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FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS
AS THEY RELATE TO MARITAL SATISFACTION
IN EARLY MARRIAGE

by

Barbara C. Kerkmann

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Family and Human Development

Approved:

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

1998

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ABSTRACT

Financial Management and Financial Problems
As They Relate to Marital Satisfaction
in Early Marriage

by

Barbara C. Kerkmann, Master of Science
Utah State University, 1998

Major Professor: Dr. Thomas R. Lee
Department: Family and Human Development

The financial management habits and perceptions of young married couples were examined, as well as their financial problems and perceptions of their problems' magnitude in an attempt to assess the relationship of these financial factors to marital satisfaction. A survey was delivered to 604 residents of family student housing at Utah State University. The spouse who predominantly handled family finances was asked to complete the survey. By using an incentive for completing the survey, a response of 51.32% was obtained. It was hypothesized that both financial management practices and problems would be related to a couple's reported satisfaction with their marriage. It was further hypothesized that there would be a difference in how husbands and wives would report the relationship between

financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction.

As hypothesized, financial management behaviors as well as perceptions of how well finances were managed were found to be significantly correlated with the respondents' marital satisfaction. Likewise, financial problems and perceived magnitude of financial problems were found to be significantly related to marital satisfaction. According to a regression analysis, perceptions may be more predictive of marital satisfaction than actual financial management practices. Contrary to the hypothesis, there were no consistent, clear differences between husbands and wives in the effect of financial variables on marital satisfaction for this sample.

In general, these findings support the widely accepted, but rarely studied, assumption that finances can affect a marital or committed couple relationship. These effects involve actual behaviors as well as perceptions of behaviors.

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Finally, I need to thank my family: my mother for instilling in me the idea that I can do anything, my father for his love, my husband for taking up the slack at home, and my husband and children for their patience during my frequent absences. I could not have done it without you.

Barbara C. Kerkmann

CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	7
III. METHODS.....	25
IV. RESULTS.....	38
V. CONCLUSIONS.....	53
REFERENCES.....	75
APPENDICES.....	89
Appendix A. Instrument.....	90
Appendix B. Informed Consent.....	99

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1	Characteristics of Sample Analyzed ($N = 217$).....27
2	Results of t Tests Between Responses of U.S. Couples and Those of Other Nationalities.....38
3	Results of t Tests Between Responses of Those Married for the First Time and Those Other than Married for the First Time.....39
4	Means and Standard Deviations for the Marital Satisfaction Subscale of the RDAS, FFMS, and FFPS....41
5	Results of t Tests Between Men and Women for Measures of Marital Satisfaction, Financial Management, and Financial Problems.....42
6	Correlations Between the Dependent (Marital Satisfaction, Independent (Financial Management and Financial Problems) and Demographic Variables($N = 217$)).....44
7	Correlations Between the Dependent (Marital Satisfaction), Independent (Financial Management and Financial Problems), and Demographic Variables by Gender: Men (Women).....45
8	Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Marital Satisfaction ($N = 217$).....47
9	Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Marital Satisfaction for Men ($n = 67$).....48
10	Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Marital Satisfaction for Women ($n = 150$).....49
11	Summary of Forced Entry Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Marital Satisfaction ($N = 217$).....50

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

During the last decade it has become ever easier for individuals and couples to qualify, with little more than a signature, for loans and credit cards. While real personal income in the recent past has shown the smallest increases in years, personal indebtedness has shown a significant increase (Bae, Hanna, & Lindamood, 1993; Brush, 1996; Canner, Kennickell, & Lockett, 1995; Dundas, 1996; Godwin, 1996a). Family finance texts (Garman & Fogue, 1997), self-help books on money management and relationship issues (Burkett, 1989; Madanes, 1994; Notarius & Markman, 1993; Poduska, 1995), mass media, as well as literature reviews on family financial management (Bloom, Niles, & Tatcher, 1985; Godwin, 1990a; Israelsen, 1990a) suggest that financial matters are closely related to family discord, marital problems, and even divorce.

Rationale

If it can be assumed that there is a relationship between financial problems and conflict within a relationship (Ulrichson & Hira, 1985), then clarifying this relationship is of considerable importance. While this relationship seems logical, and is suggested in a variety of

sources (Locke & Wallace, 1959; Spanier, 1976), closer examination reveals that these truisms are mostly anecdotal, and generally not empirically grounded (Lown & Chandler, 1993; Siegel, 1990). In a decade review on marital quality, Glenn (1990) examined a large number of studies exploring factors related to marital quality. No studies examining the relationship between financial issues and marital quality were mentioned. White (1990), in an extensive review of determinants of divorce, similarly did not cite any studies addressing this relationship. Godwin (1996b) concluded that the dearth of such research may be due to the development of different professional specialties. Professionals studying or working with financial management usually do not study or work with relationship issues and vice versa. Regardless, it must be concluded that there has been minimal effort expended in understanding what, if any, relationship exists between financial management and marital satisfaction. Meanwhile, it has been suggested that family therapists need a better understanding of family finance (Aniol & Snyder, 1997; Poduska & Allred, 1990).

Conceptual Framework

Marital Satisfaction

The concept of marital satisfaction has its roots primarily in Social Exchange Theory (Thibault & Kelley,

1959). Role theory (Waller & Hill, 1951), which has also been called a more structured version of Symbolic Interaction Theory (Burr, Leigh, Day, & Constantine, 1979), is considered another theoretical contributor to the concept of marital satisfaction. The concept of marital satisfaction has been widely used over the last three decades under a variety of different and overlapping definitions. For the purpose of this study, the marital satisfaction concept as applied in a subscale of Spanier's (1976) dyadic adjustment model and its constructs were used. This model identifies a variety of factors that influence marital satisfaction. In turn, marital satisfaction is correlated with marital quality. Both marital satisfaction and marital quality have been identified to affect the dichotomous construct of marital stability and ultimately its negative extreme, divorce (Johnson, White, Edwards, & Booth, 1986; Lewis & Spanier, 1979; Matthews, Wickrama, & Conger, 1996).

Financial Management

Financial Management is one of several concepts comprising the construct of family resource management, which has its roots in human ecology theory as well as utility theory (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993; Fitzsimmons, Hira, Bauer, & Hafstrom, 1993). Subsequently, Deacon and Firebaugh's (1988) family resource management model provides

the conceptual framework for the financial management concept used in this study. This model is concerned with controlling inputs (i.e., demands), throughputs (i.e., resource management), and outputs (i.e., met demands) so that limited financial resources are optimally allocated in order to derive "the highest possible level of economic well-being and related satisfaction or utility" (Fitzsimmons et al., 1993, p. 261).

Concept Definitions

Marital satisfaction is defined by Bahr, Chappel, and Leigh (1983) as "a subjective evaluation of the overall degree to which needs, expectations, and desires are met in marriage" (p. 797). However, the terms marital adjustment, satisfaction, quality, and happiness have been used in the literature interchangeably and with varying definitions (Bahr et al., 1983; Glenn, 1990; Spanier & Lewis, 1980).

In the resource management literature, a variety of definitions for financial management can be found. Most recently it has been defined by Godwin (1990b) as the "planning, implementing, and evaluating by family members that is involved in the allocation of their current flow of family income and their stock of wealth toward the end of meeting the family's implicit or explicit goals" (Godwin, 1990b, p. 103).

Purpose and Research Questions

In summary, there currently exists an environment which invites higher levels of indebtedness. This indebtedness directly impacts increasing numbers of American families (Brush, 1996; Dundas, 1996; Godwin, 1996a). While it has been suggested that there is a relationship between financial problems and problems in marital relationships, little empirical evidence exists to substantiate this hypothesized relationship (Lown & Chandler, 1993; Siegel, 1990). Financial management strategies do not appear to be widely or consistently practiced (Davis & Carr, 1992; Davis & Weber, 1990). Little research has investigated who is most likely to practice recommended strategies. What little research has been done has yielded contradictory results. Husbands and wives appear to experience some dimensions of marital satisfaction differently (Fowers, 1991). Considering these trends, it is important to examine the relationship between financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction, as well as the extent of recommended financial management practices. It is also of interest to examine whether these factors vary in husbands and wives.

While the overall purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between financial management and marital

satisfaction, the following specific research questions are addressed in this study:

1. Is there a relationship among financial management and financial problems?

2. Is there a relationship between financial management and marital satisfaction?

3. Is there a relationship between financial problems and marital satisfaction?

4. Is there a relationship among financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction?

5. Is there a difference between husbands and wives in the relationship among financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction?

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Marital Satisfaction: An Examination of the Impact
of Family Financial Management and Problems

Overview

Marital satisfaction is a concept closely related to a number of similar concepts. A brief historical background and the definition used in this study will be introduced along with a rationale for its selection over similar or related concepts. Marital satisfaction and its relationship with marital stability will likewise be discussed.

Subsequently, independent variables whose correlation with marital satisfaction have been identified in the current literature will be identified.

The concept of financial management will be introduced and defined. In addition, a limited historical background and theoretical framework will be given. Recent literature on financial management practices as they are recommended and practiced in real life, as well as identified financial management styles will be reviewed. A small number of studies examining financial management and related concepts and how they relate to disagreements in relationships will be discussed. Finally, a rationale for including studies addressing the relationship between financial problems and

divorce will be presented, followed by a review of articles covering that subject.

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction has been a topic of interest among social scientists and family therapists for decades (Glenn, 1990; Hicks & Platt, 1970; Spanier & Lewis, 1980). While several definitions have evolved over this time period, Bahr et al., (1983) suggested that marital satisfaction is "a subjective evaluation of the overall degree to which needs, expectations, and desires are met in marriage" (p. 797). The perception of one's marital satisfaction is derived from comparisons individuals make with regard to their ideal expectations of their partner in the fulfillment of various physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. This perception is compared with what they perceive their partners actually fulfill. The less the disparity between perceived and realized needs fulfillment, the greater the likelihood an individual will report being satisfied in his/her marriage (Burr, 1973). Thus, marital satisfaction can be conceptualized as an affectively laden variable ranging in intensity from low to high according to the degree of perceived disparity.

In the last decade there has been confusion relating to whether marital satisfaction is an independent substantive variable associated with marital stability, or if it can be

better assumed within a broader construct of marital quality (Johnson et al., 1986; Lewis & Spanier, 1979). Lewis and Spanier (1979, p. 269) defined marital quality as "a subjective evaluation of a married couple's relationship on a number of dimensions and evaluations." The first portion of this definition is consistent with previous definitions of marital satisfaction (Burr, 1973; Locke & Wallace, 1959). The addition of the later segment to the overall meaning "on a number of dimensions and evaluations" (Lewis & Spanier, 1979, p. 269) expands the notion of marital quality into a global construct that encompasses such variables as marital satisfaction, adjustment, happiness, conflict and role strain, communication, integration, and so forth (Lewis & Spanier, 1979). Crane, Allgood, Larson, and Griffin (1990; see also Fincham & Bradbury, 1987; Spanier & Cole, 1976) have pointed out issues associated with the construct "marital quality," which can be organized into one of two categories, conceptualization and measurement. Briefly, in terms of conceptualization, there is ambiguity created by the fact that marital quality is confounded with other substantive variables correlated with not only marital quality, but stability as well.

In summary, it is suggested that although marital quality appears to be a global construct encompassing a variety of variables, there remain questions regarding

conceptualization and measurement. Marital satisfaction, though also ambiguous, is useful as a subjective appraisal of the outcomes of roles fulfilled by partners and is a simpler, more limited construct.

Substantive Variables Correlated with Marital Satisfaction

A review of the literature from the past three decades clearly indicates a relationship among marital satisfaction, quality, and stability (Glenn, 1990; Hicks & Platt, 1970; Spanier & Lewis, 1980). However, of specific relevance is the fact that substantive variables play an important role in determining a couple's sense of marital satisfaction.

Early measures of marital quality, such as the Marital Adjustment Test (Locke & Wallace, 1959) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), imply that such variables as family finances, recreation/leisure, religion, affection, sexual relations, conventionality, philosophy of life, goals, time spent together, decision making, household chore performance, and career decisions affect marital satisfaction. Similarly, when Miller (1976) tested antecedents of marital satisfaction, he identified six of them as either positively or negatively affecting marital satisfaction. These six included: ease of most recent role transitions, length of marriage, number of children, amount

of companionship, family social and economic status, and child spacing (Miller, 1976). While not all of these variables have been studied further, a number of similar or related ones can be identified from recent literature.

More recently the transition to parenthood was found to be associated with a significant drop in marital satisfaction for first-time parents (Hackel & Ruble, 1992; Kurdek, 1993). Additional children were associated with further, less drastic decreases in marital satisfaction (Wilkinson, 1995). The subsequent increase of marital satisfaction in later life (Orbuch, House, Mero, & Webster, 1996) was found to be even more pronounced when household labor was shared by spouses (Pina & Bengtson, 1995). Relationship characteristics such as enjoyable partnership, commitment to spouse and relationship, sense of humor and consensus on aims and goals of life, mutual friends, and decision making were identified as factors impacting marital satisfaction in long-term marriages (Lauer, Lauer, & Kerr, 1990). Stress appeared to influence a couple's ability to come to an agreement on important decisions, such as finances, parenting, and career (Williams, 1995). Economic stress, such as unemployment and concurrent hardship, was found to be related to depression and increased hostility in marital interaction, which in turn affected marital satisfaction and stability (Conger et al., 1990; Vinokur,

Price, & Caplan, 1996). Family of origin influences, such as traditionalism and conflict resolution style (VanLear, 1992), as well as birth order (Plhakova & Osecka, 1993) and religious homogamy (Heaton & Pratt, 1990), were found to contribute to marital satisfaction.

Gender Differences and Marital Satisfaction

As early as 1972, Bernard suggested that men tended to be more satisfied with their marriages than their wives (Bernard, 1972). While there was no overall difference in reported marital satisfaction between husbands and wives, in distressed couples, the wives reported considerably higher levels of distress than their husbands. At low levels of marital satisfaction, the differences between husbands and wives became more pronounced (McRae & Brody, 1989; Schumm, Jurich, Bollman, & Bugaighis, 1985). In a large-scale study, Fowers (1991) took different dimensions of marital satisfaction into consideration. He found that husbands expressed higher levels of satisfaction with their marriages than their wives, in terms of finance, parenting, family, friends, and partner's personality. Satisfaction with conflict resolution, sex, and leisure activities was not perceived differently by husbands and wives. Similarly, Aniol and Snyder (1997) found that financial distress seemed

to affect marital satisfaction more for husbands than for their wives.

Summary

Marital satisfaction is a well established concept (Burr, 1973; Lewis & Spanier, 1979) and appears to be a useful measure of marital functioning. It is a complex concept and its correlation with numerous factors has been studied widely over the years. The negative effects of parenthood on marital satisfaction are well documented (Hackel & Ruble, 1992; Kurdek, 1993). Varying personality traits and relationship skills appear to have been linked to marital satisfaction, by either increasing or decreasing it (Kosek, 1996; Rowan, Compton, & Rust, 1995). These traits and skills appear to be connected to family of origin dynamics in some instances (Domenico & Windle, 1993; VanLear, 1992). Stress, caused by various circumstances including economic pressures, has been found to have an inverse relationship with marital satisfaction (Vinokur et al., 1996; Williams, 1995). Husbands and wives appear to experience the various dimensions of marital satisfaction differently (Aniol & Snyder, 1997; Fowers, 1991).

While finances were suggested to be related to marital satisfaction in earlier literature, this relationship has not been examined frequently in the recent past. However, an indirect relationship can be implied from studies

examining the effects of stress caused by unemployment and economic pressures, which can be assumed to lead to financial problems and the need for more careful financial management (Conger et al., 1990). Similarly, a growing family's known negative effect on marital satisfaction (Hackel & Ruble, 1992; Kurdek, 1993) can be assumed to be indirectly related to an increased demand for financial resources and the subsequent potential for financial problems and the need for more effective financial management.

Financial Management and Financial Problems

Conceptual Framework

Financial management. Since the inception of the financial management concept, a number of definitions with minor variations have been proposed. A comprehensive definition was recently proposed by Godwin (1990b), who stated that financial management is the "planning, implementing and evaluating by family members that is involved in the allocation of their current flow of family income and stock of wealth toward the end of meeting the family's implicit or explicit financial goals" (Godwin, 1990b, p. 103).

Financial problems. While no consistent definition relative to the term financial problems exists in the

literature, the term generally refers to a mismatch between financial resources and demands. For example, this may include such specifics as debt, bankruptcy, and the inability to meet obligations or buy essential goods and services (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1988; Ulrichson & Hira, 1985).

Family financial management. Theoretically grounded in human ecology theory, family financial management is the process of optimizing the use of limited resources in order to "derive the highest possible level of economic well-being and related satisfaction or utility" (Fitzsimmons et al., 1993, p. 261). More specifically, Deacon and Firebaugh's (1988) family resource management model, composed of three major components--inputs (demands and resources), throughputs (managing--planning and implementing) and outputs (demand responses, resource changes)--is the underlying theoretical framework most frequently applied by researchers studying financial management (Lown, 1986; Prochaska-Cue, 1993). Furthermore, "throughput" has been identified as having "two subsystems within the resource management system: the managerial subsystem and the personal subsystem" (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1988, p. 113). For the purpose of this study, we are primarily concerned with the managerial subsystem or variable.

Financial Management Practices

Financial counselors and family finance texts (Garman & Forgue, 1997) recommend the use of formalized budgets and other formal strategies as the ideal. Yet as few as 7% of households actually put budgets in writing and project longer than a few months into the future (Davis & Carr, 1992; Davis & Weber, 1990). Only 25% of couples who express positive attitudes toward financial management and who claim to support the idea of formal budgeting act on their beliefs (Godwin & Carroll, 1986). Those who actually use a formal budget or spending plan tend to be younger and better educated and appear to do so as a result of extra demands (Beutler & Mason, 1987). Keeping written records of expenditures appears to be the most commonly practiced strategy (Godwin & Carroll, 1986).

While accumulating and maintaining emergency savings is another commonly recommended strategy, as few as 20-21% of households have an emergency fund to cover three months expenses (Chang & Huston, 1995; Hanna, Chang, Fan, & Bae, 1993). Low income newlyweds were found to use widely recommended strategies such as record keeping, monitoring income and spending, projecting a budget, and balancing the budget at a higher rate than middle and upper level income couples by Godwin and Koonce (1992). In contrast, financially stressed households in Kansas were found to be

using recommended money management techniques at not much lower rates than more affluent ones (Davis, 1992).

Another approach to financial management is less formal and can be identified by access to financial resources by the spouses. Some couples have only joint accounts, others only separate accounts, while a third group has one or more of each. These three approaches have been named "pooled," "separate," and "combined" money management strategies, respectively. There appears to be no difference among these three strategies in how they affect marital satisfaction and happiness in remarried couples (Pasley, Sandras, & Edmondson, 1994).

Financial Management Styles

There is no one "right" style of financial management. Rettig and Schulz (1991) developed a model of five financial management styles, analyst, synthesist, idealist, realist, and pragmatist, based on the five cognitive styles or inquiry modes proposed by Harrison and Bramson (1982). Prochaska-Cue (1993) expanded a model of four cognitive information processing styles (McKenny & Keen, 1974) into a model of four cognitive financial management styles: feeling manager, holistic manager, analyzing manager, and systematic manager (Prochaska-Cue, 1993).

While these models have been introduced in the literature, they have not been implemented widely in either

research or practice. There are no studies evaluating any differences in effectiveness of the various recommended money management styles or how such styles impact family and marital relationships.

Financial Management and Disagreement

In a literature review covering three decades, Israelsen (1990a) concluded that "financial management skills lessen the chance for marital discord" (p. 325). It is theorized that "faulty financial management practices and unwise financial decisions can create crises which affect the interactions of all members and threaten the very existence of the system" (Bagarozzi & Bagarozzi, 1982, p. 55). Stress caused by financial problems is assumed to have a detrimental effect on families and appears to be associated with marital disharmony and family discord (Hogan & Bauer, 1988; Ulrichson & Hira, 1985).

While over half of the respondents in one study reported arguing about money, income did not affect the frequency of arguments. Arguments about financial management appeared to be more common, however, than arguments about the amount of money available (Lawrence, Thomasson, Wozniak, & Prawitz, 1993). For men, arguments about finances were inversely related to financial management practices along with the longevity of the marriage, while income was found to be unrelated (Williams &

Berry, 1984). A poll conducted for Money magazine found that women worry more about financial matters, such as the ability to pay for unexpected bills (11th National Money Poll, 1996). The discrepancy between beliefs about financial management and actual practice, in conjunction with low consensus about financial attitudes between spouses, creates the potential for conflict (Godwin & Carroll, 1986).

A commitment early in the marriage to equality and equity, as well as role specialization with wife influence in family finance handling, was found to be related to marital satisfaction (Schaninger & Buss, 1986). Whether accounts are held and obligations are met jointly, separately, or in a flexible manner did not appear to be related to adjustment in remarriage (Pasley et al., 1994). Instrumental financial management strategies (goal setting, budgeting, saving, and record keeping) were found to be inversely related to financial arguments, whereas delaying tactics and apparel cost cutting were positively related (Lawrence et al., 1993).

Finances and Marital Happiness

A recent study examining finances and marital happiness in newlyweds (Godwin, 1996b) went beyond examining direct relationships to exploring intervening variables. A couple's perception that income is inadequate was associated

with vulnerability to marital difficulties; attitudes toward managing money were suggested as an intervening variable between "financial and marital well-being" (p. 11). Perception of financial status was found to be the single best predictor of marital unhappiness. Financial management behaviors, measures of solvency, liquidity, and debt burden showed no significant direct relationships to marital happiness. It was suggested, however, that financial management may be indirectly related to marital happiness through intervening variables, such as feelings of financial satisfaction, which appear directly related (Godwin, 1996b).

Several finance-related concepts including financial management, financial problems, financial matters, and arguments about finances have been studied and linked with marital satisfaction or similar constructs. However, there is no consensus as yet about the nature of these relationships. Intervening variables have been identified and suggest that attitudes and perceptions about financial adequacy, satisfaction, and management are linked to marital satisfaction.

Financial Problems and Divorce

No consistent definition of financial problems has been agreed upon in the literature. Generally, financial problems are understood to consist of a mismatch between

financial resources and demands (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1988; Ulrichson & Hira, 1985).

Although records of divorce proceedings do not always state the "cause" for requested divorces, it has been suggested that four factors are frequently cited as reasons for why individuals file for divorce. These factors include: sexual incompatibility, lack of communication, husband's lack of time at home, and finances (Albrecht, Bahr, & Goodman, 1983; Burns, 1984; Lown & Chandler, 1993). It is logical to assume that if a couple presents with one or more of the above factors as "causes" for therapy or divorce, that one can conclude that they are not satisfied with how their relationship has developed over time. Divorce can be perceived as the extreme absence of marital satisfaction. Therefore, findings from the divorce literature related to financial management are included here.

Financial problems are widely cited as a leading contributor to divorce (Burkett, 1989; Garman & Fogue, 1997). White (1990) identified a strong inverse relationship between income, socioeconomic status, and divorce from a review of studies based on large national data sets. However, financial problems or management were not identified. His review of small-scale studies, examining perceptions as to the causes of divorce, identified

financial problems as one of several factors not addressed in larger studies (White, 1990). Factor analysis identified financial problems, among others, in a number of studies questioning divorcees about perceived causes of their divorces (Cleek & Pearson, 1985; Kitson & Sussman, 1982). In other studies, financial problems ranked from second to ninth as perceived causes of divorce (Burns, 1984; Davis & Aron, 1988). In a review of sources cited to substantiate the relationship between financial problems and divorce, Lown and Chandler (1993) concluded that financial problems rank fourth on average. Financial problems were cited as contributors to divorce significantly more often by initiators of divorce than noninitiators (Bloom et al., 1985).

Thus, divorce has been linked to financial problems in a number of studies that have primarily relied on perceptions of divorced subjects. No pre- and postdivorce studies have been identified that would substantiate the relationship between financial problems and marital satisfaction or ultimately divorce.

Financial Problems and Relationship Distress

The only recent study suggesting a direct relationship between relationship distress and financial difficulties was done by Aniol and Snyder (1997). They compared 25 couples

seeking marital therapy from private therapists with 32 couples seeking financial counseling at Consumer Credit Counseling Services. In addition, these two groups were compared with 32 randomly selected couples from the general population from the same community. It was found that one third of those seeking financial counseling services reported relationship distress above the mean for this group, while one third of those seeking marital therapy complained about financial difficulties above the mean for the latter group. Husbands' relationship satisfaction appeared to be more severely affected by financial distress than their wives'.

Summary

Financial management and problems have been studied for many years, but these concepts have not been defined and conceptualized consistently until recently (Fitzsimmons et al., 1993; Godwin, 1990b). A relationship between financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction is implied in a variety of studies (Godwin, 1996b; Ulrichson & Hira, 1985). The concepts measured are not consistent, however, and post-hoc perceptions are used widely, making it difficult to draw definite conclusions from existing research.

Hypotheses

Although a relationship between finances and marital satisfaction can be inferred from the review of literature, no studies could be identified that directly measure the effects of financial management and financial problems on marital satisfaction. The following null hypotheses are proposed for this study:

1. There is no relationship between financial management and financial problems.
2. There is no relationship between financial management and marital satisfaction.
3. There is no relationship between financial problems and marital satisfaction.
4. There is no relationship among financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction.
5. There is no difference between husbands and wives in the relationship among financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of financial management and financial problems with marital satisfaction. The design of this study, population, sample, measures, and procedures are discussed in this chapter.

Design

This study was a correlational study in that it attempted to assess the relationship among financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction. A nonrandom sample was used.

Population

The population for this study consisted of married, cohabiting, or previously married persons, with at least one partner attending Utah State University and living in USU family student housing. The total eligible population was estimated to be 604 families. Although a questionnaire and cover letter were delivered to all 673 units in family student housing, the researcher learned from the University Housing office that at the time of survey delivery, 35 of these units were occupied by single graduate students and that an additional 34 units were vacant. It was not

possible to identify vacant units or those occupied by singles, to avoid delivery to those units. However, from the above numbers an eligible population of 604 families was deduced.

Sample

The sample was a self-selected convenience sample. A total of 314 completed surveys was returned. Upon inspection, four surveys were found unusable, because they were blank or contained frivolous answers. This resulted in a sample of $N = 310$ and a response rate of 51.32%.

Utah State University family housing units house a large proportion of international student families. A t test determined that responses of international students were statistically significantly different from those of U.S. students (see Table 2 in the Results section). Another t test showed that answers from respondents with one or both partners who had been married more than once, or respondents who were divorced, were statistically significantly different from those in their first marriage (see Table 3 in the Results section). Thus international couples and those who were in other than intact first marriages were eliminated for the purpose of this study, resulting in a final sample of $N = 217$ (see Table 1).

Table 1

Characteristics of Sample Analyzed (N = 217)

Variable	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Gender				
M	67	30.9		
F	150	69.1		
Ethnicity				
Caucasian	214	98.6		
Hispanic	2	.9		
Asian American	1	.5		
Income				
under \$10,000	48	22.6		
\$10,000-\$19,999	106	50.0		
\$20,000-\$29,999	41	19.3		
\$30,000-\$39,999	8	3.8		
over \$40,000	9	4.2		
Financial manager				
Male	38	15.6		
Female	44	17.8		
Both	161	65.2		
Age			25.18	5.13
20 and under	16	7.3		
21-25	147	67.4		
26-30	48	20.2		
31-35	6	2.7		
36 and over	5	2.3		
Months married			36.29	36.12
under 12	50	22.9		
12-23	29	13.3		
24-35	47	21.6		
36-47	36	16.5		
48-59	20	9.2		
60-71	6	2.7		
72-83	10	4.6		
84 and over	20	9.2		

(table continues)

Number of children			1.11	1.96
0	95	43.4		
1	63	29.0		
2	40	18.3		
3	14	6.5		
4	3	1.4		
more than 4	2	1.0		
Years education			5.30	1.73
under 12	2	1.0		
12	11	5.0		
13	12	5.5		
14	46	21.4		
15	44	20.5		
16	53	24.7		
17	30	14.0		
18	12	5.5		
over 18	5	2.4		
Credit cards			2.47	2.61
0	32	13.1		
1	71	29.0		
2	55	22.4		
3	34	13.9		
4	23	9.4		
5	13	5.3		
6	6	2.4		
7	3	1.2		
8	1	.4		
12	2	.8		
14	1	.4		
15	3	1.2		
17	1	.4		

The final sample consisted of 217 couples who had been married just over 3 years on average (see Table 1). On average they were a little over 25 years old and had one child. Over 98% were Caucasian and had a predominant low income range of \$10,000 to \$19,999 per year. A little over two thirds of the respondents were female; however, even though the spouse handling the finances was asked to

complete the survey, 65.20% later indicated that they handled finances jointly. A mean of 15.30 years of education was reported for all respondents.

Procedures

For the initial wave of data collection, the following procedures were used. A questionnaire (27 questions plus demographic information, see Appendix A) and cover letter (description of study and informed consent, see Appendix B) were planned to be delivered to all 673 apartments of family student housing at one point in time, under the direction of the Extension Family Resource and Education Center (EFREC). Only married, cohabiting, or previously married persons were invited to participate. The partner usually handling the finances and paying the bills in each household was asked to fill out the questionnaire, which was expected to take 10 minutes to complete. Participants were asked to return the completed questionnaire to the EFREC. As an incentive, a disk with shareware financial software was offered for each returned questionnaire. A follow-up reminder/thank you card was sent out 1 week after the distribution of the questionnaire to all tenants of USU family housing.

When these described sampling methods were followed, there arose some unanticipated problems with survey delivery and the proposed drop-off point. The delivery person, who

had come with good recommendations, delivered surveys only to some of the designated housing units. An undetermined number of undelivered surveys were found abandoned. EFREC experienced a change in staff and thus was not open consistently during posted hours. These problems contributed to an unexpectedly and unacceptably low return of 49 completed surveys. It was decided to attempt a second wave of data collection in hopes of improving the rate of return.

For the second wave, the following modifications were implemented, aimed at eliminating the problems experienced during the first wave. The same questionnaire was used but printed on colored paper to avoid multiple replies from the same subjects. Delivery of the survey was made by the author and family members under close supervision to ensure that all surveys were actually delivered to the targeted households. The targeted households were the same as in the first wave. Funding for a new incentive, a \$5.00 coupon for Aggie ice cream, was secured. In conjunction with the new incentive, the drop-off point for completed surveys was changed to the USU Dairy Products Lab, better known as the Aggie ice cream counter. At this location subjects were able to exchange completed surveys for ice cream coupons and could redeem their coupons for consumption on the spot, if desired. It was anticipated that the new incentive in

conjunction with a more convenient and incentive-related drop-off point would generate a rate of return in excess of the originally proposed numbers. A follow-up reminder/thank you card was distributed 1 week after delivery of the questionnaires to all tenants of USU family housing. Finally, 2 weeks after delivery of the surveys, reminder posters announcing the upcoming deadline for receiving incentive coupons were posted on mailboxes, garbage dumpsters, and bulletin boards throughout the USU family student housing area. This resulted in a much larger return of 314 completed surveys.

Description of Measures

Two instruments were used to examine the research questions posed in this study. The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS; Busby, Christensen, Crane, & Larsen, 1995), a recent revision of the classic Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976), was administered in its entirety, to measure marital satisfaction through its dyadic satisfaction subscale. A combination of Frequency of Financial Management (FFMS) and Frequency of Financial Problems Scales (FFPS) (Fitzsimmons et al., 1993) was used to measure the Financial Management Construct.

The Revised Dyadic
Adjustment Scale

The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) is a self-administered, one-page, 14-item paper-and-pencil test. It utilizes a 6-point Likert format ranging from "always agree" to "always disagree" for six questions, and "never" to "more often/all the time" for seven questions. One question uses a 5-point Likert format ranging from "never" to "every day." Answers are usually scored from 0 to 5 for all but question number 11, which is scored 0-4. For this study, answers were scored 1 to 6, concurrent with numbering of answers to simplify coding.

The RDAS has three subscales, including dyadic consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion. While the whole Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was administered in its entirety, we are only concerned with the satisfaction subscale for this study. The RDAS, like its forerunner, the DAS, was designed to assess the perceived marital or relationship quality.

Dyadic satisfaction is defined as the satisfaction a couple perceives in their relationship in areas such as stability and conflict (Spanier, 1976). The other two constructs were not tested for this study, and thus are not described or discussed here.

The RDAS is a revision by Busby et al., (1995) of the two-page, 32-item DAS, which consists of four subscales.

The DAS was developed by Graham Spanier after he clarified and defined the term "adjustment" and presented it for the first time in 1976. Even though the DAS had been used in more than 1,000 studies and is one of the most popular and widely used marital adjustment measures, factor analysis found two of the four subscales (dyadic satisfaction subscale and affectional expression subscale) included items with poor factor loading as well as some that were homogeneous (Busby et al., 1995).

The RDAS was developed by revising the DAS, adhering to current conventions of construct hierarchy to eliminate validity problems. Composite scores range 0 to 20 (or in the case of this study from 1 to 24) for satisfaction or a total composite range from 0 to 69 for the global marital adjustment score (Busby et al., 1995).

Cronbach's alpha coefficients were reported at .85 for dyadic satisfaction and .90 for the total RDAS. Guttman's split-half coefficients were .88 for dyadic satisfaction and .94 for the total RDAS. Spearman-Brown split-half coefficients of .88 for dyadic satisfaction and .95 for the total RDAS indicate internal consistency and split-half reliability. These results are considered to represent an improvement over the original DAS (Busby et al., 1995).

There is evidence of construct and concurrent validity of the RDAS with the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale

(Locke & Wallace, 1959). Correlation coefficients of $r = .68$ for RDAS and MAT, $r = .66$ for DAS and MAT, and $r = .97$ for RDAS and DAS were reported (Busby et al., 1995). Criterion validity was established by the fact that distressed couples could be distinguished from nondistressed couples by their RDAS scores.

While the whole RDAS was administered to maintain the integrity of the properties reported above, only the dyadic satisfaction subscale was included in the statistical analysis. This is consistent with the focus of this study on marital satisfaction only. While a Cronbach's alpha of .81 was reported by Busby et al. (1995) for the marital satisfaction subscale, for this study a slightly higher Cronbach's alpha of .82 was established, confirming the reliability of this measure for this study.

Family Financial Management Scales

The Frequency of Financial Management Scale (FFMS) (Fitzsimmons et al., 1993) is a self-administered, four-item paper-and-pencil test. The Frequency of Financial Problems Scale (FFPS; Fitzsimmons et al., 1993) is a self-administered, six-item paper-and-pencil test. Both scales utilize a 5-point likert format ranging from never to most of the time. Scores range from 1 to 5, respectively. There

are no subscales. These instruments represent the first and only version for each thus far.

FFMS and FFPS were developed by Fitzsimmons et al. (1993), by compiling a list of 23 different family resource variables based on Deacon and Firebaugh's (1988) resource management model from a review of literature. Through principal axis factor analysis, five factors emerged and, following varimax rotation, two meaningful factors were identified. These two factors and their components are the basis for the two instruments.

Both scales are considered reliable based on a reported Cronbach's alpha ranging from .84 to .89 for Frequency of Financial Problems and .67 to .76 for Frequency of Financial Management for the eight states included in the calculations. Content validity was established by the respective family resource management experts who developed the original measures from which these two new measures were drawn. Construct validity was assessed by examining each considered variable's theoretical link to economic well being through utility theory. Subsequently these variables were tested with factor analysis, which identified the two factors, FFMS and FFPS, which represent financial management, an aspect of family resource management. Concurrent validity was tested by assessing intercorrelations between FFMS and FFPS. A Pearson's r^2 of

.06 was not statistically significant, indicating that there was little correlation between the two scales and they are measuring two distinctly different aspects of financial management (Fitzsimmons et al., 1993).

A Cronbach's alpha was run with data from this study for both FFMS and FFPS. FFMS was found to have a Cronbach's alpha of .78, which is consistent with the originally reported range of from .67 to .76 for this measure (Fitzsimmons et al., 1993). FFPS was found to have a Cronbach's alpha of .79 for this study, somewhat lower than the originally reported range of .84 to .89 for this measure (Fitzsimmons et al., 1993). However, it is still within the range of acceptable reliability.

Analyses

Frequencies, means, and standard deviations on sample characteristics and scale scores were tabulated. Responses of men were compared to those given by women with t tests. Correlations and regressions were run separately for men and women and compared. A biserial regression was run for men and women. None of these showed any statistically significant differences between men and women. Thus analyses were run for the total sample, rather than for the subsamples of men and women as originally proposed. Results and conclusions reported are based on the total sample.

To test the relationships among financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction, correlations were run on the respondents' scores to the three subscales. In addition, correlations were run with two global questions assessing overall satisfaction with financial management and overall perception of financial problems. To test the relationships among financial management, financial problems, marital satisfaction, overall satisfaction with financial management, and perception of financial problems, and to assess the influence of any significantly correlated demographic variables such as length of marriage, multiple regression analyses were run as well.

Making inferences from a regression analysis is based on assumptions such as random sampling, interval data, linearity, homogeneity of variance, no measurement errors, and no spuriousness (Lewis-Beck, 1980). This study does not have a random sample, and measurement was not at a true interval level. Regression analysis has been found to be quite robust to such violations of assumptions and is used widely in the social sciences even though all assumptions are rarely met.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Results of t Tests

Initially a set of three t tests was run to determine if responses by international student couples were significantly different from those given by U.S. student couples. The results (see Table 2) indicate that answers by international students were statistically significantly different from answers given by U.S. students for the dependent variable and the two Independent variables. Thus only U.S. student couples were included in the final analyses.

Table 2

Results of t Tests Between Responses of U.S. Couples and Those of Other Nationalities

Variable	U.S. ($n = 247$)		International ($n = 44$)		t	p
	\bar{M}	SD	\bar{M}	SD		
Marital satisfaceson	20.19	2.44	18.39	3.85	4.09	.00
Financial management	15.06	3.61	12.36	3.67	4.56	.00
Financial problems	13.96	5.25	11.25	4.77	3.17	.00

A second set of three t tests was run to determine whether responses of those divorced or married more than once differed significantly from those student couples married for the first time. The results of these t tests (see Table 3) showed that responses of those other than married for the first time were statistically significantly different on marital satisfaction. Thus only those married for the first time were included in the final analyses.

Means Comparisons

Means and Standard Deviations for the Three Measures

Three variables, marital satisfaction as the dependent

Table 3

Results of t Tests Between Responses of Those Married for the First Time and Those Other Than Married for the First Time

Variable	First Marriage ($n = 218$)		Other ($n = 29$)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Marital satisfaction	20.40	2.05	18.55	4.08	-3.96	.00
Financial management	15.16	3.55	14.34	3.99	-1.14	.25
Financial problems	13.94	5.11	14.07	6.33	.12	.90

variable and financial management and financial problems as independent variables, were measured. In addition to these measures, two global questions were included. One of these global questions assessed perceived quality of financial management, while the other measured perceived magnitude of financial problems.

The mean scores and standard deviations for marital satisfaction suggest that subjects in this sample are highly satisfied with their marriages ($\bar{M} = 20.41$ out of a maximum score of 24). These scores compare to a mean of $\bar{M} = 19.7$ (this score is adjusted from $\bar{M} = 15.07$ for the original method of scoring the RDAS) with a standard deviation of $SD = 2.2$ for the nonclinical sample used to test the RDAS when it was developed (Busby et al., 1995).

The mean scores for financial management and perceived quality of financial management also suggest that subjects in this sample manage their money reasonably well ($\bar{M} = 15.17$ for a maximum of 20) and think they do about as well or better than most managing their finances. They occasionally experience financial problems ($\bar{M} = 13.94$ for a maximum of 30 for financial problems) and consider their financial problems about as severe or a little less severe than most. The means and standard deviations for men, women, and the total sample do not appear to differ from one another (See Table 4).

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for the Marital Satisfaction
Subscale of the RDAS, FFMS, and FFPS

Scales	Men (n = 67)		Women (n = 150)		Whole Sample (n = 218)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Marital satisfaction (4 items)						
	20.48	2.23	20.38	1.99	20.41	2.05
Financial management (4 items)						
	15.42	3.53	15.01	3.56	15.16	3.55
Financial problems (6 items)						
	13.64	5.25	14.08	5.07	13.94	5.11
Perceived quality of financial management (1 item)						
	3.79	.88	3.69	.88	3.72	.87
Perceived magnitude of financial problems (1 item)						
	2.38	.98	2.43	.88	2.41	.91

Examining Differences Between
Men and Women Through t Tests

A set of five t tests confirmed the earlier stated observation, that there appeared to be no difference between men and women. The scores of men, women, and the total sample for the three measures of marital satisfaction, financial management, and financial problems do not differ statistically significantly from one another (see Table 5).

Table 5

Results of t Tests Between Men and Women for Measures of Marital Satisfaction, Financial Management and Financial Problems

Scales	Men (<u>n</u> = 67)		Women (<u>n</u> = 150)		t	p
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>		
Marital satisfaction	20.47	2.23	20.38	1.99	-.32	.75
Financial management	15.41	3.53	15.01	3.56	-.78	.44
Perceived quality of financial management	3.79	.88	3.68	.89	-.81	.42
Financial problems	13.64	5.25	14.08	5.07	.58	.56
Perceived magnitude of financial problems	2.36	.98	2.42	.87	.51	.61

Results of Correlational Analysis

Both financial management and financial problems were statistically significantly correlated with marital satisfaction (see Table 6). While financial management was positively correlated, financial problems were inversely correlated. Perceived quality of financial management was found to be positively correlated at a statistically significant level with marital satisfaction, while perceived magnitude of financial problems was found to have a statistically significant inverse relationship with marital

Table 6

Correlations Between the Dependent (Marital Satisfaction), Independent (Financial Management and Financial Problems), and Demographic Variables (N = 217)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Financial Management	--	-.08	.18**	.02	-.01	.05	.21**	-.10	-.03
2. Financial Problems		--	-.25***	.07	-.32***	-.04	-.30***	.42***	.10
3. Marital Satisfaction			--	-.14*	.03	.02	.32***	-.24***	-.11
4. Length of Marriage				--	.25***	.02	.01	-.06	.76***
5. Income					--	-.03	.06	-.24***	.20**
6. Gender						--	.06	-.03	-.03
7. Perceived Quality of Financial Management							--	-.48***	-.04
8. Perceived Magnitude of Financial Problems								--	.08
Children									--
*p < .05.	**p < .01.	***p < .001.							

satisfaction. Of the demographic variables, only length of marriage was correlated to marital satisfaction at a statistically significant level. This relationship was inverse. Financial management was found to have a positive and statistically significant relationship with perceived quality of financial management. Financial problems were found to be positively correlated with perceived magnitude of financial problems as well as inversely correlated with income and perceived quality of financial management. Length of marriage was positively and statistically significantly related to income and number of children. Income was found to be inversely and statistically significantly correlated to perceived magnitude of financial problems. In addition, income was statistically significantly related positively to number of children and inversely to perceived magnitude of financial problems.

Correlations between the same variables were run separately for husbands and wives. Results are shown in the same table with correlations for wives in brackets (see Table 7). These correlations do not appear significantly different from one another, suggesting that there is no significant difference between men and women in how the included variables covary with each other.

Table 7

Correlations Between the Dependent (Marital Satisfaction), Independent (Financial Management and Financial Problems), and Demographic Variables by Gender: Men (Women)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Financial Management	--	-.06	.31**	.08	.13	.29*	-.13	.05
2. Financial Problems	(-.08)	--	-.30*	.12	-.44***	-.33**	.63***	.01
3. Marital Satisfaction	(.12)	(-.22)**	--	-.07	.02	.48***	-.34*	-.03
4. Length of Marriage	(.04)	(-.04)	(-.18)*	--	.27*	.02	-.15	.69***
5. Income	(-.02)	(-.27)**	(.35)	(.24)**	--	-.01	-.44***	.23
6. Perceived Quality of Financial Management	(.17)*	(-.29)***	(.25)**	(.01)	(.14)	--	-.46***	.02
7. Perceived Magnitude of Financial Problems	(-.10)	(.31)***	(-.19)*	(-.01)	(-.14)	(-.51)***	--	-.20
8. Children	(-.05)	(.14)	(-.14)**	(.84)***	(.20)*	(.00)	(.27)	--

Note. Coefficients in parentheses are for women. *p <.05. **p <.01. ***p <.001.

In addition, a biserial correlation for men and women was run. It is not included as a table here, since none of the correlation coefficients showed statistical significance. However, this analysis confirms that, to this point, there is no statistically significant difference between men and women in regards to correlations between dependent, independent, and demographic variables.

Results of Regression Analysis

The independent variables showing a statistically significant correlation with marital satisfaction for the whole sample ($N = 217$) were entered for a regression analysis (see Table 8). The variables included for the purpose of regression analysis, thus, were financial management, financial problems, perceived quality of financial management, perceived magnitude of financial problems, and length of married.

When variables were entered stepwise, three of the initial five independent variables remained. These variables included: perceived quality of financial management, financial problems, and length of marriage and were thus included in the regression equation. As a result, these three variables were found to explain 15% of the variability of the dependent variable marital satisfaction (see Table 8).

Table 8

Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables
Predicting Marital Satisfaction (N = 217)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>SE B</u>	<u>β</u>
Step 1			
Perceived quality of financial management	.76	.15	.32
Step 2			
Perceived quality of financial management	.64	.16	.27
Financial problems	-.06	.03	-.16
Step 3			
Perceived quality of financial management	.65	.16	.27
Financial problems	-.06	.03	-.15
Length of marriage	-.07	.004	-.13

Note. $\underline{r}^2 = .10$ for Step 1; $\underline{r}^2 = .13$ for Step 2; and $\underline{r}^2 = .15$ for Step 3 ($p < .05$).

In addition to the stepwise regression analysis of the total sample, separate ones were run for the subsamples of men and of women. Perceived quality of financial management remained as the only variable in the regression equation for men (see Table 9). This lone variable, however, explained 24% of variability of marital satisfaction for men.

Table 9

Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables
Predicting Marital Satisfaction for Men (n = 67)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>SE B</u>	<u>β</u>
Step 1			
Perceived quality financial management	1.27	.29	.49

Note. $r^2 = .24$ for Step 1 ($p < .05$)

The stepwise regression analysis for women included perceived quality of financial management, length of marriage, and financial problems (see Table 10). These are the same three variables as the ones included in the regression equation for the total sample. For women, these three variables explain 12% of variability in marital satisfaction, slightly less than the 15% explained variability for the whole sample. These differences between men and women need to be viewed with some caution, since dividing the sample reduced the number of subjects in each subsample. The reduction in numbers was particularly drastic for men. Therefore some effects may not show any longer, even if still present, as a result of small sample size.

Table 10

Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables
Predicting Marital Satisfaction for Women (n = 150)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>SE B</u>	β
Step 1			
Perceived quality of financial management	.57	.19	.25
Step 2			
Perceived quality of financial management	.57	.18	.25
Length of marriage	-.01	.00	-.18
Step 3			
Perceived quality of financial management	.47	.19	.20
Length of marriage	-.01	.00	-.17
Financial problems	-.06	.03	-.16

Note. $\underline{r}^2 = .06$ for Step 1; $\underline{r}^2 = .09$ for Step 2; and $\underline{r}^2 = .12$ for Step 3 ($p < .05$).

For comparison purposes, all five independent variables that had shown a significant correlation earlier (see Table 6) were entered into a regression analysis, for the whole sample, with forced entry. The additional two variables did not strengthen the explanatory power of $\underline{r}^2 = .15$. To the contrary, explanatory power slightly decreased to $\underline{r}^2 = .14$ when it was adjusted (see Table 11).

Table 11

Summary of Forced Entry Regression Analysis for Variables
Predicting Marital Satisfaction (N = 217)

Variable	B	SE B	β
Financial management	.07	.04	.12
Financial problems	-.05	.03	-.13
Perception of financial problems	-.175	.17	-.08
Perception of financial management	.52	.17	-3.02
Length of marriage	-.008	.004	-.139

Note. $r^2 = .14$ ($p < .05$)

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 stated: There is no relationship between financial management and financial problems. This hypothesis was confirmed inasmuch as there was no statistically significant correlation between financial management and financial problems, if only the behavioral measures are considered. However, in addition to the behavioral measures, subjects were asked how they perceived the quality of their financial management and how severe they perceived financial problems to be. Perceived quality of financial management was related to perceived magnitude of financial problems and perceived quality of financial management was

related to financial problems. Thus, the hypothesis can be rejected on a perceptual level if not on a behavioral one.

Hypothesis 2 stated: There is no relationship between financial management and marital satisfaction. This hypothesis was rejected, since financial management was statistically significantly correlated with marital satisfaction. The perceived satisfaction with financial management was also correlated with marital satisfaction on a statistically significant level.

Hypothesis 3 stated: There is no relationship between financial problems and marital satisfaction. This hypothesis was rejected as well. Both financial problems and perceived financial problems were statistically significantly correlated with marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4 stated: There is no relationship among financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction. This hypothesis was retained, since in a stepwise regression analysis financial management dropped out when financial problems were entered. At the final step, however, perception of financial management and of financial problems were included in the regression, suggesting that there is a relationship among perceived financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5 stated: There is no difference between husbands and wives in the relationship among financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction. Support for this hypothesis was mixed. A t test found no statistically significant differences between answers given by men and those given by women. Comparison of correlations for men and women and a biserial correlation found only small differences of little practical importance. However, comparison of stepwise regressions for men and women indicate that perceived quality of financial management was much more of a predictor of marital satisfaction for men ($r^2 = .24$) than for women ($r^2 = .12$), for this sample of low-income student couples with marriages of short duration.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

This study set out to examine the widely disseminated and accepted, but largely untested assumption that financial matters are closely related to family discord, marital problems, and ultimately divorce (Godwin, 1990a; Lown & Chandler, 1993; Notarius & Markman, 1993; Siegel, 1990; Ulrichson & Hira, 1985). Specifically, the relationship between financial management, financial problems, and marital satisfaction was examined. Performance of accepted financial management behaviors by married student couples in the early years of marriage was assessed, as well as the frequency of financial problems to see how those related to marital satisfaction. In addition to assessing the financial management behaviors and financial problems of young couples, their perceptions of the quality of their financial management practices and their perceptions of the severity of financial problems were assessed as well.

Financial Management and
Financial Problems

Previous research about the relationship between financial management and financial problems was scarce and results were inconsistent (Davis, 1992; Godwin & Koonce,

1992). In this study, financial management and financial problems were not correlated with each other as hypothesized. One possible explanation for this finding might be that members of this sample overall had very low income. Thus financial problems experienced by subjects of this sample may be primarily related to income insufficiency of being "starving students" rather than failure to follow recommended financial management practices.

At the same time, the perceived quality of financial management was correlated with both financial problems and perceived magnitude of financial problems, suggesting that perceptions were a contributing factor in how these young couples experienced their financial situation. It may well be that the financial problems detected here had been expected by subjects of this study due to their being students with a very low income.

Financial Management and Marital Satisfaction

While it has been suggested that "financial management skills lessen the chance for marital discord" (Israelsen, 1990b, p. 325) and it was otherwise theorized that poor financial management practices adversely affect family relationships (Bagarozzi & Bagarozzi, 1982), Godwin (1996b) did not find any significant direct relationship between financial management behaviors and marital happiness.

However, Godwin (1996b) suggested that perceptions might act as intervening variables.

For this sample of young student couples in the early years of marriage and with modest financial resources, financial management behaviors and the perception of how well finances were managed were both found to be significantly related to the reported satisfaction with their marriages. This finding confirmed one hypothesis postulated for this study.

This finding is also consistent with earlier research of low-income newlyweds and their financial management practices (Godwin & Koonce, 1992), which found that low-income couples exhibited more "effective" attitudes and behaviors (p. 17) towards money management. It may well be that in a rather abnormal situation, such as being a "starving student," being able to control a small aspect of married life, like managing finances and feeling effective at it, may be the explanation for the relationship between perceived or actual financial management and how satisfied a couple feels with their marriage.

Financial Problems and Marital Satisfaction

Financial problems and their consequences have been discussed widely (Burkett, 1989; Garman & Forgue, 1997). However, these discussions frequently were not based on

empirical research (Lown & Chandler, 1993). The most commonly discussed consequence was divorce, the negative extreme of marital satisfaction (Burns, 1984; Davis & Aron, 1988). However, many of these studies involved recently divorced people reporting on their perceptions about what caused their marriages to fail (Cleek & Pearson, 1985; Kitson & Sussman, 1982), rather than actual measurement of financial problems or distress. Most recently, Aniol and Snyder (1997) found that a little more than one third of subjects reporting financial difficulties also experienced relationship distress. As hypothesized, for this sample financial problems as well as the perceived magnitude of financial problems showed a statistically significant correlation with how satisfied couples were with their marriages.

This finding was also in agreement with previous literature reviewed, that economic pressures and financial problems tend to affect marital relationships negatively (Conger et al., 1990). A possible explanation for the relationship may be the one suggested by Conger et al. (1990), that economic pressures increase hostility in marital interaction while at the same time reducing warmth and supportive behaviors towards one's spouse. This increased hostility and reduced warmth and support could consequently be related to a drop in marital satisfaction.

Financial Management, Financial Problems, and Marital Satisfaction

As early as 1976, Miller identified multiple factors predicting marital satisfaction. Earlier measures of marital satisfaction and related constructs included questions regarding finances (Locke & Wallace, 1959; Spanier, 1976). A recent revision of the popular Dyadic adjustment scale, however, did not include any financial variables (Busby et al., 1995). A regression analysis in this study of young married students found that about 13% of marital satisfaction was explained by perceived quality of financial management and financial problems. This proportion increased to 15% when the demographic variable length of marriage was included.

While 13-15% does not appear to be very high, marital satisfaction is complex construct made up of many variables. Also, as with much in human behavior, explanatory variables may not be the same from one couple to the next. In addition, this study was done with a sample of couples with fairly recent marriages, who overall were very happy. As time goes on, financial management and problems may play an increasingly larger part in their effect on marital satisfaction. After all, the couples in this sample can be expected to anticipate some financial struggles, due to their student status. However, with expectations of absence of financial problems after graduation and needing less

careful financial managing, the effects of financial management and financial problems may very well increase.

Conclusions about Financial Variables

These findings substantiated the frequently stated assertion that financial matters can seriously affect marital relationships. However, based on these findings it appears that perceptions, particularly for men, may be as important or possibly even more important than actual financial management behaviors or measurable financial problems in their effects on marital satisfaction, as well as on each other. The importance of perceptions suggested by these findings is in agreement with suggestions made by Godwin (1996b), that perceptions about finances are a factor in marital relationships.

Demographic Variables and Marital Satisfaction

Several demographic variables, such as length of marriage, number of children, and economic status, were found to be correlated with marital satisfaction in previous research (Hackel & Ruble, 1992; Miller, 1976; Wilkinson, 1995). However, for this sample of low-income students, who had only been married for a few years and had few children, length of marriage was the only demographic variable correlated with marital satisfaction. This correlation

between length of marriage and marital satisfaction was an inverse one.

A possible explanation may once again be the short duration of marriage on average as well as the low number of children. Another potential explanation may be that such factors as low income or economic status may be expected by young college students and thus may have less deleterious effects on their relationships than for the general population. However, even that comparatively smaller effect increases as time goes on and couples are married longer.

Differences Between Husbands and Wives

The landmark study by Bernard (1972) found that husbands and wives reported significant differences in how satisfied they were with their marriages. A number of studies have confirmed this difference in perception (Aniol & Snyder, 1997; Fowers, 1991; McRae & Brody, 1989; Schumm et al., 1985). In this study, responses of husbands did not significantly differ from those given by wives. Correlations of financial factors with marital satisfaction showed little differences between men and women. However, when stepwise regressions were run for men, perceived quality of financial management was the only factor predicting 24% of variability of marital satisfaction. As a contrast, for women, perceived quality of financial

management, length of marriage, and financial problems together explained only 12% of variability in marital satisfaction. This was the only clear difference found between men and women for this sample. These differences were considerably less than what the literature leads to expect (Aniol & Snyder, 1997; Fowers, 1991; McRae & Brody, 1989; Schumm et al., 1985).

One possible explanation may be that this sample consisted of young couples with marriages of fairly short duration, with an average of only one child. As one respondent added: "We have only been married two months and are very happy. Give us 25 years and then ask us again." Just like the expectations of declining marital satisfaction expressed here, differences between husbands and wives could possibly increase with length of marriage and consequently become more measurable.

Another possible explanation is that of cultural expectations. This study was done in Northern Utah where a large proportion of the general population is Mormon. While not examined in this study, it can be assumed that a considerable number of participants were Mormons. This predominant religious orientation contributes to a rather conservative and patriarchal local culture. In such a cultural environment it is not uncommon for a woman not to

voice her opinion, but present herself as in agreement with her husband (Brinkerhoff & MacKie, 1988).

Yet another possible explanation might be that if a couple is happy with their marriage in general, as this sample as a total appeared to be from the high mean score for marital satisfaction, they may be less inclined to report difference in opinion unless asked for specifics or challenged.

Similarly, Gottman (1993) found, for a sample of middle-aged and older couples, that differences between husbands and wives tended to be smaller in couples happy with their marriage, than those who reported to be unhappy.

A final explanation might be that our society's efforts toward gender equity are coming to fruition and thus younger couples experience their marriages less differently than previous cohorts. Previously reported differences may not have disappeared completely, but may have diminished to a point where they are more difficult to detect and measure, especially early in the marriage or if marital satisfaction is high otherwise.

Limitations

This study was done with a homogeneous sample of predominantly White student couples, with marriages of short duration and an average of one child. The sample was also a

self-selected convenience sample, where it was impossible to determine if participating subjects were different from nonparticipants, due to the anonymity requirements of USU's Housing Authority. The results should therefore not be generalized to the public at large without reservations. Responses could be very different for a racially diverse population, those with higher income, or those with marriages of longer duration or more children.

Recommendations for Future Research

While the results of this study show that there is a relationship between financial management and financial problems and marital satisfaction as had been suggested but not empirically tested (Godwin, 1990a; Lown & Chandler, 1993; Notarius & Markman, 1993; Siegel, 1990; Ulrichson & Hira, 1985), these results should only be taken as a first step. As explained earlier, the sample used for this study was not representative of the public at large and so generalizations can only be made with caution.

A similar study might be done, numbering surveys and correlating specific survey numbers with particular housing unit numbers. This would maintain the anonymity required by USU's Housing Authority, while allowing for identifying nonrespondents. Identification of housing units whose tenants did not respond would enable a researcher to deliver

a second survey to generate an even better response. It would also allow for surveying nonrespondents for a comparison with respondents.

A more diverse sample racially, culturally, with a wider income range, or with more diverse ages might be a desirable next step, in order to allow for generalizations for a larger population. The ideal for this would be a true random sample.

Since only one global question about perceptions was asked about financial management and financial problems each, a future study might focus on and further explore the role perceptions, expectations, and values about finances play in marital satisfaction. This may be of particular importance, since perceptions proved to be as important as actual behaviors in this study.

While previous studies have found marked gender differences in responses, such differences were found to be slight in this study. This raises the question about whether this is a trait unique to this sample or an indication that society is changing, so that gender differences regarding perception of marital satisfaction are becoming less pronounced and thus harder to detect. Further research could compare different age cohorts of couples and watch for changes in the magnitude of gender differences as time goes on.

Some earlier studies suggest that there may be precursors to financial problems such as unemployment or a growing family (Conger et al., 1990). A path model identifying such precursors might offer useful explanations. Alternately, a study could examine if following recommended financial management strategies might ameliorate financial problems due to stressors such as unemployment.

Implications for Practitioners

Godwin has suggested (1996b) that the lack of recent studies examining the relationship between financial management and marital satisfaction is due to the fact that financial management falls in the domain of one professional specialty, while marital issues are addressed by another. This study is one of the few attempting to bridge this gap.

This study's finding that 15% of marital satisfaction can be explained by financial problems and the perceived quality of financial management, in conjunction with the findings of other studies reporting that 39% (Geiss & O'Leary, 1981) or roughly one third (Aniol & Snyder, 1997) of marital therapy clients complain about financial difficulties or problems in couples therapy, may be of particular interest to therapists. However, Aniol and Snyder (1997) also found that about one third of financial counseling clients complain of "general relationship

distress" (p. 351). Thus the findings of this study may be of interest to both marital therapists, financial educators, and financial counselors.

Implications for Therapists

The standard approach in therapy to view finances as merely a content issue (that may be disregarded in favor of therapeutic process) may not be the best way, when the findings of this study are considered. Findings of this study that 15% of marital satisfaction can be explained by measurable financial problems and the perception of how well finances are managed, combined with findings of previous research that 39% of marital therapy clients report financial problems, appear to support the recommendation by Poduska and Allred (1990) that marriage and family therapists would benefit from being trained in family finance as part of their graduate requirements.

A requirement for training in family finance would be comparable to a current AAMFT requirement for a course in treatment of sexual dysfunctions. The sexual dysfunctions course requirement appears justified when one considers estimates for the prevalence of sexual problems. According to McCary (1979), psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists report that up to 75% of clients present with sexual problems. While the ratio of reported financial

problems in therapy is not as high, a prevalence rate of 39% (Geiss & O'Leary, 1981) seems to nevertheless justify the addition of such a requirement. This kind of requirement can be justified further when one considers the finding in this study that, for the whole sample, 15% of the variance in marital satisfaction can be explained by financial problems and the perception of how finances are managed. This justification is further strengthened when including the finding that for men alone the explanatory power of perceived quality of financial management on marital satisfaction increases to 24% (compared to a lesser 12% for women). These ratios can only be expected to increase further, as the cultural and economic climates continue to encourage increasing indebtedness, while real income grows only slightly or even stagnates periodically (Brush, 1996; Canner et al., 1995).

In addition, finding that the length of marriage is inversely correlated with marital satisfaction, along with the financial variables, may be of particular interest for premarital intervention. If financial skills can be taught, so that a couple can perceive their finances as well managed, financial problems may be reduced along with their effect on marriage as time goes on.

An Appropriate Theoretical Framework for Therapy

Since the findings of this study identify both financial management behaviors and measurable financial problems, as well as perceptions of the above, a cognitive behavioral marital therapy model (Baucom & Epstein, 1990) might be an appropriate framework in a therapeutic setting. The cognitive behavioral model uses an integration of cognitive (thought processes), behavioral, and affective (feelings) domains in psychotherapy to assess and change human behaviors and interactions (Baucom & Epstein, 1990). The therapy process customarily begins with assessment of all three domains. The findings of this study, that financial management behaviors and perceptions as well as financial problems and perceptions may affect how satisfied a couple is with their relationship, may make it practical to include finances and how they are handled as part of the initial assessment routine.

Assessment

A cognitive-behavioral therapist usually assesses all three domains. Assessment for an aspect of a marriage such as finances can reveal a lack of skills, such as communication skills or problem-solving skills. The therapist can note negative exchanges between spouses, which

may carry over into other areas of the marriage, as well as the reinforcers that maintain them.

Since perceptions about finances were identified in this study as having a significant effect on a marital relationship, assessing a couple's cognitive distortions and unrealistic expectancies regarding their finances becomes another important aspect. There also may be a discrepancy between cognitions and behaviors. There may be certain beliefs and perceptions expressed, yet the actual observable behaviors may not fit with such expressed perceptions (Baucom & Epstein, 1990; Epstein, Schlesinger, & Dryden, 1988).

One secondary finding of this study, not discussed earlier, may be of interest to therapists here. The primary manager of a household's finances was asked to complete the survey. In 69.1% of the cases it was the wife, yet on another question, 66% indicated that both spouses have primary input into budgeting. This finding suggests that what respondents think they are doing and what they actually are doing may not always agree. Thus careful, detailed assessment is essential for a therapist to learn if professed perceptions and expectancies match actual behaviors, regarding finances as well as other aspects of the relationship. There may even be considerable differences in previously undiscussed expectancies regarding

how finances should be handled between spouses, which can lead to disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the marriage, if the spouse unknowingly does not live up to them.

Finally, the affective domain needs to be assessed. This includes finding out how each spouse feels about the relationship. Have conflicting expectancies about finances and other potential issues known to reduce marital satisfaction been allowed to diminish the positive feelings for one another? Are differences resolved or are they allowed to fester?

As the finding mentioned earlier illustrates, a couple may perceive that they do one thing (such as share responsibility for finances), yet upon closer examination they actually do another (such as the wife handling most of the details, with possible occasional input or approval from a husband). It is important for a therapist to notice such discrepancies when assessing the cognitive domain, in order to tailor effective interventions.

Interventions

Following assessment, goals should be developed in cooperation with the client couple, aimed at changing behavior patterns and increasing skills (Falloon, 1991; Nichols & Schwartz, 1995). Interventions could be designed for any or all of the three domains. It is assumed that even

changes in only one domain will stimulate additional changes in the other domains (Baucom & Epstein, 1990).

Skills training in both general communication and problem-solving skills, as well as specific financial management skills, can be combined as a useful first step. For instance, clients could be taught how to set up a budget or spending plan (Garman & Forgue, 1997), while at the same time learning how to discuss what should be included in one, in a reflective way. They could also be taught how to solve the problem of insufficient resources for everything they would like to include in such a spending plan (Falloon, 1991), using standard problem-solving skills. Clients could also be helped to identify potential reinforcers for desired behaviors. Clients could then be assigned to practice at home the skills learned in session.

Distorted cognitions, such as unrealistic expectations in a partner as provider or what a family "needs" as far as material goods go, can be challenged and restructured to meet the financial realities of a couple (Baucom & Epstein, 1991).

Finally, emotional effectiveness training could be included, helping a couple separate their feeling for one another from their financial disagreements. Interventions in one of the domains, behavioral, cognitive, or affective, tend to stimulate change in the other two domains as well.

Thus, financial skills learned may change perceptions about finances as well as the relationship with the spouse. This may stimulate permanent changes in all domains and ultimately improve satisfaction with the marital relationship.

Conclusion

The finding of this study that financial management behaviors and problems, as well as perceptions of how finances were handled and how serious financial problems were perceived to be, can provide valuable insight for a marital therapist. Such insight could be used to tailor interventions based on a cognitive behavioral marital model, which could permeate isomorphically throughout all three domains addressed by this model, but ultimately transform the marital system for the better. However, a marital therapist probably should not attempt going much beyond incorporating simple budgeting into therapy. For complex issues, such as resolving problems with creditors, questions about income taxation, or retirement and estate planning, clients should be referred to a qualified financial counselor or financial planner.

Implication for Financial Counselors and Educators

Financial counselors usually are well trained in assessing financial problems or financial management skills.

They usually are proficient at setting up a spending plan or intercede with creditors on behalf of the client. However, while personal finance texts suggest that conflicts about money are a primary cause of marital problems (Garman & Forgue, 1997), financial counselors and educators are usually not trained to assess or even recognize marital issues. Aniol and Snyder (1997) reported that one third of financial counseling clients complained about marital problems. Their report gains further importance for financial counselors when taking the findings of this study into consideration. This study found that perceptions of how well finances are managed, financial problems, and the perception of how severe financial problems are can affect a couple's marital satisfaction.

A financial counselor or educator thus should be aware that there is a good chance, as high as one in three, that marital issues may present in financial counseling sessions along with the expected financial problems. A counselor can model effective communication and or help clients work out a spending plan or debt reduction plan while teaching communication skills along the way.

However, results of this study illustrate that not just actual financial management behaviors and problems, but also the perceptions regarding those may be part of the picture. Thus a financial counselor, while primarily concerned with

teaching new skills and behaviors, may need to inquire about such perceptions as expectations about financial issues and well as what role they play for the couple or each partner. Taking perceptions into account could help a financial counselor or educator to give advice that fits the client needs better, rather than when just behaviors and skills are taken into consideration (Danes, Rettig, & Bauer, 1991). A better fit may mean better follow through by the client.

Finally, a financial counselor or educator should be able to recognize when problems presented in a financial counseling session or class extend beyond the purely financial, but indicate underlying relationship problems. If the counselor can see that this is the case, it is time to make a referral to a trained marriage and family therapist.

Final Conclusions

While it has been suggested for some time that financial and marital issues are related (Garman & Forgue, 1997), little empirical evidence about this relationship or its magnitude existed to date. Results of this study suggest that financial and marital issues are indeed related. While the effects of financial management and problems on marital satisfaction were not very strong, more research with more diverse populations and better design are

needed to further examine these relationships and their magnitude. Such research would further clarify the importance for marital therapists, financial counselors, and educators to be aware of the relationship between financial and marital issues and help them provide relationship therapy, financial instruction, or financial counseling that is comprehensive and effective. In the meantime, these professionals could be aware of the mounting evidence that a relationship between marital issues and relationship issues does indeed exist and thus could watch for it during assessment and adjust interventions accordingly, if needed.

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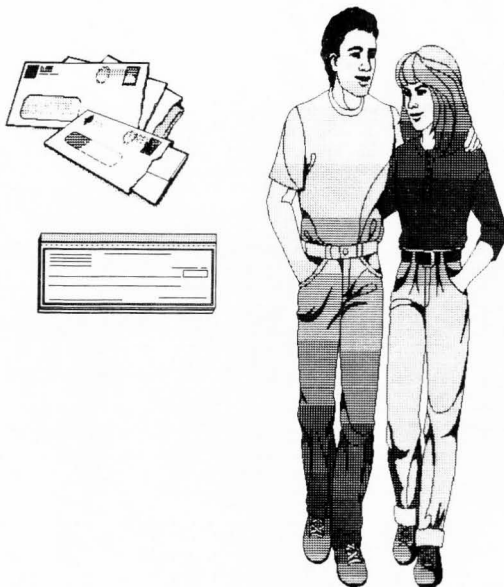
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Instrument



Financial Management and Marriage

Utah State University Extension &
Department of Family & Human Development

Q - 1 Since this survey is about couples, have you ever been or are you currently in a committed relationship like marriage?

- 1 NO (Disregard the survey)
- 2 YES (Please complete the survey)

We appreciate your time in answering a few questions about finances in marriage and similar relationships. We would like the partner who usually handles the finances and pays the bills in your household to fill out the survey. If you are currently divorced or not in a long-term relationship, please answer the questions with that previous relationship in mind. You can write your answers directly on the survey.

The first group of questions we would like to ask you, deals with how you manage your finances. Most of us have ways to handle our finances. Please circle how often you:

Q - 2 Make plans on how to use your money

- 1 NEVER
- 2 SELDOM
- 3 OCCASIONALLY
- 4 USUALLY
- 5 MOST OF THE TIME

Q - 3 Write down where money is spent

- 1 NEVER
- 2 SELDOM
- 3 OCCASIONALLY
- 4 USUALLY
- 5 MOST OF THE TIME

Q - 4 Evaluate spending on a regular basis

- 1 NEVER
- 2 SELDOM
- 3 OCCASIONALLY
- 4 USUALLY
- 5 MOST OF THE TIME

Q - 5 Use a written budget

- 1 NEVER
- 2 SELDOM
- 3 OCCASIONALLY
- 4 USUALLY
- 5 MOST OF THE TIME

Q - 6 Comparing yourself with other couples you know, how well are finances managed in your marriage?

- 1 MUCH BETTER THAN MOST
- 2 BETTER THAN MOST
- 3 ABOUT AS WELL AS MOST
- 4 WORSE THAN MOST
- 5 MUCH WORSE THAN MOST

All families have some problems when it comes to spending money. How often do you have the following problem?

Q - 7 Cannot afford to buy adequate insurance

- 1 NEVER
- 2 SELDOM
- 3 OCCASIONALLY
- 4 USUALLY
- 5 MOST OF THE TIME

Q - 8 Do not have enough money to pay for health insurance

- 1 NEVER
- 2 SELDOM
- 3 OCCASIONALLY
- 4 USUALLY
- 5 MOST OF THE TIME

Q - 9 Do not have enough money for doctor, dentist, or medicine

- 1 NEVER
- 2 SELDOM
- 3 OCCASIONALLY
- 4 USUALLY
- 5 MOST OF THE TIME

Q - 10 Cannot afford to buy new shoes or clothes

- 1 NEVER
- 2 SELDOM
- 3 OCCASIONALLY
- 4 USUALLY
- 5 MOST OF THE TIME

Q - 11 Cannot afford to pay for utilities

- 1 NEVER
- 2 SELDOM
- 3 OCCASIONALLY
- 4 USUALLY
- 5 MOST OF THE TIME

Q - 12 Cannot afford to keep car(s) in running order

- 1 NEVER
- 2 SELDOM
- 3 OCCASIONALLY
- 4 USUALLY
- 5 MOST OF THE TIME

Q - 13 Comparing yourself to other couples you know, how severe do you consider the financial problems you are experiencing in your marriage?

- 1 MUCH MORE SEVERE THAN MOST
- 2 MORE SEVERE THAN MOST
- 3 ABOUT THE SAME AS MOST
- 4 LESS SEVERE THAN MOST
- 5 MUCH LESS SEVERE THAN MOST

Since we are interested in relationships, we would like to ask you some questions about your couple relationship as well.

Most couples experience disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list:

Q - 14 Religious matters

- 1 ALWAYS AGREE
- 2 ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE
- 3 OCCASIONALLY AGREE
- 4 ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE
- 5 ALWAYS DISAGREE

Q - 15 Demonstrations of affection

- 1 ALWAYS AGREE
- 2 ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE
- 3 OCCASIONALLY AGREE
- 4 ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE
- 5 ALWAYS DISAGREE

Q - 16 Making major decisions

- 1 ALWAYS AGREE
- 2 ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE
- 3 OCCASIONALLY AGREE
- 4 ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE
- 5 ALWAYS DISAGREE

Q - 17 Sex relations

- 1 ALWAYS AGREE
- 2 ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE
- 3 OCCASIONALLY AGREE
- 4 ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE
- 5 ALWAYS DISAGREE

Q - 18 Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)

- 1 ALWAYS AGREE
- 2 ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE
- 3 OCCASIONALLY AGREE
- 4 ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE
- 5 ALWAYS DISAGREE

Q - 19 Career Decisions

- 1 ALWAYS AGREE
- 2 ALMOST ALWAYS AGREE
- 3 OCCASIONALLY AGREE
- 4 ALMOST ALWAYS DISAGREE
- 5 ALWAYS DISAGREE

Now we would like to ask you a few questions that are more sensitive. These questions deal with conflict in marital or similar relationships.

Q - 20 How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation or terminating your relationship?

- 1 ALL THE TIME
- 2 MOST OF THE TIME
- 3 MORE OFTEN THAN NOT
- 4 OCCASIONALLY
- 5 RARELY
- 6 NEVER

- Q - 21 How often do you and your partner quarrel?
- 1 ALL THE TIME
 - 2 MOST OF THE TIME
 - 3 MORE OFTEN THAN NOT
 - 4 OCCASIONALLY
 - 5 RARELY
 - 6 NEVER
- Q - 22 Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?
- 1 ALL THE TIME
 - 2 MOST OF THE TIME
 - 3 MORE OFTEN THAN NOT
 - 4 OCCASIONALLY
 - 5 RARELY
 - 6 NEVER
- Q - 23 How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?
- 1 ALL THE TIME
 - 2 MOST OF THE TIME
 - 3 MORE OFTEN THAN NOT
 - 4 OCCASIONALLY
 - 5 RARELY
 - 6 NEVER
- Q - 24 Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?
- 1 EVERY DAY
 - 2 ALMOST EVERY DAY
 - 3 OCCASIONALLY
 - 4 RARELY
 - 5 NEVER
- Q - 25 Comparing yourself with other couples you know, how happy are you with your relationship?
- 1 MUCH HAPPIER THAN MOST
 - 2 HAPPIER THAN MOST
 - 3 ABOUT AS HAPPY AS MOST
 - 4 UNHAPPIER THAN MOST
 - 5 MUCH UNHAPPIER THAN MOST

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

Q - 26 Have a stimulating exchange of ideas

- 1 NEVER
- 2 LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH
- 3 ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH
- 4 ONCE OF TWICE A WEEK
- 5 ONCE A DAY
- 6 MORE OFTEN

Q - 26 Work together on a project

- 1 NEVER
- 2 LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH
- 3 ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH
- 4 ONCE OF TWICE A WEEK
- 5 ONCE A DAY
- 6 MORE OFTEN

Q - 28 Calmly discuss something

- 1 NEVER
- 2 LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH
- 3 ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH
- 4 ONCE OF TWICE A WEEK
- 5 ONCE A DAY
- 6 MORE OFTEN

Q - 29 Comparing yourself with other couples you know, how happy are you with your marriage?

- 1 MUCH HAPPIER THAN MOST
- 2 HAPPIER THAN MOST
- 3 ABOUT AS HAPPY AS MOST
- 4 UNHAPPIER THAN MOST
- 5 MUCH UNHAPPIER THAN MOST

Finally, we'd like to ask you a little about yourself.

What is your gender?

- 1 MALE
- 2 FEMALE

What is your present age? _____

Are you a US citizen?

- 1 YES
- 2 If NO, what is your nationality _____
and how long have you lived in the US
_____ Years or _____ Months

Marital status:

- 1 FIRST MARRIAGE FOR BOTH
- 2 REMARRIAGE FOR ONE
- 3 REMARRIAGE FOR BOTH
- 4 DIVORCED OR SEPARATED, NOT REMARRIED
- 5 LIVING TOGETHER

How long have you been married to your current spouse
_____ Years or _____ Months _____ Not applicable

How many children do you have? _____ (write in number)

How many years of education have you completed?

_____ (write in number)

What of the following best describes your racial or ethnic identification?

- 1 CAUCASIAN
- 2 AFRICAN AMERICAN
- 3 HISPANIC
- 4 NATIVE AMERICAN/ ALASKAN NATIVE
- 5 ASIAN AMERICAN
- 6 PACIFIC ISLANDER
- 7 NON-RESIDENT ALIEN

What was your approximate FAMILY income from all sources before taxes, in 1996?

- 1 Less than \$10,000
- 2 \$10,000 to \$19,999
- 3 \$20,000 to \$29,999
- 4 \$30,000 to \$39,999
- 5 MORE THAN \$40,000

Who has primary input into budgeting?

- 1 HUSBAND
- 2 WIFE
- 3 BOTH HUSBAND AND WIFE

How many credit cards do you currently have? ____ (Write in number)

Do you have OTHER comments you think we should know about this important topic?

To receive your \$5.00 coupon, fill out this blue, numbered survey and drop it off at the USU Dairy Products Lab (the ice cream counter) in the Nutrition and Food Science Building on 1200 East. For those of you who already completed and returned the survey, we would like you to again fill out this blue, numbered copy and return it for your \$5.00 coupon. We apologize for the inconvenience, but that is the only way we have of knowing we don't have duplicate surveys from the same household.

THANK YOU!

Appendix B

Informed Consent

To families in USU Family Housing:

A couple of weeks ago, a survey on financial management practices and marital satisfaction was delivered throughout USU family housing. We discovered some unexpected problems with how the survey was administered. As a result, we received very few completed surveys. We are enclosing another copy of the survey and are offering you a \$ 5.00 coupon redeemable at the USU Dairy Products Lab for completing and returning the survey.

You have undoubtedly encountered the challenges that finances can place on couple relationships. But as important as finances are to relationship satisfaction, surprisingly little research has been done to examine this relationship. For the purpose of a Master's thesis we will ask you questions about your financial affairs as well as your relationship. We would like the partner who usually handles the finances and pays the bills in your household to spend about 10 minutes to complete this survey on that important topic. You can write your answers directly on the survey.

This is a study about married or cohabiting couples. We are also interested in your responses if you are not currently in a committed relationship, but had one in the past and can answer the questions in retrospect. If you have never been married or had a similar couple relationship you can disregard this survey. Your choice to participate in this study is voluntary, and poses no risks to you for participating. You can choose to not participate with no consequence whatsoever. **We will have no way to determine who participated and who did not.**

Your answers are important to us. A good rate of return will help us draw more accurate conclusions. The results of the survey will be shared in a future edition of the Extension Family Resource and Education Center newsletter. If you would like other information about the findings you can contact Dr. Lee.

If completing the survey raises any concerns about financial practices or your relationship, we would encourage you to contact Dr. Lee at 797-1551 or the Family Life Center at 753-5696 where relationship or financial counseling are available free or at nominal cost.

To receive your \$5.00 coupon, drop this completed blue survey off at the USU Dairy Products Lab (the Aggie ice cream counter) in the Nutrition and Food Science Building on 1200 East. If you already completed and returned your survey, we would like you to again fill out this blue, numbered copy and return it for your \$5.00 coupon. We apologize for the inconvenience, but this is the only way we have of knowing we don't have duplicate surveys from the same household.

Thanks, once again, for your help.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Lee, Ph.D.
Professor and Extension Specialist

Barbara C. Kerkmann
Accredited Financial Counselor and Graduate Student