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MARITAL QUALITY AND INTERSPOUSAL SELF-CONCEPT CONGRUENCY

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

PH.D. 1981

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MARITAL QUALITY AND INTERSPOUSAL

SELF-CONCEPT CONGRUENCY

by

Raymond A. Seutter

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
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Greensboro
1981

Approved by


Dissertation Adviser

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The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between marital quality and interspousal self-concept congruency. This study also sought to investigate the influence of changing sex-role attitudes on marriage. The consensus among researchers appears to be that sex-role attitudes are changing, and that this is having significant impact on marriages. This study sought to look at the relationship between a couple's sex-role attitudes toward the marriage and the amount of interspousal self-concept congruence that existed.

Testable hypotheses were developed within the framework of symbolic interaction theory. Within this perspective the processes of self-conception and self-evaluation are key elements in shaping the relationship between individual behavior and one's social environment. This framework suggests that individuals act by using symbols as well as by physical stimuli that are learned through reflective interaction with significant others. Thus, couples who are aware of the symbols (both verbal and nonverbal) that are exchanged, will be more aware of each other, and therefore, more able to accurately perceive each other's needs. This, in turn, should have a positive impact on the self-concept that each partner develops as well as the resulting quality of that marriage.

The data were collected from a stratified nonprobability sample of 151 couples in North Carolina. The sample was divided into one

group of 101 couples who were not in marriage counseling (high marital quality group) and one group of 50 couples who were in marriage counseling (low marital quality group). Of the high marital quality group, 79 percent of those contacted agreed to participate, while 42 percent of those in the low marital quality group agreed to participate. Couples were mailed or handed questionnaires. They were asked to fill these out independently and to return them by mail.

The results of the study demonstrated that there is a strong positive correlation between marital quality and interspousal self-concept congruence. This was true on all four of the subscales (satisfaction, consensus, affectional expression, and cohesion), as well as the total scale used to demonstrate marital quality.

The study also demonstrated that there is no direct relationship between sex-role attitudes and the quality of a marriage. Significant differences were found to exist between both high and low quality egalitarian and traditional relationships. Apparently, because a couple is egalitarian or traditional does not mean they have a high quality marriage. It was noted that significant differences existed between husbands and wives in the low quality group regarding their sex-role attitudes. Wives tended to be more egalitarian with husbands more traditional in this group.

The results of the study were discussed and implications for further research, as well as marital therapy, were suggested. Methodological considerations were also discussed.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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March 20, 1981
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March 20, 1981
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The institution of modern marriage is undergoing change. Glick (1975) has pointed out that ever since World War II there has been a dramatic increase in the divorce rate in the United States. He also indicated that divorce rates in the past two decades now appear to have stabilized at a relatively high level. Glick and Norton (1976) emphasized that fewer and fewer Americans are content to remain in unsatisfactory marriages. The prediction follows that more and more Americans will continue to choose to dissolve their marriages in an effort to find a marital partner with whom they feel they can live and be happy. Interestingly, even though the divorce rate is at a record high in the United States, the institution of marriage is still highly valued. More than nine out of ten Americans eventually marry, while more than 75 percent of divorced persons remarry. Half of these who do remarry following divorce do so within a three year period (Glick & Norton, 1976).

It is, therefore, important to understand the factors that are contributing to, as well as inhibiting, this high level of marital dissolution. Why is it that some marriages remain intact while others do not? What are some of the differences in characteristics between those couples who are seeking to terminate their marriages and those couples who remain in intact marital relationships?

In an effort to find answers to these questions, increasing numbers of researchers and clinicians are becoming interested in the quality of marriage and the factors that contribute toward stability in marriage. Lewis and Spanier (1979) were able to identify more than 300 different studies which have examined various aspects of the quality of marital functioning. These researchers have tended to focus on one or two specific concepts of which marital quality is comprised. Examples of this type of research can be seen in the studies on adjustment and role definitions (Ort, 1950; Axelson, 1963), communication (Navran, 1967; Bienvenu, 1970), self-attitudes (Buerkle, 1960; Luckey, 1960a), female sexual responsiveness (Clark & Wallin, 1965), and child density (Figley, 1973; Miller, 1975; Thornton, 1977).

In recent years, however, a number of researchers (Spanier, Lewis, & Cole, 1975; Spanier & Cole, 1976; Spanier, 1979) have emphasized that there is an increasing need to obtain more information regarding the significance of the variables operating in a marriage which determine whether or not a particular marriage will be one of quality and stability. Because marital functioning is such a complex phenomenon, this is a challenging task.

One of the variables which the present study seeks to examine is the impact of interspousal self-concept congruency on marital quality. A great deal of research has been done which has focused on the correlation between interpersonal attraction and the self-concept (see Wylie, 1979 for a full discussion of these studies). However, evidence regarding the correlation and significance of the self-concept and marital quality is still undetermined.

Purpose and Contribution of This Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of inter-spousal self-concept congruency on the quality of a marriage; i.e., if the self-concept which an individual has is congruent with the perceptions which his/her spouse has of him/her, is this couple likely to have a high quality marriage? How does the accuracy of inter-spousal perception regarding the self-concept affect the quality of a marriage? This study will seek to provide answers to these questions.

This study seeks to provide information on the way that an individual's ability to accurately perceive the self-concept of his/her spouse impacts itself on the quality of that marriage. A number of studies have been done which have investigated the impact of perceptual accuracy on marital adjustment (Christensen & Wallace, 1976; Clements, 1967; Corsini, 1956; Dymond, 1954; Luckey, 1960a, 1960b, 1964; Murstein & Beck, 1972). Each of these studies sought to show that "adjusted" couples were more capable of accurately assessing their spouses' needs. This, in turn, would lead them to interact more effectively and be more able to mutually satisfy each other's needs and desires. Clements' (1967) study was the only one which did not support these contentions. The strength of Clements' study is that he focused directly on the types of behavior that occur within marriage. However, his study focused exclusively on aversive types of behaviors.

Christensen and Wallace (1976), in reviewing Clements' work, suggested that the negative results produced may have been due to the

fact that he focused solely on aversive behaviors. They suggested that adjusted couples would predict more accurately their spouses' response to positive types of behavior. Their study supported this and confirmed that perceptual accuracy is related to marital adjustment. They suggested that further research needs to take into account other factors involved in marital interaction and whether a couple is seeking marital counseling or a divorce.

This study sought to do this by moving beyond the relationship of perceptual accuracy and marital adjustment. It examined the relationship between the perceptual accuracy of interspousal self-concepts and used the more inclusive concept of "marital quality." This study focused on the quality of a relationship of a married couple, and sought to determine if there were any differences between the perceptual accuracy of couples in high-quality marriages and couples in low-quality marriages. It examined specifically the perceptions of each spouse regarding the self-concept of his/her mate and the reported self-concept of that spouse. It was presumed that high-quality marriages would be those wherein the marital partners perceived with greater accuracy the self-concept of their spouse. This study was able to provide additional information regarding the relationship of interspousal self-concept congruency and marital quality.

Another contribution of this study lies in its ability to show that the influence of changing sex roles is having an impact on, and thus, changing the nature of contemporary marital relationships. Luckey (1960a, 1960b) and others (Katz, Goldstein, Cohen, & Stucker, 1963; Kotlar, 1965; Taylor, 1967) showed that marital satisfaction was

related to the ability of the wife to accurately perceive her husband's self-concept. This study sought to demonstrate that because of the influence of changing sex roles, it is now just as important for the husband to be able to accurately perceive the self-concept of his wife, as it used to be for the wife to be able to accurately perceive the self-concept of her husband, for the marital relationship to be one of high quality.

At this point, it is important to clarify the concepts of marital quality and the self-concept which are being used in this study.

The Concept of Marital Quality

A considerable amount of attention has been focused on the lack of clarity which surrounds many of the concepts currently employed in research on marriages (Burr, 1973; Cole, 1976; Edmonds, Withers, & Dibatista, 1972; Hicks & Platt, 1970; Laws, 1971; Lewis & Spanier, 1979; Lively, 1969). One of the problems in marital research has been the lack of agreement on and the use of terms such as "marital adjustment," "satisfaction," "stability," "success," or "cohesion." Different researchers have operationalized these definitions in different ways making it difficult to make accurate comparisons of the research being done. Indeed, it appears to be the norm for each researcher to define and operationalize these definitions independent of other studies. Little attempt is made to arrive at consensus regarding the use of these concepts among researchers. A brief examination of some of the studies conducted in the past 50 years points this out. Some of the earliest research efforts did not even

attempt to define their terms (Bernard, 1933, 1934; Hamilton, 1929).

Burgess and Cottrell (1936) were among the first to offer a definition.

They defined a well adjusted marriage as:

A marriage in which the attitudes and actions of each of the partners produce an environment which is highly favorable to the proper functioning of the personality structures of each partner, particularly in the sphere of primary relationships. (p. 63)

In another study Locke and Wallace (1959) defined marital adjustment

as "the accommodation of a husband and wife to each other at a given time" (p.128). Orden and Bradburn (1968) defined marital happiness

as:

A resultant of two independent dimensions, a dimension of satisfactions and a dimension of tensions . . . satisfactions are positively related to marriage happiness, and tensions are negatively related to marriage happiness. Tensions and satisfactions are, however, virtually independent of each other. (p. 253)

On the other hand, Burr (1970) saw marital adjustment as "a subjective condition in which an individual experiences a certain degree of attainment of a goal or desires" (p. 68). Spanier and Cole (1976) offer other definitions which various researchers have used over the years.

It can be seen that there is a lack of consensus regarding the concepts of marital adjustment and other closely related concepts such as marital happiness, marital success, marital satisfaction, or marital stability. In a review of 26 marriage and family texts, Spanier and Cole (1976) pointed out that while all those books discussed marital adjustment, happiness, or success, only a few of them included definitions as to what any of these terms mean. This lack

of common definition leads to confusion with regard to the operationalization and measurement of these concepts.

Because of the ambiguity and confusion resulting from various definitions and uses of these terms, a number of writers have suggested that terms such as marital adjustment, happiness, or success ought to be eliminated from the literature (Klein, 1973; Lewis & Spanier, 1979; Lively, 1969; Spanier, 1973; Spanier & Cole, 1976).

Klein (1973) was the first to propose that the concept "marital quality" be used to include each of the various terms about which there is disagreement and confusion. While Spanier and Cole (1976) did not use the term, marital quality, they attempted to redefine marital adjustment to include a number of previously used terms such as satisfaction, cohesion, and consensus. They also suggested that marital adjustment be studied as a process of movement along a continuum which allowed evaluation in terms of proximity to good or poor adjustment. They suggested that an appropriate way to operationalize this definition would be by developing a set of items that reflects each of the components of the adjustment process. This would include items such as troublesome marital differences, interspousal tensions, personal anxiety, marital satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, and consensus on matters important to marital functioning. Shortly thereafter, Spanier (1976) published a Dyadic Adjustment Scale which he suggested was an "adequate measure of marital quality" with adequate validity and reliability that is based on a clear conceptual plan. Spanier (1979) continues to argue that this

scale is a good measure of marital quality, because it is capable of measuring a number of components of which marital quality is comprised.

Lewis and Spanier (1979) argued persuasively that investigators must begin to focus their studies on the more general concept of marital quality. They noted that it is the quality of most American marriages which is the primary determinant of whether or not a marriage will remain intact. This concept is most directly concerned with how a marriage functions during its existence, and how each partner feels about it and is influenced by this functioning. Included in this concept is a wide range of terms such as marital satisfaction, happiness, adjustment, cohesion, integration, as well as a multitude of other terms which have been used to describe the various aspects of the quality of a marriage. The term "marital quality" is used as a more general concept to include and encompass the more specific terms (Lewis & Spanier, 1979; Spanier, 1979).

Marital quality is a more inclusive term which takes into account the many qualitative and evaluative dimensions of a marriage. Marital quality has been defined as:

A subjective evaluation of a couple's relationship. The range of evaluations constitutes a continuum reflecting numerous characteristics of marital interaction and marital functioning. High marital quality, therefore, is associated with good judgement, adequate communication, a high level of marital happiness, integration, and a high degree of satisfaction with the relationship. (Lewis & Spanier, 1979, p. 269)

It should be noted that this definition does not convey a fixed picture of discrete categories. Instead, a couple can be placed on a continuum ranging from high to low quality. This continuum, in turn, represents a composite picture that uses many criteria.

Spanier (1979) has noted that another approach used to reflect how well a marriage is functioning has been to focus on "marital stability," a term which refers to how or whether a marriage is dissolved. For the purposes of this study, marital stability is based on the outcome of a marriage. A stable marriage shall be defined as an intact marriage which is terminated only by the natural death of one of the spouses. An unstable marriage is one which is willfully terminated by the specific actions of one or both spouses.

In this study, a high-quality marriage was operationally defined as a marriage wherein a couple scored high on the four components of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976). The four components of a relationship which this scale measured included dyadic consensus, dyadic cohesion, dyadic satisfaction, and affectional expression. A high-quality marriage also was one which scored high on the Personal Report of Spouse Communication Apprehension Scale (Powers & Hutchinson, 1979). A low quality marriage was one wherein the couple scored low on these four components of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, and low on the Personal Report of Spouse Communication Apprehension Scale (PRSCA Scale). This operational definition took seriously Lewis and Spanier's (1979) definition of marital quality as encompassing a wide range of terms including communication, consensus, adjustment, affectional expression, and marital satisfaction.

The Concept of Self-Concept

Since this study examined the impact of interspousal self-concept congruency on marital quality, it was important to define what was meant by the term "self-concept" as it was used throughout this project.

In seeking to define the self-concept from the literature, one is immediately struck with a wide variety of names which different theorists use to describe, apparently, the same phenomenon. A sample of related names includes terms such as: self-respect, self-love, self-esteem, self-ideal congruence, ego strength, and personal efficacy. It can be noted that all of these terms denote some basic process of psychological functioning which can be described as either self-evaluation, self-affection, or some combination of these two.

Wylie (1961) in her review of the self-concept used the term "self-regard" as an all-inclusive label under which to subsume the terms given above. She considered self-regard more neutrally toned, less specific, and more inclusive than the term self-esteem. Wells and Marwell (1976), however, emphasized that the term self-esteem is currently more popular and is used more frequently to describe self-evaluative behaviors. They noted, also, that the body of information bearing on the conceptualization and measurement of self-regard is generally known as the "self-esteem literature." However, numerous other authors and researchers (Diggory, 1966; Felker, 1974; Fritts & Hammer, 1969; Leonard, 1973; Lowe, 1961; Luckey, 1960a, 1960b; Purkey, 1970), as well as Wylie's exhaustive reviews (1961, 1974, 1979), used the term self-concept to describe their efforts. In this

paper the term self-concept will be used, because it included the range of uses by many different researchers and authors.

It can be seen that any attempt to arrive at a rigorous definition of the self-concept from the literature was likely to be frustrated by the current state of vagueness and ambiguity that surrounded this term. Different researchers used different terms, sometimes to refer to the same concept, and at other times to mean something different. This continues to lead to methodological problems in that the body of evidence relating to the self-concept demonstrates that the various self-concept instruments measure something but the question of "what" remains unclear. For these reasons, Wells and Marwell (1976) pointed out that this term is a deceptively slippery one about which there is a great deal of confusion and disagreement even though the consensus among researchers tends to be that the self-concept has significant personal, psychological, and social implications for human existence.

Wells and Marwell (1976), after an exhaustive review of hundreds of articles, noted that too many researchers have misused the self-concept by utilizing it to explain too much. Because of inconsistent, unexplained, or poorly operationalized definitions, much confusion has arisen which has tended to weaken the significance of the self-concept resulting in its over-application; i.e., if the self-concept is used to explain everything, then it really explains nothing.

Crandall (1973) has noted that the self-concept has been related to almost everything at one time or another, especially since 1960 when the research in this area has begun to flourish. This widespread current usage of the self-concept was easily demonstrated. A sampling

of the experimental literature indicated that it has been a variable of interest in many different content areas such as: conformity (Gergan & Bauer, 1967); responses to threat or stress (Schalon, 1968); dishonest behavior (Aronson & Mettee, 1968); social participation (Coombs, 1969); competitive behavior (Graf & Hearne, 1970); interpersonal attraction (Leonard, 1973); cognitive dissonance (Cooper & Duncan, 1971); helping and help-seeking behavior (McMillen & Reynolds, 1969). It has been used in equally diverse areas of sociological research as well, including racial tensions and identities (Heiss & Owens, 1972); educational achievements (Felice, 1973); and the occurrence of delinquent behaviors (Chapman, 1966).

Relationships have also been found between the self-concept and academic achievement (Purkey, 1970). Conversely, a relationship has been demonstrated between a low self-concept and underachievement (Shaw & Alves, 1963). Berman and Osborn (1975) found a correlation between the self-concept and sexual permissiveness. Medinnus and Curtis (1963) found a significant correlation between maternal self-acceptance and child self-acceptance. Sears (1970) found that high self-concepts were significantly associated with high reading and mathematic achievement, small family size, early ordinal position, and high maternal and paternal warmth.

Wells and Marwell (1976) suggested that one of the reasons it is difficult to arrive at an adequate understanding of the self-concept is due to its rather indeterminate character and extreme popularity among lay people and researchers alike. They suggest that because everyone has some intuitive, common-sense idea of what the self-concept

is and does, too many researchers do not adequately spell out its nature and the processes by which it operates. This oversight leads to serious difficulties (given that the term "self-concept" is a hypothetical construct--an unobservable) in the attempt to demonstrate construct validity or for theory development. This means that because the self-concept is a hypothetical construct, it requires a clear conceptual statement of definition before it can be operationalized.

However, to develop a clear conceptual definition of the self-concept is challenging. Any self-referent concept has difficulties, because the notion of "self" is itself so deceptive. It appears to have obvious meanings, yet a perusal of the literature demonstrates that it is used in many ways. Sometimes it is used as a synonym for person, or the personality, or even to refer to the body (Prentice, 1962; Wylie, 1974). Some writers point out that the self-concept and the ego are interchangeable (Allport, 1961; Sherif, 1962). The consensus appears to be that the self-concept is some specialized subset of the personality. As generally used, the self-concept refers to the part of the personality which is phenomenal--it is perceived or experienced. It is also reflexive in that the perceiver and the perceived are the same organism. Thus, the self-concept involves that portion of the personality which consists of reflexive or self-conscious cognitions and behaviors (see Combs, Avila, & Purkey, 1978; Wells & Marwell, 1976; Wylie, 1961, 1974, 1979).

Diggory (1966) disagreed with the self-concept's being a phenomenal process. He suggested that the self-concept refers to a

particular class of behaviors. It is an "abstraction constructed from specific behaviors" (Diggory, 1966, p. 89). There are others who take exception to this phenomenal, reflexive definition. This is especially true among those writers who focus on individual potentialities rather than reflexive behaviors. Horney (1950) used the self-concept to refer to a person's innate abilities or capacities -- or the level of functioning which the person is capable of achieving. Others such as Buhler (1962), Webb (1955), and Maslow (1963) emphasized "personal potential" rather than reflexive behavior in their understanding of the self-concept.

For the purposes of this project, the self-concept shall be referred to as a learned structure that is acquired through social processes in interaction with others. The social nature of the self-concept is part of its distinguishing feature. The ability to view oneself and to respond to oneself as an object involves the capacity to abstract from one's own behavior, as well as from the behavior of others toward oneself. Thus, the self-concept is also a symbolic process or structure built upon the acquisition of language (which provides the mechanism of abstraction). This is most explicit in the writings of Symbolic Interactionists (Burgess, 1926; Cooley, 1902; Denzin, 1972; Mead, 1934; Schvaneveldt, 1966; Shibutani, 1961; Stryker, 1972). This essentially symbolic nature differentiates the self-concept from simple adaptive behaviors and has significant ramifications in determining how the self-concept is to be measured, observed in action, or explained (Schwartz & Stryker, 1970). This is especially true since all measures of the self-concept involve

symbolic techniques. Later on in this paper it will be shown how symbolic interaction theory is able to provide a workable framework for linking the concept of marital quality and interspousal self-concept congruency.

The basic properties of the self-concept as it will be used in this project -- that it is the product of feedback and is a social and symbolic process -- can be seen in Coopersmith's (1967) definition of the self-concept:

It is the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: It expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself capable, significant, successful and worthy. It is a personal judgment of worthiness expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behavior . . . children of pre-adolescent age are still highly dependent upon their parents and are very likely to employ the family context and its values to judge their own worth. (pp. 4-6)

Operationally, the self- and spouse-concepts used in this study will be all the statements that an individual makes about himself/herself and his/her spouse as they are represented by the Leary Interpersonal Check List (ICL), (Leary & Coffee, 1955). This instrument provides one way to consistently study what people say about themselves and their spouses. The instrument helps to tap into some of the reflexive, social, and symbolic processes which shape the self-concept. No claim is offered that this is the self-concept. This instrument does provide one way to consistently study what people say about themselves and their spouses. It can be seen that this definition is limited somewhat in that it is dependent upon the subject's self-report. This may be very different from what he/she does, thinks, or wishes about himself/herself.

Other Concepts

This study also looked at the way in which changing sex roles are changing the importance of interspousal self-concept congruency in determining marital quality. For the purposes of this study, two aspects of sex-role orientation were considered. First, the non-traditional wife was seen as representing an emphasis in which the interests of her husband and children were not treated as being of greater significance than her own interests. A wife was defined as traditional in her roles as indicated by weaker preferences for her own individualistic concerns, and by greater partiality to family loyalties related to her husband and children.

Second, the nontraditional husband role was seen as a departure from the orientation of patriarchalism in which the greater interests of the husband and his authority are based on the exclusive ascribed status of sex. A father was seen as nontraditional if he objected to this kind of ideology.

It can be seen that these definitions leaned heavily on studies done by Scanzoni (1975), Tomeh (1978), and Orthner (1980).

Strengths and Limitations of This Study

There were a number of strengths within this study. It took seriously the concept of "marital quality" which consists of many aspects such as adjustment, affectional expression, consensus, communication apprehension, and cohesion. This was a more realistic way to view a marital relationship, because human relationships are

complex. Rather than looking for a simple explanation as to what makes marriages survive, marital quality as a concept more closely resembles the complexity of a marital relationship and takes into consideration the many different aspects that go into making a relationship.

Another strength of this study was that the dependent measure, marital quality, was examined as being on a continuum. This, too, was more realistic in that it allowed for and recognized that the quality of a marriage varies over time. It allowed for various couples to be placed at various intervals along this continuum.

This study also took seriously the importance of changing sex-roles and the significance of these changes as they impact themselves on a marital relationship. If marital relationships are becoming more egalitarian, this will definitely have an impact on marriages. This study looked at one area, interspousal self-concept congruency, and how changing sex-roles impact this congruence, and thus, marital quality.

There were also a number of limitations in this study. The dependent measure, "marital quality," was not a clear and easily defined concept. The question as to what exactly comprises a relationship of high or low marital quality was not answered with agreement from all researchers in the family area. While this study provided one definition which sought to take the many aspects of a relationship into account, different researchers still operationalize this concept differently. This made comparisons across studies difficult.

Another limitation of this study lay in the method of data collection. The data were based exclusively upon the self-report of couples. Unfortunately, this may be very different from what they actually feel, think, or do.

Another limitation of this study lay in defining the independent measure, "self-concept congruency." While the Interpersonal Check List (ICL) does provide one way to measure this, here again, there is a lack of consensus among researchers. Different researchers have differing ideas as to what the self-concept is, and thus, operationalize it differently as well. There is also a lot of disagreement as to what is the best way to measure self-concept congruency.

There was also some question in this study regarding the use of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) as a measure of the dependent variable, marital quality. White and Brikerhof (1977) felt that this scale does not take seriously enough the problem of the unit of analysis. They questioned whether the scale accurately discriminates between individual and dyadic perceptions regarding the various components of a marriage.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Prior to looking at the research regarding the importance of the self-concept in marital relationships, a brief overview of the development of self-concept theory will be presented. This will enable a better understanding of the current state of the self-concept and self-theory. By understanding the theoretical background, one will be better able to see how symbolic interaction theory has influenced the development and use of the hypothetical construct, "self-concept," in interpersonal relationships. It appears that symbolic interaction theory is able to provide a workable theoretical framework or conceptual rationale in linking the concepts of marital quality and interspousal self-concept congruency.

A History of the Development of
Self-Concept Theory

The beginnings of the study of the self-concept in the United States owes much to William James (1890, 1892), George Herbert Mead (1934, 1956), and Charles Cooley (1902, 1909). It was the contributions of these men which provided the first major insights and guidelines in the development of the study of the self-concept.

William James

James (1890) appears to be the earliest of the writers to focus on the self-concept. He is most readily identified with the "I-Me" dichotomy in which the total self (or person) is differentiated into two aspects--the self as the knower, and the self as that which is known, or the "agent of experience and the contents of experience" (p. 79). As far as a self-reflexive act is concerned, the appearance of both of these aspects is essential in order for the process of self-consciousness to be possible.

In describing the self, James (1890) stated that a "man's self is the sum total of all that he can call his" (p. 291). He then suggested that this notion of the appropriation of an identity was influenced in three ways. First, in the course of analyzing subjective experience and one's significance, human aspirations and values have an essential role in determining whether or not we regard ourselves favorably. Our achievements are measured against our aspirations for each activity in which we participate. If achievement approaches or meets aspirations in a valued area, the result is high self-esteem. If, however, there is wide divergence, then we regard ourselves poorly. James underscored the importance of one's own values in determining which areas are used in self-judgement.

James (1890) concluded that one's achievements are measured against one's aspirations with the valued areas assuming particular significance, but he also believed that men achieve a sense of their general worth by employing community standards of success and status. This is readily noted as follows:

A man . . . with powers that have uniformly brought him success with place and wealth and friends and fame, is not likely to be visited by the morbid thoughts, diffidences and doubts about himself which he had when he was a boy, whereas he who has made one blunder after another and still lies in middle life among the failures at the foot of the hill is liable to grow all sicklied o'er with self-distrust, and to shrink from trials with which his powers can really cope. (James, 1890, p. 294)

James (1890) identified a third way in which an individual's self-concept is developed. This includes the values which a person places upon "the extensions of the self" such as his clothes, his house, his wife, children, ancestors, friends, reputation, or his cars, land, yacht, or bank account.

In addition to these material extensions of the self, there is also a "social self" which is the recognition one gets from one's peers. The enhancement of a person's extended self, be it his/her body, race, parents or reputation, also helps to raise the self-concept. To derogate any of these, however, would produce the opposite effect.

For James the self was an entirely conscious phenomenon in that a person places evaluations upon himself/herself. The way an individual evaluates himself/herself is determined by the degree to which his/her aspirations are being met.

C. H. Cooley

Cooley (1902, 1909) was the next major figure to focus on the self. He wrote from a sociological perspective, focusing on the impact of one's social milieu in the development of a self-concept. He is perhaps best known for his concept of the "looking-glass self"

which postulates that an individual's conception of himself/herself is determined by his/her perception of how others react to him/her.

According to Cooley:

A self-idea of this sort seems to have three principle elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgement of that appearance; and some sort of self-feeling. (Cooley, 1902, pp. 151-152)

Thus, the sense of self always involved a sense of other people, and is a social phenomenon.

This looking-glass self is also shaped and developed by the individual's knowledge of others and by the way he/she assesses these others:

The thing that moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind. This is evident from the fact that the character and weight of that other, in whose mind we see ourselves, makes all the difference with our feeling. We are ashamed to seem evasive in the presence of a straightforward man, cowardly in the presence of a brave man, gross in the eyes of a refined one, and so on. We always imagine, and in imagining, share the judgements of the other mind. (Cooley, 1902, pp. 184-185)

From this statement it appears that Cooley implied a comparison of the self with that of all others in deciding how one should evaluate oneself. Although it is unclear about the amount of significance Cooley attaches to the other, it appears that he did not intend to suggest that all others with whom an individual interacts are equal in importance in determining the self-concept.

Another contribution made by Cooley is his notion that the individual develops a mental image of others through interaction. This internal image may be a distortion of reality, and it is unclear

whether this image is stable or constantly changing. However, it is clear that this is a cognitive process and not simply a behavioristic reflex.

Cooley (1902) did not define the self-concept. Instead, he suggested that one can only know what it is by experiencing it. He did suggest that the self was a kind of instinct which functioned to unify and stimulate a person's behavior. Like James' self, Cooley's self developed through conscious awareness that did not include unconscious phenomena. This awareness determines both how the individual reacts to others, as well as the looking-glass self-image he/she holds.

G. H. Mead

Mead's (1934, 1956) contributions to the development of the self-concept were an elaboration of James' and Cooley's "social self." As a sociologist, Mead was concerned with the process by which the individual became a compatible and integrated member of his social group. He concluded that in the course of this process the individual internalizes the ideas and attitudes expressed by the key figures in his life. Eventually, the individual internalizes these to the extent that he is valued by others and demeans himself to the extent he is demeaned and put down by others.

Mead (1934) also suggested that one of the unique characteristics of man was the appearance of the self. Intelligent and rational behavior is made possible by the individual's ability to look at himself as an object. This process is made possible through the use of significant symbols. For Mead this is a conscious process, because while

people frequently engage in habitual and nonreflexive behavior, to engage in behavior which requires a mind, always requires a conscious self.

Mead's explanation of the importance of language as an essential part of the development and operation of the self is also significant. In developing his concept of the "generalized other," Mead suggested that the self was a symbol-using or symbol-dependent process. Through the use of language, and over the course of experience and maturation, the person develops an ability to take the role, not only of a specific other person, but of a group as well. This becomes the representation of one's own society within oneself.

Thus, the concept of the "generalized other" extended the idea of the looking-glass self. First, it emphasized the importance of the social context of self-referent ideas. The way an individual thinks about himself/herself is determined by his/her social group. Second, Mead's discussion of the generalized other and the importance of the individual's perception of himself/herself in such a context suggested the idea of social roles, with the person becoming aware of the social role he/she plays. This opened the possibility of the individual developing many selves within different contexts, each of which has varying degrees of importance in helping to shape one's self-concept.

Webster and Sobieszek (1974), in evaluating Mead's contributions, suggested that a very important contribution he made to the looking-glass self was the idea of a kind of permanence of structure or a partial resistance to change in the self. A person's self-concept develops a semipermanent structure which is established through the

experiences of acting and being acted upon. This suggests that the self does not change instantly or completely within a short period of time. The development of a structure also suggests that the effects of future interaction may not be completely equivalent to the effects of earlier interactions; i.e., once an individual comes to view himself/herself a certain way, the effect of praise or condemnation from others will be different than what it would have been before the person had developed this self-concept.

From Mead's writings it is possible to conclude that the self-concept is largely derived from the reflected appraisal of others. The gauge of self-evaluation is a mirror image of the criteria employed by important persons in our social world. Every person carries within him/her the reflecting mirror of his/her social group. It could also be inferred from Mead that the individual's self-concept changes with changes in the social context.

Freud and the Neo-Freudians

In addition to the work of Mead, Cooley and James, the work of several psychoanalytic theorists had an impact on the development of self-theory.

Freud (as cited by Hall, 1954) wrote about the same time as James and Cooley. He was initially concerned with the ego rather than the self. As Freud used the self, it consisted of three component parts: the id, the ego, and the superego. The ego was the mediational structure which was learned as a result of contact with social reality. In this way, it was similar to many earlier conceptions of

the self. The notions of the super-ego and ego-ideal represent the social aspects from which self-judgements are made. While Freud did not directly address the issue of the self-concept, he did deal with reflected evaluations such as self-hate and self-condemnation. Freud's complex theory rested very heavily on the role of the unconscious in motivating and determining behavior.

There are other theorists who were influenced by Freudian psychoanalysis, but dealt much more directly with the development of the self-concept. These include: Fromm (1939, 1955), Adler (1927), Horney (1945, 1950), and Sullivan (1947, 1953). For each of these writers the self as a reflexive structure was given much more explicit and dynamic meaning. The idea of libidinal energy as the energizing force behind all behavior was rejected in favor of seeing the self as a mediator between basic drives and social reality.

Adler (1927, 1956) placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of weakness and infirmities in producing a low self-concept. Adler proposed that feelings of inferiority may develop around certain organs or patterns of behavior in which the individual is indeed inferior. Such physical impairments as blindness or a deformed leg may produce feelings of inadequacy and insufficiency. The inevitable occurrence of childhood experiences of every individual also leads to feelings of inferiority. The comparison between relative strengths and sizes of children inevitably results in feelings of inferiority and insufficiency. This motivates the child to strive for superiority. Adler emphasized that it is not one's defect or deficiency per se which caused this striving. Rather, it was the person's

perception of that defect which determined how he/she would react. As a reflexive process, this is similar to the ideas regarding the self-concept developed by the earlier writers discussed above.

Horney (1945, 1950) also focused on the interpersonal process and on ways to avoid self-demeaning feelings. She listed a wide range of adverse factors which might produce feelings of helplessness and isolation. These feelings, which she termed "basic anxiety," she saw as the major sources of unhappiness and reduced personal effectiveness. This activity resulted not in superiority striving, but in the need for security of which the self-concept was an important part.

The basic assumption in Horney's (1950) theory was the wish of the individual to value himself/herself and to be valued by others. This results in the possibilities of a high self-concept or of self-alienation and anxiety. In seeking to defend against these anxieties, the individual develops defenses. One method of coping with anxiety is to form an idealized image of one's capacities and goals. This ideal has the effect of bolstering one's self-esteem. At the same time it may lead to dissatisfaction when these unrealistic expectations are not achieved. The idealized image thus plays an important role in how a person evaluates himself/herself. Self-alienation results from the growth of a discrepancy between the real self and the actual self.

It should be noted that Horney's idealized image differed from James' aspirations in that the former stems from negative feelings. James' aspirations may stem from either positive or negative sources. However, in both instances the level and flexibility of the ideal are important components in the self-evaluation process.

Both Fromm (1939, 1955) and Sullivan (1947, 1953), even though they were psychoanalytic theorists, were much more sociological in their focus than Horney or Adler. Fromm (1939) emphasized the close relation between a person's regard for himself/herself and the way he/she is able to deal with other persons. His association with the concept of self-esteem is better known as the idea of self-love. The basic theme of Fromm's theory is that one must be able to love one's self before one can have the ability to love others.

Sullivan (1947, 1953) presented an even more social-psychological perspective than Fromm. He closely resembled the symbolic interaction approaches of Mead and Cooley. His description of the self was wholly interpersonal, and he emphasized the function of symbolization in its development. According to Sullivan (1953), the self is built out of experience by means of reflected appraisals and is entirely a learned phenomenon. He posited no inherent self-drives or potential selves. The self-concept was characterized as a dynamism or "a relatively enduring pattern of energy transformations which recurrently characterized the organism in its duration as a living organism" (Sullivan, 1953, p. 103).

In developing his theory, Sullivan developed and popularized the concept of the "significant other." Since Sullivan was primarily concerned with the socialization of the child, his use of this term was confined to parents. It was the child's parents who are significant others, because they are instrumental in training the child in the attitudes and behaviors necessary for becoming an adult.

The use of the term, "significant other," has gradually been extended to include all those who are instrumental in shaping the individual's self-concept. Thus, a significant other is "one whose opinions and actions 'matter' to the person, one whose esteem he/she values, and whose disapproval he/she seeks to avoid" (Sullivan, 1953, p. 201). For this reason it is more self-enhancing to be praised for one's research by one's professor than by a plumber. It means more to be complimented by someone significant than by someone who is scarcely known.

Contemporary Theorists

Other theorists have approached the self-concept from a humanistic perspective. These writers adopt an optimistic view of man. Man is seen as naturally striving for those things that are most conducive to personal growth and fulfillment. Rogers (1951) proposed that all persons develop a self-image of themselves which serves to guide and maintain their adjustment to the outside world. This image develops out of interaction with the environment and reflects the judgments, preferences, and shortcomings of the familial and social setting to which one is exposed. Rogers indicated that harsh rejecting judgments prevent the individual from accepting himself/herself which causes suffering and leads to a low self-concept. It is a permissive atmosphere which permits free expression of ideas and affects without resorting to harsh and devaluating comments which enables the individual to grow and accept himself/herself. For this reason parents should seek to accept the views and values of their children even if

they do not agree with them. It is in this way that the child develops a positive self-concept, and learns to respect and trust himself/herself.

Rogers (1951) stressed that every individual has a basic tendency to actualize, maintain, and enhance oneself. The individual who is able to develop a self that is unique is a "fully functioning person." Rogers believed that if given an atmosphere of acceptance, trust, and safety, people move away from defensiveness and rigidity to openness, flexibility, and autonomy. This requires parents who are willing to accept differences, and are able and ready to trust their child. Rogers stressed the importance of acceptance in the development of a positive self-concept.

Maslow (1968) is another theorist who exemplifies this humanistic perspective. He focused his efforts on the self-actualizing process in psychologically healthy people. He saw self-actualization as that process of becoming what one has the potential to become. This is very similar to Adler's concept of superiority striving. However, rather than a single basic drive, Maslow postulated that individuals have a multitude of needs and drives that are arranged in a hierarchy. When the need which is lowest in this hierarchy is satisfied, then the next highest need presses for satisfaction. The individual's most basic need is physiological. This is followed by safety needs, love needs, belonging needs, and self-esteem needs. The highest level included self-actualization needs. Thus, self-esteem is a precondition for self-actualization, while belonging needs are prerequisites for self-esteem. It should be reemphasized that Maslow's study

focused on healthy, developing individuals to understand and determine the characteristics that distinguish these people from those who appear less able to cope with life. Both Maslow's and Rogers' work have focused on men's potential, and have emphasized the importance of the self-concept in shaping one's perceptions.

Another group of theorists have approached self-concept theory from a cognitive dimension of the self. Kelly (1955) emphasized the unique way that each individual viewed his/her world. He stressed that every individual created his/her own way of seeing the world in which he/she lives. He developed the idea of "personal constructs," or the patterns which people create and then fit over the realities of the world. Individuals then operate in ways which will seek validation of the constructs which they have built to interpret the world. This thinking has stimulated the development of other theorists such as Purkey (1970), Combs et.al. (1978), and Felker (1974).

Diggory (1966) placed primary influence on the way in which individuals evaluate themselves. He sought to accumulate empirical evidence and apply it to the study of the self. Diggory's research concentrated on situations such as within one's family, one's work, or other social contexts in which individuals evaluate themselves. He also attempted to specify the "formal logical operations" which he saw as an integral part of interpersonal relationships. One of these included the significance of competence as an aspect of self-esteem. Felker (1974), in assessing Diggory's work, noted that perhaps his main contribution has been to show that areas of self-concept can be investigated in a scientific setting. This insistence on empirical

data has helped to develop more detailed explanations regarding the significance and the development of the self-concept.

There is yet another group of researchers who emphasize the importance of the self-concept in determining how an individual experiences reality. This includes the third force in psychology, or the existentialists. Purkey (1970) pointed out that the self-concept acts as a type of filter through which phenomena are interpreted to the person. Combs, Avila, and Purkey (1978) emphasized that everyone develops unique perceptions that appear to be reality for them. At the center of these perceptions is the perception that one has of oneself--the self-concept of one's self-esteem.

Snygg and Combs (1949) were among the first to note that, although people appear to be similar, there are vast differences in the views that each person has of himself/herself, in the way that they view others and others see them, and in the way that each person really is. Purkey (1970) emphasized that those opinions that a person has regarding himself/herself are an important component of his/her behavior. Thus, one's self-concept determines how one experiences reality and becomes an important determining factor in the success or failure of one's interpersonal relationships. Coopersmith (1968) suggested that one's self-concept is probably the most important requirement for effective behavior and is central to one's coping abilities.

Felker (1974) argued persuasively that one's experiences with others around him/her function as indicators from which the person decides whether he/she is competent or incompetent, good or bad, worthy or unworthy. He saw the self-concept as a dynamic force,

which is constantly shifting according to feedback that is received. Combs, Avila, and Purkey (1978) agreed and added, "The self is the star of every performance, the central figure of every act . . . the basis by which one interprets information" (p. 58). Every individual receives information and attitudes from his/her environment. This information exerts pressures, and helps to shape what a person thinks and perceives about himself/herself.

Lecky (1951) was another phenomenologist who stressed that the self-concept operates to give some individuals internal consistency through an established set of expectations. He argued that an individual is a unified system with the problem of maintaining harmony between himself/herself and his/her environment. In order to maintain this harmony, the individual may refuse to see things in the environment or he/she might deny the perceptions of others. This person might also seek to maintain consistency by striving to change personally or by seeking to effect changes in others. What people think about themselves is vital in maintaining internal consistency. Thus, a person always acts in ways that are consistent with the self-concept.

Purkey (1970, 1978) has emphasized the interpreting role of the self-concept regarding one's present and past experiences. He commented:

The world of the self may appear to the outside to be subjective and hypothetical, but to the experiencing individual, it has the feeling of absolute reality.
(Purkey, 1970, p. 13)

Each of the writers discussed above has helped to develop and further our conceptions regarding the origin and nature of the self. The impact of the quality and consistency of the subjective experience in shaping the self-concept has developed over the years. From Cooley (1902) comes the central perspective of the looking-glass self or the idea that one's self-concept is directly dependent on the opinions and actions of others. This idea was modified by the phenomenologists (Combs & Snygg, 1948; Purkey, 1970), who pointed out that the individual in interacting with others may not correctly perceive their opinions, and that this person will interpret the significance of other's opinions in the light of what is known about them. Sullivan (1953) furthered this thinking with his conceptions regarding the impact that a "significant other" has on the development of one's self-concept.

It was Mead who contributed the concept of the "generalized other." This helped to place the individual self within a social context where roles are played in a community. It was also implied that a person may play several roles within differing social contexts. The thoughts of James (1890) helped to emphasize that not all others are equally important in determining the self-concept, while the Neo-Freudians helped to focus the reflexive nature of the self. Diggory's (1966) work helped to show that research regarding the self-concept could take place in a scientific setting. By reviewing these writings, it can be seen that there is a remarkable similarity in most of the central ideas of the social self with later writers adding to and building on the thoughts of the earlier theorists. It can also be

seen that out of these thoughts a theoretical perspective known as symbolic interaction has evolved. This theoretical perspective is also known by other labels such as role theory (Biddle & Thomas, 1966; Sarbin, 1968), self-theory or ego-theory (Goldstein, 1940; Rogers, 1951), and interactional theory (Shibutani, 1961; Stryker, 1959, 1964, 1972).

Self-Concept Congruency and Marital Quality

From the Symbolic Interaction Perspective

The basic assumptions of the interactional approach which will be presented are based primarily on the works of Stryker (1964, 1972), and Burr, Leigh, Day, and Constantine (1979). The efforts of Burr et al. (1979) represent the most contemporary and systematic review of the assumptions of this perspective as they have been outlined by many previous researchers.

The symbolic interaction framework is one of the few perspectives in which self-conception and self-evaluation are significant parts of the theoretical scheme. In symbolic interaction the process of self-conception is considered a key element in the relation between individual behavior and the social organization of which a person is a part. The emphasis is on the self and the occurrence of self-evaluation as a result of social processes involving reflected appraisals from significant others, with a stress on the performance of social roles (Stryker, 1972). Thus, it appears that symbolic interaction theory is readily able to provide a workable framework for linking and

understanding the concept of marital quality and that of self-concept congruency between marital partners.

Symbolic interaction suggests that human beings live in a symbolic as well as physical environment. They are stimulated in social situations to act by symbols as well as by physical stimuli (Rose, 1962). This ability to acquire complex sets of symbols is what makes humans unique from other forms of life. One learns nearly all these symbols through interaction with other people, especially members of the family or "significant others." Each member of the family occupies a position (or positions) to which roles are consciously and unconsciously assigned. The individual family member rapidly becomes aware of the role expectations placed upon him/her by these significant others. According to the particular situation and the person's self-concept, he/she then adopts behaviors that conform to these expectations (Stryker, 1972).

This suggests that couples, who are able to interact and are aware of the symbols (both linguistic and nonverbal) being exchanged, will be more aware of each other, and therefore, more able to accurately perceive each other's needs. This, in turn, should have a positive impact on each of the self-concepts that each marital partner has, and the resulting quality of that marriage. It can be seen that the type of and quality of communication which takes place within the marital relationship will have a very direct impact on the self-concept a marital partner develops. Conversely, if the communication channels are restricted or inhibited in some way, this will tend to have a negative impact on the self-concepts of each partner and on the quality of that marital relationship.

Because marital partners (as well as all family members) act and react by the use of symbols, communication is very significant in interaction theory (Burr, Leigh, Day, & Constantine, 1979). By being more able to risk the sharing of observations, interpretations, and the resultant feelings, a couple should be better able to achieve and maintain intimacy. Interaction stresses that self-concept development is a process, and it is continually influenced by the interpersonal exchanges that take place. The better a couple is able to communicate, the more aware they will be of each other's self-concepts. Because this is a process, couples must continuously seek to risk communicating throughout their relationship if they desire to achieve greater marital quality.

The marital relationship is a dynamic one with each partner continuously testing the perception he/she has of the other's roles and actions. Turner (1962) has noted:

In the socialization process of the children in a family and also continuously in family interaction, the product of the testing process is the stabilization or the modification of one's own role. (p. 2)

This knowledge of others is needed by the individual in order that he/she might be better able to predict what is expected. The better that a couple is able to know each other, the better they will know how to react to each other. With this mutual understanding and awareness, a couple is more able to respond to each other's needs as they are communicated which should have a positive influence on the quality of that marriage.

The application of the symbolic interaction perspective regarding the reflexive self suggests that the self-concept is learned from the reactions of others through role taking in which one interprets the response of others toward oneself in different roles (Mead, 1934). In this way the self-concept is defined. Since the symbolic feedback which is received within a marriage influences how one sees oneself, it has been argued that where individuals perceive similarly from similar frames of reference, they will be more likely to establish a satisfactory relationship (Christensen, 1976; Murstein, 1972; Snygg & Combs, 1949; Taylor, 1967). This suggests that the more accurate each partner's perception is of his/her spouse's self-concept, the better they will be able to respond to and meet each other's needs. This, too, should lead to higher marital quality. Conversely, where couples perceive differently from differing frames of reference, there will be more difficulty and tension within that relationship resulting in a low-quality marriage.

A number of studies have been done to test the effect of one's perceptions on the marital relationship. Luckey (1960b) noted that both role theorists such as Mangus (1957) and phenomenologists such as Snygg and Combs (1949) present a strong theoretical case postulating a positive relationship between congruence of perceptions and effective interpersonal relationships.

Interestingly, research that has been designed to discover the degree of congruence of self and mate self-concepts has not been in agreement. Mangus (1957), Dymond (1950), Preston, Peltz, Mudd, and Froscher (1952), as well as studies by Luckey (1960a, 1960b) found a

positive association between congruent spouse perceptions and marital success. On the other hand, studies by Brim and Wood (1956), Kirkpatrick (1954), Hobart and Klausner (1959), and Clements (1967) have not supported this theory.

Hicks and Platt (1970) noted from their review of research on marital happiness and stability that congruence of role perceptions, as well as compatibility between role expectations and actual performance, are associated in general with high marital happiness. Studies by Luckey (1960a, 1960b) and Stuckert (1963) suggested also that high marital happiness was related more significantly to the wife being able to accurately perceive her husband. Marital happiness was not associated with the husband's accurately perceiving his wife's self-concept.

Luckey (1960a, 1960b) selected 81 couples at the University of Minnesota, and determined two groups of marrieds. One group was highly satisfied with their marriages, while the other group was dissatisfied with their marriages. It was suggested that if mutuality of perception was an important basis in determining how people react to each other, then the effects of this should be most readily noted in the most intimate of all interpersonal relationships--a marriage. The Leary Interpersonal Check List (ICL) was completed by each subject for the self and the spouse. Congruence or disparity between the respondent and the spouse could be estimated by each of the four scales provided by the ICL. Analysis of the data demonstrated that satisfaction in a marriage was associated with wives seeing their

husbands as their husbands saw themselves. However, no relationship was seen to exist between the congruity of the wife's self-concept and that which the husband held of her and marital satisfaction.

It was suggested that in a satisfying marriage it is more important that the wife's perception of her husband and her husband's self-concept be congruent, because it is in keeping with this congruence of self-images that most of the marital adjustment occurs. Since it is the wife who does the adjusting, it is beneficial to the relationship if she knows what it is to which she is adjusting (Luckey, 1960a).

In a separate study, Stuckert (1963) arrived at the same conclusions. He found that in a satisfactory marriage the wife must accurately perceive her husband, but it was not as important that the husband be able to accurately perceive his wife. In his study of fifty couples who were randomly selected from couples who applied for marriage licenses in Milwaukee, he found that for wives, marital satisfaction was highly correlated with the extent to which their perception of their husband's expectations correlated with the husband's actual expectations. For husbands, similarity between their own role concepts and the perception which their wives held of their roles was found to be the most important single factor that contributed to marital happiness.

There are other studies that have been done which tend to support the findings of Luckey's (1960a, 1960b) studies. Kotlar (1965) studied fifty middle-class couples who were defined as well adjusted according to the Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale. These couples

were compared to fifty unadjusted couples who were clients of marriage counselors. On comparing their role perceptions, she found that congruence of perception was significantly related to the husbands' and the couples' marital adjustment scores. No significant correlation was found regarding the wives' adjustment scores.

Taylor (1967) used the Wallace Marital Success Scale to select fifty couples from persons in church-affiliated clubs who were rated as having high marital success. These couples were compared to fifty couples who were having significant problems adjusting to their marital spouses and were in marriage counseling. He used the Leary Interpersonal Check List to measure their perceptions. Again, he found that a greater similarity between one's self-perception and the spouse's perception of himself/herself was related to good marital adjustment. He also found that empathic accuracy was more significant with respect to the perceptions of the husband than to perceptions of the wife.

Another study by Katz, Goldstein, Cohen, and Stucker (1963) found a positive relationship between marital happiness and the favorableness of the husband's self-description.

It can be seen from the above studies that the evidence has tended to support the Luckey (1960a, 1960b) findings that marital satisfaction is more dependent on the wife's being able to accurately perceive her husband's self-concept than for the husband to be aware of his wife's self-concept.

According to the interactionist perspective, if the wife perceives her role as requiring that she adjust to her husband, and this

was reinforced by significant others, she could feel quite satisfied in this relationship. This is what her role expects of her, and because of the feedback she receives, adjusting to her husband becomes part of her self-concept as a wife. If the husband sees his role as being that of the provider whose wife is supportive of him, and he receives feedback supporting this role, then the self-concept he develops includes seeing himself as the provider who should endeavor to do his best to provide for the family. This is characteristic of the more traditional marriage in America.

Hurvitz (1959, 1965) found that in a traditional relationship wives conform more to husbands' expectations than husbands do to wives'. He concluded that the husband's instrumental role was important to marital happiness. If, in the process of marital role taking, the couple is able to reinforce each other, those traditional roles become part of their self-concepts, leading to satisfaction in that marriage. If this is further reinforced with the feedback and support for those roles they give each other, as well as from other significant persons such as parents, friends, or employers, the couple will tend to be satisfied in their marriage.

Hobart and Klausner (1959) pointed out that this intraspousal feedback has a significant impact in reinforcing role expectations which, in turn, determines how the couple is able to adjust to one another within their marriage. Udry, Nelson, and Nelson (1961) helped to point to the uniqueness of this process of role taking according to the feedback received from a spouse. This tends to reinforce the interactionist emphasis on role expectations and role

fulfillment according to feedback from significant others. The self-concept which marital partners have in the marriage also influences how their own role is perceived and what is expected from the marital partner.

Rosenburg (1965) noted that spouses tend to evaluate themselves and their marital relationships negatively when they are going through the experience of marital dissolution. He also noted that the children of a marital dissolution tended to evaluate themselves negatively. While it is difficult to know whether those low self-concepts are the product of marital strife, or the cause of it, the two appear to be highly correlated. It does follow, however, that during times of marital dissolution or marital strife, a couple would tend to impact upon each other negatively, thus contributing to a low self-concept and a low-quality marriage. Clements (1967) noted in his study that unsuccessful marriages tend to be characterized by the use of negative reinforcement and/or withdrawal. In following up on this study, Christensen (1976) found that successful marriages were characterized by a reciprocal exchange of positive reinforcement.

Since interaction theory suggests that human interaction is unique in that human beings interpret or define each other's actions instead of merely reacting to them (Burr et al., 1979), it can be seen that a marriage experiencing a lot of strife and negative reinforcement will continue to degenerate. It then becomes necessary to interrupt this process by clarifying the interpersonal activities through effective communication, in order to prevent misinterpretations and negative feedback which is destructive to that marital

relationship. Snyder (1979) has suggested that couples who are able to communicate will tend to rate their marital satisfaction very high.

It can be seen that about fifteen years have passed since the early and mid-sixties when a considerable amount of research was done which looked at the importance of self-concept congruency in marital relationships. Since then most of the empirical investigations have tended to focus on the impact of the self-concept on various aspects of the marital relationships such as: vicarious involvement (Macke, Bohrnstedt, & Bernstein, 1979), role ideals and role strain (Frank, Anderson, & Rubinstein, 1980), or on marital and family role satisfaction (Chadwick, Albrecht, & Kunz, 1976).

Of the two recent studies regarding perceptual accuracy, Christensen and Wallace (1976), and Schafer and Braitto (1979), only the latter take a serious look at the importance of marriage partners' self-concepts and their evaluation of their own and their spouses' marital role performance. In a study of 116 couples, Schafer and Braitto (1979) found that husbands with a positive self-concept seem to be more positive about their own performance and that of their spouse than were wives. They concluded that their study introduced evidence that the perception of a positive evaluation from others, as well as a positive self-evaluation, is related to a positive evaluation of one's own and one's spouse's performance in the marital relationship. These conclusions are similar to the findings of Eastman (1958), Corsini (1956), and Murstein (1971), who found that a spouse's self-concept is related to his evaluation of

the role performance of himself/herself and others. It is important to note that these studies tend to show that a positive evaluation of a spouse's role performance is related to the respondent's perception that he/she is evaluated highly by the spouse. This tends to support the notion that people like those who like them, providing they are mutually aware of each other's feelings.

The literature in the past ten or fifteen years, however, is silent regarding the impact of self-concept congruency between marital partners on the quality of that marriage. In this time a number of changes have occurred which have had an impact on male and female sex roles. Schulman (1979) has pointed out that the development of better contraceptive methods has freed women from a lifetime of rearing children. Women are now more able to pursue jobs, further education, develop careers, or other avenues of self-fulfillment. Keller (1971) noted that the female role is decreasingly being seen as that of the homemaker who is content to stay at home and rear children over many, many years. Olds (1977) has noted that it is becoming very common for women to see full- or part-time employment as a very viable option.

Increasing numbers of women are continuing their education or entering the labor market. In 1970 about 35 percent of all wives were in the labor force. By 1975 this figure had jumped to 44 percent. More recent evidence suggests that this figure is now approaching the 60 percent mark (Glick & Norton, 1977). As women become better trained for the job market, their earning power is also increasing. In 1975, 32 percent of all working wives earned about as

much as their husbands with 7.3 percent of these earning substantially more (Glick & Norton, 1977). Blood and Wolfe (1960) have pointed out that the money wives are earning is resulting in an increasing acquisition of power in the marital relationship. They noted a direct correlation between the resources (such as money) that a marital partner has and the power he/she has in that relationship. As more women continue to enter the labor force with improving skills, it can be seen that they are gaining more power in their marital relationships.

Nor is the working wife forced to be totally dependent on her husband for emotional and/or financial support. Through her work she has an increased opportunity to have these needs met by others she may encounter on the job (Keller, 1971). Schulman (1979) suggested that along with the increased economic freedoms, women are beginning to take advantage of new-found sexual freedom as influenced by the increased availability of better contraceptive methods. Because women now have a choice, they are now less "pseudo-accepting" and are becoming less submissive. This has resulted in a turning to alternate choices and to a "healthier rearrangement of family roles" with increasing numbers of husbands taking over the duties of homemaking and childrearing. As our culture has been shifting, stress has been created on the traditional gender differences which had existed between males and females. Wortis (1971) examined in a critical manner the acceptance of the "maternal role" concept, and concluded that this was nothing more than a "comfortable male myth" (p. 735).

There are still others who have questioned and attacked this dichotomy of roles. Block (1973) and Chafetz (1974) argued that the traditional notions of masculinity and femininity are hindering both sexes from living up to their full human potential. After an examination of childrearing patterns around the world, Mead (as cited by Olds, 1977) stressed that the notion that a baby must not be separated from its mother is absurd. She indicated that babies are most likely to develop into well-adjusted human beings when they are cared for by many warm friendly people provided that most of the loved ones maintain a stable place in the infants' lives. This implies that it is not only the mother or a female who can take adequate care of the child, but that fathers (or males) can as well, without any detriment to the child.

Bem (1976) concurred with these opinions, and suggested that by sex-typing males as instrumental and females as expressive, the behaviors of each sex are restricted. She noted that this has tended to produce males who were independent, but had difficulty being nurturant, while females were able to be nurturant but had great difficulty being independent. Lemasters (1975) has suggested that the dichotomy of sex roles has produced a basic mistrust between the sexes with each sex realizing it needs the opposite sex, but at the same time uncertain as to how the relationship will work out.

There can be no doubt that well organized groups such as the National Organization of Women (NOW) and the proponents of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) have helped to raise the consciousness of both

men and women regarding the way in which sex-role stereotyping can be destructive. Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1976) summarized this point well:

As more and more parents and their children begin to view traditional sex-role norms as costly rather than rewarding, we may begin to see a movement away from gender typing and an emphasis on human qualities and experiences desirable for all persons regardless of sex. (p. 239)

The current trend appears to be a slow movement in the direction of less differentiated sex roles.

In evaluating this trend, Hicks and Platt (1970) suggested that a shift is occurring from the institutional, tradition-oriented marriage in which model roles exist and are more differentiated, to the companionship marriage which places greater emphasis on the affective aspects of the relationship. Giele (1975) and Young and Willmott (1973) also saw marital relationships moving toward becoming more egalitarian in nature.

Rapoport and Rapoport (1975) concurred with the perception that a shift toward less differentiated sex roles is occurring. However, they went on to propose the concept of equity as having advantages over that of equality. By equity the Rapoport's mean a fair allocation both of opportunity and constraint for both spouses. This delicate balance between opportunities and constraints is seen as the best way to combine the best of the traditional marriage and the companionship marriage into a relationship that provides security as well as the opportunity for self-actualization on the part of both marital partners.

If relationships are becoming more egalitarian, it can be argued that in order for a contemporary marriage to be a satisfactory one,

it is becoming increasingly important for the husband to be equally aware of his wife's self-concept, and for this to be congruent with her perception of herself -- just as it is important for the wife to be aware of her husband's self-concept.

It must also be recognized, however, that not all present-day marital relationships are egalitarian. A good number are still very traditional with the husband being the head of the household, while the wife fulfills the supportive, housewife role. Within the traditional relationships, the earlier findings by Luckey (1960a, 1960b, 1964) that marital satisfaction is more dependent on the wife's being able to accurately perceive her husband's self-concept than for the husband to be aware of his wife's self-concept would still hold true. This is because within these relationships, the wife continues to be the one who does the majority of the adjusting (Luckey, 1960a, 1960b).

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were developed from the previous research and the theoretical discussion. They helped to achieve the purpose of this study which was to examine the relationship between interspousal self-concept congruency and the quality of a marriage. They were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship between marital quality and self-concept congruency among husbands and wives.

Hypothesis 2: Within egalitarian relationships, there will be a significant difference between the two groups defined as high-quality and low-quality marriages with regard to the degree of congruence between the concept each spouse holds of himself/herself and the concept of him/her held by his/her marital partner.

Hypothesis 3: Within traditional marriages, there will be no significant differences between the two groups defined as high-quality and low-quality marriages with regard to the degree of interspousal self-concept congruence.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Sampling Methods

One group of 101 couples who were not in marriage counseling (high-marital-quality group) was compared to one group of 50 couples who were seeking to resolve their marital difficulties through marriage counseling (low-marital-quality group). The high-marital-quality group was randomly selected from a list of those couples who had joined the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME) in the Winston-Salem, Morganton, Charlotte, Fayetteville, and Greensboro, North Carolina, areas. The low-marital-quality group was randomly selected from a list of those couples who were seeking to resolve difficulties in their marriages through marriage counseling. They were selected from the same geographic areas as those couples in the high-marital-quality group.

Attempts were made to examine demographic factors that might be operating within these two groups. This was done to determine if the two groups were homogeneous in these areas. In order to be aware of any intervening factors that might have an impact on the results, the attempt was made to look at a number of personal and demographic data items. This included variables such as socioeconomic status, the neighborhood communities in which the couples live, the number of years that couples have been married, and the number of children that were living with the couple. Age and other factors such as family

income were also examined to determine if there were differences in these areas between the two groups. The high and low marital quality groups were compared on each of these demographic variables. The groups were classified into appropriate categories, and the Chi-square test of independence was applied to determine if any significant differences existed. Couples were also given a Sex-Role Orientation Scale to determine if any sex-role differences existed between the two groups. This enabled the researcher to know whether the extraneous variables were similar for both groups.

It can be noted that this was a stratified nonprobability sample. Couples were selected for inclusion into the high-quality group based on whether they were members in ACME who had participated in an enrichment event, and were not presently in marriage counseling. Couples were selected for inclusion into the low-quality group based on whether they were in marriage counseling. In order to ensure that this was a fair allocation, all couples were given the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and the Personal Report of Spouse Communication Apprehension Scale. These scales were used to substantiate whether or not a couple had a high or low quality marriage; i.e., these scales were used to reinforce a couple's placement within the high or low marital quality group.

Once it was determined for certain that couples had been placed in the appropriate marital quality groups, their responses to the four scales of the Leary Interpersonal Check List were examined. Tests for differences between the groups were then performed.

Couples in ACME were mailed questionnaires, while those in marriage counseling were handed a packet containing instructions, questionnaires, and addressed, stamped envelopes. All couples were asked to fill out the questionnaires independently and to return them by mail in envelopes that were provided for them. Each questionnaire was 12 pages long and took approximately 25 minutes to complete. Couples were instructed not to discuss their responses until after they had completed and returned their respective questionnaires. Each couple was assigned a code number in order that each husband's response could be compared to the response of his wife, and vice-versa. This enabled the spouse-spouse comparisons to be made which this study demanded. After a waiting period of three weeks, the couples in ACME were sent a postcard reminding them to complete their questionnaires. Three weeks after this, a second follow-up postcard was sent out. Those couples in counseling were reminded by their respective counselors to complete and return their questionnaires. In this way, it was hoped to keep the response rate at a maximum for both groups.

General Description of the Sample

There were 151 couples who participated in this study. The entire sample was predominantly white (98 percent), Protestant (92 percent), and better educated (see Table 1). Seventy-two percent were college graduates who had also done some graduate work. Seventy-seven percent of the husbands and 67 percent of the wives had college degrees, and had either graduate degrees or had done some graduate work. The sample also tended to be middle class with 42 percent reporting a family income in excess of \$30,000.

Table 1
Demographic Data of Sample Couples

Characteristics	Husbands		Wives	
	In Counseling	Not In Counseling	In Counseling	Not In Counseling
Age (Years)	40.8 + 10.5	43 + 11.8	37.4 + 11	41.4 + 10.8
Race (Percent)				
Black		2		2
White	100	98	100	98
Religious Preference (Percent)				
Protestant	94	95	98	96
Catholic	2	2	1	1
Other	1	1	1	1
None	3	2		2
Employment Status (Percent)				
Part-time	17	16	8.5	15
Full-time	74	75.5	64.2	65
Unemployed	8	4.5	11	3
Retired	1.2	4	1.2	4
Full-time Homemaker			9	13
Type Of Neighborhood Lived In (Percent)				
Completely Black		1		1
Mostly Black	2	1	2	1
Equally Integrated	2	4	2	4
Mostly White	50	41	50	41
Completely White	46	53	46	53
Amount of Formal Education (Percent)				
Grade 8 or less	2		4	3
High School	12	3.5	18	19

Table 1 (Continued)

Characteristics	Husbands		Wives	
	In Counseling	Not In Counseling	In Counseling	Not In Counseling
Amount of Formal Education (Percent)				
Two years or less				
Post High School	12	4	20	24
Some College	14.5	14	23	19
College Graduate	28	26	24	30
Graduate Studies+	31.5	53	11	15
Occupation (Percent)				
Semi-skilled or Skilled Manual Employees	16	1	20	5
Clerical/Sales Worker or Technician	12	15	18	14.5
Administrator or Profession Requiring Bachelor's Degree	33	35	28	36
Owner, High-level Executive	3	5	1	1.5
Profession Requiring Advanced Degree	26	38.5	28	34
Student	9	3	4	6.5
Retired	1	2.5	1	2.5
Number of Children Living In Home (Percent)				
No Children	43	27.5	43	27.5
One or Two	54	67	54	67
Three or More	3	5.5	3	5.5

Other characteristics of interest regarding this sample include the following: 95 percent of the husbands worked either full or part time, while 3.3 percent reportedly were retired. Only 1.3 percent indicated they were unemployed. Of the wives, 66 percent worked either full or part time, while 7.3 percent of them indicated they were unemployed. Twenty-three percent of the wives described themselves as "full-time homemakers."

Two-thirds of the entire sample were not in marriage counseling ($n = 101$), while one-third were in marriage counseling ($n = 50$). Ninety-seven percent of the sample reported they were living with their marital partners, while three percent reported they were separated.

Of the entire sample, 28 percent ($n = 42$) indicated they were not members in the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME), while 72 percent ($n = 109$) were members. Of those members in ACME, 57.6 percent had participated in at least one marriage enrichment event. Almost eight percent of the ACME couples in this sample were also involved in marriage counseling.

Of the 151 couples, 32 percent ($n = 48$) had no children living with them, while the remaining 68 percent had anywhere from two to five children living with them.

The average age of the husbands in this sample was 42 years. They ranged in age from 22 to 74 years. The average age of the wives in this sample was 39.7 years with their ages ranging from 23 to 78 years.

Couples in this sample were married an average of 17 years with lengths of marriages ranging from two months to 46 years.

An Examination of the Demographic Data

Once it was determined that the two groups were fairly allocated, the two groups were carefully compared by means of chi-square tests for independence. This was done to ensure the homogeneity of these two groups in these areas. This test was applied to each of the following variables: employment status, race, religious preference, income, the type of neighborhood lived in, the amount of formal education acquired, the age of the respondents, the occupation of the respondents, the number of working wives, the number of years married, and the number of children living with the respondents. The results of these tests can be seen in Table 2.

It can be noted that when the chi-square tests of independence were applied to determine if significant differences existed between those couples in counseling and those not in counseling, the groups were homogeneous on all variables except for level of income, amount of formal education, and the number of children living with the couple. A closer analysis of the data revealed that couples in marriage counseling earned significantly less money ($p < .01$), had significantly less formal education ($p < .04$), and had fewer children living at home ($p < .03$). Thornton (1977) found that couples with no children were most likely to experience disruption. The U. S. Bureau of the Census (1977) also showed that divorce rates are higher for couples with few or no children. A closer examination of the educational differences by sex revealed no significant differences between the wives, but very significant differences between the educational

Table 2
 A comparison of Couples in Counseling to Those
 Not in Counseling on Demographic Data

Variable	Husbands		Wives	
	Chi-Square Score	Level of Significance	Chi-Square Score	Level of Significance
Employment Status	5.98	.11	3.87	.42
Race	.06	.80	.06	.80
Religious Preference	.75	.86	.70	.88
Income	19.12	.01*	19.41	.01*
Type of Neighborhood	1.24	.87	2.18	.70
Amount of Formal Education	15.56	.01*	10.69	.06
Age	48.81	.13	37.43	.18
Occupation	11.47	.17	12.38	.26
Years Married	49.45	.12	50.91	.12
Number of Children Living with Respondent	11.63	.04*	12.92	.02*

* Significant Differences

levels of the husband ($p < .001$). Forty percent of couples in marriage counseling had no children living at home, compared to 27.7 percent of couples not in marriage counseling. Of those in counseling, 58 percent had one or two children living at home, compared to 71 percent of those couples not in counseling. Thus, it may be concluded that those couples in marriage counseling were quite similar with regard to their demographic data to those couples not in counseling. However, in interpreting any differences between these groups, it will be important to keep in mind these demographic areas where the two groups do differ.

Research Measures

Four instruments were used in the course of this study: The Leary Interpersonal Check List (Leary & Coffee, 1955), The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), The Personal Report of Spouse Communication Apprehension Scale (Powers & Hutchinson, 1979), and a Sex-Role Orientation Scale (Orthner, 1980; Scanzoni, 1975; Tomeh, 1978).

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale is a relatively recent measure for assessing the quality of marriage and other similar dyads. The 32-item scale was designed for use with either married or unmarried cohabiting couples. It was chosen for use in this study because it is quite short, can be completed in just a few minutes, and was therefore easily incorporated into the self-administered questionnaire which this study demanded.

The scale was also chosen because of the four components which it measures, specifically: (1) dyadic consensus, (2) dyadic satisfaction, (3) dyadic cohesion, and (4) affectional expression. Each of these subscales provides the researcher with specific data in each of these four areas. Thus, while it is one scale, it enables the researcher to examine with greater intricacy the components which comprise the quality of the relationship being studied.

The scale has a theoretical range of zero to 151. It was the product of a factor analysis of approximately 200 items from previous scales that sought to measure marital adjustment. The format of the scale allows for easy coding and scoring. The individual is asked to read a statement and then to indicate by circling a number on a five-point Likert-type scale the extent to which he/she agrees or disagrees with the statement. Each response that is circled is assigned a number. These, in turn, are summed to give a picture of the amount of marital quality that is present in that relationship.

Spanier (1976) conceded that one of the problems with this scale is that it has not clarified whether it can be considered a measure of individual adjustment to the relationship or whether it measures the adjustment of the dyad as a functioning group. While some of the items attempt to assess the individual's adjustment to the relationship, most of them attempt to assess the respondent's perception of the adjustment to the relationship as a functioning group. Since this latter type of question predominates, Spanier (1976) emphasized that the researcher should assume that partner differences in responding

to the scale items largely reflect differing perceptions of the relationship's functioning. White and Brikerhof (1977) disagreed with Spanier, suggesting that his scale does not take seriously enough the problem of the unit of analysis. They questioned whether the scale accurately discriminates between individual and dyadic adjustment, consensus, cohesion, and affectional expression.

On the other hand, Spanier (1976), Spanier and Lewis (1980), and Spanier, Lewis, and Cole (1975) have pointed out that despite the criticism of marital adjustment and its related concepts, it is one of the most frequently studied dependent variables in the study of marriage and family relationships. Spanier (1979), while agreeing that the problem regarding the unit of analysis has not been totally resolved, has emphasized that efforts to clarify these problems of measurement have made it possible to distinguish marital quality from other concepts such as happiness, success, stability, integration, cohesion, adjustment, or consensus. Thus, he stressed that quality is an appropriate concept for investigation.

For the purpose of this project, marital quality is seen as a process rather than an unchanging state. Operationally, marital quality will be defined as an ever-changing process with a qualitative dimension that is measured at a given point in time by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976).

In a test of 218 married persons and a divorced sample of 94 persons, each of the 32 items in the scale correlated significantly with the external criterion of marital status; i.e., the divorced sample differed significantly from the married sample ($p < .001$). The mean total scale score for the married sample was 114.8, and 70.7 for the divorced sample. Thus, the scale is able to assess an existing status and demonstrates concurrent validity. In seeking to determine construct validity (for the extent to which a test measures a theoretical construct or trait), the Dyadic Adjustment Scale was correlated with the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke & Wallace, 1959). The correlation between these two scales was .86 among married respondents, and .88 among divorced respondents ($p < .001$). The correlation for the total sample was .93 ($p < .001$).

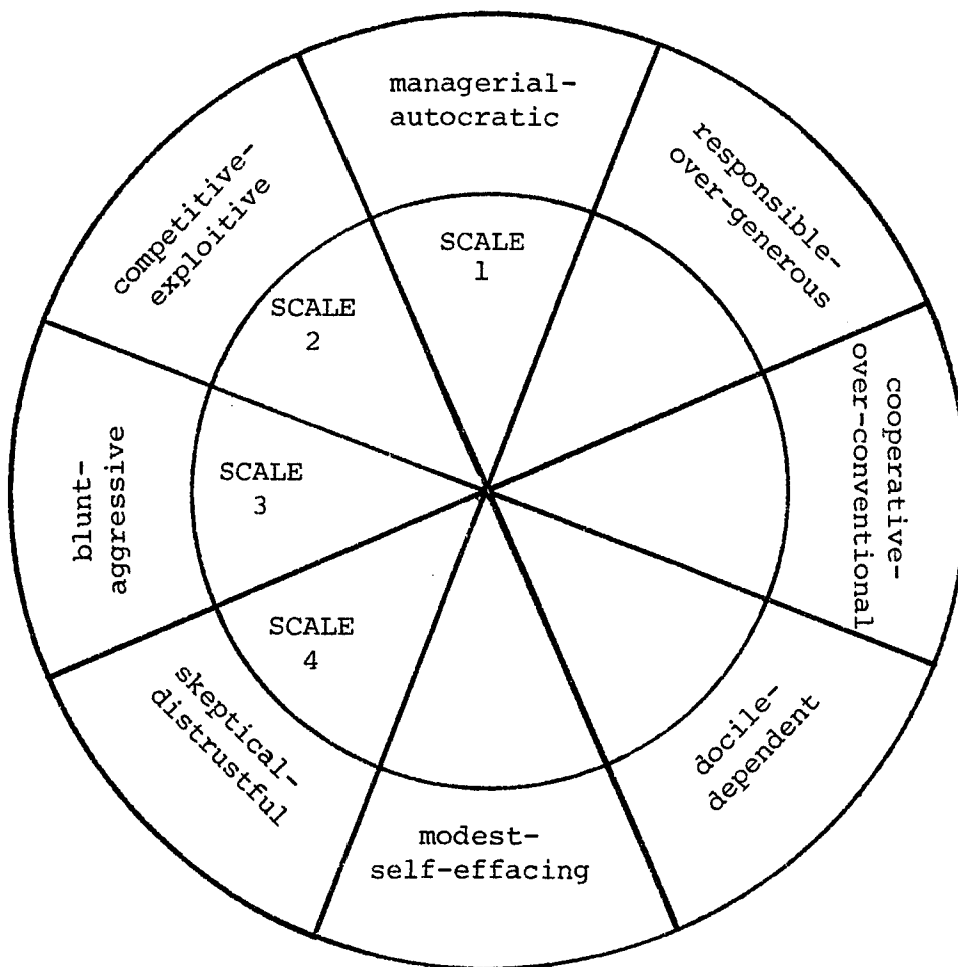
The Dyadic Adjustment Scale was found to have a total scale reliability of .96 using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Reliability was also determined for each of the component scales, as well as the total scale. The reliability scores for the Dyadic Consensus subscale was .90; for the Dyadic Satisfaction subscale it was .94; for the Dyadic Cohesion subscale it was .86; while for the Affectional Expression subscale, a reliability score of .73 was obtained. These data indicate that the total scale and its components have sufficiently high reliability to justify their use.

The Interpersonal Check List

The Interpersonal Check List is the instrument which was used to measure the individual's self-concept and the amount of interspousal self-concept congruency that existed in a marital relationship. The check list provided an organized way in which to deal with what a subject said about himself/herself and his/her spouse. As was stated earlier in this paper, no claim can be made that this is the self-concept. However, in this study the self- and spouse-concepts are operationally defined in terms of all the statements an individual made about himself/herself and his/her spouse as they are represented by these check-list items.

The Interpersonal Check List is made up of 128 descriptive, self-referent items which represent 16 interpersonal variables, each of which is made up of eight items. These variables are arranged in a circular profile, and combined into descriptive octants in such a way that each intersecting line of the profile may be thought of as a continuum, with the subject's score located according to the number of items circled within each specific category. The four continua have been designated for this study in the same manner as the Luckey (1960a, 1960b) studies. Scale 1 measures the managerial-autocratic versus modest self-effacing personality concepts. Scale 2 measures the competitive-exploitive versus docile-dependent personality concepts. Scale 3 measures the blunt-aggressive versus cooperative-overconventional personality concepts. Scale 4 measures the skeptical-distrustful versus responsible-overgenerous personality concepts. The manner in which these scales are arranged can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1
The Interpersonal Check List*



*Leary and Coffee, 1955, p. 117.

These four scales were used as the basis for comparing the degree of congruity of the self-concept and the concept of the self as perceived by the spouse. Each spouse was asked to read the list of descriptive words. If they decided the word was descriptive of them, they were asked to circle a number one in a column headed "The Way I See Myself." Then they were asked to go through the list again and

to decide whether or not each word described their mate. If it did, they were asked to circle a number two under a column headed "They Way I See My Spouse." Spouse-spouse comparisons were then made to determine the amount of congruity that existed within that relationship. This was done by calculating the absolute difference between those items each spouse checked regarding themselves and their marital partner. Each couple was compared for all 128 items. The way a husband saw himself was compared to the way his wife saw him, and vice versa. Thus, if a husband checked an item because he saw himself that way, and the wife checked that item because she saw him that way as well, that couple received no points for that particular item, indicating their perceptions were congruent. If, however, they disagreed, their differences on each of the items were summed. This meant that the greater the incongruity, the higher the score. The more congruent the couple's perceptions, the lower their Interpersonal Check List score.

Reliability for the Interpersonal Check List was determined by the test-retest method. Correlations of .73 and .78 were obtained. This suggests that the ICL scores can have sufficient stability to be useful in personality research. No validity correlations have been published. However, previous research studies (Kotlar, 1965, Leary & Coffee, 1955; Luckey, 1960a, 1960b, 1964; Stuckert, 1963) have demonstrated the ability of this scale to distinguish between groups.

The Personal Report of Spouse Communication
Apprehension Scale

The third instrument to be used in this study included selected items from the Personal Report of Spouse Communication Apprehension Scale (PRSCA) (Powers & Hutchinson, 1979). Only those items with the greatest predictive validity (.50 or better) were selected for inclusion. Using this method allowed the inclusion of 15 items from this scale. The PRSCA scale has been specifically designed to measure the level of communication apprehension in the marital environment. In this scale subjects are asked to respond to each statement on a five-point, strongly agree to strongly disagree, Likert-type scale. Individual scores are obtained by summing responses to each of the items. The scale was recoded such that higher scores reflect higher communication and less apprehension in communicating, and therefore, greater marital satisfaction. Lower scores reflect higher communication apprehension, and therefore, less satisfaction in the marriage.

Powers and Hutchinson (1979) presented evidence to support their contention that communication between spouses is substantially different from communication patterns between unmarried persons. Their findings suggest that high apprehensive subjects desired more communication in the family, and believed they would assume more responsibility in communication, but they were unable to do so. They also found that high apprehensive subjects indicated that they were significantly less satisfied in their marriages than the low apprehensives. The mean score of the high apprehensives was 13.0, while the mean score for the low apprehensives was 19.0 ($p < .05$). This indicates predictive validity for the PRSCA scale.

The reported reliability for the 15 items which loaded highest on the PRSCA scale by using the split-half reliability method was .88. Item correlations all exceeded the .001 level of significance. The PRSCA's hypothetical midpoint was 45 with an actual mean score obtained of 34, and a standard deviation of 10. Powers and Hutchinson (1979) concluded that, based on these data, the PRSCA can be considered a general measure of communication apprehension in a marital relationship. They also suggested that the scale is a good indicator of marital satisfaction.

The Sex-Role Orientation Scale

The fourth instrument to be used in this study consisted of selected items from the sex-role orientation studies of Tomeh (1978) and Scanzoni (1975) as they have been revised and utilized by Orthner (1980). This resulted in the use of nine items which were designed specifically to help determine the attitude of a couple regarding their respective roles in their marriage. In this scale subjects were asked to respond to each item on a five-point, strongly agree to strongly disagree, Likert-type scale. The scale has a theoretical range from 10 to 45. Individual scores were obtained by summing responses to each of the items. This scale was recoded such that low mean scores indicated a traditional attitude, whereas high means indicated this was an egalitarian relationship.

Using these items, Tomeh (1978) reported that the reliability of these sex-role orientation items produced coefficients of reproducibility equal to .84 for the nontraditional wife-mother role items, and

.85 for the nontraditional husband-father role items (Pearson's r , $p < .001$). Each item selected for inclusion by this researcher had a reported predictive validity of .50 or better as determined by the Scanzoni (1975) study.

This Sex-Role Orientation Scale resulted in a couple being placed on a continuum ranging from traditional to egalitarian. In order to determine whether a couple was to be considered traditional or egalitarian, the entire sample was divided into fifths. Those couples scoring in the upper two-fifths of this continuum were considered egalitarian for the purpose of this study. Those couples scoring on the lower two-fifths of this continuum were considered to be traditional. This is similar to the method used by Scanzoni (1975) in his study on sex-role egalitarianism.

Data Analysis

The Interpersonal Check List (ICL) is the instrument which enabled the researcher to determine the amount of interspousal self-concept congruency or disparity that existed within a marital relationship. The check lists were divided on the basis of sex in order that a more careful analysis of the data could be made. The wife, as she marked her own self-concept, was compared to the concept of her as marked by her husband, and because there are four scales within the ICL, four discrepancy scores representing the differences were obtained. These four were, in turn, summed to give a single discrepancy score. The same process was carried out with the husband's markings of himself and his wife's perception of him. In this way

this study was able to compare the concept the wife had of herself with the concept of her held by her husband, and the way the husband saw himself was compared to the way in which his wife saw him. Mean discrepancy scores were also obtained for those couples in high-quality marriages and those couples in low-quality marriages.

In order to determine if self-concept congruency impacts on marital quality as a test of hypothesis one, stepwise multiple regression analysis was used. The regression coefficient obtained demonstrated how marital quality changes as self-concept congruency changes. This statistical procedure also made it possible to determine the strength of the relationship that existed between these two variables. Stepwise multiple regression identified the variable that explained the greatest amount of variance. It also enabled this researcher to know how much of the variance within the quality of a marriage was explained by interspousal self-concept congruence. Thus, for hypothesis one, marital quality was the dependent measure. Self-concept congruency was treated as the independent measure.

As a further test for the relationship between marital quality and self-concept congruency, Pearson correlation coefficients were derived. This enabled this researcher to look specifically at the correlation between the way the husband saw himself and the way his wife saw him on the four subscales (THSCA-1, THSCA-2, THSCA-3, THSCA-4) and marital quality. Correlations were also determined regarding the way a wife saw herself and her husband saw her on the four subscales (TWSCA-1, TWSCA-2, TWSCA-3, TWSCA-4). Correlations were also obtained for the relationship between each of these subscales

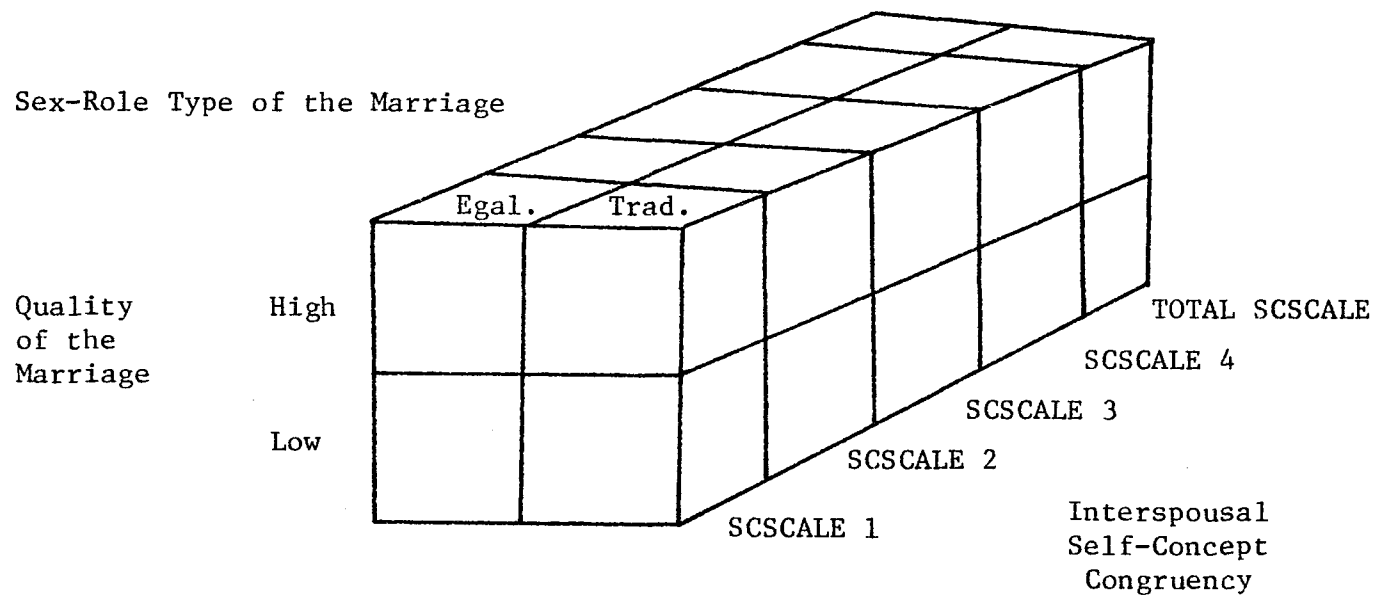
SCSCALE-1, SCSCALE-2, SCSCALE-3, SCSCALE-4), and the relationship between marital quality and the total self-concept scale (SCSCALE).

In order to test hypotheses two and three, which sought to determine the differences between egalitarian and traditional relationships, two factor analyses of variance with replication were done; i.e., two-way ANOVA were repeated on each of the five different ICL scale scores (the four subscales and the total scale score of the Interpersonal Check List). This analysis of variance technique enabled the researcher to look at any interactions that might be occurring between the quality of a marriage (high or low) and the sex-role orientation for type of marriage (egalitarian or traditional). This can be diagrammed as seen in Figure 2.

This analysis of variance technique worked well in these two hypotheses, because it made possible a way of assessing the meaningfulness of differences between the various means when more than two groups were involved. If the variation between groups was not much greater than the variation within groups, then clearly the groups are not very different from each other. The resulting F- statistic enabled this researcher to know whether within egalitarian and traditional relationships, significant differences were present with regard to the amount of interspousal self-concept congruency that existed in high- and low-quality marriages. The .05 level of significance was used.

Figure 2

Statistical Model for Hypotheses 2 and 3



CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Response Rate

Originally 197 questionnaire packets were sent to couples in ACME, and 119 questionnaires were handed to couples in marriage counseling. Of the ACME couples, a total of 69 had to be dropped from the sample. They were dropped because of incorrect addresses, deaths, being returned very late, and in several cases, because the individuals felt they were too familiar with this study to be objective. This resulted in 128 ACME couples being sent the questionnaire and kept in the sample. Out of these, 101 couples responded, resulting in a return rate of 79 percent. The use of the two follow-up postcards helped to achieve this rate of return. While this is not exceptional, it is quite an adequate rate of return in comparison to other mail survey types of designs (Dillman, 1978).

Of the 119 couples in marriage counseling, only 50 couples responded. This resulted in a return rate of 42 percent. The reason for this low rate of return might be that while the various marriage counselors were asked to remind their counselees to return the questionnaires, several of them confessed they "did not feel right" doing this, or they had "forgotten." Another reason might be that those individuals in marriage counseling are simply not as committed to their marriages, and are thus not as interested in this type of study.

The amount of interest in this study was markedly different for these two groups with almost all of the ACME couples (97 percent) requesting results. Only a few (12 percent) of those in counseling were interested in the results.

Another reason might be that those couples in marriage counseling are already experiencing a lot of stress, and simply felt too threatened or tired to complete the questionnaires. Scanzoni (1975) reported a similar poor response rate in a study he did using couples in marriage counseling. It was also noted that within the marriage counseling sample, 11 responses had to be dropped, because returns were not received from the respective spouses.

Couples in High and Low Quality Marriages

An initial task of this researcher was to divide the sample into two groups -- one high marital quality, and one low marital quality group. This was done arbitrarily based exclusively upon whether or not a couple was in marriage counseling. Those couples seeking to resolve their differences through marriage counseling were assigned to the low marital quality group, while those couples who were not in marriage counseling and were members in ACME were assigned to the high marital quality group. This resulted in 101 couples being placed in the high marital quality group, and 51 couples being assigned to the low marital quality group.

To ensure that this was a fair allocation, the marital quality scores (as obtained from the Dyadic Adjustment Scale) of the two groups were compared with t-tests to determine if they were, indeed,

significantly different. As can be seen from the data in Table 3, this was, indeed, a fair allocation with the differences between the two groups being highly significant ($p < .001$) on all four of the subscales, as well as the total scale scores.

Couples not in marriage counseling scored significantly higher in marital quality when compared to those couples in marriage counseling. This was true on each of the four subscales (dyadic consensus, affectional expression, marital satisfaction, and marital cohesion), as well as on the total scale score. When husband-husband and wife-wife comparisons were made on each of the four subscales, there were again highly significant differences ($p < .01$). Those husbands and those wives not in marriage counseling scored significantly higher in marital quality than those husbands and wives in marriage counseling.

To further ensure that this was a fair allocation, the results of the couple's communication apprehension scores (as measured by the Personal Report of Spouse Communication Apprehension Scale) were compared for differences. It can be seen from Table 4 that those couples in marriage counseling were significantly more apprehensive in their communication with their spouses, and also significantly less satisfied with their marriages than their counterparts not in marriage counseling ($p < .001$).

Here again, when husbands in counseling were compared to their counterparts not in counseling, they scored significantly higher ($p < .001$) in communication apprehension, and thus, lower in marital satisfaction. When this comparison was made for the wives, the same results were achieved at the same level of significance ($p < .001$).

Table 3
 A Comparison of Couples in Counseling to Couples
 Not in Counseling on Marital Quality (Means)
 (n=151)

Marital Quality Scale	In Marriage Counseling?	Husbands			Wives			Couple		
		X	S.D.	t	X	S.D.	t	X	S.D.	t
Dyadic Consensus	Yes (n=50)	43.09	8.73		41.69	9.32		84.73	16.52	
	No (n=101)	47.87	5.10	3.93**	47.76	6.15	4.22**	95.63	10.03	4.33**
Affectional Expression	Yes (n=50)	6.57	2.53		6.45	2.42		13.02	4.29	
	No (n=101)	8.59	2.07	11.98**	8.40	2.0	4.94**	16.99	3.62	5.67**
Marital Satisfaction	Yes (n=50)	34.10	9.22		31.29	9.73		65.39	16.94	
	No (n=101)	39.80	5.4	4.08**	39.48	5.00	5.64**	79.28	9.51	5.43**
Marital Cohesion	Yes (n=50)	13.26	4.10		12.55	4.67		25.80	7.32	
	No (n=101)	15.24	3.53	2.95*	15.17	3.50	3.53**	30.41	6.21	3.85**
Total Scale Score	Yes (n=50)	96.97	13.58		91.98	14.46		188.94	40.16	
	No (n=101)	111.50	8.48	6.92**	110.81	8.90	8.26**	222.31	24.18	5.43**

* p < .01
 ** p < .001

Table 4

A Comparison of Couples in Counseling to
 Couples Not in Counseling on
 Communication Apprehension

In Marriage Counseling	Husbands			Wives			Couple		
	X	S.D.	<u>t</u>	X	S.D.	<u>t</u>	X	S.D.	<u>t</u>
Yes (n=50)	50.53	12.95		50.86	14.74		101.39	23.67	
No (n=101)	59.35	10.23	4.24*	59.63	10.52	3.79*	118.98	17.88	4.68*

*p < .001

These results further supported the allocation of those couples in marriage counseling into the low marital quality group and those not in counseling into the high marital quality group. It is also interesting to note that in the marriage counseling sample, there was consistently greater variance on all four subscales, on the total scale score of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, as well as on the PRSCA scale. Couples not in marriage counseling had consistently less variance on both the DAS and the PRSCA scales.

Lastly, the two groups were also examined on their sex-role attitudes within their marriages. This was done to further determine if allocating couples in marriage counseling into the low marital quality group and those not in marriage counseling into the high marital quality group was a fair allocation. It was assumed that there would be no differences in the two groups here; i.e., that whether or not one was in marriage counseling would have nothing to do with his/her sex-role attitudes within that marriage.

This was, indeed, found to be true for the wives. When the couple was examined together, there was no significant difference regarding the sex-role attitudes of women in marriage counseling and those not in counseling. The same held true for couples. No significant differences were found to exist between couples in marriage counseling and those not in counseling with regard to how egalitarian or traditional they are in their sex-role attitudes toward their marriages.

However, as can be seen in Table 5, a significant difference ($p < .01$) was found to exist between the husbands. Those husbands not

Table 5

A Comparison of Couples in Counseling and Couples
Not in Counseling on Their Sex-Role Attitudes

In Marriage Counseling	Husbands			Wives			Couple		
	X	S.D.	<u>t</u>	X	S.D.	<u>t</u>	X	S.D.	<u>t</u>
Yes (n=50)	33.24	5.59		37.24	4.21		70.47	8.57	
No (n=101)	35.99	5.32	2.92*	36.86	5.09	.48	72.85	9.06	1.57

*p < .01

in marriage counseling tended to be more egalitarian in their sex-role attitudes than their counterparts in marriage counseling. Husbands in marriage counseling tended to be more traditional.

It is also interesting to note that when t-tests for differences were performed in comparing husband and wife responses, those wives in marriage counseling were significantly more egalitarian in their sex-role attitudes than their husbands ($t = 4.04, p < .001$). This was not found to be true when husbands not in counseling were compared to wives not in counseling ($t = 1.19, N.S.$). No significant differences were found here. Thus, one may speculate that one of the reasons couples are in counseling is due to their differing attitudes regarding their sex-roles in their marriage.

Interspousal Self-Concept Congruency

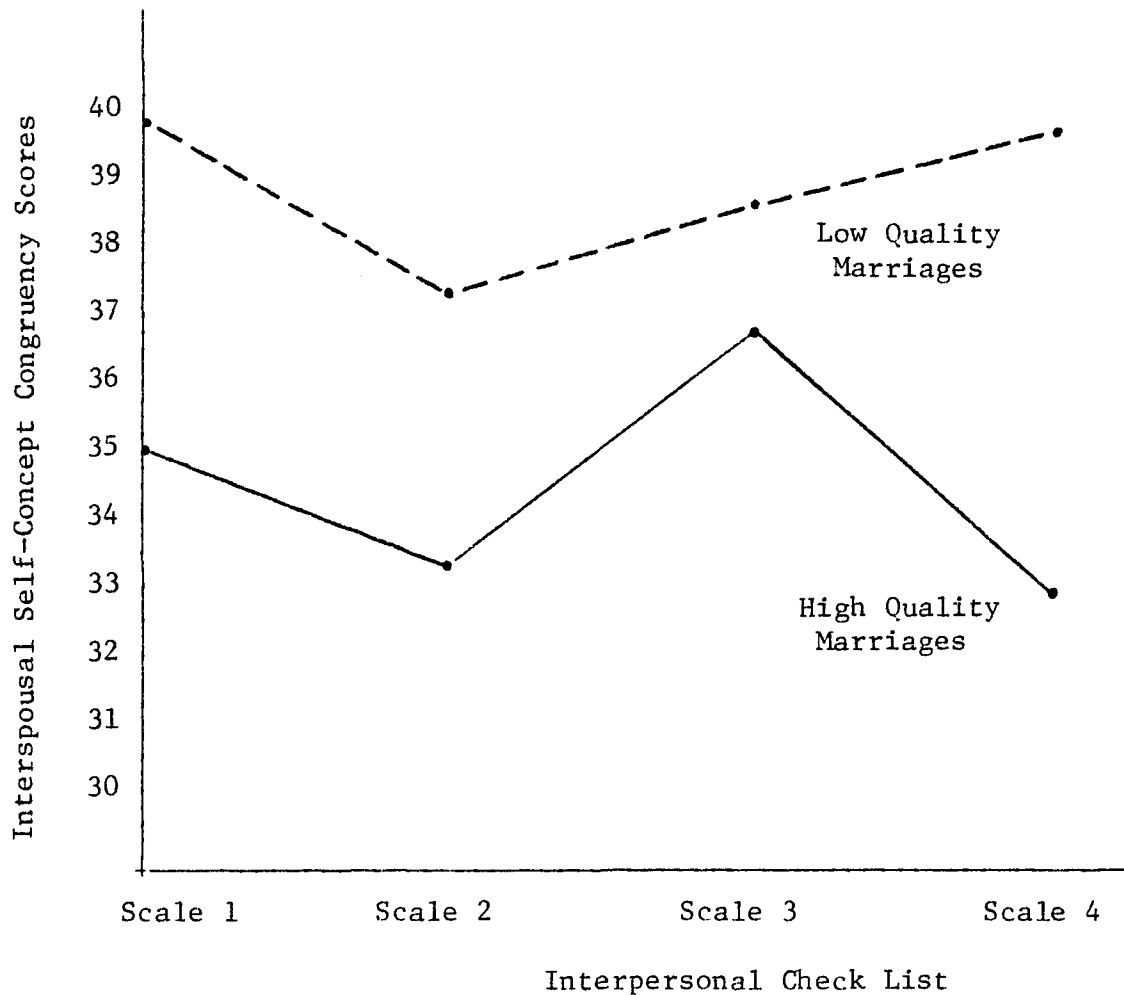
And Marital Quality

Prior to testing hypothesis one, that there will be a positive relationship between marital quality and self-concept congruency, mean scores were obtained for those couples in marriage counseling (low marital quality group) on all four of the subscales of the ICL. This process was repeated for those couples not in marriage counseling (high marital quality group). Figure 3 presents these results.

It can be seen that it appears that those couples in low quality marriages tend to have less congruency than those couples in high quality marriages. When t-tests for differences were performed to determine if these two groups were significantly different on all

Figure 3

A Comparison of the Interspousal Self-Concept
Congruency Scores of Couples in High and
Low Quality Marriages



Note: The higher the score the greater the incongruity between couples.

four scales, only Scale 3 was found not to be significantly different. Scales 1, 2, and 4 showed significant differences between the group designated as high quality and the group designated as low quality marriages ($p < .05$).

In testing hypothesis one by using stepwise multiple regression, it was found that there was a positive relationship between marital quality and interspousal self-concept congruency ($F = 11.54$, $p < .01$). However, in this study self-concept congruency explained only 15.6 percent of the total variance. The results of the multiple regression are presented in Table 6. The table also shows the order in which the self-concept congruency variables were entered and the amount of explained variance each of the self-concept congruency variables added. Beta weights are also given.

Table 6
Correlation Between Interspousal Self-Concept
Congruency and Marital Quality

Variable	Multiple R	R Square	Beta	F
HSCALE 1	.268	.071	-.142	2.09
WSCALE 4	.316	.100	-.158	2.52
HSCALE 4	.342	.117	-.175	3.76
HSCALE 3	.371	.137	.178	3.77
WSCALE 3	.378	.142	-.106	1.20
WSCALE 2	.389	.151	.122	1.64
HSCALE 2	.394	.155	-.088	.71
WSCALE 1	.395	.156	-.02	.04

To examine further the relationship between marital quality and self-concept congruency, Pearson correlation coefficients were derived. The results of these intercorrelations can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7
Pearson Correlation Coefficients Examining the
Correlation Between Marital Quality and
Self-Concept Congruency

Variable	Pearson's r	Level of Significance
HSCA 1	-.2681	.000*
WSCA 1	-.1388	.045*
HSCA 2	-.2125	.004*
WSCA 2	-.0484	.277
HSCA 3	-.0060	.471
WSCA 3	-.1857	.011*
HSCA 4	-.2494	.001*
WSCA 4	-.2522	.001*
SCSCALE 1	-.2575	.001*
SCSCALE 2	-.1645	.022*
SCSCALE 3	-.1229	.066
SCSCALE 4	-.3210	.000*
SCSCALE (Total)	-.2666	.000*

*Significant r

Note: Dependent Variable: Marital Quality
n = 151

From Table 7 it can be seen that with the exception of three variables (WSCA-2, WSCA-3, and SCSCALE 3), there is a strong positive relationship between self-concept congruency and marital quality. It should be noted that the Pearson r scores are negative, because of the way the Interpersonal Check List is coded with higher scores

indicating greater incongruity between couples and lower scores indicating greater interspousal self-concept congruency. Two of the scores that were not significantly correlated with marital quality are in Scale 3 (HSCA-3 and SCSCALE 3). It was this same scale wherein no significant differences were found between those couples in high and low quality marriages in a previous test for differences.

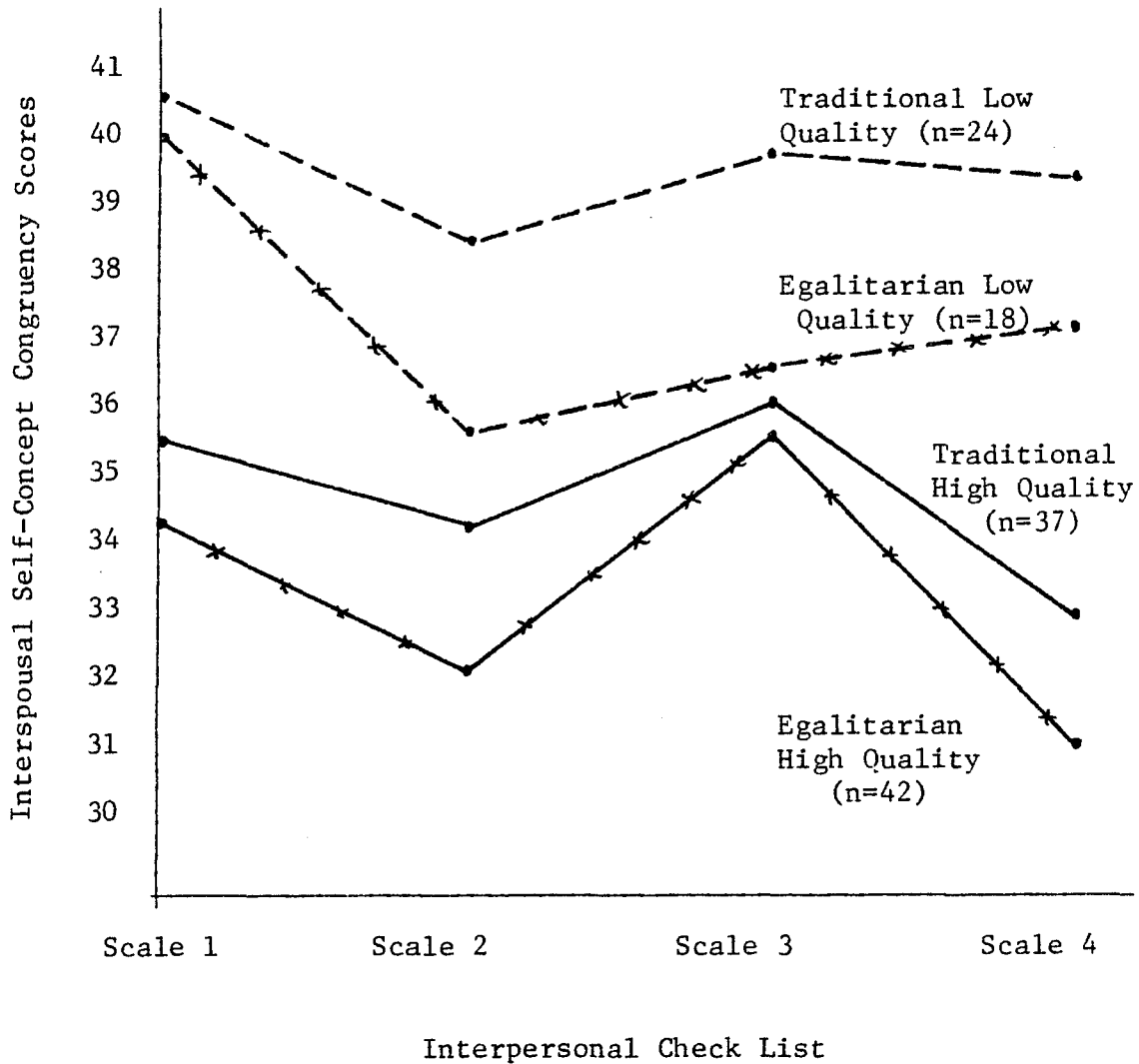
Interspousal Self-Concept Congruency and Sex-Role Attitudes

In order to test hypotheses 2 and 3, it was necessary to decide which couples would be considered egalitarian and which to consider as traditional. When the sample was divided into fifths and the middle fifth was dropped, 121 couples remained in the sample. Those scoring in the lower two-fifths of the sex-role scale were considered traditional. This resulted in a sample of 61 couples. Those scoring in the upper two-fifths were considered egalitarian, and produced a sample of 60 couples. Once this was done, these two groups were examined for the quality of their marriages. Again, those who were in marriage counseling were considered to have low-quality marriages, while those who were not in counseling were assigned to the high marital quality group.

In order to get a clear picture of any differences which might exist, the means for the interspousal self-concept congruency scores of each group were calculated. These can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4

A Comparison of Four Types of Marriages on Their
Interspousal Self-Concept Congruency Scores



Note: The higher the score the greater the incongruity between couples.

As a test for hypothesis 2 to determine whether there were significant differences between high and low quality marriages within egalitarian relationships, two-way analysis of variance with replication was performed on the means shown in Table 8.

Table 8
A Comparison of the Means of High and Low Quality
Egalitarian Marriages

Inter- personal Check List (n = 121)	Husbands		Wives		Couple	
	High Quality	Low Quality	High Quality	Low Quality	High Quality (n=42)	Low Quality (n=18)
SCALE 1	16.67	21.11	17.41	18.89	34.08	40.0*
SCALE 2	14.98	17.94	16.74	17.72	31.45	35.66*
SCALE 3	17.50	18.50	18.05	18.06	35.55	36.56
SCALE 4	14.21	18.56	16.76	18.78	30.97	37.34*
SCSCALE (Total)	63.36	76.11	68.96	73.45	132.05	149.56*

*p < .05

As a test for hypothesis 3 to determine whether there were no significant differences between the two groups defined as high and low quality marriages within traditional relationships, the two-way analysis of variance with replication was performed on the means as shown in Table 9.

Table 9
A Comparison of the Means of High and Low Quality
Traditional Marriages

Inter- personal Check List (n = 121)	Husbands		Wives		Couple	
	High Quality	Low Quality	High Quality	Low Quality	High Quality (n=37)	Low Quality (n=24)
SCALE 1	17.27	20.25	18.14	20.17	35.41	40.42*
SCALE 2	16.84	19.29	16.84	18.96	33.68	38.25*
SCALE 3	18.92	19.79	17.08	19.88	36.0	39.67
SCALE 4	15.49	17.96	16.87	20.83	32.36	38.79*
SCSCALE (Total)	68.52	77.29	68.93	79.84	137.45	157.13*

*p < .05

The results of the analysis of variance are presented in Table 10. It can be seen from this procedure that hypothesis 2 was, indeed, supported. Within egalitarian relationships, there were significant differences between the two groups defined as high and low marital quality marriages with regard to the amount of interspousal self-concept congruence. This was true for Scale 1, Scale 2, Scale 4, and the self-concept congruency of the total scale score. Only in Scale 3 of the Interpersonal Check List were no significant differences found.

The results of the analysis of variance also indicate that hypothesis 3 must be rejected. This is because of the significant

Table 10
Results of Two-Factor Analysis of Variance
With Replication

ICL Variable	Source of Variation				Interaction	
	Sex-Role Attitude		Quality		Sex Role* Quality	
	Type III S.S.	F	Type III S.S.	F	Type III S.S.	F
HSCA 1	.448	.02	372.274	15.01***	14.49	.58
WSCA 1	27.237	1.24	83.479	3.80*	2.024	.09
HSCA 2	69.546	2.43	198.563	6.94**	1.787	.06
WSCA 2	12.053	.52	65.100	2.83	8.722	.38
HSCA 3	49.624	1.91	23.688	.91	.109	.00
WSCA 3	4.913	.21	53.022	2.30	52.423	2.27
HSCA 4	3.077	.11	313.514	10.76***	23.604	.81
WSCA 4	31.469	.85	241.879	6.56**	25.751	.70
SCSCALE	1,088.053	1.55	9,215.665	13.15***	40.426	.06

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

differences which occurred between the high and low marital quality traditional marriages with regard to the amount of interspousal self-concept congruency that were found to exist.

There were no significant interactions found to exist between the sex-role attitude toward the marriage and the quality of the marriage. For that reason, no further post hoc analyses were performed.

It may be concluded from these statistical procedures that a couple's sex-role attitude toward their marriage has little or nothing to do with the amount of interspousal self-concept congruency that exists within that relationship. However, the quality of a marriage is significantly correlated with the amount of interspousal self-concept congruency that is present within the marriage.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

The general consensus among family researchers is that the institution of marriage is constantly changing. One recent trend has been an increasing dissolution of marriages with fewer and fewer Americans remaining in unsatisfactory relationships.

In an effort to better understand the factors that are contributing to and inhibiting the level of marital dissolution, this study sought to examine the relationship of marital quality and interspousal self-concept congruency. Because there is a significant correlation between marital quality and marital stability (Lewis & Spanier, 1980), it is important to examine those factors that contribute to marital quality. This study attempted to look at the relationship between interspousal self-concept congruence and marital quality. This study also sought to take seriously the influence of changing sex-role attitudes on marriage. The consensus among researchers appears to be that sex-role attitudes are changing, and that this is having an impact on marriages. This study sought to look at the relationship between a couple's sex-role attitudes to the marriage, the quality of the marriage, and the amount of interspousal self-concept congruency that existed.

Testable hypotheses were developed from the symbolic interaction perspective. Within this theoretical framework, the processes of self-conception and self-evaluation are key elements in shaping the relationship between individual behavior and the social organization of which a person is a part. This framework suggests that individuals act by using symbols as well as by physical stimuli, and that one learns these symbols through reflexive interaction with "significant others" in one's environment. This suggests that couples who are able to interact and be aware of the symbols (both linguistic and non-verbal) that are being exchanged will be more aware of each other, and therefore, more able to accurately perceive each other's needs. This in turn should have a positive impact on each of the self-concepts that each partner has, and the resulting quality of that marriage.

To accomplish this, a purposive sample of 151 couples was drawn from throughout the State of North Carolina. Both husbands and wives within the sample were mailed questionnaires. The sample was then divided into one group of 101 couples who were not in marriage counseling (high marital quality group), and 50 couples who were in marriage counseling (low marital quality group). The three hypotheses were tested using stepwise multiple regression or two-factor analysis of variance with replication.

As hypothesized, the results of the study demonstrated that there is a strong positive correlation between marital quality and interpersonal self-concept congruence. This was true on all four of the subscales (satisfaction, consensus, affectional expression, and cohesion), and the total scale used to demonstrate marital quality.

In testing hypotheses 2 and 3, it was demonstrated that there were significant differences between high and low quality marriages with regard to the degree of interspousal self-concept congruency between spouses. Significant differences were found to exist between couples in both high and low quality egalitarian as well as high and low quality traditional relationships. However, whether the couple was egalitarian or traditional per se was not significantly related to the quality of a marriage. Apparently, because a couple is egalitarian or traditional does not mean it automatically has a high-quality marriage. It was noted that significant differences existed between husbands and wives in the low quality groups regarding their sex-role attitudes. Wives tended to be more egalitarian with husbands more traditional in this group. These differences in sex-role attitudes between spouses did not exist in the high quality marriages.

Conclusions and Discussion

The results of this study indicate clearly that there is a strong positive relationship between marital quality and interspousal self-concept congruency. It is interesting to note that when the correlation coefficients are examined (see Appendix D), all of the variables examined correlate positively with marital quality. However, it is the congruency between the concept which the husband holds of himself and the way his wife perceives him with regard to Scale 1 of the Interpersonal Check List which is most positively correlated with marital quality. This scale measures the interspousal self-concept congruency on the managerial-autocratic versus modest-self-effacing items. Indeed, this single variable explained almost half of the

total explained variance offered by the rest of the self-concept scale variables. Congruency between the way a husband perceived himself and the way his wife perceived him explained 7.2 percent of the 15.6 percent of the total variance explained by interspousal self-concept congruency (see Figure 3).

Curiously enough, congruency between the way the wife saw herself on these items and her husband's perceptions of her (WSCA-1) on this scale was entered into the regression equation last. This would appear to emphasize the importance of wives seeing their husbands as they see themselves on the managerial-autocratic versus modest-self-effacing items within a quality marriage. Apparently, congruency between the husband's perceptions of his wife and his wife's self-perceptions on these items is not an important factor affecting the quality of a marriage.

When the other three scales are examined, husband and wife self-concept congruency scores are introduced into the regression equation as follows: wife scale 4 (WSCA-4), husband scale 4 (HSCA-4), husband scale 3 (HSCA-3), wife scale 3 (WSCA-3), wife scale 2 (WSCA-2), and husband scale 2 (HSCA-2). The last variable to be entered into the equation was the congruency between the wife's self-perception and that of her held by her husband on scale 1 (WSCA-1).

One may speculate as to the reasons why congruency between the husband's self-concept and his wife's perception of him on scale 1 is of such importance. At this point, the answer to this is still unclear.

Included within scale 1 are items such as: able to give orders, forceful, likes responsibility, dominating, manages others, dictatorial, respected by others, able to criticize self, always giving advice, and tries to be too successful. Quite possibly these items impact most heavily on shaping a marriage, and thus, impact on other factors which determine the quality of a marital relationship. Factors such as the sex-role expectations, marital expectations, decision-making, or communication patterns will be heavily influenced by the items listed in scale 1. Congruency of perceptions on these items in turn may well help to shape the stability and quality of the marriage (Lewis & Spanier, 1979).

Apparently, congruency between the husband's self-concept and his wife's perception of him is still an important factor. This is similar to the Luckey (1960a, 1960b) findings that wives may still be doing most of the marital adjusting that goes on within marriages. If this is true, then it is important to the quality of that marriage if she is aware of what she is adjusting to. If she sees her husband as he sees himself on this scale, she may be better able to make the adjustments which produce less role strain and result in clearer role expectations (Burr et al., 1979). This, in turn, would produce greater satisfaction and enhance the quality of that marriage. Support for this has also been documented by Thorp (1963), Stryker (1964), Clements (1967), and Lewis (1973).

Quite possibly this is due to the age of the sample. The sample tended to be around age 40. Thus, 20 years ago when Luckey (1960a, 1960b) did her study, this sample was already aged 20. One possible

area for fruitful investigation might be to look at the interspousal self-concept congruency scores of younger couples. A perusal of the age span of the sample, however, revealed that it included couples across the age spectrum. The sample did not appear to include only older couples.

It must also be noted that interspousal self-concept congruency explained only 15.6 percent of the total variance regarding the quality of a marriage. This reaffirms again the complexity of any marital relationship. The search will need to go on to discover new correlates which may explain more of the variance that is present within marital quality.

This study also found support for hypothesis 2 that there would be significant differences between high and low quality egalitarian marriages. However, hypothesis 3 was rejected, because significant differences were also found to exist between high and low quality traditional marriages. The interspousal self-concept congruency couple scores of both the egalitarian and traditional relationships are almost identical. Couples in high-quality egalitarian relationships earned a mean interspousal self-concept score of 132.05, while their counterparts in traditional relationships earned a mean score of 137.45. This type of similarity in scores was also noted for the egalitarian and traditional couples in low-quality marriages as well.

This suggests that the particular sex-role attitude of a couple has no association with the amount of interspousal self-concept congruency, and thus, the amount of marital quality that exists within a relationship. Egalitarian couples experience no significantly greater amount of marital quality than traditional couples.

However, when one examines the differences between the sex-role attitudes of husbands and wives in low-quality marriages (see Table 3), highly significant differences do appear ($t = 4.04, p < .001$). These differences were not found to exist between couples in high quality egalitarian marriages. From this, it may be concluded that it does not matter too much whether a couple is traditional or egalitarian in assessing the quality of the marriage. What does appear to make a difference is the amount of disagreement regarding sex-role attitudes within the marriage. This is similar to the results found by Bowen (1981) in a study of military couples. Similar results have also been reported by Grush and Yehl (1979). Scanzoni and Szinovacz (1980) also suggest that these types of relationships tend to be quite conflictual and punishing and were defined as inequitable, especially by the wife. Frank, Anderson, and Rubinstein (1980), in a study of 180 couples, found similar results. They found that it was couples in marital therapy who were experiencing the greatest amount of role strain.

It should also be kept in mind that the high and low marital quality groups differed significantly on amount of family income and the number of children living at home. Quite possibly the groups differed significantly because of the differing income levels. Glick and Norton (1977) have demonstrated a relationship between high income levels and marital stability. Studies by Thornton (1977) and Figley (1973) have also revealed a positive correlation between the number of children in the home and marital stability. Apparently couples with fewer children are more prone to divorce.

Methodological Considerations

An issue which the study took seriously was its inclusion of men in the sample. The unit of analysis for this project was the couple. If responses were not received from an individual's spouse, then that particular individual was dropped from the sample. This study took seriously the suggestions by Rollins and Cannon (1974), and Gottman, Markman, and Notarius (1977) that men be included in the research relating to the quality of a marriage. This study focused directly on spouse-spouse evaluations, and in this sense continued a significant trend which has been started by marriage and family researchers in the last decade (Spanier & Lewis, 1980).

Unfortunately, this study is based exclusively on the self-report technique. This limits the results to what the various couples were willing to reveal about themselves. Quite possibly the design would have been strengthened had it been able to incorporate some type of face-to-face interviews with the couples and possibly even some observational data. This would have added strength to the validity of the results which were obtained in this study.

Another important characteristic of this study is that in testing hypotheses 2 and 3, it used marital quality as the independent variable and treated interspousal self-concept congruency as the dependent measure. Although traditionally, marital quality has been structured primarily as the dependent variable, there is a growing awareness that the various dynamics operating within a marriage are part of an intricate casual chain (Lewis & Spanier, 1979). For this reason it

appears to be quite appropriate to think of alterations in marital quality as antecedents of behaviors and attitudes, as well as consequences. This, in turn, emphasizes the limits of using statistics which look for linear effects. Quite possibly, within human relationships, cause and effect may be circular, and thus, more complex and challenging than previously thought.

Lastly, it would be very helpful if this type of research could be done longitudinally rather than using a cross-sectional approach. This would enable the researcher to evaluate and examine changes and relationships between marital quality, self-concept congruency, and the amount of role strain that is present at various points within the marital relationship.

Implications for Further Research

The results of this study would tend to support the suggestion of Spanier and Lewis (1980) that it may not be too fruitful to try to relate statistically only one or two variables (such as interspousal self-concept congruency) to marital quality. In our attempt to understand marital quality, it might possibly be more helpful to use many different variables such as the factors influencing marital stability. Included in these could be marital expectations, commitment and obligations, tolerance for differences, religious doctrines, external pressures, and social stigma, divorce laws and legal aid, as well as other real and perceived alternatives, which together might help to explain and understand whether or not a marriage will be one of high

or low quality. It appears that no single variable (such as self-concept congruency) will be able to explain a great deal of the total variance within a quality marriage. Other researchers such as Nock (1979) and Spanier et al. (1975) emphasized the complex dynamics that are involved in marital quality. Researchers will need to think in terms of research designs which take seriously these complexities if we are to be able to understand more fully the various intricacies of a marriage.

Another question which needs further research is that surrounding the issue of why, given the same level of marital quality, one couple will choose to divorce while another couple will not. Although there is a lot of evidence which suggests that marital quality is significantly correlated with marital stability (Dean & Lucas, 1974; Lewis & Spanier, 1979; Spanier, 1976), this researcher has noted from his clinical work that many poorly adjusted marriages do remain intact while other seemingly well adjusted marriages end in divorce. Lewis and Spanier (1979) pointed this out as well, indicating that this type of research is still conspicuously absent from the literature.

Another suggestion for possible research lies in the fact that within the data recorded in this project, it can be noted that among low-quality couples (those couples in marriage counseling) there is consistently greater variance than in the high quality sample. It appears that this may be because the marriage counseling which the low-quality sample was receiving has been helping them, and therefore, a wider range of scores exists. However, this needs to be examined more carefully.

Another implication arising from this study lies in the treatment of those couples in marital therapy. This study suggests that it does not matter much whether a couple is traditional or egalitarian. What appears to be an important factor related to marital quality is the amount of role strain that is present. This suggests that marital therapists ought to be more concerned with the differences between husbands and wives regarding their sex-role attitudes rather than with how egalitarian or traditional a couple is. The therapist then ought to seek to facilitate the expression of each spouse's own sex-role ideals and then help the couple in negotiating some type of equitable attitude which is more conducive to higher quality within the marital relationship.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE LETTERS AND FOLLOW-UP POSTCARDS

Sample article sent out in "ACME Newsletter" advising ACME couples of this research project and their needed participation

Sometime in late March or early April a number of ACME COUPLES WILL BE RECEIVING A QUESTIONNAIRE FROM Ray Seutter, a doctoral candidate in family relations at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro and Pastoral Counselor at the School of Pastoral Care, Winston-Salem. The importance of this study lies in the information it will provide regarding the impact of marriage enrichment on a couple's marital quality. Because a small number of people will be randomly selected, in order for the results to truly represent ACME couples, should you receive a questionnaire, it is important that each one be completed and returned. Your assistance in this project is needed and highly valued.

Sincerely,

Ray A. Seutter

Association of Couples for
Marriage Enrichment, Inc.
459 South Church Street
P. O. Box 10596
Winston-Salem, NC 27108

May 9, 1980

Dear ACME Members,

ACME is assisting Mr. Ray Seutter in a marriage enrichment research project as part of his Ph.D. program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The results of this survey will be shared with ACME.

In keeping with the Board of Directors' policy that ACME mailing list not be shared or sold, we are mailing the survey for Mr. Seutter. Couples who are being asked to participate are chosen at random from among members in North Carolina, and their identity is not known.

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. It is hoped, though, that response will be large enough for the research to be valid.

If you will agree to participate, please follow Mr. Seutter's instructions and return the questionnaires in the envelope provided. Thanks.

Cordially yours,

(Signed)

Alice and Hampton Morgan

Family Research Center
Department of Child Development
and Family Relations
University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC 27412

Dear Participant:

The institution of modern marriage is undergoing change. Divorce rates in the past two decades now appear to have stabilized at a relatively high level. It appears that fewer and fewer Americans are content to remain in unsatisfactory marriages. It is, therefore, important to understand what is causing couples to break up or stay together. This study tries to answer this problem by looking at some of the differences in characteristics between couples who stay together and those couples who want to end their marriage.

You and your spouse are part of a small number of people who are being asked to share your observations regarding your marriage. In order that these results will truly represent marriages in North Carolina, it is very important that BOTH you and your spouse complete your questionnaire and return it in the separate enveloped provided for each of you. It should take no more than twenty minutes of your time. Please complete your questionnaire without talking to your spouse about it. After you have mailed them, you are of course, free to discuss the questions and your responses to them.

Please be assured of complete confidentiality. The questionnaire has an identification number in order to be able to make husband-wife comparisons. Your name will never be placed on the booklet.

The results of this research will be made available to The Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment and all interested persons. You may receive a summary of the results by writing "copy of results requested" on the back of the return envelope, and printing your name and address below it. Please do not put this information on the questionnaire itself.

I would be most happy to answer any questions you may have. The telephone number is 919-727-5047 (daytime).

Please fill out this questionnaire if at all possible within the next week (or at your earliest convenience). Thank you so much for your assistance in this most important matter.

Sincerely,

(Signed)

Ray A. Seutter
Project Director

First Follow-Up Postcard:

June 10, 1980

Dear ACME Member:

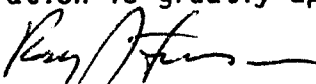
Two weeks ago two questionnaires seeking your observations regarding your marriage was sent to you. Your names were randomly selected from among the ACME members in N. Carolina.

If you and your spouse have already completed and returned these to us please accept our sincere thanks. The number of responses is very encouraging. If not, please do so today. Because they were sent to only a small sample of ACME members, it is extremely important that we hear from both you and your spouse if the results are to accurately represent marriages in N. Carolina.

In the event that you did not receive a questionnaire, or if they got misplaced, please call me collect (919-765-6735, evenings) and I will get a replacement to you.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,


Ray A. Seutter, Project Director

Second Follow-Up Postcard:

July 3, 1980

Dear ACME Member:

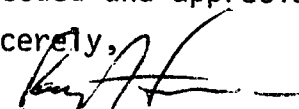
About five weeks ago you received two questionnaires seeking your observations regarding your marriage. As of today, we have not yet received your response.

If you have already completed and returned them, please accept our sincere thanks. This research was undertaken with a small sample of ACME members. In order for the results to be representative, we need to hear from you.

In the event that you did not receive the questionnaires or if they got misplaced, please call me collect at (919) 765-6735 (evenings) and I will mail you a replacement.

Again, your cooperation is needed and appreciated.

Sincerely,


Ray A. Seutter, Project Director

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

FAMILY RESEARCH CENTER
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY RELATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27412

WHY

DO SOME COUPLES STAY MARRIED
WHILE OTHER COUPLES GET DIVORCED?

A STUDY OF MARRIED COUPLES IN NORTH CAROLINA

SPRING, 1980

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY 123

COUPLE NUMBER _____

CARD NUMBER _____ 4

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate below by circling the number that corresponds with the approximate extent to agreement or disagreement that you feel, regarding each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Mixed Feelings	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I look forward to expressing my opinion to my spouse on controversial topics.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I look forward to evening talks with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when discussing issues important to my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Usually I try to work out problems myself instead of talking them out with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I look forward to discussing with my spouse those aspects of our relationship most important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I don't hesitate to tell my spouse exactly how I feel.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I usually come right out and tell my spouse exactly what I mean.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I never hesitate to tell my spouse my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Even in casual conversations, I feel I must guard what I say.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I look forward to telling my spouse my opinion on a subject.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I feel that I am an open communicator.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am hesitant to develop casual conversations with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Mixed Feelings	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
13. I am comfortable in developing indepth discussions with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am comfortable in intimate conversations with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am hesitant to develop "deep" conversations with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below by circling the number that indicates the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your spouse for each item on the following list:

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Disagree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
16. Handling family finances	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Matters of recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Religious matters	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Demonstrations of affection	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. Sexual relations	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Correct/proper behavior	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Philosophy of life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. Aims, goals, and things believed important	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. Amount of time spent together	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. Household tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Making major decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Leisure time interest and activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. Career decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6

	All of the Time	Most of the Time	More Often Than Not	Rarely	Never
31. How often do you or your mate leave the house fighting?	1	2	3	4	5
32. Do you confide in your mate?	1	2	3	4	5
33. How often do you discuss, or have you considered divorce, separation or terminating your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
34. Do you regret that you married?	1	2	3	4	5
35. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?	1	2	3	4	5
36. How often do you and your partner quarrel?	1	2	3	4	5
37. How often does your mate "get on your nerves?"	1	2	3	4	5
38. Do you kiss your mate?	1. Every Day 2. Almost Every Day 3. Occasionally 4. Rarely 5. Never				
39. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?	1. All of Them 2. Most of Them 3. Some of Them 4. Very Few of Them 5. None of them				

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

	Never	Less Than Once a Month	Once or Twice a Month	Once or Twice a Week	Once a Day	More Often
40. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. Laugh together	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. Calmly discuss something	1	2	3	4	5	6
43. Work together on a project	1	2	3	4	5	6

Below are two items about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item caused differences of opinion or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. Please check YES or NO.

	YES	NO	
44.	___	___	Being too tired for sex
45.	___	___	Not showing love

45a. Who makes the final decision on major purchases (car, house)?
 (Please circle your answer):

1. Husband
2. Wife
3. Both

46. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Extremely <u>Unhappy</u>	Fairly <u>Unhappy</u>	A Little <u>Unhappy</u>	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect

-
47. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? Please choose one answer only and place a check next to it.

_____ I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and I would go to almost any length to see that it does.

_____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and I will do all that I can to see that it does.

_____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and I will do my share to see that it does.

_____ It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am now doing to help it succeed.

_____ It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do anything more than I am now doing to keep it going.

_____ My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep it going.

Below is a list of words that can be used to describe people. We need to know whether you think these words describe you and your spouse. First, decide whether or not each word or phrase describes you. If it does, circle the number "1" in the column headed "The Way I See Myself." Next, go through the list again and decide whether each word or phrase describes your mate. If it does, circle the number "2" in the column headed "The Way I See My Spouse." Please leave the space empty if the word or phrase does not apply to you or your spouse.

	The Way I See Myself	The Way I See My Spouse
48. Able to give orders	1	2
49. Forceful	1	2
50. Good leader	1	2
51. Likes responsibility	1	2
52. Bossy	1	2
53. Dominating	1	2
54. Manages others	1	2
55. Dictatorial	1	2
56. Self-respecting	1	2
57. Independent	1	2
58. Self-reliant and assertive	1	2
59. Boastful	1	2
60. Self-confident	1	2
61. Proud and self-satisfied	1	2
62. Somewhat snobbish	1	2
63. Egotistical and conceited	1	2
64. Able to take care of self	1	2
65. Can be indifferent to others	1	2
66. Businesslike	1	2
67. Likes to compete with others	1	2

	The Way I See Myself	The Way I See My Spouse
68. Thinks only of himself/herself	1	2
69. Shrewd and calculating	1	2
70. Selfish	1	2
71. Cold and unfeeling	1	2
72. Can be strict if necessary	1	2
73. Firm but just	1	2
74. Hard boiled when necessary	1	2
75. Stern but fair	1	2
76. Impatient with others' mistakes	1	2
77. Self-seeking	1	2
78. Sarcastic	1	2
79. Cruel and unkind	1	2
80. Can be frank and honest	1	2
81. Critical of others	1	2
82. Irritable	1	2
83. Straightforward and direct	1	2
84. Outspoken	1	2
85. Often unfriendly	1	2
86. Frequently angry	1	2
87. Hard-hearted	1	2
88. Can complain if necessary	1	2
89. Often gloomy	1	2
90. Resents being bossed	1	2
91. Skeptical	1	2

	The Way I See Myself	The Way I See My Spouse
92. Bitter	1	2
93. Complaining	1	2
94. Resentful	1	2
95. Rebels against everything	1	2
96. Able to doubt others	1	2
97. Frequently disappointed	1	2
98. Hard to impress	1	2
99. Touchy and easily hurt	1	2
100. Jealous	1	2
101. Slow to forgive a wrong	1	2
102. Stubborn	1	2
103. Distrusts everybody	1	2
104. Able to criticize self	1	2
105. Apologetic	1	2
106. Easily embarrassed	1	2
107. Lacks self-confidence	1	2
108. Self-punishing	1	2
109. Shy	1	2
110. Timid	1	2
111. Always ashamed of self	1	2
112. Can be obedient	1	2
113. Usually gives in	1	2
114. Easily led	1	2
115. Modest	1	2

	The Way I See Myself	The Way I See My Spouse
116. Passive and unaggressive	1	2
117. Meek	1	2
118. Obeys too willingly	1	2
119. Spineless	1	2
120. Grateful	1	2
121. Admires and imitates others	1	2
122. Often helped by others	1	2
123. Very respectful to authority	1	2
124. Dependent	1	2
125. Wants to be led	1	2
126. Hardly ever talks back	1	2
127. Clinging vine	1	2
128. Appreciative	1	2
129. Very anxious to be approved of	1	2
130. Accepts advice readily	1	2
131. Trusting and eager to please	1	2
132. Lets others make decisions	1	2
133. Easily fooled	1	2
134. Likes to be taken care of	1	2
135. Will believe anyone	1	2
136. Cooperative	1	2
137. Eager to get along with others	1	2
138. Always pleasant and agreeable	1	2
139. Wants everyone to like him/her	1	2

	The Way I See Myself	The Way I See My Spouse
140. Too easily influenced by friends	1	2
141. Will confide in anyone	1	2
142. Wants everyone's love	1	2
143. Agrees with everyone	1	2
144. Friendly	1	2
145. Affectionate and understanding	1	2
146. Sociable and neighborly	1	2
147. Warm	1	2
148. Fond of everyone	1	2
149. Likes everybody	1	2
150. Friendly all the time	1	2
151. Loves everyone	1	2
152. Considerate	1	2
153. Encouraging to others	1	2
154. Kind and reassuring	1	2
155. Tender and soft-hearted	1	2
156. Forgives anything	1	2
157. Oversympathetic	1	2
158. Too lenient with others	1	2
159. Tries to comfort everyone	1	2
160. Helpful	1	2
161. Big-hearted and unselfish	1	2
162. Enjoys taking care of others	1	2
163. Gives freely of self	1	2

	The Way I See Myself	The Way I See My Spouse
164. Generous to a fault	1	2
165. Overprotective of others	1	2
166. Too willing to give in to others	1	2
167. Spoils people with kindness	1	2
168. Well thought of	1	2
169. Makes a good impression	1	2
170. Often admired	1	2
171. Respected by others	1	2
172. Always giving advice	1	2
173. Acts important	1	2
174. Tries to be too successful	1	2
175. Expects everyone to admire him/her	1	2

Next, we would like you to indicate below by circling the number which indicates the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement that you feel, regarding each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Mixed Feelings	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
176. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.	1	2	3	4	5
177. In marriage the wife and husband should share making major decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
178. A man should expect his family to adjust to the demands of his profession.	1	2	3	4	5
179. If his wife works, a husband should share equally in the responsibilities of child care.	1	2	3	4	5
180. A woman should be able to make long-range plans for her occupation in the same way that her husband does for his.	1	2	3	4	5
181. If a child gets sick and his/her mother works, the father should be just as willing to stay home from work and take care of the child.	1	2	3	4	5
182. A wife should realize that her greatest rewards and satisfactions come through her children.	1	2	3	4	5
183. The husband should be the head of the family.	1	2	3	4	5
184. Qualified women who seek positions of authority should be given as much consideration as equally qualified men.	1	2	3	4	5

Finally, we would like to ask you some questions about yourself to help interpret the results. Please indicate your response to the following questions by circling the number of your answer to each of them.

185. Your sex:
1. MALE
 2. FEMALE
186. Your present marital status:
1. MARRIED
 2. DIVORCED
 3. SEPARATED
 4. WIDOWED
187. Are you presently:
1. EMPLOYED PART-TIME
 2. EMPLOYED FULL-TIME
 3. UNEMPLOYED
 4. RETIRED
 5. FULL-TIME HOMEMAKER
188. Your race:
1. ASIAN
 2. AMERICAN INDIAN
 3. HISPANIC
 4. BLACK
 5. WHITE
189. Your religious preference:
1. NONE
 2. PROTESTANT (Write in Denomination Below)
 3.

JEWISH
 4. CATHOLIC
 5. OTHER (Specify)
-
190. Your approximate family income from all sources before taxes in 1979:
 _____ DOLLARS (Please Write in the Amount)
191. Are you and your spouse members in the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME)?
1. NO
 2. YES --IF YES: Have the two of you ever participated in an enrichment event?
 1. NO
 2. YES

192. How would you describe the neighborhood in which you live?
1. COMPLETELY BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD
 2. MOSTLY BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD
 3. AN EQUALLY INTEGRATED NEIGHBORHOOD
 4. MOSTLY WHITE NEIGHBORHOOD
 5. COMPLETELY WHITE NEIGHBORHOOD
193. In the past six months, are you and your spouse or have you been in marriage counseling?
1. NO
 2. YES --IF YES: How long have you been (were you) in counseling? _____ MONTHS (Write in)
194. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
1. NO FORMAL EDUCATION
 2. GRADES 1 THROUGH 8
 3. SOME HIGH SCHOOL
 4. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
 5. TWO YEARS OR LESS OF POST-HIGH SCHOOL TRADE, TECHNICAL OR VOCATIONAL
 6. SOME COLLEGE
 7. COLLEGE GRADUATE
 8. GRADUATE STUDIES AND BEYOND

Please write your answer to the following questions:

195. Your present age: _____ YEARS
196. Your present occupation _____
197. Number of years you have been married to present mate: ___ YEARS
198. Number of children you have living with you: _____

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE you would like to tell us about what makes a marriage last? If so, please use this space for that purpose.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THIS EFFORT IS SINCERELY APPRECIATED. If you would like a summary of the results, please print your name and address on the back of the return envelope with the words "COPY OF RESULTS REQUESTED." Please do not put your name on the questionnaire. We will see that you get a copy of the results. Again, thank you so much for your participation.

APPENDIX C
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

	DAS	THSCA1	TWSCA1	THSCA2	TWSCA2	THSCA3	TWSCA3	THSCA4	TWSCA4	SCSCALE
DAS	1.00000	-0.26814	-0.13877	-0.21252	-0.04842	-0.00603	-0.18575	-0.24939	-0.25225	-0.26656
THSCA1	-0.26814	1.00000	0.27645	0.54900	0.27950	0.34980	0.29757	0.45741	0.35474	0.67298
TWSCA1	-0.13877	0.27645	1.00000	0.33839	0.48917	0.32347	0.40267	0.24224	0.51503	0.67005
THSCA2	-0.21252	0.54900	0.33839	1.00000	0.35923	0.48827	0.37958	0.41578	0.36041	0.73572
TWSCA2	-0.04842	0.27950	0.48917	0.35923	1.00000	0.32434	0.45446	0.21070	0.38893	0.64935
THSCA3	-0.00603	0.34980	0.32347	0.48827	0.32434	1.00000	0.30150	0.31112	0.23864	0.61693
THSCA4	-0.24939	0.45741	0.24224	0.41578	0.21070	0.31112	0.14021	1.00000	0.21440	0.56818
TWSCA4	-0.25225	0.35474	0.51503	0.36041	0.38893	0.23864	0.50613	0.21440	1.00000	0.70517
SCSCALE	-0.26656	0.67298	0.67005	0.73572	0.64935	0.61693	0.66173	0.56818	0.70517	1.00000