

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Debra J. Messing for the Master of Science  
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Title: A COMPARISON OF THE SATISFACTION OF MARRIED  
COUPLES AND UNMARRIED COHABITING COUPLES

Abstract approved: *Del. H. Cass*

Previous research projects have studied the satisfaction of married couples today, but none has dealt with the satisfaction of cohabiting couples compared to married couples. The purpose of this study was to try to determine who are more satisfied with their relationship, unmarried cohabiting couples or married couples.

The satisfaction levels of relationships of one hundred and nine volunteers were measured by a satisfaction questionnaire which was developed by the researcher. Of this total, one hundred were selected for the final analysis of data.

The results of a chi-square analysis demonstrated that three of the twenty-eight statistically measureable data were significant at the .05 level. Specifically, the data showed that 60 percent of the married couples occasionally got on each other's nerves around the house while 52 percent of the living-together couples indicated this was rarely a

problem. The data also showed that 48 percent of the married couples frequently agreed on demonstration of affection toward each other, while for living-together couples it was 40 percent; however, 30 percent of the living-together couples always agreed on this while only 20 percent of the married couples did. The data concerning whether sexual intercourse between partners was an expression of love and affection showed 82 percent of the living-together couples stated it always was while only 51 percent of the married couples did. Also 88 percent of the living-together females replied it always was, while only 56 percent of the married females did.

Differences that were evident that were treated non-statistically were: 1) Married females experienced more difficulties in the areas of money matters, selfishness and lack of cooperation by the mate than did living-together females, 2) Married couples had a more negative attitude generally than did living-together couples; however similarities in attitude were more characteristic than differences, and 3) Living-together couples entertained friends in their home more often than did married couples while married females spent more time taking walks or going driving. Thus, the results of this study show that the evidence leans in favor of a living-together relationship for couples as opposed to marriage as far as one's personal satisfaction is concerned.

A COMPARISON OF THE SATISFACTION OF MARRIED  
COUPLES AND UNMARRIED COHABITING COUPLES

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Department of Psychology  
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Master of Science

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by  
Debra Jean Messing  
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*Paul A. Cass*

Approved for the Major Department

*Harold E. Dault*

Approved for the Graduate Council

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years attitudes toward the institution of marriage have changed considerably. Today many people question the validity of marriage, and it is often seen as an institution that is dying.

In 1975 alone, divorces among Americans exceeded the one million mark for the first time and rose 6 percent over the previous year's figure according to the U. S. Census Bureau.<sup>1</sup>

These figures indicate that one out of every three marriages fails.

Of course many people are still happily married, but many people are also turning toward different life-styles or alternatives to marriage. Unmarried cohabitation (two people sharing the same household as husband and wife when not legally married) is but one of these alternatives. Many people live together as a reaction against the institution of marriage itself.

Some unmarried couples cohabit because marriage, they feel, is a form of social pressure to stay together that they are free to ignore (except, most say, if they are not having a child). If they are secure in their

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<sup>1</sup>"Celebrate Singleness, Marriage May Be Second Best," Christianity Today, 1976, May, Vol. 131 (3). pp. 26-29.

love they don't feel they need the technical commitment of marriage.<sup>2</sup>

#### THEORETICAL FORMATION

Today, some people wonder if marriage is really necessary when it is possible to live together without a legal contract. Others wonder what the point of marriage is when they see the infidelity of many husbands and wives. They see no need for marriage if they can be just as happy living with their mate while unmarried. Other reasons people shy away from marriage and live together are: (1) they want to avoid the unpleasantness and expense of a divorce, (2) they want the feeling that they can pick up and leave whenever they get tired of the arrangement, or (3) they want to see if they are compatible enough to make a permanent marital contract attractive.

If the opposite view is taken, then many might argue that because of legal ties married couples try harder to solve problems and make a relationship work, rather than separation or divorce. If a couple is truly married they should want to make an important pledge and commitment to each other. For many people marriage provides more happiness and satisfaction than any other alternative.

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<sup>2</sup>N. M. Lobsenz, "Living Together: A New-Fangled Tango Or An Old Fashioned Waltz," Redbook, 1974, June, Vol. 143 (2), pp. 86-87.

## THE PROBLEM

Statistics show that the institution of marriage is a rather questionable one in the thinking of today. Therefore, the question arises as to whether or not couples cohabiting might be as satisfied or more satisfied with their relationship than married couples. A survey of the literature shows that no studies have been done to determine whether or not such satisfaction exists.

### Statement of the Problem

Is there a significant difference in the level of satisfaction in the relationship of married couples as compared to unmarried cohabiting couples?

### Statement of the Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction in the relationship of married couples as compared to unmarried cohabiting couples.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to try to determine who is more satisfied with their relationship, unmarried cohabiting couples or married couples. A satisfaction questionnaire was compiled and given to both groups. It is hoped that this research will stimulate other researchers to continue the investigation of these two ways of life.

### Significance of the Study

This research represents an effort to find out if a relatively new living arrangement is working and if the traditional living arrangement is on its way out. The findings should be helpful to counselors and couples in general.

### DEFINITION OF TERMS

For this study of comparing the satisfaction of married couples to that of couples who are unmarried and cohabiting, certain terms have been given special meaning and are defined to clarify their use in this research.

#### Integrative Complexity

An individual's ability to be adaptive or flexible.

#### Relational Satisfaction

The satisfaction of a particular relationship.

#### Subjects

Subjects were any persons between the ages of eighteen to forty who were either unmarried and cohabiting with their mate or persons who were married, all of whom completed and returned the satisfaction questionnaire.

#### Agreement in Role Perceptions

The degree to which people agree on how a particular person should act and what he should say.

#### Personality Concept

What a person's idea is of another's distinctive individual qualities.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### LIVING TOGETHER

A study by Lyness and others<sup>3</sup> involved eighteen unmarried cohabiting couples who were given a questionnaire on feelings and relationships. In the study, the majority of women desired the security that marriage provides even though not legally married, whereas the men thought of their living arrangement as more of an alternative to marriage indicating less commitment than the females. Women integrated sexual aspects with other qualities, especially happiness and respect. Men did not. Their reported happiness was related to need, respect, involvement and trust. Married and living-together couples reported similar degrees of happiness and emotional involvement in their relationships.

In a study by McCahen<sup>4</sup> at Cornell University in 1972, 300 students completed questionnaires choosing the

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<sup>3</sup>J. L. Lyness, and others, "Living Together: An Alternative to Marriage," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1972, May, 34, pp. 48-55.

<sup>4</sup>George McCahen, "The Relationship between Self Concept and Marital Satisfaction," Doctoral Dissertation, 1973, July, 34 (1-A), p. 173 and (1-B), pp. 417-420.

most important reason they decided to live together; 70 percent of the students picked "emotional attachment to each other." Others checked security, companionship, enjoyment, and convenience. Only 25 percent of these couples had discussed at length living together before actually doing it. The most common source of major problems for unmarried cohabiting couples was the parents. Among 62 percent of the sample the most common emotional problem was the tendency to become over-involved or over-dependent on the relationship with a subsequent loss of identity and lack of opportunity to participate in other activities. More than 90 percent of the students evaluated their experiences as successful, pleasurable and maturing. Seventy-five percent said they would never marry without living with the person first. McCahen<sup>5</sup> was very much impressed by the strong positive attitude toward unmarried cohabitation by those who had experienced it. The message to be learned from the majority is the number of ways in which the experience apparently fostered their personal growth and maturity.

Seventy-three unmarried cohabitants were interviewed and given questionnaires in a study by Montgomery.<sup>6</sup> Most of these cohabitants considered their cohabitation to be a

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 420.

<sup>6</sup>Jason Montgomery, "Toward an Understanding of Co-habitation," Dissertation Abstracts, 1973, June, 33 (12-A), pp. 7059-60.

temporary part of a permanent relationship and indicated that marriage would take place for practical reasons. Involvement in cohabitation was casual and generally without any explicit understandings. With the passage of time most people redefined their relationship and permanence became important. Most relationships were started for the purpose of obtaining a satisfying personal involvement that provided the intimacy of marriage without the accompanying commitment and responsibility. Cohabitation was not a deviant behavior pattern for young people in academic situations. Only parents and landlords objected, and they objected to either specific individuals or specific property, not generally against unmarried cohabitation. Participants felt no guilt and there was no self labeling. Montgomery observed:

Unmarried cohabitation does not signal a drastic change in the institute of the family, as it is well within the tradition of the monogamous permanent relationship. It will probably be more common in the future.<sup>7</sup>

Lobsenz<sup>8</sup> did a study and article for Redbook on living-together couples in 1974. Most of those interviewed wished to maintain emotional freedom and integrity, and again it was found that many did not decide to live together

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>N. M. Lobsenz, "Living Together: A New-Fangled Tango on an Old-Fashioned Waltz," Redbook, 1974, June, Vol. 143 (2), pp. 86-87.



but just gravitated into the relationship. They believed in the idea of individual sexual freedom but practiced monogamy. As time goes on most couples cannot avoid falling into traditional marital roles and patterns--household chores are a good example--because many times the female partner performs the traditional role of the housekeeper. Cohabiting couples tend to socialize with other couples; however, far more tolerance exists for each partner's separate friends and friends of the opposite sex than in most marriages. Living together makes it easier to be honest about exploring differences. Couples are more or less separate to begin with so they can fight without fear of a breakup, though they do live under a constant doubt of never being entirely sure where their partner stands emotionally. For most couples, the basic conflict seemed to be in their commitment to each other, what it means to each partner and how they react to it psychologically. Marriage to them is a form of social pressure that they are free to ignore unless they are having a child. If they are secure in their love, they do not feel they need the legal or technical commitment of a marriage. For some couples it seems likely, if they do not move toward marriage, they will eventually move away from each other; while other couples say they will keep striving to make this structure work. The fact is that both groups of couples are convinced that living together is a good thing to experience--they have learned, they have changed. Can one ask much more from any relationship?

THE ADVANTAGES OF LIVING TOGETHER IN ACCORD  
WITH THE DISADVANTAGES OF MARRIAGE

In a letter to Cosmopolitan magazine, Boxer<sup>9</sup> pointed out that cohabitation without the benefit of matrimony does offer certain advantages over marriage. A married woman can be charged with desertion for not following her husband wherever he wants to work or live, regardless of her feelings or career needs. An abortion or bank credit, handled on her own as a single woman, may now require her husband's permission. Unsympathetic police and ineffective laws offer little protection if a husband or wife turns violent. Furthermore marriage does not necessarily guarantee property rights or child-support payments. Many women and men see marriage as less romantic than living together, and if this feeling is mutual and strong (not just a sham one person uses to lure the other toward eventual marriage), then it should be respected.

THE ADVANTAGES OF MARRIAGE IN ACCORD WITH  
THE DISADVANTAGES OF LIVING TOGETHER

In an article entitled "Beyond Love: The Special Rewards of Marriage," Streshinsky<sup>10</sup> said that she believed

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<sup>9</sup>Laurie Jane Boxer, "A Letter to Cosmopolitan," Cosmopolitan, 1977, January, Vol. 182 (1), p. 208.

<sup>10</sup>S. Streshinsky, "Beyond Love: The Special Rewards of Marriage," Redbook, 1974, May, Vol. 143 (1), pp. 95-99.

a deeper and more tender connection between a man and a woman can be realized in the marital relationship. In her view, the spouse may realize the other's flaws and accept them so that they annoy though they do not diminish. In this case familiarity breeds respect rather than contempt.

Streshinsky<sup>11</sup> came to understand that there is no solid lump of marriages that can be labeled "good" or "successful." Instead individual marriages are always at different stages of development. Some marriages, having reached a plateau, have settled in and others continue to achieve something better. Another new idea is that husband and wife should be intimate friends. Perhaps the only reasonable commitment one person can make to another is to listen, and respect that person's feelings and his right to them. Of the people interviewed, most of those involved in marriages that they valued felt that the risks of sexual infidelity were too great, and could cause real damage to their marriage. The one thing that seems critical in the creation of a good marriage is the genuine desire to work out problems.

An article in Changing Times<sup>12</sup> stated that unmarried cohabiting couples may face many problems. They usually

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>12</sup>"The Legal Side of Living Together," Changing Times, 1976, May, Vol. 30 (5), pp. 27-29.

have difficulty opening joint charge accounts. They cannot file a joint income tax return; the advantages and disadvantages of filing jointly depend on the circumstances. In regard to car and property insurance, some companies refuse to issue policies or cancel insurance or charge higher rates when they find that the couples are not married. Some loan companies will not do business with cohabiting couples because they consider them poor risks or object to their way of life.

No-fault divorce laws have been adopted by many states, under which blame is not put on either individual. In many, however, an aggrieved person has the option of suing on a specific fault, such as misconduct or abandonment. Even common-law marriages can be ended only by formal divorce proceedings.<sup>13</sup>

A very strong negative viewpoint toward living together is expressed by Krantz in an article from Cosmopolitan.<sup>14</sup> She found that many of the women she interviewed held a common illusion. The women often believed that all one had to do was get a foot in the door, then she could prove herself irresistible and absolutely necessary to a particular man. In her opinion, if a man says he is unable to "make a commitment," this just means he does not feel strongly enough about a woman to involve himself in a pledge, a promise, an obligation, engagement, or involvement. Every one of the many unattached men she interviewed

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>14</sup>Judith Krantz, "Why Living Together is a Rotten Idea," Cosmopolitan, 1976, October, Vol. 181 (4).

eventually admitted to the attitude of "Why pay for something I can get free?" According to Krantz,<sup>15</sup> a particularly popular action among people who live together is that you can never know another person unless you live with him or her, but many people never really get to know each other. People who live together are also every bit as prone to making unsuccessful choices (and to divorce) as couples who have not shared a household before marriage. A woman with normally good judgement can learn as much as she needs to about a man by having a lengthy affair with him. If a year or two of weekends, weeknights, and vacations together cannot tell you an enormous amount about a man, he is hiding or you are not looking. A vast number of women "get to know" a man by living with him and still think that the faults they have become aware of will go away, or at least be less troubling after marriage. In almost every state, the non-income producing partner in a non-marital relationship is left with nothing at the time of a breakup. However, depending upon the outcome of certain cases before the court, this could be changing.

Elstead<sup>16</sup> has stated that many of the patients he has seen who are involved in long-term living-together relationships are "frightened people" who have not been able

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

to throw themselves wholeheartedly into any aspect of life. They do not get as much as they can out of life because they gravitate toward situations in which they do not have to make a lasting and permanent commitment. The danger in the growing together which takes place in a cohabitation arrangement is that the identities become so interwoven that the partners begin to take each other for granted. Of course this danger exists for married couples too, but people expect a degree of boredom in marriage and often come to regard it as a happy sort of safe harbor restfulness. Couples who are living together are also apt to relax into this rich, secure kind of feeling, and the risk of boredom is just as inevitable for them as it is for married people. However, a woman who lives with a man without a total commitment on his part risks becoming boringly familiar to him. Her position is more fragile in every way than that of a married woman. She has abandoned her own apartness, surrendered her claim to the life of a separate individual--too soon, much too soon.

#### MARITAL SATISFACTION, WHAT THE STUDIES SHOW TO BE SIGNIFICANT

One hundred eight married couples were tested with Burgess and Wallins' General Satisfaction of Self, and Concept of Mates Satisfaction in Marriage test. The findings showed that couples in which both partners were high in integrative complexity were significantly more happy

with their marriage than couples in which husband and wife were both low in integrative complexity. This research explored the effects of personality "structure" (as opposed to content) on marital happiness. An individual's ability to be adaptive (flexible) in the marriage is significantly related to marital happiness.<sup>17</sup>

The data from a study by Gerson<sup>18</sup> indicate that although the amount of leisure time seems to be relatively unimportant, attitudes about leisure are significantly related to satisfaction in marriage for both husbands and wives. The happy couples spent much of their leisure time with their spouses, and they did not frequently feel that they had missed certain things by marrying before one or both members finished school. Fifty couples completed the questionnaire.

Hicks and Platt<sup>19</sup> reviewed the research in the sixties and found that the instrumental role of the husband is more crucial to marital happiness than social scientists have previously believed. It may be even more critical than

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<sup>17</sup>Bryant Crouse, and others, "Conceptual Complexity and Marital Happiness," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1968, November, Vol. 30 (4), pp. 643-46.

<sup>18</sup>Walter M. Gerson, "Leisure and Marital Satisfaction of College Married Couples," Marriage and Family Living, 1960, November, 22, pp. 360-61.

<sup>19</sup>Mary W. Hicks and Marilyn Platt, "Marital Happiness and Stability: A Review of the Research in the Sixties," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1970, November, Vol. 32 (4), pp. 553-56.

any other single variable. Evidence strongly supports the assumption that congruence in role perceptions as well as compatibility between role expectations and actual performance are associated, in general, with high happiness.

Eighty couples of similar age and length of marriage were asked to describe their spouse's personality on the Leary Interpersonal Checklist. Satisfied persons saw their spouses as being: moderately managerial, competitive, modest, docile, cooperative, responsible, considerate, helpful, tender, lighthearted, friendly, neighborly and warm. Unsatisfied persons saw their spouses as: impatient with the mistakes of others, cruel and unkind, frequently angry, hard-hearted, gloomy, frequently disappointed, bitter, complaining, jealous, and slow to forgive. "One's degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with his marriage is very definitely associated with the personality concept he has of the spouse."<sup>20</sup>

Navran<sup>21</sup> gave the Primary Communication Inventory to twenty-four couples seeking marriage counseling. Happily married couples had both better verbal and nonverbal communication being more strongly associated with good marital adjustment. Happily married couples differed from unhappily married couples in that they (a) talked more to each other,

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 557.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 558.



(b) conveyed the feeling that they understood what was being said to them, (c) had a wider range of subjects available to them, (d) preserved communication channels and kept them open, (e) showed more sensitivity to each other's feelings, (f) personalized their language symbols, and (g) made more use of supplementary nonverbal techniques of communication.

Levinger and Senn<sup>22</sup> obtained evidence that strongly supports the theory that revealing one's feelings tends to be positively correlated with general marital satisfaction, but even more positively correlated with good feelings about the other person in the relationship.

Studies attempting to find a pattern of complementary differences in need gratification have been done by Katz et. al.<sup>23</sup> They found that marital dissatisfaction rather than satisfaction was strongly associated with complementary needs.

In support of earlier findings, Mathews and Mulhanovich<sup>24</sup> found no tendency for the number of marital problems to decrease with the length of time married. Problems for the happy and unhappy usually continue as irritants with which people learn to live.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 559-61.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 562-70.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 571-74.

Of the interviews conducted by Jacoby for Redbook,<sup>25</sup> all the happy couples seemed to have certain things in common. All had to weather crises that had proved disastrous to many other unions. A deep regard for the individual worth and needs of their mates was also evident. Other factors involved were respect and the need for some degree of privacy. Most couples displayed a hierarchy of values that placed family life above money and certain kinds of conventional successes. The sense of constantly deepening intimacy, both physical and emotional, is the most striking common denominator of good marriages in different generations.<sup>26</sup>

Overall, the data reported by Orthner<sup>27</sup> support the conclusion that the leisure factor is most critical in determining marital satisfaction during two marital career periods: the first years of marriage when the union of the couple is crystallizing in marital adjustment, and after eighteen to twenty-three years when the marital relationship is re-establishing itself and a new union in adjustment becomes necessary. At other times the differential use of

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<sup>25</sup>S. Jacoby, "Mystery of the Happy Marriage: Or Who Has the Key to Contentment," Redbook, 1975, August, Vol. 145 (4), pp. 65-67.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>27</sup>Dennis Orthner, "Leisure Activity Patterns and Marital Satisfaction Over the Marital Career," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1975, February, Vol. 37 (1), pp. 91-102.

leisure is much less significant as an indicator of relational satisfaction.

In a study by Pickford, Signori, and Rempel,<sup>28</sup> using a satisfaction schedule, the happily married group showed a significant positive correlation of these traits: general activity, restraint, friendliness and personal relations. However, for the unhappily married group, traits of emotional stability and objectivity were most significant. Fairly consistent evidence indicating marital happiness or adjustment was found to be related to similarity of personality traits in husband and wife and dissimilarity of personality traits in spouses was related to marital unhappiness or maladjustment.

Another study by Pickford, Signori, and Rempel<sup>29</sup> failed to show evidence in support of the theory of complementary needs. Instead, the data suggest that people who have similar relative strengths or the same or similar needs tend to marry, and that there is a direct association between increasing similarity of need patterns and greater marital happiness. In males higher amounts of general

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<sup>28</sup>Pickford, Signori, and Rempel, "Similar Or Related Personality Traits as a Factor in Marital Happiness," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1966, May, Vol. 28 (2), pp. 190-92.

<sup>29</sup>Pickford, Signori, and Rempel, "The Intensity of Personality Traits in Relation to Marital Happiness," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1966, November, Vol. 28, pp. 458-59.

activity, control, and masculinity are associated with marital unhappiness and higher amounts of restraint, sociability, objectivity, friendliness and personal relations are associated with marital happiness. For females, higher amounts of emotional stability, objectivity, friendliness, and personal relations traits are associated with marital happiness while lower amounts of these traits favor marital unhappiness.

Kelly<sup>30</sup> had seventy-six couples, who had been married anywhere from one to forty-five years, fill out schedules to learn how each spouse regarded his mate as compared with his own judgements of himself. It was concluded that the personal satisfaction which a husband or wife experiences in his marriage relationship is significantly related both to his feelings of self-regard and to his judgement of the superiority or inferiority of his own personality in comparison to that of his spouse.

Luckey<sup>31</sup> found satisfaction in marriage to be related significantly to the agreement of the husband's self-concept and the concept of him held by his wife, but unrelated to the agreement of the concept the wife holds

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<sup>30</sup>E. Lowell Kelly, "Marital Compatibility as Related to Personality Traits of Husbands and Wives as Rated by Self and Spouse," Journal of Social Psychology, 1941, February, Vol. 13, pp. 193-98.

<sup>31</sup>Eleanor Luckey, "Marital Satisfaction and Congruent Self-Spouse Concepts," Marriage and Family Living, 1961, August, Vol. 23 (3), p. 307.

of herself and that which her husband holds of her.

More than 75,000 young, middle class, American women answered a questionnaire compiled by Tavris and Jayratne<sup>32</sup> and published by Redbook magazine entitled "How Satisfying Is Your Marriage?" The results show that the majority marry for love, and eight out of ten rated love as the most important consideration in their marriage. They felt that how a couple expresses disagreement was more important than their disagreement. Three out of four married women experienced a need to have someone to depend upon in times of trouble. Fifteen percent gave pregnancy as cause for marriage. Many of the wives who did not marry primarily for love were the most dissatisfied with their marriages. Many of the unhappy ones married for financial security, because they were pregnant, or they wanted children; and the most unhappy ones married because it was expected of them. The questionnaire showed that the majority of married couples argued about six general topics: (1) irritating personal habits, (2) money, (3) husbands not showing them enough love, (4) in-law conflicts, (5) how to discipline the children, and (6) sex. The Redbook readers were generally very positive concerning the satisfaction of marriage. Whether the women worked or not, political views, size of town, income, religion, and parental divorce made no

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<sup>32</sup>C. Tavris and T. E. Jayratne, "How Happy Is Your Marriage," Redbook, 1976, June, Vol. 147, pp. 90-95.

difference in happiness. It seems that like should marry like. Those women who were most satisfied described themselves and their husbands in the same terms, especially opinionated. Mutuality in feeling, tasks, interests, decision-making and personality seem to be the best guarantee of a satisfying marriage. The happiest marriages were those in which: (1) the partners loved each other equally, (2) there was a high number of shared interests, (3) both shared in housework and child care, (4) both shared in making important decisions, and (5) the husbands listened to their wives and respected their opinions. It was found too that women with young children tended to be less happy. Over half of the remarried women lived with their husbands a short while before marriage compared to 15 percent of the once-married. Readers felt that when a marriage fails it is because of the incompatibility of the couple, lack of maturity, or one partner's personal problems.

It is more useful and realistic for each partner to see him or herself as an individual, and to take responsibility for that individual which is not easy. Perhaps the key to a good marriage is: Two individuals who know themselves well enough and respect themselves enough, to love and trust each other.<sup>33</sup>

#### SUMMARY

From all appearances, most unmarried couples who are living together seem to be enjoying the arrangement. Most

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

of these couples gravitated into their living arrangement instead of making definite plans to do it. The biggest hassle for these couples seems to be their parents.

Individuals feel most strongly about the commitment in their relationships which, of course, varies from couple to couple. There are legal advantages and disadvantages to both styles of living and the couples must weigh these for themselves. If their relationship, being either marriage or cohabitation, is to last, the individuals must have enough desire to work out their problems.

In marital satisfaction studies, the evidence points to the instrumental role of the husband as being very crucial. Satisfaction is significantly related to the husband's judgement of the superiority or inferiority of his own personality in comparison to that of his wife's. Congruence in role perceptions and compatibility between role expectations and performance are also associated with happiness. Attitudes about leisure are very important. Satisfied couples seem to enjoy spending much of their leisure time together. The personality concept the marriage partners have of each other and the similarity of personality traits are favorable for happiness in marriage. It appears that the happy couples are characterized as having high amounts of objectivity, friendliness, and are more adept in their personal relations. For most, love and constantly deepening intimacy are the bases on which their contentment flourishes.

## Chapter 3

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

A description of the methods and procedures used to investigate the satisfaction of married and living together couples are discussed in this chapter. The population involved, as well as the sampling procedures used, are described. In addition, a discussion of the questionnaire and its development, the design of the study, the collection of data, and a general description of the methods used for statistical analysis of the data are also included in this chapter.

### POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Married couples or couples who were living together in a heterosexual relationship were qualified for the study. Since the researcher lived in Emporia, Kansas and then in Hutchinson, Kansas, the couples who participated lived in those two towns.

No preference as to age, race, or creed was specified. The majority of participants were white and in their twenties.

A total of fifty couples, twenty-five who were married and twenty-five who were living together responded to the questionnaire.



## INSTRUMENTATION

In order to obtain data considered relevant to this study, a questionnaire (Appendix B, page 63), was developed.

The first item determined how the couple handled disagreements, how fair their arguments were. The second item sought to find out if the couple did much together outside of their home. It is generally considered a good sign if couples do many things together. The third item asked how much of the time the couple spent together in or outside the home. Item number four asked if both agreed on aims, goals and things believed important in life.

Item five asked if they agreed on friends. It is thought to be beneficial to a relationship if the spouses get along with each other's friends so they can all spend time together. The sixth item inquired as to whether or not the couple agreed on the amount of time spent together. The seventh item asked, "How often do you kiss your mate?" Item eight asked how often the partners got on each other's nerves around the house. The less they do, obviously, the happier they are. Item nine was concerned with whether the couple agreed on demonstration of affection toward each other. Some people need more affection, either physical or mental, than others and a couple should complement each other in this respect.

The tenth item requested the participants to check any of thirteen items which had caused difficulty in their relationship during the last three weeks. The items were: plans for children, lack of mutual friends, constant bickering, interference of in-laws, unsatisfying sexual relations, selfishness and lack of cooperation, unfaithfulness, being tired, irritating personal habits, who does what around the house, other reasons, money matters, and nothing. The more items checked, one would assume the more discord there would be in the relationship.

Item number eleven asked if the person had ever, and if so how often, wished that he or she had not married or entered into a living-together arrangement. The more often, of course, the less stable the relationship. Number twelve asked, "Do you and your partner generally talk things over together?" Communication and a lot of it is important. If it is honest, direct and frequent it is assumed that it makes for a happier partnership.

Item thirteen asked the respondents to rate how happy or unhappy they felt their relationship was. Question number fourteen asked, "If you had your life to live over again would you? (a) marry and/or live with the same person, (b) marry and/or live with a different person, (c) not marry and/or live with anyone at all, (d) engage in non-committed relationships, or (e) other." Numbers fifteen and sixteen asked the total number of times their partner had left because of conflict or how many times they had left

their partner for the same reason.

Item seventeen dealt with how enjoyable or unenjoyable sex relations were for the couple. This one was closely tied to number eighteen which asked if they agreed on how and when they had sexual relations. Question nineteen inquired as to how often sex was used as an expression of love and affection.

Numbers twenty through twenty-nine dealt with how often the couple agreed on these things: making important decisions, household finances, ways of dealing with in-laws, religious matters, and philosophies of life.

Items thirty through forty-one were incomplete sentences which the respondent was asked to finish. Some of these were neutral, like, "I wish . . . ." and "I regret . . . ." Others were more specific like "Our income . . . ." and "Getting tied down after our marriage or living together relationship . . . ."

Item twenty-five asked if the couple felt that they had a genuine desire to work out problems. It is assumed that couples who really love each other and are committed to each other have such a desire.

Number twenty-six asked if the respondents felt their mates showed sensitivity to their feelings. Item twenty-seven asked if they found the way their mate usually expressed his or her feelings of disagreement acceptable. This was considered to be a very important item. Number twenty-eight inquired, "Do you feel your mate truly listens

to you and respects your opinion?"

Item twenty-nine posed the question, "Do you ever contemplate separation or divorce?" It was believed that this can be a dead give-away as to the degree of satisfaction in a relationship.

Section three asked the participants to check the activities listed in which they and their mate had engaged in the last three weeks, like laughing or chatting together, taking a drive or walk, or entertaining friends.

In the final part of the questionnaire the participants were asked to state their sex, age and education.

#### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The study was primarily designed to investigate the possible differences in satisfaction of married couples compared to couples who were living together. At the outset, it was assumed that there were no differences. The relative satisfaction gained from the two living arrangements is something most everybody wonders about, and a comparative study might help those who are thinking of just living together as opposed to marriage.

As previously described in Chapter 1, two variables were studied. The independent variable surveyed in this study was the classification of the individual (married or living together). The satisfaction of these individuals, the dependent variable, was measured by the way in which subjects responded to items on the questionnaire.

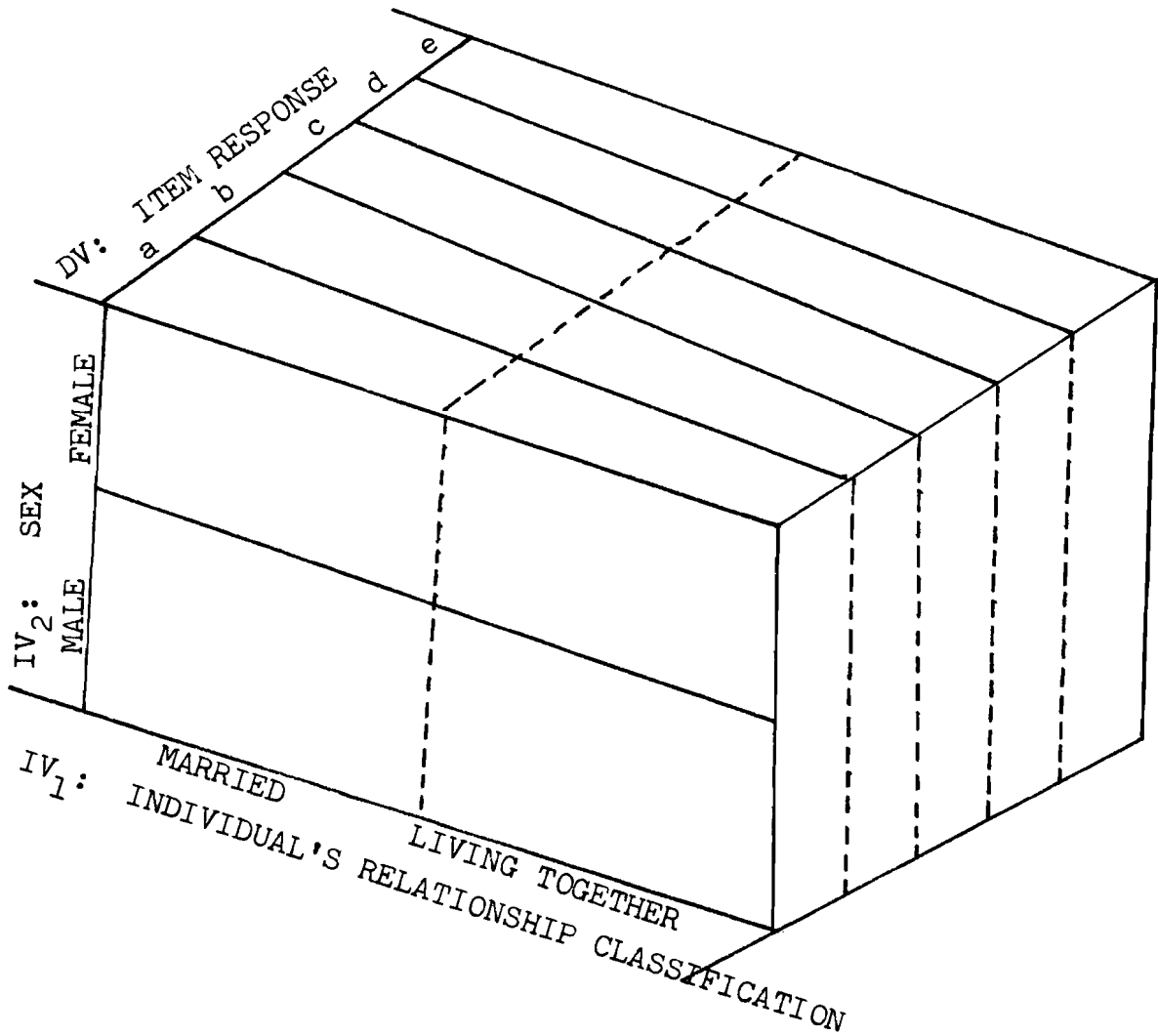
The classification of sex was also used as a second independent or moderator variable. The study also sought an answer to the question of whether or not an individual's sex had any effect on the manner in which he or she responded to the survey items.

The overall design of the study is best described as a 3x3x2 design with respect to the dependent and independent variables that were involved. This design is illustrated in Figure 1.

#### DATA COLLECTION

In order to get subjects for the study, the investigator went and talked to various classes at Emporia State University and Hutchinson Community Junior College. Pre-questionnaires (see Appendix A) which explained the type of subjects needed, and why, were distributed. The pre-questionnaire explained that for those people agreeing to participate in the study, the researcher would bring the actual questionnaires to their homes. The questionnaires were to be returned to the researcher by mail. A stamped, self-addressed envelope was provided. Everything was completely anonymous; however, the two questionnaires given to each participating couple were assigned the same number so their responses could be compared.

A total of 216 people originally agreed to participate in the study; however, only 109 (50 percent) of the



IV: independent variable

DV: dependent variable

Figure 1

Three-Dimensional Diagram of the  
Selected Variables Studied

questionnaires were returned. All questionnaires were received within eight months of the time they were given to the subjects. Fifty-nine questionnaires were returned by married people, but nine of them were from only one-half the

couple. Therefore, only fifty questionnaires (twenty-five couples) were useable. Fifty questionnaires were returned by people in the living-together classification, and all were couples. This gave twenty-five couples for each group. A summary of these returns is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Number of Questionnaires Distributed and Returned and the Number of Useable Couples for Each Classification

Classification	Number of Questionnaires Distributed	Number of Questionnaires Returned	Number of Useable Couples
Living together	108	50	25
Married	108	59	25
Total	216	109	50

### Type of Subjects

The questionnaire asked the participants to indicate the type of relationship they had with their mate. It also asked their sex, age, and how much education they had. Discussion of these factors follows.

### Sex of the Subjects

As indicated in Table 2, the final sample consisted of fifty couples: twenty-five married females, twenty-five living-together females, twenty-five married males, and

twenty-five living-together males.

### Ages of Subjects

Only eighty-eight subjects gave their age. The average age was twenty-two for females and twenty-four and one-half for males. Fifty-three subjects ranged in age from nineteen to twenty-three, thirty from twenty-four to twenty-nine, and five from thirty to thirty-four.

### Education of Subjects

Ninety-two subjects responded to the question on education. The most frequently reported level of education was "some college," and there were no subjects with just a grade school education. There were seven subjects with some high school education who did not graduate. Fourteen subjects were high school graduates while forty-six subjects had some college. Thirteen subjects had bachelor degrees, and twelve had done college work beyond the bachelor's degree.

## DATA ANALYSIS

For 69.1 percent of the data in this study, analysis was based on the number of responses to each item on the questionnaire. For analysis of these data the chi-square statistical tool, as generally described in the following paragraph, was utilized along with the contingency coefficient which was calculated to determine the degree of relationship that existed between the independent and



dependent variables. The remaining 30.9 percent of the data was dealt with in a non-statistical manner.

### Chi-Square ( $X^2$ )

Since most of the data collected in the study was nonparametric the chi-square test, one of the more powerful nonparametric statistical tools, was used. The value of chi-square is determined on the basis of the number of responses (observed frequencies) as compared to the number of expected responses (expected frequencies). Thus, chi-square, a nonparametric statistical tool, was used to determine if there was a significant difference in the two groups of marital status subjects (independent variable) and the manner in which they responded (dependent variable) to each item on the questionnaire. In addition, a secondary independent variable, or moderator variable, "sex of the individual," was also investigated with respect to the manner in which the selected participants responded (dependent variable) to the statements.

The formula<sup>34</sup> used for calculating the value of chi-square was:

$$X^2 = \frac{(\sum O_f - E_f)^2}{E_f}$$

where,  $\sum$  summation operator,  
 $O_f$  observed frequencies, and  
 $E_f$  expected frequencies.

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<sup>34</sup>N. M. Downie and R. W. Heath, Basic Statistical Methods, 4th edition, (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1974), 188.

In applying the formula, observed frequencies ( $O_f$ ) are based upon the total number of respondents in each category. The expected frequencies ( $E_f$ ) for each cell are calculated on the basis of the row sums times the column sums divided by the total number of respondents ( $N$ ), or

$$E_f = (\text{row sum}) (\text{column sum}) / N.$$

In testing the null hypothesis, the value obtained for chi-square is tested against a chi-square table. In reading from a chi-square table, the degrees of freedom must be considered. The degrees of freedom are calculated by taking the number of rows minus one times the number of columns minus one, or,  $df = (r-1) (c-1)$ .

For this study the .05 level of significance was selected to test the null hypothesis. This may be interpreted as dependent upon whether or not the statistic (sample fact) falls within the established critical region. In general, if the obtained value of chi-square is greater than or equal to the tabled value of chi-square at the .05 level of significance, chances are that ninety-five times out of 100 the obtained value of chi-square was not just due to sampling error.

### The Contingency Coefficient (C)<sup>35</sup>

The contingency coefficient is an index of measurement that is used to determine the degree of relationship

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 194.

that exists between the independent and dependent variables. The magnitude of chi-square is a function used in the determination of the contingency coefficient. The contingency coefficient formula is:

$$C = \sqrt{\frac{X^2}{N + X^2}}$$

where,  $X^2$  = obtained value of chi-square, and,  
N total number of respondents to each individual item.

For interpretation of the contingency coefficient values, the comparison is analogous to obtaining a Pearson Product - Moment Coefficient of Correlation ( $r$ ). Like Pearson's  $r$ , the degree of relationship between the independent and dependent variables is obtained.

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 194.

## Chapter 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

This study was primarily designed to investigate possible differences in the satisfaction of married couples compared to living-together couples. To obtain the necessary information, a questionnaire was developed and the results obtained are discussed in this chapter. For clarification, the analysis of data was divided into two types: statistical analysis for those data that fitted a statistical analysis pattern and non-statistical analysis for those data that could be treated on a judgmental basis only.

Statistical analysis. In analyzing the items from the questionnaires received from the fifty participating couples, the chi-square test was considered appropriate. In addition the contingency coefficient was calculated to determine the degree of relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

A significant difference between the married and the living-together couples was found in only three instances. These differences were for Items 8, 9, and 19. Item 19 is analyzed prior to Items 8 and 9 as it showed a significant difference between females and between couples while both of the other items dealt with relationships of couples only.

Item 19 asked, "Is sexual intercourse between you and your partner an expression of love and affection?" From the fifty responses tabulated for the item, twenty-two (88 percent) living-together females answered "Always," while only fourteen (56 percent) of the married females answered that way. Two (8 percent) of the living-together females answered "Frequently," while eight (32 percent) of the married females answered that way. One living-together female (4 percent) answered "Occasionally," while three (12 percent) of the married females did so. The Chi-square values of observed and expected frequencies are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient Values  
Determined from the 50 Responses of Females  
for Item 19 with Respect to Sex as an  
Expression of Love and Affection

Female classification	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Total
Married	14*(18)**	8(5)	3(2)	25
Living-Together	22(18)	2(5)	1(2)	25
Total	36	10	4	50

\*Of = observed frequencies

$$x^2 = 6.377$$

\*\*Ef = expected frequencies

$$df = 2$$

$$C = 0.336$$

A chi-square value of 6.377 was obtained from the statistical analysis of the item. Using two degrees of freedom (df=2), a tabled value of  $\chi^2 > 5.99$  was needed to reject the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance. Since the obtained value of chi-square was greater than the tabled value, rejection of the null hypothesis was warranted.

It was concluded that the observed frequencies differed significantly from the expected frequencies. This discrepancy was too great to be attributed to chance. Therefore it was concluded that there was a significant relationship between the independent variable (females) and their response (dependent variable) to Item 19. The degree of relationship between these two variables, as determined by the contingency coefficient, was 0.336 ( $C = 0.336$ ).

It can be observed from Table 3 that the discrepancy between observed and expected frequencies can be attributed to the attitudes of the "living-together" and "married" females. Almost all of the living-together females thought that sexual intercourse between them and their partner was always an expression of love and affection. On the other hand a rather large number of married females thought that frequently sex was an expression of love and affection with a lesser number saying it always was.

Item 19 also proved to be significantly different in another way. From the one hundred respondents tabulated for Item 19, twenty-eight (51 percent) of the married people

answered "always," while eighteen (36 percent) responded "frequently," and four (8 percent) said "occasionally."

Of the living-together people, forty-one (82 percent) answered "always," while seven (14 percent) responded "frequently," and two (4 percent) said "occasionally." The chi-square value of observed and expected frequencies is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient Values  
Determined from the 100 Responses of the 50  
Couples for Item 19 with Respect to Sex  
as Expression of Love and Affection

Couples classification	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Total
Married	28*(34.5)**	18(12.5)	4(3)	50
Living-Together	41(34.5)	7(12.5)	2(3)	50
Total	69	25	6	100

\*Of = observed frequencies  $x^2 = 7.955$

\*\*Ef = expected frequencies  $df = 2$

$C = .272$

A chi-square value of 7.955 was obtained from the statistical analysis. Using two degrees of freedom ( $df=2$ ), the tabled value of  $x^2 > 5.99$  was needed to reject the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance. Since the obtained value of chi-square was greater than the tabled value, rejection of the null hypothesis was warranted.

It was concluded that the observed frequencies differed significantly from the expected frequencies. This discrepancy was too great to be attributed to chance. There was a significant relationship between the independent variable (couples) and the dependent variable for Item 19. The degree of relationship between these two variables, as determined by the contingency coefficient, was .272 ( $C=.272$ ).

It can be observed in Table 4 that the discrepancy between observed and expected frequencies can be attributed to the feelings of the living-together couples that sexual intercourse between them is almost always an expression of love and affection (82 percent), whereas only 56 percent of the married couples thought so.

Significant differences were found on two items, numbers eight and nine. Item 8 asked, "How often do you and your partner get on each other's nerves around the house?"

Thirty (60 percent) of the married people indicated that they occasionally got on each other's nerves around the house while seventeen (34 percent) of the living-together people did. Twelve (24 percent) of the married persons rarely got on each other's nerves, but twenty-six (52 percent) of the living-together persons rarely did. While six (12 percent) of the married participants frequently got on each other's nerves around the house, just four (8 percent) of the living-together participants did. Two (4 percent) of the married subjects never got on each other's nerves, while three (6 percent) of the living-together subjects never did.



The observed and expected frequencies for the chi-square test of independent variables are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient  
Values Determined from 100 Responses  
of Couples for Item 8 with Respect  
to Getting on Mate's Nerves

Couple's classification	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Total
Living-Together	6*(5)**	30(23.5)	12(19)	2(2.5)	50
Married	4(5)	17(23.5)	26(19)	3(2.5)	50
Total	10	47	38	5	100

\*Of = observed frequencies

$x^2 = 9.353$

\*\*Ef = expected frequencies

df = 2

C = 0.292

The obtained value of chi-square was 9.35. A tabled value of 5.99 was needed to reject the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance for two degrees of freedom (df=2). Since the obtained value of chi-square was greater than the tabled value, rejection of the null hypothesis was indicated.

It was concluded that the observed frequencies differed significantly from the expected frequencies. Chances were ninety-five times out of 100 that this discrepancy was due to other factors than just random sampling error. Therefore, it was concluded that there was a

significant difference between living-together and married couples regarding the extent to which they got on each other's nerves around the house. The contingency coefficient ( $C=0.29$ ) of 0.29 indicated the degree of the relationship between the two variables.

As shown in Table 5, the greatest differences between the expected and observed frequencies were between the "occasionally" and "rarely" responses of the two groups. Almost twice as many married people "occasionally" got on the mate's nerves around the house than was the case for living-together people, and twice as many living-together people said they "rarely" got on the mate's nerves around the house as compared to the married people.

Analysis of Item 9, "Do you and your mate agree on demonstration of affection toward each other?" showed that of the fifty responses for married people ten (20 percent) answered "always agree," twenty-four (48 percent) answered "frequently agree," twelve (24 percent) answered "sometimes agree" and "occasionally disagree," and four (8 percent) answered "frequently disagree."

For the responses of the fifty living-together people tabulated for Item 9, fifteen (30 percent) answered "always agree," twenty (40 percent) answered "frequently agree," fourteen (28 percent) answered "sometimes agree" and "occasionally disagree," and one (2 percent) answered "always disagree." The chi-square value of observed and expected frequencies is shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient Values Determined  
 from the 100 Responses of Couples for Item 9 with  
 Respect to Agreement on Expression of Affection

Couples' classification	Always agree	Frequently agree	Occasionally disagree	Frequently disagree	Total
Married	10*(12.5)**	24(12)	12(13)	4(2.5)	50
Living-Together	15 (12.5)	20(12)	14(13)	1(2.5)	50
Total	25	44	26	5	100

\*Of = observed frequencies

$$x^2 = 20.29$$

\*\*Ef = expected frequencies

$$df = 3$$

$$C = 0.41$$

A chi-square value of 20.29 was obtained from the statistical analysis of Item 9. Using three degrees of freedom ( $df=3$ ), the tabled value of  $\chi^2 \geq 5.99$  was needed to reject the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance. The tabled value of  $\chi^2 \geq 9.21$  was needed to reject the null hypothesis at the .01 level of significance. Since the obtained value of chi-square was greater than both tabled values, the null hypothesis was rejected at both levels.

The observed frequencies differed significantly from the expected frequencies, and this discrepancy was too great to be attributed to chance only. Therefore, it was considered that a significant relationship existed between the independent variable (people) and their responses (dependent variable) to Item 9. The degree of relationship between the two variables as determined by the contingency coefficient was 0.41 ( $C=0.41$ ).

Only five people out of the one hundred respondents indicated that they frequently disagreed on demonstration of affection toward the mate. The significant chi-square value obtained was caused by the discrepancy between the observed and expected frequencies of the living-together and married people. It appeared that most of the individuals sampled felt they did not disagree frequently with their mate.

Chi-square and contingency coefficient values along with the item number and statement for all remaining items that were treated statistically but showed no significant differences are shown in Tables 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13.

Table 7

Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient Values for  
Items Dealing with Matters of Agreement

Item	Statement	Number of Responses					Total	df	x <sup>2</sup>	C
		Always Agree	Frequently Agree	Sometimes Agree Occasionally Disagree	Frequently Disagree	Always Disagree				
4	Do you and your mate agree on aims, goals, and things believed important in life?	12	57	28	2	1	100	4	5.99	0.24
5	Do you and your mate agree on friends?	20	35	40	5	0	100	3	1.81	0.13
6	Do you and your mate agree on amount of time spent together?	19	45	32	3	1	100	4	2.97	0.17
18	Do you and your mate agree on how and when you have sex relations?	26	40	25	8	1	100	4	5.10	0.22

Table 7 (continued)

Item	Statement	Number of Responses					Total	df	$\chi^2$	C
		Always Agree	Frequently Agree	Sometimes Agree Occasionally Disagree	Frequently Disagree	Always Disagree				
20	When making important decisions, do you?	12	57	29	1	1	100	4	3.63	0.19
21	Concerning household finances, do you?	29	38	31	2	0	100	3	2.56	0.16
22	On ways of dealing with in-laws, do you?	26	41	29	4	0	100	3	5.93	0.24
23	Concerning religious matters, do you?	33	34	22	5	6	100	4	3.75	0.19
24	On philosophies of life, do you?	14	53	28	1	4	100	4	2.76	0.16

Table 8

Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient Values for  
Items Dealing with Couple Relationships

Item	Statement	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Total	df	$\chi^2$	C
2	Do you and your mate engage in outside activities together?	23	51	21	5	0	100	3	3.34	0.18
11	Have you ever wished you had not married or entered into your living-together relationship?	0	3	13	38	46	100	3	6.70	0.35
12	Do you and your partner generally talk things over?	39	49	10	2	0	100	3	3.65	0.19
25	Do you feel that you and your mate have a genuine desire to work out your problems?	65	26	8	1	0	100	3	1.67	0.13

Table 8 (continued)

Item	Statement	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Total	df	$\chi^2$	C
26	Do you feel that your mate shows sensitivity to your feelings?	38	46	12	4	0	100	3	6.51	0.25
27	Do you find the way your mate usually <u>expresses</u> his or her feelings of disagreement acceptable?	16	47	28	8	1	100	4	4.08	0.20
28	Do you feel your mate truly listens to you and respects your opinions?	28	49	17	5	1	100	4	4.98	0.22
29	Do you ever contemplate separation or divorce?	0	4	14	31	51	100	3	5.10	0.22



Table 9

Chi-square and Contingency Coefficient Values  
for Items Dealing with Frequency of  
Certain Activities

Item	Statement	None	One Time	Two Times	Three Times	Four or More Times	Total	df	$\chi^2$	C
7	How often do you kiss your mate (a day)?	0	3	4	17	76	100	3	2.277	.149
15	What is the total number of times you left your partner because of conflict?	74	17	4	2	3	100	4	1.608	.126
16	What is the total number of times your partner left you because of conflict?	72	18	4	1	5	100	4	4.077	.198

Table 10

Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient Values for Items  
Dealing with Satisfaction in the Relationship

Item	Statement	Number of Responses					Total	df	$\chi^2$	C
		Very enjoy- able or happy	Enjoyable or happy	Average or mod- erately enjoyable	Tolerable	Not at all en- joyable				
13	How happy would you rate your relationship?	55	23	12		100	2	4.902	.216	
17	What are your feelings on sex relations with your partner?	55	27	7	1	100	3	5.666	.232	

Table 11

Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient Values  
for Settling of Disagreements

Item	Statement	Man giving in	Woman giving in	Neither giving in	Both giving in	Mutual agree- ment	Total	df	$\chi^2$	C
1	When disagree- ments arise, they gener- ally result in:	15	7	4	27	47	100	4	4.252	.202

Table 12

Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient Values  
for Dealing with Leisure Time

Item	Statement	Both stay home	Both on the go	At times both on the go At times both stay home	One on the go Other stays home	Makes no differ- ence	Total	df	$\chi^2$	C
3	In leisure time, which do you and your mate prefer?	13	1	78	1	7	100	4	4.117	.199

Table 13

Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient Values  
for Making a Different Marital Choice

Item	Statement	Marry or live with same person	Marry or live with different person	Not Marry or live with anyone	Engage in non- committed relation- ships	Other	Total	df	$\chi^2$	C
14	If you had your life to live over again, would you?	80	3	3	5	9	100	4	7.400	.262

Non-Statistical Analysis. Items 10 and 30 through 48 in the questionnaire were not suitable for statistical analysis; therefore, those items are dealt with in a non-statistical way in this section.

Item 10 was evaluated on the basis of the number of factors causing difficulties in each couples' relationship for the past three weeks. The respondents were asked to check any of the following factors which were applicable.

	<u>Married</u>		<u>Living Together</u>	
	M	F	M	F
a) Plans for children	2	2	1	1
b) Lack of mutual friends	0	2	4	2
c) Constant bickering	1	3	3	1
d) Interference of in-laws	2	2	0	0
e) Unsatisfying sexual relations	4	5	1	2
f) Selfishness and lack of cooperation	4	7	0	2
g) Unfaithfulness	1	0	0	0
h) Being tired	13	19	14	16
i) Irritating personal habits	2	7	4	4
j) Who does what around the house	6	7	6	5
k) Other reasons	6	4	4	4
l) Money matters	11	10	5	6
m) Nothing	4	3	0	3
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	56	71	42	46

It appears that females in the living-together group had less difficulty during the past three weeks in their relationships than did married females. Two specific areas where the married females experienced greater

difficulty than the females of the living-together group were money matters and selfishness and lack of cooperation by the mate.

Items 30 through 41 were evaluated on the basis of positive (+), negative (-), and neutral (0) values. The items were incomplete sentences which were to be completed by the respondent. Although the answers varied, it was possible to evaluate the intent of each response on the negative, neutral, or positive scale. The items along with the number of positive, negative, or neutral responses follow.

	Married			Living-together		
	+	-	0	+	-	0
30. I wish . . .	18	16	12	13	10	22
31. Our income . . .	28	11	10	23	12	10
32. My . . . and I . . .	39	8	0	25	0	12
33. I regret . . .	17	21	9	11	12	17
34. The future . . .	32	6	11	25	2	20
35. In-laws are . . .	25	19	5	35	3	9
36. The happiest time . . .	45	1	3	43	0	1
37. Getting married or moving in with my partner at the age I did . . .	32	5	11	34	3	5
38. Getting tied down after our marriage or living-together relationship . . .	32	6	10	34	4	3
39. Making decisions in our home . . .	31	10	8	34	5	9
40. What annoys me . . .	3	41	3	1	30	13
41. If only . . .	9	15	21	14	10	14
	<u>311</u>	<u>159</u>	<u>103</u>	<u>292</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>135</u>
	<u>573</u>			<u>518</u>		

Married couples had a slightly more negative attitude overall as expressed in the completion of statements toward marriage than was the case for individuals who were living together without being married. Things that contributed a great deal to this negative feeling were in-laws, regrets, and annoyances with the mate.

Those people who were living together without marriage expressed a more neutral attitude than did the married people on those statements that had a purely personal reference. In general married people and people who were living together without benefit of marriage gave extremely similar answers to practically all those statements that gave the individual an opportunity to project his own feelings through sentence completion.

Items 42 through 48 were evaluated on the basis of the number of activities each couple engaged in together. The respondents were asked to check only those activities which had been participated in with the mate during the last three weeks.

It appears that living-together couples entertained friends in the home more often than did married couples. Married females saw themselves as taking more walks and going for more drives for pleasure than was the case for females in the living-together situation.



	<u>Married</u>		<u>Living Together</u>	
	M	F	M	F
42. Had a good laugh together or shared a joke	23	23	23	22
43. Spent an event just chatting with each other	18	19	20	18
44. Did something the other particularly appreciated	20	19	22	20
45. Entertained friends in your home	14	14	23	21
46. Taken a drive or a walk for pleasure	19	20	17	13
47. Ate out in a restaurant together	22	21	23	22
48. Gone out together: movie, bowling, sporting event, or other entertainment	21	19	25	22
	<u>137</u>	<u>135</u>	<u>153</u>	<u>138</u>

## Chapter 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes a summary of the procedures employed in the study, findings and conclusions resulting from the study, recommendations regarding study results, and recommendations for conducting future studies dealing with the same topic.

#### SUMMARY

The study was designed to find out whether married couples or couples who were living together without the benefit of marriage were more satisfied with their relationship. To obtain the data, a satisfaction questionnaire was used. This questionnaire was made up of selected items from several other questionnaires plus some of the researcher's own questions. It included twenty-eight multiple choice items, two items where the subject could mark more than one answer, twelve completion sentences, and a request for information on sex, age, marital status, and education. These satisfaction questionnaires were filled out by fifty randomly selected couples living in Emporia and Hutchinson, Kansas during 1977 and 1978.

The multiple choice items were analyzed statistically and all other items were analyzed non-statistically to determine if there were differences in the satisfaction of the relationships of married couples as opposed to unmarried cohabiting couples. The primary statistical tool used was Chi-square ( $X^2$ ). Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) was utilized primarily to determine if there were any statistically significant differences between the living-together males and married males, living-together females and married females, females and males, and living-together couples and married couples. On the remaining items which included checks on frequency of engaging in certain activities, satisfaction in the relationship, ways of settling disagreements, leisure time activities, and possible changes in marital choice, conclusions were drawn from inspection of the frequency with which an item was selected.

#### CONCLUSIONS

There were three major findings of this study as related to the satisfaction of the couples and one major finding as related to the satisfaction of females alone.

The data showed that 60 percent of the married couples occasionally got on each other's nerves around the house while living-together couples indicated this was rarely a problem (52 percent). The data also showed that 48 percent of the married couples frequently agreed on demonstration of affection toward each other, while for

living-together couples it was 40 percent; however, 30 percent of the living-together couples always agreed on this while only 20 percent of the married couples did. The data concerning whether sexual intercourse between partners was an expression of love and affection showed 82 percent of the living-together couples stated it always was while only 51 percent of the married couples did. Again in regard to the question concerning whether sexual intercourse between partners was an expression of love and affection, 88 percent of the living-together females replied it always was while only 56 percent of the married females did. All the above differences were significant at or beyond the .05 level.

Differences that became evident from inspection of those results that were treated non-statistically were:

(1) Married females experienced more difficulty in their relationships with their mates than did living-together females. The areas of difficulty were money matters and selfishness and lack of cooperation by the mate.

(2) Married couples had a more negative attitude generally than did couples who were merely living together; however, similarities in attitude were more characteristic than differences.

(3) Living-together couples entertained friends in their home more often than did married couples while married females spent more time taking walks or going driving.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study show that the evidence leans in favor of a living-together relationship for couples as opposed to marriage as far as enhancing one's personal satisfaction is concerned. It would seem dating couples would want to try living with each other, at least for a while, to know each other better rather than trying marriage and later having to go through the legal difficulties of a divorce. Even if marriage is not the ultimate goal in their relationship, living-together appears to be a satisfactory arrangement in many cases.

It is recommended that a study be done concerning the effects on children of unmarried couples as compared to children of married couples. Another worthwhile endeavor would be a study similar to this one involving married couples and cohabiting couples who have lived together for a stated and rather long period of time. The present study did not attempt to consider the length of time the living arrangement had been in effect.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Pre-Questionnaire

For my master's degree thesis I am attempting to measure the satisfaction of man-woman relationships of those who are married compared to those who are living together but not married.

In order to measure this I will be giving out a satisfaction questionnaire to both sets of couples. This questionnaire will cover every aspect of a man-woman relationship. If you should choose to take it you won't be asked to sign your name. The data will be treated confidentially and anonymously.

To compare a couple's scores to each other, numbers like two 1's, two 2's, etc. will be assigned to each set randomly and anonymously of course.

If you are married or living with your mate, or you know someone who is, please sign your name and address below and mail this to me, call me, or bring it to this class next meeting. Then I will bring the questionnaire to you and after you both have completed it you can mail it back to me in separate envelopes which I will provide for you.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Companion's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your address: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you? \_\_\_\_\_ married \_\_\_\_\_ living together

Thank you very much,

Debi Messing  
128 So. Mechanic  
Emporia -- 342-6038

## APPENDIX B

### SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please Note: In-laws, as referred to in this questionnaire, mean the relatives of the person you are living with.

I. Please put a check by the statement which best describes your feelings. Please be sure to answer all questions, don't leave any blanks.

1. When disagreements arise, they generally result in:

- a) man giving in
- b) woman giving in
- c) neither giving in
- d) both giving in
- e) agreement by mutual give and take

2. Do you and your mate engage in outside activities together?

- a) all of the time
- b) much of the time
- c) some of the time
- d) seldom
- e) never

3. In leisure time, which do you and your mate prefer?

- a) both of you to stay home
- b) both to be on the go
- c) both to be on the go at times and at other times both to stay home
- d) one to be on the go and the other to stay home
- e) it doesn't make any difference to me

4. Do you and your mate agree on aims, goals, and things believed important in life?

- a) always agree
- b) frequently agree
- c) sometimes agree and occasionally disagree
- d) frequently disagree
- e) always disagree



5. Do you and your mate agree on friends?
- a) always agree
  - b) frequently agree
  - c) sometimes agree and occasionally disagree
  - d) frequently disagree
  - e) always disagree
6. Do you and your mate agree on amount of time spent together?
- a) always agree
  - b) frequently agree
  - c) sometimes agree and occasionally disagree
  - d) frequently disagree
  - e) always disagree
7. How often do you kiss your mate?
- a) four or more times a day
  - b) two or three times a day
  - c) once a day
  - d) every other day
  - e) never
8. How often do you and your partner get on each other's nerves around the house?
- a) always
  - b) frequently
  - c) occasionally
  - d) rarely
  - e) never
9. Do you and your mate agree on demonstration of affection toward each other?
- a) always agree
  - b) frequently agree
  - c) sometimes agree and occasionally disagree
  - d) frequently disagree
  - e) always disagree
10. Please check any of the following items which you think have caused difficulties in your relationship during the past three weeks:
- a) Plans for children
  - b) Lack of mutual friends
  - c) Constant bickering
  - d) Interference of in-laws
  - e) Unsatisfying sexual relations

- f) Selfishness and lack of cooperation
  - g) Unfaithfulness
  - h) Being tired
  - i) Irritating personal habits
  - j) Who does what around the house
  - k) Other reasons
  - l) Money matters
  - m) Nothing
11. Have you ever wished you had not married or entered into your living-together relationship?
- a) every day
  - b) frequently
  - c) occasionally
  - d) rarely
  - e) never
12. Do you and your partner generally talk things over together?
- a) always
  - b) frequently
  - c) occasionally
  - d) rarely
  - e) never
13. How happy would you rate your relationship?
- a) very happy
  - b) happy
  - c) average
  - d) unhappy
  - e) very unhappy
14. If you had your life to live over again would you?
- a) marry and/or live with the same person
  - b) marry and/or live with a different person
  - c) not marry and/or live with anyone at all
  - d) engage in non-committed relationships
  - e) other
15. What is the total number of times you left your partner because of conflict?
- a) none
  - b) one time
  - c) two times
  - d) three times
  - e) four or more times

16. What is the total number of times your partner left you because of conflict?
- a) none
  - b) one time
  - c) two times
  - d) three times
  - e) four or more times
17. What are your feelings on sex relations with your partner?
- a) very enjoyable
  - b) enjoyable
  - c) moderately enjoyable
  - d) tolerable
  - e) not at all enjoyable
18. Do you and your mate agree on how and when you have sex relations?
- a) always agree
  - b) frequently agree
  - c) sometimes agree and occasionally disagree
  - d) frequently disagree
  - e) always disagree
19. Is sexual intercourse between you and your partner an expression of love and affection?
- a) always
  - b) frequently
  - c) occasionally
  - d) rarely
  - e) never
20. When making important decisions do you?
- a) always agree
  - b) frequently agree
  - c) sometimes agree and occasionally disagree
  - d) frequently disagree
  - e) always disagree
21. Concerning household finances do you?
- a) always agree
  - b) frequently agree
  - c) sometimes agree and occasionally disagree
  - d) frequently disagree
  - e) always disagree

22. On ways of dealing with in-laws do you?

- a) always agree
- b) frequently agree
- c) sometimes agree and occasionally disagree
- d) frequently disagree
- e) always disagree

23. Concerning religious matters do you?

- a) always agree
- b) frequently agree
- c) sometimes agree and occasionally disagree
- d) frequently disagree
- e) always disagree

24. On philosophies of life do you?

- a) always agree
- b) frequently agree
- c) sometimes agree and occasionally disagree
- d) frequently disagree
- e) always disagree

25. Do you feel that you and your mate have a genuine desire to work out your problems?

- a) always
- b) frequently
- c) occasionally
- d) rarely
- e) never

26. Do you feel that your mate shows sensitivity to your feelings?

- a) always
- b) frequently
- c) occasionally
- d) rarely
- e) never

27. Do you find the way your mate usually expresses his or her feelings of disagreement acceptable?

- a) always
- b) frequently
- c) occasionally
- d) rarely
- e) never

28. Do you feel your mate truly listens to you and respects your opinion?

- a) always
- b) frequently
- c) occasionally
- d) rarely
- e) never

29. Do you ever contemplate separation or divorce?

- a) always
- b) frequently
- c) occasionally
- d) rarely
- e) never

II. Please complete the following sentences in reference to your relationship with your mate.

30. I wish . . .

31. Our income . . .

32. My . . . and I . . .

33. I regret . . .

34. The future . . .

35. In-laws are . . .

36. The happiest time . . .

37. Getting married or moving in with my partner at the age I did . . .

38. Getting tied down after our marriage or living together relationship . . .

39. Making decisions in our home . . .

40. What annoys me . . .

41. If only . . .

III. Please check only those activities which you and your mate have participated in in the last three weeks.

42. Had a good laugh together or shared a joke  
 43. Spent an evening just chatting with each other  
 44. Did something the other particularly appreciated  
 45. Entertained friends in your home  
 46. Taken a drive or a walk for pleasure  
 47. Ate out in a restaurant together  
 48. Gone out together: movie, bowling, sporting event, or other entertainment

It would be appreciated if you would provide the following information about yourself. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

- Female  
 Male  
 Married  
 Unmarried  
 Age

Education Completed:

- a) Grade school  
 b) Some high school but did not graduate  
 c) High school graduate  
 d) Some college but no degree  
 e) Bachelor's degree  
 f) Work beyond bachelor's degree

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