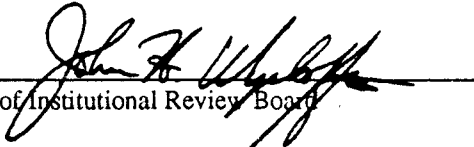
ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
AT NEXT MEETING.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A
CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD
APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR
APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval
are as follows:

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: August 12, 1996

VITA

Mark Wilson Ward

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: PREMARITAL EXPECTATIONS OF STEPFAMILY COUPLES

Major Field: Family Relations and Child Development

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Panorama City, California on January 11, 1967, the son of Geraldine Ruth and Russell Wilson Ward.

Education: Graduated from Woods Cross High School, Woods Cross, Utah in June of 1985; received Bachelor of Science degree in Family Science from Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah in August of 1993; completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Family Relations and Child Development with a Specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy at Oklahoma State University December, 1996.

Experience: Internship at The Center For Family Services, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1994 to 1996; internship at Moore Family Institute / Moore Alcohol and Drug Center, Moore, Oklahoma 1995 to 1996.