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Effects of individual-oriented relationship education on university students' knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes

Sara Polanchek
University of Montana - Missoula

EFFECTS OF INDIVIDUAL-ORIENTED RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION ON UNIVERSITY

STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE, BELIEFS, AND ATTITUDES

by

SARA A. POLANCHEK

Master of Social Work, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, 1999
Bachelor of Science, Family Science, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT, 1992
The University of Montana

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Approved by:
Rita Sommers-Flanagan, Ph.D., Chair
Counselor Education

Lindsey Nichols, Ph.D.
Counselor Education

Sidney Shaw, Ed.D.
Counselor Education

John Sommers-Flanagan, Ph.D.
Counselor Education

Christina Yoshimura, Ph.D.
Communication Studies

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Effects of Individual-Oriented Relationship Education on University Students' Knowledge,

Beliefs, and Attitudes

Chairperson: Rita Sommers-Flanagan

Abstract Content:

This quasi-experimental, exploratory study adds important empirical research to the relatively new field of individual-oriented relationship education. It describes the extent to which specific relationship beliefs and attitudes are held, and evaluates the impact of an undergraduate, semester-long Intimate and Family Relationships course on these beliefs. Utilizing data collected over two semesters at the University of Montana, this study compared 356 student responses at the beginning and end of the semester on three separate scales designed to quantify select measures of specific constraint beliefs and attitudes: Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection (AARMS), the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), and the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale-Short Form (IRMA-SF). Additionally, this study examined the mediating effects of several student background factors: parental divorce, gender, and parenting style on student responses to the educational experience. The researcher found significant results in the following areas: (a) gender differences with regards to the Love is Enough Cohabitation constraint beliefs, and rape myth acceptance; (b) differences on the Love is Enough constraint belief and rape myth acceptance between Adult Children of Divorce and non-Adult Children of Divorce; (c) differences between students who are in a relationship and those who are not, with regards to the One and Only constraint belief, and rape myth acceptance. The results are discussed in the context of exploring and understanding possible variables that may or may not impact relationship health, and may or may not be amendable to individually oriented relationship education. Limitations of the study, implications of the findings, and recommendations for future research are discussed.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my two sons, Clayton and Carter. The past three years have required sacrifice from our entire family. One of my hopes is that as you witnessed me struggle, and whine, and complain, that most of all you noticed that I kept going. There is a magnificent thrill to be had in acquiring knowledge and it is a gift you can only give yourself. My greatest hope however, (brace yourselves), is that you will both find life-long love in partners who will laugh with you and will notice all the little things about each of you that make you both so uniquely wonderful. No matter what, my most treasured role in life is to be your mother. I love you both with all of my heart.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

As individuals, one of our primary needs is to fulfill a sense of belonging with others (Adler, 1927). This fundamental need motivates us to seek out opportunities to successfully interact within a community (Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, & Schaller, 2010; Soons & Liefbroer, 2008), an interaction that yields significant benefits (Johnson, Kent & Yale, 2012). Alfred Adler (1927) argues that individuals feel their existence to be worthwhile when they are living with social and interpersonal interest in mind. A romantic, intimate, and committed relationship is one type of interpersonal relationship in which such benefits can occur.

Many believe that a sense of belonging in the form of a romantic life partner is an essential element in the pursuit of a complete and fulfilling life (Kenrick et al., 2010). Multiple studies demonstrate that romantic relationships are correlated with subjective well-being, and maintaining an intimate relationship has been shown to provide protective factors in both emotional and physical health (Besculides, Koball, Moiduddin, Henderson, Goesling, 2010; Dush & Amato, 2005). Further, research suggests that some individuals in marital relationships, as compared to those cohabitating or in other non-marital relationships have lower rates of depression (Meyer & Paul, 2011) and longer life expectancies, especially for men (Choi & Marks, 2011; Tucker, Friedman, Wingard & Schwartz, 1996). Although other variables may account for these correlations, it seems possible that enhancing the potential for individuals to form and maintain healthy relationships could reduce depression and improve overall health for a significant portion of the adult population.

Despite abundant research supporting the benefits of marriage, societal indicators suggest that the institution of marriage as a whole is in decline (Garrison & Scott, 2012). For example, divorce occurs in approximately half of all marriages (Marquardt, Blankenhorn, Lerman, Malone-Colón & Wilcox, 2012), fewer individuals than ever before are marrying (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001), cohabitation has increased dramatically (Stanley, Whitton, & Markman, 2004) and more children than ever before are born to couples outside of marriage (Taylor, 2010). Given that fewer individuals experience the social, emotional and physical advantages that marriage seems to provide, exploring possible solutions to this "marriage paradox" (Emery, Horn, & Beam, 2012) could yield significant individual and societal gains.

In the 1960's, pre-marital counseling emerged in response to societal trends that pointed to the decline of marriage (Dinkmeyer, 2007). Although shown to be effective in a number of areas, pre-marital counseling has significant limitations (Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin, & Fawcett, 2008; Ooms & Wilson, 2004). For example, pre-marital counseling focuses on couples in a relatively advanced stage of their commitment toward marriage when the recognition of optimal mate selection factors is untimely. Current researchers in the field argue that redirecting the target of relationship curricula from committed pre-marital couples to uncommitted young adults would allow for an opportunity to optimize the critical process of mate selection (Fincham, Stanley, Rhoades & Galena, 2011) and to focus on the preventative side of hostile conflict communication patterns (Stanley & Rhoades, 2009). These arguments have inspired a recent emphasis of relationship education for singles as well as couples. However, the efficacy on education for young adults earlier in relationship development has yet to be thoroughly investigated, and little is known about ways in which young adults change unhealthy beliefs about intimacy and acquire relationship knowledge.

Statement of Problem

Satisfying marital relationships may have beneficial individual and social effects, including reduced disease and depression, increased levels of life satisfaction and happiness, and higher levels of well-being for children (Ribar, 2004; Besculides et al., 2010). Despite these benefits, since 2008, the divorce rate has hovered around 50 percent and marriage rates continue to decline in the United States (Tejada-Vera & Sutton, 2010). As early as the 1960s, concerns over the emergence of these trends prompted the development of pre-marital counseling as a strategy for strengthening marriage. Despite encouraging outcomes (Hawkins et al., 2008), intrinsic limitations to these counseling programs compromise their ability to more broadly impact efforts to strengthen long-term relationships. For example, premarital counseling, by definition, targets couples already committed to a specific partner, and cannot impart knowledge and skills preceding or during the mate selection process, before negative behavior patterns may be established (Rhoades & Stanley, 2011). To reach young adults at this preventative level, researchers have recommended individual-oriented relationship education (Pearson, 2004; Rhoades & Stanley, 2011; Stanley et al., 2004). However, few studies have looked at the ability of such programs to impart knowledge, change beliefs, influence mate-selection, and favorably impact the health and strength of future committed relationships. Research is needed to identify and assess the unique outcomes associated with the beliefs and attitudes that individual oriented relationship education of young adults can change. More information is needed to determine if a more widespread role for such programs is warranted.

Purpose of the Study

This study was designed to add important empirical research to the relatively new field of individual-oriented relationship education by describing the extent to which specific relationship

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beliefs are held, and by evaluating the impact of an undergraduate, semester-long Intimate and Family Relationships course on these beliefs. Utilizing data collected over two semesters at the University of Montana, this descriptive and quasi-experimental, quantitative study compared student responses at the beginning and end of the semester on four separate scales designed to quantify select measures of specific beliefs and attitudes: Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection (hereafter AARMS; Cobb, Larson & Watson, 2003), the Parental Authority Questionnaire (hereafter PAQ; Buri, 1991) and the Illinois rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Payne, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1999). Additionally, this study examined the mediating effects of several student background factors: parental divorce, gender, and parenting style, on student responses to the educational experience.

Research Questions

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Student Variables

What is the relationship between student demographic variables and scores on measures of constraint beliefs and attitudes towards rape?

Research Question 2: Student Variables

What is the relationship between the parenting style students identify having been parented with, and scores on measures of constraint beliefs and attitudes towards rape?

Research Question 3: Student Outcomes

Do students who participate in the Intimate and Family Relationships course score significantly differently from pre-test to post-test on measures of constraint beliefs and attitudes towards rape, as compared to those in a control group?

Definition of Terms

Interpersonal conflict – According to Gottman (1994a), interpersonal conflict is predictive of both happily and unhappily married couples. Conflict in and of itself is not necessarily a negative predictor. In fact, some conflict is likely an indicator of a healthier marriage than is the avoidance of conflict altogether. Due to the ubiquitous nature of conflict in relationships, Gottman (1994a) has identified subtypes that are more distinctly associated with happy or unhappy relationships. One of these subtypes, *hostile conflict*, occurs more frequently in unhappy couples, in the context of personal attacks. Another crucial variable when considering the effects of conflict is the ratio of positive to negative affect that occurs inside the relationship. Gottman has found that although some couples may display a higher frequency of conflict behavior, it can be moderated by an even higher frequency of positive affect, resulting in a relatively higher-conflict, yet happy marriage. Therefore, in couples that are reportedly unhappy or divorcing, the associated conflict is more typically the hostile type occuring in the absence of positive affect (Dush & Taylor, 2012).

Marital stability – Marital stability refers to whether or not a marriage has dissolved either through divorce, physical separation, or legal separation. It does not refer to quality or satisfaction.

Intimacy – Intimacy within a dyad can be described with relative levels of the following six elements: knowledge, caring, interdependence, mutuality, trust, and commitment (Ben-Ari & Lavee, 2007). Although the most satisfying and rewarding intimate relationships generally include all six elements, none are required and all six are fluid in nature and tend to fluctuate throughout the term of a long relationship.

Delimitations

Delimitations in research are identified as factors that narrowed the scope of the study (Creswell, 2013). This study is delimited by these factors:

1. The sample only includes young adults who attended the University of Montana and who willingly signed up for a course in Intimate and Family Relationships for credit.

2. The relationship education was delivered at only one location.

3. The analysis and review of literature are focused on predominantly heterosexual couples and individuals.

Limitations

Creswell (2013) asserts that *a priori* identification of research limitations can be difficult. However, I have identified the following limitations to this study and recognize they may have changed post analysis.

1. There were approximately 16 weeks between pre and post-test measures, and the young adults in this sample population are developmentally immersed in the mate selection process. Under these conditions, the threat of history (Boudah, 2010) may have an impact on post-test results.

2. Though an abbreviated version has been validated (PAQ, Buri, 1991), validation of the PAQ consolidated version used in this study was not found.

3. The use of convenience sampling limits the generalizability of results (Boudah, 2011).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last half-century, numerous societal indicators point to downward trends in the health of intimate romantic relationships in the United States. For example, the divorce rate is up (Marquardt et al., 2012), fewer individuals are choosing to marry, (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001), rates of cohabitation are rising (Stanley et al., 2004), and more children are born to unmarried couples than ever before (Taylor, 2010). This review will highlight: 1) studies on belonging, divorce, and cohabitation that more broadly address societal indicators pointing to the instability of intimate relationships; 2) research on the endorsement of rape myths, constraint beliefs, and parenting style as possible correlates to intimacy; 3) the historical responses to the consequences of unstable intimate relationships, and the reasons why these responses should be adapted to meet the needs of emerging adults; and 4) the rationale and evidence supporting individual-oriented relationship education as a contemporary intervention aimed at promoting relationship stability.

Belonging

Studies have long shown that commitment to a mutually satisfying relationship is one of the most consistent variables in the lifelong pursuit of fulfillment and happiness (Kenrick, 2010; Russel & Wells, 1994). Individuals need frequent supportive interactions with others to function optimally, and these interactions are directly correlated with happiness, physical and mental health, and longevity (Besculides et al., 2010). These findings are consistent with Alfred Adler's declarations that belonging and social interest are fundamental human needs. Adler, a renowned psychiatrist and philosopher, stressed an individual's need to feel a sense of belonging with

others, and emphasized that finding love and marriage is one of the dynamic tasks in life (Adler, 1958). Speaking to his conviction for the power of marriage he claims that "…the fundamental guarantee of marriage, the meaning of marital happiness, is the feeling that you are worthwhile, that you cannot be replaced, that your partner needs you, that you are acting well, and that you are a fellow man [or woman] and a true friend" (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 432).

The antithesis to belonging is loneliness, a distinct and troubling outcome marked by a lack of satisfying social connections to others Mellor, Stokes, Firth, Hayashi, & Cummins, 2008). This state is associated with depression, lowered physical immunity, and diminished well-being (Cacioppo, Hughes, Waite & Hawkley, 2006); men without a romantic partner are lonely at approximately twice the rate of those who have romantic partners (Wheeler, Reis & Nezlek, 1983). Loneliness can be experienced inside a relationship as well as outside, and many cite this lack of connection to their partner as a reason for relationship dissatisfaction (Gierveld & Van Tilburg, 2006; Olson & Wong, 2001). Unfortunately, some research shows that loneliness may be on the rise in the United States with 25 percent of people reporting having no close confidant of any sort; this figure is up from 10 percent in 1985 (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Brashears, 2006). An individual's sense of belonging, connection to others, and romantic intimacy with a life-partner are essential human needs (Kenrick, 2010), yet this evidence points to fewer and fewer members of our society fulfilling these needs.

Divorce

Divorce has numerous, far-reaching, and largely negative effects. In the United States approximately 50 percent of all marriages end in divorce (Tejada-Vera & Sutton, 2010), a rate that is twice as high as it was 50 years ago (Wilcox, 2009). Although other countries also note an increase in divorce, the rate in the United States is higher than rates in Europe, Canada, and

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Japan (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).   Research has linked divorce with both physical disease (lowered immunity, high blood pressure, heart disease) and emotional illness (e.g., depression; Clarke-Stewart & Brentano, 2006). Not surprisingly, individuals who exit an abusive marriage tend to fare better in the years following a divorce than they did in the midst of a miserable relationship (Amato & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007). However, for most, divorce seems to have a negative overall impact. An18-year study of 30,000 individuals showed that most divorcees experienced significant drops in their level of life satisfaction (Lucas, 2007).

In addition, children of divorced relationships can suffer a variety of consequences. Brewer (2010) reported that some studies demonstrate that children of divorced parents are at a greater risk for depression as adults, are found (on average) to have less satisfaction with life, more anxiety, and are significantly more likely to become divorced themselves (Amato, 2001). Statistically, children from divorced parents have less favorable views of marriage, and less trust in the possibility that marriage can be a source of joy and support (Bartell, 2006; Cui & Fincham, 2010). Although divorce can have deleterious consequences for children, research points to the level of conflict—inside a marriage or between divorced co-parents—as the most significant variable when exploring outcomes in children as they relate to family structure (Amato & Keith, 1991).   Further, it is important to note that a key weakness in many divorce studies is the use of cross-sectional data to compare children from divorced parents to children from intact families (Strohschein, 2005). These sorts of studies inherently exclude the nature of a child's pre-divorce mental health, thereby failing to demonstrate cases where divorce may act as a stress release and incur benefits to children, especially in families with high levels of hostile conflict (Strohschein, 2005). In addition, Previti, & Amato (2003) report that many of the couples who remain intact are avoiding divorce because of the preclusive economic consequences, and not because of the

rewards found in satisfying relationships. In cases where these sorts of unions contain high levels of hostile conflict, it stands to reason that the costs are similar to those found in post-divorce families.

Researchers have explored the reasons for the relatively higher rates of failed marriage and divorce in the past 50 years. Some have argued that divorce and other relationship dissolutions occur more frequently due to the seemingly high acceptance rate of divorce (Amato & Rogers, 1999; Cox & Demmitt, 2013). While this may indeed be a factor, Cox and Demmitt go on to argue that an increase in unrealistic expectations of marriage may be a stronger culprit. Recent evidence suggests that fundamental beliefs about marriage have changed (Cox and Demmitt, 2013; Gelfman, 1995; Thornton, 1989). For example, while young adults a half a century ago believed that marriage, with the sharing of household work, resources, and parenting, was a mutually beneficial path in life, young adults today view marriage less pragmatically (Carbone, 2000; Cahn & Carbone, 2010). Marriage is now more commonly viewed as a route to personal fulfillment, with the expectation that spouses will not only share in the aforementioned components, but will also be the ultimate friend, lover, and companion (Amato, 2009, Cox, 2013). Our current culture looks to marriage to be fun, playful, and passionate, and often the work and sharing of resources becomes a boring and mundane disappointment as it strays far from what was expected.

This shift in expectations for marriage reflects in part, a trend towards individualism (or self-interest) in Western culture (Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, Bushman & Trzesniewski, 2010) and is cited as a factor in its alleged decline (Cherlin, 2009). Adlerian theory supports this idea, postulating than an interest in others enhances mental health, and that focused *self-interest* can lead to psychopathology (Adler, 1958). A focus on self often leads to higher expectations of

others to fulfill needs and more justification for ending a relationship that doesn't live up to these increasingly greater expectations (Cherlin, 2009, Coontz, 2005). Although expectations for marriage may be inflated, paradoxically there seem to be lower expectations for marital satisfaction and longevity (Emery, Horn & Beam, 2012). This dynamic combination of opposing expectations is another plausible contributor to the ongoing downward trend of marriage.

Cohabitation

In the 1960s, 94% of individuals chose to marry, but predictions today indicate that 85% or fewer will marry in the current decade (Cherlin, 2009). One correlate to this trend is the rapid increase of cohabitation occurring over the past 50 years (Stanley, Rhoades & Fincham, 2011). In the 1960s, less than 5% of relationships were cohabitating, whereas 60 – 70% of current young adults cohabit, an increase of nearly 800% (Roberts, 2010). Further, by age 24, 43% of women will have lived with a partner outside of marriage at least once (Chandra, Martinez, Mosher, Abma, & Jones, 2005). Although a majority (60%) of young adults believe that cohabitation is a valuable "trial run" for marriage, some outcomes of these relationships suggest otherwise (Stanley et al., 2011). In fact, statistically, individuals who choose to cohabit before marriage are more likely to experience higher rates of divorce and lower rates of marital quality (Stanley et al., 2011; Jose, O'Leary, and Moyer, 2010). When individuals report cohabitating as a means of testing their relationship, increased levels of conflict and domestic abuse can also be reported (Brown & Bulanda, 2008; Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2009b).

Rhoades et al. (2009b) however, report finding that when couples become engaged prior to cohabitating, their chances for success are less diminished, presumably because the established level of prior commitment is protective. Researchers speculate that the absence of commitment in a cohabitating relationship may be indicative of doubt about the relationship and can heighten

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unhealthy insecurities between partners (Stanley et al., 2011). Additionally, findings suggest that the experience of cohabitation can reduce the value and primacy that has traditionally been placed on marriage and children (Axinn, Barber, de Jong, Tolnay, Scheewe, Ruggles, & Maguire, 1997; Rhoades, Stanley & Markman, 2009). Further, some of the most happily married couples view their marriages in a more institutional context, thereby perceiving the union in relatively sacred terms and placing less value on more self-serving interests (Wilcox, 2009). These couples report less deleterious conflict and more overall marital satisfaction.

In contrast to these findings, Manning and Cohen (2012), draw on more recent data (2006 – 2008) and find that premarital cohabitation is not associated with marital instability. Manning and Cohen (2012) speculate that normative effects stemming from growing acceptance of cohabitation may play a role, and report that more nuanced analyses are needed in future studies to take into account the myriad socio-demographic factors involved.

Cohabitating couples can also experience an "inertia" factor (Kline et al., 2004; Stanley, Rhoades, & Markman, 2006) that occurs when relationships that might otherwise have ended, result in marriage only because of greater difficulty ending a cohabitating relationship than a dating relationship. Couples experiencing inertia tend to stay together and move on to marriage because of certain constraints, and not because of high interpersonal satisfaction (Stanley, et al., 2006).

Increased rates of cohabitation may also result in children becoming disconnected from the institute of marriage, as more and more children live with a parent who cohabits in lieu of marital commitment (Cherlin, 2009). As recently as the 1980s, only 13% of children were born out of wedlock (National Vital Statistics Report 61). As of 2011, that number reached 41%, more than triple the rate from 30 years prior (National Vital Statistics Report 61). Some studies

point to an increase of abuse towards children in cases where parents cohabit with non-parental partners (Sedlak, Mettenburg, Basena, Petta, McPherson, Green & Li, 2010). Given the potential consequences of this relatively ubiquitous dynamic, the new norm of single-parenting and cohabitation with partners who are not the biological parents of the children deserves our continued attention.

Parental authority style as an antecedent to dynamic factors in intimacy

In the1960's Diana Baumrind characterized three parental discipline styles that have transcended the past several decades and continue to be integrated into contemporary parenting literature. Of the three – authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive -- authoritative is considered the style from which children develop the strongest sense of self and the most keenly developed ability to regulate emotions. Authoritative parents tend to be responsive and warm but also hold high expectations of their children; they recognize the value of supporting their child in developing an internal locus of control, allowing for self-reflection and independent problem solving rather than overusing parental control and power. In addition, authoritative parents support responsible decision-making, view respect as a commodity that is reciprocal in nature, and are high on both demandingness and responsiveness. In contrast, authoritarian parents have high expectations but tend to exert their power and control in coercive ways, compromising the development of inner core control and regulation. Children with authoritarian parents struggle more with problem solving and can be more likely to externalize problems. Respect is demanded from the child and often not reciprocated, and non-compliance is met with punitive action. Research points to increased levels of aggression in children who experience predominantly authoritarian discipline (Kawabata, Alink, Tseng, van IJzendoorn, Crick, 2011). Permissive parenting is sometimes referred to as indulgent parenting. As with authoritarian

parents, permissive parents can be coercive, but tend to utilize bribes to elicit desired behaviors. Children who predominantly experience a permissive style tend to have a more diminished sense of self-worth and display more externalizing attributions (Baumrind, 2012).

Although a growing body of research points to dynamics in the family of origin as potential precursors to an individual's romantic relationships (Shaver & Hazen, 1993; Stakert & Bersik, 2003), a dearth of research exists which directly correlates parenting style with adult intimacy. However, there are demonstrated correlations between attachment patterns and adult intimacy (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999). Importantly, relationship satisfaction is greater in individuals who identify as having a secure attachment style (Rajaei, Nayeri & Sedaghati, 2007). When both partners identify with a more secure attachment pattern, they are better able to regulate emotions, stay on task, and utilize harmonious communications in spite of the experience of stress -- functions required for healthy conflict resolution (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Alternately, partners who are insecure about intimacy or attachment often lack models of healthy outcomes to fall back on and they tend to equate relationship stress with disproportionately high levels of negativity.

Importantly, the parenting practices seen in each parental discipline style often mirror those found in respective parent-attachment styles. For example, authoritative parents who are firm and responsive in their interactions inherently exhibit the same behaviors found in secure attachment patterns. Conversely, authoritarian parenting strategies that are high on demandingness and low in responsiveness, exhibit behaviors described in less secure parenting styles. Further Surjadi, Lorenz, Conger, and Wickrama (2013), found that harsh and inconsistent parental discipline correlates both with a higher tendency to externalize problems, and, emotional ambivalence. This sort of ambivalence is associated with more anger and hostility in

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relationships; both direct correlates of poorer relationship outcomes (Creasey, Kershaw, & Boston, 1999). Additionally, individuals demonstrating a higher tendency toward the externalization of problems rely more on aggressive means to manage conflict; again, a strategy shown to be antithetic to healthy relationship outcomes (Creasey et al., 1999, Gottman, 1993, 1999). Conclusions from these studies support further exploration of parental discipline styles as an important antecedent of the dynamic processes in intimate relationships.

The endorsement of rape myths as a potential precursor to poor outcomes in intimacy

Myths surrounding rape were first discussed in the literature in the 1970s, and were described as complex societal beliefs that seemed to fuel ongoing sexual violence against women by trivializing the violence, excusing the perpetrator, and blaming the victim (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) defined rape myths as: *"attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women"* (p. 134). Endorsement of such myths is inherently antithetical to healthy intimacy; therefore, as a proximal antecedent to romantic outcome, exploration of the current rate in which young adults subscribe to these beliefs is compelling.

Although individuals subscribing to such beliefs are not necessarily destined to commit a sexual assault, Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell (2007) show correlations between endorsement of these beliefs and hostile and benevolent sexism towards women. Hostile sexism refers to the derogation of women who disregard stereotypic gender roles prescribed by society (Glick & Fiske, 1997). Helms, Proulx, Klute, McHale, & Crouter (2006) find significantly lower levels of marital quality in couples with stereotypic gender roles, indicative of the pernicious nature of such derogation. Benevolent sexism supports male domination by providing women with

rewards for "staying in their place" and for reinforcing gender roles that give men more power (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism therefore works counter to findings that reveal more androgyny and equality in the happiest of marriages (Marshall, 2010). As possible predictors of intimacy dynamics and relationship outcomes, belief systems that perpetuate hostile and benevolent sexism towards women are worthy of further exploration.

Beliefs

Beliefs are mental constructions derived from consequences of pre-existing beliefs, or, explanations for experiences (Nillson, 2013). The convergence of our personal histories with contemporary cultural influences leads to the development of idiosyncratic beliefs about romantic relationships that influence mate selection and retention process. When two individuals meet and form a bond, their unique set of beliefs can factor into whether a relationship prospers or fails. "Growth" and "destiny" beliefs are two such over-arching belief systems (Knee, Nanayakkara, Vietor, Neighbors, 2001). Researchers describe growth beliefs as those that are marked by a determination to work through problems and to grow closer through these efforts. Individuals who endorse growth beliefs maintain a sense that, relationally speaking, hard work will lead to more satisfying outcomes and that problems serve a purpose worth overcoming. Individuals who endorse destiny beliefs tend to make quick initial "diagnosis" of prospective mates and a respective determination as to the longevity of the relationship.

Knee (et al., 2001) suggests that these contrasting belief systems can have diverse outcomes on relationships. For example, those endorsing growth beliefs may display a higher preponderance of mate retention behaviors and commit to one person for a longer period of time than those who endorse destiny beliefs (Knee, 1998). However, believing a relationship was "meant to be" adds resilience to a relationship, with belief in destiny serving as the factor that

can overshadow inevitable relationship challenges. Conversely, when initial uncertainty about the destiny of a prospective mate exists, little optimism exists that problems can be overcome, therefore reducing the odds of an otherwise appropriate match developing into a lasting relationship. Additional correlations in the research show that when individuals endorse growth beliefs in lieu of destiny beliefs, they tend to view relationship challenges as opportunities for growth and remain optimistic in spite of recognized shortcomings in their partner (Knee et al., 2001). In contrast, for destiny believers, small differences can lead to a pessimistic approach to problem solving and doubt about the potential success of the relationship. Therefore, depending on the specific circumstance, both destiny and growth belief systems can have strengthening or weakening impacts on the opportunities for relationship success.

Beliefs that are limiting, or more likely to propagate negative outcomes, are considered constraint beliefs (Larson, 1992). Constraint beliefs are irrational, and largely inconsistent with empirical reality, pointing individuals on a misguided relationship trajectory. In holding such beliefs, for example, young adults might overvalue romantic love and devalue variables (shared values, goals, meanings etc.) that are identified in successful marriages (Gottman & Silver, 1999), and commit to a mate based on an initial assessment (as can be the case when individuals endorse destiny beliefs) that inaccurately reflects long-term relationship potential. According to Larson (1992), constraint beliefs: (a) reduce perceived options in the mate selection process, (b) reduce perceived options with regard to timing of marriage, (c) increase or decrease effort dedicated to the pursuit of finding an appropriate mate, (d) inhibit thoughtful reflection on the idiosyncratic characteristics of possible partners that may enhance or hinder interpersonal relationship, and (e) cultivate mate selection challenges and inhibit problem solving behaviors.

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Larson (1992) believed that moderating faulty beliefs prior to commitment improves the odds of optimal mate selection, citing evidence that such beliefs can lead to increased stresses and strains in the mate selection process, and disappointments and frustration within the committed relationship. He went on to identify nine specific constraining beliefs that can negatively impact mate selection processes and outcomes. These are:

1) *The One and Only*. Individuals experience constraining consequences because they may wait for their "soul mate" and therefore miss out on alternative, well-suited partners. They believe their life partner is their "missing half" which puts exceedingly high expectations on such a union from the start.

(2) *The Perfect Partner*. Individuals wait to commit until the perfect match is found. Such perfection does not exist and these individuals likely miss out on suitable partners.

(3) *The Perfect Self*. While it is advantageous to be "ready" for commitment, rare is the individual who is fully self-actualized and perfectly primed for a lifelong union. Those who believe they need to be in a perfect position in life will again likely miss out on possible opportunity while waiting to evolve into their ideal self.

(4) *The Perfect Relationship*. Individuals need the relationship to prove itself to be ideal before committing. While such evidence would allow innumerable couples to avoid making mistakes in commitment, such certainty does not exist.

(5) *Try Harder*. Individuals believe that with enough fortitude, any relationship can survive. Successful unions, however, are formed when two people are levelheaded and able to work toward mutually beneficial solutions. Because not everyone is capable of such sensibility, it is important to maintain a certain level of scrutiny when making romantic choices.

(6) *Love is Enough*. A considerable number of unions are created based on love as the sole factor. Overlooked in this case are critical variables such as similar values, shared goals, and mutual interests, to name a few.

(7) *Cohabitation*. This belief, held by a majority of young adults, assumes living together prior to marriage will provide a litmus test of sorts to predict successful marital outcomes. Much research exists disproving this belief, revealing that many marriages that come after cohabitation are more likely to dissolve, and the protective factors that exist in marriage are not as available to couples who cohabit.

(8) *Opposites Complement*. A commonly held belief exists in our culture that opposites attract and that this sort of union will be successful because opposing strengths and weaknesses will facilitate interest and lead to a more "complete" couple. However, literature on mate selection identifies similarity as one of the strongest variables in predicting companionable unions.

(9) *Choosing Should Be Easy*. Individuals with this belief are passive participants in the precarious pursuit of a life partner. They believe the right person "will come along" and therefore expend little to no effort actively engaged in this life-altering endeavor.

Constraint beliefs potentially play a complex and nuanced role in relationship outcomes, demanding further empirical study. While measurements exist to assess the degree of romantic beliefs, Cobb et al. (2003) set out to develop a measure that assesses the degree to which young adults endorsed each of Larson's nine constraining beliefs as they relate to the mate selection process. A factor analysis of Larson's nine beliefs collapsed into an acceptable seven- factor model now used in the Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection Scale (AARMS; see Methods). For example, the Perfect Relationship and Perfect Self beliefs contained considerable

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overlap and were thus renamed Complete Assurance. The theme of this new factor is the belief that an individual should delay marriage until he or she is completely certain that personal and relationship dynamics are such that marriage will be a success. For example, "I should wait to marry my sweetheart until we have proven our relationship is strong enough to stand the test of time" and "Before I get married I must be thoroughly convinced that I will be a good spouse" are two items that measure the *Complete Assurance* construct. Additionally, the Perfect Partner belief also contained high factor loadings intending to measure the Perfect Relationship, and was therefore combined to create Idealization. The overall theme of *Idealization* is that a future partner and/or relationship must contain all of the elements necessary to have a successful marriage. The following items are examples of the Idealization subscale that contain elements of Perfect Partner and Perfect Relationship beliefs: "I should not marry my sweetheart unless everything about our dating relationship is pleasing to me" and "The person I marry needs to have all the qualities I am looking for in a mate."

Responses to the decline of marriage

Many authorities in this area argue that the individual and societal benefits to having a population of people who are able to successfully sustain long-term committed romantic relationships are wide-reaching, and the emotional, social and economic costs of failed unions are incalculably high. Given this concern, state and federal governments have responded with targeted programs designed to reduce divorce rates and add stability to marital unions. This has resulted in a "marriage movement" across the United States, with local, state and federal governments investing in programs that promote healthy long-term relationships (Marquardt et al., 2012). For example, in 2004, the Center for Marriage and Families at the Institute for American Values initiated a surge of state and federal programs promoting relationship stability

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and fatherhood (Hawkins & Ooms, 2012). Similarly, an initiative of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 set up the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Act, providing $150 million per year (from 2005 to 2013) to organizations working to increase relationship stability both for adults, and their children. This financial commitment was justified in part by findings that show stable relationships are associated with reduced reliance on government support and improved quality of life for children (Buehler, Lange, & Franck, 2007).

In addition to larger-scale federal programs a wide variety of relationship education programs were developed during this decade and are also now available across the United States. These programs grew out of efforts initially offered to premarital couples by priests, rabbis, ministers and other proponents of religious marriage in response to increased divorce rates and out-of-wedlock births in the 1960s (Hunt, Hof, & DeMaria, 1998). Soon thereafter, however, secular organizations began to develop their own programs, and formal training and evaluation of relationship education programs took root. By the 1980's, Virginia Satir, considered by some to be the "Mother of Family Therapy," had begun training therapists as relationship educators and urging colleagues to aim their work towards relationship education.

Today, a range of programs focus on couples who have established some level of commitment towards marriage. Some, such as *PREPARE/ENRICH*, *FOCCUS*, and *Relate*, are assessment-based programs that feature accessible instruments from which couples can identify strengths and weaknesses. Others, like *Marriage Essentials* (formerly known as *Pre-Cana*), are group courses required by couples wishing to marry in the Catholic Church. *PREP®* (*Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program*) integrates techniques from cognitive-behavioral marital therapy and communication-oriented marital enhancement programs. Although diverse in their approaches, these programs (and several others) share the common

goal of promoting healthy and strong intimate relationships. These programs all focus on

couples who have established some level of commitment towards marriage.

Powered by programs like these, couple-oriented relationship education continues to

grow with approximately 44% of couples married in the 1990s receiving some sort of premarital

counseling (Stanley et al, 2006). After decades of implementation, with thousands of

"graduates" of relationship programs, a substantial body of research now shows that relationship

education does modestly increase problem-solving skills, reduce marital conflict, and improve

marital satisfaction (Amato & Maynard, 2007; Carroll and Doherty, 2003; Stanley et al., 2006).

However, measuring success or failure of these programs (when many studies follow couples for

only two or three years) is compromised by a "ceiling" or "honeymoon" effect (Fawcett et al.,

2010). This effect occurs when measures of satisfaction are administered relatively early in the

development of a marriage when average levels of satisfaction are already elevated. These

effects might diminish with more longitudinal monitoring and result in greater gains from

relationship education. Further, the lack of longer-term studies is consistently noted as a

significant weakness in the evaluation of premarital education (Fawcett et al., 2010).

The increased utilization of pre-marital counseling and its modest demonstration of

efficacy is encouraging, but significant changes in demographics also call for changes in the way

relationship education is delivered (Rhoades & Stanley, 2011; Scott, Rhoades, Stanley, Allen, &

Markman (2013). A growing number of couples do not fall into the category for which these

pre-marital programs have been designed; in particular this includes the growing sector of

society that cohabits. Because traditional relationship education targets pre-marital couples,

couples who cohabit either before or instead of marriage have less access to opportunities to

improve their relationship, and improve stability for the benefit of the children involved (Rhoades & Stanley, 2011).

As a part of the "marriage movement," a growing number of researchers believe there is much to be gained when individuals learn about optimal mate selection processes prior to forming committed relationships (Gonzaga, Campos, & Bradbury, 2007). During the mate selection process, young adults have the opportunity to learn which variables in a mate are most likely to lead to long-term satisfaction and which might instead contribute to high rates of conflict and abuse. Significantly, they can also be taught strategies for exiting relationships that show signs of concern.

The new demographic of emerging adults

Jeffrey Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood identifies the time period between ages 18 and 25 as a distinct stage of development in the United States. In contrast to other "stage theories" that occur in a fixed order and in conjunction with physical and cognitive maturation, emerging adulthood has evolved from changes in social and cultural factors (Arnett, 2000). For example, young adults of the 1950's grew up during the Great Depression and World War II, and appeared to be motivated to settle down at a younger age. In contrast, recent generations have experienced comparatively less turmoil and seem more eager to retain independence and eschew responsibilities that come with commitment and family. This has contributed to the rise of the new demographic of "emerging adults" (Arnett, 2000).

The decades of the 1960's, 70's, and 80's saw the advent and elaboration of "second-wave" feminism, which brought about significant shifts in gender roles and sexuality and new social norms reflecting an acceptance of sexual relations outside of marriage. This monumental departure from the shame and disgrace associated with out-of-wedlock relations in prior

generations was also accompanied by the FDA approval of the birth control pill for contraceptive use in 1960. This eliminated the need for early marriage to cover up the consequences of pre-marital pregnancy. Educated women entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers, dissolving the economic dependence on males that served as a cornerstone to traditional family structure (Celello, 2009). Newfound economic independence relieved women from the traditional pressure to marry young and start a family (Arnett, 2010). Today, females and males marry, on average, at ages 26 and 28 respectively, deviating markedly from the ages of 20 and 22 before the 1960s (Amato, 2007). Thus, from ages 18 to 26, many individuals now experience a novel developmental period that is filled with uncertainty, freedom, and change (Arnett, 2000).

No longer identifying as adolescent, yet still outside traditional bonds of adulthood (i.e. marriage and parenthood), Arnett's "emerging adulthood" is marked by self-focus, instability, change, and contemplation (Fincham and Cui, 2011). Indeed, Grossman (2005) characterizes the "option-oriented" mindset of the young adult as "…..a chance to build castles and knock them down, experiment with different careers, knowing that none of it really counts." These young adults can contemplate a myriad of options before committing to any one job or any single life partner, and have a much larger voice in their options over career and love than the more traditional generations preceding them. Also vastly differing for this generation is the experience and opportunity that comes with (on average) eight additional years of relationship exploration. Significantly, these exploratory relationships are not self-contained; rather, they impact and alter the trajectory of future relationships (Lewandowski & Bizzoco, 2007). Although some might argue against the idea that this period is a developmental stage deserving of its own title, premarital individuals in this age group seem primed to acquire healthy relationship knowledge and skills that can be practiced in the context of pre-marital relationships. If young adults can

"practice" healthy relationship skills prior to marriage, arguably they will optimize their chances for success.

Individual-oriented education

Growing recognition of the importance of mate selection education *before* committing to a partner has resulted in a new focus on individual-oriented relationship education among relationship scientists and practitioners (Fincham, Stanley & Rhoades, 2011; Rhoades & Stanley, 2011). Redirecting the target of relationship curricula from committed pre-marital couples to uncommitted young adults allows for more focus on prevention and less on couples who are already experiencing distress. Deemed a "reachable moment" by policy analysts (Ooms & Wilson, 2004), this individual-oriented education approach can reach individuals from diverse demographic backgrounds (Rhoades & Stanley, 2011), and embraces the new demographic of "emerging adults."

Importantly, prevention preempts the development of insidious patterns of relating before these patterns have a chance to start or become habitual. Individual-oriented programs also allow educators to impart information that directly relates to optimal mate selection. Married couples surveyed about their pre-marital counseling experience cited the need for more mate selection information to pre-emptively prevent unions with partners who are not a good fit (Halford et al., 2003). Also, research has exposed early warning signs within relationships that may point to domestic abuse (Leone, Johnson, Cohan, Lloyd, 2004). Teaching individuals how to recognize and avoid the red flags of a relationship high in hostile conflict, could potentially avert abusive relationships from forming, and therefore, increase the overall stability of marriage in the United States.

Not surprisingly, mate selection is a crucial variable found in studies of marital outcomes (Clements, Stanley, Markman, 2004). Recognizing the need to reach young adults before or during the mate selection process, Pearson et al. (2005) developed *Within My Reach*, a curriculum designed to meet individual needs both for singles or those in a committed relationship. This program was adapted from PREP® (Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 2001) the most evaluated pre-marital education curriculum in the United States (Fincham et al., 2011) and the only evidence-based relationship education program listed at *SAMHSA* (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, www.SAMHSA.gov). Originally created for young, unmarried mothers, *Within My Reach* focuses on the process of mate selection, an integral distinction between this sort of curriculum and those focused on pre-marital (post-mate selection) relationships.

According to Stoops (2004) 57% of young adults experience much of their mate selection process inside a college system, a fact that seems to justify offering relationship education at the university level. Also, Creasey et al. (1999), found that relationship related issues are the greatest source of concern by students receiving counseling on campuses around the country. Perhaps underscoring the importance of college age romance, and also the need for support in this domain, studies also reveal that college students who are involved in romantic relationships enjoy better mental health (Braithwaite, Belevi, and Fincham, 2010). Despite this convincing rationale for courses targeting relationship education, and reports that various forms of such courses are being offered on campuses around the country, there is little direct research on the efficacy of these programs in current literature.

One exception is *Project RELATE*, a course at the University of Florida known to be the largest relationship education course offered in the United States. *Project RELATE* was

designed to reach 1000 students each semester, and 10,000 students over a five-year period. In reaching 25% of the University of Florida population, researchers hoped to assess the impact Project RELATE had on local social norms.

The *Project RELATE* curriculum was tailored after the core elements of PREP (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program: Markman et al., 2001). As previously stated, PREP is the most evaluated relationship education program available and consistently demonstrates efficacy for improving relationship quality (Jakubowski, Milne, Brunner & Miller, 2004). *Project RELATE* adapted the couples-based PREP program to focus on the needs of the individually oriented target population. For example, the process of mate selection is a critical educational component of Project RELATE but would be untimely for the PREP course that targets those who are already partnered. In addition to mate selection processes, the Project RELATE curriculum covers the influence of family background, self-awareness, gender roles, communication skills, intentionality with regard to relationship decisions, and conflict management.

Researchers and creators of *Project RELATE* cite the evaluation process as the most challenging factor in the delivery of this program (Rhoades & Stanley, 2009). First, longitudinal studies on all relationship programs prove difficult and are precluded in this case due to the course's relatively recent creation. Further, many of the instruments needed to assess changes in attitudes and beliefs had not been previously developed. Finally, it is difficult to assess avoidance of poor relationship outcomes due to increased awareness regarding optimal mate selection processes.

Despite challenges in evaluation, glimpses into the efficacy of this program are encouraging (Fincham et al., 2011). For example, by drawing from evaluative measures used in

assessing pre-marital programs, researchers explored self-regulatory behavior within the relationship (Wilson, Charker, Lizzio, Halford, Kimlin, 2005). By comparing students who received relationship education with a control group, and controlling for initial levels of relationship regulation, graduates of *Project RELATE* demonstrated higher gains in self-regulatory behavior ($F(1,828) = 4.68$, $p < .05$; Fincham et al., 2011). Further, researchers used measures developed by Stanley, Markman & Whitton (2002) to assess four conflict behaviors associated with marital distress. Controlling for initial levels of reported conflict behavior, graduates of *Project RELATE* reported lower levels of hostile conflict behavior than those in the control group ($F(1, 829) = 3.95$, $p < .05$; Fincham et al., 2011).

After reaching the limits of evaluation with available marital measures, Fincham and his colleagues set out to develop measures for the remaining most relevant constructs from the course. One such measure evaluates a young adult's ability to recognize warning signs of an unhealthy relationship. Researchers collected data at the beginning, middle, and completion of the semester and found that students in Project RELATE showed greater change in their awareness of warning signs than a control group ($CR = 3.43$, $p < .01$; Fincham et al., 2011). Fincham and his colleagues also designed a measure of intentionality, evaluating whether students "slide" into relationship circumstances without conscious and thoughtful consideration, or thoughtfully and carefully "decide" to make various relationship related decisions. Based on a transition and risk model framed as "sliding vs. deciding" (Stanley, Rhoades, and Markman 2006), this construct reflects the crucial need to make thoughtful decisions in relationships or risk compromising individual life goals. By asking participants to assess such statements as, "With romantic partners, I weigh the pros and cons before allowing myself to take the next step in the relationship," Fincham and his colleagues developed a measure for intentionality. Again,

graduates of Project RELATE demonstrated increased intentionality in relationship decisions than did those who did not receive relationship education (CR = 2.67, p < . 01; Fincham et al., 2011).

Although these findings point to the efficacy of relationship education targeted at a student population, further development of curriculum delivery, and evaluative methods and tools is needed. One consideration is service delivery methods that meet the rapidly evolving needs of the contemporary young adult who relies on technology more and more for educational purposes. A program such as Project RELATE may have greater efficacy and relevance if delivered on-line or with on-line supporting content. The potential of this approach has been demonstrated by Braithwaite and Fincham (2009) in their analysis of ePREP, a version of PREP that can be delivered online. Compared to a placebo group, graduates of ePREP demonstrated improvement in areas of communication, depression, and anxiety (Braithwaite & Fincham, 2009). These results provide further evidence of both the efficacy of relationship education, and the scope of possibility for future education delivery.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

Context and Setting

The University of Montana is a public research university with approximately 14,000 students (Fall semester, 2012). Since 2008, the Counselor Education Department has been offering a course entitled "Intimate and Family Relationships," initially developed to explore the interest and response that undergraduate students have to relationship education. Students from a variety of disciplines can register for this 200 level course, and class size ranges from approximately 25 to 80 each semester. Since the Fall semester 2012, this course has been offered in two separate sections. Although taught by two different instructors, both sections of this course are instructed in a similar fashion, utilizing the same textbook, sharing course objectives, and following a similar sequence.

Course Objectives, Content, and Lab Experience

The Intimate and Family Relationship course at the University of Montana covers the multi-faceted realm of intimate relationships and explores the topic from empirical and theoretical perspectives. This class explored intimate relationships through cultural, biological, social, and developmental lenses and covers specific topics such as attraction, communication, friendship, sexuality, love, conflict, power and violence, loss, social cognition, and repairing relationships. The course text, *Intimate Relationships, 6th Edition* (Miller, R.S., 2012) was supplemented with materials from current relationship research literature, The Gottman Institute,

Ted Talks, and audiovisual materials from popular media. A film depicting gender representation, *Killing Us Softly 3* (Media Education Foundation, 2002), was used as a foundation for in-class discussion. Guest speakers from the University of Montana and the greater Missoula community spoke about divorce, sexuality, sexual assault, and domestic violence. Further details on course content are in the Procedure section.

Course objectives were: (a) to develop an understanding of the empirical and theoretical study of intimate relationships, research methods involved in this field of study, the strengths and limits of research and theory, and research findings on intimacy; (b) to gain knowledge and understanding of cultural, biological, and evolutionary perspectives of intimacy; (c) to increase the intrapersonal understanding of factors that inform this view, and how it may be similar to or different from the societal views of the present and/or past; (d) to increase awareness of cultural differences regarding intimate relationships and the implications of these differences on the individual and society. Additionally, the class emphasized small group interactions and participation in large group discussions. Students were encouraged to (a) reflect on past, present, and future relationships, (b) examine their beliefs and knowledge about relationship issues, (c) critically examine ways in which the course content might alter beliefs and knowledge and therefore impact current and future relationships, and (d) critically consider the cultural influences that may affect them as individuals at an intimate level. During the 2012 – 2013 academic year, students in both sections of the Intimate and Family Relationships course were tested three times to assess comprehension of course content. Students were also assigned two reflection papers regarding their personal understanding of intimacy, and the relative value they place on relationships.

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An integral course assignment consisted of a lab component in which students were given one of the following four options: (1) complete eight individual counseling sessions with a graduate student (under the supervision of a licensed clinician) from the Counselor Education Department; (2) complete six, 1.5 hour psycho-education based group counseling sessions facilitated by two graduate students (under the supervision of a licensed clinician) from the Counselor Education Department; (3) complete five reflection papers based on course content, or (4) participate in and reflect on a community activity related to relationships.

Research Participants and Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics are based on 356 students at the University of Montana, from the Fall and Spring semesters in the 2012 – 2013 academic year, with 154 and 202 students enrolled in each semester respectively. A demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) was administered to all research participants to record information on participant age, gender, year in school, sexual orientation, ethnicity, parental marital status, age at time of parental divorce (if applicable), and current participant relationship status. Although a large majority (88%) of this population is between the ages of 18 – 25, 42 subjects whose age was older than 25 were dropped from the analysis in order for the study to align more closely with the aforementioned definition of "young adult." Consistent with the community surrounding the University of Montana, the sample population lacks diversity in regards to ethnicity and sexual orientation. Further, between-group homogeneity is demonstrated between the treatment and control groups (see Table 1).

Table 1
Student Demographics Between Treatment and Control Groups

	Treatment Group N, % 175, 49%	Control Group N, % 181, 51%
Gender		
Female	110, 63%	108, 61%
Male	65, 37%	71, 39%
Ethnicity		
White	153, 87%	156, 86%
Black	10, 6%	8, 4%
Native American	4, 2%	1, <1%
Hispanic	1, <1%	3, <2%
Asian	2, 1%	10, 6%
Other	3, <2%	2, 1%
Adult Child of Divorce		
Yes	57, 33%	54, 32%
No	116, 67%	117, 68%
Current Relationships		
Single	79, 45%	112, 62%
Dating	64, 37%	52, 29%
Engaged	5, 3%	3, <2%
Married	7, 4%	7, 4%
Cohabiting	14, 8%	4, 2%
Divorced	5, 3%	2, 1%

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual	156, 89%	175, 96%
Gay	3, <2%	0, 0%
Lesbian	7, 4%	4, 2%
Bi-sexual	7, 4%	2, 1%
Other	1, <1%	0, 0%

Instruments

A variety of tools/tests/instruments exist to assess attitudes and beliefs. The pre and post-test assessments used in this study included the following: (a) Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection (AARMS; see Appendix B), (b) Parental Authority Questionnaire (see Appendix D), (e) The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (see Appendix C). Students in the Intimate and Family Relations class were asked to complete an additional questionnaire providing overall feedback about the class experience, and identify which lab option was completed. Relevant background context and justification of the scales specifically addressed in this study are provided below.

Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection

In 2003, Cobb, Larson, and Watson designed a questionnaire to measure attitudes about romance and mate selection. The questionnaire specifically targeted (Larson's (1992, 2000) nine constraining beliefs about the mate selection process. They also sought to elucidate the influence of demographic considerations (e.g., age, gender, socioeconomic status, ethnic origin, religious affiliation) on the degree to which constraint beliefs are endorsed. Three of Larson's original nine constraint beliefs collapsed into two subscales, leaving a total of seven specific subscale dimensions: (a) One and Only, (b) Love Is Enough, (c) Cohabitation, (d) Complete Assurance, (e) Idealization, (f) Ease of Support, and (g) Opposites Complement.

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The resulting Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection (AARMS) Scale is a 32 item, seven-point Likert-type scale, with responses of 1-7 indicating very strong disagreement to very strong agreement (to disguise the true intent of the questionnaire, four of the 32 questions were inserted as distractor items, and five of the remaining 28 items were reverse-coded. High (6-7) and low (1-2) scores indicate strong and weak endorsement of constraint beliefs, respectively. To standardize the scale, Cobb et al. (2003) used responses from 387 single, never-married undergraduate students from three states. Usable data was yielded from 302 respondents, approximately 80% of whom were women. An analysis for construct validity yielded 13 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00 (Cobb et al., 2003). To assess the concurrent validity of the AARMS, Cobb et al. (2003) used the Romantic Beliefs Scale (RBS; Sprecher & Metts, 1989), a reliable and valid measure of beliefs similar in nature to constraint beliefs. The correlation between the RBS and the AARMS total score was moderate and significant (r=.45, p<.01). Furthermore, the Social Desirability Scale (SDS; Crowne-Marlowe, 1964) was used to assess whether participants answered questions on the basis of how they might be judged by others. Results from this analysis yielded a Kuder-Richardson coefficient for the SDS of .78 (n = 151), indicating that the AARMS scales are not susceptible to social desirability bias.

Tests for reliability using Cronbach's α coefficients indicated that the reliability lies above the moderate range (George, 2003). An anomaly was noted for the Cohabitation subscale (r = 0.59), which is likely due to the conservative ideology held by a majority of the sample participants. Cobb et al. (2003) recommended that further reliability information from a more heterogeneous sample be obtained for this subscale. Researchers noted that the lack of heterogeneity was not found to influence outcomes from any of the remaining six subscales.

Parental Authority Questionnaire

In the 1960's Diana Baumrind developed a theory of parenting that delineates three distinct styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) based on specific parenting behaviors. According to Baumrind's (1966) findings, authoritative parents are characterized as providing firm boundaries and direction with a foundation that is rich in warmth. An authoritarian style is characterized by having high value on obedience with little expression of warmth. Parents with a permissive style make few demands on children and provide little structure. Children raised with an authoritative style tend to score higher on measures of self-esteem in contrast to children raised with authoritarian style (Baumrind,1966). Characterization of these parenting styles have transcended the last 50 years and continue to be integrated into contemporary parenting literature.

John Buri (1989, 1991) developed the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) to measure the phenomenological appraisal of parent's authority style from the perspective of adolescent or adult children. This form was originally developed with 30 questions (10 items per construct) directed towards the mother, and 30 questions directed towards the father. Each question is identical with the exception of gender orientation. The questionnaire used in this study combined the distinct father and mother forms and refers in generic terms to a "parent." Because normative data and research on the psychometric properties of the condensed version of the PAQ were not found in the literature, this review of reliability and validity refer to the original questionnaire.

This 30-item version of the PAQ uses a five-point Likert-type scale with responses of 1 – 5 indicating strong agreement to strong disagreement respectively. Tests for internal reliability resulted in coefficients between .75 and .87 which are deemed "good" in terms of Cronbach's α, (George, 2003). The PAQ demonstrates good validity with measures of authoritarianism

inversely correlated with self-esteem and authoritativeness positively correlated to self-esteem.

Each subscale had a potential score of $10 - 50$. In this study, student scores were individually

analyzed and assigned a category (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive) relative to their

highest recorded score. Cases were assigned to a fourth category (referred to as

"Indistinguishable"), when variation from the highest score was less than three points from the

next highest score.

Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale

Myths surrounding rape were first discussed in the literature in the 1970s and were

described as complex societal beliefs that seemed to fuel ongoing sexual violence against women

(Payne, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1999). Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) defined rape myths in the

following way: "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently

held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (p. 134). In

1999, Payne and her colleagues developed the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scales (IRMA, see

Appendix C) in response to criticism of similar measures that lacked clarity and consistency in

assessing the true nature of the rape myth construct.

Payne et al. (1999) conducted several analyses and reported that the full-length IRMA

possesses adequate reliability and construct validity. Specifically, internal consistency was

established with a Cronbach alpha of .824 (George, 2003). The IRMA also correlates

significantly ($p < .001$) with several similar instruments. Although the full-length IRMA is

comprehensive and includes analysis for seven sub-domains in addition to the construct of rape

acceptance, concern that its length (45 items) would limit its widespread use led to the creation

of the IRMA-short-form. It is reported that the short version, a 20-item measure, has similar

reliability and validity as the long version for rape myths, but excludes the specific sub-domains

(Payne et al., 1999). The IRMA-Short-Form is scored using a 5-point response scale, with 1 representing "Strongly disagree" and 5 representing "Strongly agree." A copy of the IRMA-Short Form is included in Appendix C.

Procedure

In the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters, 174 students in the treatment group completed one of two sections of the sophomore course, *Intimate and Family Relations*, offered by the Department of Counselor Education, taught by doctoral Teaching Assistants.   The control group was comprised of 182 students who completed a course titled, *Introduction to Interpersonal Communication*, a freshman level course taught by a faculty member from the University of Montana Communication Department of Communication Studies. At the beginning of each semester, students in each group completed a battery of pretest assessments, and demographic questionnaires (see Appendix A).   Institutional Review Board approval was obtained, and ethical protocols were followed.

Students enrolled in the courses were offered extra credit points toward their final grade in exchange for participating in this research study. Participants were advised that there would be no penalty for opting not to participate, and alternative assignments were made available for extra credit opportunity in these cases.   Students enrolled in both courses were instructed to complete questionnaires in the experimental group only.

During the first and last weeks of each semester in the 2012 – 2013 academic year, participants completed pre and post-test questionnaires respectively. Each participant completed an informed consent form. To protect anonymity, participants were asked to provide a code

name that they could remember from pre-test to post-test. Pre-test measures were administered and retained, and compared via code matching with post-test scores.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Chapter IV: Results

This chapter presents the data analysis and consists of three sections: (a) analysis of demographic variables and their relationship to constraint beliefs and attitudes towards rape, (b) analysis of parenting style (the style students identify having been parented with) and its relationship to constraint beliefs and attitudes towards rape, (c) pre and post-test analysis of differences between treatment group and control group. A series of independent sample t-tests were conducted on the data exploring demographic variables, an Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) was used to explore parenting style with constraint beliefs and rape attitudes, and an Analyses of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted on the data exploring the effects of the treatment group between pre-test and post-test scores. An alpha level of .05 was used to determine significance for all statistical tests.

Research Question 1A: Student Variables

What is the relationship between student demographic variables and scores on measures of constraint beliefs and attitudes towards rape?

The first research question (1A) explores the relationships between student demographic variables (gender, current relationship status, and parent divorce status) and pre-test scores on

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measures of constraint beliefs [as measured by the Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection scale, (Cobbs et al., 2003)], and attitudes towards rape [as measured by the IRMA Short-Form (Payne et al., 1999)].

Gender

An independent samples *t*-test was calculated comparing the mean score of males and females with the seven constraint belief subscales from the Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection scale (AARMS). In the Cohabitation subscale, there was a significant difference in the scores for Male (M = 4.97, SD = 1.26) and Female (M = 4.59, SD = 1.40) conditions; t(311), p = 0.016; d = .54 (see Table 2). The effect size for this analysis is considered to be medium according to Cohen's (1988) convention. In the Love is Enough subscale, there was a significant difference in the scores for Male (M = 4.71, SD = 4.10) and Female (M = 4.10, SD = 1.06) conditions; t(312), p 0.001; d = .285 (see Table 2). According to Cohen's (1988) convention, the effect size for this analysis (d = .285) was found to be small. When comparing mean scores between gender with the remaining five subscales (One and Only, Ease of Effort, Opposites Compliment, Idealization, and Complete Assurance), no significant differences were found.

An independent samples *t*-test was calculated comparing mean pretest scores of males and females on the endorsement of rape myths as measured by the Illinois Rape Myth Assessment (IRMA, Payne et al., 1999). Statistically significant differences were found between scores for Males (M = 1.86, SD = .59) and Females (M = 1.50, SD = .39); t(312) = 6.58, p < 0.001; d = .72, indicating that males endorse rape myths more than females (see Table 2). The effect size was large (d = .72).

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Table 2.

Statistically Significant Results for Cohabitation and Love is Enough AARMS Subscales and IRMA Scores by Gender

	Gender								
	Male			Female					
	M	SD	N	M	SD	n	95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df
Cohabitation	4.97	1.26	127	4.59	1.40	186	.075, .675	2.50*	288
Love is Enough	4.71	4.10	127	4.10	1.06	187	.352, .871	4.65**	250
IRMA	1.86	0.59	127	1.50	0.39	187	.250, .487	6.11***	200

Note. * =p≤.05, **=p≤.01, ***=p≤.001. M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation. Cohabitation and Love is Enough subscale score range from 1 (Low level of endorsement) to 7 (High level of endorsement). IRMA score range from 1 (Low level of endorsement) to 5 (High level of endorsement).

Adult Children of Divorce

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare adult children of divorce (ACOD) and adults from non-divorced homes (non-ACOD) on each of the seven constraint beliefs subscales from the AARMS pretest measure. Statistical significance was found in the Love is Enough subscale for ACOD students, indicating that non-ACOD students had stronger Love is Enough constraint beliefs (M = 4.43, SD = 1.16) than ACOD (M = 4.14, SD = 1.13) participants; t(313) = -2.04, p = 0.042; d = .25 (see Table 3). According to Cohen's (1988)

convention, the effect size for this analysis (d = .285) is small. No significant differences were

found in the remaining analyses of childhood divorce status and the six remaining constraint

belief scales.

An independent samples *t*-test was calculated to compare mean pretest scores between

Adult Children of Divorce (ACOD) and adults from non-divorced homes (non-ACOD) on the

endorsement of rape myths. No significant difference was found between ACOD (M = 1.63, SD

= .52), and non-ACOD (M = 1.63, SD = .51) participants; t(313) = -.209, p = 0.83.

Table 3.

Statistically Significant Results for Love is Enough AARMS Subscales by Adult Children of Divorce

	Adult Children of Divorce								
	ACOD			Non-ACOD			95% CI for		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	Mean Difference	t	Df
Love is Enough	4.14	1.13	95	4.43	1.16	220	-.564, -.012	2.06	183

Note. P<*.05,* M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation. Love is Enough subscale score range from 1
(Low level of endorsement) to 7 (High level of endorsement).

Relationship Status

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare scores from students who

reported currently being in a relationship with students who currently identify as single, with

each of the seven constraint belief subscales from the AARMS pretest measure.   Significance

was found for the One and Only subscale indicating that students who identified as being in a

current relationship endorse the this belief less (M = 3.68, SD = 1.03) than those who are single

(M = 4.10, SD = 1.39); t(320) = -3.06, p = 0.002; d = .34 (see Table 2). Cohen's (1988)

convention indicates this is a small effect size (d = .34). No statistical significance was found in

the remaining six subscales of the AARMS when comparing student scores who are in a relationship to those who identified single.

Statistical significance with a small effect size were found in the pretest scores on the endorsement of rape myths between students identifying as in a relationship (M = 1.58, SD = .44), and those identifying as single (M = 1.70, SD = .55); t(320) = 2.10, p = 0.03; d = .24 (see Table 4). Cohen's (1988) convention indicates this is a small effect size (d=.24). This indicates that in this analysis, single students were more likely to endorse rape myths than students in a relationship (seriously dating, married, or cohabiting).

Table 4.

Statistically Significant Results for One and Only AARMS Subscales and IRMA Scores by Relationship Status

	Relationship Status								
	In a Relationship			Single					
							95% CI for Mean		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	Difference	t	df
One and Only	4.10	1.39	137	3.69	1.04	185	-.694, -.137	2.94	241
IRMA	1.58	0.44	137	1.70	0.55	185	.011, .231	2.17	318

Note: P<*.01,* M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation. One and Only subscale score range from 1 (Low level of endorsement) to 7 (High level of endorsement). IRMA score range from 1 (Low level of endorsement) to 5 (High level of endorsement).

Research Question 1B: Student Variables

What is the relationship between the parenting style students identify having been parented with, and scores on measures of constraint beliefs and attitudes towards rape?

This research question (1B) explores the relationship between three parenting styles (Authoritative, Permissive, and Authoritarian) measured by the Parenting Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1991), and pretest scores on measures of constraint beliefs and their

endorsement of rape myths. A fourth category—referred to as "Indistinguishable"—was included for scores that weren't clearly delineated in one of the aforementioned categories. A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the parent authority style students identify having been parented with and their pretest scores on measures of constraint beliefs and endorsement of rape myths. There were no statistically significant differences between participants' self-report parenting style and scores of constraint beliefs or rape myths.

<u>*Research Question 2: Student Outcomes*</u>

Do students who participate in the Intimate and Family Relationships course score significantly differently from pre-test to post-test on measures of constraint beliefs and attitudes towards rape, as compared to those in a control group?

This research question explores the difference in treatment group scores from pre-test to post-test on measures of constraint beliefs (AARMS) and attitudes towards rape (IRMA-Short Form), as compared to those in a control group.

A series of 2 (group) x 2 (pre/post) mixed model analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were conducted to examine the effect of completing the Intimate and Family Relationships course on the change from pre-test to post-test scores on all 7 subscales of the AARMS and the total score of the IRMA, co-varying out the effect of gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status.

AARMS Subscale 1, Cohabitation

An ANCOVA was run to determine the effect of the Intimate and Family Relationships course on post-test Cohabitation scores compared to a control group after controlling for gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status. There was homogeneity of

regression slopes as the interaction term was not statistically significant, $F(2, 244) = .841$, $p = .433$. After adjustment for the three established covariates (gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status), there was a statistically significant difference between groups in post-intervention AARMS scores on the Cohabitation subscale, $F(1, 246) = 18.358$, $p < .001$. Post hoc analysis was performed with a Bonferroni adjustment. Post –intervention Cohabitation scores were significantly lower in the treatment group vs the control group, $p < .001$ (also see Table 5). The adjusted R Squared value of .077 indicates that 7% of the variability in the predicted change in scores is explained by the linear regression model.

Table 5.

Adjusted and Unadjusted Intervention Means and Variability for Post-Intervention Scores on the Cohabitation Subscale with Gender, Parents Divorce Status, and Students' Current Relationship Status as Covariates.

		Unadjusted		Adjusted	
	n	M	SD	M	SE
Treatment	131	-.788	2.13	-.804	.147
Control	120	.094	.973	.111	.153

Note: P<.001, M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation. SE = Standard Error. Subscale score range from 1 (Low level of endorsement) to 7 (High level of endorsement).

AARMS Subscale 2, One and Only

An ANCOVA was run to determine the effect of the Intimate and Family Relationships course on post-test One and Only scores compared to a control group after controlling for gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status. There was homogeneity of regression slopes as the interaction term was not statistically significant, $F(2, 245) = 1.187$, $p = .307$. After adjustment for the three established covariates (gender, parent's

divorce status, and students' reported relationship status), there was a statistically significant difference between groups in post-intervention AARMS scores on the One and Only subscale, $F(1, 247) = 12.396$, $p < .001$. Post hoc analysis was performed with a Bonferroni adjustment. Post –intervention One and Only scores were significantly lower in the treatment group vs the control group, $p < .001$ (also see Table 6). The adjusted R Squared value of .048 indicates that 5% of the variability in the predicted change in scores is explained by the linear regression model.

Table 6.
Adjusted and Unadjusted Intervention Means and Variability for Post-Intervention Scores on the One and Only Subscale with Gender, Parents Divorce Status, and Students' Current Relationship Status as Covariates.

		Unadjusted		Adjusted	
	n	M	SD	M	SE
Treatment	131	-.527	.905	-.517	.079
Control	120	-.103	.886	-.113	.082

Note: $p<.001$, M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation. SE = Standard Error. Subscale score range from 1 (Low level of endorsement) to 7 (High level of endorsement).

AARMS Subscale 3, Love is Enough

An ANCOVA was run to determine the effect of the Intimate and Family Relationships course on post-test Love is Enough scores compared to a control group after controlling for gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status. There was homogeneity of regression slopes as the interaction term was not statistically significant, $F(2, 245) = .547$, $p = .518$. After adjustment for the three established covariates (gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status), there was a statistically significant difference between groups in post-intervention AARMS scores on the Love is Enough subscale,

F(1, 247) = 6.631, p = .011. Post hoc analysis was performed with a Bonferroni adjustment.

Post –intervention Love is Enough scores were significantly lower in the treatment group vs the

control group, p = .011 (also see Table X). The adjusted R Squared value of .020 indicates that

2% of the variability in the predicted change in scores is explained by the linear regression

model.

Table 7.
*Adjusted and Unadjusted Intervention Means and Variability for Post-Intervention Scores on
the Love is Enough Subscale with Gender, Parents Divorce Status, and Students' Current
Relationship Status as Covariates.*

		Unadjusted		Adjusted	
	n	M	SD	M	SE
Treatment	131	-.385	.894	-.381	.084
Control	120	-.077	.922	-.081	.080

Note: p<.05, M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation. SE = Standard Error. Subscale score
range from 1 (Low level of endorsement) to 7 (High level of endorsement).

AARMS Subscale 4, Ease of Effort

An ANCOVA was run to determine the effect of the Intimate and Family Relationships

course on post-test Ease of Effort scores compared to a control group after controlling for

gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status. There was

homogeneity of regression slopes as the interaction term was not statistically significant, F(2,

245) = .263, p = .696. After adjustment for the three established covariates (gender, parent's

divorce status, and students' reported relationship status), there was a statistically significant

difference between groups in post-intervention AARMS scores on the Ease of Effort subscale,

F(1, 247) = 18.005, p < .001. Post hoc analysis was performed with a Bonferroni adjustment.

Post –intervention Ease of Effort scores were significantly lower in the treatment group vs the

control group, p < .001 (also see Table 8). The adjusted R Squared value of .074 indicates that

7% of the variability in the predicted change in scores is explained by the linear regression

model.

Table 8.
Adjusted and Unadjusted Intervention Means and Variability for Post-Intervention Scores on the Ease of Effort Subscale with Gender, Parents Divorce Status, and Students' Current Relationship Status as Covariates.

		Unadjusted			Adjusted	
	n	M	SD		M	SE
Treatment	131	-.439	.842		-.439	.074
Control	120	.022	.869		.022	.078

Note: *p<.001,* M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation. SE = Standard Error. Subscale score range from 1 (Low level of endorsement) to 7 (High level of endorsement).

AARMS Subscale 5, Opposites Complement

An ANCOVA was run to determine the effect of the Intimate and Family Relationships

course on post-test Opposites Complement scores compared to a control group after controlling

for gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status. There was

homogeneity of regression slopes as the interaction term was not statistically significant, F(2,

245) = .158, p = .854. After adjustment for the three established covariates (gender, parent's

divorce status, and students' reported relationship status), there was a statistically significant

difference between groups in post-intervention AARMS scores on the Opposites Complement

subscale, $F(1, 247) = 13.194$, $p < .001$. Post hoc analysis was performed with a Bonferroni

adjustment. Post –intervention Opposites Complement scores were significantly lower in the

treatment group vs the control group, $p < .001$ (also see Table 9). The adjusted R Squared value

of .049 indicates that 5% of the variability in the predicted change in scores is explained by the

linear regression model.

Table 9.

*Adjusted and Unadjusted Intervention Means and Variability for Post-Intervention Scores on
the Opposites Complement Subscale with Gender, Parents Divorce Status, and Students'
Current Relationship Status as Covariates.*

	n	Unadjusted		Adjusted	
		M	SD	M	SE
Treatment	132	-.280	.801	-.290	.070
Control	120	.070	.800	.081	.074

Note: *p*<.001, M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation. SE = Standard Error. Subscale score
range from 1 (Low level of endorsement) to 7 (High level of endorsement).

AARMS Subscale 6, Idealization

An ANCOVA was run to determine the effect of the Intimate and Family Relationships

course on post-test Idealization scores compared to a control group after controlling for gender,

parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status. There was homogeneity of

regression slopes as the interaction term was not statistically significant, $F(2, 245) = .2.363$, $p =$

.096. After adjustment for the three established covariates (gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status), there was not a statistically significant difference between groups in post-intervention AARMS scores on the Idealization subscale, $F(1, 247) = .001$, $p = .992$.

AARMS Subscale 7, Complete Assurance

An ANCOVA was run to determine the effect of the Intimate and Family Relationships course on post-test Complete Assurance scores compared to a control group after controlling for gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status. There was homogeneity of regression slopes as the interaction term was not statistically significant, $F(2, 245) = .013$, $p = .987$. After adjustment for the three established covariates (gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status), there was not a statistically significant difference between groups in post-intervention AARMS scores on the Complete Assurance subscale, $F(1, 247) = .136$, $p = .713$.

IRMA, Endorsement of Rape Myths

An ANCOVA was run to determine the effect of the Intimate and Family Relationships course on post-test endorsement of rape myth scores compared to a control group after controlling for gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status. There was homogeneity of regression slopes as the interaction term was not statistically significant, $F(2, 245) = .564$, $p = .569$. After adjustment for the three established covariates (gender, parent's divorce status, and students' reported relationship status), there was not a statistically significant difference between groups in post-intervention scores on the endorsement of rape myths, $F(1, 247) = 2.701$, $p = .102$.

CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter V: Discussion

This study adds important empirical research to the relatively new field of individual-oriented relationship education by examining the effects of a taking a semester-long college course focused on intimate and family relationships.   Demographic variables were considered, as well as the overall impact of taking this course. In this chapter, I will describe results related to each research question, and offer thoughts about their potential significance to the growing interest in providing effective individual-oriented education to young adults. Limitations and future recommendations are also included.

Research Question 1: Student Variables

What is the relationship between student demographic variables and scores on measures of constraint beliefs and attitudes towards rape?

This research question explores the relationship between three demographic variables (gender, reported relationship status, and parent divorce status), and two measurements [the

Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection Scale, (AARMS; Cobb et al., 2003), and the Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance scale (IRMA Short-Form; Payne et al., 1999)]. The impact of the three demographic variables on the AARMS and IRMA scales, are discussed sequentially below.

Gender

Analysis of gender yielded three significant findings. First, males endorse the Cohabitation constraint belief more than females ($p = .01$). Larson (1992) identified this particular belief as one that promotes cohabiting as a precursor to marital success. In other words, a belief that if you live together first, you will have a better chance at a happy marriage. Some research suggests that overall, men may have less drive to marry than females, and that women experience different social pressures to marry than men (Blakemore, Lawton, and Vartanian, 2005). Also, with men marrying an average of two years later than women (Jayson, 2010), the young men (18-25) in our sample population may be less oriented toward marriage in this stage of their development, and thus perhaps more apt to believe in the benefits of cohabiting than the young women, who may be more interested in marriage.

This finding differs considerably from Cobb at al. (2003) who found no statistically significant difference (n=379) between men and women in scores on the Cohabitation subscale during the development of the scale. Test-retest reliability for Cobb et al.'s sample population (from which the AARMS was normed) revealed no change in this subscale in 95% of respondents. It is important to note that this sample population held highly religious and conservative values, and the researchers assumed that the endorsement of conservative values was an overriding factor for both males and females, mitigating any variance that might otherwise show up with gender. Also, this measure was normed on a population that was

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predominantly female. Although the current study did not document religious affiliation, presumably the sample was more ideologically heterogeneous. This may lend further support to Cobb et al.'s assumption that sample populations with more conservative values may inherently endorse the Cohabitation constraint less than populations with more ideological diversity.

Second, men in this study endorse the Love is Enough constraint belief at a higher rate than women (p = .00). Larson (1992) describes this belief as one that may overlook critical variables such as similar values, shared goals, and mutual interests in pursuit of "love" as an exclusive or overriding factor in mate selection. Larson does not define love in his research, but Fehr and Broughton's (2001) research supports the assertion that individuals in our culture— especially men—value romantic and passionate love to a greater degree than the more pragmatic variables like friendship and commitment found in companionate love (Sternberg, 1986). Ironically, there is general consensus that passion [feelings of activation and arousal that influence feelings of romantic love (Sternberg, 1986)] is relatively unstable and not a variable that typically endures throughout the entirety of a marriage (Sprecher & Regan, 1998; Tucker & Aron, 1993).

Only in relatively recent times has romantic love been a motivation for or an expectation of marriage. For much of human history, purely pragmatic factors drove marital unions— politics, economics, shared labor, communal living, and child bearing. According to Coontz (2005), love did not become a primary variable in the marriage equation until the Age of Enlightenment. Certainly, various ancient literatures allude to love in the marriage relationship, but not to the extent we currently see this phenomenon. Predictors of successful outcomes in marriage—shared values, shared culture, commitment, desire for children—are not always merged with the passionate part of love that seems to govern contemporary motivations for many.

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Studies over the last half-century further corroborate this growing emphasis on romantic love. A frequently cited study by Kephart (1967), found that 24% of women would not marry without love even if all of the other desired qualities, such as warmth, physical attractiveness, and dependability, were present. An even higher proportion of men (65%) stated they would not marry without romantic love. Although the gender disparity of the 1960s is similar to the gender disparity found in this study (with women approaching relationships more inclusively), studies conducted after 1967 indicate that the gender gap is diminishing as more and more men and women expect passionate love in their marriages. Replicating Kephart's work, in 1976, 86% of men and 80% of women would not marry without love, and in 1984 the numbers were 86% and 85% respectively (Simpson, Campbell, & Berscheid, 1986). However, endorsing the idea that love—regardless of type—is an important aspect of marriage is not the same as endorsing the belief that love is *enough*.

A third difference emerged between genders, with males endorsing rape myths more than females. This finding is consistent across multiple studies (Chapleau, Oswald & Russell, 2007; Diem, 2000; McMahon, 2010), and is commonly explained in part by the widespread perception that men always want to have sex and that women hold a prize that men can win with perseverance. Further, our culture encourages boys to be more dominant and aggressive than girls, and these expectations may carry forward into sexual scripts. Given the potential destructive outcomes of believing rape myths, it is disappointing that the intervention in this study (the Intimate and Family Relationship course) did not seem to reduce the rate at which the students endorsed rape myths. This will be discussed further below.

Adult Children of Divorce

Adults from non-divorced homes (non-ACOD) endorse the Love is Enough constraint belief significantly more than adults from divorced homes. Children of divorce are often painfully aware that love is not enough, and that successful marriages require a much more diverse set of skills. They have witnessed that love can die, and in fact, is not enough. In contrast, children from intact marriages may have a more romantic view of marriage that allows them to focus (perhaps naively) on love as a central dimension in a happy marriage.

Relationship Status

Relationship status was found to significantly influence the One and Only subscale of the AARMS. Students who identified as being in a relationship (dating, cohabiting, or marriage) were significantly more inclined to endorse the One and Only constraint belief ($p = 0.002$), which, according to Larson (1992) assumes that there is only one partner in the world who can complete their "other half." Generally, this belief places exceedingly high expectations on the mate selection process and limits opportunities for finding otherwise suitable mates. Further, it can lead to blind spots that restrict the individual from reacting to "red flags" in a partner that may lead to poor outcomes. A plausible explanation for the finding in this study is that students from the young adult demographic are in new romantic relationships and they may not have faced some of the difficulties inherent in more mature unions; the relatively unencumbered aspects of a new relationship may lead to positive illusions about one's partner that heighten the One and Only belief. However, it is also possible that ALL people in happy intimate relationships will endorse this more than those who have divorced, broken up, or are otherwise not romantically involved.

Students who identified being in a relationship (married, seriously dating, or cohabiting) also endorsed rape myths to a lesser extent than young adults who are single ($p = 0.03$). Given

the correlation between endorsement of rape myths and the objectification of the imagined victim (Morse, 2008), being in an intimate relationship with a real, sometimes-vulnerable human being may moderate this objectification. This explanation is supported by Boswell and Spade (1996) who found that among male members of a fraternity, single men were more likely to describe impersonal sexual exploits than were men in a relationship. It seems likely that being with a real person who you love brings greater empathy for any potential rape victim, and thus reduces the likelihood of believing rape myths. If the endorsement of rape myths is indeed reduced by being in an intimate relationship, then there is further justification for placing a primacy on successful, caring relationships in our culture.

Question 2: Student Variables

What is the relationship between the parenting style students identify having been parented with, and scores on measures of constraint beliefs and attitudes towards rape?

This study found no significant correlation between parenting styles that students identify having been parented with (Authoritative, Authoritarian, and Permissive) and scores on measures of constraint beliefs and attitudes towards rape. Further research may be warranted on any possible interactions between taking a course like the one in this study and the ways young people report being parented. However, the measures chosen did not reveal any differences among young adults who report having had different parenting styles

Research Question 3: Student Outcomes

Do students who participate in the Intimate and Family Relationships course score significantly differently from pre-test to post-test on measures of constraint beliefs and attitudes towards rape, as compared to those in a control group?

Treatment Group and AARMS Subscales, Constraint Beliefs

Post-test scores from five of the seven AARMS subscales (Cohabitation, One and Only, Love is Enough, Ease of Effort, and Opposites Complement) were significantly lower in the treatment group as compared to the control group. The Idealization and Complete Assurance subscales were not significantly changed. Although some research indicates that beliefs about relationships are fairly stable (Hawkins, Carroll, Doherty & Willoughby, 2004), little research exists that would explain the idiosyncratic nature of specific types of constraint beliefs and why some may be more plastic and amenable to change than others.

However, in this study it appears that course content may play a role in bringing about such changes. The Intimate Relationships course specifically addresses content related to the beliefs listed above, to a greater degree than it did for the unchanged beliefs. For example, the Opposites Complement belief was repeatedly dispelled by both readings and lectures that pointed to a strong correlation between successful relationship outcomes and similarities between partners. Similarly, course content repeatedly covered potential pitfalls of the mate selection process, perhaps thwarting beliefs that, as in One and Only and Ease of Effort, choosing the right mate should be clear and easy. Also, although research shows mixed outcomes from cohabitating relationships, the course textbook notes a tendency for poorer outcomes in situations where couples aren't committed to marry prior to cohabiting; a plausible explanation for post-course reduction in the Cohabitation constraint belief. Finally, ubiquitous course content related to conflict management and healthy communication likely led students to understand that successful relationships require effort, and, as in the Love is Enough belief, cannot be approached passively. The Idealization (a partner and a future relationship must be all encompassing) and Complete Assurance (commitment should be delayed until an individual

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feels a guarantee in relationship outcome) constraint beliefs may not have been addressed as concretely inside course content as those listed above.

Treatment Group and IRMA, Endorsement of Rape Myths

Analysis failed to reveal a significant difference in post-test scores on the endorsement of rape myths between the treatment and control groups. Of interest however, the average IRMA score for males and females was consistent with or lower than scores found in other research. For example, the original study by Payne et al. (1999) described IRMA scores by gender which were higher than those found in the present study for both males and females. This same study was replicated by Diem (2000) with near-identical results. A decade later, two similar studies found substantially lower IRMA scores in males and females (Aronavitz, Lambert, & Davidoff, 2012); (Fricker, 2010). An analysis exploring the difference in scores from the three studies conducted in the last five years (including the current study) found a difference in scores across studies of only .31 and .34 for males and females. Conversely, a larger difference (.95 for males and .62 for females) was found between the average scores of the three most recent studies, and those conducted in 1999 and 2000. Although this could imply that rape myths are endorsed to a lesser extent in the present day than they were fifteen years prior, the explanation is likely more nuanced.

Importantly, a relatively low modern day endorsement of rape myths certainly does not seem related to actual rape behavior. In 2000, Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, reported that between 20% and 25% of women will experience a completed or attempted sexual assault at some point during her college career. Although these and other similar statistics on sexual assault occurrence are counter to trends in endorsement of rape myth scores, it should be noted that

estimations of sexual assault numbers are wrought with limitations due to the political and social ramifications inherent in the reporting of these instances.

Of significance, the climate surrounding rape at the University of Montana has been overtly conspicuous since the Fall of 2010 when sexual assaults on campus made headlines around the country. Many campuses (including the University of Montana) are under federal scrutiny for alleged underreporting and mishandling of rape cases. The attention surrounding this issue at the University of Montana campus during the time this study was conducted may well have heightened rape awareness on campus and thereby influenced student scores. This assertion is further supported by research suggesting individuals are apt to endorse the socially acceptable response (Geiger, Fischer, & Eshet, 2004); heightened dialogue about socially unacceptable rape culture across university campuses may have contributed to relatively low scores in this study. Further, as of Fall semester 2013, students at the University of Montana are required to complete an online tutorial and quiz called PETSA (Personal Empowerment through Self Awareness) designed as part of a campaign to address issues of sexual violence, and it is possible that this education had an impact on some of the rape myth scores in this study. Finally, although the IRMA has been shown to be negatively correlated with social desirability, less than 2% of the variance was shared between the IRMA and a social desirability measure (Diem, 2000).

A significant corollary to this discussion is the absence of studies that directly link endorsement (or lack thereof) of rape myths to the act of rape. Further exploration into the correlation between rape myths and rape behavior is warranted. That said, the relatively low average rape myth endorsement scores found in this study might be attributable in part to rape-awareness on campus, and might also explain why little change in post-interventions scores was

disclosed. Research has also demonstrated that knowledge tends to reduce endorsement of rape myths (Aronowitz, Lambert, Davidoff, 2012) so further inquiry in non-student populations is needed to explore the effect of higher education on rape myth scores.

Limitations

This study contained a number of limitations. Although the demographic homogeneity between the control (a Communication course) and treatment (an Intimate and Family Relationships course) groups was advantageous for research purposes, the overlapping ideology inherent in these two courses presents two possible limitations. Both courses are rooted in the humanities and might therefore attract students who have similar values and beliefs, which reduce the likelihood of seeing variance in pre-test survey responses. There is inherent overlap in course content; communication is a core concept in the Intimate and Family Relationships course and Interpersonal Communication courses are taught within the context of relationship. More post-test change between groups might have been demonstrated in a study with a control group that is non-humanistic in nature.

Another limitation is the lack of corroborating research supporting the use of the AARMS (Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection scale), and that this measure was normed on an ideologically conservative and predominantly female population (Cobb et al., 2003). Although much was learned in this study about the ways in which young adults endorse constraint beliefs, and although it is reasonable to assume that a reduction in constraint beliefs will lead to better outcomes in mate selection processes and relationship dynamics, research does not exist that would support this assumption. For example, it is easy to surmise that if a young adult were to reduce his endorsement of the Love is Enough constraint belief—as did many subjects in this study—he or she might instead place more value on friendship and mutual

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support, and less value on the more fragile construct that is love. Future research might focus on the relationship between the endorsement of constraint beliefs and the impact these have on the mate selection process and relationship satisfaction. This would require a longitudinal design that would track couples' various constraint beliefs and their associated relationship successes.

Implications

Relationship education is a growing field, and as courses are offered across different environments, both quantitative and qualitative evaluators of success are critical to refining subsequent course and educational effort. As a result of this dissertation research, I recognize the importance of both the instructional aspects of the course and the potential power of such instruction to change attitudes and beliefs, and hopefully, behaviors.

As a researcher and instructor of the Intimate and Family Relationships course at the University of Montana, I have developed my own approach to teaching these materials, and have made systematic observations and adjustments that may be instructive to others pursuing similar lines of teaching and or research. The importance of bridging the gap between knowledge and behavior is especially crucial in courses designed to enable more successful and healthy relationships for the participants.

Although results from this study demonstrate that relationship education can indeed influence students' knowledge and beliefs, teaching students how to apply their knowledge is a much more nuanced endeavor. For example, lessons from research by John Gottman (1999) tell us that 96% of the time, the way a discussion begins is predictive of the way it will end; a harsh and critical beginning will likely end in a harsh and critical manner. We can teach a student that criticism, for instance, is a behavioral process marked by making an attack on a partner's character or personality. Further, we can teach students alternatives to criticism that include

beginning discussions gently and with "I" (self-directed) statements that are void of blaming language. Although many of the students in my course acknowledged, through various demonstrations by me, that being on the receiving end of a statement void of blaming language left them feeling much more receptive to further dialogue, many expressed discomfort with idea of using statements with a gentle and self-directed beginning. However, after further role-play and practice, these same students were able to adopt the self-directed "gentle start-up" model by infusing the recommended language with a style that felt more authentic to their unique communication style.

Based on this, and many other similar classroom experiences, one recommendation for subsequent relationship education learning is to bring a richer experiential function to the course by creating smaller groups that allow students to discuss and practice the learned skills. Qualitative evaluation received from past students indicates that this sort of practice would be a welcome and advantageous addition to the course. Further, this sort of experience would increase the likelihood that individuals would go forth with not only the knowledge necessary to support relationship health, but the practical experience to know how and when to apply this knowledge.

Conclusion

This exploratory study yielded several significant findings that shed light on the effects of individual-oriented educational efforts aimed at improving the health and stability of intimate relationships. Of greatest interest to this researcher is the finding that beliefs reported on self-report instruments can indeed be changed. Although it remains unclear what impact the specific beliefs in this study have on future relationships, knowing that change can occur provides further impetus for continued explorations into relationship education for young adults.

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Unfortunately, though the benefits of healthy relationships to individuals and our society are substantial, financial support for relationship education is relatively scarce. For example, although studies evaluating the efficacy of the aforementioned Florida State relationship course were highly encouraging, this course was discontinued after funding from federal initiatives ended. Clearly, continued perseverance in this young field of relationship science is needed.

George Bernard Shaw, a writer from the early twentieth century, is quoted as saying, "When two people are under the influence of the most violent, most insane, most delusive, and most transient of passions, they are required to swear that they will remain in that excited, abnormal, and exhausting condition until death do them part." Hopefully, further research will help identify individually-oriented educational opportunities that will balance out the violent, insane, and delusional aspects of mate selection and attraction, and stabilize the passion over time, thus increasing the chances for long-term, successful intimate relationships.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

Name of 1st Pet: _____   Last 4 Telephone numbers: __ __ __ __

COUN 242 Class Pretest on Intimate Relationships Knowledge and Attitudes

Please respond to the following questions either by writing in your response or circling the option that best fits your response.

1. What is your age? _____

2. What is your gender? _____

3. What year are you in college?

Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior   Other_____

4. What do you identify as your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual   Homosexual   Bisexual   Other _____

5. What is your ethnicity?

White____   Hispanic _____

African American____   Asian____

Native American____   Other (please identify)_____

6. Were your biological parents divorced when you were under the age of 18? **If no, please skip questions 7-9 and proceed to item #10.**

Yes   No

7. What was your age when your parents were divorced? _____

8. Did you live with one biological parent?   Yes   No

       If "Yes," which parent did you live with after the divorce?_____

9. Did either of your parents remarry after their divorce?   Yes   No

10. What is the current relationship or marital status of each of your biological parents?

Mother: Married   Cohabitating   Divorced   Widowed   Separated   Unknown

Father: Married   Cohabitating   Divorced   Widowed   Separated   Unknown

11. What is your current relationship or marital status?

Single   Seriously Dating   Engaged   Married   Cohabitating   Divorced   Widowed Separated

Appendix B: Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection Scale

Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection

The following items measure your attitudes about romance and mate selection. If you are already married or in a long-term committed relationship, just answer these questions in a way that reflects your attitude. It may help to think of the item as worded in the past tense.

And answer these items using the following 7 – point scale.

     1 = Very Strongly Disagree

     2 = Strongly Disagree

     3 = Disagree

     4 = Undecided

     5 = Agree

     6 = Strongly Agree

     7 = Very Strongly Agree

1. I am certain most of my peers and I will someday be married. _____
2. There is only one true love out there who is right for me to marry. _____
3. Our feelings of love for each other should be sufficient reason to get married. _____
4. Living together before marriage will improve our chances of remaining happily married. _____
5. I need to feel entirely sure that our marriage will work before I would consider marrying my sweetheart. _____
6. I would marry my sweetheart even if he or she wasn't completely ideal for me. _____
7. Finding the right person to marry is more about luck than effort. _____
8. Couples that are too similar have relationships that are dull and boring. _____
9. When I get married, it will be permanent. _____
10. There are a number of people in the world to whom I could be happily married. _____
11. In the end, our feelings of love for each other should be enough to sustain a happy marriage. _____

12. We will likely be happier in our marriage if we live together first. _____

13. Before I get married, I must be thoroughly convinced that I will be a good spouse. _____

14. I should not marry my sweetheart unless everything about our dating relationship is pleasing to me. _____

15. If I just wait long enough the right person to marry will come my way one day. _____

16. Being similar to my partner is an important consideration for me when deciding to get married. _____

17. Somewhere I have a "soul mate" I should marry, a special partner who is uniquely suited to me and vice versa. _____

18. As long as we love each other, we should not let any obstacles stand in our way of getting married. _____

19. It is a good idea for us to live together before getting married as a way of "trying out" our relationship. _____

20. My future spouse and I should be best friends before we get married. _____

21. I should wait to marry my sweetheart until we have proven our relationship is strong enough to stand the test of time. _____

22. The person I marry needs to have all of the qualities I am looking for in a mate. _____

23. Finding the right person to marry is not something I have much control over. _____

24. Our relationship will be stronger if I marry someone who is very much like me in many ways. _____

25. There is a "one and only" right person in the world for me to marry. _____

26. Only a fool ever walks away from marrying the person he or she loves deeply. _____

27. Living together first is a good way of testing how workable our marriage would be.

    _____

28. I should wait until I feel completely prepared for marriage before I get married. _____

29. I would marry my sweetheart even if I wasn't sure he or she could meet all of my needs.

    _____

30. Some people are just not good marriage prospects for me. _____

31. Getting married will just happen naturally without much effort by me. _____

32. I should marry someone whose personal characteristics are opposite from my own. _____

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Appendix C: IRMA – Short Form

Please place an "x" or check mark in the boxes to indicate whether you agree or disagree

with the following statements according to the following scale:

Item	1 Strongly Agree	2	3 Neutral	4	5 Strongly Disagree
1. If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of hand.					
2. When girls go to parties wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble.					
3. If a girl goes to a room alone with a guy at a party, it is her own fault if she is raped.					
4. If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble.					
5. When girls get raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.					
6. If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have					

sex.					
7. When guys rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex.					
8. Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.					
9. Rape happens when a guy's sex drive goes out of control.					
10. If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.					
11. It shouldn't be considered rape if a guy is drunk and didn't realize what he was doing.					
12. If both people are drunk, it can't be rape.					
13. If a girl doesn't physically resist sex—even if protesting verbally—it can't be considered rape.					
14. If a girl doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape.					
15. A rape probably doesn't happen if a girl doesn't have any bruises or marks.					
16. If the accused "rapist" doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape.					
17. If a girl doesn't say "no" she can't claim rape.					
18. A lot of times, girls who say they were raped					

agreed to have sex and then regret it.					
19. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at guys.					
20. A lot of times, girls who say they were raped often led the guy on and then had regrets.					
21. A lot of times, girls who claim they were raped have emotional problems.					
22. Girls who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim it was rape.					

Parental Authority Questionnaire

J.R. Buri, Department of Psychology,

University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Mn.

Instructions: For each of the following statements, circle the number of the 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) that best describes how that statement applies to you and your caretaker(s). Try to read and think about each statement as it applies to you and your caretaker(s) during your years of growing up at home. There are no right or wrong answers, so don't spend a lot of time on any one item. Be sure not to omit any items.

If your caretaker(s) were separated or divorced before you reached age 12, think about the caretaker with whom you spent the most time when you answer the questions.

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

____ 1. While I was growing up my caretaker(s) felt that in a well-run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the caretaker(s) do.

_____2. Even if their children didn't agree with them, my caretaker(s) felt that it was for our own good if we were forced to conform to what they thought was right.

_____3. Whenever my caretaker(s) told me to do something as I was growing up, they expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.

_____4. As I was growing up, once family policy had been established, my caretaker(s) discussed the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family.

_____5. My caretaker(s) have always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.

_____6. My caretaker(s) has always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their caretaker(s) might want.

_____7. As I was growing up my caretaker(s) did not allow me to question any decision they had made.

_____8. As I was growing up my caretaker(s) directed the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline.

_____9. My caretaker(s) have always felt that more force should be used by caretaker(s) in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.

_____10. As I was growing up my caretaker(s) did not feel that I needed to obey rules and regulations of behavior simply because someone in authority had established them.

_____11. As I was growing up I knew what my caretaker(s) expected of me in my family, but I also felt free to discuss those expectations with my caretaker(s) when I felt that they were unreasonable.

____12. My caretaker(s) felt that wise caretaker(s) should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.

____13. As I was growing up, my caretaker(s) seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behavior.

____14. Most of the time as I was growing up my caretaker(s) did what the children in the family wanted when making family decisions.

____15. As the children in my family were growing up, my caretaker(s) consistently gave us direction and guidance in rational and objective ways.

____16. As I was growing up my caretaker(s) would get very upset if I tried to disagree with them.

____17. My caretaker(s) feel that most problems in society would be solved if caretaker(s) would not restrict their children's activities, decisions, and desires as they are growing up.

____18. As I was growing up my caretaker(s) let me know what behavior they expected of me, and if I didn't meet those expectations, they punished me.

____19. As I was growing up my caretaker(s) allowed me to decide most things for myself without a lot of direction from them.

____20. As I was growing up my caretaker(s) took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions but they would not decide something simply because the children wanted it.

____21. My caretaker(s) did not view themselves as responsible for directing and guiding my behavior as I was growing up.

____22. My caretaker(s) had clear standards of behavior for the children in our home as I was growing up, but they were willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family.

____23. My caretaker(s) gave me direction for my behavior and activities as I was growing up and she expected me to follow their direction, but they were always willing to listen to my concerns and to discuss that direction with me.

____24. As I was growing up my caretaker(s) allowed me to form my own point of view on family matters and they generally allowed me to decide for myself what I was going to do.

____25. My caretaker(s) have always felt that most problems in society would be solved if we could get caretaker(s) to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don't do what they are supposed to as they are growing up.

____26. As I was growing up my caretaker(s) often told me exactly what they wanted me to do and how they expected me to do it.

____27. As I was growing up my caretaker(s) gave me clear direction for my behaviors and activities, but they were also understanding when I disagreed with them.

____28. As I was growing up my caretaker(s) did not direct the behaviors, activities, and desires of the children in the family.

____29. As I was growing up I knew what my caretaker(s) expected of me in the family and they insisted that I conform to those expectations simply out of respect for their authority.

____30. As I was growing up, if my caretaker(s) made a decision in the family that hurt me, they were willing to discuss that decision with me and to admit it if they had made a mistake.