

PERCEPTIONS OF OLDER HUSBANDS AND WIVES
CONCERNING MARRIAGE AND THEIR
PRESENT PERIOD OF LIFE

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

A study of the older generation offers an opportunity to understand better the unique assets and problems of the later years of life. Such research is especially desirable since the number of older persons in the United States has increased markedly in recent years. In 1940 there were 9 million persons sixty-five years of age and over, and in 1966 there was an estimated 18.5 million. In twenty-six years there has been a doubling of the number of persons over the age of sixty-five (U. S. Department of Commerce, 1967). The U. S. Department of Commerce (1969) reported that the number of persons, age sixty-five and over was an estimated 19.1 million as of July 1, 1968. There are indications that there will be an increase to 19.6 million in 1970.

Related to the rising number in the latter stage of life is the increase in the length of marriage. In 1967, of the males between sixty-five and seventy-four years of age, 80 percent were married and living with their wives, while 46 percent of the females in the same age group were married and living with their husbands (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1968). In the group of people over the age of seventy-five, 59 percent of the males and 20 percent of the females were living with their spouses. In 1960 there were reported to be 4,893,601 married

couples over the age of sixty-five. However, in 1940 there were only 2,649,810 married couples represented in the same age group (U. S. Census of Population, 1964, 1943). These statistics indicate that many couples can look forward to a number of years together after age sixty-five. As medical technology and standard of living continue to improve it is likely that the span of marriage in the later years will continue to increase in the future.

Need for Research

As both the life span and the length of marriage are increasing there is a need for more research and education which will aid in the understanding of the older person and his marriage and family relationships. It is particularly important to obtain greater understanding and knowledge of marriage during the later years as the older person may increasingly depend upon his mate to fulfill his basic emotional needs because of his gradually decreasing interaction with other institutions and with his children. To gain greater understanding and knowledge of marriage during the later years it is necessary to obtain greater information concerning the attitudes of older persons toward: marriage relationships during the later stage of life; marriage in general; as well as the present time of their lives. Such research could contribute to greater awareness of the assets and problems of marriage during the later years, and would also be a positive contribution to the teaching of marriage and aging courses. Hopefully, such research would contribute to a more positive, informed public attitude toward aging and the older person. Unfortunately, research concerned with the attitudes of older husbands and wives toward the marriage relationship

during the later years is very limited. The present research was designed to provide increased knowledge and understanding of the attitudes of older husbands and wives toward marriage during the later years.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of older husbands and wives concerning marriage and their present period of life. The specific purposes of this study were to:

1. Determine the perceptions of older husbands and wives concerning the following: (a) problems of the present period of life, (b) the happiest time of life, (c) the happiest period of marriage, (d) self-perceived happiness of marriage, (e) whether own marriage has improved or worsened over time, (f) whether most marriages improve or worsen over time, (g) most rewarding aspects of the present marriage relationship, (h) most troublesome aspects of the present marriage relationship, (i) most important characteristics of a successful marriage, (j) most important factor in achieving marital success.
2. Determine if there is a significant difference according to sex in each of the ten perceptions listed above.
3. Relate the morale scores of the older husbands and wives to each of the following: (a) the happiest time of life, (b) the happiest period of marriage, (c) self-perceived happiness of marriage, (d) whether own marriage has improved or worsened over time, (e) whether most marriages improve or worsen over time.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature concerning the marriage relationships of older husbands and wives is quite limited. The review of available literature reported here is concerned with the marital satisfaction, role adjustment, attitudes toward retirement, morale, and problems of the older person.

Marital Satisfaction

Little research has been conducted concerning the marital satisfaction of older husbands and wives. Lipman (1961), Yarrow et al. (1963), Fried and Stern (1948), and Bossard and Boll (1955), Collins (1969), and Tuckman and Lorge (1953) are among the authors who have contributed in this area of research.

In a study by Lipman (1961), it was found that the majority of older men and women in his sample indicated that their marriage had become more satisfactory since retirement.

In a study by Yarrow et al. (1963) in which 31 older couples were interviewed, it was found that only one couple out of 31 was rated as having a good and improving relationship. Two-thirds of the men were considered as having a compatible or workable relationship with their wives. Approximately one-third of the couples were rated as having a poor and often deteriorating relationship. The authors noted that this

was not a representative sample, but that the study perhaps presents an idea of the level of marital satisfaction of many elderly persons.

The research conducted by Fried and Stern (1948) offers some important information about the marital relationship of older couples. Among the 37 married couples interviewed, 50 percent were considered as having a satisfactory marriage. Fried and Stern used as a reliable indication of marital happiness: whether or not the subject would press a button if by some miracle he could press a button and find that he had never been married. It was found that:

Nearly all the marriages which were satisfactory at the time of the interview had always been good, but almost half had become even more satisfactory as the partners aged. Most of the marriages that were unsatisfactory at the time of the interview had been unsatisfactory more or less from the beginning, and approximately half deteriorated further as the partners advanced in years (Fried and Stern, 1948, p. 33).

On the basis of their interviews, Fried and Stern suggested certain factors which may contribute to marital satisfaction during the later years. When both partners had acquired almost identical habits and interests, a feeling of great satisfaction was often gained. Another factor was when one partner became seriously ill and was gratified by the affection of the protecting partner who in turn enjoyed a feeling of usefulness. A final factor suggested by several subjects was that with age they had become better adjusted, and saw themselves as "less demanding," "less temperamental," "less egotistical," and "less irritable." There were also reasons given by the partners who felt his or her mate had become more incompatible with advancing years. Some of the more common reasons given for an increase of incompatibility were that the mate had a tendency toward nagging, domineering,

worrying, fault finding, and selfishness. Another reason given was that from early marriage there were few common interests.

Bossard and Boll (1955) found from a sample of 25 married men over sixty years of age, 21 were rated as happy, 2 medium, and 2 unhappy. For 20 women of the same category, 14 were rated as happy, 4 medium, and 2 unhappy. In this study, the brothers and sisters rated the marital happiness of their siblings. Since this is a rating by outsiders, the true evaluation may or may not have been obtained. It was also found in this sample that the later years were not considered a crisis period for marital satisfaction but rather the late 40's and early 50's was considered a crisis period for women, and the 50's was considered a critical period for the marital happiness of men.

By mailed questionnaire, Collins (1969) found that for 277 older husbands and wives in Oklahoma, love was the area of greatest marital need satisfaction. Communication was the area of least satisfaction for older wives, while the area of least satisfaction for males was respect. Collins also found that marital need satisfaction was significantly related to: (a) sex, (b) amount of contact with children through visits, (c) perception of happiest period of life, (d) self-perceived happiness of marriage, (e) perception of whether own marriage has improved or worsened over time, and (f) morale. The males, who reported visiting with children five to seven times a year, who perceived the present as the happiest time of life, who perceived their marriage as very happy, who perceived their marriages as improving over time, and who expressed a high degree of morale, were found to have a significantly higher degree of marital need satisfaction.

Tuckman and Lorge (1953) interviewed 82 male and female industrial workers who had applied for retirement and 88 who were already retired. The results showed that 70 percent of each group reported a happy relationship with their spouses. Approximately four-fifths of those applying for retirement believed that there would be no change in the relationship with their spouses after retirement and a similar proportion of the retired respondents indicated that their present relationship with the spouse was the same as it had been before retirement. However, 43 percent of the women of the retired group reported that the marriage relationship had become better since retirement.

Role Adjustment

The primary arena of interaction for the retired couple is in the home and is characterized by a redefinition of marital roles in order to adjust to the loss of occupational function of the husband (Ballweg, 1967, p. 277).

Cavan (1962) suggests that the older husband often reacts to retirement by devoting more time in the activities of the home and becoming more involved with outside organizations, hobbies, or recreational activities.

In a recent study of older couples, the household task performance before and after retirement was compared by Ballweg (1967). Fifty-two wives were asked the household tasks that they and their husbands performed and their feelings regarding the husbands' activities around the house. Nearly one-third of the responses indicated shared household responsibility for both husband and wife. Usually the mechanical or physical tasks and administrative tasks were shifted from the wife to

the husband. There were only 8 out of 52 wives who reported husbands failed to do expected tasks. It was found that greater participation is typical of the retired husband as compared to the working husband over sixty-five years of age, and there was no husband-wife disharmony as a result of the role adjustment. These results were based on the responses of the wife.

Lipman (1960) interviewed 100 retired couples of the upper educational and occupational level. He asked them what they believed was the most important quality of a good husband or wife who is past sixty years of age. The majority of the men and women selected the expressive qualities of love, understanding, and companionship as important for a good wife. These expressive qualities were selected as important for a good husband by 47 percent of the females and 30.6 percent of the males. Many more men than women selected being a good economic provider as important for a good husband past sixty years of age. This would seem to indicate that the men were reluctant to give up their role as an economic provider. Our society emphasizes work, productivity, and achievement. For a man who has internalized these goals, strain may be created when he retires and can no longer attain the ambitions of pre-retirement,

In another report by Lipman (1961), the majority of the men and women indicated that their marriage had become more satisfactory since retirement. A great number of the men were involved with household activities which added common interests and solidified emotional bonds of the couple. Sharing and cooperation were emphasized and expressive qualities such as love, understanding, companionship, and compatibility assumed increased importance and were considered to be the most

important things a couple could give each other. Lipman suggests that when the husband retires and enters more into the activity of the household, the woman can no longer view her major role primarily as a good housekeeper and the husband can no longer see himself primarily as an economic provider. Retirement brings a definite change in the activities of the husband, which alters the wife's role.

Loether (1967) believes that a new dimension develops in the relationship between the husband and wife when he retires. For the first time the husband is at home during the day. This may be an intrusion upon the wife's daily routine or an opportunity to share household tasks. Loether notes that some marriages survive over the years largely because there is a separation during the daily routine. These couples can make a tolerable adjustment because they see very little of each other. "For such marriages, retirement can constitute a very real crisis" (p. 10). Retirement may be spent by avoiding each other or may end up in a belated divorce. For couples described above, retirement would be looked upon as a very unpleasant period of life.

Attitudes Toward Retirement

In a pilot study of Heyman and Jeffers (1968), 33 wives of retired men were asked how they felt about retirement. From the wives' answers they were divided into two groups: 45 percent were glad their husbands were retired, and 55 percent were sorry their husbands were retired. The wives who were sorry their husbands had retired had the following characteristics: the majority were older; had husbands who had been retired from manual labor for over ten years; were of poor health; rated low in both activities and attitudes; and said they were unhappy

both in their lifetime and in their present marriage. There were 82 percent of the couples who shared congruent attitudes toward retirement. There were more couples who were sorry than glad about retirement.

Tuckman and Lorge (1953) interviewed 82 male and female industrial workers who had applied for retirement and 88 who had already retired. The spouses of the 79 percent who were married were also interviewed. The findings indicated that there was no significant difference between the spouse's attitude toward retirement and that reported by the industrial worker. A very small minority of the spouses looked upon retirement as a period when life can be enjoyed more fully or as a period when the burden of caring for the home may be eased. It was found that husbands appear to be more enthusiastic about their wives' retirement than the wives are about their husbands' retirement.

Kerckhoff (1964) interviewed 198 couples over sixty years of age of different educational and occupational levels. The results show that the pre-retiree husbands looked forward to retirement with greater expectations than did their wives. The men who were retired less than five years showed the greatest degree of satisfaction with retirement. To compare attitudes, the couples were grouped according to the occupation of the husband. The upper occupational level couples did not welcome retirement, but their reactions and experiences were generally favorable. Middle occupational level couples welcomed retirement, and had relatively good experiences, but they did not respond as favorably as did the upper occupational level respondents. Negative responses and unpleasant experiences were typical of the attitudes of the lower level couples.

Morale

As Goldfarb (1968) has stated, marriage greatly contributes to morale and continued activity during the later years. Smith (1965), Havighurst, and Albrecht (1953), Neugarten, Havighurst, and Tobin (1961), and Kutner (1956) are in agreement with Goldfarb in that their research findings indicate older men and women who are married have a higher degree of morale and adjustment than those who are not married.

In a survey of the marital status of all people over sixty-five years of age in Prairie City, Havighurst and Albrecht (1953) found that the men and women who were married had a higher adjustment score than did the widowed or single. When comparing the marital status, those who were married and living with their spouse had the highest activity score. The individuals who were most active in their family relationships tended to be happier than the average.

In a study by Cavan (1949), the Adult Activities Schedule and Attitude Inventory were filled out by 499 men and 759 women with a median age over seventy. Both the married men and women living with their spouse had a more favorable mean attitude score than did the separated, divorced, or single person. All periods of life were considered of equal happiness by both males and females.

Kutner (1956) found lower morale among single, older people than among either the married men and women or widowers. Kutner concludes that stability of marital relationships throughout the later years contributes greatly to positive individual adjustment, but this is truer among those of higher social position than among those of low social status and economic hardship.

Collins (1969) found in her sample of older husbands and wives that marital need satisfaction was significantly and positively related to morale. Those who had a high degree of marital need satisfaction also tended to have a high degree of morale.

Some Problems After Retirement

Some individuals find the later years a period of problems partly because it is something which we do not like to think about, and also because it is something for which our society has not been prepared (Lee, 1962). Being aware of the problems of old age, the public can face them and have a more positive attitude toward growing old.

Barron (1961) has discussed some of the common problems during the later years. Of the total population of older people, approximately 75 percent live with their own families in their own houses. This leaves 25 percent who live alone, with non-relatives, in institutions, and hotels. This indicates that many housing arrangements of the older person provide feelings of loneliness, bitterness and a loss of meaning in life which can lead to mental health problems.

Barron also states that according to the findings of the Senate sub-committee on problems of the aged and aging in 1959, three-fifths of the men and women sixty-five years of age and over receive an annual income of less than one thousand dollars. This creates many problems for elderly people who have been accustomed to a much higher level of living. Due to more frequent ill health, the older population has more medical expenses and yet less income than the rest of the population.

According to Barron, perhaps one of the most serious problems of the older person is the lack of social participation and recreation.

Many of the aged are unprepared to spend their time pursuing satisfying interests and hobbies.

A longitudinal study which involved 2,007 subjects was conducted by Streib and Thompson (1957). The results show that physical health and reduced income are two variables related to adjustment to retirement. One-half of the persons in poor health were considered to be poorly adjusted. It was also found that the higher the income the less dejection and dissatisfaction before and after retirement.

Nicholson (1962) has reported that about 80 percent of all persons who are sixty-five years and older are going about their daily routines neither requesting nor needing care of any kind. However, there are many older people suffering from conditions that handicap them, who could be greatly relieved with the proper health and medical care.

Older people often have problems to adjust to in their family relationships. The roles of the aged couple and their adult children may change. Kirkpatrick (1963) writes:

A reversal of roles is the most general characteristics of the relations between the aged and their children. It is closely related to the shift in power relationships which universally accompanies growth changes in the familial group. In a sense children are destined to become parents to their elders and parents are destined to become children of their offspring (p. 551).

Summary

The review of literature of marital relationships in the later years suggests the following:

1. Many older husbands and wives consider their marriage relationship as happy and satisfactory.
2. Love is the area of greatest marital need satisfaction for

older husbands and wives, while respect is the area of least satisfaction for husbands and communication is the area of least satisfaction for wives.

3. The majority of the retired respondents indicate that their present relationship with the spouse is the same as it had been before retirement.
4. Expressive qualities of love, understanding, and companionship are considered to be increasingly important for the husband and wife to possess after retirement.
5. Husbands becoming involved in household tasks after retirement tend to add common interests and solidify emotional bonds.
6. Husbands appear to be more enthusiastic about retirement than are wives.
7. There appears to be a positive association between socio-economic level and favorable attitudes toward retirement.
8. Marriage appears to contribute to morale and continued activity during the later years.
9. Marital need satisfaction is positively related toward morale.
10. A reversal of roles is a characteristic of the relationship between the aged and their adult children.
11. Physical health and reduced income are two important variables which relate to adjustment.
12. Housing arrangements, mental health, lack of social participation, physical health, and reduced income are common problems of the older person.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Selection of Subjects

The 408 subjects of this study were obtained from the mailing lists of the Senior Citizen Centers in Oklahoma. Cover letters, explaining the research study and assuring anonymity, were sent to 418 married couples. Questionnaires were included for both the husband and wife in each letter. The husbands and wives were requested to complete the questionnaires separately and not to compare answers. The data were obtained during the months of February and March, 1969.

The Instrument

To obtain information for this study, the questionnaire (see Appendix A) was composed of the following: (a) a general information sheet to obtain background data such as sex, age, and religion, (b) questions concerned with the respondents' perceptions of marriage and the present period of life, and (c) the Life Satisfaction Index-Z which was used to measure morale of the respondents.

Life Satisfaction Index-Z

The Life Satisfaction Index-Z (LSIZ) which was developed by Neugarten, Havighurst, and Tobin (1961) and reported by Wylie and

Twente (1968) was used to measure the morale of the subjects. The LSIZ was derived from the Life Satisfaction Rating Scale (LSRS) which requires extensive interview data from each respondent concerning the following: zest, resolution and fortitude, congruence between desired and achieved goals, positive self-concept, and mood tone. On the basis of two item analyses of the original LSRS, the number of items in the Index was reduced to thirteen. These remaining items were then referred to as the Life Satisfaction Index-Z. The LSIZ has a reliability coefficient of .80 (Wylie and Twente, 1968).

Analysis of the Data

A percentage and frequency count was used to analyze the respondents' perceptions of the following: (a) problems of the present period of life, (b) the happiest time of life, (c) the happiest period of marriage, (d) self-perceived happiness of marriage, (e) whether own marriage has improved or worsened over time, (f) whether most marriages improve or worsen over time, (g) most rewarding aspects of the present marriage relationship, (h) most troublesome aspects of the present marriage relationship, (i) most important characteristics of a successful marriage, (j) most important factor in achieving marital success.

The chi-square test was used to determine if there was a significant difference according to sex in each of the ten perceptions listed above.

An analysis of variance was used to determine if there was a significant difference in morale scores classified according to: (a) the happiest time of life, (b) the happiest period of marriage, (c) self-perceived happiness of marriage, (d) whether own marriage has improved

or worsened over time, (e) whether most marriages improve or worsen over time.

RESULTS

TABLE I
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

Variable	Classification	No.	%
Sex	Male	204	50.50
	Female	200	49.50
Age	60-64	86	21.66
	65-69	144	36.27
	70-74	94	23.68
	75-79	46	11.59
	80-84	22	5.54
	85-89	5	1.26
Race	White	394	96.81
	Indian	9	2.21
Residence for Major Part of Life	On farm or in country	120	29.85
	Small town under 25,000	202	50.25
	City of 25,000 to 50,000	48	11.94
	City of 50,000 to 100,000	12	2.99
	City over 100,000	20	4.98
Present Residence	On farm or in country	67	16.67
	Small town under 25,000	209	51.99
	City of 25,000 to 50,000	105	26.12
	City of 50,000 to 100,000	5	1.24
	City over 100,000	16	3.98
Education Completed	Less than high school	155	38.46
	Some high school	83	20.60
	High school graduate	44	10.92
	Some college	64	15.88
	College graduate	27	6.70
	Post graduate study	30	7.44
Occupation for Major Part of Life	Professional -- Managerial	106	26.63
	Clerical -- Sales	159	39.95
	Skilled, Semiskilled, and Unskilled	82	20.60
	Farm	51	12.81

marriage has improved or worsened over time, (f) whether most marriages improve or worsen over time, (g) most rewarding aspect of present marriage relationship, (h) most troublesome aspect of present marriage relationship, (i) most important characteristics of a successful marriage, (j) most important factor in achieving marital success.

Perceptions of Older Husbands and Wives Concerning
the Problems of the Present Period of Life

As shown in Table II, the three areas which had the highest rate of selection as problems of the present time of life were as follows: housing (27.48%), poor health (21.17%), and money (20.05%). Physical health and reduced income were also found by Streib and Thompson (1957) to be important in adjusting to retirement. Perhaps the problem of housing could stem from the reduction of income; not having the money for the type of housing that is desired. Housing may be a problem because a difficult decision is presented when considering whether or not to stay in their own home which is near their friends, to move near adult children, or to move to a retirement community. This decision is, no doubt, closely related to the couple's physical condition and income. If the older parents move in with the adult child, problems can arise if independence, privacy, and freedom are kept from the older couple.

Also, the problem of poor health could be related to reduced income as medical care is expensive and without the proper care and medicine when attention is needed, the older person's health would tend to suffer.

TABLE II

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PERCEPTIONS
OF OLDER HUSBANDS AND WIVES CONCERNING THE PROBLEMS
OF THE PRESENT PERIOD OF LIFE

Perceptions of Problems	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Housing	56	23.93	63	30.43	122	27.48
Money	49	20.94	40	19.32	89	20.05
Use of Leisure Time	29	12.39	20	9.66	49	11.04
Poor Health	53	22.65	41	19.81	94	21.17
Not Feeling Useful	27	11.54	17	8.21	44	9.91
Finding a Job	6	2.56	7	3.38	13	2.93
Our Marriage Relationship	8	3.42	16	7.73	24	5.41

The infrequent selection of not feeling useful and our marriage relationship as problems of the present period was not anticipated in view of the common belief that older people have nothing to do and frequently suffer from feelings of not being useful, and the belief that the marriage relationship of the older person gradually deteriorates.

Perceptions of Older Husbands and Wives Concerning
the Happiest Time of Life

The present time was selected as being the happiest time of life for 50.26 percent of the total group as illustrated in Table III. One reason for more than half of the sample selecting the present time as

being the happiest may be because they no longer have to work, but are free to do whatever is desired. Since the older couple may no longer be under pressure or striving for economic success they can enjoy hobbies, travel, or visit as long as they wish without having to consider a strict schedule. There is greater opportunity to go at their own pace and there is less necessity to keep up with the fast moving world. The older person's enjoyment of the grandparent role may also be a contributing factor to their perception of the present as the happiest time of life.

TABLE III

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PERCEPTIONS
OF OLDER HUSBANDS AND WIVES CONCERNING THE
HAPPIEST TIME OF LIFE

Happiest Time of Life	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Present Time	91	47.89	97	52.72	190	50.26
Middle Years	50	26.32	40	21.74	92	24.34
Young Adult Years	29	15.26	27	14.67	56	14.81
Teenage Years	14	7.37	8	4.35	22	5.82
Childhood	6	3.16	12	6.52	18	4.76

The perceptions of the happiest time of life of the other approximately 50 percent were divided as follows: 24.34 percent selected the

middle years; 14.81 percent selected the young adult years; 5.82 percent selected the teenage years; and 4.76 percent selected the childhood years. These are the results of the total group. The greatest difference between men and women was that almost twice as many women, 6.52 percent as compared to 3.16 percent for men perceived childhood as the happiest period of life. The smallest percentage (3.16%) of males chose the childhood years, while the smallest percentage of the females (4.35%) selected the teenage years as the happiest time of life. It is interesting to note that a higher proportion of females, 52.72 percent as compared to 47.89 percent for the males perceived the present as the happiest period of life. One reason for half of the respondents feeling that the present is not the happiest period of life could be because they had not planned for retirement and could not adjust. Or the problems of housing, poor health, and reduced income may have made them feel that this is not a very happy time of life. Perhaps some felt that they had not achieved their life's goals and this time of life limited the possibility of further achievement and success. In a study by Heyman and Jeffers (1968) it was found that more than one-half of the older wives they questioned were sorry that they (or their husbands) had retired.

The present results do not coincide with the Cavan et al. (1949) study which found that all periods of life were considered of equal happiness by both older males and females.

Perceptions of the Older Husbands and Wives Concerning the Happiest Period of Marriage

From Table IV it can be seen that of the total group 54.93 percent

selected the present time as the happiest period of their married life. A reason for more than one-half of the respondents feeling that the present was the happiest period of their married life could be because with the husband no longer working, the couple can spend more time together and enjoy each other's companionship more. Through the years the couple may have developed a greater degree of understanding, acceptance, and better communications. This finding may coincide with the study of Fried and Stern (1948) in which it was found that with age many couples become better adjusted, and tend to see themselves as "less demanding," "less temperamental," "less egotistical," and "less irritable."

TABLE IV

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PERCEPTIONS
OF OLDER HUSBANDS AND WIVES CONCERNING THE
HAPPIEST PERIOD OF MARRIAGE

Happiest Period of Marriage	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Present	103	55.08	102	55.43	206	54.93
Middle Years	54	28.88	46	25.00	102	27.20
Young Adult Years	30	16.04	36	19.57	67	17.87

Perhaps the remainder of the respondents did not feel that the present married life was the happiest because they could not readjust

to being a couple. Fried and Stern (1948) found that most of the marriages that were unsatisfactory at the time of the interview had generally been unsatisfactory from the beginning, and approximately half deteriorated further as the partners advanced in years. Reasons given for increased incompatibility were as follows: tendency toward nagging, domineering, worrying, fault finding, and selfishness. Loether (1967) points out that some marriages survive over the years largely because there is a separation during daily routine. These couples can make a tolerable adjustment because they see very little of each other. Loether points out that retirement for these types of couples can be a crisis.

Inasmuch as the middle years of marriage are so often portrayed as being characterized by conflict and dissatisfaction, it is of interest that this period was second in frequency of selection as the happiest period of married life. This finding is similar to the results of Hayes (1968) who found that a high proportion of middle aged respondents (51.16%) perceived the middle years of marriage as being the happiest.

It was expected that the young adult years would have been chosen more often as the happiest period of married life inasmuch as it is so often emphasized by the mass media as being the ideal time of life. Perhaps a reason for the young adult years not being selected as the happiest period of marriage by the majority is because the young couple is so busy getting settled in their jobs, home, families, and adjusting to the many problems of this period that they have little time to spend together as a couple.

The present results indicate that a pattern exists of older persons perceiving marriage happiness to increase with the later stages of marriage.

Perceptions of Older Husbands and Wives Concerning Self-Perceived Happiness of Marriage

The greatest majority of the respondents rated their marriage as happy or very happy. The percentages in Table V were very close for those who felt that their marriage was very happy (49.49%) and those who rated their marriage as happy (45.41%). These results are similar to those obtained by other investigators. Fried and Stern (1948) found that of the 37 married couples, one-half were considered as having a satisfactory marriage. In 1955, Bossard and Boll found from a sample of 25 married men and 20 married women over 60 years of age, 35 were rated as happy, 6 medium, and 4 unhappy in their marital relationships. Seventy percent of the retired group reported a happy relationship with their spouses in the Tuckman and Lorge study (1953). The adjectives used to describe the happiness of marriage in the three research studies just cited vary, but the point is that very few considered their marriages as unhappy. In the present study only 2.81 percent rated their marriage as unhappy.

Perceptions of Older Husbands and Wives Concerning Whether Own Marriage Has Improved or Worsened Over Time

As indicated in Table VI, 53.28 percent of all respondents believed that their marriage had become better over time, 40.91 percent

TABLE V

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PERCEPTIONS
OF OLDER HUSBANDS AND WIVES CONCERNING THE
SELF-PERCEIVED HAPPINESS OF MARRIAGE

Rating of Marriage	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very Happy	99	50.51	78	40.63	178	45.41
Happy	89	45.41	102	53.13	194	49.49
Unhappy	3	1.53	8	4.17	11	2.81
Undecided	5	2.55	4	2.08	9	2.30

TABLE VI

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PERCEPTIONS
OF OLDER HUSBANDS AND WIVES CONCERNING WHETHER OWN
MARRIAGE HAS IMPROVED OR WORSENER OVER TIME

Rating of Marriage	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Better	102	51.52	108	55.67	211	53.28
Worse	9	4.55	6	3.09	15	3.79
Remained About the Same	85	42.93	74	38.14	162	40.91
Undecided	2	1.01	6	3.09	8	2.02

indicated that their marriage had remained about the same, while only 3.79 percent believed their marriage had become worse over time. These results are more encouraging than the Yarrow, et al. study (1963) which found that one couple out of 31 was rated as having a good and improving relationship, two-thirds of the couples were considered as having a compatible or workable relationship, and about one-third of the couples were rated as having a poor and often deteriorating relationship. The present results are also more favorable than the findings of Fried and Stern (1948) who reported that of the satisfactory marriages (50% of the sample) of older persons in their study, almost half had become more satisfactory as the partners aged.

The results of the present study coincide with the finding of Lipman (1961) that the majority of the 100 retired couples reported that their marriages had become more satisfactory since retirement. The present results are also related to the findings of Tuckman and Lorge (1953) that about four-fifths of the retired respondents in their sample indicated that their present relationship with the spouse was the same as it had been before retirement. They also found that 43 percent of the women reported that the relationship had become better since retirement. It is interesting to compare the present finding that the majority of respondents believed their marriage relationship had improved over time with the finding of Tuckman and Lorge (1953) that about four-fifths of the respondents who applied for retirement believed that there would be no change in the relationship with their spouses after retirement.

The finding that the majority of older husbands and wives perceived their marriages as improving coincide with the previously

mentioned finding that the respondents tended to perceive the happiest period of marriage as being the later and middle years respectively (Table IV).

Perhaps a reason for the older husbands and wives believing that their marriage had improved could be that through the years the couple may have developed a greater degree of understanding, acceptance, better communications, and common interests. In the study of Fried and Stern (1948) it was found that with age couples become better adjusted, and see themselves as "less demanding," "less temperamental," "less egotistical," and "less irritable."

Perceptions of Older Husbands and Wives Concerning Whether Most Marriages Improve or Worsen Over Time

As indicated in Table VII, the greatest percentage of all respondents (47.16%) reported that most marriages become better over time and 28.87 percent reported that most marriages remain about the same. Only 6.44 percent perceived most marriages as becoming worse over time. The finding that almost half of the respondents believe that most marriages improve over time would seem to be related to the finding that the majority of respondents, as indicated in Table VI, perceived that their own marriage had become better over time. It is suggested that the positive perception of their own marriages would tend to contribute to a positive view toward most marriages.

TABLE VII

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PERCEPTIONS
OF OLDER HUSBANDS AND WIVES CONCERNING WHETHER MOST
MARRIAGES IMPROVE OR WORSEN OVER TIME

Rating of Most Marriages	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Better	90	46.15	92	48.42	183	47.16
Worse	16	8.21	9	4.74	25	6.44
Remain About the Same	60	30.77	51	26.84	112	28.87
Undecided	29	14.87	38	20.00	68	17.53

Perceptions of Older Husbands and Wives Concerning the Most
Rewarding Aspects of the Present Marriage Relationship

Table VIII shows that the two most rewarding aspects of the present marriage relationship as perceived most often by the respondents were: companionship (18.45%) and being able to express true feelings to each other (17.79%). Similar results are reported in the Lipman study (1961) in which it was found that the expressive qualities such as love, understanding, companionship and compatibility became the most important thing a couple could give each other.

The present findings that companionship and being able to express true feelings to each other were most often chosen as the most rewarding aspects of the present marriage relationship may suggest that for many couples these two qualities increase in the later years of marriage. This could also be one explanation for the findings that: the

TABLE VIII

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PERCEPTIONS
OF OLDER HUSBANDS AND WIVES CONCERNING THE MOST
REWARDING ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT
MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

Rewarding Aspects	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Economic Security	81	15.37	89	16.76	173	16.20
Having Physical Needs Cared for	44	8.35	36	6.78	81	7.58
Standing in the Community	32	6.07	42	7.91	75	7.02
Being Able to Express True Feelings to Each Other	93	17.65	96	18.08	190	17.79
Companionship	97	18.41	98	18.46	197	18.45
Being Needed by Your Mate	59	11.20	68	12.81	128	11.99
Affectionate Relationship With Mate	70	13.28	49	9.23	120	11.24
Sharing of Mutual Interests	50	9.49	49	9.23	99	9.27
Other	1	.19	4	.75	5	.47

majority of respondents perceived the present period of marriage as the happiest (Table IV); the majority of respondents perceived their marriage relationship as very happy and happy (Table V); and the majority of respondents perceived their marriage relationship as improving over time (Table VI).

Related to the present results is the finding of Blood (1955) that the most valuable aspect of marriage for farm wives (55%) and city wives (48%) was "Companionship in doing things together with the husband."

Perceptions of Older Husbands and Wives Concerning the Most Troublesome Aspects of Present Marriage Relationship

Table IX indicates that the greatest percentage of respondents (36.21%) reported that nothing was troublesome in the present marriage relationship. This finding appears related to the previously mentioned findings that the majority of respondents: perceived the present period as the happiest period of marriage (Table IV), perceived their marriage relationship as happy and very happy (Table V), and perceived their marriage relationship as improving over time (Table VI).

The two aspects of the present marriage relationship which were considered to be the most troublesome were having different values and philosophies of life (13.79%) and lack of mutual interests (12.50%). The report of Burgess and Wallin (1953) that "compatibility of personalities" was perceived by engaged couples as one of the most important factors conducive to marriage success. A portion of the couples in the present study seem to have incompatible personalities and an indication of this would be their selection of having different values and

TABLE IX

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF
 OLDER HUSBANDS AND WIVES CONCERNING THE MOST TROUBLESOME
 ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

Troublesome Aspects	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Lack of Mutual Interests	28	10.49	39	14.29	68	12.50
Not Being Able to Express True Feelings to Each Other	27	10.11	20	7.33	47	8.64
Unsatisfactory Affectional Relationship	21	7.87	24	8.79	46	8.46
Different Values and Philosophies of Life	30	11.24	45	16.48	75	13.79
Lack of Companionship	14	5.24	6	2.20	20	3.68
Frequent Disagreements	19	7.12	22	8.06	42	7.72
Other	23	8.61	23	8.42	46	8.46
Nothing Is Troublesome	105	39.33	91	33.33	197	36.21

philosophies of life and lack of mutual interests as troublesome aspects of their marriage relationship.

Very few respondents selected companionship as a troublesome aspect (3.68%). This is consistent with the finding that companionship was selected by the highest proportion of the respondents as the most rewarding aspect of the present marriage relationship (Table VIII).

Perceptions of Older Husbands and Wives Concerning the Most Important Characteristics of a Successful Marriage

As illustrated in Table X, the respondents most often selected respect (38.25%) and sharing the same interests (26.51%) as the most important characteristics of a successful marriage. The finding that respect was mentioned most frequently as the most important characteristic of a successful marriage is worthy of note in that this concept has not been stressed a great deal in the marriage and family living literature. This result may also be related to Collins' (1969) finding that older husbands received their lowest sub-score on the Marital Need Satisfaction Scale in the need category of respect, indicating that they believed this was a need which had not been as satisfactorily fulfilled as they would have desired. The older husbands and wives in this study may feel that mutual respect is the most important quality in contributing to an atmosphere in which good communication, companionship, and other characteristics commonly associated with a successful marriage can develop.

The finding that sharing the same interests was selected so frequently as the most important characteristic of a successful marriage coincides with Lipman's (1961) that sharing common interests helped in

solidifying emotional bonds of the older couples in his sample. It is important to note that while sharing the same interests was frequently selected as the most important characteristic of a successful marriage, lack of mutual interests was one of the two aspects of the present marriage relationship most often considered troublesome (Table IX).

TABLE X

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF OLDER HUSBANDS AND WIVES CONCERNING THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE

Important Characteristics	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Respect	62	36.69	65	39.88	127	38.25
Personality Growth	4	2.37	10	6.13	14	4.22
Emotional Closeness	8	4.73	10	6.13	18	5.42
Sexual Satisfaction	18	10.65	8	4.91	26	7.83
Sharing the Same Interests	48	28.40	40	24.54	88	26.51
Effectively Expressing True Feelings to Each Other	20	11.83	24	14.72	44	13.25
Having Physical Needs Met	9	5.33	6	3.68	15	4.52

Personality growth (4.22%) and having physical needs met (4.52%) were least often selected as the most important characteristic of a successful marriage.

Perceptions of Older Husbands and Wives Concerning the Most
Important Factor in Achieving Marital Success

As Table XI indicates, the greatest proportion of the sample (48.59%) felt being in love was the most important factor in achieving marital success. This finding is related to Burgess and Wallin's (1953) report that engaged men and women indicate love is the most important reason for marriage. However, Feldman (1966), in comparing older couples with young couples found that older couples valued being in love less than the young couples.

TABLE XI

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PERCEPTIONS
OF OLDER HUSBANDS AND WIVES CONCERNING THE MOST
IMPORTANT FACTOR IN ACHIEVING MARITAL SUCCESS

Important Factors	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Being in Love	44	48.35	42	48.84	86	48.59
Determination	15	16.48	6	6.98	21	11.86
Having Common Interests	16	17.58	15	17.44	31	17.51
Compatibility of Personalities	16	17.58	23	26.74	39	22.03

It is interesting to note that the fewest number selected determination as the most important factor. More than twice as many males,

16.48 percent as compared to 6.98 percent for the females, felt that determination was the most important factor in achieving marital success.

In comparing the results on Table XI with the findings of Stinnett (1970) whose sample was single college students, it is noted that college students in Stinnett's study selected compatibility of personalities most frequently (35%) as the most important factor in achieving marital success while the same factor was chosen second in frequency (22.03%) by the older husbands and wives. Being in love was chosen third in frequency of selection (25%) by the college students while the older husbands chose the same factor most frequently as the most important factor in achieving marital success.

Examination of Major Hypotheses

Hypothesis I: There is no significant difference according to sex in each of the following: (a) problems of the present period of life, (b) the happiest time of life, (c) the happiest period of marriage, (d) self-perceived happiness of marriage, (e) whether own marriage has improved or worsened over time, (f) whether most marriages improve or worsen over time, (g) most rewarding aspect of the present marriage relationship, (h) most troublesome aspect of the present marriage relationship, (i) most important characteristic of a successful marriage, (j) most important factor in achieving marital success.

When the chi-square test was used to examine this hypothesis, it was found that no significant differences existed according to sex in any of these perceptions. For further information concerning the specific chi-square values, see Appendix B.

Hypothesis II(a): There is no significant difference in morale according to perception of the happiest time of life.

An analysis of variance was used to examine this hypothesis. As Table XII indicates there was a significant difference at the .001 level in mean morale scores classified according to the perception of the happiest time of life with those who perceived the present period of life as happiest receiving the most favorable mean morale scores. This finding implies that being happy in the present time of life affects morale, and at the same time, high morale has a significant effect on how life, in general, is viewed. Womble (1966, p. 488) stated, "Those who have developed a variety of interests usually find old age one of their most enjoyable life experiences." Very few of the respondents selected Use of leisure time (Table II) as a problem of the present period of life. The use of leisure time as one indication of the development of interests may have some relationship to the respondents' happiness and high morale.

Those who perceived childhood as the happiest period had a higher mean morale score than those who selected the teenage years or the young adult years.

Hypothesis II(b): There is no significant difference in morale scores according to perception of the happiest period of marriage.

An analysis of variance was also used to examine this hypothesis. As Table XIII indicates an F score of 16.25 was obtained which is evidence of a significant difference existing at the .001 level in mean morale scores classified according to the perception of the happiest

TABLE XII

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN MEAN MORALE SCORES ACCORDING TO PERCEPTION CONCERNING THE HAPPIEST TIME OF LIFE

Happiest Time of Life	No.	\bar{X}	F	Level of Sig.
Present	190	9.56		
Middle Years	92	7.42		
Young Adult Years	56	6.89	15.90	.001
Teenage Years	22	6.27		
Childhood	18	7.17		

TABLE XIII

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN MEAN MORALE SCORES ACCORDING TO PERCEPTION CONCERNING THE HAPPIEST PERIOD OF MARRIAGE

Happiest Period of Marriage	No.	\bar{X}	F	Level of Sig.
Present	206	9.28		
Middle Years	102	7.80	16.25	.001
Young Adult Years	67	7.06		

period of married life. Those who perceived the present time as the happiest period of married life received the most favorable mean morale score. This finding is logical because the quality of one's marriage relationship would tend to be a great influence on his emotional well-being and general outlook on life and also because the husband and wife in the later years tend to depend more upon each other and less upon children and other institutions of society to fulfill their basic emotional needs. Perhaps these results are related to Lipman's (1961) finding that after retirement a great number of men become involved with household activities which add common interests and solidify emotional bonds of the couple.

The present finding supports that of Collins (1969) who found that there was a significant positive relationship between marital need satisfaction of older husbands and wives as measured by the Marital Need Satisfaction Scale and morale. The present results and those of Collins emphasize the importance of the older person's marriage relationship to his emotional and mental well-being.

Hypothesis II(c): There is no significant difference in morale scores according to the self-perceived happiness of marriage.

Table XIV shows that when an analysis of variance was applied to this hypothesis an F score of 14.34 was obtained, indicating a significant difference in mean morale scores classified according to perceived happiness of the respondents' own marriage. Those who rated their marriage as very happy received the highest mean morale score while those who rated their marriage as unhappy received the lowest mean morale score. These results are consistent with the findings of hypothesis

II(a) and II(b). This finding also supports the finding of Collins (1969) that marital need satisfaction of older husbands and wives was significantly related to morale.

TABLE XIV

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN MEAN MORALE SCORES ACCORDING TO THE SELF-PERCEIVED HAPPINESS OF MARRIAGE

Rating of Marriage	No.	\bar{X}	F	Level of Sig.
Very Happy	178	9.35		
Happy	194	7.87	14.34	.001
Unhappy	11	4.45		
Undecided	9	6.89		

Hypothesis II(d): There is no significant difference in morale scores according to the perception of whether respondents' own marriage has improved or worsened over time.

As Table XV illustrates, an analysis of variance revealed an F score of 10.42, indicating a significant difference at the .001 level in mean morale scores classified according to the perception of whether the respondents' own marriage had improved or worsened over time. Those who perceived their marriage as better received the highest mean morale score while those who perceived their marriage as worse received

the lowest mean morale score. This is consistent with the findings of hypothesis II(a), II(b), and II(c). This finding points out the important relationship between continued growth and improvement of the marriage relationship and high morale during the later years.

TABLE XV

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN MEAN MORALE SCORES ACCORDING TO PERCEPTION CONCERNING WHETHER OWN MARRIAGE HAS IMPROVED OR WORSENEED OVER TIME

Rating of Marriage	No.	\bar{X}	F	Level of Sig.
Better	211	9.02		
Worse	15	5.07		
Remained About the Same	162	7.98	10.42	.001
Undecided	8	6.25		

Hypothesis II(e): There is no significant difference in morale according to perception of whether most marriages improve or worsen over time.

As shown on Table XVI, an analysis of variance was applied to this hypothesis and a significant difference was found to exist at the .01 level in mean morale scores classified according to the perception of whether most marriages improve or worsen over time. Those who believed that most marriages become better received the highest mean

morale score while those who believed that most marriages become worse over time received the lowest mean morale score. The present study suggests that there is a positive relationship between a respondent's positive perception of his own marriage, his positive view toward most marriages, and a high degree of morale.

TABLE XVI

F SCORE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN MEAN MORALE SCORES ACCORDING TO PERCEPTION CONCERNING WHETHER MOST MARRIAGES IMPROVE OR WORSEN OVER TIME

Rating of Marriage	No.	\bar{X}	F	Level of Sig.
Better	183	8.93		
Worse	25	6.96	4.27	.01
Remain About the Same	112	8.25		
Undecided	68	7.78		

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of older husbands and wives concerning marriage and their present time of life.

The sample was composed of 408 older husbands and wives who were on the mailing lists of the Senior Citizen Centers throughout Oklahoma. The subjects were predominantly white, over sixty-five years of age, and retired. They were primarily from small towns under 25,000. The greatest proportion indicated clerical-sales as the occupation for the major part of their lives, while the lowest indicated farming. The data were obtained during the months of February and March, 1969.

The percentage and frequency count was used to analyze the respondents' perceptions concerning marriage and their present period of life. The chi-square test was used to determine if a significant difference existed according to sex in each of the following: (a) problems of the present period of life, (b) the happiest time of life, (c) the happiest period of marriage, (d) self-perceived happiness of marriage, (e) whether own marriage has improved or worsened over time, (f) whether most marriages improve or worsen over time, (g) most rewarding aspect of the present marriage relationship, (h) most troublesome aspect of the present marriage relationship, (i) most important characteristic of a successful marriage, (j) most important factor in

achieving marital success.

An analysis of variance test was used to determine if there was a significant difference in morale scores according to: (a) happiest time of life, (b) happiest period of marriage, (c) self-perceived happiness of marriage, (d) whether own marriage has improved or worsened over time, (e) whether most marriages improve or worsen over time.

The results of the study were as follows:

1. Housing, poor health, and money were found to be the three most frequently mentioned problems of the present period of life.
2. The present time was found to be the happiest time of life for most of the respondents (50.26%).
3. The present time was found to be the happiest period of marriage for most of the respondents (54.93%).
4. Most of the respondents rated their marriage as either very happy (45.41%) or happy (49.49%).
5. The majority of the sample reported their marriage had become better over time.
6. Almost 50 percent of the sample felt that most marriages become better over time.
7. The three most rewarding aspects of the present marriage relationship were most often reported as being companionship, being able to express true feelings to each other, and economic security.
8. The two aspects of the present marriage relationship which were most often reported as being troublesome were having different values and philosophies of life and lack of mutual

- interests. The largest percentage reported that nothing was troublesome about the present marriage relationship.
9. The two most important characteristics of a successful marriage were most often reported as respect and sharing the same interests.
 10. Being in love was most often reported as being the most important factor in achieving marital success.
 11. There was no significant difference according to sex in each of the following perceptions: (a) problems of the present period of life, (b) the happiest time of life, (c) the happiest period of marriage, (d) self-perceived happiness of marriage, (e) whether own marriage has improved or worsened over time, (f) whether most marriages improve or worsen over time, (g) most rewarding aspect of the present marriage relationship, (h) most troublesome aspect of the present marriage relationship, (i) most important characteristic of a successful marriage, (j) most important factor in achieving marital success.
 12. There was a significant difference in morale scores according to each of the following: (a) perception of the happiest time of life, (b) perception of the happiest period of marriage, (c) self-perceived happiness of marriage, (d) whether own marriage has improved or worsened over time, (e) whether most marriages improve or worsen over time.

A general conclusion which might be drawn from the study is that the older husbands and wives in this sample expressed very favorable

perceptions of their marriage relationship and present period of life. As a group, the respondents tended to perceive their marriage relationship as improving and increasing in satisfaction with the later stages of married life. This supports similar results of other investigators and does not coincide with the frequently voiced view that marriage relationships during the later years gradually deteriorate and become less satisfying than in earlier years.

This study also emphasizes the importance of the association between the older person's marriage relationship and his morale. The results of the study also seem to suggest that there is not as great a difference in the specific perceptions investigated concerning marriage and the present period of life according to sex, as might be commonly thought.

Limitation of the Study and Recommendations

Race, religion, education, and occupation were not represented to the extent that conclusions and generalizations could be made in reference to the whole population over sixty-five.

It is suggested that repeated studies of the perceptions of older husbands and wives concerning marriage and their present period of life be more representative concerning the various races, religions, and geographic regions of the country. It would appear beneficial in gaining more understanding of the older husband and wife to further investigate the possible reasons for the following findings of the present study: (a) the present is the happiest time of life, (b) the present is the happiest period of marriage, (c) respondent's own marriage has improved over time. It might also be profitable in the future to

examine the extent of planning for retirement with the older person's perceptions of marriage and the present time of life.

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APPENDIX A

12. At the present time of your life, which of the following, if any, do you find to be problems? (Please check no more than 3 problems.)
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13. <input type="checkbox"/> 1. housing | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. being dependent on your children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. money | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. in-laws |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 3. use of leisure time | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. finding a job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 4. poor health | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. our marriage relationship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 5. not feeling useful | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. no problems |
15. Number of years married to present mate:
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. less than 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. 30-39 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. 5-9 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. 40-49 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. 10-19 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. 50 years and over |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. 20-29 years | |
16. If you have been remarried, was it because of:
- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. death of previous mate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. divorce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. have not been remarried |
17. Which of the following do you consider to be the happiest time of your life?
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. present time | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. teenage years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. middle years | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. childhood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. young adult years | |
18. Which of the following do you consider to be the happiest period of your married life?
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. present | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. young adult years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. middle years | |
19. Do you consider your marriage to be:
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. very happy | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. unhappy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. happy | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. very unhappy |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. undecided |
20. Since the time that you and your mate were first married, do you feel your marriage relationship has become:
- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. better |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. worse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. remained about the same |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. undecided |
21. In general, do you feel most marriages become better or worse over time?
- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. better |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. worse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. remain about the same |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. undecided |

- ___ 22. What is your present living arrangement?
- ___ 1. live in own home
 - ___ 2. live in an apartment
 - ___ 3. live with children
 - ___ 4. live with other relatives
 - ___ 5. live with non-relatives
 - ___ 6. live in trailer
 - ___ 7. other _____
- ___ 23. Do you own your home?
- ___ 1. yes ___ 2. no
- ___ 24. Generally, how often do you visit or receive a visit from one of your children?
- ___ 1. once a year
 - ___ 2. 2-4 times a year
 - ___ 3. 5-7 times a year
 - ___ 4. 8-10 times a year
 - ___ 5. over 10 times a year
 - ___ 6. do not have children
- ___ 25. How many miles is it from your home to your child who lives closest to you?
- ___ 1. less than 1 mile
 - ___ 2. 1-5 miles
 - ___ 3. 5-25 miles
 - ___ 4. 50-100 miles
 - ___ 5. 100-300 miles
 - ___ 6. over 300 miles
 - ___ 7. do not have children
- ___ 26. Generally, how often do your children write or telephone you?
- ___ 1. once a month
 - ___ 2. 2-3 times a month
 - ___ 3. 4-5 times a month
 - ___ 4. over 5 times a month
 - ___ 5. never
 - ___ 6. do not have children
- ___ 27. At present, are you:
- ___ 1. employed by others full time
 - ___ 2. employed by others part time
 - ___ 3. self-employed
 - ___ 4. retired

Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- ___ 28. As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be.
- ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree
- ___ 29. I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know.
- ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree
- ___ 30. This is the dreariest time of my life.
- ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree

- ___31. I am just as happy as when I was young.
 ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree
- ___32. These are the best years of my life.
 ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree
- ___33. Most of the things I do are boring and monotonous.
 ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree
- ___34. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were.
 ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree
- ___35. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied.
 ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree
- ___36. I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year
 from now.
 ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree
- ___37. When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the impor-
 tant things I wanted.
 ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree
- ___38. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often.
 ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree
- ___39. I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life.
 ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree
- ___40. In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is get-
 ting worse, not better.
 ___ 1. agree ___ 2. undecided ___ 3. disagree
- ___41-42. Would you say you feel older or younger than most people your
 age?
 ___ 1. older ___ 2. feel same age ___ 3. younger
- ___44. Do you think your health is better or worse than that of most
 people your age?
 ___ 1. better ___ 2. same ___ 3. worse
- ___45. Would you say your standard of living is better or worse than the
 standard of living of most of your friends and acquaintances?
 ___ 1. better ___ 2. same ___ 3. worse
- ___46. Which of the following do you consider to be the three most re-
warding aspects of your present marriage relationship?
- ___47. ___ 1. economic security
 ___ 2. having your physical needs cared for
- ___48. ___ 3. your standing in the community
 ___ 4. being able to effectively express true feelings to each
 other
 ___ 5. companionship

- 6. being needed by your mate
- 7. affectionate relationship with your mate
- 8. sharing of mutual interests
- 9. other _____
- 10. none are rewarding

50. Which of the following aspects of your relationship with your mate do you consider to be the two most troublesome at the

51. present time?

- 1. lack of mutual interests
- 2. not being able to effectively express true feelings to each other
- 3. unsatisfactory affectional relationship
- 4. different values and philosophies of life
- 5. lack of companionship
- 6. frequent disagreements
- 7. other _____
- 8. nothing is troublesome

52. Which of the following do you believe to be the two most impor-

53. tant characteristics of a successful marriage?

- 1. respect
- 2. personality growth
- 3. emotional closeness
- 4. sexual satisfaction
- 5. sharing the same interests
- 6. effectively expressing true feelings to each other
- 7. having physical needs met

54. Which one of the following do you believe to be most important in achieving marital success?

- 1. being in love
- 2. determination
- 3. having common interests
- 4. compatibility of personalities

Since you were first married to your present mate, do you feel your marriage relationship has improved or worsened in each of the following areas:

55. Love and affection for each other

- 1. improved 2. worsened 3. neither improved nor worsened

56. Expressing true feelings and thoughts to each other

- 1. improved 2. worsened 3. neither improved nor worsened

57. Companionship

- 1. improved 2. worsened 3. neither improved nor worsened

58. Respect for each other

- 1. improved 2. worsened 3. neither improved nor worsened

- __59. Understanding each other
 __ 1. improved __ 2. worsened __ 3. neither improved nor worsened
- __60. Helping each other to find meaning in life
 __ 1. improved __ 2. worsened __ 3. neither improved nor worsened
- __61. Personality growth of each partner
 __ 1. improved __ 2. worsened __ 3. neither improved nor worsened
- __62-63.

Now we would like to find out how satisfied you are with your mate's present performance of certain marriage roles at the present time of your life. Please answer each question by circling the most appropriate letter at the left of each item.

Circle VS if you feel very satisfied; circle S if you feel satisfied; circle U if you feel undecided; circle US if you feel unsatisfied; and VUS if you feel very unsatisfied.

How satisfied are you with your mate in each of the following areas?

- __64. VS S U US VUS Providing a feeling of security in me.
- __65. VS S U US VUS Expressing affection toward me.
- __66. VS S U US VUS Giving me an optimistic feeling toward life.
- __67. VS S U US VUS Expressing a feeling of being emotionally close to me.
- __68-69.
- __70. VS S U US VUS Bringing out the best qualities in me.
- __71. VS S U US VUS Helping me to become a more interesting person.
- __72. VS S U US VUS Helping me to continue to develop my personality.
- __73. VS S U US VUS Helping me to achieve my individual potential (become what I am capable of becoming).
- __74-75.
- __76. VS S U US VUS Being a good listener.
- __77. VS S U US VUS Giving me encouragement when I am discouraged.

- __78. VS S U US VUS Accepting my differentness.
- __79. VS S U US VUS Avoiding habits which annoy me.
- __80-81.
- __82. VS S U US VUS Letting me know how he or she really feels about something.
- __83. VS S U US VUS Trying to find satisfactory solutions to our disagreements.
- __84. VS S U US VUS Expressing disagreement with me honestly and openly.
- __85. VS S U US VUS Letting me know when he or she is displeased with me.
- __86-87.
- __88. VS S U US VUS Helping me to feel that life has meaning.
- __89. VS S U US VUS Helping me to feel needed.
- __90. VS S U US VUS Helping me to feel that my life is serving a purpose.
- __91. VS S U US VUS Helping me to obtain satisfaction and pleasure in daily activities.
- __92-93.
- __94. VS S U US VUS Giving me recognition for my past accomplishments.
- __95. VS S U US VUS Helping me to feel that my life has been important.
- __96. VS S U US VUS Helping me to accept my past life experiences as good and rewarding.
- __97. VS S U US VUS Helping me to accept myself despite my shortcomings.
- __98-99.
- __100-102.
- __103-104.
- __105-106.
- __107-108.

For each of the statements below please indicate which one of the three alternatives (possible answers), A, B, or C is most true, or most preferred, or most important to you by writing A, B, or C in the Most column.

Then choose the least preferred or least important of the three possible answers (A, B, or C) and write its letter in the Least column.

For every statement, be sure you mark one of the possible answers in each column. If A is entered under the Most column, then either B or C should be marked under the Least column, and so on.

Do not debate too long over any one statement; your first reaction is desired.

MOST LEAST

- () () 1. One of the greatest satisfactions in life is:
 A. Recognition for your efforts
 B. The feeling of a job well done
 C. The fun of being with friends
- () () 2. I like my friends to:
 A. Want to help others when possible
 B. Be loyal at all times
 C. Be intelligent and interested in a number of things
- () () 3. My best friends:
 A. Are easy to get along with
 B. Know more than I do
 C. Are loyal to me
- () () 4. I would like to be known as:
 A. A successful person
 B. An efficient person
 C. A friendly person
- () () 5. I enjoy:
 A. Just being with friends
 B. The feeling of accomplishment I have after doing something well
 C. Being praised for some achievement
- () () 6. If I had more time, I would like to
 A. Make more friends
 B. Work at my hobby or learning something new and interesting
 C. Just take it easy, without any pressure

MOST LEAST

- () () 7. I think I do my best when:
 A. I work with a group of people who are friendly
 B. I have a job that is in my line
 C. My efforts are rewarded
- () () 8. I like:
 A. Being appreciated by others
 B. Being satisfied personally with my performance
 C. Being with friends with whom I can have a good time
- () () 9. Nothing is worse than:
 A. Having your self-esteem damaged
 B. Failure at an important task
 C. Losing your friends
- () () 10. I like a leader who:
 A. Gets the job done
 B. Makes himself respected by his followers
 C. Makes himself easy to talk to
- () () 11. Which leisure time activity is important to you:
 A. Watching T.V.
 B. Chatting with acquaintances
 C. Keeping busy with interesting hobbies
- () () 12. I like:
 A. Sincere praise for my efforts and accomplishments
 B. Cooperative effort
 C. Wisdom
- () () 13. Which is important to you?
 A. To know what you want to do
 B. To know how to do what you want to do
 C. To know how to help others to do what they want to do
- () () 14. I am considerably disturbed by:
 A. Hostile arguments
 B. Rigidity and refusal to see the value of new ways
 C. Persons who degrade themselves
- () () 15. I would like to:
 A. Be accepted as a friend by others
 B. Help others complete a mutual task
 C. Be admired by others

APPENDIX B

The following tables give the chi-square values associated with hypothesis I, found on page 37, which states: There is no significant difference according to sex in each of the following: (a) problems of the present period of life, (b) the happiest time of life, (c) the happiest period of marriage, (d) self-perceived happiness of marriage, (e) whether own marriage has improved or worsened, (f) whether most marriages improve or worsen over time, (g) most rewarding aspect of the present marriage relationship, (h) most troublesome aspect of the present marriage relationship, (i) most important characteristic of a successful marriage, (j) most important factor in achieving marital success. In each instance, no significant difference was found.

TABLE XVII

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS
OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE PRESENT PERIOD
OF LIFE ACCORDING TO SEX

Description of Problem	Male		Female		X ²	Level of Sig.
	No.	%	No.	%		
Housing	56	23.93	63	30.43		
Money	49	20.94	40	19.32		
Use of Leisure Time	29	12.39	20	9.66		
Poor Health	53	22.65	41	19.81	8.22	n.s.
Not Feeling Useful	27	11.54	17	8.21		
Finding a Job	6	2.56	7	3.38		
Marriage Relationship	8	3.42	16	7.73		

TABLE XVIII

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS
OF THE HAPPIEST TIME OF LIFE ACCORDING TO SEX

Happiest Time of Life	Male		Female		X ²	Level of Sig.
	No.	%	No.	%		
Present Time	91	47.89	97	52.72		
Middle Years	50	26.32	40	21.74		
Young Adult Years	29	15.26	27	14.67	4.92	n.s.
Teenage Years	14	7.37	8	4.35		
Childhood	6	3.16	12	6.52		

TABLE XIX

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS
OF THE HAPPIEST PERIOD OF MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO SEX

Happiest Period of Married Life	Male		Female		χ^2	Level of Sig.
	No.	%	No.	%		
Present Time	103	55.08	102	55.43		
Middle Years	54	28.88	46	25.00	1.17	n.s.
Young Adult Years	30	16.04	36	19.57		

TABLE XX

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN SELF-PERCEIVED
HAPPINESS OF MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO SEX

Rating of Marriage	Male		Female		χ^2	Level of Sig.
	No.	%	No.	%		
Very Happy	99	50.51	78	40.63		
Happy	89	45.41	102	53.13	4.14	n.s.
Unhappy or Undecided	8	4.10	12	6.30		

TABLE XXI

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS
OF WHETHER OWN MARRIAGE HAS IMPROVED OR WORSENERD
OVER TIME ACCORDING TO SEX

Rating of Marriage	Male		Female		X ²	Level of Sig.
	No.	%	No.	%		
Better	102	51.52	108	55.67		
Worse	9	4.55	6	3.09	1.02	n.s.
Remained the Same or Undecided	87	43.90	80	41.20		

TABLE XXII

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS
OF WHETHER MOST MARRIAGES IMPROVE OR WORSEN
OVER TIME ACCORDING TO SEX

Rating of Marriage	Male		Female		X ²	Level of Sig.
	No.	%	No.	%		
Better	90	46.15	92	48.42		
Worse	16	8.21	9	4.74	3.86	n.s.
Remained the Same	60	30.77	51	26.84		
Undecided	29	14.87	38	20.00		

TABLE XXIII

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING THE DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS
OF MOST REWARDING ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT MARRIAGE
RELATIONSHIP ACCORDING TO SEX

Rewarding Aspects	Male		Female		X ²	Level of Sig.
	No.	%	No.	%		
Economic Security	81	15.37	89	16.76		
Having Your Physical Needs Cared For	44	8.35	36	6.78		
Your Standing in the Community	32	6.07	42	7.91		
Being Able to Effectively Express True Feelings to Each Other	93	17.65	96	18.08	6.93	n.s.
Companionship	97	18.41	98	18.46		
Being Needed by Your Mate	59	11.20	68	12.81		
Affectionate Relationship With Your Mate	70	13.28	49	9.23		
Sharing of Mutual Interests	50	9.49	49	9.23		

TABLE XXIV

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS
OF MOST TROUBLESOME ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT MARRIAGE
RELATIONSHIP ACCORDING TO SEX

Troublesome Aspects	Male		Female		X ²	Level of Sig.
	No.	%	No.	%		
Lack of Mutual Interests	28	10.49	39	14.29		
Not Being Able to Effectively Express True Feelings to Each Other	27	10.11	20	7.33		
Unsatisfactory Affectional Relationship	21	7.87	24	8.79		
Different Values and Philosophies of Life	30	11.24	45	16.48	10.45	n.s.
Lack of Companionship	14	5.24	6	2.20		
Frequent Disagreements	19	7.12	22	8.06		
Other	23	8.61	23	8.42		
Nothing Is Troublesome	105	39.33	91	33.33		

TABLE XXV

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS
OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF A
SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO SEX

Important Characteristics	Male		Female		X ²	Level of Sig.
	No.	%	No.	%		
Respect	62	36.69	65	39.88		
Personality Growth	4	2.37	10	6.13		
Emotional Closeness	8	4.73	10	6.13		
Sexual Satisfaction	18	10.65	8	4.91	8.30	n.s.
Sharing the Same Interests	48	28.40	40	24.54		
Effectively Expressing True Feelings to Each Other	20	11.83	24	14.72		
Having Physical Needs Met	9	5.33	6	3.68		

TABLE XXVI

CHI-SQUARE VALUES REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS
OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN ACHIEVING
MARITAL SUCCESS ACCORDING TO SEX

Important Factors	Male		Female		X ²	Level of Sig.
	No.	%	No.	%		
Being in Love	44	48.35	42	48.84		
Determination	15	16.48	6	6.98		
Having Common Interests	16	17.58	15	17.44	5.06	n.s.
Compatibility of Personalities	16	17.58	23	26.74		

VITA

2

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