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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIFFERENTIATION AND RELIGION IN THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIP: IT'S IMPACT ON MARITAL SATISFACTION IN BLACK AND WHITE COUPLES

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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ABSTRACT

Bowen (1978) believed that all individuals develop emotional ties to their families of origin, termed differentiation, and that these ties determine emotional boundaries in subsequent relationships. In this study, differentiation pertained to a couple's ability to negotiate emotional boundaries in the marital system. In addition, this investigation considered Bowen's theoretical position between religion and differentiation, as well as examined the relationship between differentiation and marital variables: communication and conflict resolution, by race.

A convenience sample of 49 Black couples and 45 White couples was used. The groups were similar in terms of overall demographics, including SES, education, and years married.

The model was tested using LISREL VIII as an observed variable model. The disturbance terms for the endogenous variables were set to correlate. The models were considered separately for Black and White couples, then a Chi-square difference test procedure was performed to ascertain whether the structure of the model was the same for Black and White couples.

The results indicated that there were few differences between Black and White couples overall. However, in the model tests, how marital satisfaction was measured made a difference. Using the KMS, a global measure of marital satisfaction, both
husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction were significantly predicted by differentiation when using the husbands' model and the Black wives' model. When using the husbands' MCLI, husbands' marital satisfaction was predicted but not the wives'. And with the wives' MCLI, their marital satisfaction was predicted but not the husbands'. With the husbands' and wives' ENRICH model, wives' marital satisfaction was significantly predicted but not the husbands'.

T-tests showed significant mean differences by race for husbands' KMS and for wives' KMS. There were also significant differences for communication and conflict resolution. In general, the patterns of correlations were the same for Black and White couples.

In sum, this study supported the relationships between differentiation and marital satisfaction, but did not indicate a significant relationship between differentiation and religion. Additionally, only in the husbands' KMS model did religion significantly predict wives' marital satisfaction, but no direct relationships were found between religion and husbands' marital satisfaction in any model.
Dedicated to

The memory of my husband, Richard

My mother, Christina C. Hutchins

My children, Tiffany and Richard II

My sister, Christina R. Hutchins

Mom, Thank you for your LOVE, SUPPORT, and PRAYERS.
I am truly grateful and blessed.
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This dissertation is dedicated to my late husband Richard and to my children, Tiffany and Richard II for their many years of understanding and sacrifices as we earned this degree together. I would also like to thank my mother who deposited in me the desire to reach for the sky and that all things are possible through Christ Jesus! Thanks also to my sister, Christina, who often changed her schedule to accommodate mine or that of my children.

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**FIELDS OF STUDY**

Major Field: Human Ecology
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract ........................................................................................................................ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication ...................................................................................................................iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments ............................................................................................... v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita .............................................................................................................................vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables .............................................................................................................xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures .............................................................................................................xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction .....................................................................................................1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Cultural Variant/Emergent Model Perspective .....................................3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1 Afrocentrism ............................................................................5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Marital Satisfaction .............................................................................7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 Racial Differences ...................................................................8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 Communication and Conflict .................................................10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2.1 Racial Differences in Communication/Conflict .........13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Religion ..............................................................................................16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Theoretical Perspective on Marital Functioning ..................................17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Statement of the Problem .................................................................19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Significance of the Problem ...............................................................21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Research Objectives and Hypotheses ...........................................23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Definition of Terms ............................................................................24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Review of the Literature .................................................................................. 25
   2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................. 25
   2.2 Black Intimate Relationships .................................................................. 25
       2.2.1 Historical Accounts ................................................................ 26
       2.1.2 Relationship Structure ........................................................... 27
       2.1.3 Satisfaction ............................................................................. 32
       2.1.4 Religion and Spirituality ........................................................ 34
   2.3 Differentiation ..................................................................................... 36
   2.4 Differentiation and Marital Outcomes ................................................. 39
   2.5 Communication and Conflict ............................................................... 42
   2.6 Religion and Marital Outcomes ........................................................... 45
   2.7 Overview of the Study ......................................................................... 48

3. Methodology ................................................................................................... 52
   3.1 Introduction .......................................................................................... 52
   3.2 Sample ................................................................................................ 52
       3.2.1 Sampling Procedures .............................................................. 52
       3.2.2 Characteristics of the Sample ................................................. 55
   3.3 Instrumentation ................................................................................... 58
       3.3.1 Marital Comparison Level Index ............................................ 61
       3.3.2 Kansas Marital Satisfaction .................................................... 61
       3.3.3 Religious Behavior Questionnaire .......................................... 62
   3.4 Data Analysis ...................................................................................... 63

4. Results ............................................................................................................ 65
   4.1 Introduction .......................................................................................... 65
   4.2 T-Tests ................................................................................................ 65
   4.3 Correlations ........................................................................................ 66
       4.3.1 Black Husbands ..................................................................... 66
       4.3.2 White Husbands ............................................................... 70
C. Instruments .......................................................................................................................... 120

1. Differentiation in the Family System (DIFS)
2. Evaluating Nurturing Relationship Issues Communication Happiness (ENRICH)
3. Marital Comparison Level Index (MCLI)
4. Kansas Marital Satisfaction (KMS)
5. Religious Behavior Questionnaire (RBQ)
6. Demographic questionnaire
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics for the Sample</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Correlations of Subscales from Black Husbands and Wives</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Correlations of Subscales from White Husband and Wives</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Husbands’ Model Test Results for Three Measures of Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Wives’ Model Test Results for Three Measures of Marital Satisfaction</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Theoretical Framework for the Study</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Husbands’ KMS Model</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Husbands’ MCLI Model</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Husbands’ ENRICH Model</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Wives’ KMS Model</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Wives’ MCLI Model</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Wives’ ENRICH Model</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1970, it was reported that almost 50% of all marriages in the United States ended in divorce (Cherlin, 1981; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984). By 1989, this figure had risen to 67% (Martin & Bumpass, 1989), with Black-Americans having the highest rates of divorce (Chadwick & Heaton, 1992; Martin & Bumpass, 1989). The Census Bureau recently reported that approximately 1.15 million people have obtained divorces from 1970 to 1996 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). These soaring numbers have ultimately lead to reports that the United States has the highest rates of divorce of any industrialized nation (Kitson with Holmes, 1992). These high divorce rates point to the need to better understand causes of marital instability and to explore and implement better ways of improving the quality of marriages in the United States.

Recent statistics reflect quantitative differences in the marital statuses of Black and White Americans. In 1993, the U.S. Bureau of the Census reported that the rate of divorced or separated Black Americans under age 35 was 29%, whereas the rate for White Americans was 15%. In 1995, 7.8% of all Black men were divorced, versus 7.6% for all White men. During the same period, 11.6% of all Black women compared to 9.6%
of White women were divorced (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996). What needs to be determined are the qualitative differences of Black and White marital experiences (Gottman, 1993a).

Divorce adversely impacts many areas of societal and family functioning. Adults experiencing divorce are reported at risk for poor mental and physical health, and experience increased risks of accidents, suicides, and homicides (Bloom, Asher, & White, 1978). Divorce also impacts children's well-being (Emery, 1982; Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982), often resulting in poor academic performance, poor social competence, depression, and a variety of conduct-related disorders which may be short or long term in duration (Cowan & Cowan, 1987, 1992; Easterbrooks, 1987; Gottman & Katz, 1989; Hetherington, Cox, and Cox, 1978). Despite these negative consequences of marital failure, little information is known about marital processes that are predictive of divorce (Gottman, 1993b; White, 1990). Thus, research efforts should focus on whether or not there are specific paths related to marital disruption or stability that are systematically related to the qualities of a marriage.

The purpose of this investigation is to explore the relationship among several variables that contribute to marital satisfaction. The goal of the investigation is to explore differences, if any, between Black and White couples. Of interest in this study is whether couples' ways of managing separateness and connectedness in relationships (differentiation) and religiosity (as measured by religious behavior) impact communication and conflict resolution which in turn impact marital satisfaction. It is also of interest to assess the direct relationships between differentiation and religiosity.
and marital satisfaction. The following discusses the various constructs included in this study.

**Cultural Variant/Emergent Model Perspective**

The cultural variant perspective developed by Allen (1978), and the emergent model described by Fine, Schwebel, and Myers (1987) can be utilized to provide insight into normative processes in Black family functioning to allow for a more relevant understanding of the experiences of and satisfaction in their marriages. From a cultural variant perspective, the distinguishing characteristics of the Black family are viewed as culturally unique (Allen, 1978, Sudarkasa, 1997). This perspective acknowledges the variation in cultural and social circumstances in Black and White families, and how they differ both in structure and way of functioning. Without it, in the face of White-dominated research and racist scientific investigation, it would be arduous to understand life in Black America (Nobles, 1997).

Billingsley (1968, 1992) views the Black community as a "ethnic subsociety" set apart from the larger White culture. Thus, in order to survive, the Black family has had to adapt to a larger society that held different values. The cultural variant model would acknowledge that the roots of the Black-American family were created in Africa (Billingsley, 1992; Nobles, 1997). And, although there is no such entity as the Black family (Boyd-Franklin, 1989) due to the variation in values, characteristics, geographic origins, and levels of acculturation, to understand the relationships within the Black community, one must acknowledge a certain level of cultural similarity. Black people were brought to the United States as slaves from Africa. The institution of slavery served to destroy the African
family, its kinship bonds, and the cultural system. The slave masters deprived African men and women of their family ties, customs, language, and spiritual rituals (Kinney, 1978).

One of the most enduring aspects of the Black African heritage is the emphasis on the large multigenerational groupings of relatives (Staples & Johnson, 1993, Sudarkasa, 1997), through matrilineages (mother line) or patrilineages (father line). The African culture stressed the importance of the "survival of the tribe" (Mbiti, 1969; Nobles, 1980).

This sense of survival for the Black family has persisted throughout the years and has become one of the major strengths of the Black family today (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). Individuals and families raised under a Western philosophy of families (focusing on the individual and the nuclear family) would have difficulty comprehending a worldview that focuses on the whole (society) before that of its members (Nobles, 1980), as found in the African culture. As Mbiti (1969) stated regarding African-Americans view of self, "I am because we are; and because we are, therefore, I am" (p. 108).

Understanding the Black family in America also requires that one recognize the role of religion and spiritual beliefs among many Africans (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). First, religion permeates all aspects of life for the individual and community (Nobles, 1980), where all Africans belonged to the community. Second, religion has been such a way of life for Africans, that it was part of their existence, spanning their lives from conception to long after death (p.25).

Shimkin, Louie, and Frate (1978) identified critical elements that distinguished Black families from other structures found in other ethnic/racial groups. The African-American family is a unique cultural form complete with its own congenital resources. The
family is made up of several individual households. The structure of the African-American family is traceable to Africa, although some of the present features of the family present adaptive responses to certain pressures of society. The extended family is visible and provides needed support during times of crisis and celebration. Further, the family often provides many social and psychological functions for the entire family (Shimkin, Louie, & Frate, 1978).

The emergent model perspective of the Black-American family, similar to the cultural variant model, focuses specifically on the African influence on the Black-American family. It acknowledges that determinants of Black family behavior and their existence in the American culture is based on their African cultural background (Fine, Schwebel, Myers, 1987). Therefore, investigations of the Black family must include an understanding of how various domains of family functioning were impacted by African influences.

Afrocentrism

Often in studies of African Americans, Afrocentrism, which is very important in their conceptual system, is omitted. Afrocentrism purports that all things are interrelated and interdependent (Myers, 1988), similar to that of Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968) an orientation used widely in studying families. Thus, this notion yields a holistic worldview. Afrocentrism further purports that reality is both spiritual and material simultaneously. Thus, when studying the "culture" of Black families, one must take into account the environmental or structural, spiritual, and material influences on their existence.
The Afrocentric perspective is not exclusive to Africa or African Americans, although it originated in Africa or from Black people of African descent (Myers, 1988). Afrocentrism is a system that has fostered human culture and civilization as well as provided a foundation to all major religions (Ben-Jochannon, 1970, in Myers, 1988; Diop, 1974; & James, 1954). Moreover, this system is embedded within the structure of our culture. However, other cultures are not without Afrocentric possibilities (Myers, 1988). There is an “energy” that permeates Black American existence, which is the sustenance of all phenomenon (Frye, 1978, in Myers, 1988).

Myers writes:

In this regard everything becomes one thing, spirit manifesting. Spirit refers to that permeating essence known in an extra-sensory fashion (energy, consciousness, God). When the spiritual/material ontology is adhered to, one loses the sense of individualized ego/mind and experiences the harmony of the collective identity of being one with the source of all good. Consubstantiation, the whole being in each of its parts, is assumed (p. 12).

An African world-view reflects this collective identity with families being comprised of several households (Fine, Schwebel, & Myers, 1987; Nobels, 1978), not all of whom are related by blood, called fictive kin (Sudarkasa, 1997). Many of these families are child-centered, with evidence of the mother-child relationship being more meaningful to Black women than the marital relationship (Bell, 1971; Staples, 1994). From an Afrocentric perspective, however, the highest level of interdependence is in
interpersonal relationships, those between men and women, (Myers, 1988). It is important, then, to comprehend the influences that the various cultures have had on these relationships. Black marriages then, must be studied from a holistic perspective. That is, they must be understood within the context of their reality or culture, one in which they have not always had direct control.

Summary

This study is not designed to examine the link between African past and American present (Sudarkasa, 1980). However, the antecedents of Black-American male-female relationships must be presented in order to aid in interpreting the results of this study, and to recognize that the influences of the African culture and slavery still influence Black-American's today.

Marital Satisfaction

Equally as important as discovering determinants of marital disruption, perhaps, is finding out how couples achieve happy or satisfactory marriages. Early studies defined marital satisfaction as "the subjective feeling of happiness, satisfaction and pleasure experienced by a spouse when considering all current aspects of his marriage" (Hawkins, 1968, p. 648). Satisfaction characterizes how a husband and wife describe and evaluate their marriage (Fitzpatrick, 1988). Marital satisfaction is a subjective evaluation of a marital relationship as being good or satisfying (Lewis & Spanier, 1979).

Lewis and Spanier (1979) suggested that marital quality or satisfaction encompasses a range of terms (i.e., satisfaction, happiness, role strain and conflict,
adjustment, etc.), which are often used interchangeably in marital research (Fitzpatrick, 1988; Lewis & Spanier, 1979). These terms represent qualitative dimensions and assessments of marriages. This variable is conceived of as a continuum running from much satisfaction to much dissatisfaction (Hawkins, 1968), and reflect numerous characteristics of marital interaction and marital functioning (Lewis & Spanier, 1979). Marriages that are high in quality are associated with adequate communication, good judgement, a high level of marital happiness, and a high degree of marital satisfaction (Lewis & Spanier, 1979). Marriages with the poorest satisfaction, adjustment, happiness, etc, will be the most susceptible to marital disruption.

Fitzpatrick (1988) measured marital success based on marital satisfaction and marital stability. She found that happily married couples, in contrast with those who are reportedly unhappy, believe they can resolve their problems and freely express emotion to their spouse. Happily married couples also believe they communicate effectively, and that they accurately interpret their spouses nonverbal communication (Fitzpatrick, 1988). Researchers observation supported these postures. Theoretically, these couples tend to be more satisfied in their marriages than unhappy couples. What is not so clear are the influences that contribute to happy marriages, and subsequent marital satisfaction.

Racial Differences in Marital Satisfaction

Theoretically, there are reasons to believe that the marriage experiences of Black Americans may be different from that of White Americans. This can best be understood by examining the historical antecedents of Black marriages in the United States. Sudarkasa (1997) postulated that the African heritage, emphasizing consanguinity (blood
ties) defines the family and relational experiences of Black Americans. This heritage emphasized the importance of kin or family, which included extended family members and often others within the community. Conversely, the European tradition accentuates conjugality (marital kinship). White American marriages are less impacted by extended family networks, placing more emphasis on marital stability in assessing family functioning (Sudarkasa, 1997).

Asante's (1981) work focused on the collectivist heritage of African Americans, that is, the well being of the group versus the individual. He believed that collectivism encouraged more egalitarian decision making, mutuality in taking care of others, and more frequent and open expressions of love among African-American marriages. The impact of slavery is said to have adversely impacted the stability of such marriages (Staples, 1994; Sudarkasa, 1997), as defined by Euro-American standards.

Past research has indicated that African-Americans experience lower marital quality than do European Americans (Adelmann, Chadwick, & Baerger, 1996; Glenn, 1989). Gaines (1995), however, suggested that the measures of quality used in such studies might be ethnically biased toward European-American ideals. As an example, Dainton (1999) critiqued the use of Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), a marital adjustment/satisfaction tool widely used in the family science field with African-Americans. Respondents are asked to choose one of several responses that most accurately reflect their feelings about their martial relationship. The response that receives the highest score reads "I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does." This, according to Dainton (1999),
reflects more of an individualistic perspective, whereas stating one is willing to do their fair share to see that the relationship succeeds, the response receiving the lowest score, is more representative of a collectivist perspective. Collectivist values such as loyalty, obligation, and dependency, which are representative of Black cultural norms, are absent from the instrument and may point to biases within the instrument.

In general, an exploratory study on the meanings and experiences of marriage across various ethnic groups, Dainton (1999) found that both African American and European Americans viewed marriage as positive, sharing some similar ideals. However, during these face-to-face interviews, she found that African Americans were less likely to focus on the companionship aspect of marriage than were European American couples.

This study was designed to utilize marital satisfaction as an evaluative or dependent measure. However, there has been much controversy regarding ways to define and operationalize marital satisfaction (Sabatelli, 1988). Therefore, relevant literature utilizing variables synonymous with marital satisfaction will be reviewed as well.

Communication and Conflict

Communication describes the giving and receiving of messages in relationships (Rice, 1990). It applies to verbal and nonverbal languaging, as people try to understand and/or influence one another. The ability to communicate and understand one another is an important factor in overall marital satisfaction (Honeycutt, 1986). An inability to communicate effectively may lead to conflict in interpersonal relationships. Therefore, communication and conflict resolution are briefly reviewed as they pertain to mediating variables in this study.
Most researchers agree that communication is strongly related to marital happiness (Fitzpatrick, 1988). Further, communication is considered pivotal to the achievement of satisfying marriages. In addition, Boland and Follingstad (1987) determined that both content (subject matter) and process (style) communication are related to marital satisfaction and are important predictors of marital stability and satisfaction. Rappaport and Harrell (1972) found that reciprocity of positive exchange has been implicated as the single most important description of a good marriage in the clinical literature. Lastly, Tolstedt and Stokes (1983) found that verbal intimacy, defined as self-disclosure, was related to marital satisfaction.

The association between communication and marital adjustment is so large that any event having an effect on one will necessarily have a similar effect on the other (Navran, 1967). Further, verbal communication is more positively associated with good marital adjustment and satisfaction than is nonverbal communication (Navran, 1967). However, couples who report good marital adjustment utilize both types of communication. Navran (1967) found that happy couples possess good communication skills. These couples are more likely to: a) talk to each other more, b) convey the feeling that they understand what is being said to them, c) have a wider range of topics of conversation available to them, d) keep the communication channels open, e) show more sensitivity to each of his/her feelings, f) personalize their language symbols, and g) make more use of supplementary nonverbal techniques of communication. (Navran, 1967). Thus, marital adjustment is positively correlated with capacity to communicate.
Self-disclosure is a form of communication that has been associated with the development of interpersonal relationships (Fitzpatrick, 1988). The use of self-disclosure is thought to be an essential component of happy marriages (Levinger & Senn, 1967). In fact, a lack of self-disclosure may signal the end of the relationship (Fitzpatrick, 1988). In established relationships, such as a marriage, the role of self-disclosure is not clear, although self-disclosure appears to decrease as relationships move through stages of deterioration (Baxter, 1985). These findings leave questions about the role of disclosure in maintaining intimate relationships (Bochner, 1983). Newer models debate the trend toward increasing openness between martial partners. According to Bochner (1983), no marriage can sustain total openness (self-disclosure) over long periods. To protect oneself or one's spouse, it is often necessary to conceal one's feelings, often causing a tension between disclosure and protection.

Conflict is the interchange of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and often interference from another in their attempt to achieve goals (Folger & Poole, 1984). All relationships experience some level of conflict (Rice, 1990). Because the needs, desires and ambitions of husbands do not necessarily parallel those of their wives, some forms of conflict are inevitable (Fitzpatrick, 1988). In fact, Argyle and Furnham (1983) found that couples who have the greatest potential for relational satisfaction, also have the greatest potential for conflict. Conflicts in marriages are normal, but the inability or failure to deal effectively with conflict has been viewed as the most powerful force discouraging marital satisfaction (Cuber & Harroff, 1965).
Racial Differences in Communication and Conflict.

Black and White Americans are said to have differing communication styles. Past cross ethnic comparisons of self-disclosure patterns have found that European-Americans are more disclosive than African-Americans (Littlefield, 1974), whereas more recent research indicates the opposite (Kochman, 1981).

To understand communication from an African-American point of view, one must necessarily know that their language is described throughout their ethnic culture. That is, their language is socially and historically emergent (Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau, 1993), a process that is always changing. Further, those in intimate relationships co-create and maintain the ethnic culture as a function of identity.

Communication styles express the core symbols of the ethnic culture and their enacted identities (Hecht, Collier, Ribeau, 1993). Conversely, the core symbols represent stylistic notes that were tendencies of African-American culture. Four basic values of African-American culture, conveyed through communication are a) sharing one's life with family in close relationships, b) uniqueness or individual style, c) affective humanism more positive attitudes, and d) diurnal orientation which allows for things to be both good and evil rather than either/or (Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau, 1993). Sharing is also characteristic of the African-American communication styles. It is played out by touch, distance, relationship, intimacy, rituals, and eye contact (Kochman, 1981).

African-American communication can be characterized by a highly expressive style and as a means of signifying individuality and uniqueness (White & Parham, 1990). There is a high regard for being positive and open regarding one's feelings. Kochman
(1981) believed that this positivity is valued in the African-American community because it communicates sincerity and true conviction. It is unclear, however, how the stylized forms of African-American style, the importance of individual style, and the heavy emphasis on genuineness are worked out in cultural practices.

The African-American experience is also expressed by high emotionality (Cogdell & Wilson, 1980). Expressions of positive emotionality serves to cleanse one's being much like religious rituals. Thus, African-American decisions appear to be embedded in intuition and feelings, whereas a Eurocentric perspective may use more rationality (Cogdell & Wilson, 1980).

Verbal messages conveyed in African-Americans communications differ from that of European-Americans in terms of content and form. (Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau, 1993). African Americans are more assertive than European Americans. Their style has also been described as forceful, and assertive even though aggressive persons tend to stand up for their rights without intending to harm others (Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau, 1993; Kochman, 1981). This style is intense, challenging, and forward, although some would describe it in more harsh terms. European Americans interpret this assertiveness as physically confronting, but they do not feel the need to be assertive in return. For African Americans, this style is taught early in life as parents prepare their children for the harsh realities of a racist society where they learn they must strive for excellence to be successful (Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau, 1993).
In public, the Black mode of communicating is often regarded as argumentative, and aggressive (Kochman, 1981), serving as persuasion to challenge opposing ideas. It is also used to ventilate anger and hostility, but controlled by the degree of intensity. Conversely, Whites use argumentative languaging only to ventilate anger and hostility. Black persons' languaging is often high-keyed, animated, interpersonal, and confrontational, which characterizes involvement with a heated, loud, generate effect (Kochman, 1981). The White middle-class languaging is relatively low-keyed, dispassionate, impersonal, and non-challenging. This style is characteristic of detached, quiet, and cool persons without affect (Kochman, 1981).

Dissimilarity between African-American and European-American styles of communication can be seen in the structures and forms conveyed nonverbally, such as the use of eye contact. For example, European-Americans look at their conversational partner longer and more often than do African-Americans in various relationships (Fugita, Wexley, & Hillery, 1976).

African Americans also differ from European Americans in strategies they use in marital conversation. For example, African-Americans are often direct in conveying their wishes to their spouses rather than hinting, explaining the situation, offering tangible rewards, or pleading helplessness (Dejarnett & Raven, 1981).
Religion

Sociological accounts have often reported that Black families view religion as an integral part of their lives, with Blacks exhibiting higher levels of religiosity than Whites (Hill, 1993; Taylor, Chatters, Tucker, & Lewis, 1991). Providing support for various areas of Black family functioning, Hill (1972) purported that religion is one of the strengths of the Black family. Further, some studies have found positive associations between religion and marriage. Dainton (1999) found that African-American couples were more likely than the European-American couples to view marriage from a more spiritual perspective. Various studies have emphasized the importance of religion in enhancing interpersonal relationships (Hatch, James, & Schumm, 1986; Roth, 1988; Thomas & Henry, 1985). Robinson (1994) cited religion as one of the strengths of married couples that lead to enduring marriages. Diggs and Stafford (1998) found that African-American couples reported greater use of religion to maintain their marriages more often than their White counterparts.

There is some evidence that religious orientation and marital quality are related (Robinson, 1994). Religious orientation may strengthen the level of commitment one has to their marriage (Larson & Goltz, 1989). Other research has pointed to the important role that religion plays in the context of Black marriages. For example, Veroff, Sutherland, Chadiha, and Ortega (1993) found that religion was positively related to Black wives' marital happiness, but not to Black husbands' marital happiness. In a study of rural Black southerners, Brody, Stoneman, Flor, and McCrary (1994) determined that
high levels of reported religiosity were associated with higher levels of observed marital interaction quality.

Theoretical Perspective on Marital Functioning

There are a number of influences from the family of origin that may impact present functioning in families of procreation (Bowen, 1978, Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1973). According to Bowen (1978), all individuals develop emotional ties to their biological families. In particular, individuals are most often influenced by emotional connections with their parents. These connections result in what Bowen called differentiation or boundary maintaining processes in the family system. Although these emotional processes impact the individual's current functioning, he theorized that they also impact the boundary maintaining processes in future relationships. Thus, when an individual marries, his/her level of differentiation interacts with his/her partners' in some way to create the boundary maintaining patterns in this new relationship. According to Bowen's (1978) theory, these processes effect how couples handle crises in their marriage. Thus, this emotional process would likely be related to the couple's overall satisfaction within their marriage.

Bowen (1978) contends that individual and relational functioning are based on a single construct, differentiation. Differentiation is a person's ability to be both a part of and separate from a relationship system. It is "the capacity to become oneself out of one's self with minimum reactivity to the positions or reactivity of others" (Friedman, 1991, p. 141). The lower the level of differentiation the more difficulty the individual has keeping
a sense of self as separate from the relational context (Karpel, 1976). It would seem that differentiation has obvious implications for marital functioning, including how the couple communicates, resolves conflict and their overall level of satisfaction in the relationship. This has not been empirically studied, however, nor has there been great progress in explicating the theoretical link between differentiation and marital satisfaction.

Bowen (1978), and Karpel (1976) to a lesser extent, suggested that individuals select partners with the same level of differentiation as themselves. This has rarely been empirically tested, but available evidence suggests this is not the case (Bartle, 1993; Kosek, 1998). Thus, it may be that individuals select partners at different levels of differentiation than themselves, and this difference in differentiation may have consequences in the interaction patterns in the relationship. Byng-Hall (1980) suggests that partners with different ways of regulating boundaries in their relationship may create distancer-pursuer cycles. These cycles result in one partner moving away, emotionally or physically, from the other partner often with the latter pursuing the former. These differences may result in dysfunction in one or the other partners (Karpel, 1976). In either situation, it is possible that the relational expectations of one or both members are not being met, although those expectations may be different. When expectations are not met, relationship quality decreases (Sabatelli, 1984).

According to Bowen, ones’ level of differentiation is not a matter of culture, intelligence, or gender (Bowen, 1978; Friedman, 1991). Nor is the level of differentiation necessarily related to socioeconomic status, although those with lower socioeconomic statuses tend to have lower levels of differentiation (Bowen, 1978), but could have high
levels as well. He also implies that differentiation would not vary by race, but this premise has not been explored to date. That is, Bowen (1978) considered all seemingly categorical differences to be a problem with the observers’ level of differentiation. If one is unable to integrate separateness and connectedness, then the solution is to separate the two seemingly opposing forces. After separating the two, they are then applied to different categories. In the example of gender, males are believed to be more independent and autonomous (separate), while females are believed to be more interdependent (connected). A similar analogy can be made for ethnic groups. Specifically, Whites are believed to be autonomous and self-sufficient (separate), while Blacks are believed to be more interdependent (connected).

While Bowen's theory focused largely on the process of differentiation and other relevant constructs, he began adding but never fully developed an additional construct, spirituality, which he believed also covaried with the process of differentiation (Friedman, 1991). However, there is no available documentation on how Bowen (1978) theorized or defined spirituality. Therefore, this study will explore possible linkages between differentiation and spirituality, or for purposes of this study, religiosity.

Statement of the Problem

Bowen (1978) highlighted the importance of understanding one's emotional processes that developed in connection with one's family of origin, and how these processes interact with others. However, there is a dearth of research that reveals how these processes influence subsequent relationships. If marital relationships are sustained
by two individuals who have to combine and create new ways of negotiating separateness and connectedness, then, to conduct informed research, it is imperative to have an understanding of how this process of differentiation influences marital satisfaction for both informative and predictive purposes.

In addition to the above, there is a paucity of empirical data examining determinants of dyadic processes in Black families. Specifically, there are no published data that examine either the differentiation process or how the individuals' levels of differentiation impacts the marital satisfaction of Black couples. Further, available research indicates that not only is the structure of Black marriages unique (Staples, 1994), but the indicators of satisfaction in Black marriages differ from other ethnic groups and particularly White Americans (Actelli, Douvan, & Veroff, 1997).

Differentiation, as defined by Bowen (1978), may not be compatible with how Black families negotiate separateness and connectedness. His premise that healthy couple functioning would promote more autonomy and less emotional reactivity is not necessarily compatible with research on normative Black couple functioning.

Research on gender biases may provide parallels regarding the application of Bowen's (1978) theory to Black families. Bowen's (1978) theory has received criticism by feminist scholars (Knudson-Martin, 1994). Maturity, according to Knudson-Martin, is the ability to integrate one's self with others. Differentiation, she purports, identifies three interrelated systems that influence human behavior: the emotional system, the feeling system (although Bowen does not focus on this), and the intellectual system. Bowen contends that when the intellectual system is not well developed, emotional
intensity overwhelms the intellect (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Differentiation is based upon two opposing forces: individuality and togetherness. If, according to this theory, togetherness increases tensions in the relational system, then overcoming togetherness and increasing individuality increases the health of the system (Knudson-Martin, 1994). For females, then, it becomes a question of how to become differentiated while simultaneously remaining connected (Knudson-Martin, 1994). Likewise, Black-Americans are thought to be more connected and less autonomous (Sudarkasa, 1997), promoting a sense of unity and connectedness in their families.

Research also indicates that religious behavior/intimacy is largely impacted by emotional intimacy (Hatch, James, & Schumm, 1986), or according to Bowen (1978), differentiation. Additionally, there are connections between religion and marital satisfaction (Hunt & King, 1978).

Significance of the Problem

Extensive research on how differentiation impacts the marital relationship, how this relationship varies across racial groups, and if and how it covaries with religiosity is relevant for a number of reasons.

First, the need to conduct research on how couples manage emotional boundaries is important because the process impacts individual and relational adjustment (Bartle-Haring & Sabatelli, 1998) and satisfaction. A couple's ability to manage their emotional boundaries also impacts children's emotional health and development in nuclear families (Bowen, 1978).
Additionally, there are no data on how differentiation occurs in Black families or in Black couple functioning. Researchers without adequate information specific to African Americans would likely extrapolate from existing research from other racial groups. This process could lead to inaccurate assumptions or a "culturally deviant" approach to studying Black families, much like the Moynihan Report (1965) which has led to sharp criticisms by numerous family scholars (Staples & Johnson, 1993).

Third, the lack of data on Black couple functioning has clinical implications. Clinicians without accurate data are forced to use existing empirical work, or rely on their own limited experiences to intervene with their clients (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). This approach assumes that Black couple and White couple functioning "looks alike." There are dangers to this assumption because it indicates that if there are differences between Black and White couples, there is pathology within the Black couple relationship. However, if there are indications of structural variation in Black couple functioning, it may be that distance regulation within Black couples is different than for White couples. That is, given contextual factors, it may be that a different balance between separateness and connectedness may be functional and lead to marital satisfaction for Black couples, whereas that same balance may not work for White couples.

One of the contextual factors that may lead to such differences is in the Black church, which historically has been a strong source of support for the Black community (Ellison, 1997). Today, the church is still viewed as a vital component to family life in the Black community. Thus, it is important to understand the role of religion within this
community and its relationship to other variables in Black family/couple functioning (Boyd-Franklin, 1989).

Research Objectives

Given the above, the purpose of this study is to examine the following: the relationship between differentiation and religiosity; the relationships among differentiation, religiosity, and marital variables; then after controlling for religiosity, the relationship between differentiation and the marital variables. Subsequently, each relationship will be examined for differences by race. The following are questions for exploration in this stu

1. Does race matter when investigating the relationship between and among differentiation, religiosity, and marital satisfaction?

2. Does race matter when examining the relationships among marital behaviors (i.e., communication and conflict resolution) and marital satisfaction?

The following research hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: Married persons who indicate high levels of couple differentiation in their relationship will have higher levels of marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Married couples who report high levels of religious behavior will have higher levels of marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Married couples with higher differentiation and religiosity will have higher communication and conflict resolution abilities, and, in turn, have higher marital satisfaction.
Definition of Terms

**Communication** – The giving and receiving of messages in relationships (Rice, 1990). It applies to verbal and nonverbal languaging, as people try to understand and/or influence one another.

**Conflict Resolution** – The openness of partners to recognize and resolve issues and the strategies used to end arguments, and their satisfaction with the way problems are solved (Fournier, Olson, & Druckman, 1983).

**Differentiation** – Differentiation pertains to the degree to which one has the ability to choose between intellectual and emotional functioning. It allows individuals to experience and express their individuality while remaining intimately connected to their spouse. Further, it characterizes a process that occurs within individuals, as well as providing an understanding of the way individuals function within the context of a relationship (Bowen, 1978; Kerr, 1984).

**Marital satisfaction** – A person's overall attitude and evaluation toward their spouse and marital relationship (Sabatelli, 1988). "A correspondence between the actual and the expected " satisfaction in the marriage (p. 439, Burgess & Locke, 1945).

**Religiosity** – A measure of religious beliefs and practices. This research examines the religious behavior of persons with a religious orientation, but does not include spirituality. It includes interaction with a religious congregation, prayers, Bible and other religious reading, and relationships with one's fellow-man (Schumm, Paff-Bergen, Hatch, Obiorah, Copeland, Meens, & Bugaighis, 1986).
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review for this study will cover four areas. First, relevant research on Black intimate relationships (historical accounts, relationship structure, satisfaction, and religion and spirituality) will be presented. The second section will examine the literature on the differentiation process to provide a conceptual understanding of how the differentiation process effects the functioning of future relationships, specifically marriages. The third section will explore the research on the differentiation and marital outcomes. Lastly, the literature on religion and marital outcomes will be presented.

Black Intimate Relationships

There is a paucity of empirical data examining determinants of dyadic processes in Black family functioning (Billingsley, 1992; Johnson, 1997). From 1965 to 1978, less than 1% of all published empirical family studies were on Black families (Johnson, 1997). Additionally, there are no published data that examine how Black married couples' levels of differentiation impact their marital satisfaction. Therefore, it is critical that existing data be utilized with caution and that care be taken to understand outcomes of such data. Because research on the marital satisfaction of Black couples is limited,
available literature that examines how Black couples view and negotiate marriage and family life will be presented.

**Historical Accounts**

Historically, the study of Black family structure has been compared to White middle-class norms to understand its family structure and processes (Taylor, 1994). Early research on the Black family has fallen into three ideological or theoretical approaches (Allen, 1978). First, there was the cultural deviant approach to studying Black families. This approach was prevalent in the 1960's around the publishing of a government document later to be termed "The Moynihan Report." Moynihan concluded that the Black family was responsible for their own economic plight (Moynihan, 1965) in which he referred to the Black family as a "tangle of pathology." Research was classified this way when emphasis was given to White middle-class norms, as a referent to which Black families were then compared. Deviation from these norms were considered pathological (Aldous, 1969).

The cultural equivalent model, more prevalent from the 1970s to the 1980s, was used when importance was given to White middle-class norms as a basis for studying Black families. Any resemblance between groups was explicitly or implicitly viewed as sustenance for shared cultural values (Johnson, 1997). Lastly, the cultural variant approach was and is used when Black family cultural patterns are essentially compared to Black norms and values. Thus, this model focuses on the uniqueness of the Black family.

Often from a victim blaming perspective, social scientists have studied the Black family (Fine, Schwebel, & Myers, 1987). Thus, when studying the nature of Black families, they have used a "disadvantaged culture" model. Early accounts characterized Black
families as poor versions of White families as they suffered the impact of slavery, racism, and economic deprivation. In the first comprehensive study on Black family functioning, Frazier (1939) argued that the vicissitudes of slavery caused increased dysfunction in African families and family structure, and that these dysfunctions will continue to undermine the stability and well-being of Black families throughout the twentieth century. More recent research has adopted the cultural variant approach so as not to label Black Americans as deviant (Johnson, 1997).

Relationship Structure

To understand relationship structure and research on Black couple functioning requires that we explore the historical chasm between Black men and Black women (Chapman, 1988). Many myths about Black men being slothful and Black women being hostile and controlling still influence the way Black people think today, ultimately impacting current functioning. These feelings have been internalized and translated into their relationships. These perceptions are perpetuated in the larger society, often by the news media as well as played out in movies to the degree that this level of relating is often viewed as normal. Thus, couples end up combating conscious and subconscious images without the proper focus on combating these external forces (Chapman, 1988).

Franklin (1984) cites one source of conflict between Black men and women as being the noncomplementarity of sex-role definitions used by Black men and Black women. Franklin believed that Black women, in their quest to define their role in relationships, internalize two conflicting definitions. They possess attitudes that are both highly masculine and feminine. On one end, they ascribe to feelings and behaviors that
are assertive, dominant, and decisive, as well as passive, subordinate, and indecisive. On the other hand, men typically exhibit highly masculine behaviors only, such as being physically aggressive, dominating sexually, and being somewhat violent, while placing less importance on family issues.

Studies also indicate that, for various reasons, there is a shortage of suitable Black men available for Black women, called the "marriage pool" (Staples, 1994). Staples (1994) reported that a large number of Black men are in the armed forces and serve overseas. Although marriage rates in the military have increased, many marriageable Black males are serving in foreign posts and on isolated military bases and are not available for committed relationships. Additionally, after their discharge from the service, many of these men have poor prospects for civilian employment. Further, unemployment and underemployment rates for Black men have always been higher than for Black women or for White men and women (Staples, 1994). These factors caused the marriage pool to be in short supply of desirable prospects for marriage.

Black women have also attained higher levels of education than that of Black men (Spanier & Glick, 1980, Staples & Johnson, 1993; Staples, 1994). Although the marriage pool issues largely affect non-college educated Black women, college-educated Black women also have problems with availability of marriage partners (Staples, 1998) if they are to marry within their socioeconomic level and race. In 1980, approximately 57% of all Black College students were female. Further, the attrition rate was higher for men than for women. In 1981, 60% of all bachelors’ degrees earned by Blacks were awarded to women. From 1976 – 1981, first professional degrees for Black women increased by
71% while declining by 21% for Black men. Over the same period, doctoral degrees increased by 29% for Black women, while declining 10% for Black men (National Center for Education Statistics, 1983, in Staples, 1994). In 1994-95, there were 963 doctorates conferred to Black women, but only 731 to Black men (National Center for Education Statistics, Internet Data Retrieval, 1997). For masters degrees, 2,500 were conferred to Black women, while just over 2,000 were conferred to Black men. Historically, these academic differences between Black men and women have forced some Black women to 'marry down' (Nobles, 1956), although those trends have changed (Staples, 1994). Cherlin (1981) indicated that there are a number of factors that have lead to instability in Black marriages (in Staples, 1994), and often to high divorce rates. Higher income levels for Black women and lower income and unemployment for Black men often present a threat to Black men. A Black woman's higher education and income may threaten her husband's authority and status, undermining his self-concept (Taylor & Johnson, 1997). Black men may feel insecure if they experience provider role problems. They are often faced with unemployment and underemployment, which results in anxiety about providing financially for his family. This group of Black husbands is also likely to experience more extensive marital difficulties (Hatchett, Veroff, & Douvan, 1995, in Taylor & Johnson, 1997).

Black marriages have been characterized largely as equalitarian (Staples, 1988). Historically, women were forced to provide for their families as a way to survive the destruction of their households due to the vicissitudes of slavery. Thus, they were in female-headed households. When Black men were allowed to remain in the home, the
The aforementioned struggles in the Black family resulted in economic parity for Black marriages in the United States (Staples, 1988). The strong economic roles and the economic and emotional independence of Black women resulted in freedom and equality unfamiliar to White women in America in the 19th Century. This pattern also produced tensions in Black marriages that were not common to White dyads. These pressures put undue burdens and stresses on the Black family and marital relationship resulting in increased divorced rates, challenging the emotional security of many Black marriages (Chapman 1988). Marital tensions also arose because of competing career and domestic roles, and problems associated with blended families. Couples struggled to balance the many challenges in their lives, often to the detriment of their own relationship.

Another source of marital conflict was and continues to be the dual role of the worker and mother (Staples, 1988). Historically, they maintained two households, one as a domestic worker and their own. This type of stress has unquestionably torn at the foundation of Black marriages. Role overload could further lead to disruption in normal marital interactions (Staples, 1988), and eventually to marital satisfaction. Today, these
stressors still exist with the multiple roles of Black women - worker, wife, and mother - resulting in more stress on the woman and high levels of tension in Black marriages.

In his book Future Shock, Toffler (1970) predicted the future of marital relationships based upon the impact of the "SuperIndustrialized Revolution". This perspective placed more emphasis on freedom in relationships, rather than commitment. While previous generations remained in marriages because of societal expectation, later generations emphasized more independence or separateness in marital relationships as providing more gender parity. However, in Black marriages, research indicated that Black women married and remained because of instrumental reasons such as companionship, family, psychological, and physiological needs. (Staples, 1994).

Conversely, Billingsley (1992) points to the positive functions Black marriage serve. He describes the interchangeability of roles and cooperative patterns of collaboration as being beneficial. Further, he believed that the egalitarian makeup of Black marriages and Black women's contribution to the economic viability of the home is highly accepted and supported by their husbands. Using data from the National Survey of Black Americans 1979-80, Billingsley found that African American marriages were important for the following reasons: raising children, companionship, a sustained love or sex life, safety, help with the housework, and financial security. This study also revealed that fifty-nine percent of Black men stated that they were very satisfied with their family life, personal happiness, and possessed a high degree of self-worth.

In a more recent study, contemporary thought on differences between Black and White women's perspectives on marriage and the family rejects the notion that there are
statistical differences as a result of race, the "Africanist" or "slavery" positions (Heiss, 1997). Findings from this study would, instead, indicate that differences are due to socialization. Heiss' (1997) study from a national data found that not only were differences between races small, but SES had more impact on women's values than did race. Further, when these differences were examined, they indicated that Black women are more instrumental in their reasons for marriage than White women, such as the desire for family, companionship, and physical security.

Satisfaction

Studies examining the impact of life stress and psychological well-being consistently indicate that psychological well-being and happiness is highest for Black married persons and lower for others in the population (Keith, 1997), such as the never-married, separated or divorced, and widowed. Depressive symptoms in Black married persons were greater for Blacks with lower education and lower employment earnings. Thus, married Blacks who are highly educated and financially secure were expected to have a greater psychological advantage over married Blacks who were less educated and had lower levels of income. Using ordinary least squares regression techniques, Keith tested separate models for married, separated-divorced, widowed, and never-married Blacks to evaluate her stress buffering hypotheses. Findings indicated that, in all groups, stress played a major role in overall life satisfaction. Thus, as stressful life problems increased, overall happiness decreased in all groups. With married Black women, they associated with more stress than did their counterparts. Further, married couples that
gained support from friends and family reported higher levels of overall life satisfaction and happiness.

Stewart (1994) theorized that Black men believed that their overall family life satisfaction was based upon length of marriage. In Billingsley's (1992) study examining the functions of marriage in African American families, he found married persons, particularly without children, were the group that reported being the most satisfied with their family life. Marital status has consistently shown that married Blacks are more satisfied with their overall life than non-married, separated, or divorced groups (Ball & Robbins, 1986; Broman, 1988). Although some research would indicate differences between Blacks and Whites on various indices of satisfaction with life, some indicates that Blacks score higher, whereas others indicate the opposite, yet others find no differences in terms of satisfaction (Clemente & Saure, 1976).

There is some evidence that what contributes to marital satisfaction may be different for Black and White couples (Acitelli, Douvan, & Veroff, 1997). A three-year study by Acitelli, Douvan, and Veroff (1997) explored the changing influence of personal perceptions of Black and White couples on marital well-being. The researchers wanted to know if interpersonal perceptions changed in the first three years of marriage and whether these perceptions had an impact on marital well-being over the same period. They interviewed 219 couples, half of whom were Black. Their results indicated that neither group showed differences in perceptual variables. However, when examined by race, Black wives and White husbands showed the most understanding of their spouses. Acitelli et al. (1997) purported that Black women, in the first year of marriage, are
comfortable with their husband being more dominant, but by the third year, his role has become more instrumental, allowing for more balance of roles. No clear explanation was given for the findings on White husbands. Additionally, wives' understanding of their husbands was related to the marital well-being of the couple but the reasons differed for Blacks and Whites. Specifically, for Black women, the wives' understanding of her husband's constructive acts was positively related to the couple's well-being. However, for White wives', their understanding of their husbands' constructive acts had negative effects on wives' marital well-being.

There may be other factors that lead to differences in martial well-being between Black and White couples. For example, the church has theoretically been the single most important organization for African Americans and their families. (Poole, 1995, Cheatham & Stewart (1995), the core of the Black community (Ellison, 1997). This being the case, it becomes important to explore its impact on the marital relationship.

Religion and Spirituality

While more research is exploring the connection between religion and family, most of the research to date has been based on data from predominantly White samples (Ellison, 1997). Ellison (1997) states that this neglect is surprising first because religious institutions have historically played a major role within the Black community and particularly the Black family from a practical sense, in terms of providing various levels of support.

Second, in the future, religious institutions will, to a larger degree, be involved in enhancing the quality of life for African Americans by countering the effects of racism at micro and macro levels. Lastly, given social and governmental concerns with single-parent
households, out-of-wedlock births, and other issues within the Black community, effective solutions would indicate the need for more research efforts directed at various socioeconomic levels within the Black community. Recently, more attention has focused on how religious factors influence African American families.

Boyd-Franklin (1989) points to the importance of examining the role of spirituality and religious beliefs and its impact on family life in Black families. Knox (1985) stated that "spirituality is deeply embedded in the Black psyche" (p. 31, in Boyd-Franklin, 1989) and strong religious and spiritual beliefs have always been an essential part of the lives of people of African descent (Hines & Boyd-Franklin, 1982). Further, Nobles (1980) stated that historically, religion permeated every aspect of the lives of those of African descent.

Broman (1988) found that Blacks have higher psychological well-being than non-married Blacks due to their religious affiliations. These findings indicate, at least in part, that religious institutions emphasize family harmony, as traditional family models and values are considered virtuous possibly leading to positive marital relations. Additionally, many churches provide in-depth guidance for marital relationships, with some offering counseling to further their support of these relationships.

Taylor (1988) explored structural determinants of religious participation among Black American's using a national sample. Taylor used three indices of participation: service attendance, frequency of activities, and membership. He found that Black women attended church more frequently than Black men, and that married respondents attended church more frequently than any other group. Overall, the study found that church and religion were important resources to the Black community.
In Billingsley’s (1992) study examining the functions of marriage in African American families, he found that more than 80% of the sample considered themselves religious, with a third of them considering themselves very religious.

Staples and Johnson (1993) believed that while religion is important in the Black marriage, it is the social support characteristic of religious affiliation that helps in promoting marital stability. They stated that the structures of religion, the spiritual, emotional, and instrumental supports, combines to help keep marriages intact.

Ellison (1997) stated that religion is the core of the Black community. This being the case, then it is reasonable to believe that religious participation may have important implications “for the quality of family life for African Americans”. Thus, these findings lend more support for the need to closely examine the role of the church in Black families.

Differentiation

Differentiation of self pertains to the degree to which individuals choose between emotional and intellectual functioning in relationships (Bowen, 1978; Papero, 1988). The balance between the two is determined primarily by the influence of one's family of origin. An individual's level of differentiation, or physical, emotional, and social functioning has been significantly shaped by relationships with their family of origin (Kerr, 1984). Bowen (1978) identified two aspects of differentiation of self. The first aspect is the differentiation of emotional from intellectual functioning within the self and the degree of choice one has over which type of functioning will govern one's behavior.
The higher the differentiation of the self, the greater the capacity to be in close emotional contact with significant others without having one's thinking, emotions, and behavior governed by seemingly involuntary reaction to those relationships or by the accompanying emotional environment (Friedman, 1991; Kerr, 1984). The second aspect is described as "the process by which individuality and togetherness are managed by a person and within a relationship system" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 95). Thus, differentiation of self provides individuals with the ability to balance separateness and connectedness within the boundaries of a relationship.

Differentiation is believed to lie on a hypothetical continuum, theoretically ranging from low to high, from 0 to 100, although Bowen did not design an instrument to measure it. Lower scores are not indicative of persons in states of poor emotional health or some other pathological state. However, people low on the scale are more vulnerable to stress and possibly to slow recovery to symptoms in the system. Individuals with differentiation scores on the lower end of the scale are said to fuse in relationships. That is, their way of relating in close relationships causes "togetherness forces" to dominate their functioning (Bowen, 1978; Friedman, 1985; Kerr, 1981; Papero, 1988). In couples, this automatic tendency towards togetherness heightens emotional functioning, often to the detriment of intellectual functioning. Consequently, these individuals become overly dependent on those with whom they are in close relations to meet all their expectations for intimacy.

According to Karpel (1976), fusion describes "the persons' state of embeddedness in, of undifferentiation within, the relational context" (p. 67). Any number of individual
or relational problems may result from this struggle. Thus, symptoms may indicate "consequences of, defenses against, or ambivalence over the persistence of the state of fusion" either in the individual or within the context of the relationship or marriage (Karpel, 1976, p.67).

Individuals with scores in the middle range are the most common (Kerr, 1981). These individuals are able to make clear distinctions between emotion and intellect. Further, they are able to state their own needs and positions without attacking others or being compelled to defend their own. Individuals with scores in the high range are thought to be more clear about their emotional and intellectual self, being able to function within close emotional relationships without needing to dominate their partners thinking or overall functioning (Bowen, 1978; Friedman, 1985; Kerr, 1981). On this end of the scale, couples balance separateness and connectedness effectively. At this level, the marital relationship is in a state of dialogue (Karpel, 1976).

Too much togetherness in families can cause familial relationships to become fused (Kerr, 1984). This process may form emotional ties that leave little room for separateness. Further, it may foster a dependency on others that continue once new relationships are formed. Some individuals respond to too much closeness in their family of origin by cutting themselves off emotionally. The more people are totally removed emotionally from their family of origin, the greater the possibility that they will invest unrealistically in new relationships. Further, when this happens, the "newly formed relationship contributes to the unresolved problems with past generations being played out in present or future generations" (Kerr, 1984, p.14)
In Karpel’s (1976) work, he defined several categories of couple functioning from fusion to a state of dialogue. The immature couple relates by fusing where one person often sacrifices his/her emotional self to balance the conflict in the relationship. In the transitional category, the couple experiences both “I” and “we” as conflicting alternatives. They either lose themselves to the “we” or they become an isolated “I” within the relationship. In a mature relationship, the mature poles of “I” and “we” are merged in such a way that they blend with one another and become meaningless without the other. In this category, they are at an improved state of relating that (Karpel, 1976) refers to as dialogue. Thus, they are at a healthy level of differentiation. Couples at this state are likely to experience greater marital satisfaction.

Differentiation and Marital Outcomes

When couples marry, they form a nuclear family emotional system (Bowen, 1978). They are developing an ‘undifferentiated family ego mass’ which describes the ‘emotional stuck togetherness’ or fusion with a new system, although the level of differentiation of the spouses largely determines the family system’s intensity or degree of fusion (Bowen, 1978). The manner in which married couples manage fusion determines how the system will assimilate undifferentiation and how symptoms will be expressed.

In marriages, there is always some degree of fusion (Bowen, 1978). Individuals with higher levels of differentiation have a greater ability to separate themselves, their emotional self from others, than those who have low levels of differentiation. Therefore, individuals with higher levels of differentiation are likely to have more realistic marital
expectations. Within the context of a marriage, people on the high end of the scale can freely lose self safely in the emotional intimacy with others, but those on the low end of the scale might either have to avoid close relationships to escape too much fusion or to look for fulfillment of their emotional needs within the fused relationship. As couples grapple with distance regulation or boundary maintenance, their communication and conflict resolution is likely to be impacted. Bowen suggests that one outcome of fusion in relationships is marital conflict that is not easily resolved. Marital conflict becomes the distance regulator (Bartle & Rosen, 1994). There are other authors that suggest impaired communication patterns result when couples have difficulty maintaining boundaries (cf. Wynne, 1984). Thus, differentiation may be related to how couples communicate and resolve conflict. Gottman's work (cf. Gottman, 1993b) suggests that high levels of emotional reactivity, or physical and psychological flooding (an indication of lack of differentiation) leads to hostile conflict which leads to lower marital satisfaction and divorce. Thus, differentiation in the couple relationship appears to be related to marital interaction and marital outcomes.

There is some empirical evidence that supports these relationships. Bartle-Haring and Sabatelli (1998) have demonstrated that husbands' and wives' experience in their own family of origin impacts their marital satisfaction and personal adjustment, which in turn impacts their offsprings' experience in the nuclear family. Skowron and Friedlander (1998) also demonstrated a relationship between marital satisfaction and differentiation of self. Kotler (1989) in a series of case studies demonstrated a relationship between early family of origin experiences and subsequent marital quality. Finally, Bartle (1996)
demonstrated that, at least for males, emotional reactivity toward parents (an indication of the lack of differentiation) detracted from their ability to trust in a romantic partner. Although somewhat tangential to marital satisfaction, the ability to trust would seem to have consequences for marital outcomes.

Kosek (1998) conducted a study on differentiation within the couple relationship. The goal of the exploration was to test Bowen’s (1978) theory of whether or not couples marry spouses who have similar levels of differentiation as themselves. Findings of the study did not support Bowen’s theory that couples marry spouses with similar levels of differentiation. He found significant sex differences on all subscales. Men tended to express their emotionality by disengaging, while women expressed their state of emotionality by becoming emotionally reactive with their spouse. These findings suggest that research on differentiation should evaluate sex differences, and that women tend to be more connected with others than are men.

While these studies provide some insight into how differentiation relates to marital satisfaction, their findings were preliminary and these relationships need to be explored further. Additionally, they did not take into account some of the more critical mediating variables, communication and conflict resolution, which impact all marital relationships at some level.
Communication and Conflict

Marital satisfaction is largely impacted by the ability of spouses to understand one another (Honeycutt, 1986), and an inability to do so may result in conflict in the marriage. Communication and interaction, then, is pivotal to achieving satisfying marriages.

Fitzpatrick (1988) and Gottman (1993) identified three typologies for classifying marriages, based upon couples' interactional patterns from their studies. Although not the focus of this investigation, these typologies will provide a useful format for organizing modalities of communicating in marital relationships.

The first type of marriage is the traditional or validating marriage. The traditional marriage is based upon conventional roles or norms. Couples believe in exercising restraint in expressing negative feelings. Traditional or validating couples tend to avoid conflict but when they argue, they argue about the issues most vital to the marriage. They forfeit individual goals and instead, there is a high degree of space-sharing.

The second type of marital typology is the independent or volatile marriage. These couples believe that individuality should be emphasized and strengthened within the marriage. Spouses in this group believe they should have privacy and independence. Further, they thrive on conflict and neither is openly afraid of expressing disagreement in the marriage, disclosing both positive and negative feelings. Their marriage is believed to be egalitarian, engaging in conflict, bargaining and negotiations. Gottman (1993b) believed that for conflict engagers, conflict avoidance may predict the deterioration of martial satisfaction over time.
The third marital typology is the separates or avoiders. They are characterized by their separateness and interpersonal distance, maintaining autonomy in their use of space, but avoiding all marital conflict. Further, they limit their expressiveness and engage in a minimum amount of self-disclosure. In this group, there is a low-level of companionship and sharing.

Overall, typologies would suggest that individuals use communication in various ways (Fitzpatrick, 1988). The manner in which communication is used is based on implicit assumptions about what constitutes appropriate types of communication for maintaining a desirous relationship (Gottman, 1993).

Gottman and Porterfield (1981) studied the relationship between marital communication deficits and marital satisfaction. This investigation thus found support for the communication deficit hypothesis for husbands as receivers but not for wives. Wife's marital satisfaction and her husband's communication deficits score were significantly related, indicating the husband's inability to understand his wife's messages, were related to lower marital satisfaction. The lower the wife's marital satisfaction, the lower her husband's communication deficits score. This led to an increase in marital dissatisfaction on the wife's part. This study suggested a positive relationship between marital satisfaction of both husbands and wives and the husband's ability to accurately read his wife's nonverbal messages (Gottman & Porterfield, 1981).

Alternatively, Kahn, (1970) found that husbands in unhappy marriages distorted their wives emotional messages towards the negative. In his study, Kahn (1970) found that dissatisfied husbands were more inclined than satisfied husbands to ascribe negative
connotations to their wives attempts to communicate affection, happiness and
playfulness. However, husbands of satisfied wives were more able to read their wives'
nonverbal cues whereas the husbands of dissatisfied wives were less able to read their
nonverbal cues.

Plattner (1950) believed conflict to be inevitable in marriage and it belonging
indeed to the essence of marriage. Conflict has internal causes, which are found in the
very essence of marriage or with the marriage partners. They are not necessarily the
result of the conduct of one spouse or another. Instead, they are the result of the blending
two diverse backgrounds (Plattner, 1950).

A study by Gottman and Krokoff (1989) found that some level of conflict
engagement might be functional for a marriage longitudinally. However, conflict that is
indicative of defensiveness, stubbornness, or withdrawal, especially by the husbands,
may be dysfunctional longitudinally. Thus, conflict-avoiding couples are at some risk
over time. Wives who are positive and compliant, in their interactions with their husband,
fare better in terms of their husbands concurrent negative affect at home and concurrent
marital satisfaction. Nevertheless, the marital satisfaction of these couples deteriorates
over time. On the other hand, the stubbornness and withdrawal of husbands may be most
harmful to marital satisfaction longitudinally. The marital satisfaction of wives improved
over time if wives expressed anger and contentment during conflict discussions, but
declined if the wife expressed sadness or fear. For husbands, only whining predicted a
change in marital satisfaction over time. It predicted a regression of both partners'
marital satisfaction. In unhappy marriages, wives were described as conflict engaging, whereas husbands were described as withdrawn.

Argyle and Furnham (1983) conducted a study examining the relationship between sources of satisfaction and conflict in long-term relationships. Using factor analysis, results indicated that a spousal relationship was the greatest source of both satisfaction and conflict. Further, those relationships that produced the greatest satisfaction also had the greatest conflict. This implied that satisfaction and conflict are compatible with each other, and the closer the relationship, the more satisfaction and conflicts are present. For example, a spouse would have very high conflict and satisfaction scores, but co-workers scores on conflict and satisfaction would be somewhat lower.

Religion and Marital Outcomes

Research has indicated that examining the influences or impact of religion on lives is worthy of scientific study (Thomas & Henry, 1985). Therefore, Hatch, James and Schumm (1986) examined the relationship between spiritual intimacy and marital satisfaction, although spirituality is not the focus of this study. They designed a study to examine how religion influences family life. Using the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, Hatch, James, and Schumm (1986) found a link between spirituality and emotional intimacy and marital satisfaction. Specifically, they found that there was an indirect relationship between religion and marital satisfaction, operating through emotional intimacy, but no direct relationship between spiritual intimacy and marital satisfaction.
Other research has indicted that there are direct connections between religion and marital satisfaction (Hunt & King, 1978).

Further, religious homogamy promotes somewhat higher marital satisfaction than if couples are of differing beliefs (Glenn, 1982; Heaton, 1984). In another study on religious homogamy, Heaton and Pratt (1990) examined the relationship between religious homogamy and marital satisfaction/stability. Using log linear analysis of national survey data, they found that denominational affiliation homogamy was the most significant factor in marital satisfaction. Marital similarities in church attendance contributed slightly to marital success. Neither marital satisfaction nor marital stability were significantly impacted by similar beliefs about the Bible.

Ross (1988) examined the relationship between spiritual well-being and marital adjustment. Using Spanier’s (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale, and Paloutzian and Ellison’s (1982) Spiritual Well-Being Scale, Ross surveyed 146 married individuals from churches in Southern California. Findings indicated that spiritual well-being was correlated with marital adjustment with significant differences shown for years married. Couples married between 10 and 40 years showed higher correlations with spiritual well-being than those that were married 40 years or more. Thus, couples married less than 40 years but greater than 10 years indicated greater spirituality than those married longer. These findings may indicate that older married couples have less stress from parenting and occupational roles, which could result in more positive views of marriage. However, by later in life, their religious views may be well established and they may have come to terms with overall life satisfaction, possibly explaining lower correlations with spiritual
well-being.

Fowers (1991) study found that religion is more important part of the marriage from the husband's perspective than for the wife's. Using the ENRICH marital inventory, Fowers (1991) examined gender differences in marital satisfaction. Consistent with previous research, this study suggested that men obtain greater mental health benefits from marriage than do their wives. Additionally, husband's were somewhat more satisfied in their marriage's than were their wives.

Robinson (1994) interviewed 15 couples who had been married thirty years or more. The couples were asked what they perceived to be the strengths of their relationships. Most of the couples indicated that their religious faith was the most important asset in the stability and the satisfaction in their marriage. Thus, their religious orientation and faith was critical in the decline or growth of their marriage. This finding suggests that religiosity has a positive impact on marital stability.

Call and Heaton (1997) conducted a study on the impact of religion on marital stability. Using a sample from the National Survey of Families and Households, consisting of 4,587 married couples, they conducted personal interviews and follow-up surveys (self-administered questionnaires) in their longitudinal study. The most marked conclusion from their study was that church attendance had the greatest impact on marital stability. Conversely, differences between spouses' church attendance increased the risk of divorce or dissolution. These findings suggest that attending religious activities, or services, is a critical aspect of religious experiences that can enhance marriages.
Overview of the Study

The measure of marital satisfaction has been met with controversy in the family science literature. Sabatelli (1988) carefully summarizes some of these concerns with these measures. First, he states that over the past 50 or so years, the distinction between marital adjustment, marital satisfaction, and marital quality have been blurred. Marital adjustment has most often referred to those processes that are assumed to be necessary for compatible and functional marriages (Spanier, 1976; Spanier & Cole, 1976). A well-adjusted marriage is, then, one in which the partners have frequent interactions, seldom disagree on important issues, communicated openly, and resolve conflicts that bring mutual satisfaction to both members (Locke & Wallace, 1959).

Marital adjustment is confounded by the fact that marital satisfaction is also a component of marital adjustment (Spanier & Cole, 1976). Satisfaction usually refers to an individual's attitude toward their spouse and their marriage (Sabatelli, 1988). Marital quality has also emerged frequently within the marital research. One aspect of marital quality describe a mixture of the marital adjustment and marital satisfaction/happiness tradition (Sabatelli, 1988). This perspective encompasses the presence of companionship and good communication and the absence of conflict, linked with the presence of a high degree of relationship and spousal satisfaction (Lewis & Spanier, 1979). Another aspect of marital quality is one that reflects the person's global assessment of their marriage (cf. Norton, 1983, in Sabatelli, 1988). This interpretation is comparable to former conceptualizations of marital satisfaction (Sabatelli, 1988), thus confounding the meanings of each term. Sabatelli summarizes by stating that marital
satisfaction, adjustment, and quality fall into two general categories: marital satisfaction quality and marital adjustment quality. This research was designed to assess couples' satisfaction quality.

One of the best ways to capture the concept of marital satisfaction is to use several measures. In this study, several measures were utilized to capture marital satisfaction/outcomes. First, a global measure of marital satisfaction, the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS, Schumm, Paff-Bergen, Hatch, Obiorah, Copeland, Meens, & Bugaighis, 1986) was used to assess overall satisfaction in the relationship. A second measure, the Marital Comparison Level Index (MCLI, Sabatelli, 1984), is an instrument designed to measure marital expectation. It provided information on the couples' perception of the degree to which their marital relationship measures up to their expectations of acceptable marital behavior (Sabatelli, 1984). The third instrument was a marital satisfaction subscale of the Evaluating and Nurturing Relationship Issues, Communication, Happiness Scale (ENRICH, Fournier, Olson, & Druckman, 1983) which is a multidimensional inventory designed to measure various areas of marital intrapersonal issues as well as external issues. For purposes of this study, three subscales of ENRICH were used: communication, conflict resolution and marital satisfaction. Overall, the use of these instruments is an attempt to gain insight into whether or not married Black and White couples experience marriage and marital satisfaction in similar or different ways.

Given the above theoretical and empirical literature, this study was designed to examine the relationships between the independent variables, differentiation and religion
and the dependent variable, marital satisfaction, as influenced by marital conflict
resolution and marital communications (See Figure 2.1). Combining these contextual
factors with differentiation, and building a coherent theoretical basis for these
relationships is both the goal and the challenge of this dissertation.

The results of this study may shed some light on various influences on marital
satisfaction between Black and White couples. However, this examination is exploratory
and designed to provide a starting point for which to theorize and conceptualize the
aforementioned relationships. Limitations to generalizability of this investigation will be
discussed in Chapter 5.
Figure 2.1: Theoretical Framework for the Study
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Overview of Study

This study was designed to compare differences in marital satisfaction in Black and White couples. More specifically, the researcher investigated the usefulness of a cultural variant perspective in determining differences in Black and White marital satisfaction when examining the following: the relationship between differentiation and religion, and their impact on marital satisfaction. The project was approved by The Ohio State University Behavioral and Social Sciences Human Subjects Review Committee (Human Subjects Protocol #96B0155, Appendix A).

This chapter will outline the procedures used to conduct the study. First, the sampling procedures and the characteristics of the sample are presented. Next, the instruments utilized in the study are introduced. Finally, the data analysis procedure is presented.

Sample

Sampling Procedures

The data for this project were collected from a convenience sample of volunteer participants. Initially, a letter was sent to area pastors, familiar to the researcher, of
several churches in Columbus, Ohio. The letter introduced the researcher and the study, and then asked for their support. A script to be read to members of the congregation accompanied the letter. All pastors who agreed to participate in the study delegated the assignment to leaders of their couples' ministries. In all cases, participation in the study was voluntary and in no way affected the subjects' memberships in their respective organizations or groups. Additional participants were solicited by sending mailings to the researchers' friends. They all received fliers to hand out inviting married couples to attend an open house where a survey would be completed on marital satisfaction (See Appendix B – Forms for Solicitation of Subjects).

Data were collected by the following methods: One group of subjects was couples attending an outing at the home of a bible study leader in Columbus, Ohio. Participants were all seated on a patio spacious enough to assure confidentiality of their responses. The subjects were instructed not to share answers with their spouse during data collection. Upon completion, each subject gave their questionnaire to the researcher and then received a $5.00 Kroger gift certificate for participating. The next group of subjects were solicited by sending fliers to several friends and asking them to pass them out to couples they thought would be willing to participate. The fliers invited them to attend an open house to participate in a study on marital satisfaction. It further stated that their participation was voluntary and that they would receive a small gift for their participation.

At the open house, the subjects were seated in a large room where there was space enough to allow for confidentiality of written responses. The subjects were instructed not
to share their answers with their spouses during data collection. The third group of participants was solicited from a Sunday School class of married couples in Bowling Green, Ohio. The Sunday School teacher read the solicitation letter to the couples, written by the researcher, asking for volunteers, and stressing that their participation, or lack thereof, would in no way jeopardize their standing in the class. The subjects completed their questionnaires in class, and received their participation gift when they turned in their questionnaires. The next group of participants was solicited from among workers for the state of Ohio. Many of the couples from this group stated that they would participate as long as they did not have to attend a scheduled session somewhere else. Therefore, they were permitted to take the questionnaires home if they agreed to complete them in a single sitting and not to share their responses with their spouse until both questionnaires had been turned in. They were given a solicitation letter stating that their participation was voluntary and that their assistance would further the study of marital satisfaction. Once they completed their questionnaires, they were returned to the solicitor in a sealed envelope and a gift was given to the participant.

Of the total respondents that agreed to participate, one wife declined to complete her questionnaire. One hundred-three couples participated in the study. However, eight questionnaires had missing data, two subjects were of Hispanic origin, and the racial/ethnic group of two other subjects was unknown, therefore, their data were omitted from the analysis.
Characteristics of the Sample

The sample was almost evenly divided between Black couples (n = 49) and White couples (n = 45). All respondents resided either in Columbus, Ohio or in Bowling Green, Ohio. A series of Chi-square analyses and t-tests were performed to assess for differences between the Black and White couples on all demographic variables. Few significant differences were found. Significant differences were found between Black and White husbands on church affiliation ($\chi^2 = 73.07(11), p = .000$), n=51 for Black husbands and n=40 for White husbands. There were also significant differences between wives on church affiliation ($\chi^2 = 73.749(12), p = .000$; n=54 for Blacks and n=43 for Whites. For wives, significant differences were found between Black and White wives regarding employment. These results indicated that Black wives were more likely to be employed full-time than White wives ($\chi^2 = 14.1(4), p = .007$) n=56 for Black wives and n=45 for Whites.

The entire sample ranged in age from 21 to 68, with the average age being 44.4 for Black husbands, 43.0 for Black wives, 43.0 for White husbands, and 41.5 for White wives. The number of years married ranged from less than 1 to 48, with the average being 15.8 for Blacks and 16.4 for Whites. Sixty-seven percent of Black husbands reported being married one time only, whereas 71% of Black wives reported being married one time only. For White husbands and wives, the percentages of reports of being married one time only was 80% and 82% respectively. Twenty-five percent of Black husbands and 28.8% of Black wives reported being divorced and remarried, whereas those figures were 15.6% and 17.8% respectively for White husbands and wives.
Black couples, on average, reported having 2.6 children with 1.3 children living in the home. White couples reported means of 2.5 and 1.3 respectively.

With respect to income, 3.8% of Black husbands and 1.9% of Black wives had incomes under $20,000. There were no White husbands or wives reporting income at this level. Over forty-four percent of Black males and 38.5% of Black females had incomes between $50,000 and $79,999, whereas the figures were 35.6% and 33.3% respectively for White husbands and wives. Almost twenty-nine percent of Black husbands and 23.1% of Black wives reported incomes over $80,000, whereas 8.8% of White husbands and 11.1% of White wives reported the same information. With respect to education, 57.7% of Black husbands and 65.4% of Black wives had either attended or graduated from college, whereas the percentages were 53.3% and 64.4% for White husbands and wives respectively. Roughly 27% of Black husbands and wives had masters or doctorate degrees, while over 13% of White husbands and wives had the same degrees.

Just over 90% of Black husbands and Black wives reported membership in a religious faith or church. Ninety-three percent of White husbands and 96% percent of White wives reported that they had memberships in a church or religious faith. Of this, over 35% percent of Black husbands reported belonging to a non-denominational church, and over 31% reported belonging to a Baptist church. Thirty-six percent of Black wives stated they belonged to a Baptist church, and almost 31% said they belonged to a non-denominational church. Sixty-four percent of the White husbands and wives reported memberships in the Assemblies of God church. (Specific demographic information is outlined in Table 3.1).
### Descriptive Statistics for the Sample

Variables

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<tr>
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<th>Black Husbands</th>
<th>Black Wives</th>
<th>White Husbands</th>
<th>White Wives</th>
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<td>52</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M = 44.39</td>
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<td>43.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Range = 25 - 68</td>
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<td>21 - 64</td>
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<td><strong>Years Married</strong></td>
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#### Education

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<td>11</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>9</td>
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#### Income

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<td>10</td>
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Table 3.1 Actual frequencies reported on the sample
Instrumentation

The instruments for this analysis (See Appendix C) were the Differentiation in the Family System Scale (DIFS, Anderson & Sabatelli, 1992); three subscales from Evaluating and Nurturing Relationship Issues, Communication, Happiness Scale (ENRICH, Fournier, Olson, & Druckman, 1983); the Marital Comparison Level Index (MCLI, Sabatelli, 1984); the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS, Schumm, Paff-Bergen, Hatch, Obiorah, Copeland, Meens, & Bugaighis, 1986); the Religious Behavior Scale (RBS, Smith & Apfeldorf, 1969); and a demographic scale.

Differentiation in the Family System Scale

The Differentiation in the Family System Scale (DIFS, Anderson & Sabatelli, 1992) was used to assess the patterns of differentiation in the couple relationship. This particular scale models a "circular questioning" format in which the individual's perception of how various members of the family interact with one another is assessed. The scale consists of 11 Likert-type items that provide information about the respondent's views of the patterns of interaction found within the husband/wife, and the wife/husband relationship characteristics. All items are designed to assess the behavioral patterns in the family that would reinforce the individual's sense of self as separate, yet also maintain a sense of closeness. The original scale yielded six dyadic relationship scores, with high scores indicating higher levels of differentiation. Only two of the subscales were used in this study: the wife-to-husband, and the husband-to-wife subscales from both the husband and the wives' perspectives. Examples of the items on the DIFS
for these relationships are “My wife shows respect for my views,” “My husband shows respect for my views,” “I show respect for my wife’s views,” and “I show respect for my husband’s views.”

Anderson and Sabatelli (1992) report internal consistency reliabilities for the DIFS subscales ranging from .86 to .94. For purposes of this investigation, the subscales were combined for husbands and wives (wife to husband and husband to wife). Given the sample size, adding the subscales was the best option.

Evaluating and Nurturing Relationship Issues, Communication, Happiness Scale

The Evaluating and Nurturing Relationship Issues, Communication, Happiness Scale (ENRICH, Fournier, Olson, Druckman, 1983) is a marital inventory that measures fourteen categories of relationship functioning. In 1989, Olson and Flowers conducted a discriminant analysis on the ENRICH instrument and found that happy couples could be distinguished from unhappy couples with 85–95% accuracy. For purposes of this study, only three of the subscales, marital satisfaction, marital communication, and conflict resolution, were used. These subscales were selected to address three areas where couples could have significant marital problems related to personal and interpersonal issues. Each subscale contains ten items. The responses, recorded on a 5-point scale, ranged from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree.’

First, the marital satisfaction subscale of the ENRICH scale was administered to provide specific measures of satisfaction across ten areas of marital functioning, although it is considered a global measure. Examples of the questions include “I am very happy with how we handle role responsibilities in our marriage,” “I am very unhappy about our
financial position and the way we make financial decisions,” and “I feel good about how we each practice our religious beliefs and values.” High scores indicated compatibility and satisfaction in most areas of their marriage. Cronbach alpha was reported as .81 and the retest reliability was .86 (Fournier, Olson, Druckman, 1983). This subscale correlated with the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale at .73 for individuals scores and .81 for couple scores. The reliabilities in this study were .77 for wives and .85 for husbands (Cronbach’s Alpha).

Second, the marital communication subscale of ENRICH was used to assess couples’ feelings, beliefs, and attitudes toward communication in their marriage. It was designed to assess their level of comfort with how they perceive their spouses way of processing information (Fournier, Olson, Druckman, 1983) and their own perception of how well they communicate with their husband/wife. High scores indicate couple’s awareness and satisfaction with their type and level of communication. Cronbach alpha was reported as .68 and retest as .90. In this study, Cronbach alphas were .79 for both husbands and wives.

Third, the conflict resolution subscale of ENRICH was used to assess individuals’ attitudes, feelings and beliefs towards the existence and resolution of conflict in his/her marital relationship. The items assessed the openness of couples to receive and resolve problems. Examples of the items were “Sometimes we have serious disputes over unimportant issues,” and “In order to end an argument, I usually give up too quickly.” High scores reflected the couple’s realistic attitudes about the couple’s comfort level with
handling problems. The alpha was reported as .75 and the retest as .90. The reliabilities for this study were .82 for wives and .86 for husbands.

**Marital Comparison Level Index**

The Marital Comparison Level Index (MCLI, Sabatelli, 1984) was used to assess the marital relationship. It is based on a social exchange perspective of marital satisfaction as a comparative process in which the individual assesses their relationship based on expectations. The MCLI is a 32-item instrument in which respondents rate items based on the degree to which a particular dimension occurs in their marriage relative to their expectations. It is based on a 7-point scale ranging from -3 to +3, with negative numbers indicating that their relationship is worse than they expected, 0 indicating that the outcome of their marriage is about what they expected, and positive numbers indicating that the outcome of their relationship is better than they expected. Sabatelli (1984) reported internal consistency reliability at .93. He also demonstrated a relationship between the MCLI and measures of relationship equity and commitment as evidence for construct validity. In the current study, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated at .95 for both husbands and wives.

**Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale**

The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS, Schumm, Paff-Bergen, Hatch, Obiorah, Copeland, Meens, & Bugaighis, 1986) was used to provide a global measure of marital satisfaction. This brief measure was designed in response to conceptual issues raised in the literature on the spouse, marriage and marital relationships. The questionnaire consists of the following three questions: "How satisfied are you with your
marriage,” “How satisfied are you with your husband/wife,” and “How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband/wife?” The responses were recorded on a 7-point scale ranging from “extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied.” The questionnaire yielded a reliability of .93 and excellent concurrent validity with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The scale reliability for this study was .97 for both husbands and wives (Cronbach alpha).

The three marital satisfaction instruments were used in order to assess the couples' level global and overall satisfaction in the marital relationship.

Religious Behavior Questionnaire

The Religious Behavior Questionnaire (RBQ, Smith & Apfeldorf, 1969) was used to assess the degree to which religious practices were related to differentiation and marital satisfaction. The RBS is a multi-denominational religious behavior questionnaire that can be administered across various religious, education, and socioeconomic levels. It contains 36 items, 20 of which were used in the present study, which measure activities related to the respondent’s membership in or interaction with a religious congregation. The participants were asked to respond to 8-point scales, which addressed religious behavior across various dimensions. Examples of the questions include “Do you have the practice of blessing the food every time you eat at meal times,” and “Do you try to live by the teachings of your religion?” Although the original sample was small, it yielded a reliability of .89 (Smith & Apfeldorf, 1969). A follow-up study was conducted and test-retest reliabilities of .93 were reported (Apfeldorf, 1972). This same study reported a
split-half reliability of .88. In this study, the RBS yielded an internal consistency of .93 for husbands and .90 for wives.

A demographic scale was used to identify the respondent’s race, the year of their current marriage, whether or not they were remarried, the number of children under age 18 in their home, their socioeconomic status (SES), their level of academic attainment, and other general information about the sample.

Data Analysis

The model (See Figure 2.1) was tested using structural equation modeling (LISREL VIII, Joreskog & Sorbom, 1999) as an observed variable model using the covariance matrix and maximum likelihood estimation. In other words, it was tested like a traditional path model except that the equations were estimated simultaneously rather than in a series of regression analyses, thus, the disturbance terms in the equations could be correlated. In the model, the disturbance terms for communication and conflict resolution (both endogenous variables) were set to correlate. This decision was based on the belief that because both subscales were communication related, whatever was missing in the equation might be the same for both communication and conflict resolution. The disturbance between wives’ and husbands’ marital satisfaction, also endogenous variables, was also set to be correlated for similar reasons. The data were considered separately for Black and White couples; then a chi-square difference test procedure was performed to ascertain whether the structure of the model was the same for Black and White couples, which addressed the research questions 1) Does race matter when
investigating the relationship among differentiation, religiosity, and marital satisfaction; and 2) Does race matter when examining the relationships among marital behaviors (i.e., communication and conflict resolution) and marital satisfaction.

The path model also tested the research hypotheses to determine whether there was any indication of causality between the independent variables (differentiation and religion), and the dependent variable (marital satisfaction). Further, the model simultaneously tested the paths between the independent variables, the mediating variables (communication and conflict resolution) and marital satisfaction. Findings from the structural equation modeling are presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5.

In essence, the unit of analysis is the couple. However, due to sample size restrictions and the complexity of the model, wives' perceptions of differentiation in the relationship, religiosity, communication, and conflict resolution, were used to predict both husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction. Then, husbands' perception of the "independent" variables were used to predict both husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction. This, we can explore how husbands' perceptions of the marital relationship impact wives' marital satisfaction as well as their own and vice versa.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to compare the relationship among differentiation and religion and marital satisfaction in Black and White married couples. A cultural variant approach was used to hypothesize differences in Black and White couples' marital satisfaction. This chapter will present an overview of the t-test results, the correlations among variables, findings from hypotheses testing, and a chapter summary.

T-tests

T-tests were performed by race for husbands and then wives. The results showed significant mean differences for husbands' KMS (t=-1.958(94), p=.053), n=51 for Blacks and n=45 for Whites. White husbands mean scores were higher than Black husbands. For wives, the KMS yielded significant mean differences (t=-1.963(94), p=.053), n=50 for Blacks and n=46 for Whites. Wives' RBS also yielded significant mean differences (t=2.327(94), p=.022), n=50 for Blacks and n=46 for Whites. While White wives' KMS scores were higher than Black wives', the Black wives' RBS scores were higher than White wives' scores.
T-tests were performed for husbands' and wives' mean scores on the instruments in the model. The means and standard deviations for the scales are reported on Table 4.1 for Black husbands and wives and Table 4.2 for White husbands and wives.

**Paired t-tests**

The results of the paired t-tests indicated that for Black spouses, communication and conflict resolution were significantly different, \( t=-2.17(47), p=0.035 \) and \( t=-2.86(47), p=0.006 \) respectively. With both communication and conflict, Black wives mean scores were higher than those of Black husbands. For White couples, there were no differences in the means on any of the scales.

**Correlations**

Zero order correlations on the subscales were calculated separately for husbands and wives and are found on Tables 4.1 and 4.2 respectively. Generally, the patterns of correlations for the Black couples and White couples were the same.

**Black Husbands'**

DIFS scores for Black husbands were significantly related to the following: husbands' religious behavior scores, husbands' communication scores, husbands' conflict resolution scores, both husbands' and wives' KMS scores scores, and both husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. These findings indicate that, both husbands' and wives' MCLI husbands' levels of differentiation are associated with more religious behavior, with higher levels of communication, and with a greater ability of the couple to resolve conflict.
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<td>.346*</td>
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<td>.477**</td>
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<td>.412**</td>
<td>.549**</td>
<td>.520**</td>
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<td>9. Husbands' Mar Sat</td>
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<td>.250</td>
<td>.430**</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>.693**</td>
<td>.433**</td>
<td>.649**</td>
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<td>.412**</td>
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<td>.253</td>
<td>.372**</td>
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<td>.663**</td>
<td>.680**</td>
<td>.413**</td>
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<td>.576**</td>
<td>.652**</td>
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<td>.189</td>
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<td>87.38</td>
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<td>14. Wives' Tot Diff</td>
<td>.695**</td>
<td>.706**</td>
<td>.492**</td>
<td>.664**</td>
<td>.528**</td>
<td>.740**</td>
<td>.499**</td>
<td>.706**</td>
<td>.352*</td>
<td>.688**</td>
<td>.361*</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.694**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>86.90</td>
<td>15.01</td>
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Table 4.1: Correlations of Subscales from Black Husbands and Wives
Table 4.2: Correlations of Subscales from White Husbands and Wives

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<thead>
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<th>Husbands</th>
<th>TotDf</th>
<th>Diff</th>
<th>RelBeh</th>
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<tr>
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<td>160</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. wife</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. husband</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. wife</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. husband</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. wife</td>
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<td>-0.25</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. husband</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. wife</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. husband</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. wife</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .05, **p < .01
Husbands' differentiation scores were also associated with greater global marital satisfaction of husbands and wives, more realistic expectations for husbands and wives, and greater overall marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Husbands' religious behavior scores were related to husbands' and wives' KMS scores and husbands' and wives' MCLI scores. Thus, increased religious behavior of husbands was associated with greater global marital satisfaction in both husbands and wives and with more realistic marital expectations in both husbands and wives.

Husbands' communication scores were significantly related to husbands' conflict resolution scores, to husbands' and wives' KMS scores, to husbands' and wives' MCLI scores, and to husband's and wives' ENRICH scores. Thus, higher levels of communication were associated with increased ability to resolve conflicts, with greater global marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives, with more realistic marital expectations for both husbands and wives, and with greater marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Husbands' conflict resolution scores were related to husbands' and wives' KMS scores, to husbands' and wives' MCLI, and husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. Thus, couples' ability to resolve conflict was associated with both husbands' and wives' increased global marital satisfaction, with both husbands' and wives' realistic marital expectations, and with both husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction scores.

Husbands' KMS scores were significantly related to wives' KMS scores, to both husbands' and wives' MCLI scores, and to both husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores, such that greater global marital satisfaction for husbands was related to greater global marital satisfaction for wives, and with both husbands and wives more realistic marital expectations.
Higher global marital satisfaction was also associated with overall marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Husbands' MCLI scores were significantly related to wives' MCLI scores, and to both husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores, such that husbands' more realistic marital expectations were associated with more realistic marital expectations for wives, and greater marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Husbands' ENRICH scores were related to wives' ENRICH scores, such that husbands' marital satisfaction was related to wives' marital satisfaction.

**White Husbands'**

White husbands' DIFS scores were related to husbands' communication and conflict resolution scores, to both husbands' and wives' KMS scores, to both husbands' and wives' MCLI scores, and to both husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. Hence, their level of differentiation was associated with increased communication, with greater abilities for couples to resolve conflicts, and with both husbands and wives increased global marital satisfaction. Husbands' level of differentiation is also associated with both husbands' and wives' realistic marital expectations, and both husbands' and wives' overall marital satisfaction.

Husbands' religious behavior scores were related to husbands' MCLI scores and to husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores, such that increased religious behavior was related to more realistic marital expectations for husbands, and to greater overall marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.
Husbands' communication scores were significantly related to husbands' conflict resolution, both husbands' and wives' KMS, both husbands' and wives' MCLI, and both husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. Thus, husbands' communication scores were associated with greater abilities of couples to resolve conflict, higher global marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives, more realistic marital expectations by both husbands and wives, and greater overall marital satisfaction by both husband's and wives.

Husbands' conflict resolution scores were related to husbands' and wives KMS scores, to husbands' and wives' MCLI scores, and to husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. Thus, the couples' increased ability to resolve conflict was associated with more global marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives, more realistic marital expectations for both husbands and wives, and increased overall marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

The husbands' KMS scores were related to wives' KMS, to husbands' and wives' MCLI scores and to husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. These findings suggest that husbands' increased global marital satisfaction was associated with wives' increased global marital satisfaction, with more realistic marital expectations in both husbands and wives, and with higher overall marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Husbands' MCLI scores was significantly related to wives' MCLI scores, and to both husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores, such that husbands' more realistic marital expectations were associated with more realistic marital expectations for wives, and greater marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Husbands' ENRICH scores were related to wives' ENRICH scores, such that husbands' marital satisfaction was related to wives' marital satisfaction.
Black Wives*

Black wives' DIFS scores were related to their communication scores, their conflict resolution scores, to both husbands' and wives' KMS scores, to both husbands' and wives' MCLI scores, and to both husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. Thus, wives' differentiation was associated with wives' increased levels of communication, with greater couple ability to resolve conflicts, and with increased global marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives. Their differentiation was also associated with more realistic marital expectations for both husbands and wives and with greater marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Wives' communication scores were related to wives' conflict resolution scores, to both husband's and wives' KMS scores, to both husbands' and wives' MCLI scores, and to both husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. This indicates that wives' increased communication was associated with the couples' increased ability to resolve conflicts, with greater global marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives, and with more realistic marital expectations for both husbands and wives. It also indicates that wives' increased communication was associated with greater marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Wives' conflict resolution scores were related to husbands' and wives' KMS, to husbands' and wives' MCLI, and to husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. Therefore, the couples' ability to resolve conflict was associated with greater global marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives, with husbands and wives having more realistic marital expectations, and with greater overall marital satisfaction scores.
Wives' KMS scores were related to husbands' KMS scores, husbands' and wives' MCLI scores, and husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. Thus, wives' global marital satisfaction was associated with husbands' global marital satisfaction, with husbands and wives having more realistic marital expectations and with greater overall marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Wives' MCLI scores were related to husbands' MCLI scores and wives' ENRICH scores, such that more realistic marital expectations in wives was associated with more realistic expectations for husbands, and to wives' greater overall marital satisfaction.

Wives' ENRICH scores were related to husbands' ENRICH scores such that greater marital satisfaction for wives was associated with greater marital satisfaction for husbands.

White Wives'

White wives' total DIFS scores were related to their communication and conflict resolution scores. That is, wives with higher levels of differentiation were associated with the couples' increased communication, and with their increased problem solving abilities. Their DIFS' scores were also related to both husbands' and wives' KMS, MCLI and ENRICH scores. That is, wives' levels of differentiation were related to both husbands and wives increased global marital satisfaction, with more realistic marital expectations for both husbands and wives, and with greater overall marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Wives' religious behavior scores were significantly correlated with their conflict resolution and KMS scores, with husbands' MCLI scores, and with husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. Thus, wives' increased religious behavior was associated with the couples'
problem solving abilities, and wives' global marital satisfaction scores. Wives' increased religious behavior was also associated with husbands' realistic marital expectations, and with both husbands' and wives' increased overall marital satisfaction.

Wives' communication scores were related to wives' conflict resolution scores, to both husbands' and wives' KMS scores, to both husbands' and wives' MCLI scores, and to both husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. This indicates that wives increased communication was associated with the couples' increased ability to resolve conflicts, with greater global marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives, and with more realistic marital expectations for both husbands and wives. It also indicates that wives' increased communication was associated with greater marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.

Wives' conflict resolution scores were related to husbands' and wives' KMS, to husbands' and wives' MCLI, and to wives' ENRICH scores. Therefore, the couples' ability to resolve conflict was associated with greater global marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives, with husbands and wives having more realistic marital expectations, and wives having greater overall marital satisfaction scores.

Wives' KMS scores were related to husbands' KMS scores, husbands' and wives' MCLI scores, and husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores. Thus, wives' global marital satisfaction was associated with husbands' global marital satisfaction, with husbands and wives having more realistic marital expectations and with greater overall marital satisfaction for both husbands and wives.
Wives' MCLI scores were related to husbands' MCLI scores and husbands' and wives' ENRICH scores, such that more realistic marital expectations in wives was associated with more realistic marital expectations for husbands, and to both husbands' and wives' greater overall marital satisfaction.

Wives' ENRICH scores were related to both husbands' and wives' MCLI scores such that greater marital satisfaction is associated with realistic marital expectations in both husbands and wives.

Model Tests

Group Comparisons

In this study, it was of interest to compare the relationships among the variables between Black and White couples. That is, are the relationships among differentiation, religious behavior, communication, conflict resolution, and marital satisfaction different for Black couples versus White couples? Therefore, a group comparison procedure was utilized.

Comparability or invariance represents a continuum. Looking at comparability, one must consider the following: the model form and the similarity in parameter values (Bollen, 1989). Models with different forms usually represent the lower range of the invariance continuum. Here, the assumption was that the models had the same form, because the model for each group had the same parameter matrices with the same dimensions in the same location of fixed, free, and constrained parameters. Thus, the focus here was on the similarity of parameter values within a given form.
A series of hypotheses were tested. First, after testing H form, the null hypotheses, a test of the path coefficients was conducted (H beta gamma). Then a test of path coefficients along with the variance/covariance matrix of the two exogenous variables, differentiation and religiosity, was conducted (H beta gamma, phi). Finally, a test of all model parameters including disturbance terms in the equations was performed (H beta, gamma, phi, and psi).

In testing H form first, none of the non-fixed parameters were restricted across the two groups. When there was a good fit, the next more restrictive hypotheses was tested, H beta, gamma, a simultaneous test of all coefficients across groups. When phi was added to the hypotheses, equality was added for the covariance matrices of the two exogenous variables (Bollen, 1989). Lastly, psi was added representing a test of the most restrictive hypotheses. If there was no loss of fit after the hypotheses tests, then the model was assumed invariant across the two groups. If there was a significant loss of fit at any step, this would suggest that the two groups were different. Data for Black and White husbands and for Black and White wives were fitted separately. Then, to see if the structure of the model was the same for husbands and then for wives, a Chi-square difference test procedure was used (Bollen, 1989).

**Husbands**

In the model using the KMS (See Table 4.3), there was loss of fit when testing the full model for husbands in the group comparison procedure. The model provided a good fit up through the test of the path coefficients and the exogenous variables ($X^2=19.66(15)$, $p=.19$; RMSEA=.07, GFI=.94). Thus, it can be assumed that the models are slightly different across the two groups. The model lost fit in the last step, which suggested that the
<table>
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*p<.05

Table 4.3: Husbands' Model Test Results for Three Measures of Marital Satisfaction
disturbance terms in the equations for Black and White husbands were not the same. This may suggest that different factors impact global marital satisfaction for Black husbands versus White husbands.

In this model (See Figure 4.1), there were significant paths between differentiation and the following variables: communication, conflict, husbands' marital satisfaction, and wives' marital satisfaction. There were also significant paths from religion to wives' marital satisfaction, and from communication to husbands' marital satisfaction. The disturbance terms between conflict resolution and communication were significantly correlated. The disturbance terms between husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction were also significantly correlated. The model explained 57% of the variance in the husbands' and 40% of the variance in the wives' KMS scores.

Figure 4.1: Husbands' KMS Model
In the MCLI model (See Table 4.3), there was no loss of fit at any step in the group comparison procedure ($\chi^2=23.02(21), p=.34; \text{RMSEA}=0.00, \text{GFI}=0.89$). Thus, it can be assumed that the model is invariant across Black husbands and White husbands.

In this model, reported in Figure 4.2, there were significant paths between differentiation and the following variables: communication, conflict resolution and husbands' marital satisfaction. There were also significant paths from communication to husbands' marital satisfaction, but not wives'. The disturbance terms were also significantly correlated. The model explained 53% of the variance in the husbands' and 27% of the variance in the wives' MCLI scores.

Figure 4.2: Husbands' MCLI Model
In the ENRICH model (See Table 4.3), there was no loss of fit in any step in the group comparison procedure ($X^2=30.06(21)$, $p=.09$; RMSEA=.07, GFI=.87). Thus, it can be assumed that the model is invariant across Black husbands and White husbands.

In this model, reported in Figure 4.3, there were significant paths between differentiation and the following: communication, conflict resolution, and wives' marital satisfaction. There were also significant paths from communication to husbands' marital satisfaction and from conflict resolution to husbands' marital satisfaction. The model explained 47% of the variance in the husbands' and 28% of the wives' ENRICH scores.

![Figure 4.3: Husbands' ENRICH Model](image-url)
Wives

In the model using the KMS (See Table 4.4), there was a loss of fit when performing the group comparison procedure for wives ($X^2=22.12(12), p=.03; \text{RMSEA}=13, \text{GFI}=.95$). This step was testing the path coefficients. Thus, the paths were not equal across the two groups.

In this model, reported in Figure 4.4, there were significant paths for Black wives between differentiation and the following variables: communication, conflict resolution, husbands' marital satisfaction, and wives' marital satisfaction. There were also significant correlated disturbance terms for communication and conflict resolution, and for husbands' marital satisfaction and wives' marital satisfaction. The model explained 53% of the variance in the KMS for Black wives and 50% for Black husbands' KMS.
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* $p < .05$

Table 4.4: Wives' Model Test Results for Three Measures of Marital Satisfaction
Figure 4.4 Wives’ KMS Model
For White wives in the KMS model (See Figure 4.4) there were also significant paths from differentiation to the following: communication, conflict resolution, and wives’ marital satisfaction but not husbands’. There were also significant paths from religion to communication and to conflict resolution. The model explained 48% of the variance in the KMS for White wives and 24% of the variance for White husbands.

In the model using the MCLI (See Table 4.4), there was no loss of fit at any step in the group comparison procedure ($X^2=26.67(21)$, $p=.18$; RMSEA=.06, GFI=.90). Thus, it can be assumed that the model is invariant across Black wives and White wives.

In this model, reported in Figure 4.5, there were significant paths between differentiation and the following: communication, conflict resolution, and wives’ marital satisfaction. There were also significant paths from religion to communication and to conflict resolution, and from communication to wives’ marital satisfaction. The disturbance terms were significantly correlated as hypothesized. The model explained 51% of the variance in the MCLI for wives and 22% for husbands.
Figure 4.5: Wives' MCLI Model
In the model using the ENRICH (See Table 4.4), there was no loss of fit at any step in the group comparison procedure ($\chi^2=32.63(21)$, $p=.05$; RMSEA=.95, GFI=.88). Thus, it can be assumed that the model is invariant across Black wives and White wives.

In this model, reported in Figure 4.6, there were significant paths between differentiation and the following: communication, conflict resolution, and wives' marital satisfaction. Significant paths were also found from religion to communication and to conflict. The model explained 57% of the variance in the ENRICH for wives and 16% of the variance for husbands.

![Figure 4.6: Wives' ENRICH Model](image_url)
Summary

The way marital satisfaction was measured made a difference in the model tests. When using the KMS, both husbands' and wives' marital satisfactions were significantly predicted. When using the husbands' model and the wives' model of the other marital satisfaction measures, only the husbands' marital satisfaction was significantly predicted in the husbands' model, and only wives' in the wives' model. This was most notable in the wives' models.

The only significant and meaningful difference found was for the Black wives' KMS model. In the model for Black wives', both husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction were significantly predicted by differentiation. In the White wives' model, only their marital satisfaction was significantly predicted by differentiation, whereas their religious behavior also predicted their communication and conflict resolution. This was not the case for Black wives.

For husbands, the GFI's dropped from .94, to .89, to .87, testing the KMS, MCLI, and ENRICH respectively. This pattern was the same for each scale for wives. This is an indication that the fits of the models are the same for women as it is for men. It appears that the KMS scale provides the best fit of all three models, with the MCLI being second, and the ENRICH third. This may suggest that the other marital satisfaction scales have more variability than the KMS, and the variables used to predict marital satisfaction in the model do not explain enough of that variability to provide a good model to data fit.
It is also the case, however, that the models using the KMS lost fit in the group comparison procedure. Thus, using a global marital satisfaction measure suggests differences between Black and White couples that do not show up when using more specific measures of marital satisfaction and quality.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will summarize this investigation by reviewing the following: the problem under investigation, the findings, measurement issues, and limitations of the study. It will conclude by providing an overview of possible clinical implications, areas for future research, and a summary of significant contributions of this research.

Research has indicated that Black couples divorce at higher rates and are less satisfied in their marriages than White couples. Further, Census Bureau statistics also report these high rates of divorce for Black couples. Whether or not Black couples are less happy in their marriages that White couples is not clear and the antecedents of Black relationship have led to a lack of support for the longevity of the relationship.

Problem under Investigation

Differentiation, in this study, pertained to a couple's ability to negotiate emotional boundaries in their marital system. Because this construct has seldom been tested empirically, and available data does not take into account significant contextual variables such as communication and conflict, this investigation was designed to explore such relationships.
Additionally, although there is evidence that differentiation is related to marital satisfaction, and that religion or spirituality is related to marital satisfaction, there are no studies linking differentiation and religion, although such a relationship had been theorized (Bowen, 1978, Waanders, 1987). Further, none of these relationships had explored with Black couples to date. Thus, this study was designed to examine the relationships between differentiation, religiosity, and marital satisfaction, while exploring possible links with communication and conflict, as stated in the hypotheses.

Findings

The following were the hypotheses indicated for this study:

Hypothesis 1: Married persons who indicate higher couple differentiation in their relationship will have higher marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Married couples who report high religious behavior will have higher marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Married couples with higher differentiation and religiosity will have higher communication and conflict resolution abilities, and, in turn, have higher marital satisfaction.

The overall tenets of the hypotheses were supported. That is, the hypotheses were a test of the model that was specified. The model fit and there did not appear to be differences between Black and White couples with two exceptions. Regarding the research questions 1.
Did race matter when examining the relationship between differentiation, religiosity, and marital satisfaction; and, 2. Did race matter when examining the relationship among marital behaviors (i.e. communication and conflict resolution) and marital satisfaction?, findings indicated that race was not a significant factor except when using particular instruments to measure marital satisfaction, specifically the KMS.

Overall, the patterns of correlations between Black and White couples were the same. For Blacks, differentiation was related to husband's religious behavior, whereas for Whites, there were no correlations between differentiation and religious behavior. This suggests that Black husbands' and wives' differentiation was impacted by the religious behavior of the husbands but not the wives.

For Black husbands and wives, as well as White husbands and wives, differentiation was significantly related to the three marital satisfaction variables. That is, the couples' levels of differentiation were positively correlated with married couples' global and overall marital satisfaction, and the level of realistic marital expectations experienced by husbands and wives. Therefore, couples who have high degrees of differentiation in their marriage, have higher levels of marital satisfaction and more realistic marital expectations.

The model tests provided different results depending on the marital satisfaction instruments used. For the most part, Black and White husbands models were the same. In the KMS model, there were significant paths from differentiation to all variables, and from religion to wives' marital satisfaction, and from communication to husbands' marital satisfaction. This indicated that for husbands, their level of differentiation had a significant impact on communication and the couple's ability to resolve conflict in their marriage as
well as on both their and their wives' global marital satisfaction. Thus, husbands who have higher levels of differentiation are more likely to be globally satisfied in their marriages. Moreover, the husbands' religious behavior positively impacted the wives' marital satisfaction such that the more he engaged in religious activities, the higher the wives' marital satisfaction, similar to other research findings (Call & Heaton, 1997). Further, the greater the couples' ability to communicate effectively, the higher the husbands' own marital satisfaction.

For the husbands' MCLI, significant paths indicated that the husbands' level of differentiation was positively related to the couples' level of communication, as well as the husbands' own marital satisfaction. That is, the husbands' ability to negotiate emotional boundaries directly impacted the ability of the couple to communicate effectively, which in turn, determined the husbands' own level of marital satisfaction.

In the husbands' ENRICH model, significant paths indicated that differentiation had a positive relationship to communication, conflict resolution, and wives' marital satisfaction. That is, husbands with high levels of differentiation were better able to communicate and resolve conflict within their marriage. Further, this level of differentiation was associated with higher levels of marital satisfaction for the wives. The couples' levels of both communication and conflict resolution both significantly influenced husbands' marital satisfaction. That is, when couples are able to communicate and resolve conflicts effectively, husbands are more satisfied in their marriages.

Black and White wives' models showed differences only when using the KMS. The KMS model for wives' lost fit, meaning that the paths, or parameter values were not the
same for Black and White wives'. For Black wives', both the husbands' and the wives' marital satisfaction were significantly predicted by differentiation. That is, for Black wives, their level of differentiation influenced both the wives' and the husbands' marital satisfaction. It also influenced the way they communicated and resolved conflict. For White wives' KMS model, there were significant paths from differentiation to communication, conflict resolution, and wives' marital satisfaction. Thus, White wives' level of differentiation effected the couples' ability to communicate effectively and resolve conflict. Further, wives' religious behavior influenced the couples' ability to communicate and resolve conflict.

The other two models were the same for Black and White wives'. The MCLI yielded significant paths between differentiation and communication, conflict resolution, and wives' marital satisfaction. That is, wives' level of differentiation influenced the couples' ability to communicate and resolve conflict as well as their own marital satisfaction.

In the ENRICH model, there were significant paths from differentiation to communication, conflict resolution, and wives' marital satisfaction. Thus, wives who had high levels of differentiation were likely to experience increased couple communication and conflict resolution abilities. They were likely to have high levels of marital satisfaction as well. Wives' with high levels of religious behavior were also likely to experience increased communication and conflict resolution abilities in their marriages.

What varied most was the amount of variance accounted for in marital satisfaction, especially for the other partner's marital satisfaction. For example, for the husbands' KMS, the model explained 57% of the variance in the husbands' scores and only 40% for the
wives. For the MCLI, the model explained 53% of the variance in husbands' scores but only 27% of the variance in wives' scores. With the ENRICH, the model explained 47% of the variance in the husbands' scores, but only 28% in the wives'.

For the wives' model tests, the KMS model explained 53% of the variance in the Black wives' score, and 50% of the variance in the husbands' scores. For White wives, using the KMS model, the model explained 48% of the variance in wives' scores, but only 24% of the variance in husbands' scores. Using the MCLI, the model explained 51% of the variance in the wives' scores, but only 22% of the variance in the husbands' scores.

Finally, using the ENRICH, the model explained 57% of the variance in the wives' scores but only 16% of the variance in husbands' scores.

For the most part, these findings are similar to those of previous research. Differentiation in the couple relationship was related to marital satisfaction as was the case for Bartle-Haring and Sabatelli (1998) and Skowron and Friedlander (1998). These findings however, also point to the fact that there are more complex associations at work here.

Kotler (1989) demonstrated that husbands' family of origin experiences were related to wives' marital satisfaction. From these findings, it appears that husbands' perceptions of differentiation in couple relationships can predict wives' marital satisfaction depending on the instrument used, while wives' perception of differentiation in the couple relationships are not as predictive of husbands' marital satisfaction regardless of instrument used. This may suggest that wives' satisfaction in marriages is more sensitive to husbands' behaviors.
Measurement Issues

Based upon the findings of this study, it appears that how marital satisfaction is measured is critical in accurately interpreting the findings of such studies (Sabatelli, 1988). This study utilized three instruments to measure marital satisfaction: the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, a 3-item global measure of marital satisfaction, the Marital Comparison Level Index, a 32-item scale measuring marital expectations, and the marital satisfaction subscale of the Evaluating, Nurturing Communication Happiness scale, a 10-item subscale that globally measures 10 different dimensions of marital functioning. The more global measure implied differences in marital satisfaction and the more specific measure implied that there were no differences in marital satisfaction between Black and White couples. Thus, the three item global measure showed that either the groups were different on these measures of global satisfaction, or the way the questions were worded impacted the way the subjects responded.

At the onset of this study, there appeared to be significant historical support to expect significant contributions of religion to various areas of marital functioning. However, this assumption was not fully supported by this research. Although religion has historically been a significant part of the lives of Black families in the United States overall (Ellison, 1997), the results of this study only indicated a few significant relationships. However, though these findings were somewhat surprising, it does not eliminate the possibility of there existing more significant relationships between religiosity and various aspects of Black family/couple functioning. This may instead speak to the paucity of valid
instrumentation for measuring religiosity. In the design of this study, few instruments measuring religiosity were available that complemented its purposes and populations. Therefore, the most exhaustive instrument was used in hopes of capturing a more in-depth view of religious practices. The Religious Behavior Questionnaire, utilized in this study, was designed almost forty years ago for use by the Chaplain Research Program of the Veteran's Administration, as well as for other research endeavors examining the sociology and psychology of religion (Smith & Apfeldorf, 1969). Although this instrument contained 35 questions, more recent research utilizes as few as 5–8 global questions in an attempt to measure religious practices.

These findings point to the need for caution when investigating differences across ethnic groups. The instruments themselves may inflate or deflate actual differences.

Limitations of the Study

Although care was taken to use the appropriate analyses for the sample and study, there were several issues that would limit generalizability to all Black and White couples.

First, most of the instruments were not normed on African Americans. Thus, the findings from those inquiries may not accurately reflect the construct or the responses from the Black couples in this sample.

Next, the sample was not random. Because data were collected from a convenience sample, the representativeness of the sample is unknown. Thus, it cannot be assumed that these results would apply to all middle class Black and White married couples.
Although it was of great benefit in this study having Black and White couples similar regarding SES, it limited the ability to generalize these finding to groups with lower SES, or to groups other than Blacks and Whites at this socioeconomic level. Historically, research has been criticized because, using a 'cultural equivalent' approach, researchers have compared the Blacks and Whites from an Euro-centric advantage when the groups were not similar (Johnson, 1997). At other times, studies controlled for SES but there is always the risk of losing some vital indicators, or making assumptions about the analysis' ability to partial out biases from the data in order to perform a comparative analysis.

The majority of this sample was homogenous in terms of identifying with and belonging to a particular religious organization. Of the Black respondents, 90% of the husbands and 90% of the wives reported being a member of a religious faith or church. Over 34% of the Black husbands reported belonging to a non-denominational church and almost 31% reported belonging to Baptist churches. Nearly 37% of Black wives reported belonging to Baptist churches, while 31% of them reported belonging to non-denominational churches. Ninety-three percent of White husbands and 96% of White wives reported being a member of a religious faith or church. Over 64% of White husbands and wives reported belonging to Assembly of God churches. Therefore, the majority of this study sample subscribed to some religious orientation. While this is positive in terms of consistency of findings regarding persons with religious beliefs, it does not provide a control group of non-religious couples for comparison purposes.
Clinical Implications

This study has important clinical implications. First, it provides some preliminary information that differentiation has similar consequences for Blacks as it does for Whites. There were no significant mean differences in differentiation between the two groups. Caution must be taken, however, to not confuse this with the different processes that occur in Black families versus White families. For example, in treatment, although a Black couple and a White couple may appear to have similar levels of differentiation, their individual, familial, and cultural histories are likely to be so varied, that effective interventions might be quite dissimilar.

Findings from this study also provide information about the importance of including husbands in treatment (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). These results indicated that both husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction is largely impacted by how both husbands' and wives' negotiate emotional boundaries in the marriage. This would indicate that treatment should include focusing on helping couples effectively manage separateness and connectedness, such that both parties learn to be comfortable in close relationship to each other as well as giving the other the 'space' they need within the marriage.

Lastly, in treating Black couples in therapy, Knox (1985) believes that it is important to examine the role of spirituality when assessing and treating African American clients and their families. She stated that spiritual beliefs are such an integral part of the survival system of Black people, that they should be employed in psychotherapy whenever possible. Once clients mention some spiritual association, any lack of acknowledgement on the part of the therapist could be construed as a disregard for or insensitivity to their beliefs. This
could jeopardize the joining processes or cause premature termination of the therapeutic
relationship.

Areas for Future Research

This study provided preliminary information about differentiation in Black couples,
as well as how it relates to religiosity, communication, conflict resolution, and marital
satisfaction. However, this study should be replicated using the following: larger, random
samples; a control group of non-religious couples; and, more varied socioeconomic groups.

Researchers should also explore different ways of measuring religiosity/spirituality.
It may be that because these constructs are not widely examined in family studies, valuable
information is lost because there are not reliable instruments available to family scientists.

It might be useful to design and utilize instruments normed for Black couples. The
use of instruments normed for Black couples would give us a better idea about whether or
not the structure of Black marriages are different and how functional their communication
and conflict resolution strategies are. These results could be a valuable contribution to a
body of literature that deems Black couple patterns of functioning as largely conflictual.

Summary

This exploration provided important information about the emotional processes in
Black and White middle class marriages. Much of existing research on Black couple
functioning uses lower SES or clinical populations. Boyd-Franklin (1989) stated that further
exploration of the needs of Black families, other than those at poverty levels, is important.
Often counseling training programs focus on the needs of Black families of lower SES and
do not provide adequate intervention strategies for new counselors working with middle-
class families. With these findings, current intervention strategies could be examined to
determine whether they might meet the overall needs of the study sample, especially
pertaining to the appropriateness of family therapy and the use of social service
interventions.

This research was a valuable contribution to the family literature on Black family
functioning. Although there are now national data sets available on Black families, they are
limited in information on specific variables of marital functioning.

This study also provided some valuable preliminary information on differentiation in
Black couples. Bowen (1978) had postulated that race does not impact the process of
differentiation and this research seemed to support that position. It remains to be seen if the
same holds true for Black couples of varying socioeconomic levels.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECT PROTOCOL FORM
ACTION OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

With regard to the employment of human subjects in the proposed research protocol:

96B0155 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIFFERENTIATION AND MARITAL SATISFACTION IN BLACK AND WHITE COUPLES, Susanne Bartle-Haring, Diana M. Leigh, Family Relations and Human Development

THE BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES REVIEW COMMITTEE HAS TAKEN THE FOLLOWING ACTION:

___ APPROVED  ___ DISAPPROVED

X APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS*  ___ WAIVER OF WRITTEN CONSENT GRANTED

* Conditions stated by the Committee have been met by the Investigator and, therefore, the protocol is APPROVED.

It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to retain a copy of each signed consent form for at least three (3) years beyond the termination of the subject's participation in the proposed activity. Should the principal investigator leave the University, signed consent forms are to be transferred to the Human Subjects Review Committee for the required retention period. This application has been approved for the period of one year. You are reminded that you must promptly report any problems to the Review Committee, and that no procedural changes may be made without prior review and approval. You are also reminded that the identity of the research participants must be kept confidential.

Date: May 3, 1996

Signed: (Chairperson)
APPENDIX B

FORMS FOR SOLICITATION
OF SUBJECTS
May 11, 1996

Dear Pastor,

Suzanne Bartle-Haring, Ph.D. and I are conducting a study on how married couples interact. We understand that you are willing to assist us in our endeavors.

We will be asking the participants to complete a single questionnaire that will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Although the questionnaire items are not excessively invasive, there are a few items that ask about the couple's satisfaction with their sexual relationship as well as their socioeconomic status.

We will send you a script to be read to members of your congregation either by yourself, or the person(s) in charge of your couples' ministry, to solicit participants for the study. We will call you within a week to arrange a date and time to administer the questionnaires. On the scheduled date, we will be available to administer and collect the questionnaires, as well as to distribute the participant's gifts (a gift certificate) after completion.

Your willingness to help with this research project is greatly appreciated. We anticipate it making a contribution not only to the study of Marriage and Family, but also to further our understanding of how religion is related to marital satisfaction.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 478-1837 (home), or 251-0103 (work). You may also contact Suzanne Bartle-Haring at 688-3259.

Sincerely,

Diana M. Leigh, M.S.
Doctoral Student

Suzanne Bartle-Haring, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

DL/dh
For Married Couples Only

Please come and help Diana Leigh, at The Ohio State University, turn her M.S. into a Ph.D. by becoming a research participant. Stop by 3368 Pine Valley Rd. (off N. Cassady Ave. and Hudson St.) on Saturday, August 30, 1997, anytime between 10:00 am - 1:00 pm. It only takes 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

You will receive a gift certificate for your participation.

If you have any questions, please call 371-9789.

If not, see you there!
Script for Soliciting Married Couples for Research Project

Please use the following script to solicit participants for the study on marital satisfaction. It is not necessary for us to have the names of the couples.

"Suzanne Bartle-Haring, Ph.D. and Diana Leigh, M.S. at The Ohio State University, Department of Family Relations and Human Development, are conducting research on marital satisfaction. They are interested in finding out about how couples relate to one another. Further, they want to see how religion plays a part in marital satisfaction.

All information you provide on the questionnaire will be strictly confidential, so not even your pastor will have access to it. Further, you will not be asked to put your name on the questionnaire. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to fill out a single questionnaire which should only take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Both the husband and wife are encouraged to fill out the questionnaire independently.

The researchers have also indicated that you will be receiving a restaurant gift certificate as a way of saying thank you for your participation."
Dear Participant:

Diana Leigh, M.S., and Suzanne Bartle-Haring, Ph.D. at The Ohio State University, Department of Human Development and Family Science, are conducting a study to learn more about the marital relationship. In this questionnaire, you will find questions about your marriage, your religious practices, and your characteristics in general.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are not required to put your name on the questionnaire. Please fill out the questionnaire in one sitting, versus putting it down and returning to it at a later time. If any questions make you feel uncomfortable, please skip them and go on to the next one. But please try to fill out the entire questionnaire. You will see a number on this questionnaire. This is your identification number and is the only way we have of identifying your data. Your spouse will have the same number so that we will be able to match your response with his/hers. However, please do not put your name on the questionnaire. This way, your answers are kept anonymous. Also, please do not share answers with your spouse during the completion time.

When you turn in your questionnaire, you will be given a small gift as a way of saying 'Thank you for your participation.' If you have further questions about this project, please contact us at (614)688-3259.

We hope that the information we gather from this project will give us a better understanding of what factors contribute to the creation of more satisfying marriages.

Sincerely,

Diana M. Leigh, M.S. Suzanne Bartle-Haring, Ph.D.
Doctoral Candidate Assistant Professor
APPENDIX C

INSTRUMENTS
INSTRUCTIONS:

Answer the following sets of statements describing the relationship between you and your spouse. Please circle the number that best describes **HOW OFTEN** the following statements happen between you and your spouse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Almost Always</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Me:

1. I show respect for my spouse’s viewpoints.  
   1  2  3  4  5

2. I respond to my spouse’s feelings as if they have no value.  
   1  2  3  4  5

3. I demonstrate respect for my spouse’s privacy.  
   1  2  3  4  5

4. I tell my spouse what she/he should be thinking.  
   1  2  3  4  5

5. I respond to my spouse’s feelings in an understanding way.  
   1  2  3  4  5

6. I tell my spouse that he/she doesn’t mean what he/she is saying.  
   1  2  3  4  5

7. I show a lack of concern for my spouse’s feelings.  
   1  2  3  4  5

8. I encourage my to spouse to express her/his own feelings, bad or good.  
   1  2  3  4  5

9. I discount my spouse’s thoughts and opinions.  
   1  2  3  4  5

10. I show understanding when my spouse does not wish to share his/her feelings.  
    1  2  3  4  5

11. I allow my spouse to speak for herself/himself.  
    1  2  3  4  5
My Partner:

1. My partner shows respect for my viewpoints. 1 2 3 4 5
2. My partner responds to my feelings as if they have no value. 1 2 3 4 5
3. My partner demonstrates respect for my privacy. 1 2 3 4 5
4. My partner tells me what I should be thinking. 1 2 3 4 5
5. My partner responds to my feelings in an understanding way. 1 2 3 4 5
6. My partner tells me that I don't mean what I am saying. 1 2 3 4 5
7. My partner shows a lack of concern for my feelings. 1 2 3 4 5
8. My partner encourages me to express my feelings, bad or good. 1 2 3 4 5
9. My partner discounts my thoughts and opinions. 1 2 3 4 5
10. My partner shows understanding when I do not wish to share my feelings. 1 2 3 4 5
11. My partner allows me to speak for myself. 1 2 3 4 5
INSTRUCTIONS:
Please use the scale and circle the appropriate number that best describes how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marital Satisfaction Scale

1. I am very happy with how we handle role responsibilities in our marriage.  
   1 2 3 4 5

2. I am not pleased with the personality characteristics and personal habits of my partner.  
   1 2 3 4 5

3. I am not happy about our communication and feel my partner does not understand me.  
   1 2 3 4 5

4. I am very happy about how we make decisions and resolve conflicts.  
   1 2 3 4 5

5. I am very happy about our financial position and the way we make our financial decisions.  
   1 2 3 4 5

6. I am very happy with how we manage our leisure activities and the time we spend together.  
   1 2 3 4 5

7. I am very pleased about how we express affection and relate sexually.  
   1 2 3 4 5

8. I am not satisfied with the way we each handle our responsibilities as parents.  
   1 2 3 4 5

9. I am dissatisfied about our relationship with my parents, in-laws, and/or friends.  
   1 2 3 4 5
10. I feel very good about how we each practice our religious beliefs and values.

Communication Scale

1. It is very easy for me to express hard feelings to my partner.

2. When we are having a problem, my partner often gives me the silent treatment.

3. My partner sometimes make comments which put me down.

4. I am sometimes afraid to ask my partner for what I want.

5. I wish my partner was more willing to share his/her feelings with me.

6. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my partner tells me.

7. I often do not tell my partner what I am feeling because he/she should already know.

8. I am very satisfied with how my partner and I talk with each other.

9. I do not always share negative feelings I have about my partner, because I am afraid he/she will get angry.

10. My partner is always a good listener.

Conflict Resolution Scale

1. In order to end an argument, I usually give up too quickly.

2. My partner and I have very different ideas about the best way to solve our disagreements.
3. When discussing our problems, I usually feel my partner understands me.

4. When we are having a problem, I can always tell my partner what is bothering me.

5. Sometimes we have serious disputes over important issues.

6. I would do anything to avoid conflict with my partner.

7. I sometimes feel our arguments go on and on and never seem to get resolved.

8. When we have a disagreement, we openly share our feelings and decide how to resolve our differences.

9. I usually feel that my partner does not take our disagreements seriously.

10. When we argue, I usually end up feeling that the problem was all my fault.
Marital Comparison Level Index (MCLI)

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Indicate by circling the appropriate number how your current experiences compare to your expectations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-3</th>
<th>-2</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>+1</th>
<th>+2</th>
<th>+3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worse than I expected</td>
<td>About what I expected</td>
<td>Better than expected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The amount of companionship you experience.  
2. The amount your partner is trusting of you.  
3. The amount of sexual activity that you experience.  
4. The amount of confiding that occurs between your and spouse.  
5. The amount of conflict over daily decisions that exist.  
6. The amount of time you spend together.  
7. The amount of affection your partner displays.  
8. The amount the responsibility for household tasks is shared.  
9. The amount your partner is willing to listen to you.  
10. The amount of relationship equality you experience.  
11. The amount of conflict over money you experience.  
12. The amount of compatibility that you experience.
13. The amount of conflict over the use of leisure time that you experience.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

14. The amount of disagreement over friends that you experience.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

15. The amount of interest in sex your partner expresses.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

16. The fairness with which money is spent.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

17. The amount of criticism your partner expresses.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

18. The amount of mutual respect you experience.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

19. The degree to which your interpersonal communications are effective.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

20. The amount of love you experience.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

21. The degree to which your needs are met.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

22. The amount of freedom you experience in pursuing other friendships.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

23. The amount of responsibility your partner accepts for household chores.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

24. The amount that you and your partner discuss sex.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

25. The amount of privacy you experience.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

26. The amount to which your spouse supports your choice of an occupation.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

27. The amount to which you and your spouse agrees on your life-style.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3

28. The amount to which you and your spouse agree on the number of children to have.  
-3  -2  -1  0  +1  +2  +3
29. The degree of physical attractiveness of your partner.  

30. The amount of arguing over petty issues that you experience.  

31. The amount of jealousy your partner expresses.  

32. The amount of commitment you experience from your spouse.
Kansas Marital Satisfaction (KMS)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Answer the following sets of statements describing the relationship between you and your spouse. Please circle the number that best describes your level of satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Mixed Satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Extremely Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. How satisfied are you with your marriage? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. How satisfied are you with your husband/wife as a spouse? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband/wife? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Religious Behavior Scale (RBS)

Are you a member of a religious faith or church?  

Yes (   )  
No (   )  
Don't know (   )

If you are a member of an organized faith or church, check one box below.

Assembly of God (   )  Lutheran (   )
Baptist (   )  Methodist (   )
Congregational (   )  Non-denominational (   )
Eastern Orthodox (   )  Pentecostal (   )
Episcopal (   )  Presbyterian (   )
Interdenominational (   )  Roman Catholic (   )
Jewish:  Conservative (   )  Unitarian (   )
  Orthodox (   )  United Church of Christ (   )
  Reform (   )  Other _______________________

1. How often do you usually attend religious services?

1 to 2 times per week or more (   )
Twice a month or so (   )
Once a month or so (   )
5 to 6 times a year (   )
1 or 2 times per year (   )
Never (   )

2. Do you take an active part in a religious organization? e.g. usher, choir member, vestry man, etc.

1 to 2 times per week or more (   )
Twice a month or so (   )
Once a month or so (   )
5 to 6 times a year (   )
1 or 2 times per year (   )
Never (   )

130
3. Do you teach a “Church School” class, or other religious classes or groups?

   1 to 2 times per week or more ( )
   Twice a month or so ( )
   Once a month or so ( )
   5 to 6 times a year ( )
   1 or 2 times per year ( )
   Never ( )

4. Do you take part in any religious instruction group? e.g. study or discussion club?

   1 to 2 times per week or more ( )
   Twice a month or so ( )
   Once a month or so ( )
   5 to 6 times a year ( )
   1 or 2 times per year ( )
   Never ( )

5. Do you invite anyone (not of your faith) to attend religious services with you?

   1 to 2 times per week or more ( )
   Twice a month or so ( )
   Once a month or so ( )
   5 to 6 times a year ( )
   1 or 2 times per year ( )
   Never ( )

6. Do you try to interest one or more persons in your religion?

   1 to 2 times per week or more ( )
   Twice a month or so ( )
   Once a month or so ( )
   5 to 6 times a year ( )
   1 or 2 times per year ( )
   Never ( )

7. Do you discuss religious subjects with your friends?

   1 to 2 times per week or more ( )
   Twice a month or so ( )
   Once a month or so ( )
   5 to 6 times a year ( )
   1 or 2 times per year ( )
   Never ( )
8. When you have a problem, do you stop and ask God for guidance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 times per week or more</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a month or so</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month or so</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 6 times a year</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or 2 times per year</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. How often do you pray?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 times per week or more</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a month or so</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month or so</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 6 times a year</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or 2 times per year</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Do you have the practice of blessing the food you eat at mealtimes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 times per week or more</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a month or so</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month or so</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 6 times a year</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or 2 times per year</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Do you spend some time thinking about your religious beliefs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 times per week or more</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a month or so</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month or so</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 6 times a year</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or 2 times per year</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Do you read the Bible?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 times per week or more</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a month or so</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month or so</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 6 times a year</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or 2 times per year</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Do you read anything about your religion?

1 to 2 times per week or more ( )
Twice a month or so ( )
Once a month or so ( )
5 to 6 times a year ( )
1 or 2 times per year ( )
Never ( )

14. Do you try to live by the teachings of your religion?

1 to 2 times per week or more ( )
Twice a month or so ( )
Once a month or so ( )
5 to 6 times a year ( )
1 or 2 times per year ( )
Never ( )
("I belong to no church") ( )
Don't know ( )

15. In dealing with your fellow men, do you try to do what your religion tells you to do?

1 to 2 times per week or more ( )
Twice a month or so ( )
Once a month or so ( )
5 to 6 times a year ( )
1 or 2 times per year ( )
Never ( )
("I belong to no church") ( )
Don't know ( )

16. Do you try to be of help to others who are sick or in trouble?

1 to 2 times per week or more ( )
Twice a month or so ( )
Once a month or so ( )
5 to 6 times a year ( )
1 or 2 times per year ( )
Never ( )
17. Do you try to do what you could to help those with less money than you have?

1 to 2 times per week or more ( )
Twice a month or so ( )
Once a month or so ( )
5 to 6 times a year ( )
1 or 2 times per year ( )
Never ( )

18. Do you try to be kind and pleasant even to those you did not like?

1 to 2 times per week or more ( )
Twice a month or so ( )
Once a month or so ( )
5 to 6 times a year ( )
1 or 2 times per year ( )
Never ( )

19. Do you give money (or donations) to a religious group?

1 to 2 times per week or more ( )
Twice a month or so ( )
Once a month or so ( )
5 to 6 times a year ( )
1 or 2 times per year ( )
Never ( )
Unable to do so ( )

20. How much of your income do you give to a religious group annually?

More than 10% of your income ( )
10% of your income ( )
$25 per year or more ( )
$10 to $25 ( )
Less than $5 ( )
Nothing ( )
Unable to do so ( )
Demographic Questionnaire

1. How old are you? ______________

2. What is your sex? (circle the correct letter)
   a. Male
   b. Female

3. Which category best describes your marital status? (circle the correct letter)
   a. Married (one time only)
   b. Divorced and remarried
   c. Widowed but remarried
   d. Married but separated

4. What year did you marry your spouse? 19_______

5. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic identification? (circle the correct letter)
   a. African American/Black
   b. White (Caucasian)
   c. Hispanic
   d. American Indian / Alaskan Islander
   e. Asian / Pacific Island
   f. Other _____________________

6. How many children do you have (including step-children)? ______________

7. How many children do you have in your home that are under 18 years of age? ________

8. What is your employment status? (circle the correct letter)
   a. Employed full-time (more than 35 hours per week)
   b. Employed part-time (less than 35 hours per week)
   c. Not employed outside the home
   d. Retired
   e. Other _____________________________
9. What is your occupation? ____________________________________________

10. What is your correct approximate household income? (circle the correct letter)

   a. Less than $10,000
   b. $10,000 - $19,999
   c. $20,000 - $29,999
   d. $30,000 - $39,999
   e. $40,000 - $49,999
   f. $50,000 - $59,999
   g. $60,000 - $69,999
   h. $70,000 - $79,999
   i. $80,000 - $89,999
   j. $90,000 or more

11. What is your level of education? (circle the correct letter)

   a. Some high school
   b. High school degree
   c. Vocation/Technical school
   d. Some college
   e. Bachelor's degree
   f. Some graduate credit
   g. Master's degree
   h. Doctoral degree