

RELATIONSHIP OF SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING, LIFE  
EXPERIENCES, SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND SELECTED  
DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES WITH  
DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT

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1974

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE  
August, 2001

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis committee including Dr. Don Boswell, Dr. Marie Miville, and Dr. Rockey Robbins for their valuable suggestions, encouragement, and editorial comments at key stages throughout this project. I thank my advisor and chair, Dr. Don Boswell, for his open and honest feedback as I endeavored on this rather significant midlife career change. Although not appreciated by all, I have enjoyed the open and forthright communication that we have shared. His perspectives and guidance have been especially helpful related to the study design, statistical analysis, and organization of the thesis report. I thank Dr. Boswell for his many editorial reviews of this thesis study in preparation for review by others on my thesis committee. I thank Dr. Rockey Robbins and Dr. Marie Miville for their most valuable contributions during the early formulation stages of this research. Specifically, Dr. Robbins shared my desire to make a contribution to the participants of this study as we brainstormed about the possibilities. In this regard, I also thank Dr. Boswell as he helped maintain a reasonable balance by reminding me that the best master's thesis is one that is completed. Thus, together Dr. Robbins and I agreed that consulting with and providing confidential feedback to participants related to their divorce adjustment could be a valuable service. I thank Dr. Robbins for his encouragement which is the epitome of his character. When I was struggling with a way to make this study of divorce adjustment unique, Dr. Marie Miville was an invaluable resource as we explored possibilities related to religion, spirituality, and culture. In this regard, I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Teresa Bear

for her suggestion of an article that became the catalyst for using the Spiritual Well-Being instrument in this study. I also thank Dr. Miville for her suggestions, encouragement, consultation, and editorial comments at key points during this research.

In addition to my thesis committee, I would like to thank the professors who have contributed significantly to my education at OSU and thus my ability to perform this study. Listed in chronological order of my encounter with them are Dr. Kay Bull, Dr. Michael Barnes, Dr. John Romans, Dr. Laura Barnes, Dr. Marcia Dickman, Dr. Carrie Winterowd, Dr. Teresa Bear, Dr. Suzy Burks, and Dr. Connie Fox.

I would like to thank the participants of this study for without them a study would not be possible. In this regard, I thank the facilitators and directors of the sites who participated in this study including Joan Henning, Mary Randolph, Jim Small, Corina Wright, Chip Olin, and Claudia Arthrell.

Many thanks to Impact Publishers for granting permission to use the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale instrument and profile. This was invaluable for measuring divorce adjustment and providing feedback to the participants of this study.

It is with great pleasure that I thank my wife, Susan, for supporting my journey and keeping the home fires burning. She is my best friend, soul mate, life long partner, and we revel in supporting each other's journey while sharing the adventure of life together. Susan has provided invaluable support through encouragement, editing, data entry, and assistance in administering the instruments of this study.

Finally and most profoundly related to this study, I thank God who is the foundation of my spiritual well-being. It is with His grace, His provision, and the relationship that He has made possible that forms my vision of life and helps me to embrace the rigor, challenges, and opportunities that life offers.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

During 1990, 1.2 million people were divorced concomitant with the marriage of 2.4 million. Of those entering marriage, 54 percent were for the first time while 46 percent had been previously married. These divorces involved over one million children, an average of .9 children per divorce decree (U. S. Census Bureau, 1999). Strikingly 40 to 60 percent of children will experience divorce of their parents at some time before the age of 18 (Glick, 1989; Jacobs, 1986). Divorce has significantly increased in the past thirty years in our society (U. S. Census Bureau, 1999; Jacobs, 1986). It is rare to find a person who has not been touched by divorce either personally or through a friend or relative (Jacobs, 1986).

Based on the amount of readjustment required, divorce ranks second only to the death of a spouse as the most stressful life event according to a commonly used measure of stressful life events (Holmes and Rahe, 1967). Although the initial development of this scale was based on perceived rather than actual stress, a substantial amount of subsequent research using actual life stresses has shown both prospectively and retrospectively that people experiencing more stress (including marital disruption) are more likely to become ill (Cline and Chosy, 1972; Holmes and Masuda, 1974). Of all the social variables relating to the distribution of psychopathology in the population, none has been more consistently found to be so crucial for the population than marital status (Cline and

Chosy, 1972; Holmes and Masuda, 1974). Persons who are divorced or separated have been repeatedly found to be over represented among psychiatric patients, while persons who are married and living with their spouses have been found to be underrepresented (Redick and Johnson, 1974).

Predominant factors identified in the literature that affect adjustment to divorce include issues related to the emotional impact of separation or divorce, economic and other lifestyle adjustments (e.g., life experiences), changes in social network and the availability of a social support system, and transitional issues related to child custody and the legal process for divorce (Levinger and Moles, 1979). Relatively few studies have been conducted to explore the effects of religion and spirituality on mental health (Wood, 1994). Recently, the relationship among religion, spirituality, and mental health have begun to be more fully explored.

There are two main hypotheses related to religious well-being that may be effectual to divorce adjustment. The first hypothesis contends that religion can “heal the soul” and give an “inner peace” to believers that the less or non-religious simply do not have. The second hypothesis states the opposite: religion is linked with anxiety and anger in its followers. Proponents of this second hypothesis say that many religions call on their followers to fear their god. They say that fearing a god could hardly calm someone’s nerves. Additionally, some religions hold negative views toward divorce and may cause divorced followers to feel alienated from the body of religious believers. A number of religions have had, and some still do have, restrictions about the participation of divorced persons in rituals of the denomination, such as the ability to take communion or the sacraments. Some also limit the ability of divorced persons to remarry and remain in

good standing as members of their denominations. Thus, the end of the marriage could produce the need for religious support and comfort, or it could produce a desire to withdraw from contacts for fear of disapproval or as a result of a feeling of personal failure in meeting denominational standards. Proponents of the second hypothesis also hold the view that religions do not provide concrete, visible help in the time of an individual's need. If an individual has relied on religion all their life, and, suddenly, a crisis appears such as marital separation, the individual may feel "let down." This can, obviously, cause quite a bit of anger, confusion, and anxiety (Koenig, 1994).

These two hypotheses related to religiosity will be formally evaluated in this study by testing for correlations between the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB) which measures Religious Well-Being (RWB) and Existential Well-Being (EWB) and the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS) (Ellison, 1983; Fisher & Bierhaus, 1994). All of the SWB items deal with transcendent concerns, or those aspects of experience which involve meaning, ideals, faith, commitment, purpose in life, and relationship to God. The SWB scale measures spiritual well-being, while distinguishing between two interrelated yet distinct aspects of spirituality: religious and existential well-being. Additionally, the Life Experiences Survey has four questions related to religious affiliation so that participants can rate their experiences on a -3 to +3 scale (Sarason, Johnson, & Siegel, 1978). This will be included in the evaluation by testing for correlations between the Life Experiences Survey scores and the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale.

Many measures that were developed to assess quality of life involved objective indicators and didn't assess the internal feelings or perceptions of respondents. Also very few mentioned the role of religion or spirituality in perceived well-being. According to a

Gallup Poll, 86% of Americans say that their religious beliefs are fairly or very important, and 34 % or 50 million Americans consider themselves to have been “born again” (Gallup, 1977-1978). Worldwide estimates indicate that over two billion people in the world have religious commitments. For most of these people, religious commitment plays an important role in how they live and experience life (Zimbardo, 1979). Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976) found that religious faith was a highly important domain for understanding quality of life experience for 25% of the American population. In pioneering work, Moberg and Brusek (1978) suggested that spiritual well-being is best conceived as having two dimensions. A vertical dimension refers to one’s sense of well-being in relationship to God. A horizontal dimension connotes one’s perception of life’s purpose and satisfaction apart from any specifically religious reference. The Spiritual Well-Being (SWB) Scale was developed to measure these two dimensions (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982). In light of evidence to suggest that many people report that their religious commitments affect their quality of life, the SWB will be used in this study to determine if there is a correlation between spiritual well-being and adjustment to divorce.

Allport and Ross (1967) were the first to characterize a person’s religious dimension into two categories, intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. Their study was intended to determine whether churchgoers are more prejudiced against ethnic minorities than non-church attenders. Instead of finding a linear relationship where low attenders had low prejudice scores and high attenders had high prejudice scores, Allport and Ross found a curvilinear relationship. To explain this, a person’s religious motivation was called into question. In essence, they found that an extrinsically religious person is motivated to use religion for personal gain. The religious beliefs are shaped into whatever

form for which the person's primary needs call. An intrinsically religious person finds their "master motive in religion" (Allport & Ross, 1967, p. 434). They internalize the rules, laws, and beliefs of their religion.

While marital separation and divorce are cast as important but single "life events" in many of the more popular stress inventories, studies show that separation can cause and happen concurrently with other life events that can positively or negatively affect psychological changes. Thus, there is a correlation between life events and psychological well-being (Chiriboga & Catron, 1991; Jacobson, 1983). As in adjusting to the death of a spouse, such factors may include emotional illness and previous losses that complicate adjustment to the new changes brought about by the divorce (Parkes & Weiss, 1983). In a London study of depression, events were rated as more or less stressful on the basis of "the configuration of factors surrounding a life event" (Parkes & Weiss, 1983). For example, two women may learn that their husbands are terminally ill. One may be socially isolated except for the contact with the husband, may have no assurance of remaining in her home once he dies, and may have had no warning of his illness; whereas for the second woman, the opposite may be true in all regards. The threat of the illness would therefore be much greater for the first woman.

Social support has been shown to aid people in adjusting to stressful life events (Berkman & Syme, 1979; LaRocca, House, & French, 1980). It is clear that loss of or changes in possessions, position, or relationships with others can disrupt accustomed ways of thinking, perceptions of the self, the performance of tasks, and interactions with others (Parkes, 1971). In such situations, a person's assumptions need to be examined and retested, and habits need to be modified. Supportive persons may reduce the feeling of

being in a strange, ambiguous, or unexpected situation. Support brings assurance that although some of a person's life has been modified, much of it remains the same. This continuity helps people to re-establish their equilibrium and routines more rapidly (Parkes, 1972). Primary groups such as families or friendship networks may provide support for an individual by taking over or assisting in the performance of instrumental tasks, by providing a setting for expressing emotions and testing coping strategies, and by maintaining continuity in other aspects of a person's life (Litwak, 1985). Relationships thus serve to buffer or mediate some of the stress-producing aspects of life changes (Dean & Lin, 1977). They do so, in part, by providing feedback or evidence from others that actions are leading to the desired outcome in the new situation and by providing opportunities to express pent-up emotions during conditions of uncertainty and indecision (Cassel, 1976).

The data on the economics of divorce more clearly reflect a picture of economic hardship, especially for women, with men suffering less than women and experiencing little or no financial difficulty (Arendell, 1986; Garfinkel & McLanahan, 1986). Dissolving a marriage in any jurisdiction requires dissolving an economic unit – a process described as “the economic divorce” (Bohannon, 1970). It has been argued that economic problems constitute the most important issue in the decision to divorce and in the consequences of the breakup (Becker, 1973). “Economic adaptations” are financial changes made by the divorced in anticipation of or in response to the divorce. Adaptive strategies are the mechanisms families use to regain control over desired outcomes in the face of economic change (Moen, Kain, & Elder, 1983).

It appears divorce adjustment is time related. The longer time postdivorce, the more adjusted individuals become to divorce. The mean scores for length of separation with the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS) indicate scores increase (i.e., adjustment to divorce improves) the longer the time interval since separation. There is a high correlation between length of total time since separation and scores on the FDAS (Fisher & Bierhaus, 1994).

#### Purpose of the Study

Given the growing divorce rates now exceeding one million annually and with a greater propensity of future marriages involving those who have been previously married, this study will determine variables correlated to divorce adjustment. Two variables that have been suggested that may relate to divorce adjustment are religious well-being and life experiences which have not been previously studied in this context. Religious well-being and life experiences will be studied in the context of other issues that may correlate to divorce adjustment including income, total time since separation, sex, and social support. With a better understanding of factors that correlate to divorce adjustment, mental health professionals' awareness and understanding may provide more empathic and enlightened care of their clients.

#### Definition of Terms

**Religion** – Religion is “(1) an individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and patterns of behavior, in relation to (2) the supernatural, and usually includes (3) a community of believers” (Mickley, Carson, & Soeken, 1995, p. 346).



**Spiritual well-being** – Spiritual well-being is the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community, and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness (National Interfaith Coalition on Aging, 1975).

**Extrinsic religiosity** – Extrinsic is the dimension of religion in which the individual uses religion for self-serving purposes such as for comfort from sorrows or misfortunes, socialization, establishment in the community, view that other things are more important than religion, and are more inclined to compromise beliefs to protect their social and economic wellbeing. Allport and Ross (1967, p. 434) describe the dimension in this way: “The embraced creed is lightly held or else selectively shaped to fit more primary needs.” This approach to religion is utilitarian. An extrinsic person “turns to God, but without turning away from self” (p. 434).

**Intrinsic religiosity** – Intrinsic is the dimension of religion in which the individual carries their religious beliefs into their everyday living, provides a sense of meaning in life, desires to spend time in religious thought and meditation to feel the presence of God or the divine being, want to learn about their religion, and participate in prayer and religious affiliations. An intrinsic person finds their master motive in religion. This individual’s “other needs ... are regarded as of less ultimate significance, and they are ... brought into harmony with the religious beliefs and prescriptions” (Allport and Ross, 1967, p. 434). This person internalizes the creed and follows it completely.

**Social support** – Social support is emotional, material, or informational assistance provided by other people. Social support provides meaningful attachments to others, integration in a network of shared relationships, opportunity for nurturing others and being nurtured by them, reassurance of an individual’s worth through performance of

valued social roles, a sense of reliable alliance with kin, and access to guidance in times of stress (Cobb, 1976). The Social Support Behaviors (SS-B) Scale, consists of 45 items designed to tap five modes of support: emotional support, socializing, practical assistance, financial assistance, and advice/guidance (Vaux, Riedel, & Stewart, 1987).

**Divorce adjustment** - To have adjusted, a person must have sufficiently mastered the social, psychological, and economic events facing him or her that he or she is able to go about the tasks – and pleasures – of daily life without difficulty. Thus, “adjustment” is defined as “being relatively free of symptoms of psychological disturbance, having a sense of self-esteem, and having put the marriage and former partner in enough perspective that one’s identity is no longer tied to being married or to the former partner.” Such a definition assumes that a person has been able to put enough psychological distance between himself or herself and the divorce to be able to move ahead with his or her life. This does not mean that divorce-related problems and issues will not continue to arise, but that an individual will be able to deal with these in a relatively straightforward manner (Kitson & Holmes, 1992). The Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS) attempts to measure a person’s adjustment to the ending of a love-relationship. The six subtest scores are based on 25 questions to measure feelings of self-worth, 22 questions to measure disentanglement from the former love relationship, 12 questions to measure feelings of anger, 24 questions for symptoms of grief, 8 questions for rebuilding social trust, and 9 questions for social self-worth.

**Life experiences** - While marital separation and divorce are cast as important but single “life events” in many of the more popular stress inventories, studies show that separation can cause and happen concurrently with other life experiences that can

positively or negatively affect psychological changes. Thus, the principle of the relationship between experiences and psychological well-being is established (Chiriboga & Catron, 1991; Jacobson, 1983). The Life Experiences Scale (LES) is a 47-item self-report measure that allows respondents to indicate events that they have experienced during the past year (Sarason, Johnson, & Siegel, 1978).

#### Significance of the Study

This study is designed for mental health practitioners and theorists and those with an interest in factors correlated to divorce adjustment. This study also addresses the issue of life experiences, spiritual, and religious well-being, which have not been previously studied in context of divorce adjustment.

#### Assumptions

It is assumed that the subjects will answer honestly without concern for what might be socially acceptable. To this end, subjects will be assured of complete anonymity. Second, it is assumed that those who respond to the study are not solely pro-religious or anti-religious. Third, it is assumed that the instruments measure the constructs intended for this study and that these measurements are interval quality.

#### Limitations

First, the sample in the present study was not a random sample of all those experiencing divorce. It was a sample from among those who presented at the sites willing to participate in this study. Second, the homogeneous nature of the sample does not reflect the greater variance in the population with regard to demographic variables

such as ethnicity, age-range, socioeconomic status, religion; therefore, generalizeability of the results may be limited. Third, all data were collected using paper and pencil self-report instruments. This method of data collection may be subject to the influence of social desirability and fake good responses. Thus, the generalizeability of the results may be limited. Fourth, the study is correlational and will not confirm cause-effect relationships.

### Research Questions

This study is an attempt to answer the following five specific research questions addressed in this study:

1. Is there a significant relationship between selected demographic variables (sex, total time since separation, and income) and divorce adjustment?
2. Is there a significant relationship between spiritual well-being and divorce adjustment?
3. Is there a significant relationship between family/friends support and divorce adjustment?
4. Is there a significant relationship between life experiences and divorce adjustment?
5. Is there a linear combination of sex, total time of separation, income, spiritual well-being, life experiences, and social support that significantly correlate with divorce adjustment?

## Hypotheses

Based on research conducted and to address the research questions previously cited, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1A – 1C: In general, there is no relationship between selected demographic variables (sex, total time since separation, and income) and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 1A: There is no relationship between sex and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 1B: There is no relationship between total time since separation and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 1C: There is no relationship between income and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 2A – 2C: In general, there is no relationship between spiritual well-being and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 2A: There is no relationship between total spiritual well-being and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 2B: There is no relationship between religious well-being and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 2C: There is no relationship between existential well-being and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 3A – 3B: In general, there is no relationship between family and friends support and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 3A: There is no relationship between family support total and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 3B: There is no relationship between friends support total and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 4A – 4C: In general, there is no relationship between life experiences and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 4A: There is no relationship between total life experiences and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 4B: There is no relationship between positive life experiences and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 4C: There is no relationship between negative life experiences and total divorce adjustment.

Hypothesis 5: There is no linear combination of sex, total time of separation, income, spiritual well-being, life experiences, and social support that has a significant correlation with divorce adjustment.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature to follow will examine the data concerning spiritual and religious well-being, intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, and life experiences to determine how these constructs relate to issues associated with divorce adjustment. These constructs will be studied in the context of other issues that may correlate to adjustment including income, total time since separation, sex, and social support.

#### Religious Dimension and Mental Health

Mental health professionals openly discuss the many cultural aspects of the client's experiential reality often to the exclusion of religion and how these affect the counseling and recovery process. An area receiving increasing attention is the issue of spirituality and religiosity and how these may relate to mental health. "Scientists and philosophers have often viewed religious belief as little more than magical thinking employed in the pathetic attempt to understand nature and to influence natural forces that are otherwise beyond our control" (Alcock, 1992, p. 122). As a result, many view religion as irrational and mentally unhealthy. Likewise, religious leaders have often viewed mental health professionals as charlatans who meddle in matters that should be left to religious leaders. Many in the mental health field have been wary of religion's effect on mental health while many active in religion have been wary of the mental health field's effect on the perception of religion (Bergin, 1983). This type of stand-off has been in effect without

any empirical data to support either position for many years. Recently, more research is addressing this area of interest.

William James was among the first to discuss religion and mental health. In his book, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, James (1985) writes on healthy minded religion and the religion of the “sick soul.” He quoted from a variety of individuals. Some said that a separateness from God was the cause for any individual’s sickness, mental or otherwise, and conversely, closeness to God produced health. Others stated the opposite, that those who are close to a god are the ones more prone to poor mental health, and those who are not close to a god are healthy.

As an example of this dichotomous thinking, James states that the Catholic practice of confession and absolution is grounded in a philosophy of healthy-mindedness. After confession, an individual starts over with a clean slate. Repentance is very similar to confession and absolution in other Christian denominations. On the other hand, critics have said that guilt (and thereby anxiety and anger) can thrive within a religious framework.

Allport and Ross (1967) were the first to characterize a person’s religious dimension into two categories, intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. Their study was intended to determine whether churchgoers are more prejudiced against ethnic minorities than non-church attenders. Instead of finding a linear relationship where low attenders had low prejudice scores and high attenders had high prejudice scores, Allport and Ross found a curvilinear relationship. To explain this, a person’s religious motivation was called into question. In essence, they found that an extrinsically religious person is motivated to use religion for personal gain. The religious beliefs are shaped into whatever



form for which the person's primary needs call. An intrinsically religious person finds their "master motive in religion" (Allport & Ross, 1967, p. 434). They internalize the rules, laws, and beliefs of their religion.

From a review of the literature, Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis (1993) identified seven different conceptions of mental health. These seven conceptions are absence of mental illness, appropriate social behavior, freedom from worry and guilt, personal competence and control, self-acceptance or self-actualization, personality unification and organization, and open-mindedness and flexibility. For the extrinsically motivated individual, a negative relationship was found in the clear majority of the eighty studies. For the intrinsically motivated individual, the results were not as clearly delineated. Just over half of the studies showed a positive relationship with good mental health while approximately fifteen percent showed a negative relationship with good mental health. The remainder showed no clear relationship with good mental health.

Many measures that were developed to assess quality of life involved objective indicators and didn't assess the internal feelings or perceptions of respondents. Also very few mentioned the role of religion or spirituality in perceived well-being. It is probably because such terms as "spiritual" and "well-being" appear to have subjective meanings which are so impossible to operationalize that behavioral scientists have avoided the study of spiritual health and disease. According to a Gallup Poll, 86% of Americans say that their religious beliefs are fairly or very important, and 34 % or 50 million Americans consider themselves to have been "born again" (Gallup, 1977-1978). Worldwide estimates indicate that over two billion people in the world have religious commitments. For most of these people, religious commitment plays an important role in how they live

and experience life (Zimbardo, 1979). In pioneering work, Moberg and Brusek (1978) suggested that spiritual well-being is best conceived as having two dimensions. A vertical dimension refers to one's sense of well-being in relationship to God. A horizontal dimension connotes one's perception of life's purpose and satisfaction apart from any specifically religious reference. To have a sense of existential well-being is "to know what to do and why, who (we) are, and where (we) belong" (Blaikie & Kelsen, 1979, p. 137) in relation to ultimate concerns. Both dimensions involve transcendence, or a stepping back from and moving beyond what is. The Spiritual Well-Being (SWB) Scale was developed to measure these two dimensions (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982).

"It is the spirit of human beings, which enables and motivate us to search for meaning and purpose in life, to seek the supernatural or some meaning that transcends us, to wonder about our origins and our identities, to require morality and equity. It is the spirit that synthesizes the total personality and provides some sense of energizing direction and order. The spiritual dimension does not exist in isolation from our psyche and soma, but provides an integrative force. It affects and is affected by our physical state, feelings, thoughts, and relationships. If we are spiritually healthy, we will feel generally alive, purposeful, and fulfilled, but only to the extent that we are psychologically healthy as well. The relationship is bi-directional because of the intricate intertwining of these two parts of the person. To a lesser extent the spiritual well-being of person is affected by physical well-being. There are numerous cases of courage (we might better term it faith in ultimate purpose and in one's self) which has allowed people to move beyond or to transcend physical handicaps and suffering, and to experience spiritual and emotional health and growth" (Ellison, 1983, pp. 331-332). The key seems

to be holding on to one's deepest spiritual commitments and being able to interpret the suffering within the context of deeper positive meaning (Frankl, 1963).

Anger is a relatively new research area as compared to anxiety, depression, and aggression. Consequently, few studies have been conducted concerning the relationship between religion and anger.

Bohannon (1991) conducted a study involving grieving parents. The subjects were 143 mothers and 129 fathers who had lost a child during the past eighteen months. Though the focus of the study was not entirely on anger, Bohannon found that grieving mothers and grieving fathers who attended church on a regular basis did have significantly lower levels of grief-related anger than their counterparts who were not regular church attendees.

Morgan (1983) conducted a study to determine whether religious people are "nicer" than non-religious people. Morgan used the National Opinion Research Center's 1974 interview of 1,476 noninstitutionalized adult citizens of the United States. Results of the analysis of the interviews show that the prayerful are less likely to get very angry, i.e., "feel like smashing things" (p. 690).

Acklin, Brow, and Mauger (1983) conducted a study partially concerning anger measured by one subscale of the Grief Experience Inventory and dimension of religion measured by the Religious Orientation Scale (Allport & Ross, 1967). Subjects for their study were adult cancer patients at a Baptist medical center. The authors found intrinsic religiosity and church attendance to be inversely related to anger and hostility in cancer patients.

Two studies identified a significantly high correlation relationship between the Religious Well-Being (RWB) subscale of the Spiritual Well-Being (SWB) instrument and the Intrinsic subscale of the Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) instrument (Ellison, 1983; Allport & Ross, 1967). The first study of 500 participants including men, women, housewives, college students, young adults, senior citizens, high school students, married and single persons, religious and non-religious people from large cities, small cities, and rural areas reported a Pearson correlation coefficient of .79, ( $p < .001$ ) between the SWB - RWB and ROS Intrinsic Scale (Ellison, 1983). The second study of 401 college students from three Western universities reported a correlation of .74 ( $p < .01$ ) between the SWB - RWB and ROS Intrinsic Scale (Park, Meyers, & Czar, 1998). This second study included 256 females, 144 males and one participant who did not report his or her sex. The students ranged in age from 17 – 58 years of age ( $M = 23.53$ ,  $SD = 7.26$ ) and were 50.1% Caucasian, 20.0% Asian, 10.5% Hispanic, 8.5% African-American, 1.7% Native American, and 7.7% other, with 1.5% not reporting their ethnicity. In total, 32.2% identified themselves as Christians, 30.9% were Catholics, 6.5% were Buddhists, 11.2% were of some other faith, 16.5% reported that they had no religious denomination, and 2.7% did not answer the question (Park, Meyers, & Czar, 1998).

#### Life Events and Stress in the Context of Marital Separation and Divorce

While marital separation and divorce are cast as important but single “life events” in many of the more popular stress inventories, studies show that separation can cause and happen concurrently with other life events that can positively or negatively affect

psychological changes. Thus, the principle of the relationship between events and psychological well-being is established (Chiriboga & Catron, 1991; Jacobson, 1983). As in adjusting to the death of a spouse, such factors may include emotional illness and previous losses that complicate adjustment to the new changes brought about by the divorce (Parkes & Weiss, 1983). In a London study of depression, events were rated as more or less stressful on the basis of “the configuration of factors surrounding a life event” (Parkes & Weiss, 1983). For example, two women may learn that their husbands are terminally ill. One may be socially isolated except for the contact with the husband, may have no assurance of remaining in her home once he dies, and may have had no warning of his illness; whereas for the second woman, the opposite may be true in all regards. The threat of the illness would therefore be much greater for the first woman.

#### Divorce Adjustment

To have adjusted, a person must have sufficiently mastered the social, psychological, and economic events facing him or her that he or she is able to go about the tasks – and pleasures – of daily life without difficulty. Thus, “adjustment” is defined as being relatively free of symptoms of psychological disturbance, having a sense of self-esteem, and having put the marriage and former partner in enough perspective that one’s identity is no longer tied to being married or to the former partner (Kitson & Holmes, 1992). Such a definition assumes that a person has been able to put enough psychological distance between himself or herself and the divorce to be able to move ahead with his or her life. This does not mean that divorce-related problems and issues will not continue to arise, but that an individual will be able to deal with these in a relatively straightforward manner (Kitson & Holmes, 1992).

During the early stages of a divorce, data (Kitson & Holmes, 1992) illustrate the dislocating impact of divorce in a number of areas of individuals' lives; indicate either that women were more affected by these than men or that women were more willing to acknowledge their distress; and support the finding from other retrospective research concerning initially high levels of divorce distress that decrease with time (Albrecht, Bahr, & Goodman, 1983). Within two years, data indicated the divorced had less subjective distress, improved self-esteem, decreased attachment, fewer illness contacts, and fewer reported psychosomatic complaints. These data support the view that divorce in its early stages represents a crisis during which individuals experience difficulties in adjustment and the passing of time correlates to improved adjustment to marital separation and divorce (Kitson & Holmes, 1992).

#### Implications of Economics for Marital Separation and Divorce

Data on the economics of divorce more clearly reflect a picture of economic hardship, especially for women, with men suffering less or no financial difficulty (Arendell, 1986; Garfinkel & McLanahan, 1986). Dissolving a marriage in any jurisdiction requires dissolving an economic unit – a process described as the economic divorce (Bohannon, 1970). It has been argued that economic problems constitute the most important issue in the decision to divorce and in the consequences of the breakup (Becker, 1973). Economic adaptations are financial changes made by the divorced in anticipation of or in response to the divorce. Adaptive strategies are the mechanisms families use to regain control over desired outcomes in the face of economic change (Moen, Kain, & Elder, 1983).

## Social Support

Social support is help that people receive in performing the activities required or permitted by their social roles. Support springs from the bonds and obligations of relationships with family, friends, and acquaintances (at work, at school, and in organizations), as well as from contacts with helping professionals (Lin, Simeone, Ensel, & Kuo, 1979). Social support provides meaningful attachments to others, integration in a network of shared relationships, opportunity for nurturing others and being nurtured by them, reassurance of an individual's worth through performance of valued social roles, a sense of reliable alliance with kin, and access to guidance in times of stress (Cobb, 1976). The nature of help can range from informal encouragement by family and friends to payment for professional services or provision of services or money by governmental or voluntary agencies.

Social support has been shown to aid people in adjusting to stressful life events (Berkman & Syme, 1979; LaRocca, House, & French, 1980). It is clear that loss of or changes in possessions, position, or relationships with others can disrupt accustomed ways of thinking, perceptions of the self, the performance of tasks, and interactions with others (Parkes, 1971). In such situations, a person's assumptions need to be examined and retested, and habits need to be modified. Supportive persons may reduce the feeling of being in a strange, ambiguous, or unexpected situation. Support brings assurance that although some of a person's life has been modified, much of it remains the same. This continuity helps people to re-establish their equilibrium and routines more rapidly (Parkes, 1972). Primary groups such as families or friendship networks may provide support for an individual by taking over or assisting in the performance of instrumental

tasks, by providing a setting for expressing emotions and testing coping strategies, and by maintaining continuity in other aspects of a person's life (Litwak, 1985). Relationships thus serve to buffer or mediate some of the stress-producing aspects of life changes (Dean & Lin, 1977). They do so, in part, by providing feedback or evidence from others that actions are leading to the desired outcome in the new situation and by providing opportunities to express pent-up emotions during conditions of uncertainty and indecision (Cassel, 1976). Friendship networks, interest groups, and human service agencies may partially substitute for or supplement help from the family if it alone cannot provide enough or appropriate support. This is more likely when the family cannot adequately respond, such as situations in which the performance of formerly routinized tasks is thrown into disarray, patterns of exchange and reciprocity are disrupted, or family members do not have the skills needed to provide appropriate assistance.

The availability of supports depends in part on a person's position in a network of persons willing and able to provide support (McLanahan, Wedemeyer, & Adelberg, 1981). Members of primary groups are not always able or willing to help. A divorce upsets the pattern of exchange in a family and kin network. Family members may not approve of the decision to divorce. There may be strained relationships with in-laws. Some friends become defined as "his" or "hers," thereby further cutting potential support (Miller, 1970). In situations such as divorce, the source and type of support available to a person may be more problematic, and help may be needed from outside one's circle of family and friends. It is also the case that the help offered may not actually be helpful. "Help" may include bad advice, actions that restrict a person's options, or advice that



leads to anger and frustration (“I’m telling you this for your own good.” “What you need to do is ...”).

Sometimes one’s extended family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors provide much-needed support during and after divorce. Having others available to listen, to sympathize, and to validate the unhappy person’s worth is extremely helpful. Women with a strong network of friends and family who can provide financial assistance, temporary housing, and child care during the crisis and transition fared much better than their counterparts who were lonely and isolated (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

For men who move out of the family home and lose their daily involvement in family life, the support system may be more amorphous. It may include their parents, siblings, and/or colleagues. Some men maintain contact with both single and married friends either by telephone or in person. Lacking this, or perhaps in addition, they may seek comfort or escape in alcohol, drugs, or gambling, or look for any available companionship at a bar. Some men become workaholics to fill the emptiness, and others increase time in recreational and athletic pursuits. Some ask friends to introduce them to potential dates, and others find themselves pursued.

Religion may provide support to individuals in a number of ways. Members of the clergy may provide direct assistance through counseling. Membership in a church or synagogue and attendance at its services can provide emotional solace, while interactions with other members may also provide support and a feeling of being a valued person. On the other hand, a number of religions have had, and some still do have, restrictions about the participation of divorced persons in rituals of the denomination, such as the ability to take communion or the sacraments; some also limit the ability of divorced person to

remarry and remain in good standing as members of their denominations. Thus, the end of the marriage could produce the need for religious support and comfort, or it could produce a desire to withdraw from contacts for fear of disapproval or as a result of a feeling of personal failure in meeting denominational standards (Kitson & Holmes, 1992).

### Summary

The review of the literature reveals the need for a study examining the relationship between Paloutzian and Ellison's (1982) Spiritual Well-Being and Sarason, Johnson and Siegel's (1978) Life Experiences Survey in the context of other factors including income, total time since separation, sex, and social support that may be correlated to divorce adjustment. Intrinsic religiosity effects may be indirectly addressed using the Religious Well-Being (RWB) scale of the Spiritual Well-Being (SWB) instrument since studies show significant correlations ( $r = .79, p < .001$ ;  $r = .74, p < .01$ ) between the SWB - RWB and the Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) intrinsic subscale (Ellison, 1983; Allport & Ross, 1967; Park, Meyers, & Czar, 1998).

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

This chapter discusses the study conducted to determine the validity of the hypotheses proposed for this research. The study participants, instrumentation, procedures, research design, data analysis, and limitations of the design are discussed.

#### Participants

The population of participants was selected from those presenting to divorce adjustment support groups and agencies in contact with those who have experienced divorce in a large Midwestern city. These groups and agencies were approached to allow data collection for this research. A total of 102 (59 female, 41 male, 2 did not indicate his or her sex) participants completed the instrument packets and made up the sample for this study. The number and percent for sex, ethnicity, marital status, income, level of education, who initiated the divorce, children, and religion are detailed in Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and range of scores for age, years married, and total time (years) of separation are shown in Table 2. The average age of the participants was 45, ranging from 24 to 70. The average number of years married was 16, ranging from 1.1 to 36 years. The average total time since separation was 2 years, ranging from 0.02 to 15 years. Histograms of participants' age, years married, total time (years) of separation, income, and level of education are shown in Figures 1 – 5, respectively.

Table 1

Number and Percent for sex, ethnicity, marital status, income, level of education, who initiated divorce, children, and religion

Category	Number	Percent
Sex		
Female	59	57.8
Male	41	40.2
Missing Data	2	2.0
Ethnicity		
Asian American	1	1.0
Caucasian	91	89.2
Hispanic/Latino	3	2.9
Native American	4	3.9
Other	1	1.0
Missing Data	2	2.0
Marital Status		
Not Separated	3	2.9
Separated	9	8.8
Divorce in process	18	17.6
Final Divorce	69	67.6
Single	1	1.0
Missing Data	2	2.0

Table Continued

Michigan State University Library

Table 1 (Continued)

Category	Number	Percent
<b>Income</b>		
Less than \$10,000	6	5.9
\$10,000 - \$25,000	21	20.6
\$25,000 - \$40,000	32	31.4
\$40,000 - \$60,000	18	17.6
Greater than \$60,000	18	17.6
Missing Data	7	6.9
<b>Level of Education</b>		
Not High School Graduate	2	2.0
High School Graduate	15	14.7
2 Years College or Technical School	40	39.2
Undergraduate Degree	27	26.5
Graduate Degree	15	14.7
Missing Data	3	2.9
<b>Who initiated divorce?</b>		
Both	16	15.7
Participant of study	20	19.6
Partner of participant	66	64.7

Table Continued

Table 1 (Continued)

Category	Number	Percent
<b>Children</b>		
No Children	27	26.5
Children less than or equal to 18 years	40	39.2
Children less than or equal to 25 years	19	18.6
Children greater than 25 years	16	15.7
<b>Religion</b>		
Baptist	17	16.7
Catholic	8	7.8
Episcopalian	1	1.0
Lutheran	1	1.0
Methodist	42	41.2
Mormon	1	1.0
Non-denominational	20	19.6
Other	5	4.9
Presbyterian	2	2.0
Unitarian	1	1.0
Missing Data	4	3.9

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Range of scores for age, years married, total time (years) of separation.

Category	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Age	97	24	70	44.98	7.72
Years Married	99	1.10	36	15.99	8.78
Total time (years) of separation	99	0.02	15	1.99	2.80

Data were collected from four sites with 75, 20, 5, and 2 participants from sites 1-4, respectively as detailed in Table 3. Although sites 1 and 2 were church sponsored, the program at site 1 was secular in content so that they may effectively reach out to the community at large, while the program at site 2 was Christian in orientation. Site 3 was a secular counseling agency, and site 4 was a large Midwestern university.

Table 3

Number and percentage of participants at different sites

Category	Number	Percent
Site 1	75	73.5
Site 2	20	19.6
Site 3	5	4.9
Site 4	2	2.0

Figure 1. Histogram of age.

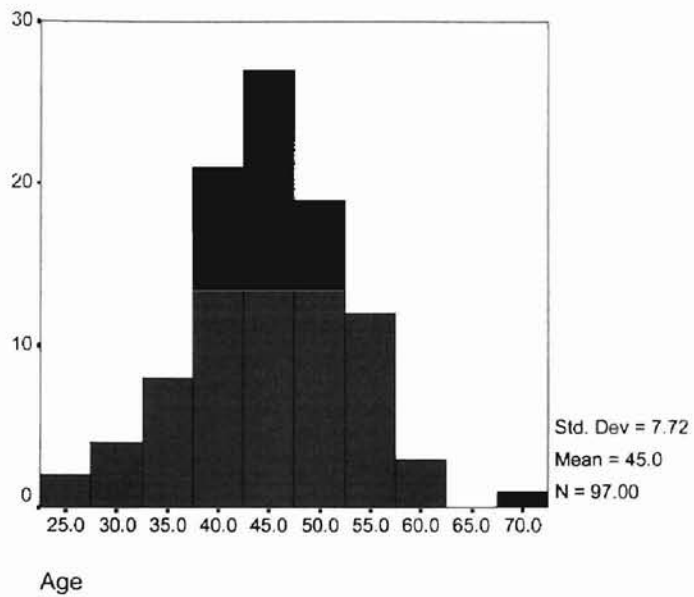
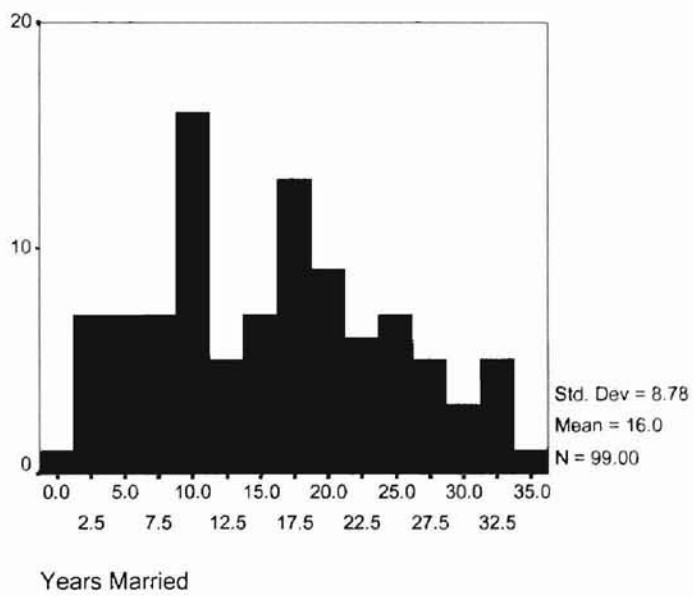


Figure 2. Histogram of years married.



Uthmaniyah University



Figure 3. Histogram of total time (years) of separation.

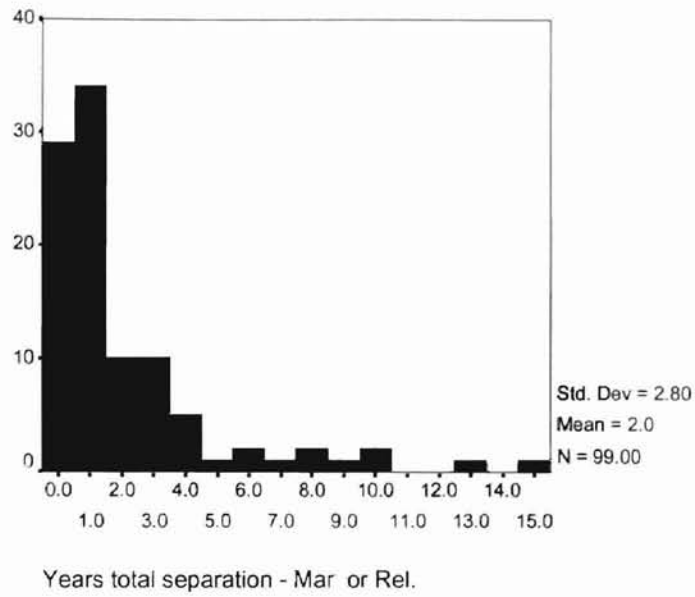


Figure 4. Histogram of Income.

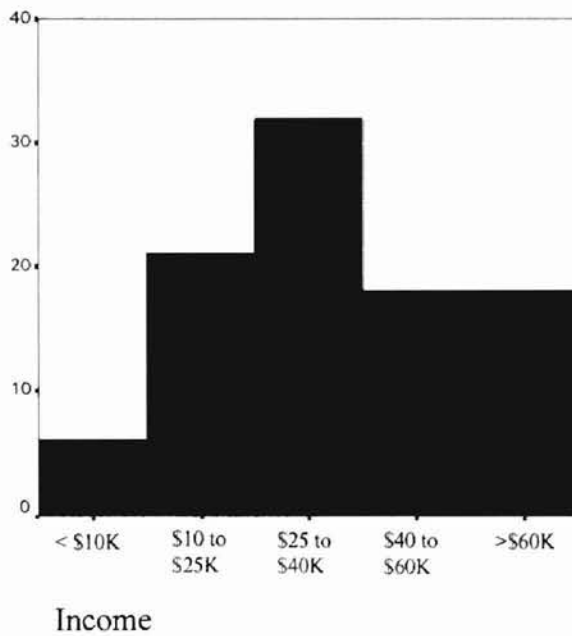
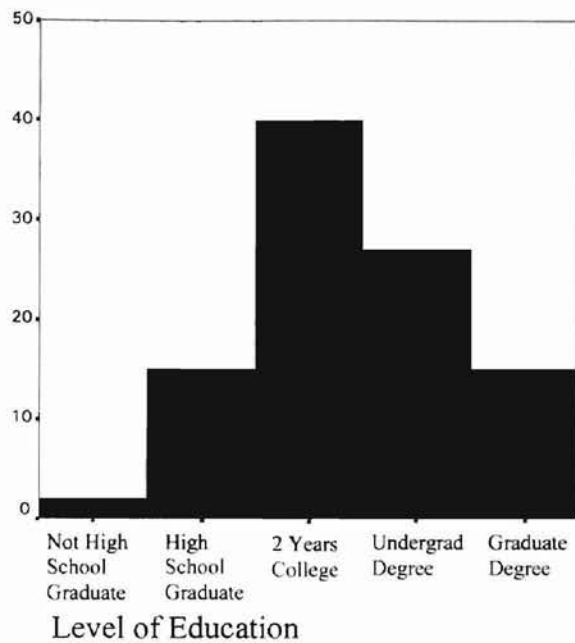


Figure 5. Histogram for level of education.



## Instruments

### Demographic Questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire, Appendix B, includes information about sex (i.e., male or female), length of time of marriage and since separation, number of children, and involvement in counseling or a support group. The questionnaire also requests information about ethnicity, religious affiliation, age, level of education, and income level.

### Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS)

The Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS), Appendix C, attempts to measure a person's adjustment to the ending of a love-relationship (Fisher & Bierhaus, 1994). It is not designed to measure a person's mental illness. The FDAS has 100 questions measured on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 ranging from 1- almost always to 5-almost never.

The FDAS has six subtest scores and a total score. The six subtest scores are based on 25 questions to measure feelings of self-worth, 22 questions to measure disentanglement from the former love relationship, 12 questions to measure feelings of anger, 24 questions for symptoms of grief, 8 questions for rebuilding social trust, and 9 questions for social self-worth.

The internal reliability of the FDAS is .98 for the total score and a range from .87 to .93 for the various subtests (Fisher & Bierhaus, 1994). There are indications of validity for this instrument.

When people take the FDAS, they frequently state, "These test questions are right on. This is exactly what I have been feeling" (Fisher & Bierhaus, 1994). Fisher and Bierhaus (1994) found that when facilitators of divorce adjustment seminars asked participants to vote for those who have experienced the most improvement in divorce adjustment while taking the seminar, there was a correlation between their votes and the participants having the highest gain scores between the pre-test and post-test on the FDAS. Thus, it appears the FDAS is measuring the same thing participants in the seminar define as divorce adjustment which is an indication of good face and content validity for the FDAS.

According to studies conducted by Fisher & Bierhaus (1994), it appears divorce adjustment is time related. The longer time post-divorce, the more adjusted individuals become to divorce as indicated by higher scores on the FDAS.

#### Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB)

For this study, the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB) was used as originally developed by the authors, except the name was changed to Belief Survey (BS)

(Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982). This name change was in response to concerns expressed by potential participating sites that a Spiritual Well-Being Scale may imply the site's intention of projecting the value of spirituality upon their clients.

In order to distinguish religious and existential items, all of the religious well-being (RWB) items contained a reference to God. The existential well-being (EWB) items contain no such reference. The SWB Scale yields three scores: (1) a total SWB score; (2) a summed score for religious well-being (RWB) items; (3) a summed score for existential well-being (EWB) items. Test-retest reliability coefficients were .93 (SWB), .96 (RWB), and .86 (EWB). Alpha coefficients reflecting internal consistency, were .89 (SWB), .87 (RWB), and .78 (EWB). The magnitude of these coefficients suggests that the SWB Scale and subscales have high reliability and internal consistency.

The SWB Scale appears to have sufficient validity for use as a quality of life indicator. Face validity of the SWB Scale is suggested by examination of the item content. Also, SWB scores correlated in predicted ways with several other scales. According to a study conducted by Paloutzian and Ellison (1982), people who scored high on SWB tended to be less lonely, more socially skilled, higher in self-esteem, and more intrinsic in their religious commitment.

#### Life Experiences Survey (LES)

The LES is a 47-item self-report measure that allows respondents to indicate events that they have experienced during the past year (Sarason, Johnson, & Siegel, 1978). It contains a list of 47 events plus items added for this study including eleven items specific to those experiencing divorce and four items associated with religious dimensions.

Thirty-four of the events listed in the LES are similar in content to those found in the Schedule of Recent Experiences, SRE, (Holmes & Rahe, 1967).

The format of the LES calls for subjects to rate separately the desirability and impact of events that they have experienced. Thus, they are asked to indicate those events experienced during the past year (0-6 months or 7 months – 1 year) as well as (a) whether they viewed the event as being positive or negative and (b) the perceived impact of the particular event on their life at the time of occurrence. Ratings are on a 7-point scale ranging from extremely negative (-3) to extremely positive (+3). Summing the impact ratings of those events designated as positive by the subject provides a positive change score. A negative change score is derived by summing the impact ratings of those events experienced as negative by the subject. By adding these two values, a total change score can be obtained, representing the total amount of rated change (desirable and undesirable) experienced by the subject during the past year.

Two test-retest reliability studies provide evidence for test-retest reliability (Sarason, Johnson, & Siegel, 1978). Results of the studies indicate reliability coefficients of .53 ( $p < .001$ ) and .61 ( $p > .05$ ) for positive scores, while coefficients of .88 ( $p < .001$ ) and .72 ( $p < .01$ ) were obtained for negative scores. Finally, the studies show reliability coefficients of .64 ( $p < .001$ ) and .72 ( $p < .01$ ) for total change scores. The time between the test-retest for these studies was 6 and 8 weeks respectively. It should be noted that test-retest reliability coefficients found with instruments of this type are likely to underestimate the reliability of the measure. That is, with a time interval of 6-8 weeks, subjects may actually experience a variety of events, both positive and negative, that may be reflected in responses given at the time of retesting. As these changes reflect the actual

occurrence of life changes, rather than simply inconsistencies in reporting, it would be inappropriate to consider the total variability in responding as error.

Correlations of the LES scores were compared to other instruments. A study of 100 college students resulted in a correlation of .46 ( $p < .001$ ) between the LES negative score and State Anxiety measured by the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970; Sarason, Johnson, & Siegel, 1978). Another study of 76 naval personnel correlates at .46 ( $p < .001$ ) between the LES negative score and State Anxiety (Sarason, Johnson, & Siegel, 1978).

Scores on the LES, the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, 1967), and the Internal-External (I-E) Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966) were obtained for a sample of 64 (34 males and 30 females) college students drawn from undergraduate psychology courses. Correlations between the LES negative score and the Beck Depression Inventory were .37 ( $p < .01$ ) which is better than the .17 correlation for the Schedule of Recent Experiences (SRE) (Sarason, Johnson, & Siegel, 1978; Holmes & Rahe, 1967). The LES and the Locus of Control Scale were significantly positively related ( $r = .32, p < .02$ ) indicating that individuals experiencing high levels of negative change appear to be more externally oriented, perceiving themselves as being less capable of exerting control over reinforcement contingencies in their environment (Sarason, Johnson, & Siegel, 1978).

Results of the studies indicate that the LES negative and total change scores are reasonably reliable over a 6 – 8 week interval, although the positive change score appears to be less stable. The negative change score is significantly related to a number of stress-related dependent measures. In addition, scale responses appear to be relatively free from social desirability biases.

It seems possible that life stress is most accurately conceptualized in terms of negative life changes rather than in terms of positive or total change (Sarason, Johnson, & Siegel, 1978). Their findings and those reported by others suggest that it is the negative change measure that should be used if one's purpose is to determine degree of "life stress."

#### Social Support Behaviors (SS-B) Scale

The Social Support Behaviors (SS-B) Scale consists of 45 items, each to be rated for support from family and friends, designed to tap five modes of support: emotional support, socializing, practical assistance, financial assistance, and advice/guidance (Vaux, Riedel, & Stewart, 1987). Five strategies were used to determine the validity of the SS-B: the classification of items by judges, an analogue simulation of samples deficient in each mode of support, an examination of levels of each mode of support provided for different problems, confirmatory factor analyses, and convergent and divergent validity analysis. Specifically, subscales of the SS-B would be expected to converge with similar, and diverge from different, subscales of the Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviors (ISSB) (Barrera, Sandler, & Ramsay, 1981; Vaux, Riedel, & Stewart, 1987).

Comparing obtained to intended classifications provides a measure of content validity. Overall, the mean percentage of judges (5 psychology faculty members sharing expertise in the study of social interactions, 8 psychology graduate students, and 25 undergraduates) correctly classifying items to their scales was very high: emotional support (92%), socializing (89%), practical assistance (91%), financial assistance (82%), and advice/guidance (90%) (Vaux, Riedel, & Stewart, 1987). These results strongly

support the content validity of the SS-B, and the correspondence of specific items to their respective theoretical definitions.

Vaux, Riedel, and Stewart (1987) conducted a study of sixty male and sixty female undergraduates to read a vignette which gave a general description of a same-sex individual with either adequate support or support that was deficient in one of the five modes. After reading the vignette, the participants were asked to complete the SS-B as they thought the described individual would. This procedure simulated samples deficient in specific modes of support. Mode-specific support scores were compared across conditions through one-way analysis of variance. The results confirmed that each mode of support was differentially sensitive to the role conditions, except that all tended to be suppressed by the emotional support deficiency condition. In summary, a role-adoption procedure was used to simulate samples deficient in each of the five modes of support. These samples provided differentiated ratings of the availability of specific supportive acts. Subjects adopting the role of someone deficient in a particular mode of support reported significantly lower availability of that mode of support on the SS-B, relative to subjects adopting either a no-deficiency role, or the role of someone deficient in different modes of support. Further, except that the emotional support deficiency condition tended to suppress all modes of support, the effect of role conditions was limited largely to the relevant mode of support. These findings provide further evidence for the sensitivity of SS-B subscales.

Cronbach alpha was computed for each of the five SS-B mode scales (both from family and from friends), for both the black and white student samples (100 white and 75 black). Of the 20 alphas resulting, the lowest was .82. Mean alphas for the family and



friend support mode scales were .90 and .89, respectively for the black sample, and .86 and .83 for the white sample. In short, all SS-B mode scales showed excellent internal consistency.

Factor loading of SS-B items (for family and friends) resulting from the confirmatory factor analyses resulted in factors 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 which refer, respectively, to emotional support, socializing, practical assistance, financial assistance, and advice/guidance. With one exception, all items loaded significantly and very highly (most > .70) on the factor they were designed to measure, and none loaded highly (most < .40) on any other factor. The exception was Item 1, which loaded on the emotional support rather than the socializing factor. The confirmatory factor analyses thus provided very strong evidence for the correspondence of specific SS-B items to the theoretical modes of support each was intended to operationalize (Vaux, Riedel, & Stewart, 1987).

In summary, evidence for the validity of the SS-B subscales was fairly consistent. Given general category descriptions, independent judges correctly classified items, indicating excellent content validity. Subjects in a role adoption procedure showed mode-specific deficits in available support corresponding to their role, providing evidence of subscale sensitivity. Associations between modes of available (SS-B) and enacted (ISSB) supportive behavior, though weak, largely showed predicted patterns of convergence but less adequate divergence. Significant variations were reported in mode-specific supportive behavior received in the face of different types of problems, once again indicating subscale sensitivity. Further, the pattern of reported support received for problems was theoretically interpretable. The internal consistency of mode-specific subscales was excellent. Finally, confirmatory factor analyses (performed on reported

availability of support from family and from friends) yielded a pattern of factor loadings that was highly consistent with that predicted.

### Procedures

Specific steps were followed in carrying out this study. Before conducting the study using the previously described instruments, the authors of the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS) were contacted and permission to use the respective instrument and associated divorce adjustment profile for participants was requested and obtained. Prior to the administration of the instruments, permission to use human subjects in a scientific study was requested and granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Oklahoma State University (see Appendix E). Upon receipt of permission from the IRB to complete the study, a prepared proposal was used to solicit participation by various sites within the area. As an incentive and service to participants, confidential feedback regarding their adjustment to divorce was provided. An example of the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS) Profile provided to participants is shown in Appendix D. Generally, those experiencing separation and divorce want to better understand what they are feeling and how this might relate to the experience of others.

Instruments were randomly ordered and sorted into individual packets. Individual test packets were placed in manila envelopes. A space was provided on the outside of the envelope for participants to write their confidential four-digit number. This four-digit number was used to ensure confidentiality when the divorce adjustment profiles were returned to participants after scoring the instruments.

During the first contact with participants, the sites allocated about one and a half-hours. During this time, the researcher informed the participants about the study,

requested volunteer participation to complete the instruments, and the researcher made contact with each participant to follow-up regarding question 90 on the FDAS which asks about thoughts of suicide. Two consent forms were included in each packet as shown in Appendix A. The researcher reviewed this form with the participants and then asked them to sign the form, which was then collected separately to maintain confidentiality. The second copy of the consent form was for the participants to keep for their records and as a resource since it listed counseling services in the area. Participants were asked to complete the demographic form as shown in Appendix B. Participants were then asked to complete each of the remaining instruments in an honest and open manner noting the different scales on each of the four instruments. Participants were asked to verify that they completed all the forms before the packets were collected. A total of 102 subject packets was collected.

During the second contact with participants, about 30 minutes were allocated for the researcher to review participants' confidential Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale Profiles. The Divorce Adjustment Scale Profile was returned to participants in sealed envelopes marked by their confidential four-digit number. Results from sites 1 and 2 were reviewed in general with all participants as a group. The researcher and participating sites allocated additional time to meet individually with interested participants to address questions regarding their adjustment to divorce. Divorce adjustment results were only reviewed individually with participants at sites 3 and 4. Thus, the researcher consulted with about 75 of the 102 participants individually during this study.

## Research Design

The general type of research design used in this study is a correlational and no cause and effect relationships were explored. Individual assessment packets each contained the same five measures: demographic questionnaire; the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB), which was renamed Belief Survey (BS); Social Support Behaviors (SSB) Scale; the Life Experiences Survey (LES); the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS); and the informed consent were distributed to subjects for completion and retrieved for scoring and analysis.

## Data Analysis

A total of 102 completed subject packets was collected for data analyses. Data from the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS) were entered in a spreadsheet to automatically score participants Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale Profile and print their confidential profile. These profiles were placed in individual manila folders with explanation materials and labeled with the participant's confidential number to provide feedback to them. Each participant's responses (demographic form, BS, SSB, LES, and FDAS results from their spreadsheets) were entered into a separate spreadsheet per participant to automatically score the instruments; thus, 102 spreadsheets were created. These 102 spreadsheets were organized into a spreadsheet workbook for convenient automatic consolidation of all relevant study data into one spreadsheet.

This consolidated spreadsheet was entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Variable labels, missing values, and special values were set-up within the program. Two participants did not complete the demographic form, and some

statements were left blank by participants. Considering the number of instruments, overall, the missing data is less than 1%.

Descriptive statistics were computed for all variables. In order to test the hypotheses, correlational analyses and multiple regression analyses using a forced entry method were performed. Results and these analyses are reported in the following chapter.

### Limitations of the Design

Limitations regarding the specific population used in this study may affect generalizeability. The conclusions obtained from the data analyses reported in Chapter 4 are made within the framework of the following limitations:

1. The sample in the present study was not a random sample of all those experiencing divorce. It was a sample from among those who presented at the sites willing to participate in this study.
2. The homogeneous nature of the sample does not reflect the greater variance in the population with regard to demographic variables such as ethnicity, age-range, socioeconomic status, religion; therefore, generalizeability of the results may be limited.
3. All data were collected using paper and pencil self-report instruments. This method of data collection may be subject to the influence of social desirability and fake good responses. Thus, the generalizeability of the results may be limited.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The present chapter reports the results of this study. Null hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 were tested through the use of zero-order correlational analysis. Null hypothesis 5 was tested through the use of multiple regression analysis.

#### Descriptive Statistics

The number, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values of participants' scores on the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS), Spiritual Well-Being (SWB), and Life Experiences Survey (LES), Social Support Behaviors Scale (SSB) statistics indicating support from family and friends are reported in Table 4.

Regarding the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scales (FDAS), the higher the score, the greater the adjustment to divorce. The six FDAS subscales are self-worth, entanglement, anger, grief, social intimacy, and social self-worth, scales 1-6, respectively. The Spiritual Well-Being (SWB) instrument has a total score, which is the sum of two subscale scores Existential Well-Being (EWB) and Religious Well-Being (RWB). Higher scores for the SWB scales indicate a greater measured level of well-being in their respective dimensions. The Social Support Behaviors (SSB) instrument has a total score, which is the sum of subscale scores for emotional, social, practical, financial, and advice support. The SSB provides separate measures for both family and friends support. Higher scores in each of the scales indicates a greater level of support in that dimension.

Table 4

Number, means, standard deviations, and range of scores for Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS), Spiritual Well-Being (SWB), Life Experiences Survey (LES), and Social Support Behaviors (SSB) for family and friends

Category	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
FDAS					
Total	102	7	96	41.86	26.17
Self-worth	102	8	94	43.64	26.51
Entanglement	102	6	100	44.65	28.44
Anger	102	4	96	40.94	25.93
Grief	102	5	94	38.62	24.70
Intimacy	102	0	100	40.37	27.59
Social Self-worth	102	6	100	56.35	29.45
SWB					
Total	102	50	118	87.97	16.87
RWB	102	22	60	46.96	10.42
EWB	102	19	60	41.01	9.37
LES					
Total	102	0	77	35.55	20.38
Positive	102	0	47	12.60	9.19
Negative	102	0	74	22.95	17.17

Table Continued

Table 4 (Continued)

Category	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Family Support					
Total	102	45	229	169.29	49.31
Emotional	102	10	50	38.64	11.31
Social	102	7	35	26.76	7.67
Practical	102	8	40	30.72	9.41
Financial	102	8	40	30.08	9.69
Advice	102	12	75	43.10	14.22
Friends Support					
Total	101	45	225	167.69	38.76
Emotional	101	10	50	40.02	9.36
Social	101	7	35	28.07	6.22
Practical	101	8	40	30.03	7.53
Financial	100	8	40	25.84	7.93
Advice	101	12	60	43.99	11.00

The Life Experiences Survey (LES) total score is a sum of positive and negative subscales scores. Higher scores indicate a greater measure in the specified scale. For example, a negative scale score of 20 indicates a greater level of negative experiences compared to a negative scale score of 10. Likewise, a positive score of 20 indicates a greater level of positive experiences compared to a positive scale score of 10.



When addressing research questions 1-4, appropriate correlation relationships will be presented in tables that include the FDAS total and subscale scores with relevant independent variables. Multi-linear regression analysis will be used to address research question 5. Post hoc analyses will address relationships that are not directly associated with the hypotheses of this study.

#### Research Question 1

Is there a significant relationship between selected demographic variables (sex, total time since separation, and income) and divorce adjustment? To test research question 1, three null hypotheses were developed. Null hypothesis 1A states there is no relationship between sex and total divorce adjustment. Null hypothesis 1B states there is no relationship between total time since separation and total divorce adjustment. Null hypothesis 1C states there is no relationship between income and total divorce adjustment. Null hypotheses 1A, 1B, and 1C were rejected.

A series of Pearson product moment correlations were used to test this hypothesis and are reported in Table 5. Multiple significant correlations, highlighted in Table 5 by bold text, were observed between these independent variable values and the FDAS scores.

#### Null Hypothesis 1A

There is no relationship between sex and total divorce adjustment. Sex was coded as 1 and 2 for females and males, respectively. Since there is a significant positive correlation between sex and total divorce adjustment as measured by FDAS7 – Total ( $r = .265, p < .01$ ), the null hypothesis was rejected. This positive correlation between sex coded as 1 and 2 for females and males, respectively and divorce adjustment indicates

that for this population, men generally had higher levels of adjustment to divorce as compared to women.

Other significant positive correlations were found between sex and FDAS3-Anger ( $r = .235, p < .05$ ), FDAS4-Grief ( $r = .332, p < .01$ ), and FDAS5-Social Intimacy ( $r = .353, p < .01$ ). No significant relationships were identified between sex and FDAS1-Self-worth ( $r = .191, p > .05$ ), FDAS2-Entanglement ( $r = .087, p > .05$ ), and FDAS6-Social Self-worth ( $r = .104, p > .05$ ).

Table 5

Pearson Correlation Coefficients between all FDAS scores and sex, total time (years) separation, and income

Independent Variable	FDAS7 Total	FDAS1 Self-worth	FDAS2 Entanglement	FDAS3 Anger	FDAS4 Grief	FDAS5 Intimacy	FDAS6 Social
Sex	.265**	.191	.087	.235*	.332**	.353**	.104
Total Sep.	.199*	.147	.222*	.198*	.157	.104	.154
Income	.241*	.250*	-.044	.207*	.355**	.217*	.282**

\*\* Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### Null Hypothesis 1B

There is no relationship between total time since separation and total divorce adjustment. Total time since separation includes all time of separation to the present time including time since the final divorce, if applicable. Since there is a significant positive correlation between total time since separation and total divorce adjustment

as measured by FDAS7 – Total ( $r = .199, p < .05$ ), the null hypothesis was rejected. This positive correlation indicates that greater time since separation correlates with higher levels of divorce adjustment.

Other significant positive correlations were found between total time (years) since separation and FDAS2-Entanglement ( $r = .222, p < .05$ ), and FDAS3-Anger ( $r = .198, p < .05$ ). No significant correlations were identified between total time since separation and FDAS1-Self-worth ( $r = .147, p > .05$ ), FDAS4-Grief ( $r = .157, p > .05$ ), FDAS5-Social Intimacy ( $r = .104, p > .05$ ), and FDAS6-Social Intimacy ( $r = .154, p > .05$ ).

#### Null Hypothesis 1C

There is no relationship between income and total divorce adjustment. Income was coded 1 through 5 with increasing incomes from 1 through 5, respectively. Since there is a significant positive correlation between income and total divorce adjustment as measured by FDAS7 – Total ( $r = .241, p < .05$ ), the null hypothesis was rejected. This positive correlation indicates that those with higher incomes correlate with higher levels of divorce adjustment.

Other significant positive correlations were identified between income and FDAS1-Self-worth ( $r = .250, p < .05$ ), FDAS3-Anger ( $r = .207, p < .05$ ), FDAS4-Grief ( $r = .355, p < .01$ ), FDAS5-Social Intimacy ( $r = .217, p < .05$ ), and FDAS6-Social Self-worth ( $r = .282, p < .01$ ). No significant correlation was identified between income and FDAS2-Entanglement ( $r = -.044, p > .05$ ).

## Research Question 2

Is there a significant relationship between spiritual well-being and total divorce adjustment? To test research question 2, three null hypotheses were developed. Null hypothesis 2A states there is no relationship between total spiritual well-being and total divorce adjustment. Null hypothesis 2B states there is no relationship between religious well-being and total divorce adjustment. Null hypothesis 2C states there is no relationship between existential well-being and total divorce adjustment. Null hypotheses 2A, 2B, and 2C were rejected.

A series of Pearson product moment correlations were used to test these hypotheses as reported in Table 6. The independent variables of hypotheses 2A, 2B, and 2C were measured by the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB) whose total scale (SWB – Total) is the sum of the two subscales Religious Well-Being (SWB –RWB) and Existential Well-Being (SWB – EWB). Multiple significant correlations, highlighted in Table 6 by bold text, were observed between these independent variable values and the FDAS scores.

Table 6

### Pearson Correlation Coefficients between all FDAS scores and SWB scores

Independent Variable	FDAS7 Total	FDAS1 Self-worth	FDAS2 Entanglement	FDAS3 Anger	FDAS4 Grief	FDAS5 Intimacy	FDAS6 Social
SWB-Total	<b>.518**</b>	<b>.551**</b>	<b>.316**</b>	<b>.293**</b>	<b>.584**</b>	<b>.263**</b>	<b>.425**</b>
SWB-RWB	<b>.208*</b>	<b>.263**</b>	.065	.068	<b>.304**</b>	.055	<b>.237*</b>
SWB-EWB	<b>.701**</b>	<b>.700**</b>	<b>.496**</b>	<b>.451**</b>	<b>.713**</b>	<b>.411**</b>	<b>.501**</b>

\*\* Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### Null Hypothesis 2A

There is no relationship between total spiritual well-being and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant positive correlation between Spiritual Well-Being – Total and total divorce adjustment as measured by FDAS7 – Total ( $r = .518, p < .01$ ), the null hypothesis was rejected. This positive correlation indicates that there is a correlation between higher levels of spiritual well-being and higher levels of divorce adjustment.

Significant positive correlations were identified between SWB-Total and all FDAS scales. Specifically, significant positive correlations were identified between SWB-Total and FDAS1-Self-worth ( $r = .551, p < .01$ ), FDAS2-Entanglement ( $r = .316, p < .01$ ), FDAS3-Anger ( $r = .293, p < .01$ ), FDAS4-Grief ( $r = .584, p < .01$ ), FDAS5-Social Intimacy ( $r = .263, p < .01$ ), and FDAS6-Social Self-worth ( $r = .425, p < .01$ ).

### Null Hypothesis 2B

There is no relationship between religious well-being and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant positive correlation between the Religious Well-Being subscale of the Spiritual Well-Being Instrument (SWB – RWB) and total divorce adjustment as measured by FDAS7 – Total ( $r = .208, p < .05$ ), the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, higher levels of religious well-being correlate with higher levels of divorce adjustment.

Other significant positive correlations were identified between the Religious Well-Being (SWB – RWB) and FDAS1-Self-worth ( $r = .263, p < .01$ ), FDAS4-Grief ( $r = .304, p < .01$ ), and FDAS6-Social Self-worth ( $r = .237, p < .05$ ). No significant relationships were identified between SWB-RWB and FDAS2-Entanglement

( $r = .065$ ,  $p > .05$ ), FDAS3-Anger ( $r = .068$ ,  $p > .05$ ), FDAS5-Social Intimacy ( $r = .055$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

#### Null Hypothesis 2C

There is no relationship between existential well-being and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant positive correlation between the Existential Well-Being subscale of the Spiritual Well-Being Instrument (SWB – EWB) and total divorce adjustment as measured by FDAS7 – Total ( $r = .701$ ,  $p < .01$ ), the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, this positive correlation indicates that higher levels of existential well-being correlate with higher levels of divorce adjustment.

Other significant positive correlations were identified between Existential Well-Being (SWB-EWB) and all FDAS scales. Specifically, significant positive correlations were identified between SWB-EWB and FDAS1-Self-worth ( $r = .700$ ,  $p < .01$ ), FDAS2-Entanglement ( $r = .496$ ,  $p < .01$ ), FDAS3-Anger ( $r = .451$ ,  $p < .01$ ), FDAS4-Grief ( $r = .713$ ,  $p < .01$ ), FDAS5-Social Intimacy ( $r = .411$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and FDAS6-Social Self-worth ( $r = .501$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

#### Research Question 3

Is there a significant relationship between family/friends support and divorce adjustment? To test research question 3, two null hypotheses were developed. Null hypothesis 3A states there is no relationship between family support total and total divorce adjustment. Null hypothesis 3B states there is no relationship between friends support total and total divorce adjustment. Null hypothesis 3A was accepted. Null hypothesis 3B was rejected.

A series of Pearson product moment correlations were used to test these hypotheses and are reported in Table 7. Multiple significant correlations, highlighted in Table 7 by bold text, were observed between these variables.

#### Null Hypothesis 3A

There is no relationship between family support total and total divorce adjustment. Family Support was measured by the Social Support Behaviors Scale (SSB), whose total score is the sum of the subscales for emotional, social, practical, financial, and advice support. Since there is no significant relationship between the Family – Total score and total divorce adjustment as measured by the FDAS7 – Total ( $r = .162$ ,  $p > .05$ ), the null hypothesis was accepted. Thus there is no significant correlation between total family support and divorce adjustment.

Although there was no significant correlation between Family Support – Total and FDAS7 – Total, other significant correlations exist between the subscales of these instruments as reported in Table 7. Significant positive correlations were found between Family Support - Total and FDAS1-Self-worth ( $r = .225$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and FDAS5-Social Intimacy ( $r = .212$ ,  $p < .05$ ). No significant correlations were identified between Family Support - Total and FDAS2-Entanglement ( $r = .074$ ,  $p > .05$ ), FDAS3-Anger ( $r = .094$ ,  $p > .05$ ), FDAS4-Grief ( $r = .145$ ,  $p > .05$ ), and FDAS6-Social Self-worth ( $r = .168$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Other significant correlations among Family Support and FDAS subscales are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Pearson Correlation Coefficients between all FDAS scores and Family and FriendsSupport (SSB).

Independent Variable	FDAS7 Total	FDAS1 Self-worth	FDAS2 Entanglement	FDAS3 Anger	FDAS4 Grief	FDAS5 Intimacy	FDAS6 Social
Family							
Total	.162	<b>.225*</b>	.074	.094	.145	<b>.212*</b>	.168
Emotional	<b>.216*</b>	<b>.269*</b>	.143	.100	.194	<b>.216*</b>	<b>.246*</b>
Social	<b>.210*</b>	<b>.275*</b>	.100	.145	.177	<b>.231*</b>	.185
Practical	.189	<b>.239*</b>	.104	.125	.174	<b>.227*</b>	.176
Financial	.121	.164	.071	.076	.098	.183	.122
Advice	.068	.149	-.028	.035	.073	.163	.088
Friend							
Total	<b>.239*</b>	<b>.310**</b>	.132	.116	.180	<b>.207*</b>	<b>.294**</b>
Emotional	<b>.270**</b>	<b>.356**</b>	.188	.057	<b>.196*</b>	<b>.253*</b>	<b>.365**</b>
Social	<b>.269**</b>	<b>.343**</b>	.152	.172	<b>.204*</b>	.179	<b>.350**</b>
Practical	<b>.241*</b>	<b>.300**</b>	.125	.166	.193	.194	<b>.259**</b>
Financial	.122	.190	.086	.032	.091	.103	.094
Advice	<b>.198*</b>	<b>.265**</b>	.060	.096	.153	<b>.239*</b>	<b>.246*</b>

\*\* Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



### Null Hypothesis 3B

There is no relationship between friends' support total and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant positive correlation between Friends Support – Total and total divorce adjustment as measured by FDAS7 – Total ( $r = .239$ ,  $p < .05$ ), the null hypothesis was rejected. Although there is no significant correlation between total family support and divorce adjustment, there is a significant correlation between total friends' support and divorce adjustment for the population of this study. Specifically, this positive correlation indicates that higher levels of total friends' support are correlated with higher levels of divorce adjustment.

Significant positive correlations were found between Friends Support - Total and FDAS1-Self-worth ( $r = .310$ ,  $p < .01$ ), FDAS5-Social Intimacy ( $r = .207$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and FDAS6-Social Self-worth ( $r = .294$ ,  $p < .01$ ). No significant correlations were identified between Friends Support - Total and FDAS2-Entanglement ( $r = .132$ ,  $p > .05$ ), FDAS3-Anger ( $r = .116$ ,  $p > .05$ ), and FDAS4-Grief ( $r = .180$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Other significant correlations among Friends Support and FDAS subscales are shown in Table 7.

### Research Question 4

Is there a significant relationship between life experiences and divorce adjustment? Life experiences were measured by the Life Experiences Survey instrument whose total (LES – Total) is the sum of the positive (LES – Positive) and negative scores (LES – Negative). To test research question 4, three null hypotheses were developed. Null hypothesis 4A states there is no relationship between total life experiences and total divorce adjustment. Null hypothesis 4B states there is no relationship between positive life experiences and total divorce adjustment. Null hypothesis 4C states there is no

relationship between negative life experiences and total divorce adjustment. Both null hypotheses 4A and 4C were rejected. Null hypothesis 4B was accepted.

A series of Pearson product moment correlations were used to test these hypotheses and are reported in Table 8. Multiple significant correlations, highlighted in Table 8 by bold text, were observed between the LES and FDAS scores.

#### Null Hypothesis 4A

There is no relationship between total life experiences and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant negative correlation between life experiences total (LES – Total) and total divorce adjustment as measured by FDAS7 – Total ( $r = -.360$ ,  $p < .01$ ), the null hypothesis was rejected. A negative correlation indicates that divorce adjustment is lower in the context of higher total life experiences. Likewise, generally divorce adjustment is higher if the total life experiences score is lower.

Other significant negative correlations were found between LES - Total and FFDAS1-Self-worth ( $r = -.252$ ,  $p < .05$ ), FDAS2-Entanglement ( $r = -.239$ ,  $p < .05$ ), FDAS3-Anger ( $r = -.205$ ,  $p < .05$ ), FDAS4-Grief ( $r = -.437$ ,  $p < .01$ ), FDAS6-Social Self-worth ( $r = -.324$ ,  $p < .01$ ). No significant correlations were identified between LES - Total and FDAS5-Social Intimacy ( $r = -.160$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

Table 8

Pearson Correlation Coefficients between all FDAS scores and LES scores.

Independent Variable	FDAS7 Total	FDAS1 Self-worth	FDAS2 Entanglement	FDAS3 Anger	FDAS4 Grief	FDAS5 Intimacy	FDAS6 Social
LES-Total	-.360**	-.252*	-.239*	-.205*	-.437**	-.160	-.324**
LES-Pos.	.116	.128	.151	.067	.043	.142	.135
LES-Neg.	-.489**	-.368**	-.364**	-.279**	-.541**	-.266**	-.457**

\*\* Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

#### Null Hypothesis 4B

There is no relationship between positive life experiences and total divorce adjustment. Since there is no significant correlation between positive life experiences (LES – Positive) and total divorce adjustment as measured by FDAS7 – Total ( $r = .116$ ,  $p > .05$ ), the null hypothesis was accepted. Thus, there is no significant correlation between positive life experiences and total divorce adjustment.

No significant correlations were identified between LES - Positive and any of the FDAS scales including FDAS1-Self-worth ( $r = .128$ ,  $p > .05$ ), FDAS2-Entanglement ( $r = .151$ ,  $p > .05$ ), FDAS3-Anger ( $r = .067$ ,  $p > .05$ ), FDAS4-Grief ( $r = .043$ ,  $p > .05$ ), FDAS5-Social Intimacy ( $r = .142$ ,  $p > .05$ ), and FDAS6-Social Self-worth ( $r = .135$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

#### Null Hypothesis 4C

There is no relationship between negative life experiences and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant negative correlation between negative life experiences (LES – Negative) and total divorce adjustment as measured by FDAS7 – Total ( $r = -.489$ ,  $p < .01$ ), the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, divorce adjustment levels are generally lower in the context of higher levels of negative life experiences. Conversely, divorce adjustment levels are generally higher in the context of lower levels of negative life experiences.

Other significant negative correlations were found between LES - Negative and FDAS1-Self-worth ( $r = -.368$ ,  $p < .01$ ), FDAS2-Entanglement ( $r = -.364$ ,  $p < .01$ ), FDAS3-Anger ( $r = -.279$ ,  $p < .01$ ), FDAS4-Grief ( $r = -.541$ ,  $p < .01$ ), FDAS5-Social Intimacy ( $r = -.266$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and FDAS6-Social Self-worth ( $r = -.457$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

#### Research Question 5

Is there a linear combination of sex, total time of separation, income, spiritual well-being, life experiences, and social support that significantly correlate with divorce adjustment? To test research question 5, one null hypothesis was developed. Null hypothesis 5 states there is no linear combination of sex, total time of separation, income, spiritual well-being, life experiences, and social support that has a significant correlation with divorce adjustment. Null hypothesis 5 was rejected. Thus, divorce adjustment is related to a linear combination of sex, total time of separation, income, spiritual well-being, life experiences, and social support.

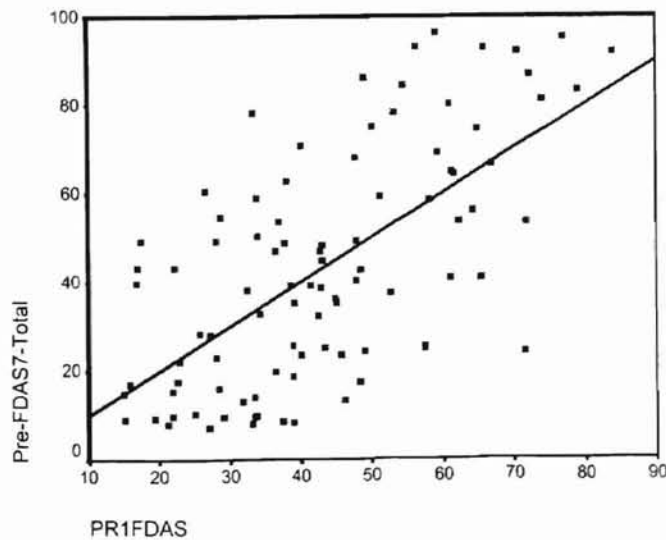
Using the forced entry method, a multiple regression equation was determined for total time since separation, income, sex, SWB – Total, Family Support – Total, Friends Support – Total, and LES - Total. This regression equation is significant with the variables entered,  $F(7, 85) = 8.647$ ,  $p = .000$ . This regressed variable has a R Square of .416 indicating that 41.6% of the variance in total divorce adjustment (FDAS7 – Total) is accounted for by this linear combination of total time since separation, income, sex, SWB – Total, Family Support – Total, Friends Support – Total, and LES - Total. To better understand the relationships, Beta weights, and levels of significance for each predictor variable are reported in Table 9. The SWB – Total, LES – Total, and sex scores were observed to have the greatest level of significance in their contribution to the variance in divorce adjustment at the .000, .004, and .005 levels of significance, respectively. A linear regression variable (PR1FDAS) was created using the B coefficients shown in Table 9 to predict the FDAS - Total. The resulting linear regression variable values and regression line are shown in Figure 6 (FDAS – Total versus Predicted FDAS – Total, shown as Pre-FDAS7-Total versus PR1FDAS, respectively). Since there is a significant relationship between the linear combination of these variables and FDAS – Total, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 9

Multiple Regression Summary Table of Beta Weighting for the Relationship Between total time since separation, income, sex, SWB – Total, Family Support – Total, Friends Support – Total, and LES - Total with FDAS7-Total.

Variable	Coefficient B	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-32.744		-2.021	.046
Total time of separation	1.44	.159	1.858	.067
Income	-.746	-.033	-.369	.713
Sex	13.318	.253	2.872	.005
SWB – Total	.557	.361	3.994	.000
Family Support-Total	.00747	.014	.143	.887
Friends Support-Total	.105	.158	1.502	.137
LES - Total	-.326	-.256	-2.953	.004

Figure 6: Linear Regression model for the combination of variables total time since separation, income, sex, SWB – Total, Family Support – Total, Friends Support – Total, and LES - Total versus FDAS7-Total



## Post Hoc Analyses

Multiple regression analyses were performed for three independent variables including (1) divorce adjustment total, (2) the grief subscale of divorce adjustment, and (3) the self-worth subscale of divorce adjustment. Dependent variables with significant and the strongest Pearson correlation coefficients with these independent variables were considered for incorporation in the multiple regression analyses resulting in the following regression relationships. First, a multiple regression equation combining total spiritual well-being, total time of separation, religious well-being, and negative life experiences was significantly related to divorce adjustment total. Second, a linear combination of income, spiritual well-being total, religious well-being, negative life experiences and sex was significantly related to the grief subscale of divorce adjustment. Third, a linear combination of spiritual well-being total, religious well-being, income, and emotional support of friends was significantly correlated to the self-worth subscale of divorce adjustment.

### Post Hoc Analysis – Divorce Adjustment Total

Using the forced entry method several additional multiple regression equations were determined that had significant correlation to FDAS7 – Total. Variables first considered were those which had the strongest correlations to total divorce adjustment (FDAS7 – Total). Thus, the multiple regression equation included SWB – Total, total time of separation, SWB – RWB, and LES – Negative, with correlations of .518, .199, .208, -.489, respectively with FDAS7 – Total.

The regression equation reported in this section is significant with the variables entered,  $F(4, 94) = 29.269$ ,  $p = .000$ . This regressed variable has a R Square of .555

indicating that 55.5% of the variance in total divorce adjustment (FDAS7 – Total) is accounted for by this linear combination of SWB – Total, total time of separation, SWB – RWB, LES – Negative. To better understand the relationships, Beta weights, and levels of significance for each predictor variable are reported in Table 10. The SWB – Total, SWB – RWB, and LES – Negative scores were observed to have the greatest level of significance in their contribution to the variance in divorce adjustment at the .000, .000, and .002 level of significance, respectively. A linear regression variable (LINREG2) was created using the B coefficients shown in Table 10 to predict the FDAS - Total. The resulting linear regression variable values and regression line are shown in Figure 7 (FDAS – Total versus Predicted FDAS – Total, shown as Pre-FDAS7-Total versus LINREG2, respectively).

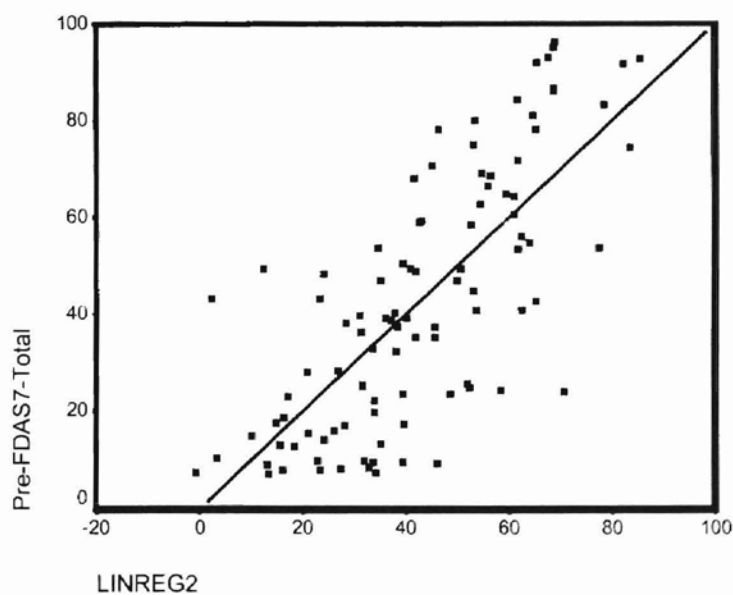


Table 10

Multiple Regression Summary Table of Beta Weighting for the Relationship Between SWB-Total, LES-Negative, SWB-RWB, Total Time of Separation and FDAS7-Total.

Variable	Coefficient B	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-13.001		-1.130	.262
SWB - Total	1.803	1.150	7.330	.000
SWB - RWB	-2.082	-.838	-5.582	.000
LES - Negative	-.363	-.239	-3.124	.002
Total Time of Separation	1.125	.120	1.734	.086

Figure 7: Linear Regression model for the combination of variables Total Time of Separation, SWB-RWB, LES-Negative, SWB-Total versus FDAS7-Total



### Post Hoc Analysis – Divorce Adjustment Grief

Using the forced entry method several additional multiple regression equations were determined that had significant correlation to FDAS4 - Grief. Variables first considered were those with strongest correlations to FDAS4 – Grief. Specifically, the multiple regression equation included income, SWB – Total, SWB – RWB, LES – Negative, and sex, with correlations of .355, .584, .304, -.541, and .332, respectively to FDAS4 - Grief.

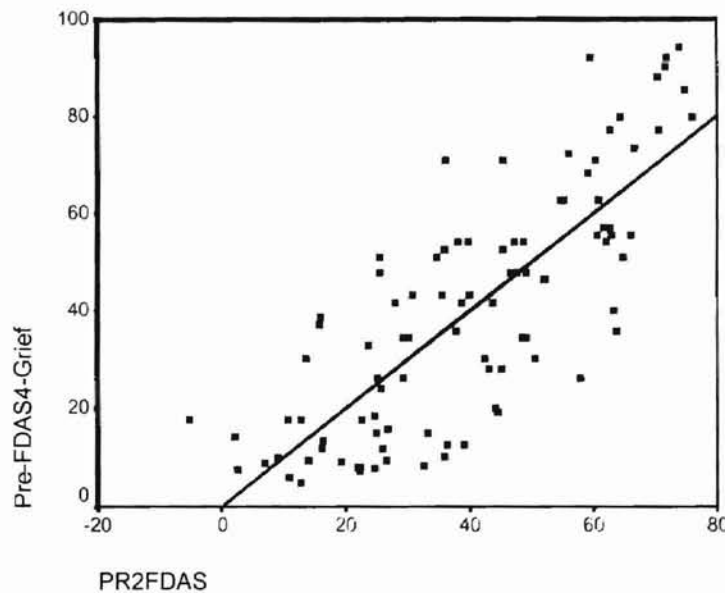
The regression equation reported in this section is significant with the variables entered,  $F(5, 89) = 30.991$ ,  $p = .000$ . This regressed variable has a R Square of .635 indicating that 63.5% of the variance in divorce adjustment for grief (FDAS4 - Grief) is accounted for by this linear combination of income, SWB – Total, SWB – RWB, LES – Negative, and sex. To better understand the relationships, Beta weights, and levels of significance for each predictor variable are reported in Table 11. The SWB – Total, SWB – RWB, LES – Negative, and sex were observed to have the greatest level of significance in their contribution to the variance in divorce adjustment at the .000, .000, .000, and .006 level of significance, respectively. A linear regression variable (PR2FDAS) was created using the B coefficients shown in Table 11 to predict the FDAS4 - Grief. The resulting linear regression variable values and regression line are shown in Figure 8 (FDAS4 – Grief versus Predicted FDAS – Grief, shown as Pre-FDAS4- Grief versus PR2FDAS, respectively).

Table 11

Multiple Regression Summary Table of Beta Weighting for the Relationship Between Income, SWB – Total, SWB – RWB, LES – Negative, and Sex with FDAS4-Grief.

Variable	Coefficient B	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-29.097		-2.749	.007
Income	2.870	.137	1.966	.052
SWB – Total	1.401	.956	6.438	.000
SWB – RWB	-1.449	-.618	-4.338	.000
LES - Negative	-.439	-.305	-4.320	.000
Sex	9.632	.193	2.837	.006

Figure 8: Linear Regression model for the combination of variables income, SWB – Total, SWB – RWB, LES – Negative, and Sex versus FDAS4-Grief



### Post Hoc Analysis – Divorce Adjustment Self-Worth

Using the forced entry method several additional multiple regression equations were determined that had significant correlation to FDAS1 – Self-Worth. Variables first considered were those with strongest correlations to FDAS1 – Self-Worth. Thus, the multiple regression equation comprised of SWB – Total, SWB – RWB, Income, Friends Support - Emotional have correlations of .551, .263, .250, and .356, respectively with FDAS1 – Self-Worth.

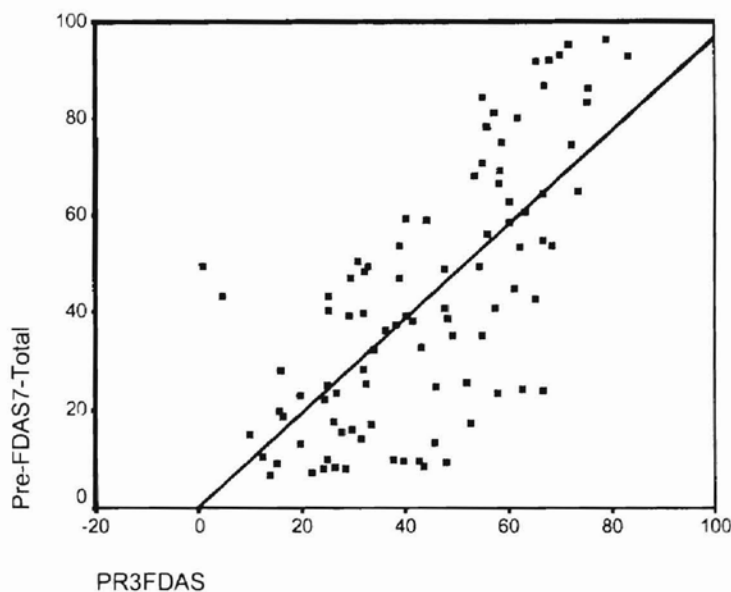
The regression equation reported in this section is significant with the variables entered,  $F(4, 89) = 23.541$ ,  $p = .000$ . This regressed variable has a R Square of .514 indicating that 51.4% of the variance in divorce adjustment for self-worth (FDAS1 – Self-Worth) is accounted for by this linear combination of SWB – Total, SWB – RWB, Income, Friends Support - Emotional. To better understand the relationships, Beta weights and levels of significance for each predictor variable are reported in Table 12. The SWB – Total, SWB – RWB, LES – Negative, and Friends Support - Emotional were observed to have the greatest level of significance in their contribution to the variance in divorce adjustment at the .000, .000, and .030 level of significance, respectively. A linear regression variable (PR3FDAS) was created using the B coefficients shown in Table 12 to predict FDAS1 – Self-Worth. The resulting linear regression variable values and regression line are shown in Figure 9 (FDAS1 – Self-Worth versus Predicted FDAS1 – Self-Worth, shown as Pre-FDAS1 – Self-Worth versus PR3FDAS, respectively).

Table 12

Multiple Regression Summary Table of Beta Weighting for the Relationship Between SWB – Total, SWB – RWB, Income, Friends Support - Emotional with FDAS1-Self-Worth.

Variable	Coefficient B	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-49.439		-4.094	.000
SWB – Total	1.900	1.210	7.431	.000
SWB – RWB	-2.179	-.861	-5.465	.000
Income	2.714	.121	1.568	.120
Friends support – Emotional	.482	.173	2.204	.030

Figure 9: Linear Regression model for the combination of variables SWB – Total, SWB – RWB, Income, Friends Support - Emotional versus FDAS1-Self-Worth.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter reports a summary of the study, conclusions, and discussions based on the results, implications, and recommendations for future research.

#### Summary

This study was to expand the field of research in two areas related to divorce adjustment. First, the relationship of divorce adjustment and spiritual well-being as measured by constructs of religious well-being and existential well-being were evaluated. Second, the correlation of life experiences and their effects in the context of divorce adjustment was studied. So that the study was more comprehensive, variables included in many other studies regarding divorce adjustment were also included. These additional variables included total time since separation, income, sex, and social support.

Several instruments were used to measure constructs of this study for comparison to divorce adjustment measured by the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS). The FDAS total score is the sum of the six subscales self-worth, entanglement, anger, grief, social intimacy, and social self-worth, where higher scores on these scales indicate higher levels of adjustment to divorce. The Spiritual Well-Being (SWB) total score is the sum of the religious well-being and existential well-being subscales, where higher values on

these scales indicate higher levels of well-being. The Life Experiences Survey total is the sum of the positive and negative life experiences subscale, where higher scores indicate greater levels of positive or negative life experiences according to their respective scales (i.e., higher negative scale score indicates higher negative life experiences). Additionally, the Social Support Behaviors scale (SSB) provided separate scores for family and friends' support. Specifically, the SSB provided separate measures for family and friends' support total which is the sum of the emotional, social, practical, financial, and advice support subscales. Finally, additional information was collected using a demographic questionnaire.

A total of 102 participants who were in the process or had experienced divorce was collected from four sites. The instruments, cited in the preceding paragraph, were organized in random order in manila envelopes. Confidential feedback for divorce adjustment was provided to participants. All data were collected from January through May, 2001.

Twelve null hypotheses were tested in the present study. Pearson correlations were used to test null hypotheses 1A – 1C, 2A – 2C, 3A – 3B, 4A – 4C. Null hypothesis 5 was tested through the use of multiple regression analysis. The following is a summary of the five twelve null hypotheses with accompanying results from the statistical analyses.

#### Null Hypotheses 1A – 1C

Null hypothesis 1A states there is no relationship between sex and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant positive correlation between sex and total divorce adjustment, the null hypothesis was rejected. Since sex was coded as 1 and 2 for females and males, respectively, and the correlation is positive, males had higher levels of divorce

adjustment in comparison to females. This correlation has an R square value of .07 indicating that only about 7% of the variance for divorce adjustment is accounted for by sex. There were also significant positive correlations between sex and the anger, grief, and social intimacy subscales of divorce adjustment.

Null hypothesis 1B states there is no relationship between total time since separation and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant positive correlation between total time since separation and total divorce adjustment, the null hypothesis was rejected. A positive correlation indicates that greater time since separation relates to higher levels of divorce adjustment, which might be reflective that individual's would have more opportunity to readjust their lives after the losses associated with divorce. Time alone will not account for total adjustment to divorce since an R square of .04 indicates that only 4% of the variance is accounted for by total time since separation. There were also significant positive correlations between total time of separation and the entanglement and anger subscales of divorce adjustment.

Null hypothesis 1C states there is no relationship between income and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant positive correlation between income and total divorce adjustment, the null hypothesis was rejected. Income was coded 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, from lower to higher incomes, respectively. Thus, a positive correlation would suggest higher levels of divorce adjustment are associated with higher incomes. An R square value of .058 indicates that 5.8% of the variance in divorce adjustment is accounted for by income. There were also significant positive correlations between income and the self-worth, anger, grief, social intimacy, and social self-worth subscales of divorce adjustment. It is also interesting to note that there was a significant positive correlation



between sex (females and males coded 1 and 2, respectively) and income (income coded 1 through 5 from lower to higher income) suggesting that men's income are higher compared to females' income post divorce.

#### Null Hypotheses 2A – 2C

Null hypothesis 2A states there is no relationship between total spiritual well-being and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant positive correlation between spiritual well-being total and total divorce adjustment, the null hypothesis was rejected. This correlation suggests that higher levels of spiritual well-being are correlated to higher levels of total divorce adjustment. This correlation has an R square value of .268 indicating that 26.8% of the variance of divorce adjustment may be explained by spiritual well-being total. Spiritual well-being total is also significantly positively correlated to the self-worth, entanglement, anger, grief, social intimacy, and social self-worth subscales of divorce adjustment.

Null hypothesis 2B states there is no relationship between religious well-being and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant positive correlation between religious well-being and total divorce adjustment, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is a correlation between high levels of religious well-being and total divorce adjustment. The R square value of .043 suggests that 4.3% of the variance in total divorce adjustment may be associated with religious well-being. When reviewing the statements associated with religious well-being, different constructs are being measured as compared to total divorce adjustment. Religious well-being is also significantly positively correlated with the self-worth, grief, and social self-worth subscales of divorce adjustment.

Null hypothesis 2C states there is no relationship between existential well-being and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant positive correlation between existential well-being and total divorce adjustment, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, high levels of existential well-being are related to higher levels of divorce adjustment. An R square of .491 suggests that 49.1% of the variance for total divorce adjustment may be accounted for by existential well-being. Existential well-being may be measuring some of the same constructs as total divorce adjustment which may account for this high correlation. The question may remain as to whether high levels of existential well-being contribute to higher divorce adjustment or vice versa. Existential well-being is also positively correlated to all the subscales for divorce adjustment including self-worth, entanglement, anger, grief, social intimacy, and social self-worth.

#### Null Hypotheses 3A – 3B

Null hypothesis 3A states there is no relationship between family support total and total divorce adjustment. Family support total is the sum of support from emotional, social, practical, financial, and advice. Since there is no significant relationship between family support total and total divorce adjustment, the null hypothesis was accepted. This lack of correlation may be due to the distributions of age and income associated with the population used for this study thus affecting the generalizeability of this conclusion. Refer to the histogram for age ( $M = 45$ ,  $S.D. = 7.72$ ) as shown in Figure 1, to understand that this population is older than the general population experiencing divorce. Additionally, the histogram shown in Figure 4 shows that this population has higher than average incomes. Thus, this population may have less need for practical and financial support from families. Regarding emotional and social support, these seem to be met by

friends rather than family support perhaps due to the ages of parents, family members not living nearby as their social networks have moved beyond the immediate family, and cultural expectations of a predominantly Caucasian population. Among the subscales for divorce adjustment, the most significant correlations were among emotional, social and some practical support although weaker correlations as compared to the support of friends. There were no significant correlations between financial and advice support and divorce adjustment.

Null hypothesis 3B states there is no relationship between friends' support total and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant positive correlation between friends' support total and total divorce adjustment, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there seems to be a relationship between having the support of friends and higher adjustment to divorce. An R square of .057 suggests that 5.7% of the variance for total divorce adjustment may be associated with the support of friends for this population. The most significant support for this population among the subscales of divorce adjustment were in the areas of emotional and social support followed by practical and advice support. For this population there were no significant relationships between divorce adjustment and financial support from family or friends.

#### Null Hypotheses 4A – 4C

Null hypothesis 4A states there is no relationship between life experiences and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant negative correlation between life experiences total and total divorce adjustment, the null hypothesis was rejected. This negative correlation indicates that adjusting to divorce in the context of other life experiences may be adversely related to divorce adjustment. An R square of .130

indicates that 13% of the variance for total divorce adjustment may be accounted for by life experiences total. Life experiences total is also significantly negatively correlated to the self-worth, entanglement, anger, grief, and social self-worth subscales of divorce adjustment.

Null hypothesis 4B states there is no relationship between positive life experiences and total divorce adjustment. Since there is no significant correlation between positive life experiences and total divorce adjustment, the null hypothesis was accepted. There were no relationships between positive life experiences and any divorce adjustment subscale.

Null hypothesis 4C states there is no relationship between negative life experiences and total divorce adjustment. Since there is a significant negative correlation between negative life experiences and total divorce adjustment, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, this relationship may suggest divorce adjustment is impeded in the context of negative life experiences. An R square of .239 suggests that 23.9% of the variance in total divorce adjustment may be contributed by negative life experiences. The life experiences negative subscale have significant negative correlations with all the subscales of divorce adjustment including self-worth, entanglement, anger, grief, social intimacy, and social self-worth.

#### Null Hypothesis 5

There is no linear combination of sex, total time of separation, income, spiritual well-being, life experiences, and social support that has a significant correlation with divorce adjustment. Since there was a significant correlation between the linear

combination of these variables and total divorce adjustment, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Multiple regression analysis using the forced entry method indicated sex, total time of separation, income, spiritual well-being, life experiences, and social support accounted for a significant amount of the variance (41.6%) in divorce adjustment as measured by FDAS7 – Total. Zero order correlation analysis indicated that sex, total time of separation, SWB – Total, LES – Total were significant predictors of divorce adjustment at the .01 level. Income and Friends' Support – Total were significant predictors of divorce adjustment at the .05 level.

### Conclusions and Discussion

The conclusions obtained from the data analyses reported in Chapter 4 are made within the framework of the following limitations:

1. The sample in the present study was not a random sample of all those experiencing divorce. It was a sample from among those who presented at the sites willing to participate in this study.
2. The homogeneous nature of the sample does not reflect the greater variance in the population with regard to demographic variables such as ethnicity, age-range, socioeconomic status, religion; therefore, generalizeability of the results may be limited.
3. All data were collected using paper and pencil self-report instruments. This method of data collection may be subject to the influence of social desirability and fake good responses. Thus, the generalizeability of the results may be limited.

The most significant correlations with total divorce adjustment, based on the strength of the Pearson correlation coefficients at the .01 significance level, are spiritual

well-being total ( $r = .518$ ), existential well-being ( $r = .701$ ), life experiences total ( $r = -.360$ ), and negative life experiences ( $r = -.489$ ). Additional significant relations with divorce adjustment total at the .05 level with weaker Pearson correlation coefficients include religious well-being ( $r = .208$ ) and total time of separation ( $r = .199$ ).

The existential well-being subscale of the spiritual well-being instrument may be measuring similar constructs as divorce adjustment total as measured by the FDAS7 – Total scale, which may account for the relatively high correlation coefficient for the existential well-being subscale ( $r = .701$ ). Regarding existential well-being, the question remains as to whether higher levels of existential well-being contribute to higher levels of divorce adjustment or are existential scores higher because these persons have achieved higher levels of divorce adjustment.

The religious well-being correlation is consistent with the literature which suggests that higher scores on the religious well-being component of the spiritual well-being instrument could contribute to adjustment especially on the divorce adjustment grief subscale ( $r = .263$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and the self-worth subscale ( $r = .304$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Regarding religious well-being, although not conclusive indications are based on the literature and interviews with about 75 participants, those with higher levels of divorce adjustment have benefited from higher levels of religious well-being rather than their higher level of adjustment contributing to higher religious well-being scores. The relatively low correlation coefficient ( $r = .208$ ) is probably indicative of other factors contributing more to divorce adjustment and some either not benefiting from or possibly some being hindered in adjustment due to negative effects of religious experiences.

The relatively high and significant correlation of negative life experiences with divorce adjustment is consistent with the literature. That is, adjustment by those experiencing divorce will be affected in the context of other significant negative life experiences. Conversely, it is not surprising that positive life experiences scores do not have a significant correlation to any of the divorce adjustment scores. This is probably due to the relatively high magnitude of adjustment required for divorce as compared to likely events contributing to the positive life experiences scores; positive events simply do not offset the trauma of divorce adjustment in a significant way.

Family and friends support did not have a high correlation with this population. The most significant areas of friends' support were emotional and social. During individual interviews, some of the subjects of this study reported that they did not pursue emotional support from family since they seemed more invested in the marriage and were less supportive or empathic of the divorce as compared to friends. In general, participants of this study embrace middle class and Christian ideology that marriage is forever. According to their religious beliefs, only infidelity and extreme abuse are acceptable reasons to consider ending a marriage which is a sacred covenant with God. Additionally, the concern for children will be a factor in holding marriages together. For this population, the mean length of marriage was 16 years with a standard deviation of 8.8 years with marriages ranging from 1.1 years to 36 years. In regard to children, 39 percent had children less than 18 years old and 58 percent had children less than 25 years old. Therefore, it may be consistent with these values that the lowest subscale score of divorce adjustment was for grief with a mean of 38.6 as compared to the other subscales of self-worth, entanglement, anger, social intimacy, and social self-worth. Individuals reported

that their feelings of grief related to the loss of the ideal that marriage is forever, a sense of failure, loss of family relationships, concern for their children, and longing for the lifestyle and family that they once shared.

Most significant correlations at the .01 level are reflective of friends' support. Regarding emotional and social support, these seem to be met by friends rather than family support perhaps due to the ages of participants ( $M = 45$ ,  $SD = 7.72$ ), the age of their parents, family members not living nearby as their social networks have moved beyond the immediate family, and cultural expectations of a predominantly Caucasian population.

When reviewing the histograms of level of education and income, the needs of individuals may not be as great compared to those in a lower SES, and thus correlations may be lower. Thus, since the population of this study may have less need for practical and financial support from families these correlations to divorce adjustment are not significant. On the other hand, those from lower SES are more likely to need and hence seek practical and financial support from family in order to meet basic needs. Thus, for a lower SES population, family support to meet practical and financial needs may be significant.

The population of this study are predominantly middle class, Caucasian (89%) and with a mean age of 45 tend to be more independent and less interconnected with their family. This is consistent with the finding of this study that indicated the most significant correlations were for emotional, social, and some practical support from friends as compared to family. Other cultures such as Hispanic and African-American report a more interconnected and dependent relationship with their families. Thus, a study including



these populations would probably indicate significant correlations between family support and divorce adjustment. Thus, when generalizing results from this study regarding support from family and friends, the culture, religion, and other demographic variables of this study population must be considered.

### Implications

The purpose of this study is to help counseling professionals and individuals affected by divorce by providing more insight into the relationship of variables that may be correlated to divorce adjustment. Based on the amount of readjustment required, divorce ranks second only to the death of a spouse as the most stressful life event according to a commonly used measure of stressful life events (Holmes and Rahe, 1967). Over 1.2 million people were divorced during 1990 concomitant with the marriage of 2.4 million (U. S. Census Bureau, 1999). Of those entering marriage, 54 percent were for the first time while 46 percent had been previously married, since about 80 percent of men and 75 percent of women will remarry, usually within three years after the divorce (U. S. Census Bureau, 1999; Jacobs, 1986). As they enter a new marriage, are these 46 percent adjusted to their previous divorce?

Since so many are affected by divorce and subsequently remarry, it is interesting to note that the old adage, “time heals all wounds” only tells part of the story as it relates to divorce adjustment. This study showed that time since separation only accounts for about four percent of the variance related to divorce adjustment while Spiritual Well-Being (SWB), Life Experiences – Negative, and Friends Support - Emotional scores accounted individually for 27 percent, 24 percent and 7 percent of the variance, respectively. The implication may be that it takes more than time to adjust from divorce. Thus, it should not

be surprising that variables, which correlate to divorce adjustment, are multifaceted.

What are other implications of this study including findings from the statistical analysis and consultations with 75 of the 102 participants?

In one case, after completing the instrumentation packet for this study, a participant who divorced three years earlier stated that at this time she plans to focus her attention on searching for some sense of spirituality in her life. Three months later, this participant took a posttest. The SSB, LES and general life circumstances were the same as at the pretest time. However, the SWB scores increased from 80 Total, 31 RWB, and 49 EWB to 111 Total, 57 RWB, and 54 EWB. The most significant improvement in her SWB score was on the Religious Well-Being (RWB) subscale, which increased by 84% from 31 to 57. Her FDAS self-worth score increased by 23% from 75 to 92. Her FDAS grief score increased by 31% from 54 to 71 and her FDAS social self-worth score increased by 37% from 67 to 91. Although the results are interesting for this individual, they are not significant statistically and do not show a causal relationship. The primary implications of this example are to show the potential for learning from a pretest – posttest research design and if a person can identify areas that are correlated to divorce adjustment concentrated effort in these areas could be beneficial for their divorce adjustment.

In reviewing results with participants, it has been helpful for them to see the areas of greatest adjustment to divorce and most significantly recognize areas where they need the greatest help. The use of the FDAS divorce adjustment profile has been very effective in helping individuals identify areas where effort is needed for their adjustment. The following are tentative interpretations based on interviews performed during this study. The most commonly unrecognized area needing adjustment is in grief, self-worth and

their relationship to anger. Additionally, some participants learned that they have been in denial related to their feelings of anger. First, in interviews with individuals, a pattern was recognized where anger has been used to distance a person from their former love partner which is reflected on the FDAS profile by relatively high adjustment to entanglement and low adjustment to anger and grief. In recognizing this, a counseling professional can help an individual work through their anger and thereby increase their sensitivity to their feelings for their former love partner and work more effectively through the grieving process. Second, sometimes a person may have such low self-worth that they are unable to get in touch with their anger and live in denial of it to the point that they are unable to work through the grieving process. In this case, a counseling professional could help this individual build their self-worth so that they can have a more balanced perspective of their anger, rights, and the divorce experience.

The instruments used in this study may be helpful to counseling professionals in understanding an overall picture of an individual's experience, significant correlates, and status in their divorce adjustment process. A pre and post test could identify progress made during the adjustment process. Since 46% of those getting married have been previously married, administration of the FDAS could be used as part of pre-marital counseling to assess adjustment to their previous divorce.

Fisher and Bierhaus (1994) report that the FDAS1 – Self-Worth scale measures adjustment to divorce related to self-worth. Actually, after reviewing the 25 statements that measure self-worth, it seems that the measure of self-worth although related to a measure for divorce adjustment has elements independent of divorce adjustment. Thus, a person with low self-worth independent of the divorce experience may appear to have

low adjustment to divorce on the self-worth subscale. That is, in some cases a person's low self-worth score, although exacerbated by the divorce experience, may be limited by other experiences which ultimately prevent higher adjustment on the FDAS1 – Self-Worth scale.

Although the authors have attempted to generalize the wording of the Spiritual Well-Being instrument so that it is not biased toward Judeo-Christian beliefs, the scoring seems to be biased toward these beliefs. For example, the Spiritual Well-Being instrument statement, "I have a personally meaningful relationship with God", is scored highest if the response is "strongly agree" (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982, p. 232). This response is consistent with most Judeo-Christian expectations that greater spiritual well-being is achieved when one experiences a personally meaningful relationship with God. Other statements of the Spiritual Well-Being instrument are consistent with these observations including the following from Paloutzian and Ellison, 1982, p. 232. "I don't get much personal strength and support from my God. My relationship with God helps me not to feel lonely. I feel most fulfilled when I'm in close communion with God." Buddhism among other religions would not embrace these concepts. Thus, the Judeo-Christian believer who "strongly agrees" with these statements would have a higher score of spiritual well-being as compared to a Buddhist who may disagree with these statements consistent with their Buddhist beliefs. Is it fair to suggest that the Judeo-Christian believer has a higher level of spiritual well-being as compared to the Buddhist? No, this resultant scoring would be consistent with a bias of the instrument scoring toward Judeo-Christian principles. Thus, in its present form, this instrument may not be appropriate for all spiritual or religious beliefs. Perhaps the respondent could rate the

significance of each statement related to their spiritual belief system. This rating could then be used to appropriately orient the scoring for the respondents belief system. For example, a Christian response of “strongly agree” with a specific statement may yield the highest score, while a Buddhist response of “strongly disagree” may yield the highest score for them. Although this is probably an oversimplification to unbiased the spiritual well-being instrument, it provides a means for the spiritual well-being of respondents to be assessed in the context of their spiritual belief system.

Since about 90% of the participants of this study were Christians, the scoring of the Spiritual Well-Being instrument was consistent with the beliefs of this population. It seems that the population of this study is more religious than the general population of the United States. Scores for the Religious Well-Being subscale of the Spiritual Well-Being instrument can range from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 60. The mean score for the Religious Well-Being subscale was 47 with a standard deviation of 10.4 indicating a distribution skewed toward the high end indicating higher levels of religious well-being. Although confidentiality was emphasized during this study, it is also possible that some respondents faked their answers to indicate a higher level of well-being in order to be more socially acceptable.

The scoring bias of the Spiritual Well-Being scale is a significant issue that should be addressed before considering application to a more general population. Religious belief can be among the most potent influences in life. Its effects may include profound changes in subjective experience and social behavior. It can supply purpose and meaning (Frankl, 1963), facilitate intimate interpersonal contact and a sense of belonging (Ellison, 1983), and affect one’s entire satisfaction with existence. Thus, it is important to

measure one's sense of spiritual well-being in the context of their spiritual beliefs. Therefore, the validity of the statements and scoring for the Spiritual Well-Being instrument must be evaluated in the context of the individual's spiritual beliefs.

### Recommendations

It may be beneficial to conduct a similar study within a more generalizable random sample of those experiencing divorce. The present study was conducted using only participants who presented to select divorce adjustment groups sponsored by churches or a secular agency where the participants were seeking counseling services.

Based on the conclusions and implications of this study, it is recommended that future research be conducted to further examine the complex relationship that exists between dimensions of religiosity, spirituality, and coping resources. Future studies could more closely examine extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity in the context of divorce adjustment. Additional studies could evaluate characteristics of spirituality and spiritual maturity to clarify the relationship of these constructs to divorce adjustment.

A pretest – posttest design could allow the study of divorce adjustment over time in relationship to the constructs included in this study and additional constructs previously cited. Thus, significant correlations could be identified between the constructs of interest and the degree of change to divorce adjustment measured by the FDAS-Total, self-worth, entanglement, anger, grief, social intimacy, and social self-worth scales. Additionally, a pretest – posttest design could be used to compare divorce adjustment for those involved in individual counseling, different types of divorce adjustment groups, and those not involved in counseling or a divorce adjustment group.

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APPENDIX A  
CONSENT FORM

## Consent Form

"I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby authorize or direct J. Mike Ross, or associates or assistants of his choosing to perform the following procedure:"

**Procedure:** You will be asked to complete a packet of assessment instruments, including a brief Demographic Questionnaire, the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS), Belief Survey (BS), Life Experiences Survey (LES), and Social Support Behaviors (SS-B) Scale.

**Duration:** The completion of these assessment instruments should take approximately 45 – 90 minutes.

**Confidentiality:** In an effort to gain open and honest responses, confidentiality will be maintained. Request for name will not be made on any of the self-report measures. On the self-report measures, cited above, you will provided a confidential identification number (e.g., the last four digits of your social security number) so that results of your adjustment to divorce can be communicated to you after the instruments have been evaluated. This informed consent will be the only time identification will be requested and it will be collected separately from the completed forms. Only the primary investigator, J. Mike Ross, will have a key to the locked file cabinet and room used to secure confidential materials used in this study.

**Possible Discomforts or Risks:** The completion of the above mentioned self-report scales will require a certain level of introspection. Self-examination may lead to temporary change in mood/affect, which may be either positive or negative.

**Resources for Counseling Services:** The following resources are provided for convenient reference and are not intended to be an all inclusive list: (1) Association of Christian Therapists 496-9588 (2) Center for Counseling and Education 747-6800, (3) Christian Family Institute 745-0095, (4) \*\*DVIS 585-3143, (5) \*\* Family and Children's Services 587-9471, (6) Family Life Enrichment Center 459-0635, (7) Laureate 481-4000, (8) Living Solutions Christian Counseling 494-0550, (9) New Choice Inc. 663-6057, (10) Parkside 582-2131, (11) Resonance (women only, free counseling) 587-3888, (12) St. John Medical Center of Behavioral Health 748-9868. Providers above marked "\*\*\*" have reduced fee arrangements and others may also. Insurance companies and employer provided Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may also be able to provide referral sources.

**Purpose of Study:** This study is being completed as part of an investigation examining the relationship between dimensions of divorce adjustment, survey of beliefs about life and spirituality, life experiences, and social support.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project directors.

I may contact J. Mike Ross at (918) 865-6991 should I wish further information about the research. I may also contact Sharon Bacher, IRB Executive Secretary, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078; Telephone (405) 744-5700.

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

Subject Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ -Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject before requesting the subject to sign it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
J. Mike Ross or authorized representative

APPENDIX B  
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE



## DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

**Your Confidential Identification Reference Number** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (For example, use the last four digits of your social security number)

1. Sex:        \_\_\_\_\_ Female                      \_\_\_\_\_ Male
2. How many years were you married or with your partner? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you have children?    \_\_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_\_ No,        If yes, what are their ages? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Check **ALL** that apply to your current marital status:    \_\_\_\_\_ **Married**                      \_\_\_\_\_ **Separated**  
                                  \_\_\_\_\_ **Legal divorce in process**                      \_\_\_\_\_ **Final divorce**                      \_\_\_\_\_ **Single**                      \_\_\_\_\_ **Other:**
5. If separated, how long since separation? \_\_\_\_\_ **and**  
     If divorced, how long since divorce? \_\_\_\_\_  
     If not separated or divorced, how long have you known that separation or divorce is likely? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Are you involved in individual counseling or a divorce support group?    \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No
7. If involved in individual counseling, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_
8. If in a support group, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_

### ETHNICITY

<input type="checkbox"/> African-American <input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino	<input type="checkbox"/> Native American <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-racial (Specify: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____
--	---

### RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Agnostic <input type="checkbox"/> Atheist <input type="checkbox"/> Baptist <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist <input type="checkbox"/> Catholic <input type="checkbox"/> Episcopalian	<input type="checkbox"/> Hindu <input type="checkbox"/> Jehovah's Witness <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish <input type="checkbox"/> Lutheran <input type="checkbox"/> Methodist <input type="checkbox"/> Mormon	<input type="checkbox"/> Muslim <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Denominational <input type="checkbox"/> Pentecostal <input type="checkbox"/> Presbyterian <input type="checkbox"/> Unitarian <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
--	---	---

AGE	Level of Education	Income Level
_____     	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't graduate from high school <input type="checkbox"/> High School Graduate or GED <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Years or some College OR Technical/Specialty school <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate degree (e.g., Bachelors degree) <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 – \$25,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000 - \$40,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 - \$60,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Greater than \$60,000

APPENDIX C

FISHER DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE (FDAS)

**Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale**

Your Confidential Identification Reference Number \_\_\_\_\_

1. If separated, divorce is in process or granted, who wanted (or initiated) separation/divorce?  
Typically, when not both, the initiator (i.e., the one who wanted the divorce) may be one of the following: the partner who decided and informed the other partner about the divorce; sometimes is the one who filed for divorce; was the unfaithful partner; or the one who wants to continue their life without their partner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Both                  \_\_\_\_\_ You                  \_\_\_\_\_ Partner (Spouse)
2. The following statements are feelings and attitudes that people frequently experience while they are ending a love relationship. Keeping in mind one specific relationship you have ended or are ending, read each statement and decide how frequently the statement applies to your present feelings and attitudes. Circle your response (1-5) to the right of each question. Do not leave any statements blank. If the statement is not appropriate for you in your present situation, answer the way you feel you might if that statement were appropriate.

Question No.	Answer each question below by circling the appropriate number (1-5) to the right of each question.					
		Almost always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never
1.	I am comfortable telling people I am separated from my love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I am physically and emotionally exhausted from morning until night.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I am constantly thinking of my former love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I feel rejected by many of the friends I had when I was in the love relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I become upset when I think about my former love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I like being the person I am.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I feel like crying because I feel so sad.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I can communicate with my former love partner in a calm and rational manner.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	There are many things about my personality I would like to change.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	It is easy for me to accept my becoming a single person.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I feel depressed.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I feel emotionally separated from my former love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	People would not like me if they got to know me.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I feel comfortable seeing and talking to my former love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I feel like I am an attractive person.	1	2	3	4	5

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Question No.	Answer each question below by circling the appropriate number (1-5) to the right of each question.	Almost always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never
		1	2	3	4	5
16.	I feel as though I am in a daze and the world doesn't seem real.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I find myself doing things just to please my former love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I feel lonely.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	There are many things about my body I would like to change.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I have many plans and goals for the future.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I feel I don't have much sex appeal.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I am relating and interacting in many new ways with people since my separation.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Joining a singles' group would make me feel I was a loser like them.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	It is easy for me to organize my daily routine of living.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	I find myself making excuses to see and talk to my former love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Because my love relationship failed, I must be a failure.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I feel like unloading my feelings of anger and hurt upon my former love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I feel comfortable being with people.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	I have trouble concentrating.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	I think of my former love partner as related to me rather than as a separate person.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	I feel like an okay person.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I hope my former love partner is feeling as much or more emotional pain than I am.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	I have close friends who know and understand me.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	I am unable to control my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	I feel capable of building a deep and meaningful love relationship.	1	2	3	4	5

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Question No.	Answer each question below by circling the appropriate number (1-5) to the right of each question.					
		Almost always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never
36.	I have trouble sleeping.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	I easily become angry at my former love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	I am afraid to trust people who might become love partners.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Because my love relationship ended, I feel there must be something wrong with me.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	I either have no appetite or eat continuously which is unusual for me.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	I don't want to accept the fact that our love relationship is ending.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	I force myself to eat even though I'm not hungry.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	I have given up on my former love partner and I getting back together.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	I feel very frightened inside.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	It is important that my family, friends, and associates be on my side rather than on my former love partner's side.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	I feel uncomfortable even thinking about dating.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	I feel capable of living the kind of life I would like to live.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	I have noticed my body weight is changing a great deal.	1	2	3	4	5
49.	I believe if we try, my love partner and I can save our love relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
50.	My abdomen feels empty and hollow.	1	2	3	4	5
51.	I have feelings of romantic love for my former love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
52.	I can make the decisions I need to because I know and trust my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
53.	I would like to get even with my former love partner for hurting me.	1	2	3	4	5
54.	I avoid people even though I want and need friends.	1	2	3	4	5
55.	I have really made a mess of my life.	1	2	3	4	5

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Question No.	Answer each question below by circling the appropriate number (1-5) to the right of each question.					
		Almost always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never
56.	I sigh a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
57.	I believe it is best for all concerned to have our love relationship end.	1	2	3	4	5
58.	I perform my daily activities in a mechanical and unfeeling manner.	1	2	3	4	5
59.	I become upset when I think about my love partner having a love relationship with someone else.	1	2	3	4	5
60.	I feel capable of facing and dealing with my problems.	1	2	3	4	5
61.	I blame my former love partner for the failure of our love relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
62.	I am afraid of becoming sexually involved with another person.	1	2	3	4	5
63.	I feel adequate as a fe/male love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
64.	It will only be a matter of time until my love partner and I get back together.	1	2	3	4	5
65.	I feel detached and removed from activities around me as though I were watching them on a movie screen.	1	2	3	4	5
66.	I would like to continue having a sexual relationship with my former love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
67.	Life is somehow passing me by.	1	2	3	4	5
68.	I feel comfortable going by myself to a public place such as a movie.	1	2	3	4	5
69.	It is good to feel alive again after having felt numb and emotionally dead.	1	2	3	4	5
70.	I feel I know and understand myself.	1	2	3	4	5
71.	I feel emotionally committed to my former love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
72.	I want to be with people but I feel emotionally distant from them.	1	2	3	4	5
73.	I am the type of person I would like to have for a friend.	1	2	3	4	5
74.	I am afraid of becoming emotionally close to another love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
75.	Even on the days when I am feeling good, I may suddenly become sad and start crying.	1	2	3	4	5

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Question No.	Answer each question below by circling the appropriate number (1-5) to the right of each question.					
		Almost always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never
76.	I can't believe our love relationship is ending.	1	2	3	4	5
77.	I become upset when I think about my love partner dating someone else.	1	2	3	4	5
78.	I have a normal amount of self-confidence.	1	2	3	4	5
79.	People seem to enjoy being with me.	1	2	3	4	5
80.	Morally and spiritually, I believe it is wrong for our love relationship to end.	1	2	3	4	5
81.	I wake up in the morning feeling there is no good reason to get out of bed.	1	2	3	4	5
82.	I find myself daydreaming about all the good times I had with my love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
83.	People want to have a love relationship with me because I feel like a lovable person.	1	2	3	4	5
84.	I want to hurt my former love partner by letting him/her know how much I hurt emotionally.	1	2	3	4	5
85.	I feel comfortable going to social events even though I am single.	1	2	3	4	5
86.	I feel guilty about my love relationship ending.	1	2	3	4	5
87.	I feel emotionally insecure.	1	2	3	4	5
88.	I feel uncomfortable even thinking about having a sexual relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
89.	I feel emotionally weak and helpless.	1	2	3	4	5
90.	I think about ending my life with suicide.	1	2	3	4	5
91.	I understand the reasons why our love relationship did not work out.	1	2	3	4	5
92.	I feel comfortable having my friends know our love relationship is ending.	1	2	3	4	5
93.	I am angry about the things my former love partner has been doing.	1	2	3	4	5
94.	I feel like I am going crazy.	1	2	3	4	5
95.	I am unable to perform sexually.	1	2	3	4	5

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Question No.	Answer each question below by circling the appropriate number (1-5) to the right of each question.	Almost always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never
96.	I feel as though I am the only single person in a couples-only society.	1	2	3	4	5
97.	I feel like a single person rather than a married person.	1	2	3	4	5
98.	I feel my friends look at me as unstable now that I'm separated.	1	2	3	4	5
99.	I daydream about being with and talking to my former love partner.	1	2	3	4	5
100.	I need to improve my feelings of self-worth about being a wo/man.	1	2	3	4	5

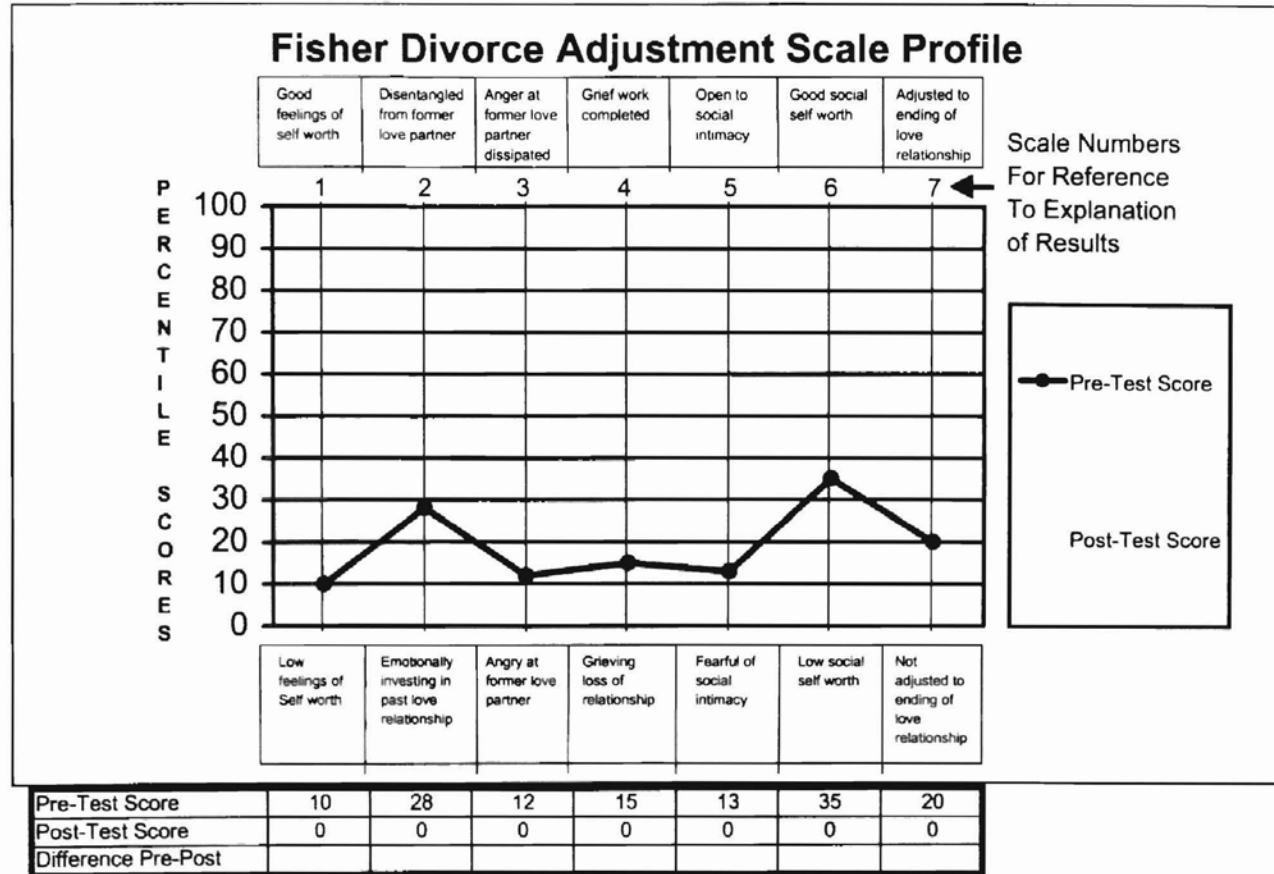
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## APPENDIX D

Example: Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale Profile

Profile For: **Example Only**



The higher your score, the more you approach the values at the top of the profile graph. The lower your score, the more you approach the values at the bottom of the profile graph. Further explanations of your scoring results are given on the enclosed explanation.

APPENDIX E

OSU IRB Human Subjects Review

Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 12/20/01

Date : Tuesday, January 02, 2001

IRB Application No ED0167

Proposal Title: FACTORS THAT AFFECT ADJUSTMENT TO DIVORCE

Principal  
Investigator(s) :

J. Mike Ross  
Valley Apts #2 farrow Dr  
Mannford, OK 74044


Donald Boswell  
406 Willard  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and  
Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) : Approved

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Signature



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Tuesday, January 02, 2001

Date

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

VITA<sup>2</sup>

James Michael Ross

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: RELATIONSHIP OF SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING, LIFE EXPERIENCES,  
SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES WITH  
DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT

Major Field: Counseling and Student Personnel

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Central High School, Tulsa, Oklahoma in May 1969; received Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma in December 1974. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Counseling and Student Personnel, Specialty Community Counseling at Oklahoma State University in August 2001.

Experience: Completed practicum and internship experiences during the fall of 2000 and spring of 2001 at Family and Children's Services in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the summer of 2000 at the Marriage and Family Counseling Center at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Facilitated and provided free assessment services for divorce adjustment groups in Tulsa, Oklahoma, January 2000 through June 2001. Performed research, supervision, and staff development as Team Leader and Research Associate 1982 – 1999 at Amoco Production Company in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Managed team and developed products as Project Engineer 1978 – 1982 at Telex Computer Products, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Developed seismic processing systems 1977 - 1978 as Senior Engineer at Seiscom Delta in Houston, Texas. Developed well log instrumentation 1975 – 1977 as an Engineer at Texaco Research Center, Bellaire, Texas. Taught calculus and electronics courses part-time 1975 – 1978 at Houston Community College, Houston, Texas.

Professional Memberships: American Psychological Association Student Affiliate; American Psychological Association Graduate Student Association; American Psychological Association Division 17 – Counseling Psychology; American Counseling Association.