

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG MARITAL SATISFACTION, LEVEL  
OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT, AND DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF

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BY

RUSSELL F. BARTEE, B.S., M.Ed.

DENTON, TEXAS

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TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
DENTON, TEXAS

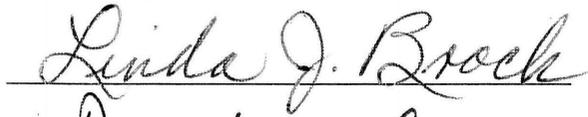
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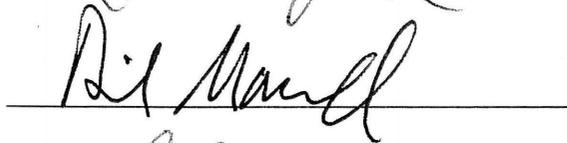
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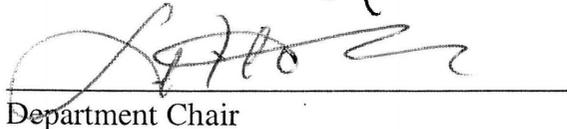
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Russell F. Bartee entitled "Exploring The Relationship Among Marital Satisfaction, Level of Faith Development, and Differentiation of Self." I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Family Therapy.

  
Glen Jennings, Ed.D., Major Professor

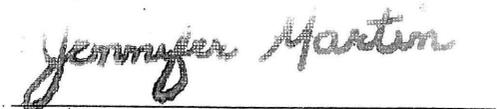
We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

  
Linda J. Brock

  
Bill Marshall

  
Department Chair

Accepted:

  
Jennifer Martin  
Dean of the Graduate School

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## ABSTRACT

RUSSELL F. BARTEE

### EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG MARITAL SATISFACTION, LEVEL OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT, AND DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF

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The purpose of this study was to look at the relationship among marital satisfaction, level of faith development, and differentiation of self. The study looks at marriages using Bowen family systems theory and Fowler's faith development theory. This quantitative study collected data through a convenient, snowball method. The sample consisted of 124 individuals married from 1 to 59 years. Four assessment inventories and a demographic questionnaire were used to collect data. Marital satisfaction was assessed using the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised; level of differentiation was assessed using Skowron's Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised and Bray's Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire; level of faith development was assessed using Leak's Faith Development Scale. Multiple regression and descriptive statistics were used to examine the data.

Ten hypotheses were tested, and additional findings were noted and discussed. Findings revealed that differentiation of self is a greater predictor of marital satisfaction, and that level of faith development has little relationship with marital satisfaction.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Constructing and then maintaining a marriage is difficult at best, and challenging at the least. Couples who begin their life together in marital union give verbal assent that their marriage will be “for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health.” However, the reality of sustaining the joy and bliss of the wedding event soon appears and the couple now is faced with how to hold on to that original, pristine concept of “happily ever after.”

Many weddings are performed in a spiritual setting, with a minister or other religious representative officiating over the union who invokes the presence of a Transcendent as giving consent to the marriage. For couples that profess faith as part of their marriage, the sustenance of the marriage over time oftentimes has a spiritual component infused within it. If the marriage is performed in the presence of God, there can be a presupposition that, at some level, God is significant in their lives. For many of these couples, sustaining a marriage that is satisfying may have an additional factor of attempting to integrate a belief in God with the usual practicality of daily living.

A faith perspective is only a single factor that can be considered when appraising marital success. Emotional maturity and differentiation of self are other components that may have an influence upon marital satisfaction. There is an assumption through Bowen theory (1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988) that individuals who are more highly differentiated

are better equipped to manage the emotional and intellectual challenges of constructing and then maintaining an intimate relationship. In a similar view, an argument could be made that an individual who professes a deeper faith perspective may also be more differentiated, thus having a grounded sense of self to offer in a marital partnership. The end result of this may be a higher level of marital satisfaction.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Among married couples who claim faith and religion are important to them and are actively pursuing spiritual growth, studies have shown that their level of differentiation is reported to be similarly high. In a qualitative study of 57 married couples, Dollahite & Lambert (2007) reported that a shared faith perspective assisted in promoting marital fidelity. The couples reported that practicing their faith together, honoring their covenant vows of marriage, and focusing on spiritual growth were common in fostering fidelity in marriage; marital fidelity correlated positively with marital satisfaction. In another qualitative study of couples married from 22 to 36 years, Armstrong (1996) found that strong commitment, friendship, and shared values derived from faith perspectives significantly influence one's level of differentiation. In a meta-analysis of religion and marital journals, Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar & Swank (2001) reported statistical significance from 13 studies regarding marital stability and church attendance. They summarized the findings by stating, "greater frequency of church attendance is associated with lower divorce rates" (p. 566).

Most studies in the literature focus on *religiosity*: How does one *practice* or express their faith behaviorally versus developing or *growing* in their faith internally? Two studies typify the range in which religious practices may have an influence on marital satisfaction. Flynn (1987) studied 300 couples and found that marital satisfaction is related to religious beliefs and practices, and that religiosity may even be a predictor of marital satisfaction. However, in a study of 248 couples, Gaunt (2006) reported that even though having similar personality traits may have a positive influence on marital satisfaction, similarity in religious belief systems does not.

This study sought to more clearly understand aspects of marital satisfaction, specifically by exploring an individual's faith in God and their level of differentiation of self. Rather than focusing on the function of personal or corporate religious practices (religiosity), this study explored one's sense of developing an internal faith. It hopes to add to the body of knowledge of the relationship among marital satisfaction, level of individual faith development in God, and level of differentiation in marriages.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine perspectives of married couples in the following aspects of their lives: the individual's level of differentiation, the individual's level of faith development, and the couple's reported overall sense of satisfaction. The level of differentiation, using Bowen theory (1988), was measured individually and then combined to provide a couple's overall level of differentiation. The level of each partner's faith development was measured using principles from Fowler's (1974) theory

of faith development, as well as through specific questions in the researcher-produced questionnaire. Finally, the couple's marital satisfaction was measured through both an inventory and the researcher-produced demographic questionnaire.

Using a quantitative research approach, the researcher correlated these three domains of an individual (level of differentiation, level of faith development, and level of marital satisfaction) through descriptive statistics, *t*-tests, Pearson's *r*, and multiple regressions.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The study had the following null hypotheses:

1. There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the self-reported assessment of marital satisfaction as recorded on a Questionnaire.
2. There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) and the level of faith development as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS).
3. There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-

Revised (DSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (PAFS-Q).

4. There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R).

5. There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-R (MSI-R) and the level of faith development as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS).

6. There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of faith development as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R).

7. There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (PAFS-Q).

8. There will be no statistically significant difference between the level of marital satisfaction of the husband as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-R (MSI-R) and the level of marital satisfaction of the wife as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-R (MSI-R).

9. There will be no statistically significant difference between the level of faith development of the husband as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS) and the level of faith development of the wife as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS).

10. There will be no statistically significant difference between the level of differentiation of the husband as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) and the level of differentiation of the wife as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R).

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this study the following definitions are applied:

*Differentiation of self:* refers to the “process by which individuality and togetherness are managed by a person and within a relationship system.” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 95). They illustrate by stating, “As differentiation increases, individuality is better developed. Togetherness needs are less intense, and emotional reactivity is better modulated.” (p. 68).

*Faith development:* how a person, in a spiritual context, sees “him- or herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose,” (Fowler, 1981, p. 4).

*God:* a common name ascribed to the Transcendent Supreme Being who is worshipped as creator and sustainer of the universe.

*Marital satisfaction*: how a person subjectively senses or assesses the quality of their marital relationship.

*Spirituality*: “one’s personal relation to the sacred or transcendent, a relation that then informs other relationships and the meaning of one’s own life” (Sinnott, 2001, p. 199).

*Religiosity*: the specific set of behaviors, practices or liturgical rites associated with expressing one’s sense of spirituality.

### **Assumptions**

The following underlying assumptions based on existing research are being made for this study:

- The instruments used in this research study are appropriate and comprehensive in their measures of internal validity to adequately measure marital satisfaction, differentiation of self, and development of faith.
- Participants will respond openly and honestly to the survey instruments.
- Participants will respond independently as individuals and not as a couple.

### **Delimitations**

The following delimitations accompany this study:

- The research is limited to the geographic region of a major metropolitan city in the north Texas area.

- The sample consists of convenience-sampled participants chosen using a convenience and snowball sampling method, and who volunteered to participate in this study.

- The sample consists of married couples.
- The couples are all in heterosexual marriages.
- This is a quantitative study, not allowing for qualitative input.
- The participants in this study are from a predominantly Christian religious perspective.

### **Summary**

Research comparing religion and marital satisfaction has predominantly utilized self-assessment reports from couples at different life stages. There is significant research that focuses on the effect that participation in religious practices has on the quality of marriage. Very little research in this area has made the distinction between a person's set of religious practices versus their level of faith development. Similarly, research has been conducted on differentiation of self, and how different levels of differentiation influence marital satisfaction. This quantitative study hopes to add to the body of knowledge of marital satisfaction by correlating a couple's sense of marital satisfaction with individual levels of differentiation of self and an individual's self-assessed level of spiritual faith.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will review and critique relevant research on the topics of marital satisfaction, differentiation of self (including research and discussion of general systems theory and Bowen systems theory), and faith development.

#### **Marital Satisfaction**

Marriages are on the decline and the divorce rate is at a high rate (Gottman, 1993; Mahoney, et al., 2001). If marriages are to succeed, it is important to ascertain the factors that contribute to an increase in marital satisfaction.

Defining what makes for a good or healthy marriage has been the subject of numerous studies (Flynn, 1987; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Gottman & Porterfield, 1981; Kwon, 2000; Lavery, 1984; Lim & Jennings, 1996; Olson & McCubbin, 1990; Wilson & Musick, 1996). Serious study into marital satisfaction began in the pre-World War II era using approaches that were founded in individual psychiatry and focusing on marital adjustment (Terman & Johnson, 1939). In studying marriages during this time there was an emphasis on predicting marital success through tests and assessment tools (Terman & Johnson, 1939; Terman & Wallin, 1949). With the advent of systems thinking in the post-War era, interest in marital adjustment and satisfaction shifted to studying family dynamics rather than just the marital dyad. It was not until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century that specific attention was given to how to measure satisfaction in a marriage using systems

theory and communication patterns between partners. Among the instruments developed in and around this time were the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (MAT) (Locke & Wallace, 1959), an attempt to reduce the instrument to “a relatively small number of basic and fundamental items” (1959, p. 255). The Locke-Wallace MAT has been widely used in clinical and research applications since its development. Spanier (1976) developed the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), a 32-item scale testing components of couple adjustment: dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus, and affectional expression. Spanier’s goal was to attempt to quantify in a relatively simple way the complexities of marital satisfaction, using “paper and pencil measures” (1976, p. 25) for use in clinical and research settings. Gottman, Markman, & Notarius (1977) researched how communication patterns influence marital satisfaction. In this study, they interviewed 28 couples who self-described their marriage as in significant conflict. After determining their level of dissatisfaction using the Locke-Wallace Marital Relationship Inventory, they presented each couple with situations that would involve the couple to engage in problem solving. These sessions were videotaped and the couple’s content, affect, and nonverbal communication were coded and quantified. Gottman et al. (1977) produced a “reciprocity model” (p. 476) of healthy and unhealthy communication patterns, which the researchers hypothesized could be generalized to predicting other marital distress dynamics. Additional instruments have been developed to assess marital satisfaction (Beavers, 1985; Kelso, Stewart, Bullers, & Eginton, 1984) and studies

conducted to determine factors that contribute to a satisfied marriage (Flynn, 1987; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Gottman & Porterfield, 1981; Lavery, 1984).

It has been proposed that marital satisfaction functions on a curvilinear or U-shaped pattern over the life of the marriage (Anderson, Russell, & Schumm, 1983; Olson & McCubbin, 1990; Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1983). In this model, the marriage begins with a high level of satisfaction, commonly known as the honeymoon period. As the marriage progresses over time, various factors displace the quality of time and effort previously experienced in the marriage, primarily parenting and vocational demands, and marital satisfaction decreases. The model's last phase occurs when children leave the home and the couple once again has the opportunity to focus on nurturing the marriage, resulting in an upturn in marital satisfaction.

This U-shape over the lifespan of the marriage has been the basis of Olson's Circumplex Model (Olson et al., 1983). In support of this model, Vanamburgh (1987) studied 51 married couples between the ages of 20 and 40 who had been married at least one year. The average length of marriage was 7.9 years. Vanamburgh observed that, over the 20 to 40 years of age range, the level of marital satisfaction as well as their level of individual differentiation decreased, seeming to confirm this mid-life dip in the curvilinear model.

However, there are studies where the data do not seem to support a U-shaped model (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Glenn, 1989; Richards, 1987). These studies recorded the mid-life dip as anticipated, but data do not fully support the subsequent increase in

marital satisfaction. In a classic study of marital power, Blood and Wolfe (1960) described a shift in balance of decision-making during the child-raising years, resulting in a decrease in marital satisfaction. They reported that when the wife reentered the work force, the power dynamic once again shifted but did not necessarily result in increased marital satisfaction. Glenn (1998) studied marriage cohorts from 1973 to 1994, and shed doubt on the assumption that marriages improve in the middle to late years. Glenn stated, “the evidence reported here fails to support the widespread belief that marriages tend to improve at mid-term” (p. 575). He concluded, however, that “persons in the earlier durations of their marriages should not expect them to mature into a golden state in the normal course of events” (p. 576) unless they are “diligent in maintaining their relationship” (p. 576).

The level of differentiation of each partner may also influence marital satisfaction, although research reports some ambiguity on specific aspects of marital satisfaction. Bowen theory (1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988) suggests that individuals seek out partners with a similar level of differentiation. Vanamburgh (1987) compared scores of marital adjustment from the Dyadic Adjustment Scale to the level of differentiation as reported by scores from the PAFS-Q in 51 married couples between the ages of 20 and 40. All couples were in their first marriage and had been married more than one year. The findings were that more highly differentiated couples experienced higher levels of marital adjustment, and that couples tended to have similar levels of differentiation. A stronger correlation between level of differentiation and marital satisfaction was found among

females than males. Vanamburgh also reported that the levels of both differentiation and marital adjustment decreased among the sample from ages 20 to 40, implying that marital adjustment may decrease over time. Shursen (2006) found in a study of 26 adult sex offenders and their spouses that their levels of differentiation were similar. In a study of 21 engaged couples, Vaughn (1988) found that individuals tend to select mates with similar levels of differentiation.

There are some studies testing Bowenian theory that found there was not a significant correlation to support that spouses seek and marry others with similar levels of differentiation. In a study of 54 married couples, Kwon (2000) “found that as husbands’ level of differentiation increased, so did wives’ level of differentiation “ (p. 70), but that this does not infer they began their marriage at a similar level of differentiation. Patrick (2002) studied 124 married couples and concluded that, through factor analysis, personality traits may play a more significant role in couple selection than in level of differentiation (Racite, 2001; Richter, 1998).

Spirituality and personal religious belief systems may be other components of marital satisfaction. Flynn (1987) surveyed 300 married students attending community colleges in New Jersey. Using the Marital Satisfaction Scale, the Faulkner-DeJong Religiosity Scale and the Value Survey-Terminal Scale, Flynn reported that religious beliefs were related to an increase in marital satisfaction, especially among those couples that reported having a more traditional or fundamental belief system. Flynn also

concluded that having traditional religious beliefs might actually be a predictor of marital satisfaction.

However, Wilson and Musick (1996) tested a theory that religion acts as a barrier that raises “the cost of dissolving the marriage and thus influencing the degree of dependency of the spouse on the marriage” (p. 31). The researchers used data from the 1988 National Survey of Families and Households, a sample of 13,017 adults interviewed between March 1987 and May 1988. Wilson and Musick found from the data that greater marital stability was found in couples who shared a similar faith and who were engaged in religious activities together. They did not equate dependency with marital satisfaction; rather they found that those couples that practice a fundamental religion together were committed to staying in the marriage primarily because of the potential detrimental religious implications of divorcing. This distinction is especially interesting in light of the findings of Schumm and Webb (1998). They used the same data set and found that women were overall less satisfied in marriage than men, and that religious or faith perspectives were not significantly influential in the level of satisfaction with the marriage. These studies seem to indicate that, when considering religious influences, couples may stay in unsatisfying marriages due to religious beliefs.

Lim and Jennings (1996) looked at 113 married couples (n=226) to consider if there was a correlation between a couple’s level of differentiation and marital satisfaction. Using scores from the PAFS-Q, the couples were placed into four categories of differentiation: healthy/like, healthy/unlike, unhealthy/like, and unhealthy/unlike. Lim

and Jennings measured marital satisfaction using the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI). Using the score from the MSI as the dependent variable, the level of marital satisfaction from the MSI was compared with the level of differentiation from the PAFS-Q. Their results were fourfold: first, individuals with similar levels of differentiation tended to seek out partners of similar levels, supporting an integral part of Bowen theory (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Second, individuals who were more highly differentiated experienced higher levels of marital satisfaction. Third, individuals with lower levels of differentiation were more dissatisfied in their marriages and had higher levels of conflict within their marriage. Finally, the study reported that the women in this study reported overall lower scores on marital satisfaction than men.

### **Differentiation of Self**

Murray Bowen (1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988) developed the concept of differentiation of self in family systems theory. Bowen was a psychiatrist in the 1950s, trained in the classical individual psychoanalytical approach. As a practicing psychiatrist, he began to look at families systemically when treating individuals with schizophrenia. Although at the time he developed his Family Systems Theory, “Bowen’s theory of family systems was not based on concepts in general systems theory” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 24), but did reveal that he was influenced by the work of early contributors to general systems theory: Bertalanffy and Weinberg (Bowen, 1978). It is important to see the influence of general systems theory on Bowen’s work to better understand his concept of family systems theory.

## **General Systems Theory**

General systems theory (GST) evolved from a paradigm shift of thinking in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Hanson, 1995). Prior to this time, the scientific method of linear causality was prominent. There were some, however, who were considering a non-linear approach to science in favor of a systemic perspective. Especially influential at this time were the new approaches to war offered by the Second World War. Warfare had evolved from a linear, two-dimensional ground-based approach to include technological advances such as the use of airplanes, long-range missiles, and radar. The new geography of war added other elements. Prior wars had been within confined regions where troops could be dispatched and overseen by a field command. The Second World War had a much larger field of battle. This new three-dimensional method of war produced challenges to strategic thinking of troop movements as well as logistics to support a worldwide conflict. Post-war debriefings prompted new ways to conceptualize processes in complex systems.

Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968), a German biologist, was a key figure in the development of general systems theory. His thinking brought together experts in a variety of scientific disciplines to design a collaborative method of approaching science. Along with notables from various disciplines such as Rapoport (mathematics), Gerard (neurophysiology), and Boulding (economics), Bertalanffy formed the Society for General Systems Research in 1954. It is now known as the International Society for the Systems Sciences (<http://iss.org/world/index.php>).

This interdisciplinary approach to science influenced scientists in other fields of study to think beyond the linear. In the field of psychiatry and human behaviors, Gregory Bateson (Bateson, Jackson, Haley & Weakland, 1956) formalized thinking about human behavior in systemic terms. Bateson was an anthropologist who, when thinking systemically about animal behaviors, began a dialog with Norbert Weiner and others in the new field of cybernetics (Weiner, 1961). Bateson's interest in communication patterns in schizophrenic patients led to a collaboration with John Weakland, Jay Haley, and Don Jackson to formulate a seminal theory of the double bind (Bateson et al., 1956). In 1959 the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California was founded based on this theory and its implications (Watzlawick, Bavelas, & Jackson, 1967). This group formulated a model of communication that led to a new approach to psychotherapy called brief therapy (Watzlawick et al., 1967).

### **Family Systems Theory and Bowen Systems Theory**

In the 1950s, physicians, scholars, and researchers from a range of diverse disciplines produced applications of general systems theory. No longer relegated to only the hard sciences of mathematics and logistics, general systems theory prompted researchers to consider applications to social sciences. It was from this new mindset that the seeds of family systemic theory developed.

Murray Bowen was educated as a psychiatrist in the middle of the last century. His training at the Menninger Clinic was followed by a five-year research project at the National Institute of Mental Health in Maryland. This project focused on communication

patterns among families of adult schizophrenic patients. It was this work that stimulated his formulation of family systemic theory (Bowen, 1978).

Bowen's theory of family systems (1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988) has eight connected concepts: triangles, emotional cutoff, family projection process, multigenerational transmission process, nuclear family emotional system, sibling position, societal emotional process, and differentiation of self. This study focuses primarily on the last concept: differentiation of self.

**Bowen's differentiation of self.** A most significant contribution to Bowen theory is the concept of differentiation of self. The original concept of differentiation of self came from the science of biological evolution. Bowen's "speculations about the function of differentiation are derived from comparisons of seemingly parallel research observations made by E. O. Wilson [and] Paul MacLean" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 89), and laid a foundation for application to family systems theory. Differentiation of self in family systems theory refers to the "process by which individuality and togetherness are managed by a person and within a relationship system." (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 95). A well-differentiated person is one who has the ability to separate from early family dynamics by balancing emotional and intellectual functioning with intimacy and autonomy in relationships (Bowen, 1978).

Bowen cites that a poorly differentiated family is, "where individuality is so underdeveloped that people are literally clinging to one another for emotional support (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 94). In contrast, a well-differentiated family is one in which,

“people recognize their realistic dependence on one another but are able to be fairly autonomous in their emotional functioning” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 94). Although this is a struggle to obtain, Bowen theory stresses the importance of having this balance in order to become a mature adult. It embodies a developmental level transcending what others think and expect, especially those thoughts and expectations learned in the family of origin, into a maturity of managing self, thought, emotion, and feelings independent of others’ expectations. Choosing for oneself is thus based on principles and wisdom, not fear or timidity.

Bowen theory (1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988), being a set of principles and aspects of individual and family systemic dynamics, prompted clinicians and researchers to develop instruments which could measure its eight components. An early attempt at such an instrument was developed by Blau Riecher (1990). Blau Riecher endeavored to produce an instrument that measured five of the eight concepts of Bowen theory: nuclear family emotional system, emotional cutoff, family projection process, triangles, and differentiation. She correlated her factors with the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire with 108 adults. Her instrument, the Multigenerational Transmission Instrument (MTI), is not in wide use, but provides an example of researchers’ attempts to quantify Bowen theory. A commonly used instrument to assess Bowen theory (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) is the Differentiation of Self Inventory (Skowron, 1995; Skowron & Friedlander, 1998; Skowron & Schmitt, 2003). This instrument is used in this research project, and will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

Additionally, Bowen theory has provided researchers with the opportunity to assess several family systems theory concepts: marital satisfaction (Carter, 1980; Nelson, 1987; Ng, 1991; Peleg, 2008; Skowron, 2000; Vanamburgh, 1987); assessment of engaged couples' differentiation (Vaughn, 1988); adult attachment (Skowron & Dendy, 2004); differentiation of self among individuals of color (Skowron, 2004); differentiation across the lifespan (Dowling, 1998); interpersonal stress and coping styles (Johnson & Buboltz, 2000; Murdock & Gore, 2004; Skowron, Stanley, & Shapiro, 2009); and differentiation of self and sexuality (Schnarch, 1991, 1997).

### **Faith Development**

According to Sheldrake (2007), seeking after God comprises two significant and distinct aspects. The first is the *internal process* of cognitively and emotively processing the concepts surrounding the nature of God. When one is challenged to consider that there may be something larger than self in the universe, possibly something that can control destiny, influence day-to-day activities, or provide a holistic context for human existence and purpose, this process promotes an internal dialog to construct a model of faith. Meditation, didactic discourse, and reflection are common strategies to nurture and develop this construct.

The second aspect of seeking after God is the *external expression* of that belief system. It is common that an internal construct of God prompts behaviors that can be observed. This is most often seen as religious rituals, rites, and liturgies. Usual strategies include attendance of worship assemblies or performing altruistic tasks such as helping

the poor or giving to charitable causes. Common to most every religious perspective is the tenet to express one's faith through behaviors.

Historical studies of faith and religious influences have focused primarily on the latter aspect, namely the expression of one's faith (Sinnott, 2001). Fortunately, behaviors can be quantified, allowing an ease of measurement for statistical research. These quantifiable measures usually include counting the number of religious-related activities one participates in (including worship and volunteer activities), counting the number of religious rites one uses (prayer, reading of scripture, etc.), and possibly even counting the amount of money contributed to charity in the name of one's faith.

Fowler (1974; 1981) "developed what is perhaps the most influential theory concerning the process of faith development" (Leak, 2009, p. 203). A student of both Piaget (1983) and Kohlberg (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hower, 1983), Fowler constructed a theory of faith from a cognitive-learning and psychosocial developmental framework. The basic tenets of Fowler's faith development theory (FTD) revolve around a series of seven stages, each needing to be mastered in order to advance to the subsequent stage. In the present post-modern era, Fowler's theory has come under some critique for being grounded in a linear, structuralism model. Heywood (2008) is especially critical of Fowler. He cites that Fowler was lax in empirical testing of his faith development theory, and that "clearly FTD is a theory increasingly out of synch with the trend of contemporary thought" (2008, p. 266). Heywood further states that "structuralism is the wrong theoretical framework" (p. 266) and that "FTD is an example of a paradigm

reaching the end of its life” (p. 270). Fowler stated earlier that he, even in the era of post-modern thinking,

still strongly believe[s] that the stages, with their complex integration of cognitive, emotional, and imaginative operations, do constitute what, in the Piagetian tradition, is called a typology of structural wholes. That is to say, I believe that the structural aspects descriptive of faith stages do correlate and are integrated with each other. Further, I hold that the structural stage sequence is sequential, invariant, and hierarchical. (2001, p. 171)

Regardless of the philosophical debate on the nature of faith development, Fowler’s (2004) work has become the de facto standard among researchers in the field of faith development theory.

### **Fowler’s Stages of Faith**

Fowler’s (Fowler, 1974, 1981) seven stages of faith are as follows:

**Stage 0: Undifferentiated or primal faith.** This is the beginning of faith development, also termed a pre-stage level. It is at this stage where the newborn to 2-year-old individual, through relationship with primary caregivers, lays the foundation for Erikson’s (1968) trust vs. mistrust stage. It is “a pre-conceptual, pre-linguistic disposition toward the conditions of life...[where] the caring one[s] communicate assurance of meaning and purpose in life and the bases of courage (or their opposites) in non-verbal, often somatic ways” (Fowler, 1974, p. 214).

**Stage 1: Intuitive-projective faith.** This stage is usually in the age three to seven year ranges, marked by imagination and unencumbered by logical or rational thought. There is “little distinction of fact from fantasy; no categories for anything like natural-supernatural” (Fowler, 1974, p. 214). “Deity as Cause or Creator [is] understood in magical terms” (p. 214). Adults are the origin of examples, actions, stories, and rituals surrounding the concept of God, religion, and religious practices. A child defines faith through responding to what is modeled.

**Stage 2: Mythic-literal faith.** In this stage, school-aged children begin the process of taking on for him- or herself the practices of faith which have been observed. “Notions or constructs underlying such distinctions as natural and supernatural have appeared” (Fowler, 1974, p. 215). Additionally, “concepts tend to be largely concrete in reference; symbols tend to be literally and one-dimensionally apprehended” (p. 215). A transition to Stage 3 occurs when there is significant dissonance between compliance with adult perspectives and the questioning of those rules of order and structure.

**Stage 3: Synthetic-conventional faith.** The child moves into adolescence, where the dynamics of life become much more complex. The adolescent must now find a coherent balance between various aspects of life such as social interactions, the development of independent peer relationships, shifts in family rules and expectations, school and educational challenges, and possibly even religious practices. “Constructs underlying the distinction of value-knowing from fact-knowing emerge, constituting the basis for practical distinctions between subjectivity and objectivity” (Fowler, 1974, p.

216). The individual is in the process of an independent construct of a philosophy of life separate from that of parents and society. Fowler further states, “the increase of trust in one’s own judgment applies primarily to [the] ability to choose and evaluate authorities, rather than to taking responsibility for directly solving the inter-authority dissonance” (p. 216). Disillusionment with established teachings from family and religion provide an impetus to break from Stage 3 and move into Stage 4.

**Stage 4: Individuating-reflective faith.** This stage is characteristically achieved in late adolescence or early adulthood, and it “grows out of the collapse or failure of the kind of synthesis described in Stage III” (Fowler, 1974, p. 216). This stage demythologizes much of the experience of earlier interactions by accommodating a sense of individuation not yet reached. The “balance of responsibility for world-synthesis shifts more clearly to oneself” (p. 216) from parents and society in this stage. Fowler states that this stage is “likely to see most institutional religion as ‘conventional,’ and to be drawn to the exotic or novel in traditions foreign to its own” (p. 216).

**Stage 5: Polar-dialectical or conjunctive faith.** Moving into mid-life, this stage of faith development involves a stronger sense of merging symbolism into owned concepts. “In this stage the polar tensions that were encountered and dealt with in Stage IV by some strategy of tension-reduction, now have to be embraced, affirmed, and the tension incorporated into an equilibrated faith-knowing and faith-being” (Fowler, 1974, p. 217). Fowler sees as a significant task of this life stage for an individual to go through a “reappropriation...of one’s past, and of the significant persons and groups whose

example and teachings influenced its growth in faith-knowing” (p. 217). Additionally, it “strives for a complex coherence in which the various dimensions and communities of life are held together in mutuality with and through its apprehension of the meaning of life and the imperatives of the Ultimate” (p. 217).

**Stage 6: Universalizing faith.** This is the highest level of faith development in the Fowler theory, and has, as its main tenet, a sense of embracing universal values of justice, love, and truth. “This stage wants to characterize an integration of life in faith in which immediacy or participation in the Ultimate is the fruit of development, of discipline, and, likely, of spiritual genius” (Fowler, 1974, p. 217). Few attain this level, similar to Maslow’s (1943) self-actualization level. Fowler states “the rare persons who may be described by this stage have a special grace that makes them seem more lucid, more simple, and yet somehow more fully human than the rest of us” (p. 217). These individuals live with a sense of unification and transformation of their world; where one’s “life is both loved and held to loosely” (p. 218). Persons at this stage “know how to relate to us affirmingly, never condescendingly, yet with pricks to our pretense and with genuine bread of life” (p. 218).

Fowler’s (1974, 1981) theory has provided researchers new aspects of study in the differentiation of religiosity and faith development. Leak (2009) reports that there are “more than 200 studies using Fowler’s faith development theory” (2009, p. 205). Due in part to the influence of Fowlerian theory, the study of how spirituality and faith development are influential in marriages has similarly expanded. Armstrong (1996)

conducted a study with six couples that had been married more than 22 years. The study looked at two questions: What were factors that facilitated growth in the marriage and what are potential areas for growth in the marriages. Armstrong reported three factors that facilitate growth: Strong commitment, deep friendship, and shared values. Armstrong also reported that growth is a function of the individual's level of differentiation.

In a study focusing on the influence of spirituality in marriage counseling, Coffey (2001) interviewed 3 couples and 6 clinicians. In his qualitative study exploring a wide range of individual spirituality, Coffey's study reported that all participants in the study identified personal spirituality as a significant influence in the outcome of the marriage counseling experience.

Researchers have utilized Fowler's (1974, 1981) faith development theory to expand understanding of faith development. Correlations between Erikson's (1968) developmental stages with Fowler's faith development stages have been reported (Jersa, 2008), as well as Jung's (1923) analytical psychology (Jones, 2003).

### **Summary**

This chapter explored research in the areas of marital satisfaction, faith development, and differentiation of self. Individually, each of these topics have benefitted from a large body of research. However, there has been little research in how these three aspects of an individual's life are intertwined. It is the hope of this researcher that this present study will add to an understanding of marital satisfaction by exploring this intertwining.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore how marital satisfaction is influenced by aspects of differentiation of self and level of faith development. Data were collected using a demographic questionnaire and four inventories. Analysis of data used descriptive statistics, correlations and multiple regressions. Bowen systems theory and Fowler's faith development theory provided the theoretical foundation.

#### **Method**

##### **Participants**

Participants in this study were individuals who are married; there were no other criteria that disqualified a participant for this study. Participants were obtained through a convenience, convenience and snowball method of recruitment at a Christian church in a major north Texas city. Originally 440 packets were distributed, of which 147 were returned. Of these, 124 packets (62 couples) were deemed appropriate to use for this study (23 packets of materials were returned incomplete and were not considered in the results of this study). Further description of the sample is found in chapter 4.

##### **Protection of Human Subjects**

The study was presented to the Institutional Review Board at Texas Woman's University. Approval from the Institutional Review Board of the University was obtained prior to the commencement of any data gathering activity (Appendix G).

Participants were assured that participation is completely voluntary and that their responses would be kept anonymous and confidential. A coding process was utilized to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

### **Design and Procedure**

The researcher solicited participants through a convenience/convenience and snowball method. A flyer (Appendix A) was developed and several were placed in various places in a north Texas church building, with the permission of church officials. The flyer announced the study being conducted by the researcher, and, if interested, to contact the researcher directly. Additionally, prospective participants were asked to refer others to participate.

Each packet contained two complete sets of the following inventories: a researcher produced Questionnaire, the Marital Satisfaction Inventory – Revised, the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire, the Differentiation of Self Inventory – Revised, and the Faith Development Scale. The researcher began by dividing the Questionnaire into two equal stacks that were placed one on the left and one on the right. The left Questionnaire stack was then numbered by hand in the upper right corner from 001 to 220, and then the right Questionnaire stack was also numbered by hand in the upper right corner from 001 to 220. The left stack was then additionally coded with the letter “A”, so that the entire stack was coded A001, A002, A003, etc. The stack on the right was additionally coded with the letter “B”, so that the entire stack was coded B001, B002, B003, etc. The two stacks were then set aside into an A and B stack. The

remaining inventories were coded in the same way, each being coded with a letter (“A” or “B”) and a numeric counter (001, 002, 003, etc.).

When all inventories were similarly coded, the researcher then compiled each participant packet in this manner: All four inventories and Questionnaires coded A001 were compiled and placed within a clasp envelope that was then clasped but not sealed. The researcher ensured that the Questionnaire was on top of the set of inventories. All inventories coded B001 were compiled and placed within a clasp envelope that was then clasped but not sealed. The researcher ensured that the Questionnaire was on top of the set of inventories. The researcher then took the clasped A001 envelope and the B001 envelope and placed them together into a larger, unmarked clasp envelope. Into this larger envelope were also inserted instructions on how to complete the packets (Appendix B). This procedure was repeated until there were 220 large packets. As a result there were a total of 220 participant packets, each containing a set of inventories for the husband and the wife. It did not matter which packet each spouse completed (either the A or the B packet); spousal gender was handled by a Question 5 in the Questionnaire (Appendix C). This coding process protected the anonymity of participants.

Once contacted by a participant, the researcher presented them with a single packet containing two complete sets of inventories. Inside the single envelope were two smaller envelopes coded with an “A” and a The study was designed so that the surveys could be completed in the privacy of their home or some other place and time of their choosing.

The participants completed the instruments, replaced the completed surveys into the original oversized envelope, sealed it, then returned it to a prepared, secure drop-box in the office complex of the church building. Only the researcher was able to acquire the contents of the secure drop-box.

After obtaining the materials, the researcher then performed the appropriate analysis of the data using SPSS 19 for MacOS. Following data analysis, the study materials were placed in a secure cabinet at the researcher's office where they will be kept until they are destroyed.

## **Instruments**

### **Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised**

The Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) is a self-report measure of a couple's quality of relationship (Snyder, 2004; Snyder, Wills, & Keiser, 1981). The inventory consists of 150 True-False items (129 items if the couple has no children) that measures strengths of a marriage across 13 scales. The scales include one global assessment scale, two validity scales and ten specific subscales assessing couple satisfaction. These subscales are Affective Communication, Role Orientation, Problem-Solving Communication, Aggression, Family History of Distress, Time Together, Dissatisfaction With Children, Conflict Over Child Rearing, Sexual Dissatisfaction, and Disagreement About Finances. What follows is a brief description of each subscale.

- The Inconsistency subscale is a "validity scale based upon 20 pairs of items intended to assess the individual's consistency to item content" (Snyder, 2002, p. 2).

- The Conventionalization subscale assesses “individuals’ tendencies to distort the appraisal of their relationship in a socially desirable direction” (Snyder, 2002, p. 2).
- The Global Distress subscale “measures individuals’ overall dissatisfaction with the relationship” (Snyder, 2004, p. 2).
- The Affective Communication subscale “evaluates individuals’ dissatisfaction with the amount of affection and understanding expressed by their partner” (Snyder, 2004, p. 3).
- The Problem-Solving Communication subscale “assesses the couple’s general ineffectiveness in resolving differences” (Snyder, 2004, p. 3).
- The Aggression subscale measures “the level of intimidation and physical aggression experienced by the respondent from his or her partner” (Snyder, 2004, p. 3).
- The Time Together subscale “evaluates the couple’s companionship as expressed in time shared in leisure activity” (Snyder, 2004, p. 3).
- The Disagreement About Finances subscale “measures relationship discord regarding the management of finances” (Snyder, 2004, p. 3).
- The Sexual Dissatisfaction subscale “assesses dissatisfaction with the frequency and quality of intercourse and other sexual activity” (Snyder, 2004, p. 3).
- The Role Orientation subscale “evaluates the respondent’s advocacy for a traditional versus nontraditional orientation toward marital and parental gender roles” (Snyder, 2004, p. 3).

- The Family History of Distress subscale “reflects the disruption of relationships within the respondent’s family of origin” (Snyder, 2004, p. 3).
- The Dissatisfaction With Children subscale “assesses the relationship quality between respondents and their children, as well as parental concern regarding the emotional and behavioral well-being of one or more of the children” (Snyder, 2004, p. 3).
- The Conflict Over Child Rearing subscale “evaluates the extent of conflict between partners regarding child rearing practices” (Snyder, 2004, p. 3).

The inventory was standardized from a sample of 1,020 intact couples (2,040 individuals), approximating the U.S. population regarding ethnicity, geographic region of the country, and educational level.

The reliability of the MSI-R shows a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ranging on the individual scales from .70 to .93, and an overall internal consistency coefficient of .82 on all scales. The mean test-retest reliability coefficient is about .79, which ranges from .74 to .88 (Snyder, 2004).

Validity of the MSI-R was established by correlating it with the prior version of the MSI, having a median correlation score of 95.5, ranging from .94 to .98 (Snyder, 2004). Additionally, a scale (the Inconsistency Scale) was added in the MSI-R to address internal consistency and random responding.

### **Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised**

The Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI) was originally developed by Skowron and Friedlander (1998) and consisted of 43 items on a 6-point Likert scale with

four subscales: Emotional Reactivity (ER), I Position (IP), Emotional Cutoff (EC), and Fusion with Others (FO).

- The Emotional Reactivity (ER) subscale consists of 11 items reflecting “the degree to which a person responds to environmental stimuli with emotional flooding, emotional lability, or hypersensitivity” (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998, p. 239).
- The I Position (IP) subscale contains 11 items that “reflect a clearly defined sense of self and the ability to thoughtfully adhere to one’s convictions when pressured to do otherwise” (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998, p. 239).
- The Emotional Cutoff (EC) subscale contains 12 items that reflect “feeling threatened by intimacy and feeling excessive vulnerability in relations with others” (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998, p. 239).
- The Fusion with Others (FO) scale is a 12-item subscale that “reflects emotional overinvolvement with others, including triangulation and overidentification with parents” (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998, p. 239).

The internal consistency reliabilities of the subscales are DSI full scale = .88, ER = .84, IP = .85, EC = .82, and FO = .74.

In 2003, the instrument was revised to 46 items (Skowron & Schmitt, 2003) and named Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R). Internal consistencies using Cronbach’s alpha increased to DSI-R full scale = .92, ER = .89, IP = .81, EC = .84, and FO = .86 (Skowron & Schmitt, 2003).

Scores on the DSI-R are computed with reversing select items, the items then summed up across each subscale and divided by the number of items in each subscale; The ER and IP each have 11 items, the FO and EC each has 12 items. Scores on each subscale range from 1 to 6. The DSI-R full-scale score is computed in a similar manner, dividing the total by 46. A higher score on the DSI-R full scale reflects a greater differentiation of self (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998; Skowron & Schmitt, 2003).

### **Faith Development Scale**

The Faith Development Scale (FDS) was developed by Leak (Leak, Loucks, & Bowlin, 1999) to assess an individual's level of spiritual faith. The FDS is based on Fowler's Stages of Faith (Fowler, 1981), and was developed in response to a need to have a brief measure of faith development that did not require an in-depth interview process. The FDS is an 8-item forced choice scale with an internal consistency coefficient  $\alpha = .71$ . The test-retest reliability is significant,  $r = .96$ ,  $p < .01$ . The FDS has continued to undergo refinement through factorial validity analysis research (Leak, 2008). Scores on the FDS range from 1 to 8, with higher scores indicating greater faith development, and lower scores indicating underdeveloped faith development.

### **Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire**

The Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (PAFS-Q) "operationalizes concepts from intergenerational and multigenerational theory into rating scales" (Bray, 2004, p. 1). The PAFS-Q has its theoretical basis in the family systems theory postulated by Bowen (1988). It was originally developed in 1991 and has three

versions: Version A is for adults with children, Version B is for adults without children, and Version C is for young adults without children (Bray, Williamson, & Malone, 1984). The PAFS-Q contains 132 items grouped into eight, non-overlapping, 5-point Likert scales: Spousal Fusion-Individuation (SPFUS), Intergenerational Fusion-Individuation (INFUS), Spousal Intimacy (SPINT), Intergenerational Intimacy (ININT), Nuclear Family Triangulation (NFTRI), Intergenerational Triangulation (INTRI), Intergenerational Intimidation (INTIM), and Personal Authority (PERAUT).

- The Spousal Fusion-Individuation (SPFUS) subscale measures “the degree to which a person operates in a fused or individuated manner in a relationship with the mate or significant other” (Bray, 2004, p. 3).
- The Intergenerational Fusion-Individuation (INFUS) subscale measures “the degree to which a person operates in a fused or individuated manner with parents” (Bray, 2004, p. 3).
- The Spousal Intimacy (SPINT) subscale assesses the “degree of intimacy and satisfaction with their mate or significant other” (Bray, 2004, p. 3).
- The Intergenerational Intimacy (ININT) subscale assesses the “degree of intimacy and satisfaction with parents” (Bray, 2004, p. 3).
- The Nuclear Family Triangulation (NFTRI) subscale measures “triangulation between spouses and their children” (Bray, 2004, p. 3).
- The Intergenerational Triangulation (INTRI) subscale measures “triangulation between a person and his/her parents” (Bray, 2004, p. 3).

- The Intergenerational Intimidation (INTIM) subscale assesses the “degree of personal intimidation experienced by an individual in relation to his/her parents” (Bray, 2004, p. 4).
- The Personal Authority (PERAUT) subscale items reflect “topics of conversation that require an intimate interaction with a parent, while maintaining an individuated stance” (Bray, 2004, p. 4)

Measures of internal consistency, coefficient alpha (Cronbach), range from .80 to .95 with a mean of .89. Reliability estimates range from .55 to .95 with a mean test-retest reliability of .74.

Concurrent validity with the Family Adaptability and Cohesion and Evaluation Scales-I (FACES-I) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) were demonstrated with significance with the exception of the FACES-I Adaptation scale (Bray, et al., 1984).

### **Data Reporting**

After the data were collected, descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the demographic data collected from the questionnaire. Additionally, *t*-tests, correlations, and multiple regression statistics were used to examine the data collected from the Questionnaire, the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised, the Differentiation of Self Inventory–Revised, the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire and the Faith Development Scale inventory.

## **Summary**

This chapter outlines the design, collection of data, and methodology to process the collected data. The researcher collected data using a convenience and snowball method from participants living in the North Texas area. The tools used to collect data were a general Questionnaire, the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-R, the Faith Development Scale, the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire and the Differentiation of Self Inventory-R. The data were processed using descriptive, correlational, and multiple regression statistics.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (Bray, 2004), the Marital Satisfaction Inventory, Revised (Snyder, 2004), the Differentiation of Self Inventory, Revised (Skowron & Schmitt, 2003), the Faith Development Inventory (Leak, Loucks & Bowlin, 1999) and a researcher-produced Questionnaire were administered to 62 couples for the purpose of exploring the relationship among marital satisfaction, differentiation of self, and level of faith development among couples. This chapter will present the findings of the study.

#### **Description of the Sample**

The study sample ( $n=124$ ) was comprised of married couples in the North Texas area. A total of 440 participant packets were distributed through a convenience and snowball sampling method. Of these, 147 (33.4%) individual packets were returned and 124 (28.1%) were deemed suitable for the study. The other 23 packets were disqualified for this study due to incompleteness of individual items or one spouse failing to return or complete portions of the inventories. The study included 62 married couples.

#### **Age**

The sample ( $n=124$ ) was comprised of participants ranging in age from 23 to 85, the mean age being 49.9 years old, with a range of 62 (minimum 23, maximum 85), median 52.0 years and  $SD = 16.054$ . All participants reported being in a heterosexual

marriage ( $n = 62$  males and  $n = 62$  females). Table 1 shows the age distribution of the sample.

Table 1

*Number and Age Groups of Subjects in Sample*

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
21 – 30	17	13.7	13.7
31 – 40	24	19.4	33.1
41 – 50	18	14.5	47.6
51 – 60	36	29.0	76.6
61 – 70	16	12.9	89.5
71 – 80	8	6.5	96.0
> 81	5	4.0	100.0
Total	124	100.0	

**Ethnicity**

The sample consisted almost entirely of individuals reporting their ethnicity as White (94.4%). Additional participants comprised the following ethnic groups: African American (3.2%), Asian (.8%), and Hispanic (1.6%). Table 2 reports these demographics.

Table 2

*Ethnic Groups of Subjects in Sample*

Ethnic Group	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
African American	4	3.2	3.2
Asian	1	.8	4.0
Hispanic	2	1.6	5.6
White	117	94.4	100.0
Total	124	100.0	

**Marriage**

All of the participants were currently married couples, ranging from being married 1 year to 59 years. The average length of marriage of the sample was 23.8 years, with the median 25.0 years. The majority of the sample reported their current marriage being their first (83.1%) with none reporting being married more than 3 times. Table 3 reports marital statistics for this study.

Table 3

*Number of Marriages and Length of Marriage of Subjects in Sample*

Marriage Number	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
First Marriage	103	83.1	83.1
Second Marriage	18	14.5	97.6
Third Marriage	3	2.4	100.0
Total	124	100.0	

Length of Marriage			
1 - 10 Years	36	29.0	29.0
11 - 20 Years	18	14.5	43.5
21 - 30 Years	26	21.0	64.5
31 - 40 Years	24	19.3	83.8
41 - 50 Years	12	9.7	93.5
51 - 60 Years	8	6.5	100.0
Total	124	100.0	

**Household Income and Educational Levels**

The majority of participants in this survey report an income of more than \$75,000 per year (n=90, 72.5%), with almost half of the participants reporting an annual household income of more than \$120,000 (41.9%). Additionally, a great percentage report having attended college: 21.8% attended some college, while 92 (74.2%) completed either a 4-year college degree or postgraduate coursework. Table 4 summarizes both the household income and educational levels of the participants.

Table 4

*Annual Household Income and Educational Level of Subjects in Sample*

Annual Income	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
\$20,001 - \$40,000	4	3.2	3.2
\$40,001 - \$75,000	30	24.2	27.4
\$75,001 - 120,000	38	30.6	58.1
> \$120,001	52	41.9	100.0
Total	124	100.0	

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Some high school	1	.8	.8
High school graduate	4	3.2	4.0
Some college	27	21.8	25.8
College graduate	56	45.2	71.0
Post graduate	36	29	100.0
Total	124	100.0	

**Religious Affiliation and Attendance**

Almost all of the participants in this study reported a Christian religious affiliation (98.4%). Of these, the Church of Christ was the most common (49.2%), with those describing themselves as “Christian” about the same (44.4%). Participants were drawn primarily from a convenience sample from a Church of Christ. One participant declared no religious preference, and one declared “Other”. Participants reported attending religious services predominantly on either a weekly basis ( $n = 115, 92.7\%$ ) or a monthly basis ( $n = 6, 4.8\%$ ). Table 5 reports the religious groupings of the participants.

Table 5

*Religious Groups of Subjects in Sample*

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Baptist	1	.8	.8
Catholic	1	.8	1.6
Christian	55	44.4	46.0
Church of Christ	61	49.2	95.2
Disciples of Christ	1	.8	96.0
Methodist	3	2.4	98.4
None	1	.8	99.2
Other	1	.8	100.0
Total	124	100.0	

**Hypotheses**

This section describes the hypotheses for the study, along with the statistical results. For the purposes of this study only the Global Distress Scale (GDS) on the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) was used (Snyder, 2004) to determine marital satisfaction. The range of scores on this subscale go from 30 - 70, with marital satisfaction described as “Good” for scores reported in the 30 - 50 range, “Possible Problem” with scores in the 51 - 60 range, and “Problem” with scores in the 61 - 70 range (Appendix E). Computations using this scale result in a negative or inverse score when performing statistics with the other inventories. This section will report the results and interpretation of the findings will be included in chapter 5.

Hypothesis 1: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the self-reported assessment of marital satisfaction as recorded on a Survey Questionnaire.

The Global Distress Scale (GDS) on the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised was compared with Question #9 (Q9) on the Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix C). Question #9 read, "How satisfied are you with your marriage?" and the participant responded on a 10-point Likert Scale, with 1 being *Not satisfied at all* and 10 being *Very satisfied*. When a correlation was performed between MSI-R and Question #9, the Pearson  $r = -.694$  ( $r^2 = .4816$ ), inferring that the participants' initial assessment of marital satisfaction as reported by Question #9 correlates positively with the more in-depth assessment of marital satisfaction as determined by the MSI-R (Table 6).

Table 6

*Correlations Between MSI-R and Q9*

		MSI-R	How satisfied are you with your marriage?
MSI-R	Pearson Correlation	1	-.694**
	$r^2$		.4816**
	Sig.		.000
	N		124
How satisfied are you with your marriage?	Pearson Correlation	-.694**	1
	$r^2$	.4816**	
	Sig.	.000	
	N	124	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hypothesis 2: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) and the level of faith development as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS).

Using a bivariate correlation test, the three variables produced a strong, inverse relationship between MSI-R and DSI-R ( $r = -.440$ ,  $r^2 = .1936$ ). As the MSI-R score decreases (indicating greater marital satisfaction) the DSI-R increases (indicating greater differentiation of self). This infers that a more highly differentiated person is more likely to report greater satisfaction in marriage. There is not much of any relationship for MSI-R and FDS ( $r = -.025$ ,  $r^2 = .0006$ ), inferring that marital satisfaction is not related to the

level of faith development. Similarly, there is not a strong relationship between DSI-R and FDS ( $r = .072$ ,  $r^2 = .0051$ ). Pearson  $r$  for MSI-R, DSI-R and FDS does not equal 0 (Table 7).

Table 7

*Correlations Between MSI-R, DSI-R, and FDS*

		MSI-R	DSI-R	FDS
MSI-R	Pearson Correlation	1	-.440**	-.025
	$r^2$		.1936**	.0006
	Sig.		.000	.392
	N		124	124
DSI-R	Pearson Correlation	-.440**	1	.072
	$r^2$	.1936**		.0051
	Sig.	.000		.214
	N	124		124
FDS	Pearson Correlation	-.025	.072	1
	$r^2$	.0006	.0051	
	Sig.	.392	.214	
	N	124	124	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (PAFS-Q).

Using a bivariate correlation test, the three variables demonstrated some relationship because the Pearson  $r$  does not = 0. The MSI-R and PAFS-Q are not highly correlated ( $r = -.199$ ,  $r^2 = .0396$ ), inferring that marital satisfaction and the level of differentiation are independent of each other. The DSI-R and PAFS-Q scores report higher correlation ( $r = .431$ ,  $r^2 = .1857$ ), inferring that the two measurements of differentiation of self are related (Table 8).

Table 8

*Correlations Between MSI-R, DSI-R, and PAFS-Q*

		MSI-R	DSI-R	PAFS-Q
MSI-R	Pearson Correlation	1	-.440**	-.199*
	$r^2$		.1936**	.0396*
	Sig.		.000	.013
	N		124	124
DSI-R	Pearson Correlation	-.440**	1	.431**
	$r^2$	.1936**		.1857**
	Sig.	.000		.000
	N	124		124
PAFS-Q	Pearson Correlation	-.199*	.431**	1
	$r^2$	.0396*	.1857**	
	Sig.	.013	.000	
	N	124	124	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Hypothesis 4: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised

(MSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R).

Table 9 reports the relationship between MSI-R and DSI-R, which is significant ( $r = -.440$ ,  $r^2 = .1936$ ).

Table 9  
*Correlations Between MSI-R and DSI-R*

		MSI-R	DSI-R
MSI-R	Pearson Correlation	1	-.440**
	$r^2$		.1936**
	Sig.		.000
	N		124
DSI-R	Pearson Correlation	-.440**	1
	$r^2$	.1936**	
	Sig.	.000	
	N	124	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hypothesis 5: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the level of faith development as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS).

The relationship between MSI-R and FDS is not significant ( $r = -.025$ ,  $r^2 = .0006$ ). The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

*Correlations Between MSI-R and FDS*

		MSI-R	FDS
MSI-R	Pearson Correlation	1	-.025
	$r^2$		.0006
	Sig.		.392
	N		124
FDS	Pearson Correlation	-.025	1
	$r^2$	.0006	
	Sig.	.392	
	N	124	

Hypothesis 6: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of faith development as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R).

The Pearson correlation between FDS and DSI-R shows no relationship ( $r = .072$ ,  $r^2 = .0051$ ). The results are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

*Correlations Between FDS and DSI-R*

		FDS	DSI-R
FDS	Pearson Correlation	1	.072
	$r^2$		.0051
	Sig.		.214
	N		124
DSI-R	Pearson Correlation	.072	1
	$r^2$	.0051	
	Sig.	.214	
	N	124	

Hypothesis 7: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self-Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (PAFS-Q).

The relationship between DSI-R and PAFS-Q is significant ( $r = .431$ ,  $r^2 = .1857$ ).

The results of the computation are shown in Table 12.

Table 12

*Correlations Between DSI-R and PAFS-Q*

		DSI-R	PAFS-Q
DSI-R	Pearson Correlation	1	.431**
	$r^2$		.1857**
	Sig.		.000
	N		124
PAFS-Q	Pearson Correlation	.431**	1
	$r^2$	.1857**	
	Sig.	.000	
	N	124	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hypothesis 8: There will be no statistically significant difference between the level of marital satisfaction of the husband as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the level of marital satisfaction of the wife as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R).

Using a *t*-test grouped by gender, at  $\alpha = .05$ ,  $t = -.621$ ,  $p = .535$ , which failed to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates there is not enough evidence to say they are different and are not statistically equivalent (Table 13).

Table 13

*Marital Satisfaction of Husband (n = 62) and Wife (n = 62)*

		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means		
		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.
Score on the MSI-R	Equal variances assumed	-.621	122	.535
	Equal variances not assumed	-.621	120.595	.535

Hypothesis 9: There will be no statistically significant difference between the level of faith development of the husband as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS) and the level of faith development of the wife as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS).

At  $\alpha = .05$ ,  $t = -.159$ ,  $p = .874$ , which failed to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (Table 14).

Table 14

*Level of Faith Development of Husband (n = 62) and Wife (n = 62)*

		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means		
		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.
Score on the FDS	Equal variances assumed	-.159	122	.874
	Equal variances not assumed	-.159	120.907	.874

Hypothesis 10: There will be no statistically significant difference between the level of differentiation of the husband as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) and the level of differentiation of the wife as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R).

Using an independent sample *t*-test, it was computed that at  $\alpha = .05$ ,  $t = .724$ ,  $p = .470$ , which failed to reject the null hypothesis (Table 15).

Table 15

*Level of Differentiation of Self of Husband (n = 62) and Wife (n = 62)*

		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means		
		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.
Score on the DSI-R	Equal variances assumed	.724	122	.470
	Equal variances not assumed	.724	108.889	.470

### **Additional Findings**

The study included a self-report questionnaire (Appendix C). Participants were instructed to complete this portion of the study first before continuing on to the in-depth inventories. In addition to demographic questions in the questionnaire, participants were asked to give their initial impression of several aspects of their married life: overall satisfaction with their marriage, sexual satisfaction, communication, financial, educational, religious, and faith perspectives.

Additional correlations were computed comparing many of these questions with the MSI-R, DSI-R, PAFS-Q and FDS scores. This section reports the findings from these correlational computations. The questions labeled “Q” correspond to questions in the Questionnaire (Appendix C). Discussions of the implications of each will be found in chapter 5.

1. *What is the relationship between the length of marriage (Q4) and marital satisfaction from the MSI-R?* At  $p = .283$ , the Pearson  $r = -.052$ ,  $r^2 = .0027$ , indicating

that longer lasting marriages do not necessarily ensure greater marital satisfaction (Table 16).

Table 16

*Relationship Between Length of Marriage and MSI-R*

		How long have you been married?	Score on the MSI-R
How long have you been married?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.052
	$r^2$		.0027
	Sig.		.283
	N	124	124
Score on the MSI-R	Pearson Correlation	-.052	1
	$r^2$	.0027	
	Sig.	.283	
	N	124	124

2. *What is the relationship between participants' level of education (Q8) and marital satisfaction from the MSI-R? At  $p = .012$ , the Pearson  $r = -.202$ ,  $r^2 = .0408$ , indicating that marital satisfaction is not necessarily related to the amount of education one attained (Table 17).*

Table 17

*Relationship Between Educational Level and MSI-R*

		What is the highest educational level you have attained?	Score on the MSI-R
What is the highest educational level you have attained?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.202*
	$r^2$		.0408*
	Sig.		.012
	N	124	124
Score on the MSI-R	Pearson Correlation	-.202*	1
	$r^2$	.0408*	
	Sig.	.012	
	N	124	124

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

3. *Is there a correlation between what the initial self-report of marital satisfaction (Q9) is and what is found in the MSI-R?* At  $p < .001$ , the Pearson  $r = -.694$ ,  $r^2 = .4816$ , indicating a strong correlation between what their initial assessment of marital satisfaction was and what they stated in the in-depth MSI-R (Table 18).

Table 18

*Relationship Between Self-Report of Marital Satisfaction and MSI-R*

		How satisfied are you with your marriage?	Score on the MSI-R
How satisfied are you with your marriage?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.694**
	$r^2$		.4816**
	Sig.		.000
	N	124	124
Score on the MSI-R	Pearson Correlation	-.694**	1
	$r^2$	.4816**	
	Sig.	.000	
	N	124	124

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

4. *When controlling for marital satisfaction using MSI-R, what is the relationship between the individual's initial assessment of marital satisfaction (Q9), level of sexual satisfaction (Q10) and marital satisfaction (MSI-R)?* When controlling for MSI-R, the Q9 and Q10 are related ( $p = .001$ ,  $r = .305$ ,  $r^2 = .0930$ ). This infers that couples who are more satisfied with their sexual relationship report greater marital satisfaction (Table 19).

Table 19

*Relationship Between Self-Report of Marital Satisfaction and Sexual Satisfaction when Controlling for MSI-R*

Control Variables			How satisfied are you with your marriage?	How satisfied are you with your sexual relationship?
Score on the MSI-R	How satisfied are you with your marriage?	Correlation $r^2$ Sig. $df$	1.000   0	.305 .0930 .001 121
	How satisfied are you with your sexual relationship?	Correlation $r^2$ Sig. $df$	.305 .0930 .001 121	1.000   0

5. *What is the relationship between marital satisfaction (MSI-R), the self-reported importance of faith (Q12) and the individual's self-reported marital satisfaction score (Q9)?* When controlling for MSI-R, the relationship between importance of faith and the self-report marital satisfaction score is somewhat significant ( $p = .023$ ,  $r = .206$ ,  $r^2 = .0424$ ). This infers that there is a slight but measurable significance between the couples' marital satisfaction and the extent they both report that faith is an important aspect of their personal lives (Table 20).

Table 20

*Relationship Between Self-Report of Marital Satisfaction and Importance of Faith when Controlling for MSI-R*

Control Variables			How satisfied are you with your marriage?	How important to you is your faith / spirituality / religion?
Score on the MSI-R	How satisfied are you with your marriage?	Correlation	1.000	.206
		$r^2$		.0424
		Sig.		.023
		$df$	0	121
	How important to you is your faith / spirituality / religion?	Correlation	.206	1.000
		$r^2$	.0424	
		Sig.	.023	
		$df$	121	0

6. *What is the relationship between the participant's age (Q1) and level of differentiation of self (DSI-R)?* The correlation coefficient is small ( $p = .427$ ,  $r = .017$ ,  $r^2 = .0002$ ), inferring that there is practically no relationship between age and level of differentiation (Table 21).

Table 21

*Relationship Between Age and Level of Differentiation*

		What is your age?	Score on the DSI-R
What is your age?	Pearson Correlation	1	.017
	$r^2$		.0002
	Sig.		.427
	N	124	124
Score on the DSI-R	Pearson Correlation	.017	1
	$r^2$	.0002	
	Sig.	.427	
	N	124	124

7. *What is the relationship between the participants' self-report of marital satisfaction (Q9) and level of differentiation of self (DSI-R)?* There is a slight correlation ( $p = .001$ ,  $r = .286$ ,  $r^2 = .0817$ ) between these variables (Table 22).

Table 22

*Relationship Between Self-Report of Marital Satisfaction and Level of Differentiation*

		How satisfied are you with your marriage?	Score on the DSI-R
How satisfied are you with your marriage?	Pearson Correlation	1	.286**
	$r^2$		.0817**
	Sig.		.001
	N	124	124
Score on the DSI-R	Pearson Correlation	.286**	1
	$r^2$	.0817**	
	Sig.	.001	
	N	124	124

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

8. *What is the relationship between participants' self-report of being sexually satisfied in their marriage (Q10) and their level of differentiation of self score (DSI-R)?*

The correlation is slight ( $p = .001$ ,  $r = .282$ ,  $r^2 = .0795$ ), inferring that there is not much relationship between the variables (Table 23).

Table 23

*Relationship Between Self-Report of Sexual Satisfaction and Level of Differentiation*

		How satisfied are you with your sexual relationship?	Score on the DSI-R
How satisfied are you with your sexual relationship?	Pearson Correlation	1	.282**
	$r^2$		.0795**
	Sig.		.001
	N	124	124
Score on the DSI-R	Pearson Correlation	.282**	1
	$r^2$	.0795**	
	Sig.	.001	
	N	124	124

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

9. *What is the relationship between participants' level of marital satisfaction (Global Distress Scale on the MSI-R) and their level of dissatisfaction with sexuality in their marriage (Sexual Dissatisfaction Scale on the MSI-R)?* The correlation coefficient ( $p < .001$ ,  $r = .477$ ,  $r^2 = .2275$ ) suggests a significant relationship between a distressed marriage and distressed sexual satisfaction (Table 24).

Table 24

*Relationship Between Sexual Dissatisfaction and Marital Satisfaction*

		Score on the MSI-R Sexual Dissatisfaction Scale	Score on the MSI-R Global Distress Scale
Score on the MSI-R Sexual Dissatisfaction Scale	Pearson Correlation	1	.477**
	$r^2$		.2275**
	Sig.		.000
	N	124	124
Score on the MSI-R Global Distress Scale	Pearson Correlation	.477**	1
	$r^2$	.2275**	
	Sig.	.000	
	N	124	124

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

10. *What is the relationship between participants' statement that faith is important (Q14) and level of differentiation of self (DSI-R)?* There is almost no correlation between these variables ( $p = .227$ ,  $r = .068$ ,  $r^2 = .0046$ ) (Table 25).

Table 25

*Relationship Between Importance of Faith and Level of Differentiation*

		Do you profess a spiritual faith?	Score on the DSI-R
Do you profess a spiritual faith?	Pearson Correlation	1	.068
	$r^2$		.0046
	Sig.		.227
	N	124	124
Score on the DSI-R	Pearson Correlation	.068	1
	$r^2$	.0046	
	Sig.	.227	
	N	124	124

11. *What is the relationship between participants' self-report of marital satisfaction (Q9) and if they consider being closely matched in their faith perspective with their spouse (Q13)?* The relationship is significant ( $p < .001$ ,  $r = .510$ ,  $r^2 = .2601$ ), indicating that more satisfied couples share a similar level of seeking out one's faith (Table 26).

Table 26

*Relationship Between Self-Report of Marital Satisfaction and Being Closely Matched in Spousal Faith Perspective*

		How satisfied are you with your marriage?	How closely matched are you and your mate in your faith?
How satisfied are you with your marriage?	Pearson Correlation	1	.510**
	$r^2$		.2601**
	Sig.		.000
	N	124	124
How closely matched are you and your mate in your faith?	Pearson Correlation	.510**	1
	$r^2$	.2601**	
	Sig.	.000	
	N	124	124

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

12. *Which is a better predictor of marital satisfaction: level of differentiation or level of faith development?* Regression analysis computed to predict marital satisfaction (MSI-R) with level of differentiation of self (DSI-R) and level of faith development (FDS) report that one's differentiation of self is a much better predictor of marital satisfaction than one's level of faith development. The Beta weight of DSI-R is higher than that of FDS (DSI-R = -.441, FDS = .007), and the Beta weight of DSI-R is similarly

much higher than that of PAFS-Q (DSI-R = -.435, PAFS-Q = -.012). Table 27 and Table 28 report the computations.

Table 27

*Regression to Predict Marital Satisfaction Using DSI-R and FDS*

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	73.251	5.064		14.464	.000
	Score on the DSI-R Inventory	-6.252	1.160	-.441	-5.388	.000
	Score on the Faith Development Scale Inventory	.033	.390	.007	.084	.933

a. Dependent Variable: Score on the MSI-R Global Distress Scale

Table 28

*Regression to Predict Marital Satisfaction Using DSI-R and PAFS-Q*

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	73.573	5.124		14.358	.000
	Score on the DSI-R Inventory	-6.173	1.283	-.435	-4.812	.000
	Score on the PAFS-Q	-.009	.072	-.012	-.131	.896

a. Dependent Variable: Score on the MSI-R Global Distress Scale

## Summary

A quantitative research study was conducted in the North Texas area using a convenience and snowball sampling method. There were 124 individuals (62 married couples) from a conservative Christian perspective who completed a study packet that included a demographic questionnaire, the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised, the Faith Development Scale, the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire, and the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised. The study had 10 hypotheses and produced several additional findings. The instruments were hand scored and subjected to *t*-tests, correlations, and regression analysis. Paired sample *t*-tests were computed between marital satisfaction and level of differentiation of self, level of faith development, age, length of marriage, educational level, and sexual satisfaction. Computations indicated that the best predictor of marital satisfaction is level of differentiation, and that level of faith development had little influence on marital satisfaction.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The previous chapters of this study outlined the research rationale, a review of literature on the research project, the methodology by which the researcher approached this project, and the findings from the research gathered from the inventories utilized. This chapter will provide a summary of the study, discussion of the data, and a discussion of the limitations. It will conclude by presenting recommendations for further study.

#### **Summary of the Study**

This study examined relationships among marital satisfaction, level of faith development, and level of differentiation of self. There were 124 participants who completed the following instruments: a demographic and descriptive questionnaire (Appendix C), the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (Snyder, 2004), the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (Skowron & Schmitt, 2003), the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (Bray, 2004), and the Faith Development Scale (Leak, Loucks, & Bowlin, 1999). The study tested 10 hypotheses, and additional findings were discovered as well. The sample demographic comprised a group of married couples predominantly from a Christian perspective (98.4%) and White ethnicity (94.4%) who have been married an average of 23.8 years. The average age of participants was 49.9 years. The study found that there is very little relationship between level of faith

development and marital satisfaction, and that differentiation of self is a greater predictor of marital satisfaction than level of faith development.

## **Discussion**

The study was designed to consider what, if any, relationship there might be between marital satisfaction and level of faith development and differentiation of self. In the following section there will be a discussion of the results regarding level of faith development, differentiation of self, and marital satisfaction.

### **Level of Faith Development**

According to Gallup & Lindsay (1999), approximately 95% of Americans profess some level of faith in God. With such a large percentage of Americans making this claim, it was hypothesized that this profession of faith could correlate to marital satisfaction. However, believing in God does not necessarily equate to professing a *religious* preference, or to level of *participation* within a religious institution. According to a Gallup Poll (Gallup Poll, November 10-12, 2003) about 65% of the American population claim to have membership in an organized religious organization. When considering these two statistics, it is noted that although there is a substantial number of Americans who professes belief in God, a smaller percentage takes the steps to align themselves with a particular church or religious body. To this researcher this statistic revealed a significant distinction that prompted a direction for this particular research project. Rather than look at religious activities or participation in religious organizations as an indicator for marital satisfaction, what would be revealed if the focus were on the individual's

belief in God? After all, more Americans profess faith in God than are aligned with a formal religious group. This question provided the basis for using the Faith Development Scale, which measures *level of spirituality* rather than instruments that measure *religious activity*.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there would be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) and the level of faith development as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS). Statistical analysis produced a very small relationship between level of faith development and marital satisfaction and is a poor predictor of marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5 stated there would be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-R (MSI-R) and the level of faith development as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS). The results of this study report that there is no relationship between how one describes their level of faith development when compared with their level of marital satisfaction. This was curious to the researcher, who was expecting to find that as one's level of faith increased so would the level of marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6 stated there would be no statistically significant relationship between the level of faith development as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self

Inventory-Revised (DSI-R). Again, the study reports no relationship between how one describes their level of differentiation and their level of marital satisfaction. One of the research questions guiding this study presumed that as a person matures (either in level of faith development or in level of differentiation) it would have a positive impact on the quality of marital satisfaction. This study reports that faith development has very little relationship with either marital satisfaction or differentiation of self.

The researcher considered whether the marital dyad reported having a similar level of faith development. Statistics were computed for the husband's score on the FDS and the wife's score on the FDS, and was stated as Hypothesis 9: There will be no statistically significant difference between the level of faith development of the husband as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS) and the level of faith development of the wife as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS). The independent sample *t*-test produced  $t = -.159$ ,  $p = .874$ , stating there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. There is an inference that, within the marital dyad, the husband's level of faith development appears to be at a similar level of the wife's. Clore (1997) reported women's level of faith development is generally higher than men's, but there is insufficient research to explore this level between marital partners. The finding in this study may point more to Bowen theory (1978) in regard to individuals seeking out partners of similar levels of differentiation. A healthy similarity in level of faith development may be one of many variables to overall marital satisfaction.

## Differentiation of Self

This study explored several aspects of differentiation of self in regard to marital satisfaction. Hypothesis 2 stated there would be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) and the level of faith development as measured by the Faith Development Scale (FDS). The correlation between the score on marital satisfaction and the score on differentiation of self indicates a negative correlation of  $-.440$ , indicating that as the score on marital satisfaction decreases (indicating greater satisfaction) the score on the DSI-R increases (indicating greater level of differentiation of self). Along with a Beta weight value of  $-.441$  found in multiple regressions, the findings support that an increased differentiation of self influences healthier marital satisfaction.

Correlation statistics were computed using DSI-R and participant's age (Q1), level of sexual satisfaction (Q10), and if they profess a faith (Q14). The correlation coefficients found in this study report that participants' *age* and differentiation of self ( $r = .017, r^2 = .0003$ ), *level of sexual satisfaction* and differentiation of self ( $r = .282, r^2 = .079$ ), and *profession of faith* and differentiation of self ( $r = .068, r^2 = .004$ ) do not appear to have an influence on the level of differentiation of self.

Another hypothesis tested the level of differentiation within each marriage. The husband's DSI-R score was compared through *t*-test to the wife's DSI-R score through

Hypothesis 10: There would be no statistically significant difference between the level of differentiation of the husband as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) and the level of differentiation of the wife as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R). There exists insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (at  $\alpha = .05$ ,  $t = .724$ ,  $p = .470$ ), so the  $t$ -test failed to reject the null. Bowen theory (1978) holds that individuals seek out marriage partners of someone who is at a similar level of differentiation, but there was not enough evidence to support this basic tenet of Bowen theory.

Hypothesis 3 stated there would be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (PAFS-Q). The bivariate correlation produced a .431 correlation between DSI-R and PAFS-Q, both of which measure aspects of differentiation. Even though they have this correlation, the scores between each and MSI-R are quite different (Table 8). It is inferred that the difference between the values (MSI-R and DSI-R  $r = -.440$ ,  $r^2 = .1939$ ; MSI-R and PAFS-Q  $r = -.199$ ,  $r^2 = .0396$ ) may be contributed to the DSI-R and PAFS-Q measuring different aspects of differentiation of self.

The researcher sought to determine if there is a relationship between two measures of differentiation. Hypothesis 7 stated there would be no statistically significant

relationship between the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (PAFS-Q). This study reports that with a correlation coefficient of .431 ( $r^2 = .1857$ ), there is indeed a relationship between these two instruments.

### **Marital Satisfaction**

The dependent variable throughout this study was marital satisfaction: An end result of this study was to determine what influence one's level of faith development and level of differentiation of self has on their level of marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1 stated there would be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the self-reported assessment as recorded on a Survey Questionnaire. The participants were given a Questionnaire (Appendix C), which asked them to rate on a 1-10 scale their initial impression of satisfaction in marriage (Q9). This was then probed in more depth through the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised, which produced a score on the Global Distress Scale. This scale indicates the level of distress in marriage, with a lower score indicating greater satisfaction. The null hypothesis was rejected when comparing means.

When placing the scores within categories it produces an interesting result. The MSI-R scoring sheet has a continuum between 30 and 70 where the scores may be placed. Additionally, the MSI-R shades three realms along this continuum: scores less

than 50 are shaded *Good*, scores between 51 and 60 are shaded *Possible Problem* and scores greater than 61 are shaded *Problem* (see Appendix E). The mean score on the GDS (mean = 47.306) falls within the range of *Good*. Additionally, the mean score on Q9 scores high in the 1-10 scale of 1 = *Not satisfied at all* and 10 = *Very satisfied* (Q9 mean = 8.99). Both of these scores place the couples' assessment of *Good* and *Very satisfied*. Given these results, it infers that their initial assessment of how satisfied they are in their marriage is similar to what is determined in the in-depth inventory.

Hypothesis 4 stated there would be no statistically significant relationship between the level of marital satisfaction as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) and the level of differentiation as measured by the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R). The correlation coefficient ( $r = -.440$ ,  $r^2 = .1936$ ) shows a significant relationship between one's level of differentiation of self and more satisfaction in marriage. A person's level of differentiation assists in having a positive effect in quality of marriage.

Hypothesis 8 stated there would be no statistically significant difference between the level of marital satisfaction of the husband as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-R (MSI-R) and the level of marital satisfaction of the wife as measured by the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-R (MSI-R). When testing to see if the husband's perspective of marital satisfaction is different from that of the wife's perspective, there is not enough evidence in this study to conclude the means are statistically equivalent (at  $\alpha = .05$ ,  $t = -.621$ ,  $p = .535$ ).

There were other additional findings in this study relating to marital satisfaction.

These are summarized in the following points:

- *How long a couple has been married does not relate with greater marital satisfaction.* The mean for this study was 23.8 years married, with a range of 1-59 years. When comparing marital satisfaction with length of marriage (Q4) the correlation coefficient is small ( $r = -.052$ ,  $r^2 = .0027$ ,  $p = .283$ ), inferring that one can have a level of marital satisfaction that is independent of how long they've been married.

- *Educational level does not ensure greater marital satisfaction.* Approximately three-fourths of the participants in this study (74.2%) have acquired a 4-year college degree, and they report a very slight correlation with marital satisfaction ( $r = -.202$ ,  $r^2 = .0408$ ,  $p = .012$ ).

- *There is a correlation between level of differentiation of self and marital satisfaction* ( $r = .286$ ,  $r^2 = .0817$ ,  $p = .001$ ) when testing for marital satisfaction as assessed through an “off the cuff” assessment (Q9 on the Questionnaire; Appendix C). The in-depth assessment tool of the MSI-R provided a stronger correlation ( $r = -.440$ ,  $r^2 = .1936$ ,  $p < .001$ ) with differentiation of self (Tables 9 and 18).

- *Couples who report having a similar match in their faith perspective report higher marital satisfaction.* Question 13 on the Questionnaire (Appendix C) asks “How closely matched are you and your mate in your faith?” This question hoped to encourage an overall assessment of both the direction and intensity of their partnered faith perspective. If the couple goes to church together, works in ministry together, or

otherwise manifests expressions of their faith then an assessment value would be expected to be in the upper end of the Likert scale. If, however, the one spouse perceives that there may not be common spiritual expectations than their partner's expectations, the assessment value could be expected to be in the lesser end of the Likert scale. The correlation between this assessment and marital satisfaction is strong ( $r = .510$ ,  $r^2 = .2601$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that couples that are working toward a common faith goal have greater marital satisfaction.

### **Limitations**

The following limitations of this research study are listed below:

1. The research participants were solicited through a convenience and snowball method from the researcher's home church. As such, the results may not necessarily generalize to other religious groups or to the general population. Future research can consider randomization to increase generalizability.
2. Due to the convenience sampling method of using the researcher's home church, participants may have known the researcher. This may have produced a bias in the responses from the participants.
3. Intentionality to include a wider range of churches and faith perspectives might provide additional data of correlations between level of faith development, differentiation of self, and marital satisfaction.
4. Intentionality to include a wider range of socioeconomic groups and ethnic groups would provide a greater generalizability of results.

5. This research project relied on quantitative data collection. As such, there was not a forum presented for participants to elaborate or share perspectives on the topics of faith development, marital satisfaction, or differentiation of self. The utilization of a mixed-method research design may provide rich descriptions of these topics.

6. This research study relied on inventories that may not have provided as wide a range of data. The use of other inventories may produce different results.

7. The number of inventories used in the study may have produced participant fatigue. Many packets were not returned, and several returned inventories had comments about its lengthiness. Fewer inventories or shorter ones may reduce participant fatigue.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are derived from this study:

- One of the aspects of this study focused on a particular characteristic of faith, namely level of faith development. Most research conducted in this area explored strategies of how one expresses faith through religious practices: the number of times one prays, attends a worship service, participates in a ministry opportunity, etc. While these expressions of faith can indeed express aspects of one's faith perspective, there have been fewer studies that deal with exploring the inner aspects of faith. More studies using an instrument such as the Faith Development Scale (FDS) in research may provide additional insight into a person's faith.

- Correlational studies between faith development, faith practices and variables such as level of differentiation or marital satisfaction may prove useful to therapists who work with spiritually-influenced marriage and family counseling.

- Many couples present themselves with a desire for Christian or faith-based marriage counseling. Indeed, it is common that there are insurance groups who solicit therapists specializing in Christian or faith-based therapy and religious organizations may prefer to refer couples for faith-based counseling. Future research may explore efficacy of faith-based counseling beyond what this limited study explored. If it is true that a large majority of Americans have a faith in God, that aspect should be assessed for relevance in all marriage and family therapies. A tool that can be used by marriage therapists is the insertion of a question or two on a client intake form, such as, “Is your faith an important part of therapy? If so, what are the religious affiliations of you and your spouse?” By asking this on the intake form, a therapist has an insight into where faith is in the marital dyad. If appropriate, the therapist can integrate faith-based inquiries into therapy, or refer the couple to receive spiritual counsel from someone of their particular faith perspective.

- The results of this study reflect a strong relationship between level of differentiation of self and marital satisfaction. Marriage and family therapists should consider implementing a specific course of therapy to address improving differentiation in marital therapy. Use of a tool such as the DSI-R as a standard part in the intake process may provide insight into marital distress. More highly differentiated couples may respond

differently to therapy than those less differentiated, and the information provided by a tool such as the DSI-R can assist the counselor in effectively working with the couple.

- Additional research can be conducted to further clarify Bowen theory (1978) on whether individuals seek out similarly differentiated partners. This particular study group did not produce enough evidence to confirm this premise.

- Future research should consider methods that can be more ethnically inclusive. By doing so research can be more easily generalized to the public.

- Additional research can address correlations between religiosity in practice and level of faith development.

### **Summary**

This study focused on marital satisfaction, and how one's level of differentiation of self and one's level of faith development related to quality of marriage. Using several instruments to probe these variables, it was found that one's level of differentiation of self is a greater predictor of marital satisfaction than one's level of faith development, and that faith development is not a significant factor in marital satisfaction. Bowen theory's concept that individuals seek out partners of similar level of differentiation was substantiated.

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APPENDIX A  
Announcement Flyer

## PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR A DISSERTATION PROJECT

My name is Russ Bartee, and I am a doctoral candidate in family therapy at Texas Woman's University. The topic of my dissertation is looking at aspects of what makes up healthy and satisfying marriages.

*If you are a married couple it would greatly help my research if you participate in this study.*

There are four brief inventories and a general questionnaire to be completed, which should take about 60-90 minutes. Participation is completely voluntary.

*If you know of another couple that would be interested in participating, please pass this invitation on to them.*

All the information gathered is strictly confidential. The inventory responses will be analyzed by computer and will be destroyed at the completion of the study. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that it is allowed by law.

If you have any specific questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Russ Bartee, PhD (Candidate)  
(817) 938-5825

## APPENDIX B

### Participant Instructions

# ***Thank you for participating!***

## ***Please read this before completing the inventories.***

The purpose of this research study is to explore the relationships between marital satisfaction with levels of faith development and levels of differentiation of self. Differentiation of self refers to one's ability to separate one's own intellectual and emotional functioning from that of the family. Your participation will assist in adding to the body of knowledge of factors that influence healthy marriages.

Enclosed in this packet are the following items. There are two (2) copies each, one for each of you to complete:

1. Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised
2. Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire
3. Differentiation of Self Inventory
4. Faith Development Scale
5. A general demographic questionnaire

These should take about 60-90 minutes total to complete. You may do so wherever it is most comfortable and private for you to do so. Take as many breaks as you need during the process.

*When you are finished with the assessments, please return them to the secure lockbox in the church foyer.*

Please know that nowhere on any of these documents are we asking you for your name or other identifying information. All materials will remain confidential, and will be seen only by my research supervisor and me. All materials will be destroyed after completion of the study. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law.

If you have any additional questions, please contact me at your convenience at the number below.

Again, thank you for your participation!

Russ Bartee  
(817) 938-5825

## APPENDIX C

### Demographic Questionnaire

*The return of your complete questionnaire constitutes your informed consent to act as a participant in this research.*

## Questionnaire

*Thank you in advance for filling out this questionnaire. There is no need to put your name on this form, but please keep your responses attached to your partners' responses. Only the researcher will see the responses you put on this survey; your confidentiality is of the utmost importance to the researcher.*

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Are you currently married? \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Have you been married before? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what number marriage is this for you? \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. How long have you been married? \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What is your gender? Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. What is your ethnic group?
  - a.  African American
  - b.  Asian
  - c.  Hispanic
  - d.  Native American
  - e.  White
  - f.  Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. What is your approximate annual household income?
  - a.  less than \$20,000
  - b.  \$20,001 - \$40,000
  - c.  \$40,001 - \$75,000
  - d.  \$75,001 - 120,000
  - e.  greater than \$120,001



15. How often do you attend church or religious services?

- a. \_\_\_\_ Weekly
- b. \_\_\_\_ Monthly
- c. \_\_\_\_ Several times a year
- d. \_\_\_\_ Once or twice a year
- e. \_\_\_\_ Rarely
- f. \_\_\_\_ Never
- g. \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D  
Research Instruments

The return of your complete questionnaire constitutes your informed consent to act as a participant in this research.

DSI-R

These are questions concerning your thoughts and feelings about yourself and relationships with others. Please read each statement carefully and decide how much the statement is *generally true* of you on a 1 (not at all) to 6 (very) scale. If you believe that an item does not pertain to you (e.g., you are not currently married or in a committed relationship, or one or both of your parents are deceased), please answer the item according to your best guess about what your thoughts and feelings would be in that situation. Be sure to answer every item and try to be as honest and accurate as possible in your responses.

	NOT AT ALL				VERY	
	TRUE				TRUE	
	OF ME				OF ME	
1. People have remarked that I'm overly emotional.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I have difficulty expressing my feelings to people I care for.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I often feel inhibited around my family.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I tend to remain pretty calm even under stress.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I usually need a lot of encouragement from others when starting a big job or task.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. When someone close to me disappoints me, I withdraw from him/her for a time.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. No matter what happens in my life, I know that I'll never lose my sense of who I am.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I tend to distance myself when people get too close to me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I want to live up to my parents' expectations of me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I wish that I weren't so emotional.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I usually do not change my behavior simply to please another person.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. My spouse/partner could not tolerate it if I were to express to him/her my true feelings about some things.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. When my spouse/partner criticizes me, it bothers me for days.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. At times my feelings get the best of me and I have trouble thinking clearly.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. When I am having an argument with someone, I can separate my thoughts about the issue from my feelings about the person.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I'm often uncomfortable when people get too close to me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. I feel a need for approval from virtually everyone in my life.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. At times I feel as if I'm riding an emotional roller-coaster.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. There's no point in getting upset about things I cannot change.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. I'm concerned about losing my independence in intimate relationships.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. I'm overly sensitive to criticism.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I try to live up to my parents' expectations.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. I'm fairly self-accepting.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I often feel that my spouse/partner wants too much from me.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. I often agree with others just to appease them.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. If I have had an argument with my spouse/partner, I tend to think about it all day.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. I am able to say "no" to others even when I feel pressured by them.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. When one of my relationships becomes very intense, I feel the urge to run away from it.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Arguments with my parent(s) or sibling(s) can still make me feel awful.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

30. If someone is upset with me, I can't seem to let it go easily. .... 1 2 3 4 5 6

		NOT AT ALL TRUE OF ME				VERY TRUE OF ME
31.	I'm less concerned that others approve of me than I am in doing what I think is right. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
32.	I would never consider turning to any of my family members for emotional support. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
33.	I often feel unsure when others are not around to help me make a decision. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
34.	I'm very sensitive to being hurt by others. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
35.	My self-esteem really depends on how others think of me. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
36.	When I'm with my spouse/partner, I often feel smothered. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
37.	When making decisions, I seldom worry about what others will think. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
38.	I often wonder about the kind of impression I create. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
39.	When things go wrong, talking about them usually makes it worse. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
40.	I feel things more intensely than others do. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
41.	I usually do what I believe is right regardless of what others say. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
42.	Our relationship might be better if my spouse/partner would give me the space I need. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
43.	I tend to feel pretty stable under stress. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
44.	Sometimes I feel sick after arguing with my spouse/partner. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
45.	I feel it's important to hear my parents' opinions before making decisions. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6
46.	I worry about people close to me getting sick, hurt, or upset. ....	1	2	3	4	5 6

*The return of your complete questionnaire constitutes your informed consent to act as a participant in this research.*

### **THE FAITH DEVELOPMENT SCALE**

Leak, Loucks, and Bowlin (1999)

1. A. I believe totally the teachings of my church.  
B. I find myself disagreeing with my church over numerous aspects of my faith.
2. A. I believe that my church offers a full insight into what God wants for us and how we should worship him.  
B. I believe that my church has much to offer but that other religions can also provide many religious insights.
3. A. It is very important for me to critically examine my religious beliefs and values.  
B. It is very important for me to accept the religious beliefs and values of my church.
4. A. My religious orientation comes primarily from my own efforts to analyze and understand God.  
B. My religious orientation comes primarily from the teaching of my family and church.
5. A. It does not bother me to become exposed to other religions.  
B. I don't find value in becoming exposed to other religions.
6. A. My personal religious growth has occasionally required me to come into conflict with my family or friends.  
B. My personal religious growth has not required me to come into conflict with my family or friends.
7. A. It is very important that my faith is highly compatible with or similar to the faith of my family.  
B. It isn't essential that my faith be highly compatible with the faith of my family.
8. A. The religious traditions and beliefs I grew up with are very important to me and do not need changing.  
B. The religious traditions and beliefs I grew up with have become less and less relevant to my current religious orientation.

APPENDIX E  
Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised Sample Score Sheet

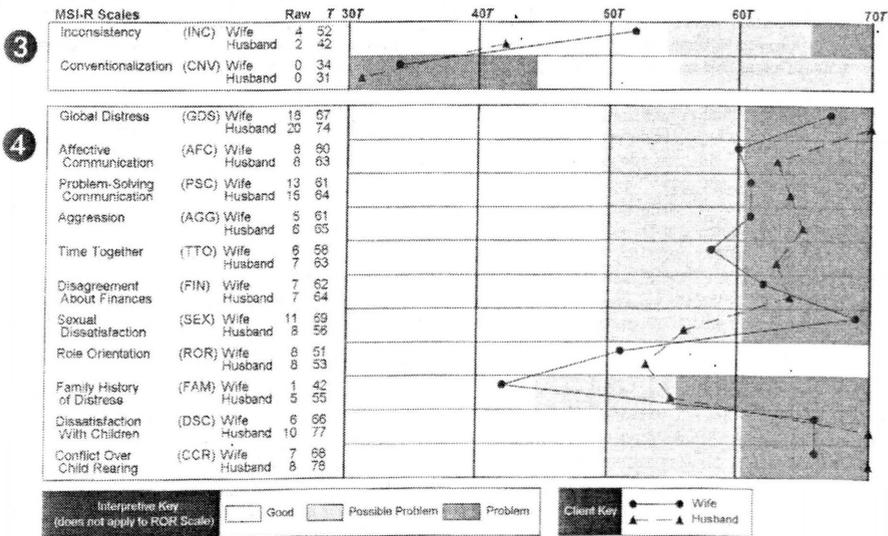
# Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised Sample Score Sheet

## Marital Satisfaction Inventory, Revised (MSI-R)

A WPS TEST REPORT by Douglas K. Snyder, Ph.D. and David Lachar, Ph.D.  
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 12031 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90025-1251  
 Version 1.113

	Wife	Husband
Administration Date:	08/03/04	08/03/04
Processing Date:	08/03/04	08/03/04
Client ID Number: <b>1</b>	00101001	00101002
Gender:	Female	Male
Age:	44 years	45 years
Education:	16 years	18 years
Length of Current Marriage:	23 years	23 years
Number of Previous Marriages:	0	0
<b>2</b> Ethnicity:	Not Entered	Not Entered
<b>2</b> Number of Children:	3	3
Age of Oldest (or Only) Child:	17 years	17 years
Age of Youngest Child:	11 years	11 years
Employed Outside the Home:	Yes	Yes
Hours Worked per Week:	50 hours	50 hours
Present Occupation:	Bus. Mgr./Lwr. Prof./Teacher	Bus. Mgr./Lwr. Prof./Teacher

This interpretive report for the MSI-R is an aid for relationship evaluation and treatment planning. The user should be familiar with the material presented in the MSI-R Manual (WPS Product No. W-328B). No evaluation or treatment decisions should be made solely on the basis of this report without confirming information from independent sources.



Western Psychological Services • 12031 Wilshire Boulevard • Los Angeles, California 90025-1251  
**WPS TEST REPORT™**

**Figure 18**  
 Sample WPS TEST REPORT™ for the MSI-R

APPENDIX F  
Permission Letters

**JAMES H. BRAY, PH.D.**  
CLINICAL AND FAMILY PSYCHOLOGIST  
3701 Kirby Drive, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Houston, Texas 77098  
(713) 798-7752 798-7789 FAX

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your request of the **Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire**. Enclosed are the materials that you requested.

You are hereby granted permission to reproduce the PAFS-Q and answer sheet for your proposed project. **You may not alter the original scales, use items from a single scale, or translate the instrument into any other language.** Be sure to reference the 1984 article or manual in any articles.

If you plan to use the PAFS-Q in your thesis or dissertation, **do not put a copy of the instrument and how to score it in your final manuscript.** Indicate that people should contact me for copies of the instrument.

We may contact you in the future to receive your feedback on the instrument. Since this is the first printing we would greatly appreciate any feedback you have on the instrument and manual.

We will keep your name on our mailing list for future updates. Thank you for your interest in our work. If you have any questions feel free to write or call me at (713) 798-7751.

Sincerely,



James H. Bray, Ph.D.

**From:** "Elizabeth Skowron" <[eas14@psu.edu](mailto:eas14@psu.edu)>  
**Date:** September 6, 2009 12:04:55 PM CDT  
**To:** "Russ Bartee" <[russbartee@gmail.com](mailto:russbartee@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** **RE: Use of DSI in dissertation**

Hi Russ,

You are welcome to use the DSI in your research for data collection.

You may reproduce the DSI in your thesis document itself...i.e., in the appendix, etc.

Best wishes with your project.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Skowron, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Counseling Psychology  
327 Cedar Bldg.  
The Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, PA 16802-3110  
email. [eas14@psu.edu](mailto:eas14@psu.edu)  
tel. 814-863-2416  
fax. 814-863-7750  
<http://familysystemslab.psu.edu/>  
[http://www.ed.psu.edu/cecprs/fac\\_bios/skowron\\_e.asp](http://www.ed.psu.edu/cecprs/fac_bios/skowron_e.asp)

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Russ Bartee [<mailto:russbartee@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 06, 2009 10:55 AM  
**To:** [eas14@psu.edu](mailto:eas14@psu.edu)  
**Subject:** Use of DSI in dissertation

Dr. Skowron,

I am preparing to complete a doctoral dissertation from Texas Woman's University. It would greatly help my research to have permission to reproduce and use the Differentiation of Self Inventory to gather data.

Thank you for your consideration.

Russ Bartee, LPC, LMFT  
1100 Airport Freeway, Suite 202  
Bedford, Texas 76022  
(817) 354-5554 Office  
(817) 354-5556 Fax

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Dear Graduate Student:

Thank you for your interest in using WPS test materials in research. See the accompanying literature for details on available components, including current prices, and note that the instrument's manual serves, in effect, as a specimen set, as it contains sample administration materials as well as comprehensive discussions of development, administration, scoring, interpretation, etc.

WPS encourages scholarly research with its instruments, and you do not require permission to use our instruments in this context, with the following stipulations:

- (1) All materials must be used ethically and for the purposes and in the manner for which they were intended.
- (2) Students generally need to purchase and use test materials under the direct supervision of a qualified professional. Consequently, please arrange for your supervising faculty member to send to WPS a letter by mail or fax on your institution's letterhead, or by e-mail through his/her institutional address indicating that s/he will supervise your use of a specifically-named test in accord with recognized, professional and ethical principles.
- (3) No reproduction, adaptation or translation of the materials may be made in any format, for any purpose, electronic or otherwise, without the prior, written permission of WPS.

Also, WPS offers discounts against the cost of WPS-published test materials needed for qualified scholarly studies. To apply, please send to my attention along with the supervision letter requested above in number 2 a brief summary of the nature of your research, including the estimated period of its completion, and a list of the estimated quantities of specific WPS test components you'll need. On approval, we'll send to you a Memorandum of Discount Authorization for 50% off the single-unit cost of computerized components, and 20% off the single-unit price of all other test components (including kits), which will request among its conditions that you share the results of your study with WPS. The discount cannot be applied retroactively, so be certain to secure one before making your purchase.

We appreciate your interest in our publications and hope for the opportunity to serve your research needs. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Susan Dunn Weinberg  
Assistant to the President  
WPS Rights and Permissions  
e-mail: [weinberg@wpspublish.com](mailto:weinberg@wpspublish.com)  
Tel: 310/478-2061, ext. 123  
Fax: 310/478-7838

SDW:se

APPENDIX G

IRB Approval Letter from Texas Woman's University



**Institutional Review Board**

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
P.O. Box 425619, Denton, TX 76204-5619  
940-898-3378 Fax 940-898-3416  
e-mail: IRB@twu.edu

October 13, 2010

Mr. Russell F. Bartee  
10724 Broken Arrow Trail  
Fort Worth, TX 76108

Dear Mr. Bartee:

Re: *Exploring the Relationship Among Marital Satisfaction, Level of Faith Development, and Differentiation of Self (Protocol #: 16263)*

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and was determined to be exempt from further review.

If applicable, agency approval letters must be submitted to the IRB upon receipt PRIOR to any data collection at that agency. Because a signed consent form is not required for exempt studies, the filing of signatures of participants with the TWU IRB is not necessary.

Any modifications to this study must be submitted for review to the IRB using the Modification Request Form. Additionally, the IRB must be notified immediately of any unanticipated incidents. If you have any questions, please contact the TWU IRB.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kathy DeOrnellas, Chair  
Institutional Review Board - Denton

cc. Dr. Larry LeFlore, Department of Family Sciences  
Dr. Glen Jennings, Department of Family Sciences  
Graduate School