

TASK SELECTION AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS
INFLUENCING CLERGY PREMARITAL
COUNSELING APPROACHES

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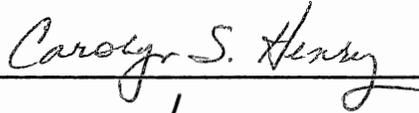
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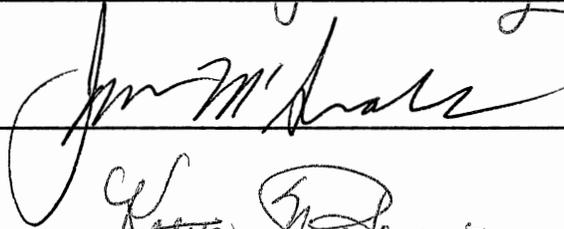
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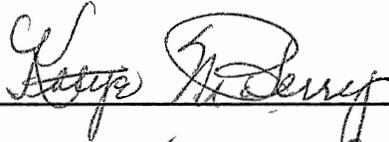
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CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

As the world enters the final decade of the century and approaches the end of the millennium, many people question society's emphasis on the quantity of years of life as opposed to the quality of life, particularly in the area of interpersonal relationships, and, specifically with respect to marriage and family life. People in the United States are becoming increasingly concerned about the rising divorce rate and its effects on families. Couples appear to be unwilling to remain in relationships that are not enriching and fulfilling (Hof & Miller, 1981).

Couples are marrying and divorcing in ever-increasing numbers. Each year, nearly two and one half million couples marry while one and one half million couples divorce. Equally significant is the fact that 75 to 80 percent of those who divorce eventually remarry (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987), which strongly suggests that people are reluctant to give up hope that marital relationships can be a means of enhancing the quality of life. A 15 year study of 868 college student attitudes was conducted for the years from

1972 to 1987. A total of 96 percent of all subjects intended to marry and have two children (Rubinson & de Rubertis, 1991). In the present decade, couples may turn more and more frequently to marriage and family counselors expecting them to provide assistance in improving the quality of marital relationships (Curtis, 1990).

Clergy and other premarital counselors acknowledge a growing concern and responsibility for the increase in the divorce rate (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). Denominations, church leaders, families and couples look hopefully and expectantly toward the clergy believing that marriages can be saved and marital quality can be enhanced through premarital counseling. Rutledge (1966) suggests that, if all therapists would devote as much as one fourth of their time to premarital counseling, they would have a greater impact on the health of the nation than through all their other counseling efforts combined. Successful results have been obtained from the marriage enrichment movement in improving the relational skills of married couples and research suggests that premarital counseling may effect changes by helping couples improve their interpersonal skills (Mace, 1989).

There are many factors involved in determining the success of a marriage. Researchers, however, have difficulty agreeing upon the definition of a "successful" marriage. Mace and Mace (1980) report that as many as 50 percent of all married couples are unhappy in their marriage

with only ten percent of all marriages ever reaching their potential. There are, however, specific identifiable factors involved in initiating, maintaining and improving the quality of a marital relationship. These factors may not actually determine whether a marriage is successful or not, but they are factors which, if addressed, can enhance relationship quality. These factors, however, can be addressed effectively in the premarital counseling process as well as in post-wedding counseling (Mace, 1989; Nickols, Fournier & Nickols, 1986; Sams, 1983). These factors will be identified and explained in the next section of this paper.

Theoretical Foundation

Premarital counseling can be divided into four specific types or approaches; (a) Therapeutic, (b) Family Life Education, (c) Instructional and (d) Relationship Enrichment. Even though there may be some overlap of these approaches in the premarital counseling process, each approach has its own unique set of objectives and limitations which are examined in this section.

Therapeutic Premarital Counseling

Therapeutic premarital counseling is the approach most often associated with marriage and family therapists who

generally do not see couples until their relationship has reached a high level of dysfunction (Gleason & Prescott, 1977). The therapeutic approach focuses on needs or problems which have already surfaced in the relationship and are couple specific. These needs and concerns may include any number of specific content areas; however, the focus of therapy is not on instruction of the couple nor upon enrichment of the relationship (Schumm & Denton, 1979). In therapeutic counseling, the therapist and the couple explore underlying dynamics, address sepecific issues and utilize assessment techniques for the purpose of restoring the relationship to a functional level.

Ordinarily, clergy do not utilize the therapeutic approach in premarital counseling. Due to the demand for treatment of dysfunctional couples, it is unlikely that marriage and family therapists will be able to move away from this traditional counseling approach (Mace, 1989; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987).

Family Life Education

The family life education approach, also called the generalized education approach, typically is used in high schools, colleges and community-based settings (Schumm & Denton, 1979). The aim of family life education is preventative in nature and research suggests that this approach can be effective, to some extent, in preparing

people for marriage (Duvall, 1965). General objectives of family life education encompass the following; (a) providing people with a basic understanding of family relations, (b) enhancing understanding of the family as a societal entity and (c) increasing the ability to relate to members of the opposite sex (Avery, Ridley, Leslie, & Handis, 1979). The emphasis is on developing a broad but specific knowledge base related to self, others, roles and expectations for future marriage. Those who participate ordinarily are not involved as engaged couples anticipating marriage in the near future.

Instructional Premarital Counseling

Clergy often utilize the instructional premarital counseling approach which has as its goal "...preparing couples to adjust realistically their expectations of marriage by providing them with information and exposure to a wide variety of frequently occurring marital problems" (Schumm & Denton, 1979, p.24). Content of the instructional premarital counseling approach includes the following eight tasks; (a) teaching the religious meaning of the marriage vows, (b) going over the specifics of the wedding ceremony, (c) talking to the couple about their faith and encouraging them to attend a church they are both comfortable in, (d) teaching the couple what it means to have a Christ-centered home and family, (e) determining the couple's level of sex

education, teaching essential sex education, naming types of contraceptives available or counseling the couple to have a complete physical examination prior to marriage, (f) introducing the subject of finances and talking to the couple about setting up a household budget, debt, housing, savings and tithing, (g) challenging the couple to divide up household chores and duties such as laundry, dishwashing, bill paying, bed-making, cooking, house cleaning, yard work and grocery shopping and (h) attempting to raise the couple's awareness of potential sources of conflict which typically arise during the first year of marriage such as money, sex, dual career conflicts, in-laws, religion, friends, recreation, jealousy and annoying personal habits and encouraging them to seek professional help if it is ever needed (Hunt & Hunt, 1981; Mace, 1989; Schumm & Denton, 1979; Smith & Smith, 1981; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987; Stewart, 1970).

Typically, the instructional premartial counseling approach attempts to anticipate problems which characteristically arise early in marriage and to help couples deal with them before they actually occur. Limitations to the instructional premarital counseling approach include the difficulty of trying to prepare couples for situations which are basically outside their referential field. "...how can one person help to prepare another person for an experience he has not had?" (Mudd, Freeman, & Rose, 1941, p.114). Mace (1989) likens this to learning to swim

the old fashioned way by practicing swimming strokes lying on a piano stool. No evidence exists that the lecture approach has any effect on the communication process (Boike, 1977).

Relationship Enrichment Premarital Counseling

Another approach currently being utilized by counselors is the relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach. "The enrichment approach has been promoted based on the premise that equipping couples to deal with their own concerns is more useful in the long run than merely conveying information and advice" (Schumm & Denton, (1979, pp.24-5). The Association for Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME) is an organization which educates couples and promotes the enrichment approach as a preventative model precursor to marriage enrichment (Mace, 1978). Objectives of the relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach include; (a) strengthening the couple's commitment to growth in their relationship, (b) development of in-depth communication skills, (c) provision of conflict management skills and (d) modeling affection (Mace, 1989). Aspects of the relationship enrichment model are represented in a number of premarital programs (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; Hunt & Hunt, 1981; Miller, Corrales, & Wackman, 1975; Smith & Smith, 1981; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987).

In the relationship enrichment approach, emphasis is placed upon the process of interpersonal relationships more than upon content areas (Gleason & Prescott, 1977). Group couple involvement is more the norm with five to seven couples participating in an enrichment event (Mace, 1989). There is little focus on individual couple counseling or on large group educational instruction (Mace, 1989; Schumm & Denton, 1979).

The relationship enrichment approach is grounded theoretically in psychodynamic, humanistic and behavioral schools. In addition, there is an emphasis on the interpersonal systems orientation. The relationship enrichment approach is an intergated holistic approach (Guerney, Brock, & Coufal, 1986). Intergration of these schools is reflected in nine skill areas listed by Guerney et al. (1986). The skill areas typically emphasized in the relationship enrichment approach include (a) expression of needs and feelings, (b) empathy, (c) discussion and negotiation skills, (d) problem solving/conflict resolution skills, (e) self change with respect to partner, (f) skill in helping others change, (g) ability to generalize skills and use them in daily living, (h) skill in teaching others and (i) skill in maintenance of change over a long period of time.

A major study conducted by the Family Service Association of America (Beck & Jones, 1973) notes that 86.6 percent of couples who sought help for marital problems

listed difficulty in communication as their major concern. This was followed distantly by problems with children by 45.7 percent of the couples. Prevention of problems is an important consideration of the relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach. Once dysfunctional interaction patterns develop, they are difficult to alter (Raush, Barry, Hertel, & Swain, 1974).

Research suggests eight relationship premarital counseling tasks including (a) utilizing some type of test or test series such as the FIRO-B, Meyers-Briggs, Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis, etc., in order to assess couple personality and relationship; (b) asking the couple how they manage conflict including having them tell about their latest or worst argument, teaching them conflict resolution or taking a specific concern of the couple and walking them through the process of conflict resolution/problem solving; (c) assessing the couple's communication skill level and helping them improve in the areas of self awareness and body feelings, assertiveness training, communication training and active listening skills; (d) discussing the couple's role expectations for themselves and their spouse-to-be including how each feels about women working outside the home, biblical and/or cultural role expectations for men and women and role expectations that come from their family of origin; (e) discussing the couple's understanding of the balance of power in their relationship including how the couple makes

decisions, who has the final say in decision making, how violence, aggression, physical, emotional and sexual abuse alter the balance of power in relationships, and teaching negotiation skills; (f) enabling the couple to consider the influence of their family of origin on their personality development and mate selection and how families might continue to influence their lives as a married couple by using genograms, identifying birth order and its possible significance, and guiding the couple in discussing how their families historically dealt with conflict, made decisions, and handled problems such as alcohol; (g) encouraging the couple to attend church or community sponsored relationship enrichment events such as PREPARE, or communication workshops and similar events and (h) assessing the couple's level of sexual knowledge and exploring areas of interest or concern related to sexual issues or providing resources in the area of male and female sexuality (Alberti & Emmons, 1975; Bach & Wyden, 1970; Bernard, 1981; Bolton, 1979; Bower & Bower, 1976; Colapietro & Rockwell, 1985; Goldberg, 1983; Hunt & Hunt, 1981; Kater, 1985; Mace, 1989; Madanes, 1981; Mantooth, Geffner, Franks, & Patrick, 1987; Marlin, 1989; McGoldrick & Gerson, 1985; McKay, Davis, & Fanning, 1981; Miller, 1985; Naimark & Pearce, 1985; Russo, 1979; Satir, 1972; Smith & Smith, 1981; Splete & Freeman-George, 1985; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987; Toman, 1976; Vande Kempe, 1985; Voydanoff, 1985).

Statement of the Problem

Clergy are responsible for a large percentage of premarital counseling (Markman, Floyd, Stanley, & Lewis, 1986; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). Shonick (1975) notes that of 4000 young couples applying for marriage licenses in Los Angeles County in 1972, a total of 2745 couples utilized clergy premarital counseling services. "Recent evidence is that perhaps 60 percent of premarital couples have at least one 'counseling' session with a religious leader prior to marriage" (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987, p.xiv). This demand for premarital counseling places significant responsibility on clergy who often feel inadequately prepared to offer effective premarital counseling (Schumm & Denton, 1979).

Wright (1976) reports that clergy premarital counselors typically see couples for a modal number of three sessions. Clergy premarital counselors most often make use of family life educational materials incorporated into an instructional counseling approach (Schumm & Denton, 1979). However, while it can be demonstrated that couples need and can benefit from increased knowledge in specific content areas such as sex education or finances, research suggests that the instructional premarital counseling approach is less effective than the relationship enrichment approach (Sams, 1983).

Guldner (1971) evaluated the effectiveness of clergy premarital counseling and found that after six months,

couples reported they received little or no benefit from these sessions. Schumm and Denton (1979) reported that non-religious premarital counselors appear to be adopting the relationship enrichment approach more rapidly than clergy although they offer no research to support this supposition. The apparent slowness of clergy in making the transition from the family life education instructional approach to the relationship approach may indicate a reluctance to abandon the model of the traditional marriage, or it may simply reflect a lack of real opportunity for formal educational experiences based on the relationship enrichment approach.

Most of the research related to clergy premarital counseling is several years old and may not reflect current clergy attitudes and practices in premarital counseling. Knowing to what extent clergy continue to do premarital counseling from the family life education instructional approach as opposed to using the relationship enrichment approach will be of value to those who are responsible for clergy premarital counselor education.

This study is designed to address the following question: To what extent have clergy made the transition from the family life education instructional approach to the relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach?

Significance of the Study

The societal transition from traditional marriages (Rice, 1983) to companionship marriages (Mace, 1989) has made it necessary for premarital counselors to reconceptualize the meaning and purpose of marriage and to develop new and effective models for working with couples. Mace (1989) makes the distinction between the traditional marriage model and the companionship model.

...the difference between the old marriage pattern and the new is very clear. The first conforms to a rigid system, which provides ready-made answers to most questions that are likely to arise. The couples don't have to struggle with differences; and they don't have to be much involved in each other's inner thoughts and feelings. The second pattern, by contrast, involves husband and wife in a continuing series of interpersonal interactions and is virtually unworkable unless they can establish the kind of flexible relationship that only companionship makes possible (p.15).

To date, no research has been published indicating how widespread has been the adoption of the relationship model by clergy premarital counselors. Not knowing this makes it difficult for those responsible for clergy premarital counselor education to provide effective and efficient educational experiences and opportunities. Knowing to what extent the transition from the instructional approach to the relationship enrichment approach has been made by clergy may enable them to offer more effective premarital counseling to couples. Ultimately, this could result in fewer divorces, more satisfying marriages and better quality family life.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms have been operationally defined.

Instructional Premarital Counseling Approach

The instructional premarital counseling approach is operationally defined as including the eight items or premarital counseling tasks on the 16 item instrument, developed by the research, (see Appendix B) which reflect that the counselor would approach an issue by providing the couple with information through some type of teaching/learning process.

Relationship Enrichment Premarital Counseling Approach

The relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach is defined as the counseling orientation which might include providing information, as does the instructional approach, but which has as its primary focus identifying and improving the interactional styles and relationship skills of individual couples. The relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach is operationally defined as including eight items or premarital counseling tasks on the 16 item instrument (see Appendix B) as developed by the literature.

Oklahoma Annual Conference

The Oklahoma Annual Conference is defined as the total number of clergy who serve the church within the geographic boundaries of the State of Oklahoma. Clergy may serve as ministers of local churches or may serve in any number of ministries beyond the local church.

Formally Educated Clergy Premarital Counselor

For the purpose of this study, formally educated clergy premarital counselor is operationally defined as a counselor who has received education in premarital counseling inclusive of but not limited to graduate level premarital counseling courses, workshops or seminars emphasizing communication processes, marriage and family therapy, and assessment of relationship interactions, values, strengths and weakness. This information will be obtained from the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix A, Question Six).

Non-Formally Educated Clergy Premarital Counselor

A non-formally educated clergy premarital counselor is operationally defined as a clergy premarital counselor who reports having no graduate level premarital counselor education (see Appendix A, Question Six).

Urban Ministry Setting

An urban ministry setting is defined as a church located in a city with a population of more than 50,000 people. This information will be obtained from the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix A, Question Seven).

Suburban Ministry Setting

A suburban ministry setting is defined as a church located in a town or area of 50,000 people or less adjacent to an urban area. This information will be obtained from the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix A, Question Seven).

Rural Ministry Setting

A rural ministry setting is defined as a church located in a town of 50,000 people or less and not adjacent to an urban area. This information will be obtained from the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix A, Question Seven).

New Minister

A new minister is defined as a minister who has been in professional ministry for five years or less. This

information will be obtained from the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix A, Question Three).

Veteran Minister

A veteran minister is defined as a clergy member who has been in professional ministry for more than five years. The rationale for making this division is based on the knowledge that United Methodist clergy in the Southwest Jurisdiction are transferred an average of every 3.2 years. This means that most clergy after five years will be in their second pastoral appointment and would no longer be considered as new to ministry. This information will be obtained from the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix A, Question Three).

Younger Minister

A younger minister is defined as a minister who is age 30 or less. This information will be obtained from the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix A, Question Two).

Older Minister

An older minister is defined as a minister who is more than age 30. This information will be obtained from the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix A, Question Two).

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses are included in the current investigation:

Hypothesis 1: There is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy with respect to selection of instructional and relationship enrichment approach premarital counseling tasks.

Hypothesis 2. There is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy who utilize instructional or relationship enrichment premarital counseling approaches based on clergy gender.

Hypothesis 3. There is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy who utilize instructional or relationship enrichment premarital counseling approaches based on geographic setting of ministry.

Hypothesis 4. There is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy who utilize instructional or relationship enrichment premarital counseling approaches based on premarital counseling educational experiences.

Hypothesis 5. There is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy who utilize instructional or relationship

enrichment premarital counseling approaches based on tenure in ministry.

Hypothesis 6. There is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy who utilize instructional or relationship enrichment premarital counseling approaches based on clergy counselor age.

Hypothesis 7. There is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy ideal and expert actual instructional and relationship enrichment premarital counseling approaches.

Hypothesis 8. There is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy actual and clergy ideal instructional and relationship enrichment premarital counseling approaches.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations are inherent in this study:

1. Clergy premarital counseling respondents were limited to United Methodist clergy in the Oklahoma Annual Conference and may not reflect the larger population of clergy premarital counselors.

2. Clergy subjects were selected at a group level rather than on a completely randomized basis. This selection was based on willingness of individual District

Superintendents to allow their district pastors to participate as a group.

3. Accuracy of the results is dependent on clergy respondent willingness and ability to follow written instructions and to complete the tasks.

4. Ordinal level data make the use of non-parametric statistical analysis necessary which means that there is less likelihood of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is false (Bartz, 1988).

Organization of the Study

Chapter I provides a theoretical overview of premarital counseling, identifies the research problem to be studied, outlines the significance of the study, defines and operationalizes significant terms, presents research hypotheses and delineates limitations inherent in the study. Chapter II further defines the various approaches employed by clergy premarital counselors and reviews literature and research in premarital counseling and clergy premarital counselor education. Chapter III presents a discussion of the subjects, instrumentation and procedures used in the study. Results of the investigation are presented in Chapter IV. Summary, conclusions and recommendations for future research are included in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of premarital counseling literature reveals a shift of emphasis in research and practice. This chapter traces the development of premarital counseling up to mid-twentieth century and then examines literature reflecting the current state of premarital counseling including research related to the various approaches utilized by premarital counselors. Research related to the current status of premarital counseling is then discussed. The chapter ends with a summary.

Historical Antecedents

The companionship model of marriage is a relatively recent development in modern United States society (Mace, 1989). History reflects that marriage generally has been viewed as a way to preserve social order and not necessarily as a vehicle for meeting the emotional needs of couples (Mace, 1989; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). Until mid-twentieth century, most marriages worldwide were arranged by parents or other authority figures (Mace, 1989). Few people held expectations that marriage would or necessarily could be a

means of personal or interpersonal fulfillment (Rubin, 1983). In earlier patriarchal societies, the notion of romantic love inside marriage was relegated to a secondary position. Duty and stability were higher virtues and were pre-imminent (Rubin, 1983). The rubric of most traditional wedding ceremonies began by naming three reasons for marriage. Most important was procreation; next was to keep sexual relations under proper control; and finally, to provide companionship (Mace, 1989). Traditional marriages, therefore, were seen as having very little to do with romantic love and personal fulfillment of individuals. In fact, romantic love may have been considered more of a liability than an asset. Marriage based on love as opposed to marriage based on convenience and security is a phenomenon developing only in the early part of this century (Hof & Miller, 1981; Mace, 1989).

Clergy have been involved in premarital counseling for many centuries (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). Wedding ceremonies dating back as early as 398 A.D. included a priestly benediction (Christensen, 1964).

By the middle ages, this concept of requiring permission to marry had been broadened to include parents, the church and civil authorities as well (Christensen, 1964). Stahmann and Hiebert (1987) note that by the year 1164 A.D., marriage had become an official sacrament of the church and clergy had begun to have significant involvement with couples in the premarital counseling process.

However, this involvement was limited to emphasis on the sacramental nature of marriage as a rite of passage and couples were instructed on the meaning of marriage relative to God and church (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). The emphasis was not focused on the marital relationship.

The understanding of marriage as sacrament has been carried over into the twentieth century as well. "The pre-wedding sessions conducted by clergy prior to World War II followed the kind of instructional pattern that was typical of initiatory rites. The emphasis was on the nature of marriage, the place of religion in the home, and the rehearsal of the wedding rite" (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987, p. 8).

Before mid-twentieth century, most non-religious premarital counseling was conducted by physicians (general practitioners as well as psychiatrists) and psychologists (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). They approached premarital counseling from a medical model based on individual psychopathology. The emphasis was on "fixing" whichever individual in the relationship was dysfunctional (Ackerman, Beatman, & Sherman, 1961; Glick & Kessler, 1974). The "...development of an interactional focus, the awareness of and concern about what transpires between people, did not seriously enter the psychological world until well into mid-twentieth century" (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987, pp.6-7). Problems within a relationship were seen as by-products of intrapsychic personal problems and this was reflected in the

premarital counseling approaches taken, the content of those approaches and the education of the counselors (Guerney et al., 1986).

A recent study conducted by Schmitt (1990) reflects a changing attitude toward the role of physicians as premarital counselors. A total of 24 male and 21 female patients were interviewed about the content of their premarital medical exam. A total of 62 percent of the subjects expressed a desire for their physician to raise the topics of reproductive biology and health history. A total of 53 percent of the subjects would like to have had their physician discuss sexual relations. A total of 33 percent also sought counsel on interpersonal and child-rearing issues.

Recent Developments

Following World War II, changes began to occur in the fields of counseling, sociology and psychology which affected the way professionals conceptualized and practiced premarital counseling (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). Behavioral psychology, with its focus on children, emerged resulting in development of interest in parent-child relationships as well (Guerney, Brock, & Coufal, 1986; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). Researchers began focusing on relationships between people rather than just on individuals (Ackerman, Beatman, & Sherman, 1961; Glick & Kessler, 1974;

Guerney, Brock, & Coufal, 1986; Jackson, 1973; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). Researchers also became interested in the relationship of patients to their mothers and fathers and an awareness of the nature and significance of relationships between all family members developed (Fromm-Reichmann, 1948; Lidz & Lidz, 1949). The marriage and family movement emerged from this new understanding (Glick & Kessler, 1974). Stahmann and Hiebert (1987) summarize the development of marriage and family therapy.

As research in marital and family therapy increased, it became evident that marital relationships and their health or lack of health were related to something beyond the mental health of the individuals in the marriage. It became clear that it really was possible to have an unhealthy marital relationship between two relatively healthy people (p.9).

Therapists and researchers now recognize that the relationship between two people in a marriage has its roots in the premarital relationship (Mace, 1989). Vande Kempe (1985) observes that mate selection prior to any kind of premarital relationship is connected at a deep level to one's family of origin. Wamboldt and Wolin (1988) present a theory of mate selection and premarital behavior based on the two partner's family myths. Family myths are internalized personal constructs or schema of the family's reality. Interpersonal transactions between the couple allow them to integrate their two family myths into a new, improved family reality. Awareness of the individual as part of a series of relationships has resulted in an

increased emphasis on holistic counseling approaches including the relationship enrichment/enhancement model as a preventative measure (Guerney et al., 1986; Markman, Floyd, Stanley, & Lewis, 1986).

The transition from individual psychopathology counseling orientations to the interpersonal relationship enhancement and enrichment orientation has generated a number of specific premarital counseling programs and approaches which are currently being utilized by clergy and others. The next section examines these specific premarital counseling approaches and programs.

Premarital Counseling Approaches

Research related to four premarital counseling approaches is examined in this section. These four approaches include, (a) the Therapeutic Approach, (b) Family Life Education, (c) the Instructional Approach and (d) Relationship Enrichment.

Therapeutic Approach

The therapeutic approach to premarital counseling arises from the traditional medical model of therapy. In the medical paradigm, the orientation is toward pathology and the elimination of whatever pathogenic entities are causing symptoms (Guerney et al., 1986). The relationship

between therapeutic approaches and prevention is very close since therapy assumes the presence of difficulties while prevention anticipates areas of conflict which might occur in the future. Marital therapists and treatment agencies do not address adequately preventative interventions or strategies. Prevention services are provided almost exclusively by clergy and church affiliated groups (Markman, Floyd, Stanley, & Lewis, 1986).

Family Life Education

Family life education or the generalized education approach is commonly utilized in high schools, colleges and community based settings. Family life education has been in existence most of the twentieth century. Duvall (1965) examined over 80 reports on the effectiveness of marriage courses and found that in each report measurable changes in student understanding, attitudes, expectations and abilities occurred. Satir (1975) advocates family life education as a preventative approach.

We do not have to wait until people develop symptoms when we are in the process of repair, which is commonly called therapy. If we want to, through good family education, we can enrich and prevent through education. Then we will not need as much repair (p.8).

A number of studies have evaluated the effectiveness of family life education courses (Bardis, 1963; Crosby, 1971; Duvall, 1965; Finck, 1956; Gillies & Lastrucci, 1954; Moses,

1956). Several studies report increases in knowledge (Bardis, 1963; Crosby, 1971; Gillies & Lastrucci, 1954). Several studies also report significant attitudinal changes and increased personal adjustment of students (Crosby, 1971; Duvall, 1965; Dyer, 1959; Finck, 1956; Gillies & Lastrucci, 1954; Moses, 1956). Bardis (1963), Dyer (1959) and Moses (1956) utilized control group experimental designs. In each of these studies, the subjects in the experimental group made significantly greater gains than subjects in the control group. Bardis (1963) utilized a pre-test post-test control group design and found that knowledge of sex increased significantly over the length of the semester course. Crosby (1971) conducted a study involving junior and senior high students and found that students achieved a significant increase in knowledge and in positive self attitude. Moses (1956), Sporakowski (1968) and Stinnett (1969) found that marital readiness is related positively to dating status of students which suggests premarital counseling approaches that involve couples might be more effective than generalized family life education in preparing people for long term marital relationships.

Instructional Premarital Counseling Approach

The instructional premarital counseling approach is the one most often used by clergy particularly when working with couples on a one to one basis (Schumm & Denton, 1979).

Instructional premarital counseling goals typically include providing couples with information about specific issues including sexual issues, marital roles, the wedding ceremony and religious concerns. An attempt is made to prevent marital problems by anticipating them and providing information. Greene (1970) surveyed 750 couples who were involved in marital therapy and found certain complaints to be most common. The complaints are listed in descending order of frequency of occurrence; (a) lack of communication, (b) constant arguments, (c) unfulfilled emotional needs, (d) sexual dissatisfaction, (e) financial disagreements, (f) in-law trouble, (g) infidelity, (h) conflicts about children, (i) domineering spouse, (j) alcoholism and (k) physical attack.

An extensive study was conducted by the Family Service Association which identified the major areas of conflict in couples and their frequency of occurrence (Beck & Jones, 1973). The most frequent difficulty reported by couples was in the area of communication. A total of 86.6 percent of couples reported difficulties in communication. The other areas of difficulty and their frequency of occurrence are listed; (a) children, 45.7 percent, (b) sex, 43.7 percent, (c) money, 37.0 percent, (d) leisure, 32.6 percent, (e) relatives, 28.4 percent, (f) infidelity, 25.6 percent, (g) housekeeping, 16.7 percent, (h) physical abuse, 15.6 percent and (i) other problems, 8.0 percent.

Several studies have been conducted which suggest that instructional or didactic premarital counseling programs are of limited value in preparing couples for marriage. Guldner (1971) found that premarital couples were in a state of bliss, were out of touch with reality and were therefore, not very teachable. He found that couples were more receptive to counseling after they had been married for six months. McCornack and Parks (1990) suggest that as couples move into a more deeply committed relationship, they have more difficulty in determining when their partner is being honest with them, making it difficult to be objective about the relationship. A total of 55 premarital couples viewed 12 video taped segments of their partner who told the truth in half and lied in half of the video. Accuracy in determining the truth when obscured by deception declined as the couple became more involved. It was noted that women were consistently more accurate than men.

Olson (1976) evaluated the effectiveness of five different premarital programs. The programs varied in length from a one weekend program to an eight week course. Olson tested couples and found that the effectiveness of the courses was very low.

Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett, and Conway (1980) followed up on Guldner's findings with similar results. The effectiveness of a group format premarital counseling program was compared to a post-wedding counseling program begun after six months of marriage. Each couple was

interviewed four times; prior to the wedding, after six months of marriage, at one year and at four years of marriage. A total of 300 interviews were conducted. A control group of couples did not receive treatment. Results indicated that the premarital counseling program was somewhat effective in helping couples with their relationship development. However, the post-wedding program was significantly more effective in helping couples. Couples in the post-wedding program reported greater relationship development than the control group. The research concluded that the effectiveness of didactic programs prior to marriage was low in comparison to post-wedding counseling.

Relationship Enrichment Premarital Counseling

Researchers report good results from the use of relationship enrichment approaches in premarital counseling. Giblin (1986) evaluated existing relationship enrichment literature using meta-analysis. A total of 85 studies representing 3,886 couples or families who had participated in premarital, marital or family enrichment studies between 1971 to 1982 were analyzed. Results indicated that enrichment programs affected the lives of participants in communication skills and constructive problem solving techniques. It was noted that many couples underwent an

initial period of negative change as a result of participation in the studies.

Hahlweg and Markman (1988) used meta-analysis to determine the effectiveness of premarital behavioral interventions. Seven studies were analyzed with an effect size of .79. The research noted that gains were usually maintained over time.

Objectives of relationship enrichment include (a) strengthening the couple's commitment to growth in the relationship, (b) development of in-depth communication skills, (c) provision of conflict management skills and (d) modeling affection (Mace, 1989). Some researchers view relationship enrichment as a major transition in therapeutic approaches which takes the field of couples therapy a quantum leap beyond the medical model into the realm of holistic therapy.

We are not advocating the grafting on of a new branch to the present therapy tree; we are advocating a new, and we think stronger, therapy tree, one in which enrichment flows from the roots up, strengthening the whole structure. It is our belief that such a wholistic therapy is one that will be more beneficial not only in the long run (i.e., at follow-up years later) but also in terms of immediate outcome (Guerney, Brock, & Coufal, 1986, p.151).

Notarius and Vanzetti (1984) found that relationship enhancement, defined as confidence in problem-solving, is positively related to relationship satisfaction in married couples. Also, satisfying premarital interactions predict future marital satisfaction (Markman, 1979; 1981). Positive

results were obtained in a long term study conducted by Markman, Jamieson and Floyd (1983). A comparison was made of a control group of couples with couples who completed the Premarital Enrichment Program (PREP). The program was a five week, two hour per session experience which focused on providing couples with communication and problem-solving competencies. Evaluation of the data indicated that the intervention resulted in improved communication skills and increased relationship satisfaction immediately after the program as compared to the control group. At one and three year follow-ups, the intervention couples, compared to the no-treatment control group, maintained their gains and also continued to increase their relationship satisfaction and communication quality.

A short term evaluation of the initial PREP program was conducted by Blew and Traphold (1982) who obtained similar results. They used a pre-post evaluation which compared communication training with an attention placebo condition. Findings indicated that couples in all groups demonstrated increased relationship satisfaction as they moved closer to marriage, but only couples who had been given communication training showed increased satisfaction with their interactions. These results indicate that communication education is an important segment of the relationship enrichment approach.

Landis and Landis (1973) studied 581 married couples in order to discover at what point in the relationship couples

became aware of how their ideas and opinions differed from their spouse in the areas of sex, children and money. Awareness of differences about children and sex did not occur until after marriage in 94 percent of the couples. Similarly, awareness of differences concerning money did not become apparent until after marriage in 85 percent of the couples.

In an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of communication in premarital couples, Knox and Knox (1974) conducted a marriage preparation program at East Carolina University. One hundred couples were involved in the program which focused on enhancing awareness of differences concerning sex, economics, children, religion, alcohol and recreation within the couple dyad. In addition, couples were assigned task completion experiences including shopping for an apartment and furniture, developing a budget, going to church and visiting with in-laws. Discrepancies in differences of opinions were found to vary from 10 to 16 percent. Over 40 percent of the couples reported an improvement in their relationship. They concluded that premarital couples generally did not know each other as well as they had supposed and that couple relationships can benefit from discussion of serious issues. However, teaching people to communicate more effectively without providing them with effective means of negotiating conflict and problem-solving will not bring about long lasting changes or improve relationship quality (Bagarozzi,

Bagarozzi, Anderson, & Pollane, 1984). A descriptive study of 10 premarital romantic relationships was conducted by Goldsmith (1990). Findings suggest that couples grow closer by a gradual process of being involved with one another in a series of dialectic tensions that pull each person toward both autonomy and connectedness. The relationship changes in time as a direct result of getting involved with the partner, experiencing trade-offs, and deciding on fairness, tolerance and commitment.

Bagarozzi et al. (1984) report positive results in helping couples with communication and problem-solving as well as dealing with irrational beliefs concerning partners. Their three year experimental study utilized the Premarital Education Sequence, PETS, which is a six week, two hour per session program. They examined the effects of a relationship enrichment program on couples preparing for marriage. A total of 18 couples were involved in the study with nine couples in the control group and nine couples receiving the the PETS program treatment. The experimental design involved the use of pre and post tests which compared the treatment and control groups. The study examined differences in irrational beliefs and expectations, functional communication and problem-solving as well as commitment to marriage. Results of the study indicated that participation in the program caused a decrease in irrational beliefs at the time of the post-test in comparison to the control group. No differences were observed at the three

year follow-up suggesting that the PETS program served to accelerate the reduction of irrational beliefs and decrease the couple's interactional pattern of infatuation and move them toward integration (Rolfe, 1976).

A reduction in commitment was also observed in the treatment couples in comparison to the control group which supports the conclusion that the PETS program was useful in interfering with the typical societal forces and influences which automatically propel couples into marriage once they make a commitment and announce their commitment (Lewis, 1972). Bagarozzi et al. (1984) also found that the PETS program emphasis on functional communication and problem-solving seemed to increase the percentage of rewarding verbal and non-verbal dyadic exchanges. There was an opposite trend in the control group.

The effectiveness of the relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach was evaluated by Bader, Microys, Sinclair, and Conway (1980). The study was based on their eight session group format marriage preparation program. Emphasis was on effective communication training and conflict resolution. An important factor to note is that the first four sessions took place prior to marriage while the final four took place after the wedding. They hypothesized that (a) spouses who took part in the program would be less likely to engage in destructive conflict with each other than those who had not taken part and (b) spouses who took part in the program would seek assistance in

solving individual or marital problems more readily than those who did not take part. A total of 94 couples were selected for the program. Couples were interviewed prior to marriage, six months after marriage and again after one year of marriage. The interviews examined problem areas including roles, affection, sexual relationship, job issues, money, family, friends, children, religious values, residence and societal involvement. The interviews also evaluated positive communication interactions and conflict resolution.

Results of the study indicated that couples who took the course were able to approach disagreements in a more constructive manner and were less likely to avoid communicating on difficult issues than were those in the control group. In addition, the treatment group demonstrated an increase in their degree of positive conflict resolution in comparison to the control group and actually continued to grow stronger from the second to the third interview. Results also supported the second hypothesis. Couples who participated in the marriage preparation program reported use of a broader support system than did couples who did not participate. The study concluded that the relationship enrichment program which also utilized post-wedding sessions was effective.

A study comparing the effectiveness of the relationship enrichment/enhancement premarital counseling approach with the lecture/discussion approach was conducted by Avery,

Ridley, Leslie, and Milholland (1980). They hypothesized that the relationship enhancement group, as compared to the lecture/discussion group, would demonstrate significantly higher self-disclosure scores and empathy skill levels on the post-test and follow-up than prior to treatment. After a six month follow-up, results indicated that the relationship enrichment group, relative to the lecture/discussion group, demonstrated improved ability to communicate thoughts and feelings clearly and accurately and to respond with understanding and acceptance.

Research indicates that communication deficits are associated with the development of marital problems (Markman & Floyd, 1980). Wright (1990) presented a case study and a model demonstrating that the engagement period is a time when the process of conflict resolution is occurring. Smith, Vivian, and O'Leary (1990) point out that the affective features of dyadic communication during the premarital period bear significantly on marital satisfaction. These affective features included disengagement, positivity and negativity. Research by Lloyd (1987) involving 50 premarital partners indicated that men judged relationship quality based on the number of conflicts and their perceived stability. Women judged relationship quality based on the number of conflicts and their perceived resolution.

Buunk-Bram, Schaap, and Prevoo (1990) studied the conflict resolution styles of self and partner in premarital relationships. A total of 51 male and 84 female Dutch

university students looked at conflict resolution styles of self and partner. Findings suggest that men try to avoid emotional discussions and prefer to smooth over differences. Men see themselves as more willing to compromise. Women viewed themselves as expressing their negative emotions more than their partners and attempting to resolve problems through an open exchange of feelings.

Markman and Floyd (1980) describe their study of a preventative premarital program entitled the Premarital Enrichment Program, PREP, which is designed to enhance couple communication using a behavioral approach. Their study of the PREP program was predicated on the results of an earlier study by Markman (1979) which among other conclusions suggested that "...the quality of the couple's premarital interaction is etiologically related to future outcomes" (Markman & Floyd, 1980, p.34). In other words, unrewarding interaction patterns precede the development of relationship dissatisfaction and can be identified during the premarital period. Markman and Floyd (1980) used a two group pre-test post-test design which included a control group which consisted of persons on a waiting list. Four couples were in the control group and four couples participated in the six week, three hour per session behavioral program. Beyond the positive self reports made by participants, the study failed to demonstrate any statistically significant gains in any of the couples. The study concluded that more research was needed in order to

develop more sensitive and specific measurements for preventative behavioral approaches.

Julien, Markman, and Lindal (1989) conducted research which supports the effectiveness of the relationship enrichment premarital approach. A total of 59 premarital couples completed the Marital Adjustment Test and the Relationship Problem Inventory. Discussions related to conflict resolution were then video taped and coded using a global and microanalytic system. The global and microanalytic measures related to escalation in conflict resolution were found to be predictive of future relationship satisfaction.

A study comparing the effectiveness of a relationship/discussion group model was conducted by Ridley, Avery, Harrell, Leslie, and Dent (1981). The researchers hypothesized that educating and training couples in communication and mutual problem solving procedures would benefit couples more than merely discussing relationships. Couples were assigned to either the problem solving group (PS) or to the relationship/discussion group (RD). The PS group participated in a problem solving skills program. The RD group participated in group discussions designed to promote a better understanding of relationship functioning. Results indicated that the PS group relative to the RD group showed a significant increase for all communication skills and for problem solving. The study also revealed that even though the couples had been recruited from a non-clinical

population and exhibited no pathology, their pre-test scores indicated restricted problem solving skills. The post-test revealed that the PS group had learned to use "I" statements, were able to identify feelings and were able to respond with more sensitivity to their partner. The researchers concluded that couples can benefit from premarital models which are educational but which also allow the practice of problem solving skills.

Benefits from utilizing a group premarital counseling enrichment approach have been elucidated by Martin, Gawinski, and Medler (1982). Their study involved 35 committed couples at a university. Subjects participated in a committed couples program that was developmental and preventative in nature. Emphasis was on communication processes and the clarification of each couple's relationship.

The results indicated four patterns. First, couples typically have few models of marriage to emulate. For 32 of the 35 couples, their parents were their only major model for marriage. Second, committed couples typically share many misconceptions about roles and have little real knowledge of each other. Over 50 percent of couples expressed surprise over how little they really knew about their partner. Third, couples are normally aware of communication problems but are afraid to discuss them for fear of losing their partner. They tended to avoid problems rather than face them. Fourth, couples are often influenced by role stereotypes and

myths. Conclusions drawn from this study are that effective premarital programs must anticipate and address the agendas of family of origin and gender role conflict based on family stereotype.

Wamboldt and Reiss (1989) examined the roles of gender, original family environment and couple consensus-building. Their research involved 16 couples in a one year longitudinal study. Findings indicated that family of origin and marital satisfaction are correlated. Data also suggest that women play the role of "relationship specialists" within marriages.

Silliman and Schumm (1989) conducted research which suggests that role issues are important in premarital relationships and premarital counseling. The study involved 185 university students and asked them what they wanted in a premarital counseling program. It was discovered that subjects were especially interested in developing interactional skills such as listening or were interested in conflict management and parenting skills. Findings indicate that interest in interpersonal skills may suggest awareness of skills required for a companionship marriage. Interest in conflict skills may indicate a dominance of parent roles as a powerful force in marriage.

Family systems theory and an understanding the influence of the family of origin may have a significant effect on premarital relationships. Wood and Stroup (1990) describe a four session premarital counseling program that

enables couples to look at their relationship by studying the system of their family of origin. Each partner prepares a three-generational genogram and describes all the persons in the family of origin. Questions are then discussed concerning such issues as family values, the role of religion, the family's emotional climate, and experiences of privacy and sharing. Hidden family influences and their dynamics are then considered in light of the current relationship. The approach utilized by Wood and Stroup (1990) represents an innovative approach to premarital counseling.

Fournier (1982) outlined several criteria for developing or upgrading premarital programs: (a) provide couples with specific information about relationship strengths and weaknesses early in the counseling process; (b) use small group discussions and avoid overuse of lectures; (c) avoid one-day programs in order to allow time to appropriate learning; (d) schedule programs at least three to six months prior to the wedding to avoid societal pressure effects and to avoid preoccupation with the wedding event itself.

Nickols, Fournier, and Nickols (1986) address the need to integrate the educational model with the counseling model in a workshop format. Their approach utilizes the PREPARE program (Fournier, 1979; Fournier, Olson, & Druckman, 1983; Olson, Fournier, & Druckman, 1979; 1982). The PREPARE program used in the study consisted of six, two hour

sessions. Topics for the sessions included, (a) communication, (b) communication and conflict resolution, (c) role expectations, (d) values, (e) human sexuality and (f) financial management. Mini-lectures were followed by discussion and task completion activities. A total of 30 couples were selected for involvement in the study. Pre-test and post-test administrations of the PREPARE Inventory were given. Results indicated significant increases from pre to post testing in the categories of communication, sexual relationship, children and marriage, religious orientation, and family and friends. The study concluded that the workshop format combination of educational and counseling models was successful in helping couples establish positive patterns in the areas listed above. Couple ranking of what was least and most helpful included the sex knowledge inventory and communication as most helpful and the religious beliefs inventory as least helpful. Key elements of the program included the focus on sexual relationships and communication.

Larsen and Olson (1989) conducted a three year follow-up of 179 couples who participated in the PREPARE program. Results replicated the research of Fowers and Olson (1986). They found a positive correlation between the PREPARE inventories and predicting marital satisfaction.

Research comparing the effectiveness of post wedding counseling suggests that post wedding counseling can be more effective than premarital counseling (Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett, & Conway, 1980; Guldner, 1971; Schumm & Denton, 1979). Guldner (1971) reported that premarital couples are typically in a state of idealistic, romantic infatuation which renders attempts at premarital counseling ineffective. He found that couples were more realistic and approachable after having been married for six months. Couples involved in the study agreed that premarital counseling was less effective due to the fact that they were not ready for help.

Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett, and Conway (1980) conducted a four year follow-up of the Guldner (1971) study and found that couples did think premarital counseling was to some extent helpful, but that it was the post wedding counseling which had been most beneficial. The couples involved in the post wedding program continued to report better marital relationships over an extended period of time. Schumm & Denton (1979) suggest that, "The most important goal of premarital counseling may be the establishment of a positive relationship with the counselor as a prelude to several post wedding meetings, at which time the counseling/enrichment process may be genuinely facilitative of the couple's relationship development" (p. 26).

Premarital Counselor Education

For many years, clergy, operating from the medical model, assumed the role of mental health agents whose primary premarital counseling responsibility was to screen couples for problems requiring the services of psychotherapists (Olson, 1976; Rutledge, 1966; Stewart; 1970). Clergy feel responsible for providing competent instruction and effective counseling to couples concerning the sacramental nature of marriage and rehearsal of the wedding ceremony. To this has been added the expectation that clergy will be able to identify potential problems in couple relationships and address them effectively. As noted earlier, the rising divorce rate places increased responsibility on clergy since it is assumed that couples who receive adequate premarital counseling will not be as susceptible to divorce.

Clergy premarital counselors feel the burden of having ultimate responsibility for producing successful marriages and reducing the divorce rate. Stahmann and Hiebert (1987) suggest that this combination of expectations has resulted in much of the ambivalence and disillusionment toward premarital counseling currently being demonstrated by clergy. Clergy who are serious about the task of premarital counseling struggle with a three-fold set of expectations which arise from the mental health field, the church and civil authorities. "With that three-part mix, the minister

who takes seriously all three roles at the same time is likely to have succumbed, in years of ministry, to a state of numbness or helplessness in resolving the dilemma" (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987, p.11).

In addition, many couples are reluctant or unwilling to enter into premarital counseling and often do so only because it is required. Shonick (1975) reports on the effectiveness of mandatory premarital counseling with young couples. Between 1970 and 1973, 1300 teenage couples received premarital counseling through Shonick's Los Angeles County program. Participation in premarital counseling by teenage couples was required by California law. Shonick found that her program which combined an emphasis on education and communication was effective. However, another significant discovery was that many young couples chose clergy for premarital counseling rather than be involved in the mandatory state program. In 1972, of the 4000 teenage couples who applied for marriage licenses in Los Angeles County, 2745 utilized clergy premarital counseling services.

Rolfe (1976) conducted a similar survey in Michigan and found that, in all cases of couple-drop-out from the state-mandated premarital counseling program, the couples had chosen to get married in another state where the premarital counseling requirements were less stringent. Couples tend to resist involvement in premarital counseling particularly if they are required to participate. Wright (1981) surveyed 8000 subjects from 25 different religious denominations

asking them how they felt about their premarital counseling experience. Wright found that only 29.3 percent of the subjects felt very favorable about premarital counseling and 11.2 percent reported their experience as being very unfavorable.

Another study of 10 couples involved in an enrichment program and 68 females graduates from a high school family life program sought to discover subject perceptions of the effectiveness of the two programs preparing them for real life marriage (Stucky, Eggeman, Eggeman, Moxley, & Schumm, 1986). Perceived effectiveness of premarital counseling was found to be related to the degree to which the program was seen as voluntary. Shonick (1975) writes, "As a result, couples have turned increasingly to the clergy for counseling since many clergymen require only one counseling session in contrast to the three required by the community health services and many other agencies" (p.324). Senediak (1990) noted that although premarital counseling programs can be potentially helpful to couples in exposing couples to skills for improving interpersonal relationships, problems exist in the premarital educational programs due to the atheoretical nature of most programs, the lack of opportunities for couples to discuss critical tasks and poor evaluation procedures used to examine effectiveness.

Studies conducted by a number of researchers suggest that premarital counseling can be effective if conducted from the relationship enrichment approach. However,

evaluative conclusions are limited because few studies have attempted to evaluate premarital counseling from a long-term perspective (Bader et al., 1980; Guldner, 1971). Very little research has focused on educating premarital counselors and evaluating those educational experiences.

Research by Most and Guerney (1983) suggests that it is possible to provide educational experiences in relationship enrichment and enhancement for volunteer leaders. Their study utilized a pre-test post-test design to assess program effectiveness in the learning of concepts and skills in communication and conflict resolution. In addition, the study provided for the evaluation of topics covered, formats, and modes of educating the volunteer lay leaders for the program. The evaluation sought to determine empirically "...the degree to which these leader trainees could (a) learn the appropriate concepts and skills and (b) effectively transmit these skills to engaged couples when conducting the program" (Most & Guerney, 1983, p.240).

Five married lay couples volunteered to undergo training as leaders of the religiously oriented Engaged Encounter (EE) program. These leader trainees were prepared by experiencing three weekend modules offered over the course of three months. The leader trainees then served as assistants for a weekend PRE program involving 12 couples. One month later, leader trainees conducted another PRE weekend program for 12 couples on their own while being

evaluated by relationship enrichment experts. Results of the study indicate that the leader trainees had made significant gains in behavioral skills as did the PRE couples they taught. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the leader trainees by the expert observers and by the PRE couples was positive. Guerney (1977) concludes that the program was successful in teaching lay leaders to conduct the PRE program. On a broader level, he concludes that other educational experiences involving clergy leader trainees are possible.

Other relationship enrichment professionals report having effectively taught paraprofessionals to serve as relationship enrichment program leaders.

We have found that consultants can be trained adequately with as little as 20 hours of didactic and role play instruction, supplemented by reading assignments. Also, although the consultants must be closely supervised by the professional group leader, one leader can effectively direct a group of up to six couples. The division of duties thus makes PREP a viable program for use in service agencies where costly professional staff is scarce, or in community settings such as church groups where volunteers can serve as paraprofessional consultants (Markman, Floyd, Stanley, & Lewis, 1986, p.188).

Educational opportunities which emphasize relationship enrichment are emerging. These experiences are available for couples as well as for clergy premarital counselors. Until recently, the family life education approach was utilized widely, if not almost exclusively, by those responsible for facilitating premarital counseling experiences (Duvall, 1965). Clergy adopted the

instructional approach and made extensive use of family life education concepts, resources and materials.

At present, most church related and public colleges and universities continue to offer family life education courses, many of which do combine instructional approaches with elements of the relationship enrichment approach. Increasing numbers of universities are offering premarital courses specifically for couples who plan to marry in the near future. Again, at least part of the emphasis is upon relationship enrichment and enhancement.

Seminaries and universities which educate clergy are offering courses and programs designed to assist in the development of relationship enrichment marital and premarital counseling proficiency. One such program was designed by Buckner and Salts (1985) and offers marriage and family therapists education in premarital counseling at the Master level. Components of the program include premarital counseling supervision and assessment of relationship dynamics through the use of the Premarital Assessment Program. Premarital counseling students participate in a course which focuses on premarital counseling, marital therapy, and divorce therapy in addition to the supervised practicum experience.

Vande Kempe (1985) describes a premarital counselor education seminar offered at Fullerton Theological Seminary in which emphasis is placed on increasing the premarital counselor's awareness of developmental issues, family

influences and the psychodynamics which underlie mate selection at the premarital level. Topics of study for the course include (a) marriage as a developmental phase, (b) complementarity in mate selection, (c) marriage, differentiation and pseudo-self, (d) The negotiation of intimacy, (e) the unconscious marriage contract, (f) collusion in marriage, (g) sibling constellation, (h) sexuality and other loyalty conflicts and (i) theological integration.

Markman, Floyd, Stanley, and Lewis (1986) list three broad attributes or characteristics premarital counselors need in order to be effective in utilizing the relationship enrichment approach: (a) they must possess the ability to focus consistently on expanding couple competencies in the enrichment skill areas and have sufficient understanding so as not to get sidetracked with therapeutic issues; (b) the consultant must maintain a process orientation that focuses on the couple's interactional styles rather than on any particular immediate stressor; (c) consultants must see themselves as teachers who support the independent use of skills taught during the programs. Relationship building skills also are crucial.

Even though there is a growing emphasis on relationship enrichment as reflected in the types of premarital counselor education experiences being offered that are accessible to clergy, the overall extent of the influence of these course offerings is not known since new ministers represent only a

small percentage of clergy who are engaged actively in ministry and the number of long-time ministers who return for additional education is not known. Since the focus of research has been upon evaluation of program outcome, the effectiveness of clergy premarital counselor education can only be inferred. As noted previously, the subjective evaluations of clergy premarital counseling have indicated low levels of effectiveness and satisfaction. The rate of divorce continues to remain high. Reports from clergy themselves about the effectiveness of the premarital counseling process also indicate dissatisfaction. "In general, it appears that clergy think they are now better trained than in the past, though often still inadequately. Consistently, pastors have continued to report extensive use of family life education literature as a vital supplement to their premarital counselor programs" (Schumm & Denton, 1979, p.24). One clergy premarital counselor writes,

We need to revise some of our assumptions about what premarital programs can achieve. What seems clear is that information-giving programs are by themselves of very low effectiveness. What couples can use before marriage is training not just teaching in couple communication, encouragement and guidance in looking at their own and other's attitudes toward and expectations of marriage (Mace, 1989, p.192).

Clergy assumptions about the value of didactic instructional talks must be re-evaluated in light of new enrichment possibilities (Mace, 1989).

Clergy premarital counselors who do want to use the enrichment approach in premarital counseling have been

limited by the types of published programs available to them. Bagarozzi and Rauen (1981) critically reviewed over 50 published premarital counseling programs and found that only 3 of the 50 taught premarital counselors to solve problems and negotiate conflicts. Only in recent years have professionals "...developed marriage preparation counseling to include actual opportunities for couples to focus on problems or coping skills" (Martin, Gawinski, & Medler, 1982, pp.102-03). Schumm and Denton (1979) expressed an enduring concern of premarital counselors saying that there is no doubt that education of premarital counselors has been neglected.

Barriers To Education

There are several significant barriers to educating clergy premarital counselors. A first barrier is that many clergy counselors themselves do not view premarital counseling as a distinct and separate field or discipline and therefore suppose their skills in interpersonal counseling are sufficient to do premarital counseling (Schumm & Denton, 1979). It is important for clergy premarital counselors to be aware of and take into account "...the typically less realistic attitudes, shorter relational history, youthfulness and transitional aspects of the couple" (Schumm & Denton, 1979, p.26). Specialized premarital counseling is needed to heighten awareness of the unique qualities of young couples.

A second barrier to clergy premarital counselor education is related to the relatively low premarital counseling caseload of most clergy premarital counselors which makes it difficult to justify extensive education even when these educational experiences are readily available and accessible. Surveys indicate that most clergy do fewer than 12 weddings per year (Fairchild, 1959; Hill, 1968; Wright, 1976).

Summary

A number of approaches have been utilized by clergy premarital counselors in their efforts to provide effective services to the couples entrusted to their guidance. Research suggests that the relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach can be an effective model for premarital counselors. Research also suggests that the overall premarital counseling process has fallen short of its potential effectiveness. Encouraging results have been reported by those who have made the transition from the didactic instructional approach to the relationship enrichment/enhancement approach.

This study is intended to provide data which reflect to what extent clergy premarital counselors have or have not made the transition from an instructional premarital counseling approach to the relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach. Development of specific

clergy premarital educational experiences to facilitate this transition is an ultimate goal.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The method and procedures used for this study are presented in this chapter. The chapter is divided into the following sections; (a) subjects, (b) instrumentation, (c) ethical considerations, (d) procedures and (e) research design/data analysis.

Subjects

Subjects for this study were volunteers selected from a total population of 723 Oklahoma United Methodist clergy who were members of the Oklahoma Annual Conference. The total population of clergy consisted of 665 (92 percent) male clergy and 58 (8 percent) female clergy (Coffin, 1991). Research packets were either mailed or distributed at district meetings to a total of 159 clergy. Subjects for this study were selected based on availability and willingness of district superintendents to allow their districts to participate. Clergy from the Tulsa, Oklahoma City South and Muskogee districts participated. These districts include representation from each of the clergy groups investigated in the study. A total of 102 valid

responses were received resulting in a 64 percent return rate. Of those 57 clergy (36 percent) not included in the study but who received research packets, 43 did not respond even after receiving a follow-up letter, another seven stated they were too busy, five reported that they did not perform weddings, one had retired, one reported that he did not feel comfortable with the study and one packet was invalid as a result being filled out incorrectly. Of the 102 clergy subjects, 89 were male (87 percent) and 13 were female (13 percent).

Instrumentation

Data were collected using a three part instrument. Part I of the instrument was a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A). Part II of the instrument included a color and number coded card set consisting of 16 potential premarital counseling tasks (see Appendix B). Part III of the instrument consisted of another color and number coded card set with the same 16 potential premarital counseling tasks as were on the set in Part II. Cards sets were color coded as either green or blue (see Appendix H).

Demographic Questionnaire

Part I of the instrument was the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix A). The demographic section

yielded data concerning clergy respondent gender, age, years in ministry, geographic location of ministry, premarital counseling educational background, number of weddings performed each year and the number of premarital counseling sessions spent with different types of couples. A question concerning post-wedding follow-up also was included. The Demographic Questionnaire was the first task (Part I) for all subjects.

Coded Premarital Counseling Task Card Sets

Instrument Parts II and III consisted of the two 16 item premarital counseling task card sets. The two sets of color and number coded cards (coded with blue or green self adhesive labels on the front and with a three-digit task identification number on the back) were presented to each clergy subject. The two sets were identical and contained cards with 16 separate potential premarital counseling tasks. Using the green set, clergy were asked to first select and then rank order the specific tasks that they ordinarily do during premarital counseling with engaged couples. Eight of the tasks were identified in the literature as being based on the instructional premarital counseling approach and eight were identified in the literature as being based on the relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach.

Using the other card set (color coded blue), clergy were instructed to rank order all 16 tasks based on what they considered to be the most to least important task they would do if their premarital counseling were being done under ideal circumstances. All clergy subjects were instructed to complete the green set first followed by the blue set.

Reliability. A pilot study was conducted prior to actual data collection in order to locate any procedural difficulties in the study as well as to establish test-retest reliability. The instrument was mailed to eight United Methodist clergy in northwest Arkansas, Fayetteville district. Response rate was very low with only three clergy participating in the complete pilot study. A second research packet was mailed to the pilot study subjects 10 days after the first administration of the instrument with written instructions directing subjects to complete and return the packet promptly.

A coefficient of stability was determined for the instrument by correlating mean sum of ranks from the two administrations of the instrument to the pilot study group. Two correlation coefficients were calculated. The coefficient of stability for the green set of cards was $r=.92$ indicating a high degree of consistency between responses on the two administrations of the instrument. The coefficient of stability for the blue set was $r=.77$

indicating a fairly strong degree of consistency. Due to the extremely low response rate on the pilot study, interpretation of the coefficient of stability must remain tentative.

Validity. Literature supports the validity of the 16 tasks as being potential instructional premarital counseling tasks (Hunt & Hunt, 1981; Mace, 1989; Schumm & Denton, 1979; Smith & Smith, 1981; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987; Stewart, 1970) and relationship enrichment premarital counseling tasks (Alberti & Emmons, 1975; Bach & Wyden, 1970; Bernard, 1981; Bolton, 1979; Bower & Bower, 1976; Colapietro & Rockwell, 1985; Goldberg, 1983; Hunt & Hunt, 1981; Kater, 1985; Mace, 1989; Madanes, 1981; Mantooth, Geffner, Franks, & Patrick, 1987; Marlin, 1989; McGoldrick & Gerson, 1985; McKay, Davis, & Fanning, 1981; Miller, 1985; Naimark & Pearce, 1985; Russo, 1979; Satir, 1972; Smith & Smith, 1981; Splete & Freeman-George, 1985; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987; Toman, 1976; Vande Kempe, 1985; Voydanoff, 1985) according to the definitions of the two approaches offered in Chapters I and II and Appendix C.

Content validity of the instrument was further established by assembling a panel of four experts in the field of premarital counseling and allowing them to review the instrument. All members of the panel were required to have backgrounds in marriage and family therapy and to report professional experience in premarital counseling (see

Expert Demographic Form, Appendix F). Panel members included one master level and three doctoral level therapists. One panel member was in private practice and was an ordained United Methodist clergy member, one was a pastor in a local church and a college instructor, one was a master level therapist clergy member in a church-related counseling center and the other panel member was a doctoral level therapist in a church-related counseling center.

Experts were instructed to review the instrument, study the research proposal and report whether the instrument appeared to measure what it was designed to measure. Panel members were provided with definitions of both the instructional and relationship enrichment counseling approaches (see Appendix C) and were given an opportunity to accept or reject and revise the definitions. Panel members then examined each of the 16 premarital counseling tasks and validated that each task was associated with either the instructional or relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach. Panel members revised the instrument until they agreed that it had content validity.

The panel of experts were then asked to select and rank order the 16 tasks based on what they considered to be the most important to the least important tasks that they actually did in their premarital counseling practice. Experts were finally asked to rank order a set of cards based on what they would do in their premarital counseling practice given ideal circumstances. The mean sum of ranks

for these cards were used in a comparison with clergy subjects in the actual study.

Ethical Considerations

Clergy subjects were volunteers and were notified in writing at the time they received their research packets that their participation was voluntary. Subjects were notified in writing that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point, that all responses would be kept confidential and that results of the study would be available to them when the study was completed (see Appendix D). A coding procedure was used for identification purposes. The Institutional Review Board at Oklahoma State University acknowledged that subjects participating in this study were at no risk (see Appendix E).

Procedures

Each clergy respondent received a research packet containing Parts I, II and III of the instrument. Written instructions (see Appendix G) and consent forms were included in each packet. Packets were either mailed to individual clergy or were distributed to them during district minister meetings. Clergy participants were selected at a district level based on availability and willingness of district superintendents to allow

participation. Three of the Oklahoma Conference's 12 districts were selected to participate after getting permission from the district superintendents of the districts. Tulsa, Oklahoma City South and Muskogee districts were selected since they contained rural, urban and suburban churches.

Clergy subjects were instructed to complete all items without consultation or discussion among respondents. Subjects were instructed to complete the Demographics Questionnaire (Part I) first and then proceed to Parts II and III. Clergy were instructed to rank order the card sets so that their highest ranking cards were on the top continuing in descending order so that their lowest ranked card was on the bottom. Clergy subjects were instructed to secure each set of selected and rank ordered cards by placing a rubber band around each set. Extra bands were available if bands became lost or broken. Respondents were instructed to place all materials in their packets upon completion of the instrument.

Responses were used to obtain mean sum of ranks for each of the 16 instructional and relationship enrichment premarital counseling tasks with respect to clergy gender, age, geographic location of ministry, tenure and premarital counseling educational experience. Mean sum of ranks were obtained for both the clergy-actual and clergy-ideal card sorting sets and for the expert group.

Research Design/Data Analysis

This was a descriptive study which examined the characteristics of clergy premarital counselors with respect to demographic variables including gender (male and female), tenure in ministry (new and veteran), premarital counseling educational experiences (formally and non-formally educated) and geographic location of ministry (rural, urban and suburban). In addition, comparisons were made between clergy actual and clergy ideal mean sum of ranks as well as between clergy ideal and expert actual mean sum of ranks.

Data were at the ordinal level making non-parametric statistical analysis appropriate (Bartz, 1988; Downie & Heath, 1983; McCall, 1980). Mean sum of ranks were obtained for each of the groups based on the 16 premarital counseling tasks. Each of the eight hypotheses was tested using a Mann-Whitney U Test (Bartz, 1988) in order to determine if there were differences in the approaches utilized by each group being studied. Hypotheses were tested at the $p < .05$ level.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the investigation. The study was designed to determine to what extent clergy utilize instructional or relationship enrichment premarital counseling approaches and to determine if there are differences in the approaches used based on clergy gender, age, tenure in ministry, geographic location of ministry and educational level.

Data consisted of frequency counts making non-parametric statistical analysis appropriate. The Mann-Whitney U Test was used to compare clergy instructional and relationship enrichment approach selection on a card sorting procedure. Mann-Whitney U Tests were performed for each of the variables being considered in order to determine if differences existed. Two-tailed probabilities associated with each of the U values were evaluated at the $p < .05$ level. Clergy subjects from each category identified and ranked the actual tasks performed in premarital counseling and what they would do given ideal circumstances. Table 1 reports the Mann-Whitney U values for clergy actual and Table 2 reports Mann-Whitney U values for clergy ideal. In addition, total clergy results were compared with the actual

Table 1

Mann-Whitney U Values for Clergy Actual Mean Sum of Ranks
For Instructional Versus Relationship Enrichment Tasks

Category	N	U Value	Critical Value
Total Clergy	102	9.0	.014 *
Female	13	27.0	.646 ns
Male	89	10.0	.020 *
New	18	12.0	.038 *
Veteran	84	11.0	.028 *
Older	96	11.0	.028 *
Younger	6	16.0	.104 ns
Formally Educated	49	12.0	.038 *
Non-Formally Educated	53	11.0	.028 *
Rural	32	11.0	.028 *
Urban	50	13.0	.050 *
Suburban	20	8.0	.010 *

*p<.05

Table 2

Mann-Whitney U Values for Differences Between Instructional
Versus Relationship Enrichment Task Mean Sum of Ranks for
Clergy Counseling Under Ideal Circumstances

Category	N	U Value	Critical Value
Total Clergy	102	14.0	.064 ns
Female	13	25.0	.506 ns
Male	89	11.0	.028 *
New	18	9.0	.014 *
Veteran	84	15.0	.082 ns
Older	96	14.0	.064 ns
Younger	6	20.5	.234 ns
Formally Educated	49	18.0	.160 ns
Non-Formally Educated	53	12.0	.038 *
Rural	32	15.0	.082 ns
Urban	50	12.0	.038 *
Suburban	20	17.0	.130 ns

*p<.05

Table 3

Mann-Whitney U Values for Differences Between Instructional
Versus Relationship Enrichment Task Mean Sum of Ranks for
Expert Actual and Ideal Counseling

<u>Category</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>U Value</u>	<u>Critical Value</u>
Expert Actual	4	10.5	.024 *
Expert Ideal		12.0	.038 *

*p<.05

and ideal responses of a panel of experts in premarital counseling. Expert panel Mann-Whitney U values are reported in Table 3. An alpha level of .05 was used to evaluate the Mann-Whitney U findings.

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis postulated that there is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy with respect to the selection of instructional and relationship enrichment premarital counseling tasks actually being performed in the field. All clergy subjects were combined into one group for which mean sum of ranks for each of the 16 tasks were obtained. A Mann-Whitney U of $U=9$ was obtained with an associated tabled two-tailed probability value of 0.014 which was significant at the $p<.05$ level. The total group of all clergy subjects were found to use instructional approach tasks significantly more than relationship enrichment tasks, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Mean sum of ranks for the top three most frequently selected tasks were from the instructional approach. The lowest mean sum of rank reported was a relationship enrichment task.

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis postulated that there is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy who utilize instructional or relationship enrichment premarital counseling approaches based on clergy gender. Mean sum of ranks were obtained for each of the 16 potential premarital counseling tasks for both male and female clergy.

Mann-Whitney U values were calculated for both male and female clergy groups. The female clergy group value was $U=27$ with an associated probability of 0.646 which was found to be non-significant when evaluated at $p<.05$. Female clergy selected tasks from both the instructional and the relationship enrichment approaches with equal frequency, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

A Mann-Whitney U value of $U=10$ was obtained from the mean sum of ranks for male clergy. The probability level associated with $U=10$ was 0.020 which was found to be significant when evaluated at $p<.05$. Male clergy utilized more instructional approach tasks than relationship enrichment tasks in their premarital counseling.

The highest three mean sum of ranks reported by female clergy included two relationship enrichment tasks and one instructional approach task. The lowest mean sum of ranks reported by female clergy involved discussing sexual issues and contraception with premarital couples. In contrast, the highest mean sum of ranks for male clergy subjects came from

the instructional approach and focused exclusively on religious issues. The lowest mean sum of rank for males was a zero. No male clergy reported dealing with the use of sociological techniques to discuss conflict resolution.

Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis postulated that there is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy who utilize instructional and relationship enrichment premarital counseling approaches based on geographic location of ministry. Clergy were grouped into rural, urban and suburban categories and mean sum of ranks were obtained on each of the 16 tasks. Mann-Whitney U's were calculated for each of the groupings.

A Mann-Whitney U of $U=11$ was obtained for the rural clergy group. A tabled two-tailed probability value of 0.028 was significant at the $p<.05$ level. The rural clergy group utilized instructional approach tasks more often than relationship enrichment approach tasks. The three highest mean sum of ranks for rural clergy came from the instructional approach tasks. The lowest mean sum of ranks was an instructional approach task related to discussing sexual issues and contraception.

A Mann-Whitney U was obtained from the mean sum of ranks for urban clergy. The obtained value $U=13$ had an

associated two-tailed probability of 0.050 which was significant at the $p < .05$ level. Urban clergy results indicated that they utilized instructional approach based tasks more frequently than relationship enrichment approach tasks. The three highest mean sum of ranks for the urban clergy group were obtained from instructional approach tasks. The lowest mean sum of ranks came from the instructional approach task related to discussing sexual issues and contraception with couples.

A Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted for the suburban clergy mean sum of ranks with a value of $U=8$ and an associated two-tailed probability of 0.010 which was significant at the $p < .05$ level. Clergy from the suburban group tended to utilize instructional approach tasks more often than relationship enrichment approach tasks. The three highest mean sum of ranks were from the instructional approach and the lowest mean sum of ranks was a relationship enrichment task related to discussing the influence of the family of origin on personality development and mate selection. Each of the three groups of clergy utilize the instructional approach more than the relationship enrichment approach or a balanced combination of approaches, therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis Four

The fourth hypothesis stated that there is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy based on educational experience. Clergy were grouped based on whether they had formal education in the area of premarital counseling or whether they were non-formally educated (i.e., they reported having no educational experiences related to premarital counseling).

A Mann-Whitney U was performed for the formally educated group with a value of $U=12$ and an associated two-tailed probability of 0.038 which was significant at the $p<.05$ level. The U value indicated that the instructional approach tasks were utilized more frequently than the relationship enrichment approach tasks. The three highest mean sum of ranks were from the instructional approach tasks.

The non-formally educated group Mann-Whitney U value was $U=11$ with an associated two-tailed probability of 0.028 which was significant at the $p<.05$ level. The U value indicated a greater utilization of the instructional approach tasks rather than relationship enrichment approach tasks. The three highest mean sum of ranks were from the instructional approach tasks. The lowest mean sum of ranks was also from the instructional approach tasks and was related to discussing sexual issues and contraception.

Formally educated and non-formally educated clergy premarital counselors use the instructional approach. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis Five

The fifth hypothesis postulated that there is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy who utilize instructional or relationship enrichment approaches based on tenure in ministry. Clergy were grouped into new and veteran divisions.

A value of $U=12$ was obtained for the new group with an associated two-tailed probability of 0.038 which was significant at the $p<.05$ level. The resultant U value indicated that new clergy utilized instructional approach tasks more frequently than relationship enrichment approach tasks. Mean sum of ranks for the top three tasks were from the instructional approach and were related to religious issues. The lowest mean sum of ranks was an instructional task related to sexual issues and contraception.

The Mann-Whitney U for veteran clergy was $U=11$ with an associated two-tailed probability of 0.028 which was significant at the $p<.05$ level. The U value indicated that the veteran clergy group selected tasks more frequently from the instructional approach than from the relationship enrichment approach. The highest three mean sum of ranks came from the instructional approach tasks and included two

religious issues tasks and one task related to making the couple aware of potential sources of conflict likely to arise in the first year of marriage. The lowest mean sum of ranks came from the instructional approach item related to sexual issues and contraception.

No difference in premarital counseling approaches was found between formally educated and non-formally educated clergy. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis Six

Hypothesis six stated that there is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy who utilize instructional or relationship enrichment approaches based on clergy age. The clergy groups were divided into younger and older clergy.

A Mann-Whitney U test for the younger clergy group produced a value of $U=16$ with an associated two-tailed probability of 0.104 which was not significant at the $p<.05$ level. This suggests that younger clergy tend to utilize both instructional and relationship approach tasks in their counseling. Two of the three highest mean sum of ranks were from the instructional approach tasks with one being from the relationship enrichment approach tasks.

The Mann-Whitney U for the older clergy group was $U=11$ with an associated two-tailed probability of 0.028 which was significant at the $p<.05$ level. The U value indicated that the older clergy group utilize instructional approach tasks

more frequently than relationship enrichment tasks. The three highest mean sum of ranks were for religious issues and were from the instructional approach. The lowest mean sum of ranks was for the instructional approach related to discussing sexual issues and contraception.

A difference in clergy premarital counseling approaches based on age was found to exist. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Seven

Hypothesis seven postulated that there is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy ideal and expert actual instructional and relationship enrichment premarital counseling approaches.

A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted for the total clergy ideal set of mean sum of ranks with an obtained $U=14$. The associated two-tailed probability was 0.064 which was non-significant. The total clergy group ideally would include a balance of both instructional and relationship enrichment tasks. The three highest mean sum of ranks were from the instructional approach and included two religious issues tasks and one task related to role issues, women working outside the home and biblical role models for men and women. The two lowest mean sum of ranks included one instructional task related to sexual issues and

contraception and one relationship enrichment task related to sexual issues.

A Mann-Whitney U test for expert actual mean sum of ranks resulted in a $U=10.5$ and an associated two-tailed probability of 0.024 which was significant at the $p<.05$ level. The U indicated that the expert group utilized relationship enrichment approach tasks more frequently than instructional approach tasks in their premarital counseling. The three highest mean sum of ranks were from the relationship enrichment approach and included discussing biblical and cultural role expectations, teaching conflict resolution skills and assessing and improving couple communication skills. The lowest mean sum of ranks was the instructional task related to sexual issues and contraception.

A difference between clergy ideal and expert actual premarital counseling approaches was found. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Eight

The eighth hypothesis stated that there is no difference in the mean sum of ranks of clergy actual and clergy ideal instructional and relationship enrichment premarital counseling approaches. After obtaining mean sum of ranks for each the 16 tasks on the total clergy actual

and total clergy ideal card sorting tasks, Mann-Whitney U's were calculated.

The Mann-Whitney U value for total clergy actual was $U=9$ with an associated probability of 0.014 which is significant at the $p<.05$ level. The total clergy ideal value was $U=14$ with an associated probability of 0.064 which was non-significant at the $p<.05$ level. The U value for total clergy actual reflected clergy use of the instructional approach more frequently than the relationship enrichment approach. Data reflect that clergy would ideally select tasks from both the instructional and relationship enrichment approaches with equal frequency, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The tasks receiving the three highest mean sum of ranks for clergy actual were related to religious issues exclusively. For the clergy ideal, the top three mean sum of ranks also were related exclusively to religious issues. A Mann-Whitney for female clergy ideal also was obtained. The female ideal value was $U=25$ with an associated probability of 0.506 which was non-significant at the $p<.05$ level. Though the number was not statistically significant at the $p<.05$, the U value did indicate that female clergy selected a greater number of relationship enrichment tasks than instructional tasks. The Mann-Whitney U for male clergy ideal was $U=11$ with an associated probability of 0.028 which was significant at the $p<.05$ level. The U value indicated that ideally male clergy would

tend to utilize a larger percentage of instructional tasks than relationship enrichment tasks. A Mann-Whitney U value was obtained for expert ideal with $U=12$ and an associated probability of 0.038 which was significant at the $p<.05$ level. The $U=12$ indicated an expert ideal preference for relationship enrichment task selection that was consistent with the expert actual findings.

Summary

This chapter presents the results of the investigation, including the statistical analyses. Results indicate that the total group of clergy tend to select instructional approach tasks more frequently than relationship enrichment tasks in their actual premarital counseling sessions, but under ideal circumstances they would utilize a balance of both approaches. It must be noted that for the clergy actual card sorting tasks, clergy respondents were allowed to select up to 16 possible tasks, but for the clergy ideal card sorting task they were required to rank all 16 tasks. Inferences about clergy ideal preferences are at best tentative.

Clergy respondents did tend to select religiously oriented tasks as their first three choices in comparison to experts in premarital counseling who tended to rank relationship enrichment tasks in the top three positions.

For the female clergy group, no statistically significant difference was found in instructional and relationship enrichment task selection. Male clergy did report a more frequent use of instructional approach tasks. Under ideal circumstances, male clergy report a higher utilization of instructional tasks in the first three tasks. The female ideal group findings suggest they would continue to use a balance of relationship enrichment and instructional approach tasks.

Results for rural, urban and suburban clergy indicate that each group tends to use instructional based approaches more frequently than relationship enrichment approach tasks. The clergy ideal findings are consistent for the urban group which reported that they would initially continue to use instructional approach tasks. Rural and suburban clergy indicate that they would utilize a combination of approaches ideally in contrast to their more frequent use of instructional approach tasks in actual counseling.

Formally educated and non-formally educated clergy both tend to use instructional approach tasks more frequently than relationship enrichment approaches. When asked to rank all tasks for ideal purposes, there was no difference in the ranking of both instructional and relationship enrichment approach tasks.

Results of the study indicate that there is no difference in clergy premarital counseling approaches based on tenure in ministry. U values for new and veteran clergy

indicate that both groups rank instructional approach tasks higher than relationship enrichment tasks.

There is a difference in older clergy and younger clergy with respect to approaches utilized in premarital counseling. For older clergy the $U=11$ was significant and indicates that they rank instructional approach tasks higher than relationship enrichment tasks. No statistically significant difference in approach selection was found for the younger clergy. On the ideal set of rankings, U values indicate no significant differences in the ranking of tasks for either the older or younger clergy groups.

There is a difference in the way experts in premarital counseling and clergy respondents approach premarital counseling. U values for the expert group indicate that they select relationship enrichment tasks more frequently than instructional tasks. Clergy select instructional approach tasks more frequently than relationship enrichment tasks. There also is a difference in the clergy ideal and the expert actual approaches. The clergy ideal $U=14$ was not found to be significant which indicates that they rank both approaches together with equal frequency. Experts tend to rank relationship enrichment tasks higher.

The results indicate that there is a difference in the clergy actual and the clergy ideal approaches. Clergy actual values indicate that clergy utilize the instructional approach more than the relationship enrichment approach.

The clergy ideal findings suggest that there is no difference in the rankings of either set of tasks when all tasks are ranked.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate to what extent clergy premarital counselors utilize instructional or relationship enrichment approaches in their counseling with couples. Specifically, the study was designed to determine to what extent clergy utilize each approach based on factors including clergy gender, age, geographic location of ministry, level of education and years in professional ministry. The study also compares clergy premarital counseling approaches with the approaches utilized by a panel of premarital counseling experts.

A total of 102 United Methodist clergy from the Oklahoma Conference participated in the study. Of the 102 subjects a total of 89 were male and 13 were female. The subjects were from the Tulsa, Oklahoma City South and Muskogee districts and serve as ministers or associate ministers of local churches or are district superintendents in the respective districts.

The demographic surveys and the two card sorting tasks were distributed at district minister meetings or were mailed to each of the volunteer subjects. The two card sorting tasks consisted of identical sets of 16 cards each,

categorized by a panel of premarital counseling experts, as being either an instructional task or a relationship enrichment task. Clergy were asked to select and rank one set of cards to reflect the tasks that they actually performed during their premarital counseling with couples in their churches. Clergy subjects were then asked to rank order another card set indicating the premarital counseling tasks they would do if they had to do all of the 16 tasks.

Limitations of the study are: a) subjects were limited to clergy in the Oklahoma Annual Conference and may not be generalizable to all United Methodist clergy or to clergy in general; b) only volunteer subjects were included in the sample, thus the inherent differences between volunteer subjects and randomly selected subjects must be recognized as a possible intervening factor in the outcome of the study; c) a limited number of experts were used to compare with the clergy and to determine if the 16 tasks were instructional or relationship enrichment in nature, thus making it difficult to generalize to all professionals in the field of premarital counseling; d) clergy subjects were selected at a group level based on availability of districts, thus restricting complete randomization of subjects; e) data were at the ordinal level and consisted of frequency counts making non-parametric statistical analysis necessary, thus reducing the likelihood of rejecting a false null hypothesis (Bartz, 1988); and f) the number of female clergy subjects was relatively small making it difficult to

generalize results to all female clergy. However, the number of female clergy in the study (13 percent) is generally representative of female clergy in the Oklahoma Annual Conference (8 percent).

To investigate the study's eight hypotheses, frequency counts were weighted and converted to mean sum of ranks. Mann-Whitney U tests were performed for each group of subjects to determine if there were significant differences in the ranking of instructional and relationship tasks by clergy subjects. Comparisons were made between the total clergy and experts, younger and older, new and veteran, male and female, rural, urban and suburban, and formally educated and non-formally educated clergy. Mann-Whitney U's were performed for each group's mean sum of ranks between the clergy ideal and clergy actual approaches and comparisons were made for the groups. In addition, the top three and bottom mean sum of ranks were noted.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions are presented:

1. There is a significant difference in the approaches clergy use in premarital counseling. Clergy as a total group tend to select premarital counseling tasks that are based on the instructional approach more frequently than they select tasks from the relationship enrichment approach.

This means that clergy as a total group have not made the transition from the less effective instructional approach to the more effective relationship enrichment approach.

Reasons for this may include a lack of opportunity for educational experiences centered on the relationship enrichment approach. However, results of the study also indicate that the individual tasks selected by clergy are not only instructional approach tasks but also focus exclusively on religious issues. The continuing utilization of the instructional approach may reflect a conscious decision to choose one approach over the other. It is expected that clergy would focus on religious tasks during premarital counseling. However, the high rankings given to religious tasks suggest that greater emphasis is placed on these tasks rather than on tasks which might strengthen couple relationship skills.

When the total group of clergy ranked all 16 tasks based on what they would do given ideal circumstances, no difference between instructional approach and relationship enrichment approach tasks was noted. This supports the conclusion that clergy ideally would select a more balanced approach than they actually do. Even so, results indicate that clergy as a total group would still select religiously oriented tasks as their first four premarital counseling objectives.

2. Results of the study indicate that there is a significant difference in the premarital counseling approach

used by male and female clergy. Male clergy tend to use tasks from the instructional approach while females tend to use both instructional and relationship enrichment approaches with equal frequency in counseling. Clergy gender does appear to influence premarital counseling task selection and approaches which implies that gender differences have the potential to affect the outcome of premarital counseling.

Results of the study indicate differences between male and female clergy in their highest ranked tasks. Male clergy selected a religiously oriented instructional approach task as their highest mean sum of ranks. Female clergy gave the highest mean sum of ranks to the relationship enrichment oriented task related to couple communication. Female clergy make communication skills a higher priority in premarital counseling. This supports research which suggests that females tend to be relationship specialists in marriage (Wamboldt & Reiss, 1989). Female clergy appear to carry that role into premarital counseling situations.

A difference in the lowest ranked tasks for male and female clergy was noted. The lowest ranked task for male clergy was related to enabling the couple to consider family of origin influence on personal development and mate selection. No male clergy selected this task which could mean that male clergy do not consider this an important premarital task or they do not understand its possible

significance in the counseling process. For female clergy, the lowest ranked task was related to sexual issues which could mean that female clergy do not see this as an important area for premarital counseling or that they may be uncomfortable discussing sexual issues in premarital counseling situations.

3. Rural, urban and suburban clergy each use instructional based approaches more frequently than relationship enrichment approaches. This means that geographic location of ministry setting does not influence the premarital counseling approach utilized by clergy. This result is surprising considering that urban and suburban clergy are more likely to have a number of resources available to them which are not as easily accessible to rural clergy. In addition, since suburban and urban clergy perform more weddings, have opportunity to do more premarital counseling and might be more motivated to obtain additional premarital counseling education, it is expected that they would approach premarital counseling from a different perspective than rural clergy. This is not indicated by results of the study. Reasons for this may include a lack of educational opportunity to increase relationship enrichment skill. Results of the study do not support that rural, urban or suburban clergy have made the transition from the instructional to the relationship enrichment approach.

4. Results of the study indicate that non-formally educated and formally educated clergy tend to use the instructional approach more frequently than the relationship enrichment approach. This means that clergy premarital counselor educational experiences have not been effective in helping clergy make the transition from the instructional approach to the relationship enrichment approach.

5. Results of the study indicate that both new clergy and veteran clergy tend to utilize the instructional approach more frequently than the relationship enrichment approach. This means that clergy who are new in ministry may not be receiving educational experiences which would help them make the transition from the instructional approach to the relationship enrichment approach. Reasons for this failure could be explained by the various avenues of entry available to clergy as they begin ministry. Some new clergy are older, second career people who have gone through the United Methodist Summer Course of Study that is not as extensive as the graduate seminary route into ordained ministry. The abbreviated course of study entry route may not offer as many educational opportunities as seminary.

6. Results of the study indicate that older clergy tend to utilize the instructional approach more than the relationship enrichment approach while younger clergy utilize a combination of both instructional and relationship enrichment approaches. This may be a reflection of younger

clergy attempting to experiment with a wider variety of approaches rather than settling on a comfortable set of techniques which may be the case for the older clergy. In addition, younger clergy tend to enter ministry through graduate seminary education. The trend toward utilization of a combination of approaches may reflect a trend toward new educational approaches available in seminaries. The difference also could reflect the growing number of female clergy who are attending seminary and entering the professional clergy ranks. Female clergy may tend to use a more balanced approach. The difference may reflect a qualitatively different style for younger clergy or increased proficiency in relationship skill areas.

7. Results of the study indicate that under ideal circumstances the total clergy group would utilize a combination of both instructional and relationship enrichment approaches. This supports the alternative hypothesis that clergy would prefer to utilize an approach different from the approach they actually use and that the ideal approach would include a balance of instructional and relationship enrichment tasks. However, it must be considered that the clergy were asked to rank all 16 tasks in the ideal card set. Therefore, the differences may be the result of not having the option to discard certain tasks altogether as was the case for clergy when selecting and ranking the tasks they actually did during premarital counseling. In their premarital counseling, experts utilize

the relationship enrichment approach more frequently than the instructional approach. Clergy and experts approach premarital counseling from different perspectives. Reasons for this may include the likelihood that the experts included in this study were skilled in relationship enrichment approaches and techniques and had them as viable counseling options. Given an opportunity to develop skills, clergy counselors might choose the relationship enrichment approach more often.

8. Results of the study indicate that there is a difference in the approach actually utilized by clergy and the approach clergy report they would utilize under ideal circumstances. Clergy report that they actually use more instructional approach tasks than relationship enrichment tasks, but that they would use a more balanced combination under ideal circumstances. Conclusions about this are tentative since clergy were not allowed to both select and rank items on the ideal set. It is possible that items were included which they would not do even under ideal circumstances.

Recommendations for Research

The following recommendations for future research are based upon the results of this study.

1. The results of this study support the hypothesis that clergy as a total group tend to utilize the

instructional premarital counseling approach more frequently than the relationship enrichment approach. Previous research suggests that the instructional approach is less effective than the relationship enrichment approach. Research is needed which will focus on the reasons for clergy persistence in use of the instructional approach so that appropriate educational opportunities can be designed and implemented to assist clergy in becoming more effective premarital counselors.

2. Future research might focus on the differences between male and female clergy premarital counseling approaches. Use of a larger number of female clergy could either confirm or refute the apparent differences that are indicated in this study which includes only 13 females. Future research might address gender differences by examining the motivation and dynamics involved in gender specific counseling. Research might answer the question: Is the difference the result of different male and female socialization tracks, role expectations for male and female clergy or some other intervening variable? Future research might address whether female clergy premarital counselors would utilize a different approach when counseling couples in non-traditional situations such as when working with previously married couples.

Given research which suggests that females are relationship specialists in marriage (Wamboldt & Reiss, 1989), one issue for future study would be to consider if

female clergy are more likely than male clergy to attend educational experiences based on the relationship enrichment approach. Research could be conducted to determine if female clergy who utilize a more balanced approach or even a relationship enrichment approach obtain more successful results.

3. Results of the study indicate that clergy give lowest rankings to tasks related to sexuality issues. Further research is needed to explore the issue of clergy sexuality and its effect on the premarital counseling process. Research might include focusing on clergy overall perception of the appropriateness of including sexuality in premarital counseling.

4. The current study reveals a difference between clergy actual and clergy ideal premarital counseling approaches. Future research might clarify the reason for the differences between the two to be certain that the differences are real and are not due to some intervening variable. In future research, clergy would need to be given the choice of both selecting and ranking premarital counseling tasks.

5. Future research could include a larger number of experts in premarital counseling and focus on the reasons for the differences in the tasks selected as the top choices for clergy and for experts. Future research could focus on determining the relative effectiveness of expert premarital counselors.

6. Future research might explore potential qualitative differences between younger and older clergy counselors. Differences might include premarital counseling educational experiences each group has had or differences in personality or values.

Recommendations for Professionals

Results of this study indicate that clergy, as a whole, and male clergy, as a group, tend to utilize an instructional based premarital counseling approach even though research suggests that a relationship enrichment based approach is more effective. This study supports the hypothesis that female clergy utilize a different approach than male clergy and that both male and female clergy premarital counseling approaches differ from the approach used by premarital counseling experts. In addition, young clergy differ from older clergy in premarital counseling approaches. Suggestions for professionals include the following.

1. Premarital counseling educational opportunities for clergy should focus on teaching relationship enrichment skills including problem solving, communication and conflict resolution.

2. Since clergy appear reluctant to approach sexuality issues, alternative opportunities for sex education should be made available to couples.

3. Human sexuality events for clergy might be designed and implemented in order to assist clergy in identifying areas of greatest need for couples and to increase clergy personal awareness of potential internal sexuality conflicts.

4. Given that clergy tend to utilize premarital counseling approaches based on the instructional model, groups of churches in a community or region should offer relationship enrichment premarital counseling experiences for groups of couples.

5. Premarital education programs for clergy need to be re-evaluated considering the continued trend toward utilization of the instructional approach. Focus should be on methods for facilitating the transition from the instructional approach to the relationship enrichment approach.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUMENT PART I
DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **GENDER:** Male, Female.
2. **AGE** (as of last birthday): 21-30, 31-40, 41-50,
 51-60 61 or above.
3. **YEARS IN PROFESSIONAL MINISTRY:** 1-5, 6-10,
 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30,
 31-35, 36-40, 41 or above.
4. **EDUCATION** (Indicate highest level obtained): Less Than High
School, High School Diploma, Associate Degree,
 Bachelor, Master (Specify Area: _____),
 Doctorate (Specify Area: _____).
5. **JOB DESCRIPTION:** Senior Minister, Associate,
 Diaconal, Other (Specify: _____).
6. **INDICATE WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PREMARITAL COUNSELING EDUCATIONAL
EXPERIENCES YOU HAVE HAD** (Check all that apply):
 Undergraduate Family Life Course
 Graduate Premarital Counseling Course or Practicum
 Premarital Counseling Seminar
 Reading in Premarital Counseling
 Other (Specify: _____).
 Have not taken nor have I received any training in PMC.
7. **TYPE OF CHURCH IN WHICH YOU MINISTER:**
 Rural (Town of 50,000 or less not adjacent to an urban area).
 Suburban (Town or area adjacent to an urban area of
more than 50,000).
 Urban (City of more than 50,000).

8. APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF WEDDINGS CONDUCTED PER YEAR:

_____ 1-5, _____ 6-10, _____ 11-15, _____ 16-20, _____ 21+

9. NUMBER OF PREMARITAL COUNSELING SESSIONS SPENT WITH COUPLES:

Circle the approximate number of premarital sessions you spend with each of the following categories. For example, If with "Most Couples" you spend three sessions, circle the number "3". And if with "Younger Couples" you spend five sessions, circle the number "5", etc.

	Number of Sessions						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more
Most Couples:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more
Younger Couples:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more
Older Couples	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more
Divorced Couples:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more
Couples w. Children:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more
"Walk-ins"	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more

10. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING EVENTS HAVE YOU RECOMMENDED TO COUPLES WITH WHOM YOU HAVE DONE PREMARITAL COUNSELING? (Check all that apply).

_____ Therapeutic Premarital Counseling

_____ Premarital Relationship Enrichment Program

_____ Family Life Education Course

_____ Communications Workshop

_____ Other (Specify: _____).

11. POST WEDDING COUNSELING FOLLOW-UP. Indicate which of the following you have done with couples who have been through premarital counseling and then got married. Circle the letter which best describes your follow-up in each area. Letter choices are: N=Never, S=Sometimes (less than half the time), O=Often (more than half the time).

N S O Schedule a counseling session six months after wedding

N S O Call or visit couples within six months after wedding

N S O Maintain constant contact with couple

N S O Lose all contact with the couple

APPENDIX B

PREMARITAL COUNSELING TASK ITEMS

PREMARITAL COUNSELING TASK ITEMS ON INSTRUMENT

INSTRUMENT PART II & III

The following is a list of 16 possible premarital counseling tasks. This list is a summary of the items found on the blue and green dot cards which comprise Parts II and III of the instrument. The items have been separated into eight Instructional Approach tasks and eight Relationship Approach tasks. The items have been numbered for reference purposes only. Numbers do not appear on the actual instrument to control for selection interaction by randomizing items.

Instructional Approach Items

1. I routinely teach the religious meaning of the marriage vows.
2. I routinely go over the specifics of the wedding ceremony.
3. I routinely talk to the couple about their faith and encourage them to attend a church they are both comfortable in.
4. I routinely teach the couple what it means to have a Christ-centered home and family.
5. I routinely determine the couple's level of sex education and do any of the following:
 1. Teach essential sex education.

2. Name types of contraceptives available.
3. Tell couple to have complete physical exams prior to marriage.

6. I routinely bring up the subject of finances and talk about any of the following:
 1. Tell couple to set up a household budget.
 2. Raise subject of debts, housing, savings, tithing.

7. I routinely challenge the couple to divide up household chores and duties such as laundry, dishwashing, bill paying, bed-making, cooking, house cleaning, yard work, grocery shopping.

8. I routinely attempt to raise the couple's awareness of potential sources of conflict which typically arise during the first year of marriage such as money, sex, dual career conflicts, in-laws, religion, friends, recreation, jealousy, annoying personal habits, etc. and encourage them to seek professional help if it is ever needed.

Relationship Enrichment Approach Items

1. I routinely utilize some type of test or test series such as the FIRO-B, Meyers-Briggs, Taylor-Johnson, PREPARE, in order to assess differences in the couple's personalities.

2. I routinely ask the couple how they manage conflict including doing any of the following:
 1. Have them tell about their latest or worst argument.
 2. Teach the couple conflict resolution.
 3. Take a specific concern of the couple and walk them through

a process of conflict resolution/problem solving.

3. I routinely assess the couple's communication skill level and help them improve in any of the following areas:

1. Self awareness of feelings and body messages.
2. Assertiveness training.
3. Communication training.
4. Active listening skills.

4. I routinely discuss the couple's role expectations for themselves and their spouse-to-be including any of the following:

1. How each feels about women working outside the home.
2. Biblical and/or cultural role expectations for men and women.
3. Role expectations that come from their family.

5. I routinely discuss the couple's understanding of the balance of power in their relationship including any of the following:

1. How the couple makes decisions.
2. Who has the final say in decision-making.
3. How violence, aggression, and physical, emotional and sexual abuse alter the balance of power in relationships.
4. Teach negotiation skills.

6. I routinely seek to enable the couple to consider the influence of family on personal development and mate selection and how their families might continue to influence their lives as a married couple by doing any of the following:

1. Construct a "family tree" or genogram.

2. Identify birth order and its possible significance.

3. Guide the couple in discussing how their families dealt with conflict, made decisions, handled problems such as alcoholism, etc.

7. I routinely encourage couples to attend church or community sponsored Relationship Enrichment events, communication workshops or premarital experiences such as PREPARE or Engaged Encounter.

8. I routinely assess the couple's level of sex knowledge and do any of the following:

1. Explore areas of interest or concern related to sex with the couple or with the individuals.

2. Provide resources in the area of male and female sexuality.

APPENDIX C
DEFINITIONS PROVIDED
TO PANEL

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions were provided to the panel of experts who examined the instrument and determined that the instrument measured what it was designed to measure.

Instructional Approach

An instructional premarital counseling approach is defined as the premarital counseling orientation which primarily focuses on the education of couples in specific content areas of marriage using a lecture-type format. The instructional premarital counseling approach is operationally defined for the purpose of this study as including the eight tasks on Part II of the instrument which reflect that the counselor would approach an issue by providing the couple with information through some type of teaching or educational process.

Relationship Enrichment Approach

The relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach is defined as the counseling orientation which might include providing information but which has as its primary focus identifying and improving the interactional styles and relationship skills of individual couples. The relationship enrichment premarital counseling approach

is operationally defined as including the eight tasks on Part II of the instrument which reflect that the counselor would utilize an understanding of the couple's relationship dynamics, would utilize a skill building approach and would focus on the couple's relationship needs.

APPENDIX D

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

Judith E. Dobson, PhD, has authorized Mark W. Davis, a doctoral student in ABSED, to perform the following procedure:

1. To ask volunteer United Methodist clergy from the Oklahoma Conference to complete a Demographics Questionnaire and to respond to an instrument by identifying which of 16 potential premarital counseling tasks they actually perform during their premarital counseling sessions and further to rank order a list of 16 potential premarital counseling tasks that they might do under ideal circumstances during premarital counseling.
2. To follow up initial data gathering procedures with a letter to clergy non-respondents requesting that they complete the instrument.

These procedures are done as a part of an investigation entitled, "Factors Influencing Clergy Approaches Utilized In Premarital Counseling."

The purpose of this research is to determine what factors influence the approaches utilized by clergy in the premarital counseling process.

As a volunteer clergy respondent, I understand that my participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation at any time after notifying the project director.

I may contact Mark W. Davis by calling 918-422-6292 or Judith E. Dobson, PhD by calling 405-744-6036 should I wish further information about the research. I may also contact

Marcia L. Tilley, University Research Services, 418 Agriculture Hall Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078 or by calling 405-4776154.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: _____ Time: _____ am/pm

Signed: _____
(Signature of Subject)

All elements of this form were completely explained to the subject before requesting the subject to sign it.

Signed: _____
(Project Director)

APPENDIX E

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FORM

**OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH**

Proposal Title: Task Selection and Demographic Factors Influencing
Clergy Premarital Counseling Approaches

Principal Investigator: Judith Dobson/ Mark Davis

Date: 4-20-92 IRB # ED-92-035

This application has been reviewed by the IRB and

Processed as: Exempt Expedite Full Board Review

Renewal or Continuation

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s):

Approved

Deferred for Revision

Approved with Provision

Disapproved

Approval status subject to review by full Institutional Review Board at
next meeting, 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reason for Deferral or
Disapproval:

Provisions Received

Signature: Marcia L. Tilley

Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: 4-23-92

APPENDIX F

EXPERT DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

EXPERT DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

1. **GENDER:** _____ Male, _____ Female. 2. **AGE:** _____

3. Years of Professional Counseling Experience: _____ .

4. Job Title: _____ .

5. Highest Degree Held & Major: _____ .

6. Professional Specialties (School psychology, marriage & family counseling, pastoral counseling, etc.):

_____ .

7. Type of License(s) held: _____ .

8. What percent of your counseling experience has been spent with each of the following groups? Please report so that they add up to 100 percent.

_____ Individual counseling

_____ Marital & Family counseling

_____ Premarital counseling

_____ Other: _____ .

APPENDIX G

INSTRUCTION SHEET

INSTRUCTION SHEET

To All Clergy Participants:

Thank you for your assistance in this research study. Please complete all steps including signing the Consent Form, completing the Demographics Questionnaire and rank ordering the Green Dot and Blue Dot Card sets. All materials need to be returned to the researcher as quickly as possible.

STEP ONE: Read and sign the Consent Forms. (Keep one and return one).

STEP TWO: Fill out the Demographics Questionnaire completely.

STEP THREE: Green Dot Card Set.

1. Find the Green Dot Card Set.
2. Select the cards/tasks you routinely actually do in your premarital counseling.
3. Rank order the cards/tasks you have selected so that the task you most often do is on top. Continue ranking the cards in descending order so that your lowest-ranked card is on the bottom.
4. Use the rubber band to secure only the cards you have selected and rank ordered.

STEP FOUR: Blue Dot Card Set.

1. Find the Blue Dot Card Set.
2. Rank order the entire set of premarital counseling cards/tasks so that what you consider to be the most important premarital counseling task appears on top. Rank order the cards in descending order so that the card/task you consider least important is on the bottom.
3. Use the rubber band to secure the entire set.

STEP FIVE: Place all materials, including any loose Green Dot Cards, in the enclosed envelope and return the materials to the researcher immediately.

Thank you for your cooperation and participation.

APPENDIX H

INSTRUMENT CODING SCHEME

INSTRUMENT CODING SCHEME

The following coding system will be used to identify each item on the instrument. These numbers will be assigned to each of the individual cards in the color coded card sets.

111: Green card, item 1, IA.	211: Blue card, item 1, IA.
121: Green card, item 2, IA.	221: Blue card, item 2, IA.
131: Green card, item 3, IA.	231: Blue card, item 3, IA.
141: Green card, item 4, IA.	241: Blue card, item 4, IA.
151: Green card, item 5, IA.	251: Blue card, item 5, IA.
161: Green card, item 6, IA.	261: Blue card, item 6, IA.
171: Green card, item 7, IA.	271: Blue card, item 7, IA.
181: Green card, item 8, IA.	281: Blue card, item 8, IA.
112: Green card, item 1, REA.	212: Blue card, item 1, REA.
122: Green card, item 2, REA.	222: Blue card, item 2, REA.
132: Green card, item 3, REA.	232: Blue card, item 3, REA.
142: Green card, item 4, REA.	242: Blue card, item 4, REA.
152: Green card, item 5, REA.	252: Blue card, item 5, REA.
162: Green card, item 6, REA.	262: Blue card, item 6, REA.
172: Green card, item 7, REA.	272: Blue card, item 7, REA.
182: Green card, item 8, REA.	282: Blue card, item 8, REA.

These codes will be written on the back of each card in the instrument.

2
VITA

Mark William Davis

Candidate for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: TASK SELECTION AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS INFLUENCING
CLERGY PREMARITAL COUNSELING APPROACHES

Major Field: Applied Behavioral Studies

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Stillwater, Oklahoma, October 25,
1952, the son of William D. and Dorothy L. Davis.

Education: Graduated from Cassville High School, Cass-
ville, Missouri, 1970; received Bachelor of Science
degree from Oklahoma State University in 1974;
received Master of Theology degree from Southern
Methodist University, Dallas, Texas in 1979; received
Master of Behavioral Studies from Southeastern Okla-
homa State University, Durant in 1987; completed
requirements for Doctor of Philosophy degree at Okla-
homa State University in December, 1992.

Professional Experience: Ordained United Methodist
minister, Oklahoma Annual Conference, 1975 to
present; adolescent therapist, Greenleaf Drug,
Alcohol and Psychiatric Hospital, Shawnee, Oklahoma,
1988-1989; Counseling Intern, Center for Christian
Counseling, Tulsa, 1990 to 1992; Educational
Examiner, Chrysalis Associates, 1992.

Professional Organizations: American Counseling Assoc-
iation, American Association of Marriage and Family
Therapists-Clinical Member, International Association
of Marriage and Family Therapists, Licensed Pro-
fessional Counselor, Licensed Marital and Family
Therapist.