

POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT AMONG WOMEN

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem Definition

Is divorce for better or worse? There are many possible answers to this question, each inevitably personal, subjective and different for each woman experiencing the situation. In addition, each woman in the situation will inevitably reach different conclusions than others about the benefits or losses incurred after divorce.

To determine if divorce is for better or worse, an individual might look at how a woman is adjusting to the divorce. In the study by Heritage (1974) on postdivorce adjustment, she stressed the importance for the professional to determine how an individual is adjusting to the divorce. Her study found that some divorced persons are "better" adjusted than others. People who are found to be "poorly" adjusted need to be dealt with in terms of adjustment problems, rather than the divorce status. For those divorced persons who are "better" adjusted the professional needs to focus on problems which are associated with the status (stigma) of being divorced.

Recent statistics indicate a substantial increase in the rate of divorce in the United States. For example, in

January, 1976, an estimated 86,000 divorces and annulments were granted as compared to 83,000 who filed in January of 1975. These figures show an increase of more than three percent in just one year (Vital Statistics Report, 1976). In 1975, Oklahoma alone reported that 20,104 people had filed for a divorce (Vital Statistics Report, 1976). In 1915, the divorce rate was one per 1,000 population. Now the divorce rate is about five per 1,000 population (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1976).

Hunt (1966) indicated that 40 percent of all divorcees' marriages lasted more than 20 years, with the median duration of a marriage before divorce being 7.3 years. The median age for women at the time of divorce is 30.1 years (Epstein, 1974). Krishnan (1971) stated that a married female, age 20, has a chance of 29 in 100 of getting divorced during her lifetime; and during her child bearing years, she has a chance of 25 in 100 of becoming divorced. It is apparent from these statistics that any married person may be exposed to the problems of postdivorce adjustment.

Counselors are becoming aware of the need to establish positive goals for postdivorce adjustment. Some of the goals of postdivorce adjustment are to reduce negative feelings, and to become more understanding and acceptable of one's self, children, ex-spouse and society (Fisher, 1973). Before the goals of postdivorce adjustment can be accomplished, the divorced woman must deal with the problems which are interfering with the adjustment process. Each

divorced woman has her own "special" problems which affect her readjustment to "single" life. Some of the common problems which interfere with readjustment are emotional, social, physical, sexual, dating, occupational, children, family members, friends, and several others, depending upon the woman's situation.

It has been determined that there are a number of factors which also affect the degree of readjustment for a divorced woman. Goode (1956) found a higher degree of adjustment after divorce among women who had been the first to suggest divorce; held an attitude of indifference toward their former spouse; could depend on regular support payments from their former spouse; had a full time job; had greater opportunities to date and develop new social opportunities.

Another means of determining the degree of readjustment would be to consider if a divorced woman had received post-divorce counseling. A survey made for the congressionally chartered Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health found that one-fifth of the men as compared to two-fifths of the women sought professional help for their emotional problems. Others felt they would have benefited from some type of postdivorce counseling (Hunt, 1966).

Fisher (1973) indicated several goals of postdivorce counseling which would help a divorced woman reevaluate her situation and adjust to divorce. Some of these goals are to help her become her own judge of what is good or bad for herself; develop a rational role for herself; reduce negative

feelings; gain insight into her personal problems and deal with them more effectively; reevaluate her choice of ex-spouse and examine expectations of remarriage; change negative attitudes and behaviors. Women in Transition (1975) found that postdivorce counseling would also help a woman in developing a better sense of her own self-worth.

As one can see there are a variety of ways to determine how a divorced woman is adjusting to her divorce. The purpose of this study is to examine these various ways of assessing postdivorce adjustment. Because the research on postdivorce adjustment is limited, this author will further examine and determine the problems involved in this area and will determine the affects these problems have on a woman's adjustment to her divorce.

Purpose of Study

The general purposes of this study were to examine the perceptions of divorced women concerning their present adjustment to divorce and to relate these perceptions to selected background variables. The specific purposes of this study were to examine perceptions concerning:

1. Whether respondent received professional counseling since the divorce.
2. Reasons for not participating in postdivorce counseling.
3. Most difficult period of adjustment during the divorce process.

4. Major problems experienced since the divorce.
5. Major problem the respondent presently is experiencing.
6. Present feelings about the divorce.
7. Present degree of difficulty of emotional adjustment to the divorce.
8. Who wanted to terminate the marriage the most.
9. Most difficult adjustment respondent has experienced returning to a single life style.

A secondary purpose of this study was to examine the following hypotheses that there is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to each of the following:

1. Age
2. Income
3. Level of education
4. Number of years married
5. Length of time divorced
6. Number of children
7. Whether or not children are living with respondent
8. Whether respondent has received professional post-divorce counseling
9. Current living situation
10. Who wanted to terminate the marriage the most
11. Present degree of emotional adjustment to the divorce

Definitions

The following are definitions which are unique for the purpose of the study:

- (1) Divorce - The legal termination of a marriage.
- (2) Postdivorce Adjustment - The emotional, social, physical, and psychic (achieving a new self identity) adjustment from a married life style to a single life style.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature concerning postdivorce adjustment among women is very limited. Rose and Bonham (1973) have indicated in their findings that more research is needed in the area of postdivorce adjustment. The following are related areas of divorce in which information was compiled for the review of literature:

- (1) Stages and Types of Divorce
- (2) Causes of Divorce
- (3) Decision to Divorce
- (4) Feelings of the Divorced
- (5) Adjustments to Divorce
- (6) Counseling for the Divorced
- (7) Children of the Divorced
- (8) Friends of the Divorced
- (9) Remarriage Among the Divorced
- (10) Societal Views of the Divorced
- (11) Suicide Among the Divorced

Stages and Types of Divorce

It has been found that there are various types of divorce. Bohannon (1970) has developed six types of divorces:

Emotional divorce, deals with the problems of a deteriorating marriage; legal divorce, based on grounds; economic divorce, deals with problems over money and property; coparental divorce, deals with custody, single-parent homes and visitation; community divorce, deals with the problems of changing friends and community; and psychic divorce, deals with the problems of regaining individual autonomy (p. 34).

Fisher (1973) identified three stages of divorce as being: the emotional divorce, the physical separation or physical divorce, and legal divorce. The emotional divorce takes place while the couple are still living together as husband and wife. Physical separation or physical divorce takes place when friends and family of the couple know that they are no longer living together. Legal divorce is when the marriage is legally dissolved.

Wiseman (1975) stated that there are five overlapping stages to divorce. These include: denial, loss and depression, anger and ambivalence, reorientation of life style and identity, acceptance and integration.

Causes of Divorce

The real causes of divorce are numerous and complex (Carter & Glick, 1970). However, Hunt (1966) indicated that there are several causes for divorce:

The first major cause is financial trouble; second, the control or domination of one partner by the other; third, adultery, drunkenness, personality

differences; and fourth, irresponsibility and lack of interest in the home life. Other causes are cultural differences, immaturity, desertion, influence of relatives, and sexual incompatibility (p. 24).

O'Brien (1971) stated that violent behavior was a factor which also influenced the decision to divorce.

Decision to Divorce

Most people fight the idea of divorce desperately until it becomes a last resort, a necessary move, comparable to a serious operation (Haussamen & Guitar, 1960). Divorce is viewed as an end of the rope decision, with the decision process lasting from three or four years and sometimes as long as 12 years (Rose & Bonham, 1973). Goode (1956) found the median time for first serious consideration of divorce to be one year. Often the future failure of a marriage is decided sometime before the second payment on the engagement ring. This decision is at an unconscious level and neither mate is aware of the decision (Reuben, 1971). Troll (1975) indicated that the decision to divorce is based upon one's religion, values, socioeconomic status, and personality. The increase in life expectancy has also affected one's decision to divorce. People are deciding to not remain in an unhappy marriage for several years. However, the decision to divorce is often a crisis even if it is desired by both spouses (Rose & Bonham, 1973).

Feelings of the Divorced

Divorced women go through a period where they recognize that the relationship has died. They then enter a period of mourning and finally a slow painful emotional readjustment to the facts of single life (Krantzler, 1973). It was once believed that divorced people were sick, hopeless neurotics who would repeat their failures if they ever remarried (Fisher, 1973). Loeb (1966) found in her study that people who divorce are more disturbed psychologically, have greater psychopathic tendencies, and demonstrate their psychopathy more prominently in relation to other traits. In the study by Goode (1956), he found that three-fifths of the respondents reported various kinds of personal disorganization. However, LeShan (1973) indicated that personal disorganization is related to a person's fear of being rejected or discarded.

Fisher (1973) indicated that those who asked for the divorce first were the ones who had experienced a tremendous impact of feelings. Rose and Bonham (1973) stated that the degree of trauma is related to:

- (1) Having the husband first suggest divorce;
- (2) being given a short time for consideration of divorce;
- (3) having the idea of divorce come unexpectedly;
- (4) continuing to have attachment or emotional involvement with the ex-spouse after the divorce;
- (5) possessing a desire to punish her former husband;
- (6) being ambivalent about obtaining a divorce;
- (7) being personally disapproving of divorce;
- (8) having divorce disapproved by her reference groups (family and friends);
- (9) experiencing discrimination as a divorcee;
- (10) coming from a rural background; and
- (11) her former husband having a middle or upper class oc-

cupation (p. 292).

There are three types of stress which a divorced person may experience; physical, mental and emotional (Mindez, 1969). Women in Transition (1975) stated that women feel responsible for their marriage's failure by not being the "right" kind of wife. These feelings are transmitted to their bodies and appear as headaches, ulcers, and/or recourse to drugs, food, or sleep as an escape. Haussamen and Guitar (1960) indicated the following:

Between the first six months to one year after divorce physical symptoms appear. These symptoms are characterized by dryness in the mouth and throat, difficulty in breathing, a mild nauseous feeling in the stomach, generalized weakness and an all pervasive sense of mental and physical misery (p. 214).

The available research indicates the following observations of emotional feelings of the divorced person:

- (1) fear of aloneness, concern for loss of self esteem as a woman, hostility toward men, concern for their children (Ilgenfritz, 1961);
- (2) confusion, drained, cheapened and flashes of doubt (Epstein, 1974);
- (3) drained, cheated, exploited and disappointed (Reuben, 1971);
- (4) bitterness, guilt and doubt (Shain, 1973);
- (5) loneliness (Hunt, 1966);
- (6) grief, depression, loneliness, failure and anxiety (Fisher, 1973);
- (7) trauma and loneliness, bitterness, defeat, rejection (Rose & Bonham, 1973);

- (8) confusion, depression (Women in Transition, 1975); and
- (9) resentment, anger, guilt, fear or panic (Klemer, 1965).

Divorced people also go through a period of grieving (Mindez, 1969). Wiseman (1975) stated that the divorced person must go through a process of detachment and mourning to resolve the crisis involved in the loss. It is important for a person to express his/her grief or resentment rather than repress it (Klemer, 1965). The mourning reaction is expressed by withdrawal, feelings of inadequacy, fear and depression (Reuben, 1971). Wiseman (1975) indicated that the divorce process consists of not only grief but also of growth.

Personal factors are not the only thing which affects the degree of trauma a divorced person experiences. Rose and Bonham (1973) stated that the legal system increases the trauma experienced by divorcing persons. Present-day divorce courts hampered by archaic and unrealistic laws, tend to aggravate an already disturbed situation (Elkin, 1962).

Adjustments to Divorce

There are a variety of factors which influences a persons adjustment to divorce. Goode (1956) found a higher degree of adjustment after divorce among women who had been the first to suggest divorce in their previous marriage,

held an attitude of indifference toward their former spouse, could depend on regular support payments from their former spouse, had a full time job, and had greater opportunities to date and develop new social relations.

Fisher (1973) stated the goals of adjustment for divorced women after divorce were to reduce feelings of bitterness and hostility, and to have a better understanding and acceptance of self, children and ex-spouse, and society. Divorced persons need to feel safety, love, respect, prestige, feelings of belonging, and to identify with others (Mindez, 1969). Mindez (1969) illustrated the importance of adjustment in a quote by Abraham Maslow:

The absence of love certainly stifles potentialities and even kills them. Personal growth demands courage, self-confidence, even daring, and non-love from the parent or the mate produces the opposite, self-doubt, anxiety, and feelings of worthlessness and expectations of ridicule, all inhibitors of growth and of self-actualization (p. 197).

In the study by Heritage and Daniels (1974), their findings indicated that some individuals are better adjusted than others, depending on the individual's personality. The "better" adjusted were found to be more emotionally stable, happy-go-lucky, conscientious, venturesome, controlled, less apprehensive and tense. Hunt (1966) indicated that others readjust to divorce by pampering themselves with liquor, drugs, a full regimen of activities, and rush into new full time relationships.

Counseling for the Divorced

Hunt (1966) stated that marriage counseling has little chance of saving a dying marriage. In the study by Goode (1956), he found that only a minority received marital counseling before divorce, and the majority of those were Catholics. However, Bohannon (1970) stated that divorce counseling could become one of the most effective forms of marriage counseling.

Haussamen and Guitar (1960) stated that divorced people with children are more apt to seek counseling than childless couples. One-sixth of all family heads who go for counseling are either separated or divorced (Hunt, 1966). A survey, made for the congressionally chartered Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health, found that among separated and divorced people, one-fifth of the men as compared to two-fifths of the women sought help for their emotional problems from psychiatrists, clinics, social agencies, general practitioners or ministers; another one-eighth of the men as compared to one-fifth of the women did not, but they felt they could have used it (Hunt, 1966). Krantzler (1973) stated that most divorced people do not seek counseling because consciously or not they had bought society's picture of themselves as failures.

Fisher (1973) indicated that the goals of women who obtain postdivorce counseling are to:

Enable the divorced person to become her own judge of what is good and bad, wise and unwise, and develop a rational role for herself, to re-

duce negative patterns and minimize feelings of guilt and revenge, to gain insight into their personal problems and deal more adequately with these problems, to evaluate objectively the sort of person her ex-spouse was, why she married that person, expectations and disappointments of marriage, and to change attitudes, feelings, and behavior in relation to ex-spouse, children, relatives, friends, sex and dating, marriage, work, hobbies, and life as a whole (p. 60).

Bohannon (1970) stated that postdivorce counseling helps one gain insight into the reasons for their marriages' failure, so they can avoid another disastrous marriage. Postdivorce counseling also helps women develop a sense of their own self worth (Women in Transition, 1975). Haussamen and Guitar (1960) indicated that only a few progressive courts are now making counseling available and even mandatory in some cases for divorcing couples.

Children of the Divorced

Jacobson (1959) stated that divorce is nine times greater in childless marriages. A study by Geismar and Krisberg (1966) found that approximately half the divorces are granted to childless couples. Half of the divorced couples have children under the age of 18 (Epstein, 1974; Chen, 1968). Approximately one million children are affected by divorce each year (Neuhaus & Neuhaus, 1974).

Ninety-five percent of mothers have custody of minor children (Rose & Bonham, 1973). Divorced mothers often have a hard time explaining to their children why "Daddy" does not come home anymore (Reuben, 1971). Ilgenfritz (1961) indicated that children were usually unwilling to accept the

the divorce and kept hoping their father would return and things would be the way they were. Felner, Stolberg and Cowen (1975) found that children of divorced persons were more sensitive to environmental events. Children tend to show excessive aggressive behavior. Sheffner and Suarez (1975) indicated that postdivorce clinics should be set up for children in order to detect early aggression and emotional disorders. Divorced parents need to recognize fear in their children and deal with the child's emotional feelings (Neuhaus & Neuhaus, 1974).

Rose and Bonham (1973) stated that most mothers felt that the divorce had not been detrimental to their children, and almost all believed their children were better off since the divorce. In the study by Goode (1956), he also found that almost all mothers thought their childrens' lives had improved since the divorce. Brandwein, Brown and Fox (1974) found that divorced mothers felt insecure and guilty regarding their childrearing abilities.

Friends of the Divorced

Opportunities for divorced persons to meet new people are related to class, age, job holding, type of job, and help of friends (Goode, 1956). Mindez (1969) also indicated that friends are therapeutic. Telling everything to a few real confidantes is the nearest thing to psychotherapy (Hunt, 1966). Friends also provide help in meeting eligible suitors (Rose & Bonham, 1973).

Friends often express a variety of different attitudes towards their divorced friends after the divorced person obtains a divorce. Some of these attitudes are:

(1) anxiety; (2) shame; (3) inordinate preoccupation with the divorce; (4) desire for a sexual relationship with one of the divorcees; (5) pleasure about the divorcee's suffering; (6) feelings of superiority; (7) surprise and incredulity; (8) experience of emotional loss and grief; (9) conflict over allegiances; (10) disillusionment about friendship; (11) crisis about personal identity; and (12) preoccupation and curiosity about the settlement (Bohannon, 1970, p. 71).

Remarriage Among the Divorced

The divorced person has a better chance of remarriage than either the widowed or the never married (Bernard, 1956; Goode, 1956; Schlesinger, 1968). There is also a higher tendency for divorced persons to marry persons who also had been previously married (Bernard, 1956).

Rose and Bonham (1973) indicated that earlier remarriages occurred more often among women who deliberated for a longer period of time between first serious consideration of divorce and filing of the lawsuit, experienced greater loneliness during the period of separation, experienced high trauma, and reported being in love with another man prior to the divorce.

Schlesinger (1968) indicated that those who took longer between first serious consideration of divorce and filing the suit were more likely to remarry earlier. If there was a mutual agreement as to the divorce, 50 percent of the divorced persons remarried within 14 months after the divorce.

If the husband wanted the divorce, 30 percent of the divorced persons remarried after 14 months. If the wife wanted the divorce, 41 percent of the divorced persons remarried after 14 months (Goode, 1956). Schlesinger (1968) also indicated that the elapsed median time prior to remarriage for the divorced person is 2.7 years.

Societal Views of the Divorced

Society seems to have the following attitudes concerning the divorce situation. Society permits divorce but does not provide sufficient, sound and flexible postdivorce institutional arrangements to help the divorcee through the emotional crisis (Rose & Bonham, 1973; Schlesinger, 1968; Schwartz, 1968; Goode, 1956). Schwartz (1968) also indicated that our society expects divorcing couples to be enemies. Our society has also not defined the role of the divorced person (Fisher, 1973). Pressures towards new marriages for divorced women are also created by society (Rose & Bonham, 1973).

Suicide Among the Divorced

The suicide rates are high among the divorced (Gove, 1972; Bohannon, 1970; Segal, 1969). Divorced men commit suicide four times more often than divorced women. Women use the threat and attempt of suicide as a method of controlling and manipulating the ex-spouse (Mindez, 1969).

In the study by Schrut and Michels (1974), they found that divorced women who had attempted suicide had severe

loneliness and unhappy childhoods. The fathers of these women had usually abandoned the family and the father's attitude towards their daughter reflected her self esteem and her marital history.

Summary

The review of literature concerning postdivorce adjustment among women suggests the following:

1. A higher degree of postdivorce adjustment is related to women who: first suggested the divorce; held an attitude of indifference towards their ex-spouse; could depend on regular support payment from ex-spouse; had a full time job; and had greater opportunities to date and develop new social relations.
2. Goals of postdivorce adjustment are to reduce negative feelings, understand one's self, children, ex-spouse, and society.
3. "Better" adjusted individuals are emotionally stable, happy-go-lucky, conscientious, venturesome, controlled, less apprehensive and tense.
4. Approximately three-fifths of divorced women experienced various kinds of personal disorganization, while only approximately two-fifths seek professional postdivorce counseling.
5. Divorced women experience a variety of emotional feelings about the divorce, such as guilt, bitter-

ness, loneliness, failure, rejection and fear.

6. Approximately 95 percent of divorced mothers have custody of their minor children, and approximately 1,000,000 children are affected by divorce each year.
7. The elapsed median time prior to remarriage for the divorced person is 2.7 years.

One can see that much data has been obtained on statistics on the divorces of women, but data on postdivorce adjustments for women is limited. Goode's study in 1956 is a classical study of divorced women, which deals with postdivorce adjustment in some part. Up to date few studies have been done to reveal difficulties in dealing with these adjustments.

Of the research completed as of date, only one study has been found by this author on postdivorce adjustment and this study was done by Heritage and Daniels in 1974. However, their study dealt with both males and females, whereas this author's study dealt specifically with the women's perceptions of postdivorce adjustment.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Subjects

The subjects for this study were divorced females from Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and surrounding areas. The subjects from the Stillwater area were currently enrolled at Oklahoma State University in February, 1977. These subjects' names, addresses and marital status were obtained through Oklahoma State University Registrar's Office. Those subjects from Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and surrounding areas were attending postdivorce guidance groups in Tulsa or Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Their names and addresses were obtained from the churches who were holding these sessions in February, 1977. A total sample of 88 subjects was obtained.

Instrument

A questionnaire developed by the author was used to measure females' perceptions of postdivorce adjustment. Items concerning age, occupation, income, education, years married, years divorced, and number of children were included as background data. Fixed, alternative-type and open-ended questions dealt with such aspects of divorced women's perceptions of: (a) major problems since the divorce; (b) degree of

emotional difficulty since the divorce; (c) words identifying feelings; (d) most difficult period of adjustment since the divorce; and (e) most difficult adjustment problem in returning to a single life style since the divorce. A scale (Postdivorce Adjustment Scale) was developed by the author for rating postdivorce adjustment.

The questionnaire was presented to a panel of five judges. They were asked to rate the items in terms of the following criteria:

- (1) Does the item possess clarity?
- (2) Is the item specific?
- (3) Is the item significantly related to the concept under investigation?
- (4) Are there other items which need to be included to more adequately measure the concept under investigation?

A minor revision was incorporated following the evaluation by the judges.

Analysis of Data

Percentages and frequencies were used to analyze the background characteristics of the subjects. Percentages and frequencies were also used to examine the various perceptions concerning postdivorce adjustment.

Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance (when comparing three or more groups) was used to examine the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment

Scale scores according to each of the following: (a) age; (b) income; (c) level of education; (d) number of years married; (e) length of time divorced; (f) number of children; (g) whether or not children are living with respondent; (h) who wanted to terminate the marriage the most; and (i) present degree of emotional adjustment to the divorce.

The Mann Whitney-U Test (when comparing two groups) was used to examine the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to whether the respondent has received professional post-divorce counseling. The chi-square test was used to do an item analysis of the Postdivorce Adjustment Scale. The split-half reliability coefficient was used to test the reliability of the Postdivorce Adjustment Scale items.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Description of Subjects

A detailed description of the 88 females who participated in this study is presented in Table I. Their ages ranged from 19 to 61, with the greatest proportion being 25-29 (25.58%) and 19-24 (24.42%). Sixty-one women (69.31%) have children. The majority of these respondents (67.74%) stated that all of their children lived with them. The largest percentage of all respondents (50.00%) stated that their current living situation was with their own children.

The greatest percentage (37.50%) of the respondents were students. The most frequently reported occupation was a secretary/clerk (10.23%). The greatest proportion of the respondents (22.99%) stated that their annual income was between \$3,001-\$6,000. The largest percentage of the respondents stated that they had some college education (41.86%).

The largest percentage (35.23%) of the respondents stated they had been married from one to four years, and had been divorced from one to three years (56.32%). The majority of the respondents (72.13%) did not obtain counseling for their children after the divorce. The largest percentage (33.33%) of the respondents who took their children to re-

ceive counseling, took their children to psychologists. The majority (58.62%) of the respondents stated they had received postdivorce counseling. The greatest percentage (30.68%) of the respondents also received postdivorce counseling from a psychologist.

The Item Analysis

The chi-square test was used in obtaining an index of the validity of the items in the Postdivorce Adjustment Scale, in which the significance of differences among those subjects scoring in the upper quartile, middle fifty percent, and lower quartile was determined for all of the 34 items in the scale. The item analysis revealed that 29 of the 34 items were discriminating. As shown in Table II, 16 of the 34 items were significantly discriminating at the .0001 level while the remaining 18 were significant at the .0002, .0003, .0004, .0005, .0007, .0010, .0023, .0030, .03, .02, and .01 levels. The five items which were not significantly discriminating at the .05 level were eliminated for the final analysis of the hypothesis.

A split-half reliability coefficient of +0.94 was obtained in determining an index of reliability of the items in the Postdivorce Adjustment Scale.

TABLE I
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

Variable	Classification	No.	%
Age	19-24	21	24.42
	25-27	22	25.58
	30-34	16	18.61
	35-39	15	17.44
	Over 40	12	13.95
Occupation	Secretary/Clerk	9	10.23
	Teacher	7	7.96
	Bookkeeper/Accountant	4	4.55
	Probation officer	2	2.27
	Housewife	1	1.14
	Nurse	2	2.27
	Student	33	37.50
	Professor	1	1.14
	Psychologist	2	2.27
	Unemployed	2	2.27
	Other	13	14.77
Annual Income	Below \$3,000	17	19.54
	\$3,001-\$6,000	20	22.99
	\$6,001-\$9,000	19	21.84
	\$9,001-\$12,000	14	16.09
	\$12,001-\$15,000	9	10.35
	Above \$15,000	6	6.90
Education	Less than high school	1	1.16
	Some high school	1	1.16
	High school graduate	8	9.30
	Some college	36	41.86
	College graduate	13	15.12
	Post graduate study	27	31.40
Years Married	Less than one year	4	4.55
	1-4 years	31	35.23
	5-8 years	21	23.86
	9-12 years	9	10.23
	13-19 years	13	14.77
	20 or more years	10	11.36
Years Divorced	Less than one year	15	17.24
	1-3 years	49	56.32
	4-6 years	17	19.54
	7-10 years	4	4.60
	11 or more years	2	2.30

TABLE I (Continued)

Variable	Classification	No.	%
Number of Children	One	18	29.51
	Two	23	37.71
	Three	10	16.39
	Four	6	9.84
	Five	3	4.92
	Six	1	1.64
Children at Home	All	42	67.74
	Some	10	16.13
	None	10	16.13
Children Received Counseling	Yes	17	27.87
	No	44	72.13
Type of Counselor for Children	Psychiatrist	2	11.11
	Pastor	5	27.78
	Doctor	2	11.11
	Catholic Charities	1	5.56
	Children's Medical Center	2	11.11
	Parents of divorced respondent	1	5.56
	Psychologist	6	33.33
	Child Psychologist	1	5.56
	Family and Children Services	1	5.56
Respondents Receiving Counseling	Yes	51	58.62
	No	36	41.38
Type of Counselor Respondent Consulted	Psychiatrist	9	10.23
	Psychologist	27	30.68
	Social Worker	3	3.41
	Priest or Pastor	15	17.05
	Family Doctor	7	7.96
Current Living Situation	Living alone	21	23.86
	Living with parents	2	2.27
	Living with own children	44	50.00
	Living with female roommate	8	9.09
	Living with male companion	3	3.41
	Other	8	9.09

TABLE II

ITEM ANALYSIS BASED ON COMPARISONS OF THE UPPER QUARTILE,
MIDDLE FIFTY PERCENT, AND LOWER QUARTILE OF TOTAL
POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE SCORES

Item	df	x ²	Level of Sig.
I feel rejected.	4	22.58	.0002
I feel peaceful.	4	19.57	.0001
I feel that I am a failure.	4	27.98	.0001
I am happier now than I have ever been.	4	31.12	.0001
I feel lonely.	4	31.44	.0001
I am adjusting well to my di- vorce.	3	29.84	.0001
I feel depressed.	4	24.68	.0001
I feel like a desirable person.	4	22.87	.0001
I feel confused.	3	29.95	.0001
I am glad I got a divorce.	4	29.84	.0001
I feel sad about my divorce.	4	10.60	.03
I am better off now, emotionally, than when I was married.	4	27.09	.0001
I think of suicide at times.	4	21.47	.0003
I feel that my self esteem has improved since my divorce.	4	19.80	.0005
I enjoy my present freedom.	4	23.37	.0001
I think my feelings about my divorce are normal.	3	4.10	N.S.
My future looks promising.	3	27.47	.0001
I am worried about my future.	4	13.54	.01
I am unhappy.	4	29.50	.0001

TABLE II (Continued)

Item	df	χ^2	Level of Sig.
I enjoy dating again.	3	5.01	N.S.
I enjoy being single again.	4	13.42	.01
I have difficulty meeting available men.	4	16.61	.0023
I am disenchanted with men.	4	18.47	.0010
I am experiencing problems due to the fact that the men I date pressure me too much to have sexual intercourse with them.	4	6.87	N.S.
The absence of sex is a problem for me at the present time.	4	16.00	.0030
I am experiencing difficulty with my sexual relationships at the present time.	4	23.88	.0001
I do not want to get emotionally involved with another man at the present time.	4	12.00	.02
I do not want to ever remarry again.	4	11.90	.02
I feel my friends have abandoned me since I got a divorce.	4	11.92	.02
I feel my friends have been more supportive of my ex-spouse.	4	8.33	N.S.
My family does not understand my feelings.	4	8.07	N.S.
My friends do not understand my feelings.	4	20.36	.0004
I feel "out of place" socially since I divorced.	4	27.73	.0001
I find myself preoccupied with resentment toward my ex-spouse.	4	19.27	.0007

Responses to Items in the Postdivorce
Adjustment Scale According to
Respondents' Perceptions of
Postdivorce Adjustment

Percentages and frequency counts were used to examine the responses to the items in the Postdivorce Adjustment Scale. The results concerning each of these items are now presented.

As shown in Table III, the respondents reported the highest percentages to the following seven items concerning their perceptions of postdivorce adjustment.

1. "I am better off now, emotionally, than when I was married." (Strongly disagree - 59.09%).
2. "I think of suicide at times." (Strongly disagree - 54.55%).
3. "I enjoy dating again." (Disagree - 54.02%).
4. "My friends do not understand my feelings." (Disagree - 53.49%).
5. "I think my feelings about my divorce are normal." (Disagree - 52.27%).
6. "I enjoy being single again." (Disagree - 50.58%).
7. "I feel that my self esteem has improved since my divorce." (Strongly disagree - 50.00%).

TABLE III
RESPONSES TO ITEMS IN THE POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE
ACCORDING TO RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF
POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT

Items	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I feel rejected.	7	7.96	12	13.64	7	7.96	30	34.09	32	36.36
I feel peaceful.	6	6.82	10	11.36	14	15.91	35	39.77	23	26.14
I feel that I am a failure.	2	2.27	10	11.36	9	10.23	23	26.14	44	50.00
I am happier now than I have ever been.	8	9.09	18	20.46	17	19.32	22	25.00	23	26.14
I feel lonely.	14	15.91	28	31.82	5	5.68	29	32.96	12	13.64
I am adjusting well to my divorce.	0	0	8	9.09	9	10.23	33	37.50	38	43.18
I feel depressed.	7	7.96	16	18.18	9	10.23	36	40.91	20	22.73

TABLE III (Continued)

Items	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I feel like a desirable person.	4	4.55	5	5.68	17	19.32	34	38.64	28	31.82
I feel confused.	11	12.50	22	25.00	2	2.27	34	38.64	19	21.59
I am glad I got a divorce.	4	4.55	3	3.41	12	13.64	26	29.55	43	48.86
I feel sad about my divorce.	5	5.68	37	42.05	6	6.82	16	18.18	24	27.27
I am better off now, emotionally, than when I was married.	5	5.68	4	4.55	6	6.82	21	23.86	52	59.09
I think of suicide at times.	2	2.27	20	22.73	1	1.14	17	19.32	48	54.55
I feel that my self esteem has improved since my divorce.	2	2.27	7	7.96	8	9.09	27	30.68	44	50.00
I enjoy my present freedom.	2	2.27	7	7.96	11	12.50	35	39.77	33	37.50
I think my feelings about my divorce are normal.	0	0	6	6.82	16	18.18	46	52.27	20	22.73

TABLE III (Continued)

Items	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
My future looks promising.	0	0	5	5.68	12	13.64	31	35.23	40	45.46
I am worried about my future.	5	5.68	19	21.59	4	4.55	34	38.64	26	29.55
I am unhappy.	3	3.41	8	9.09	8	9.09	37	42.05	32	36.36
I enjoy dating again.	0	0	4	4.60	22	25.29	47	54.02	14	16.09
I enjoy being single again.	2	2.30	9	10.35	18	20.69	44	50.58	14	16.09
I have difficulty meeting available men.	17	19.54	35	40.23	3	3.45	22	25.29	10	11.49
I am disenchanted with men.	1	1.15	14	16.09	17	19.54	37	42.53	18	20.69
I am experiencing problems due to the fact that the men I date pressure me too much to have sexual intercourse with them.	10	11.49	15	17.24	8	9.20	43	49.43	11	12.64

TABLE III (Continued)

Items	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
The absence of sex is a problem for me at the present time.	3	3.45	16	18.39	4	4.60	42	48.28	22	25.29
I am experiencing difficulty with my sexual relationships at the present time.	4	4.60	15	17.24	8	9.20	43	49.43	17	19.50
I do not want to get emotionally involved with another man at the present time.	8	9.20	10	11.49	24	27.59	30	34.48	15	17.24
I do not want to ever remarry again.	2	2.30	4	4.60	23	26.44	20	22.99	38	43.68
I feel my friends have abandoned me since I got a divorce.	1	1.15	11	12.64	8	9.20	34	39.08	33	37.93

TABLE III (Continued)

Items	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I feel my friends have been more supportive of my ex-spouse.	1	1.15	5	5.75	7	8.05	34	39.08	40	45.98
My family does not understand my feelings.	5	5.75	17	19.54	7	8.05	36	41.38	22	25.29
My friends do not understand my feelings.	4	4.65	11	12.79	4	4.65	46	53.49	21	24.42
I feel "out of place" socially since I divorced.	9	10.35	16	18.39	8	9.20	39	44.83	15	17.24
I find myself preoccupied with resentment toward my ex-spouse.	4	4.60	10	11.49	9	10.35	35	40.23	29	33.33

Responses by Subjects Who Have Children
Concerning their Children and
Postdivorce Adjustment

Percentages and frequency counts were used to examine the responses to the items concerning the subjects who have children (69.31%). The results concerning each of these items are now presented.

As shown in Table IV, the respondents who have children reported the highest percentages to the following four items concerning their children and postdivorce adjustment.

1. "My children do not understand why their father does not live with us anymore." (Disagree - 28.57%).
2. "I think my children have benefited from my divorce." (Agree - 27.06%).
3. "Divorce would be easier if I did not have any children." (Strongly agree - 25.58%).
4. "Visitation rights are a real problem." (Strongly disagree - 22.35%).

TABLE IV
RESPONSES BY SUBJECTS WHO HAVE CHILDREN CONCERNING
THEIR CHILDREN AND POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT*

Items	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I think my children have benefited from my divorce.	14	24.14	23	39.66	6	10.34	9	15.52	6	10.34
If my children had their way my ex-spouse and I would get back together again.	14	24.56	15	26.32	6	10.53	16	28.07	6	10.53
My children do not understand why their father does not live with us anymore.	6	10.53	8	14.04	9	15.79	24	42.11	10	17.54
Divorce would be easier if I did not have any children.	22	37.29	19	32.20	7	11.86	6	10.17	5	8.47
Visitation rights are a real problem.	9	15.52	8	13.79	4	6.90	18	31.03	19	32.76

TABLE IV (Continued)

Items	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I am satisfied with the child support payments at the present time.	4	7.27	17	30.91	6	10.91	11	20.00	17	30.91

* N=61 (69.31% of the total sample had children)

Perceptions of Women Concerning
Postdivorce Adjustment

Percentages and frequency counts were used to examine the perceptions of the subjects concerning various aspects of their postdivorce adjustment. The results concerning each of these perceptions are now presented.

Perceptions Concerning Who Wanted
To Terminate The Marriage

As shown in Table V, the subjects felt that they were the ones who wanted to terminate the marriage the most (48.86%). However, some of the subjects felt that their ex-spouses wanted to terminate the marriage the most (38.64%).

TABLE V
PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHO WANTED
TO TERMINATE THE MARRIAGE

Who wanted to terminate the marriage	No.	%
She did	43	48.86
He did	34	38.64
Mutual	10	11.36
Neither	1	1.36

Perceptions Concerning Why Respondent
Did Not Receive Postdivorce Counseling

As shown in Table VI, the subjects most often gave the reason concerning why they did not receive postdivorce counseling as being that there was no need or that they felt they were self sufficient (19.05%). Other reasons they gave were that their families helped them to adjust, there was no time, and too embarrassed (5.95%).

TABLE VI

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WHY RESPONDENT DID
 NOT RECEIVE POSTDIVORCE COUNSELING

Reasons	No.	%
Financial	3	3.57
No need/Self sufficient	16	19.05
Prior counseling before divorce	3	3.57
Not available	4	4.76
Did not want to talk to a stranger	2	2.38
Other	5	5.95

Perceptions Concerning Most Difficult
Period of Adjustment

As shown in Table VII, the subjects felt that the three most difficult periods of adjustment were the first three months after the divorce (31.82%), during the separation itself (26.14%) and some felt that all periods of adjustment were equally difficult for them (15.91%).

TABLE VII
 PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING MOST DIFFICULT
 PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT

Most difficult Period of Adjustment	No.	%
Separation	23	26.14
First 3 months	28	31.82
4-6 months	5	5.68
7-9 months	4	4.55
10-12 months	7	7.96
13-15 months	1	1.14
16-18 months	3	3.41
All equally difficult	14	15.91
Never a difficult period	1	1.14
Other	6	6.82

Perceptions Concerning Degree of
Difficulty of Emotional Adjustment

As shown in Table VIII, the majority of the subjects felt they were adjusting to their divorce with a very low degree of difficulty (48.84%). The very highest degree of emotional difficulty (3.49%) was least frequently reported by the subjects.

TABLE VIII
 PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY
 OF EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Degree of Difficulty of Emotional Adjustment	No.	%
1 - Very low degree	42	48.84
2 - Low degree	20	23.26
3 - Moderate	11	12.79
4 - High degree	10	11.63
5 - Very high degree	3	3.49

Perceptions Concerning Words Which Express
Feelings About the Divorce

As shown in Table IX, the subjects felt that the word

"relief" (59.09%) best represented their feelings about their divorce. Opportunity (39.77%) and peace (36.36%) were two other words which also often represented their feelings. The word, tragedy (9.09%), least frequently represented their feelings. Other words which the respondents stated were: depression, disgust, anger, resignation, insecurity, pleased, freedom, independence, confidence, personal development and growth (18.18%).

TABLE IX
PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING WORDS WHICH EXPRESS
FEELINGS ABOUT THE DIVORCE

Words	No.	%
Relief	52	59.09
Disappointment	14	15.91
Guilt	12	13.64
Satisfaction	24	27.27
Tragedy	8	9.09
Bitterness	21	23.86
Opportunity	35	39.77
Rejection	18	20.46
Peace	32	36.36
Failure	16	18.18
Sadness	26	29.55

TABLE IX (Continued)

Words	No.	%
Blessing	19	21.59
Happiness	24	27.27
Confusion	22	25.00
Regret	18	20.46
Other	16	18.18

Perceptions ConcerningMajor Problem

As shown in Table X, the subjects felt that the three major problems for them were money (63.64%), loneliness (62.50%) and emotional problems (60.23%). The problem they perceived to be the least of their concerns was their family (10.23%).

TABLE X
PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING MAJOR PROBLEMS

Major Problems	No.	%
Money	56	63.64
Emotional	53	60.23
Physical	11	12.50
Sexual	19	21.60
Men in general	20	22.73
Dating	33	37.50
Occupational	14	15.91
Living alone	21	23.86
Children	23	26.14
Loneliness	55	62.50
Family	6	6.82
Friends	9	10.23
Difficulty with ex-spouse	25	28.41
Other	7	7.96

Perceptions Concerning The Major
Problem The Respondent Is Having Now

As shown in Table XI, the subjects felt that the three major problems they are concerned with now are finances (15.91%), emotional problems (15.91%), men, dating and sex

(14.77%).

TABLE XI
PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE MAJOR PROBLEM
THE RESPONDENT IS HAVING NOW

Present Problems	No.	%
Financial	14	15.91
Children	6	6.82
Ex-spouse/Alimony/Child Support	12	13.64
Emotional	14	15.91
Loneliness/Living alone	10	11.36
Career/School	7	7.96
Societal	1	1.14
Concern about remarriage	3	3.41
Men/Dating/Sex	13	14.77
Other	3	3.41

Perceptions Concerning The Most
Difficult Adjustment In Returning
To A Single Life Style

As shown in Table XII, the most difficult problems of returning to a single life style for the subjects were

children (28.41%) and emotional problems (25.00%). The two least frequently reported areas of concern were career/school (3.41%) and concern about remarriage (3.41%). Other problems associated with returning to a single life style were repairs around the house, automotive repairs, roles, and cooking for one person (4.55%).

TABLE XII

PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE MOST DIFFICULT ADJUSTMENT
IN RETURNING TO A SINGLE LIFE STYLE

Problems in Returning to a Single Life Style	No.	%
Men/Dating/Sex	18	20.46
Emotional	22	25.00
Children	25	28.41
Career/School	3	3.41
Financial	9	10.23
Societal	12	13.64
Ex-spouse/Child Support	7	7.96
Concern about remarriage	3	3.41
Friends	5	5.68
Loneliness/Living alone	16	18.18
Other	4	4.55

Examination of Hypotheses

The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance was used to examine the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to each of the following: (a) age; (b) income; (c) level of education; (d) number of years married; (e) length of time divorced; (f) number of children; (g) whether or not children are living with respondent; (h) who wanted to terminate the marriage the most; and (i) present degree of emotional adjustment to the divorce.

Hypothesis I (a): There is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to age.

The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance indicated that there is no significant relationship between age and Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores. An H value of 9.45 was obtained which came very close at representing a significant difference. As shown in Table XIII, the highest average rank score was for the respondents between the ages of 19-24 (56.14). The lowest average rank score was for the respondents over the age of 40 (31.25).

TABLE XIII
H SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN
POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE
SCORES ACCORDING TO AGE

Age	No.	Average Rank Score	H	Level of Sig.
19-24	21	56.14		
25-29	22	38.57		
30-34	16	45.56	9.45	N.S.
35-39	15	40.63		
Over 40	12	31.25		

Hypothesis I (b): There is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to income.

The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance indicated that there is no significant difference between income and Post-divorce Adjustment Scale scores.

TABLE XIV
H SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN
POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE
SCORES ACCORDING TO INCOME

Income	No.	Average Rank Score	H	Level of Sig.
Below \$3,000	17	51.15		
\$3,001-\$6,000	20	47.05		
\$6,001-\$9,000	19	31.63	9.40	N.S.
\$9,001-\$12,000	14	51.04		
\$12,001-\$15,000	9	35.78		
Above \$15,000	6	34.50		

Hypothesis I (c): There is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to level of education.

The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance indicated that a significant relationship existed between the level of education and Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores. As Table XV illustrates, an H value of 8.94 was obtained, indicating a significant relationship at the .05 level. The highest rank score, reflecting the most positive postdivorce adjustment was reported by the respondents who had some college (47.69). The lowest rank score reflecting the least positive postdivorce adjustment was reported by the respondents

who were high school graduates (20.19).

TABLE XV
H SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN
POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE
SCORES ACCORDING TO LEVEL
OF EDUCATION

Level of Education	No.	Average Rank Score	H	Level of Sig.
High school graduate	8	20.19		
Some college	36	47.69	8.94	.05
College graduate	13	37.96		
Post graduate study	27	44.37		

Hypothesis I (d): There is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to number of years married.

The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance indicated that there is no significant difference between years married and Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores.

TABLE XVI
H SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN
POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE
SCORES ACCORDING TO NUMBER
OF YEARS MARRIED

Years Married	No.	Average Rank Score	H	Level of Sig.
1-4 years	31	49.92		
5-8 years	21	42.55		
9-12 years	9	35.44	6.53	N.S.
13-19 years	13	39.35		
20 or more years	10	29.85		

Hypothesis I (e): There is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to length of time divorced.

The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance indicated that there is no significant difference between length of time divorced and Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores.

TABLE XVII
H SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN
POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE
SCORES ACCORDING TO LENGTH
OF TIME DIVORCED

Years Divorced	No.	Average Rank Score	H	Level of Sig.
Less than one year	15	28.90		
1-3 years	49	43.11	5.02	N.S.
4-6 years	17	45.59		

Hypothesis I (f): There is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to number of children.

The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance indicated that there is no significant difference between the number of children a respondent has and Postdivorce Adjustment Scale score.

TABLE XVIII
H SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN
POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE
SCORES ACCORDING TO NUMBER
OF CHILDREN

Number of Children	No.	Average Rank Score	H	Level of Sig.
One	18	42.36		
Two	23	42.57		
Three	10	36.30	2.85	N.S.
Four	6	31.67		

Hypothesis I (g): There is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to whether or not children are living with respondent.

The Kruskal-Wallis of Variance indicated that there is no significant difference between children living with the respondent and Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores.

TABLE XIX
H SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCE IN POST-
DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE SCORES
ACCORDING TO WHETHER OR NOT
CHILDREN ARE LIVING
WITH RESPONDENT

Children at Home	No.	Average Rank Score	H	Level of Sig.
All	42	46.43		
Some	10	32.60	4.18	N.S.
None	10	36.60		

Hypothesis I (h): There is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to who wanted to terminate the marriage the most.

The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance indicated that a significant relationship existed between who wanted to terminate the marriage the most and Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores. As Table XX illustrates, an H value of 10.42 was obtained indicating a significant relationship at the .01 level. The highest rank score, reflecting the most positive postdivorce adjustment was reported by the respondents who wanted to terminate the marriage themselves (52.58). The lowest rank score, reflecting the least positive postdivorce adjustment was reported by the respondents who perceived

their ex-spouse as wanting to terminate the marriage (34.01).

TABLE XX
H SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCE IN
POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE
SCORES ACCORDING TO WHO
WANTED TO TERMINATE THE
MARRIAGE THE MOST

Who wanted to terminate the marriage	No.	Average Rank Score	H	Level of Sig.
She did	43	52.58		
He did	34	34.01	10.42	.01
Mutual	10	41.05		

Hypothesis I (i): There is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to the present degree of emotional adjustment to the divorce.

The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance indicated that a significant relationship existed between the degree of emotional adjustment to the divorce and Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores. As Table XXI illustrates, an H value of 27.03 was obtained, indicating a significant relationship at the .001 level. This finding also supports the construct valid-

ity of the scale. The highest rank score, reflecting the most positive postdivorce adjustment, was reported by the respondents who perceived their degree of difficulty of emotional adjustment as being very low (54.50). The lowest rank score, reflecting the least positive postdivorce adjustment was reported by the respondents who perceived their degree of difficulty of emotional adjustment as being high (18.35).

TABLE XXI

H SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCE IN
POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE
SCORES ACCORDING TO PRESENT
DEGREE OF EMOTIONAL
ADJUSTMENT TO THE
DIVORCE

Degree of Difficulty of Emotional Adjustment	No.	Average Rank Score	H	Level of Sig.
1 - Very low degree	42	54.50		
2 - Low degree	20	36.57	27.03	.001
3 - Moderate	11	25.64		
4 - High degree	10	18.35		

Hypothesis II: There is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to whether the respondent has received professional postdivorce counseling.

The Mann Whitney-U Test indicated that there is no significant difference between whether the respondent received professional postdivorce counseling and Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores.

TABLE XXII

Z VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN POSTDIVORCE
ADJUSTMENT SCALE SCORES ACCORDING TO
WHETHER THE RESPONDENT HAS RECEIVED
PROFESSIONAL POSTDIVORCE COUNSELING

Received Postdivorce Counseling	No.	Z	Level of Sig.
Yes	51	-1.44	N.S.
No	36		

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine women's perceptions of postdivorce adjustment. The perceptions of these women in the study were compared to various factors related to their postdivorce adjustment.

The sample was composed of 88 divorced females from Stillwater, Tulsa, Oklahoma City and surrounding towns in Oklahoma. The subjects' ages ranged from 19 to 61, with the majority being between the ages of 19-29. Over half of the subjects had been divorced between one to three years. The questionnaire was distributed to the subjects in February, 1977.

Percentages and frequencies were used to analyze the respondents' background characteristics. Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance was used to examine the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to each of the following: (a) age; (b) income; (c) level of education; (d) number of years married; (e) length of time divorced; (f) number of children; (g) whether or not children are living with respondent; (h) who wanted to terminate the marriage the most; and (i) present degree of emotional adjustment to the divorce.

The Mann Whitney-U Test was used to examine the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores according to whether the respondent has received professional postdivorce counseling. The chi-square test was used to do an item analysis of the Postdivorce Adjustment Scale. Also, the split-half reliability coefficient was used to test the reliability of the Postdivorce Adjustment Scale items.

The results of the study were as follows:

1. The seven most frequently mentioned responses from the Postdivorce Adjustment Scale, concerning the subjects' postdivorce adjustment, were as follows:
 - a. "I am better off now, emotionally, than when I was married." (Strongly disagree - 59.09%).
 - b. "I think of suicide at times." (Strongly disagree - 54.55%).
 - c. "I enjoy dating again." (Disagree - 54.02%).
 - d. "My friends do not understand my feelings." (Disagree - 53.49%).
 - e. "I think my feelings about divorce are normal." (Disagree - 52.27%).
 - f. "I enjoy being single again." (Disagree - 50.58%).
 - g. "I feel that my self esteem has improved since my divorce." (Strongly disagree - 50.00%).
2. The four most frequently mentioned responses by the 61 subjects who have children, concerning their

children and postdivorce adjustment, were as follows:

- a. "My children do not understand why their father does not live with us anymore." (Disagree - 42.11%).
 - b. "I think my children have benefited from my divorce." (Agree - 39.66%).
 - c. "Divorce would be easier if I did not have any children." (Strongly agree - 37.29%).
 - d. "Visitation rights are a real problem." (Strongly disagree - 32.76%).
3. Fifty-eight percent of the subjects received professional postdivorce counseling. Of these, the majority received counseling from a psychologist.
 4. The reason most often given by the majority of the subjects, who did not obtain postdivorce counseling, was that they felt they were self-sufficient in handling their own problems.
 5. Seventy-two percent of the subjects did not obtain counseling for their children after the divorce. Approximately one-third of those children who did receive counseling were taken to a psychologist.
 6. The most difficult period of adjustment for the respondents was during the first three months after the divorce.
 7. "Relief" was the most frequent word reported which expressed the subjects' feelings about the divorce.

8. The majority of the subjects indicated that they were the ones who wanted to terminate the marriage the most.
9. The three most frequently mentioned problems for the subjects were money, loneliness, and emotional problems.
10. The major problems the subjects were having at the time of the study were finances, emotional problems, men, dating, and sex.
11. The two most difficult problems of returning to a single life style for the subjects were children and emotional problems.
12. The majority of the subjects felt they were adjusting to their divorce with a very low degree of difficulty.
13. There was no significant relationship between the Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores and age, income, number of years married, length of time divorce, number of children, whether or not children are living with respondents, and whether the respondent has received professional postdivorce counseling.
14. There was a significant relationship at the .05 level between the level of education and Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores. The majority of the respondents who reported a more positive attitude about their divorce were those who had some college.

15. There was a significant relationship at the .01 level between the respondents' perceptions concerning who wanted to terminate the marriage the most and Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores. The respondents who reported wanting to terminate the marriage themselves, were the ones who had a more positive attitude about their divorce.
16. There was a significant relationship at the .001 level between the respondents' perception of the degree of difficulty of emotional adjustment to the divorce and the Postdivorce Adjustment Scale scores. The respondents who reported a very low degree of emotional difficulty were the ones who had a more positive attitude about their divorce.

Discussion and Conclusions

The finding that emotional problems was the most often mentioned problem for the respondents, in dealing with postdivorce adjustment, is in agreement with the study by Hayes (1976), who also found that emotional problems were one of the major problems reported. This problem was selected three times by the respondents in this study. The majority indicated emotional problems as being a general problem they were having (60.23%).

The majority of the respondents (59.09%) strongly disagreed with the statement, "I am better off now, emotionally, than when I was married." This finding is in agreement with

the study by Goode (1956), in which he reported an increase in emotional problems after obtaining a divorce. Further support is found in the study by Loeb (1966), in which divorced individuals were reported as being more psychologically disturbed and had greater psychopathic tendencies.

Another finding which corresponds to the respondents feeling that they have emotional problems was that half (50.00%) strongly disagreed with the statement, "I feel that my self-esteem has improved since my divorce." This finding is supported by Ilgenfritz (1961) who found that divorced women indicated a loss of self-esteem after getting a divorce.

The largest percentage of the respondents (31.82%) felt that the most difficult period of adjustment was during the first three months. This finding is in agreement with the study by Hayes (1976). According to Hayes (1976), the emotional trauma during the first part of divorce is associated with the loss of a mate and learning to live alone again.

The finding that the majority of the respondents (54.55%) strongly disagreed with having suicidal thoughts, is not in agreement with past research. Mindez (1969) indicated that divorced women used the threat of suicide as a method of controlling and manipulating the ex-spouse. Even though the divorced women in this study reported having emotional problems, they obviously do not feel that suicide would be the answer to their problems. This is supported by the finding that the respondents selected the word "tragedy" (9.09%) as least ex-

pressing their feelings about their divorce. The majority of the respondents (59.09%) selected the word "relief" as best expressing their feelings about their divorce. This finding is supported by the study of Hayes (1976) in which the word "relief" was also selected by the majority of the respondents in her study.

An interesting finding was that the majority of the respondents (52.27%) did not think their feelings about their divorce were normal. This may have been one reason why over half of the respondents (58.62%) reported receiving professional postdivorce counseling. Of those who obtained counseling, the greatest percentage (30.68%) went to a psychologist. The reason most often given, by the respondents who did not receive postdivorce counseling, was that they felt there was no need and they were self-sufficient in dealing with their own problems.

The finding that the greatest proportion of the respondents (48.84%) felt they were adjusting to their divorce with a very low degree of difficulty, may be a result of the majority receiving postdivorce counseling, or because they felt self-sufficient and were indeed not needing counseling. This same finding corresponds with the finding that those who reported having a very low degree of difficulty were the ones who had a more positive attitude towards postdivorce adjustment (at the .001 level). This finding also supports the construct validity of the Postdivorce Adjustment Scale.

Another finding which deals with the degree of post-

divorce adjustment, was that the majority of the respondents (52.58%) indicated that they were the ones who wanted to terminate the marriage the most. This finding is supported by the study of Goode (1956), who indicated that women are the ones who usually request the divorce. Goode also indicated that women who suggested the divorce experienced a more positive attitude towards postdivorce adjustment. Goode's finding also corresponds with this author's finding that there is a relationship between women wanting to terminate the marriage the most and having more positive attitudes towards postdivorce adjustment (at the .01 level).

The finding that the greatest proportion (41.86%) of the respondents who had some college, had a more positive attitude towards postdivorce adjustment (at the .05 level), was not in agreement with the study by Hayes (1976). This finding may reflect the fact that those respondents with some college perceive that they have more resources and alternatives to utilize than do those with less education. The largest percentage of the respondents (37.50%) in this study were either full time or part time students at Oklahoma State University when the data was collected. This may have been a factor as to why so few respondents reported having suicidal thoughts. As Goode (1956) indicated, divorced women who have greater opportunities to date and develop new social relations have a more successful degree of postdivorce adjustment. This finding would apply to the respondents in this study because they were in such an environment. However, one interesting

finding was that the majority (54.02%) disagreed with the statement, "I enjoy dating again." This would indicate that although the majority of the respondents have adequate opportunities to meet men, they do not enjoy the dating game. Another finding was that the majority (50.58%) disagreed with the statement, "I enjoy being single again." Since emotional problems was indicated as being a major problem in returning to a single life style, the respondents probably did not realize the many adjustments involved after obtaining a divorce.

The majority of the respondents (69.31%) had children. Of these, the majority (72.13%) did not obtain counseling for their children. Approximately one-third (33.33%) of those children who were taken to a counselor were taken to a psychologist. The respondents who had children were given the opportunity to respond to statements concerning their children and postdivorce adjustment. The four most frequently mentioned responses were as follows: (1) The greatest proportion (42.11%) disagreed with the statement, "My children do not understand why their father does not live with us anymore." This finding is not in agreement with Reuben (1971), who indicated that divorced mothers had a hard time explaining why the child's father does not live at home anymore. The finding shows that the majority of the mothers felt their children understood the situation. (2) The largest percentage (39.66%) agreed with the statement, "I think my children have benefited from my divorce." This finding is in agreement

with Rose and Bonham (1973) and Goode (1956), who all indicated that the majority of divorced mothers felt the divorce had not been detrimental to their children and that their children's lives had improved since the divorce.

(3) The greatest proportion (37.29%) strongly agreed with the statement, "Divorce would be easier if I did not have any children." This finding also corresponds with children as being the major problem of returning to a single life style (28.41%). The divorced mothers obviously felt that having to care for their children was a detriment to their postdivorce adjustment. (4) The largest percentage (32.76%) strongly disagreed with the statement, "Visitation rights are a real problem." Although several of the mothers in this study felt visitation rights were not a problem for them, visitation rights for other mothers are a major problem.

Recommendations and Implications

In a study of such a sensitive and personal nature as divorce, the sample will be biased and each subject will perceive the problems associated with postdivorce adjustment from her own point of view. It is therefore recommended that further investigation into some of the findings and conclusions be made.

While this study was limited to divorced women, there is no way of knowing if divorced men's perceptions of postdivorce adjustment are related to women's. A study of divorced men's perceptions, and/or a comparison of divorced

men's and women's perceptions of postdivorce adjustment would be advantageous in understanding both of their feelings.

This study was limited to women in Oklahoma, and there is no way of knowing if these subjects' perceptions are representative of the majority of women in the United States. Also, the majority of the respondents in this study were divorced students, and it is not known if they were from rural or urban areas. A study to make a regional comparison would be a worthwhile investigation. Also, more attention should be given in future research to the effect divorce has on children and their perceptions of how they are adjusting to their parents' divorce.

The major conclusions hold several implications for counselors, educators and persons dealing with divorced women in the helping professions. These are becoming aware of educating persons about the problems divorced women may have regarding postdivorce adjustment, and helping the divorced woman deal with her problems with a more positive attitude.

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APPENDIX



Oklahoma State University

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY RELATIONS AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074
241 HOME ECONOMICS WEST
(405) 372-6211 EXT. 6084

Hello!

Divorce statistics tell us that over 20,000 marriages ended in divorce in the State of Oklahoma during 1976. We know that almost a third of the total number of divorces occur within the first four years of marriage. In order to understand both the causes and the effects of early divorce, we, in the Department of Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University are undertaking a study. We hope that you will be willing to participate in this project. Your name was acquired from the Registrar's records or from someone who felt that you would be willing to participate.

We are all aware that there are many adjustments that a divorcing person must make. In the search for ways of making the divorce process less traumatic and to help people deal with divorce in the most effective and constructive manner, we believe that those who have experienced divorce are the only persons who are qualified to give us answers to our many questions. The information gained through this research will be of assistance to persons considering marriage or divorce and also of benefit to those in the helping professions.

We are sending you a short questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire, please place it in the enclosed addressed envelope (no postage required) and drop it in the mail. This should be done as soon as possible, hopefully within ten (10) days after you receive this letter. We would appreciate your returning the questionnaire by February 10, 1977. Your responses will remain completely anonymous.

Please be assured that you will be making a valuable contribution to the field of Family Relations. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Cordially yours,

Karen Laeger
Karen Laeger, Researcher

Nick Stinnett
Dr. Nick Stinnett
Major Advisor
Family Relations and Child Development

Your cooperation in this research project is greatly appreciated. Your contribution in a research project of this type helps us to gain greater knowledge and insight into the problems of readjustment for the divorced woman.

Please check or fill in answers as appropriate to each question. Since your name is not required, please be as honest in your answers as possible. The blank for numbers 1 through 3 are for coding purposes, please do not fill this in.

1-3 _____

4. Age _____

5. Occupation _____

6. Annual Income (Please check only one)

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| (a) Below \$3,000 | (d) \$9,001-\$12,000 |
| (b) \$3,001-\$6,000 | (e) \$12,001-\$15,000 |
| (c) \$6,001-\$9,000 | (f) Above \$15,000 |

7. Highest level of education

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| (a) Less than high school | (d) Some college |
| (b) Some high school | (e) College graduate |
| (c) High school graduate | (f) Post graduate study |

8. How many months or years were you married? _____ months _____ years

9. How many months or years have you been divorced now?

_____ months _____ years

10. How many children do you have? _____ child(ren)

11. What are the ages of your children? _____

12. Are the children now living with you? _____ All _____ Some _____ None

13. Did any person help you counsel with your children about the divorce during or after the divorce? _____ Yes _____ No

14. If so, what type of counselor? _____

15. Have you received counseling from a professional counselor since your divorce? _____ Yes _____ No

16. If so, what kind of counselor did you consult?

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| (a) Psychiatrist | (e) Family doctor |
| (b) Psychologist | (f) None |
| (c) Social Worker | (g) Others, please specify |
| (d) Priest or Pastor | _____ |

17. If you did not receive counseling please indicate your reason(s) why you chose not to. _____
-
18. When was the most difficult period of adjustment during the divorce process? (Please check only one)
- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (a) Separation | (g) 16-18 months |
| (b) First 3 months (after div.) | (h) All were equally difficult |
| (c) 4-6 months | (i) Never a difficult period |
| (d) 7-9 months | (j) Other, please specify _____ |
| (e) 10-12 months | |
| (f) 13-15 months | |
-
19. Which of the following are the major problems you have experienced since you have been divorced? Check those which apply to you.
- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> money | <input type="checkbox"/> living alone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> emotional | <input type="checkbox"/> children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> physical | <input type="checkbox"/> loneliness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sexual | <input type="checkbox"/> family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> men in general | <input type="checkbox"/> friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dating | <input type="checkbox"/> difficulty with ex-spouse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> occupational | <input type="checkbox"/> others, please specify _____ |
-
20. What is the major problem you are having now? _____
-
21. Check those words listed below which represent your feelings about your divorce at the present time.
- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> relief | <input type="checkbox"/> peace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> disappointment | <input type="checkbox"/> failure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> guilt | <input type="checkbox"/> sadness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> satisfaction | <input type="checkbox"/> blessing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tragedy | <input type="checkbox"/> happiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bitterness | <input type="checkbox"/> confusion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> opportunity | <input type="checkbox"/> regret |
| <input type="checkbox"/> rejection | <input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify _____ |
-
22. How would you rate the present degree of difficulty of emotional adjustment to your divorce? One (1) represents the lowest degree of difficulty and five (5) represents the highest degree of difficulty. Circle the number which represents you.
- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|------|
| Low | | | | | High |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
23. What is your current living situation?
- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (a) living alone | (f) living with female companion |
| (b) living with parents | (g) living with a male companion |
| (c) living with own children | (h) living in a communal setting |
| (d) living with relative | (i) other, please specify _____ |
| (e) living with female roommate | |

24. Who wanted to terminate the marriage the most? _____

It is acknowledged that divorced persons have days when they feel good and days when they feel badly. Would you please indicate below the degree to which each of the following statements characterize your situation as a divorcee. There are no right or wrong answers. Below please circle the response that you feel best reflects your own feelings at the present time. The response code for each of the questions below are: SA-strongly agrees, A-agrees, U-undecided, D-disagrees, and SD-strongly disagrees.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 25. I feel rejected. | SA A U D SD |
| 26. I feel peaceful. | SA A U D SD |
| 27. I feel that I am a failure. | SA A U D SD |
| 28. I am happier now than I have ever been. | SA A U D SD |
| 29. I feel lonely. | SA A U D SD |
| 30. I am adjusting well to my divorce. | SA A U D SD |
| 31. I feel depressed. | SA A U D SD |
| 32. I feel like a desirable person. | SA A U D SD |
| 33. I feel confused. | SA A U D SD |
| 34. I am glad I got a divorce. | SA A U D SD |
| 35. I feel sad about my divorce. | SA A U D SD |
| 36. I am better off now, emotionally, than when I was married. | SA A U D SD |
| 37. I think of suicide at times. | SA A U D SD |
| 38. I feel that my self esteem has improved since my divorce. | SA A U D SD |
| 39. I enjoy my present freedom. | SA A U D SD |
| 40. I think my feelings about my divorce are normal. | SA A U D SD |
| 41. My future looks promising. | SA A U D SD |
| 42. I am worried about my future. | SA A U D SD |
| 43. I am unhappy. | SA A U D SD |

44. I enjoy dating again. SA A U D SD
45. I enjoy being single again. SA A U D SD
46. I have difficulty meeting available men. SA A U D SD
47. I am disenchanted with men. SA A U D SD
48. I am experiencing problems due to the fact that the men I date pressure me too much to have sexual intercourse with them. SA A U D SD
49. The absence of sex is a problem for me at the present time. SA A U D SD
50. I am experiencing difficulty with my sexual relationships at the present time. SA A U D SD
51. I do not want to get emotionally involved with another man at the present time. SA A U D SD
52. I do not want to ever remarry again. SA A U D SD
53. I feel my friends have abandoned me since I got a divorce. SA A U D SD
54. I feel my friends have been more supportive of of my ex-spouse. SA A U D SD
55. My family does not understand my feelings. SA A U D SD
56. My friends do not understand my feelings. SA A U D SD
57. I feel "out of place" socially since I divorced. SA A U D SD
58. I find myself preoccupied with resentment toward my ex-spouse. SA A U D SD
- Complete only if you have children (questions 59 - 64).
59. I think my child(ren) has benefited from my divorce. SA A U D SD
60. If my children had their way my ex-spouse and I would get back together again. SA A U D SD
61. My children do not understand why their father does not live with us anymore. SA A U D SD
62. Divorce would be easier if I did not have any children. SA A U D SD
63. Visitation rights are a real problem. SA A U D SD
64. I am satisfied with the child support payments at the present time. SA A U D SD

65. What is the most difficult adjustment you have experienced in going back to a single life style?

VITA

Karen Virginia Laeger

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: POSTDIVORCE ADJUSTMENT AMONG WOMEN

Major Field: Family Relations and Child Development

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Muskogee, Oklahoma, August 21, 1948, the daughter of Virgil and Marcella Laeger.

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