

IS INTUITION AN INFLUENTIAL FACTOR IN MARITAL PARTNER SELECTION?

A QUALITATIVE STUDY

A DISSERTATION

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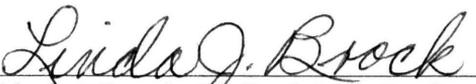
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To the Dean of the Graduate School:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Amanda Martin entitled "Is Intuition an Influential Factor in Marital Partner Selection? A Qualitative Study." 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.


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We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:







Department Chair

Accepted:



Dean of the Graduate School

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my wonderful family that has been supportive throughout my lengthy educational goals.

My parents, April and Gilbert Plunkett and David and Sarah Faulkner, for always supplying me with humorous sarcasm that made this process tolerable.

Dedicated to my husband,
John Martin, my voice of reason and loving encouragement.

Dedicated to my beloved animals.
Olive, Nixon, Julie, and Vanessa,
I never had to spend a late night alone without a support at my feet and purring by my side.

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ABSTRACT

AMANDA MARTIN

IS INTUITION AN INFLUENTIAL FACTOR IN MARITAL PARTNER SELECTION? A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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The purpose of this research was to determine whether intuition was an influential factor in a couple's experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry. The theoretical frameworks that guided this study were phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, and symbolic experiential family therapy. The research included 20 participants who completed individual face-to-face interviews that were audio taped. The participants were 10 couples (each spouse completed an individual interview) in their first marriage without children. The participants were asked four questions, and the audio taped interviews were analyzed to determine the themes.

Six themes were found: (a) similar interests; (b) similar values and beliefs; (c) personality characteristics; (d) intuition; (e) logical reasoning; and (f) relationship characteristics. Conclusions and recommendations are included to offer aid to mental health professionals and agencies working with couples and families, and to suggest future research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The concept of intuition has been studied in different fields including business management, psychology, decision making processes, and human cognitive development, but overall is highly underrepresented in research. The subjectivity of the concept has resulted in various definitions that vary significantly in similarities (Volz & von Cramon, 2006). The varying definitions contribute to the inconsistency in researching this concept since the concept is lacking a universal definition to guide empirical studies. At the present there are many differences in how intuition is defined in individual research fields and conceptualized with different meta-theoretical approaches (Volz & von Cramon). Some of the research on intuition is highly scientific and rooted in development of human cognition and neuroscience (Sadler-Smith, 2008). Other fields that have studied intuition have found intuition to be linked with psychic abilities in people (Naparstek, 1997). The differing fields and scopes of how intuition is conceptualized has resulted in this researcher questioning if the concept of intuition is scientifically valid or is more suited for the mystical realm of things unknown.

Most research on intuition across the different fields has found it to be a valuable concept and one that needs further exploration (Baylor, 2001; Charles, 2004; Daley, 2006; Hodgkinson, Langan-Fox, & Sadler-Smith, 2008; Hogarth, 2005; Keith, 1987; Mander, 2004; Naparstek, 1997; Spickler, 1983; Welling, 2005; Vaughan, 1979). Based

on previous findings, further research on the significance of intuition and its role in making decisions in relationships appears to be a necessary area to explore.

There are a variety of definitions of intuition and some fields view intuition as a process which involves stages (Baylor, 2001). Other fields have given specific names to intuition that are used in certain areas like clinical intuition for its use by therapists in psychotherapy (Daley, 2006; Hogarth, 2002). The researcher for this proposed study has reviewed several of the most commonly used definitions of intuition and developed a definition of intuition specific for this study (Hodgkinson et al., 2008). The definition incorporates the most commonly used descriptions and assumptions of intuition to help clarify the understanding of the concept and is rooted in previously used definitions of intuition in relevant research. Intuition is defined as an immediate, unconscious analysis that is holistic in nature and experienced in four areas of awareness in the human senses, including physical bodily sensations, emotional feelings that enter into the consciousness without logical steps, mental internal images, and spiritual symbolic experiences (Baylor, 1997; Bowers, Regehr, Balthazard, & Parker, 1990; Charles, 2004; Dane & Pratt, 2007; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986; Jung, 1921; Keith, 1987; Koestler, 1964; Miller & Ireland, 2005; Polany, 1964; Reber, 1989; Robinson & Davidson, 1999; Rowan, 1986; Sadler-Smith, 2008; Segalowitz, 2007; Shirley & Langan-Fox, 1996; Smolensky, 1988; Vaughan, 1979; Westcott, 1968).

Currently there is a lack of research on the emotional process and experience of how people select their partners for marriage. The majority of research on marriage has

been based on attraction, familiarity, and how people meet (Napier, 2000). There has yet to be any existing research exploring the role of intuition specifically in partner selection for marital relationships. The term marital relationship refers to marriage. This study defined marriage as a legally and emotionally binding commitment between a man and a woman who live as husband and wife in the same household. Therefore this study only sought to explore the decision making process involved with heterosexual married couples. A recent study found evidence that rational and intuitive cognitive styles play a similar role in mate selection and decisions on career paths (Shiloh & Shenhav-Sheffer, 2004). The study's findings suggested that intuition can influence a person's decision making process on picking a partner to date, but did not use a sample of participants who were married. Thus existing research appeared to support further exploration of the significance of intuition. This study attempts to offer additional information on the depths of intuition and its use by people in intimate relationships at an important phase in life.

Marriage has been a tradition that is practiced across many cultures and has been viewed as an important transition in a person's life (Napier, 2000). The rate of marriage has varied over the years, but it continues to be a tradition that most individuals participate in at least once in a lifetime. Texas showed an increase in marriages in 2006 that totaled 178,115, which was an increase from 2005 (Texas Department of State Health Services, 2008). The US Census Bureau (2004) found that only 4.3% of people had never been married by the age of 60 years of age. The majority of American citizens will be married at least once within their lifetimes, thus exploration of how a person

decides to marry a particular person would help provide useful information for many fields that work with human relationships (US Census Bureau, 2004). If intuition were involved in the decision making process of marital mate selection, it would provide additional information on the different areas of human experiences where intuition has been utilized.

Intuition has been considered to be part of the decision making process that is immediate and without analysis, stemming from the unconscious (Hodgkinson et al., 2008). There have been different theories on the development of intuition, but most assume that intuition plays a key role in decision making (Hodgkinson et al., 2008). Intuition has been found to be involved with judgments of risk-taking (Reyna & Farley, 2006). In addition, intuition has been considered one aspect in a combination of processes in decision making between conscious and unconscious realms (Lubell et al., 2008). The conscious and unconscious realms are interconnected between three different levels: institutional level, psychological level, and neural level (Lubell et al., 2008). Therefore, intuition has been best conceptualized when acknowledged within its process of working in tandem with the systems involved with decision making.

Intuition has been found to be a helpful tool in the workplace (Jeffery, 2008). It has been considered a valuable tool for counselors and therapists in psychotherapy. It is known as clinical intuition and is defined as

Speedy, unconscious knowing of information about a client, used to form hypotheses about a client without rational, logical means of what sort of

treatments will work with a client, and/or used to determine a new course of action with a client if feeling stuck (Daley, 2006, p. 91).

Clinical intuition has been found to be a useful tool in many ways in therapy, including being a catalyst in change for the client, and works in conjunction with the therapeutic relationship (Hathaway, 1956; Jeffery, 2008; Keith, 1987; Welling, 2005). Intuition has been found to be useful in other areas of work by people in leadership roles or management (Sadler-Smith, 2008). This further suggests that intuition plays a vital role in how people make choices and interact in relationships.

Statement of the Problem

There has been a lack of research on intuition in many areas of human functioning and behavior, despite the existing research providing some evidence and speculation that intuition has played an important role in the decision making process in different areas of daily life (Daley, 2006; Jeffery, 2008; Hamm, 2008). Currently there has been one study that explored intuition and rational cognitive styles involved with decision making in the areas of mate-selection in relationships (Shiloh & Shenhav-Sheffer, 2004). That study provided a stepping stone for this study's exploration of the role of intuition in marital partner selection. Based on existing research, further study of intuition in many areas would help provide needed information on the significance of intuition in decision making across all areas of human behavior.

Intuition has been considered to be an unconscious process that arises immediately and without reasoning during human experiences (Sadler-Smith, 2008).

Therefore, a study in the field of neuroscience found that intuitive judgments were emotionally driven (Volz & von Cramon, 2006). Intuition has been assumed to be a right brain function and the recent studies on intuition in the neuroscience field have provided additional information to support this assumption (Keith, 1987; Volz & von Cramon, 2006). Emotional expression has been found to be an important factor in marital satisfaction and marital quality (Waldinger, Schulz, Hauser, Allen, & Crowell, 2004). Another study found that cohabitating partners did not have similar personality traits, but held realistic perceptions of each other (Nordvik, 1996). These findings suggest that intuition plays an important role in human relationships with decision making and emotional expression. Therefore this study explored what role, if any, intuition may play in how people decide to marry or not marry.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research was to determine whether intuition was an influential factor in a couple's experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry. Due to the limited information on intuition and its significance in relationships, this study explored each partner's experience of the process to select each other to marry. Since marriage is a common practice and a legal union, further information on the decision making process that people experience in selecting a partner to marry would offer vital information to potentially help prevent or reduce the divorce rate (US Census Bureau, 2004). Additional information on peoples' experiences in the process of deciding to marry could provide valuable information to premarital counseling and counseling treatment methods.

Theoretical Framework

Phenomenological Approach

This study used a phenomenological approach as a theoretical lens for how the data are collected and analyzed. A phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to explore and gather information on the phenomenon of intuition and the essence of the experience (Creswell, 2007). The phenomenological approach focuses on understanding experiences and how people assign meaning to the experiences (Daly, 2007).

Phenomenology has roots in philosophy and epistemology and seeks to link peoples' experiences both subjectively and objectively in their conscious awareness (Daly). The phenomenological approach is interested in peoples' conscious awareness of reality of everyday life known as natural attitude (Daly). "Natural attitude is the everyday mode of consciousness that is characterized by the belief in an existent system of meaning in the world" (Daly, 2007, p. 95). The US Census Bureau (2004) reported that over 90% of Americans marry at least once in their life. Therefore a phenomenological approach is a good fit for a study exploring each spouse's experiences in choosing to marry.

The phenomenological approach is used with interviews and observations to study common phenomena among the participants. The focus of the phenomenological approach is to gather direct, rich descriptions of the experience (Daly, 2007). This study used audio-taped interviews to gather information on each participant's experience in selecting a partner and choosing to marry. The data collected were analyzed for significant statements, meaning units, textural and structural descriptions of the

phenomena (Creswell, 2007). The researcher was the one to transcribe and analyze the data for significant statements, meaning units, textural and structural descriptions of the phenomena of the experience. This study viewed intuition as the common phenomenon that was explored in the interviews.

There are two types of phenomenological approaches, hermeneutical and psychological (Creswell, 2007). Hermeneutical phenomenology focuses on studying the experiences and interpretations of the “texts” by the researcher (van Manen, 1990). Psychological phenomenology places less emphasis on the interpretations and analyzes the data by seeking similarities in direct statements (Moustakas, 1994). This study used the psychological phenomenological approach to analyze the data. The main goal of the phenomenological approach is to gain direct descriptions without explanation to capture the essence of the experience (Daly, 2007). The phenomenological approach fit well with the scope and methodology of this study. The phenomenological approach goal of gathering descriptions of subjective and objective experiences provides a theoretical bridge to include the two additional theories (symbolic interactionism and symbolic experiential family therapy) this study used.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism is a theory that seeks to explain family functioning and social networks in how humans learn through interactions and symbols (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). Therefore, humans learn and communicate through symbols that are created and/or modified through constant interactive experiences with humans and the

environment (LaRossa & Reitzes). Symbolic Interactionism was developed in 1937 and has several leading contributors to the theory's origin that include John Dewey, Charles Cooley, George Herbert Mead, William Thomas, and Herbert Blumer (LaRossa & Reitzes). The theory emphasizes the importance of the social construction of reality and has three themes with seven core assumptions. Blumer (1969) defined three themes for this theory as the following (a) humans respond to the environment or situation based on the meanings and constructed meanings, (b) interaction among humans creates and teaches meanings, and (c) interactions bring about the interpretive process of meaning and meaning making that is in a constant state of play with continued interactions. The core themes are further explained by the concepts the theory outlines to relate the human experience from the micro-level to the macro-level of social functioning.

Symbolic Interactionism has four major concepts: identities, roles, interactions, and contexts (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). Identities represent the self-made meanings in a given role of a person and are organized hierarchically by salience (LaRossa & Reitzes). Therefore, the more an identity is used, the more prominent it becomes in a person's view of their self concept that motivates their behaviors. Identities are evaluated when a person views self in the terms of conformity, interactions, morals, and personality, including self esteem (LaRossa & Reitzes).

Roles are defined as shared norms of a given society given to people in social situations and social positions (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). Roles provide information on the expectations in given social interactions and social positions (LaRossa & Reitzes).

Roles are broken down into informal and formal roles (LaRossa & Reitzes). Formal roles refer to organizations, societies, groups or families, while informal roles refer to interpersonal situations that are more hidden in the context of the interaction between a few people without others having common knowledge of the meaning (LaRossa & Reitzes). People learn roles through the process of role taking and role making. Roles are able to change throughout the socialization process and can be flexible when a person modifies the role to fit his/her personality (LaRossa & Reitzes).

Interactions are verbal and nonverbal communication that happens between humans and between humans and the environment (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). Humans are assumed to learn through interactions and create meaning based on these experiences (Hewitt, 2000). Symbols play a key role in the interaction process and some teach meaning without a person having to experience the symbol first hand (Hewitt). Natural symbols are considered private and are learned only through experience, while conventional symbols are public and do not have to be experienced to understand the meaning (Hewitt). An example of a natural symbol is each person's experience of love and how they define it. Wedding rings are an example of a conventional symbol that communicates a meaning to others without having been to be married to know what they symbolize.

The final concept is context and it is considered to be the result of the interaction (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). Context is a concept that helps evaluate actions and shows how culture and behaviors shape each other (LaRossa & Reitzes). There is a negotiation

process that occurs in this concept that allows the person to interpret and integrate the meanings learned in the interaction (LaRossa & Reitzes). The process includes the person being able to link the experience to self and society for meanings and social norms. This process is circular and continuous with constant modifications to actions and societal beliefs (LaRossa & Reitzes).

Symbolic Interactionism provides a helpful theoretical framework to explain the process of human interactions and meaning-making communication. Marriage and the act of “falling in love” are an example of conventional and natural symbols for the American society. Symbolic Interactionism does provide a foundation for social construction and family development in addition to being widely used in the family studies field.

Symbolic Experiential Family Therapy

Symbolic experiential family therapy theory is a growth oriented approach that views pathology as a cry for help in getting unstuck in the growth process (Whitaker, 1989). Carl Whitaker is considered the founding father of this model, but the theory has had many contributors and is believed to evolve with contributions that each therapist brings to it with practicing it (Connell, Mitten, & Bumberry, 1999). After Whitaker’s death in 1995, this theory has not been as widely researched; therefore many of the references are older. The theory is often called atheoretical, but it does have an infrastructure (Connell et al., 1999). The theory outlines four stages of therapy that families transition through in the course of treatment that include: battle for structure, battle for initiative, trial of labor, and termination (Connell et al., 1999). The stages are

not linear in nature and it is common for families to experience them in different orders or reoccurring at different times in treatment (Connell et al., 1999).

The symbolic experiential family therapy theory assumes that all people are capable of growth and actively seek it, pathology is a symptom of growth, and all people are capable of making decisions, although many decisions are rooted in the family of origin (Malone, Whitaker, Warkentin, & Felder, 1961). Therefore, the goals of family therapy are to promote personal growth, depathologize the identified patient, increase spontaneity and creativity, and improve the ability to tolerate a wide range of emotions, including anxiety (Malone et al., 1961). The goals are for the clients and for the therapist. It is assumed that the therapist grows with each experience in therapy and builds intuitive ability.

Symbolic experiential family therapy theory has five assumptions of marriage that include: (a) marriage is a third entity, (b) marriage is greater than its parts alone, (c) people choose partners with the same or similar values and beliefs, (d) marriage is both legally and emotionally binding, and (e) marriages grow and seek to resolve predictable and unpredictable impasses throughout life (Whitaker, Greenberg, & Greenberg, 1979). These assumptions provide a framework for the concept of marriage and assume that partners select each other based on present and previous experiences which have shaped their personal characteristics. Based on these assumptions it is possible that intuition may play a role in selecting a partner for marriage.

The symbolic experiential family therapy theory has several concepts that are often used for interventions that include symbols and symbolic language, intuition, craziness, confusion, spontaneity, fantasy, and play (Connell et al., 1999). These concepts are used throughout the course of treatment and each represents a different method to communicate. Many of the concepts are examples of both natural symbolism and conventional symbolism that allows different levels of communication to occur (Hewitt, 2000). Therefore, this theoretical framework fits well with symbolic interactionism in the methods of how families, couples, and individual people communicate.

Symbolic experiential family therapy theory is one of the few theories that values the concept of intuition and includes it as a pivotal skill that is necessary for a therapist to enhance for treatment to be productive (Keith, 1987). Intuition is considered valuable for all persons to utilize in the decision-making process and is not limited to being useful in psychotherapy (Naparstek, 1997). Naparstek assumes that everyone has intuition, but some people are more aware of it than others. These theoretical approaches provided a theoretical framework for how the researcher gathered and analyzed the data in determining if intuition was present in the deciding-making process of choosing to marry.

Definitions

Atheoretical: A descriptive term for a model without strict guidelines and assumptions for methods of treatment.

Battle for Initiative: A stage in the therapeutic process where the responsibility of the sessions shifts to the family.

Battle for Structure: A stage in therapy, usually in the beginning, where the therapist actively interviews the family and sets the rules for the sessions.

Clinical intuition: An unconscious process in which the therapist/counselor determines the course of treatment with a client without rational reasoning as to being drawn to this thought process.

Craziness: A concept that is non sequitur, illogical, and paradoxical communication that can be used as an intervention in therapy.

Confusion: A concept used to disrupt existing patterns and create an environment where reactions and experiences cannot be premeditated, but are present focused.

Conventional symbol: A symbol that communicates meaning without a person having to experience it to understand what it means.

Fantasy: A concept that allows people to communicate symbolically and explore meanings without being constrained by perceptions of reality.

Formal role: A role that refers to larger groups or societies.

Identity: A self image of a person in the differing roles they hold in their life.

Informal role: A role that refers to individual experiences and the meanings are not known to the general public.

Infrastructure: The underlying framework of a family or system.

Interaction: A concept of how people communicate verbally and nonverbally to learn about their environment.

Intervention: A therapeutic tool used to initiate change in a system.

Intuition: An immediate, unconscious analysis that is holistic in nature and experienced in four areas of awareness in the human senses including physical bodily sensations, emotional feelings that enter into the consciousness without logical steps, mental internal images, and spiritual symbolic experiences.

Marriage: A legally and emotionally binding commitment between a man and a woman who live as husband and wife in the same household.

Natural symbol: A symbol that communicates meaning that people must experience on their own.

Phenomenology: A qualitative research approach that studies common phenomena by gathering information through interviews and observations.

Spontaneity: A concept that is experienced in the unconsciousness that allows quick natural impulses to be expressed.

Symbol: The most basic form of learning and expressing personal impulses.

Symbolic-Experiential Family Therapy: A theory that is present and growth oriented with emphasis on symbols and experiences in therapeutic treatment.

Symbolic interactionism: A theory that focuses on explaining the socialization of families through communication using symbols and interactions.

Trial of Labor: A stage in the therapeutic process where the underlying pain of the family is exposed and discussed.

Unconscious: A cognitive process that the person lacks awareness of, but can influence a person's reactions and behaviors.

Research Questions

There is limited research available on intuition and its role in partner selection. This research study provided information on married couples' experiences in choosing their partner by conducting separate individual interviews. The study provided additional helpful information to research literature in the area of intuition and partner selection. The research questions attempted to reveal the thought process of each partner in the decision to marry and if intuition played a role in the decision making process.

Research Question 1. What experiences help people decide to marry?

Research Question 2. Does intuition play a role in the decision to marry?

Assumptions

This study assumed that:

1. The experience of selecting a marital partner will be different for each person and couple.
2. The experience of intuition will be different for each person and couple.
3. The importance placed on the role of intuition will vary based on each person's and couple's individual experience.
4. The understanding of intuition may vary due to the subjective nature of the concept for each person and couple.
5. Intuition does play some role in the decision making process of selecting a marital partner.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study were:

1. Couples must be at least 18 years of age.
2. Only heterosexual couples were interviewed in this study.
3. Couples must be legally married for duration of 3 months or more.
4. Couples do not have children in the present relationship or from previous relationships.
5. Participation was voluntary.
6. The participant sample was recruited from the Dallas/Fort Worth areas and other regions of Texas.
7. Both spouses must complete individual separate interviews for the data to be included in the data analysis.

Researcher as Person

The person behind the question in qualitative research studies is the researcher. Therefore, it is important for the researcher to provide any self disclosures that could sway any interpretations of the data (Creswell, 2007). Therefore the following information is provided on the researcher to allow the reader to understand the biographical information, purpose for conducting the study, and knowledge of intuition.

I am a doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University in the Family Therapy program. I have been married for two years and I am a practicing Licensed Professional Counselor and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist-Associate. Currently I have a

fulltime private practice that offers outpatient therapeutic services. I have been providing counseling services since 2006 and have experience working with outpatient and inpatient therapeutic centers. At the present, I provide individual, couple, and family therapy.

The treatment theory I use is Symbolic Experiential Family Therapy and it provides a theoretical framework for conceptualizing the course of treatment. This theory places emphasis on the concept of intuition and views it as a valued concept in personal decision making and treatment interventions. Therefore, there is a personal interest in the concept of intuition and its use in the therapeutic treatment. This has led to the current interest in the role of intuition in various aspects of human life and decision making.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to determine whether intuition is an influential factor in a couple's experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry. The practice of marriage is a common experience and is included as an important stage in life in many life course theories. At the present, there has been limited research on intuition and none that has explored the possibility of intuition being involved in marital partner selection.

This research study provided information on married spouses' experiences in choosing their partner to marry in separate individual interviews. The findings from this study provide additional information on intuition and its role in the decision making process for marital partner selection. The findings offer new insight into the experience of

intuition in meaningful relationships and give information in a present gap in existing research.

The research questions, assumptions and delimitations have been outlined to offer clarity on the scope of the sample of participants that were sought and add trustworthiness to the findings of the research. This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach with symbolic interactionism and symbolic experiential family therapy as the theoretical framework for collecting and analyzing the data.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the relevant literature about intuition and its role in the decision making process. Although there is no present research on the role of intuition in the decision making process of choosing a partner to marry, there is research that provided evidence that this study's query was valid and a necessary extension of the existing research. The literature reviewed in this chapter includes research from the fields of psychology, cognitive decision making, and neuroscience.

Marriage is a practice that most people choose to experience at least once in their life time (US Census Bureau, 2004). The experience of getting married is considered to be an important symbolic ritual in life that most people experience (Napier, 2000). Texas alone reported 178,115 marriages in the year 2006, a 0.8% increase from 2005 (Texas Department of Health Services, 2008). The Texas Department of Health Services reported that there were 79,469 divorces in 2006, a 1% increase from 2005. Therefore, the decision to marry continues to be a common experience within the American culture and there are several professions that would benefit understanding the decision-making process in more detail.

The professions that provide services for people getting married and/or divorced would benefit from additional information on the process of how a person decides to marry a partner. The information may help create prevention programs for divorce or

educational services to help people gain more insight into the decision-making process. Although marriage is a tradition that is practiced across many cultures, this study focused on married couples living in Texas since this is where the study took place. The results are compared to studies reviewed in this chapter in Chapter V.

The literature reviewed in this chapter provided evidence that intuition plays a significant role in the decision making process in different areas of peoples' lives. Therefore, this study explored the role of intuition in the specific area of selecting a partner and deciding to marry. Intuition continues to have a variety of definitions with some being similar and others not having much in common. The researcher reviewed the most common definitions of intuition and composed a definition for this study that has the most common components of the reviewed definitions. This study defines intuition as an immediate, unconscious analysis that is holistic in nature and experienced in four areas of awareness in the human senses, including physical bodily sensations, emotional feelings that enter into the consciousness without logical steps, mental internal images, and spiritual symbolic experiences (Baylor, 1997; Bowers, Regehr, Balthazard, & Parker, 1990; Charles, 2004; Dane & Pratt, 2007; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986; Jung, 1921; Keith, 1987; Koestler, 1964; Miller & Ireland, 2005; Polany, 1964; Reber, 1989; Robinson & Davidson, 1999; Rowan, 1986; Sadler-Smith, 2008; Segalowitz, 2007; Shirley & Langan-Fox, 1996; Smolensky, 1988; Vaughan, 1979; Westcott, 1968). Although intuition has not been widely researched in the area of partner selection, there has been some relevant research on it in some related areas.

Intuition in Relationships

In 2004 a study examined the role of intuitive judgments in predicting marital satisfaction (Waldinger, Schulz, Hauser, Allen, & Crowell, 2004). This longitudinal quantitative study included 47 couples to explore expressed emotions for three marital outcomes that included reported marital quality, marital satisfaction, and marital stability. The couples participated in two 10-minute discussions on marital conflict in a laboratory, and then were asked to identify the areas of importance for them in the relationship. Then the discussions were coded by undergraduate college students for emotions identified in each partner during the discussion. In addition to the laboratory discussions, the participants completed the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and Social Adjustment Scale. The results showed a positive correlation between expressed emotions in marital interactions and self-reported marital satisfaction, assessments of marital quality, and marital dissolution. The interviewers' ratings of poorer marital adjustment were positively correlated with men's expression of hostility and women's expression of distress. The expression of empathy, affection and warmth were predictive of the marriage lasting longer than if these emotional expressions were absent. The findings suggested that intuitive judgments of emotional expression are predictive of marital satisfaction, quality, and stability.

Intuition has been assumed to play a role in the decision-making process of picking a career and one study assumed that mate-selection decisions followed a similar procedure (Shiloh & Shenhav-Sheffer, 2004). A person's ability to be decisive has been

found to have healthier functioning levels than a person that is indecisive (Shiloh & Shenhav-Sheffer). Therefore, Shiloh and Shenhav-Sheffer conducted a study to explore the relationship between rational and intuitive cognitive styles in mate-selection decisions. The study included 210 volunteers (161 female and 49 male) who were Israeli Jews and ranged in age from 19 to 43 years. All the participants identified self as being single and indecisive about mate selection. This quantitative study included two questionnaires (mate-selection decision-difficulties questionnaires and rational-experiential inventory) that were administered in random order on the same day. The findings showed that intuition had a positive correlation with three areas of difficulties (lack of motivation, dysfunctional myths, and internal conflicts). Rational cognitive style was found negatively correlated with decision difficulties. Therefore, the findings suggested that people with strong intuitive cognitive styles may be better at avoiding decision difficulties, while people with strong rational cognitive styles may be better at coping with the difficulties when the events occur. The findings provided some evidence that different cognitive styles play a role in mate-selection in a similar way to the decision-making process of choosing a career.

In addition to intuition being studied in its role in the different areas of decision making, it has been explored in personality traits in relationships (Cohen, 1992; Gray, 1949; Nordvik, 1996). Although limited, there are a couple of studies discussed on the correlation of personality traits in married partners (Gray; Nordvik). Intuition has been classified as a personality trait in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and has been used to

explore the similarities and differences between married partners (Myers & Pepper, 1977). Therefore, the next two studies reviewed addressed the current findings on personality traits in each married partner.

A foundational study on psychological types in married people is discussed to provide clarification on how personality traits affect marriage (Gray, 1949). This study used a mixed methods approach and included 271 couples. The sample of participants were 31% single people, 59% married, 5% divorced, 3% remarried, 2% widowed, and 0.3% widowed and remarried. Single and divorced people were more commonly found to be the intuitive type. All the participants took the personality questionnaire. Out of the 271 couples, there were: (a) 15% that had 3 complementary powers, but no like powers, (b) 32% with 2 complementary powers and 1 like power, (c) 14% with 1 complementary power and 2 like powers, and (d) 15% with all three powers alike. Therefore, the majority of couples had complementary traits, but not identical. These results suggest that people are attracted by complementary traits and not the same traits. This gives some credibility to the idea that opposites attract one another.

A more recent study explored couple personality traits both real and perceived by using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Nordvik, 1996). The study included 90 heterosexual couples and had each take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator twice (one for self and one for the belief of the partner). The results showed no difference between the males' reports on either the self report or partner report measures, although there were differences found between the females' self reports and partner reports in the Sensing-

Intuition and Judgment-Perception. This finding suggested that the females had a more realistic perception of their partners. The findings did suggest that there may be a difference in the reported scores that affect the sex roles in the relationships, but it does not appear that partner selection was based on similarity or dissimilarity. This study suggested that partners are selected based on attributes such as intelligence or interests and that personality similarities or dissimilarities among couples is random.

One study explored the question of what makes a good marriage (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1996). This study included a sample of 50 married couples that participated in one individual and one conjoint interview to discuss what made their marriages good. The participants had to be married at least 9 or more years and have one or more children. Not all the marriages were the first marriage and couples were interviewed by the researchers and five experienced clinicians. The couples participated in a follow-up interview by telephone two years after the interviews were conducted. The results showed that couples mentioned the following as important factors in what contributes to a good marriage: liking each other, respect, pleasure and comfort in each other's company, love, trust, safety, and feeling cared for (Wallerstein & Blakeslee). The findings included mentioning of some personality characteristics of the spouses (honesty, generosity, loyalty, fairness, and compassion) and moral qualities that were valued in the marriage (Wallerstein & Blakeslee). The study identified four types of marriages: romantic marriage, rescue marriage, compassionate marriage, and traditional marriage. The romantic marriage had a core that was based around the couples' passion and sexual

intimacy, while the rescue marriage was focused on the healing process the partners' experienced in the marriage (Wallerstein & Blakeslee). The compassionate marriage had a foundation in friendship and equality among partners, while the traditional marriage had more clearly defined roles for the spouses where the wife takes care of the home and the husband is responsible for working and finances (Wallerstein & Blakeslee). All the different types of marriages studied were found to be satisfying to the couples. The study did find that many participants sought partners that they were not only attracted to, but had a deeper connection with that they felt fit with them psychologically (Wallerstein & Blakeslee). The connection was assumed to be a conscious and unconscious process for the couples. Although intuition was not mentioned specifically, this study did provide recent information about characteristics identified in good marriages and how couples came together.

Personality and traits have been explored in a few studies, but there continue to be mixed reported results on the significance in partner selection (Cohen, 1992; Gray, 1949; Nordvik, 1996). Although some have assumed that there is an unconscious need that occurs in the partner selection (Gray), it continues to be debated as a personality trait of attraction due to the conflicting results in different studies (Cohen; Nordvik). Therefore, further research on intuition and partner selection is necessary to determine its role in the decision making process and other potential factors in selecting a marital partner. The use of intuition in psychotherapy has been another area that has been explored and offers further evidence that intuition plays a vital role in relationships.

Clinical Intuition

Clinical intuition refers to the use of intuition in psychotherapy. Most commonly the word intuition is informally defined as a “gut feeling” or “hunch” and intuition is believed to be rooted in the unconscious of a person (Hodgkinson, Langan-Fox, & Sadler-Smith, 2008). Belleruth Naparstek (1997) defined intuition “as an internal feeling that brings an awareness of knowledge through our sensory channels about someone or something” (p. 20). In her book she presents intuition as a sixth sense that she utilizes in therapy and addresses ways to strengthen intuitive forces within one’s mind.

One article defined intuition as an informal and unconscious process that brings information to our conscious awareness immediately (Keith, 1987). Keith assumed that intuition bridges the gaps in the processing of logic in the mind and enables awareness to deeper meanings in relationships. Keith is a practicing psychiatrist and professor who uses symbolic experiential family therapy theory as a treatment model for his clients. A few authors and researchers have suggested that it is imperative that therapists’ develop self awareness of their intuition to be successful in therapy with clients (Keith; Boylin & Briggie, 1987; Kaye, Dichter, Keith, 1986). The authors (Keith; Boylin & Briggie; Kaye, Dichter, Keith) utilized a family systems approach to treatment methods and found that the therapist’s use of intuition created an effective agent of change in the therapeutic process.

A recent study explored meaning making and the use of clinical intuition in treatment of clients (Daley, 2006). The study used a constructivist grounded theory

qualitative methodology to explore the research questions. The findings showed a specific definition for clinical intuition:

Speedy, unconscious knowing of information about a client, used to form hypotheses about a client without rational, logical means of what sort of treatments will work with a client, and/or used to determine a new course of action with a client if feeling stuck. (Daley, 2006, p. 91)

The study found that clinical intuition was viewed as a sense of awareness of the counselor-client relationship, but was reportedly experienced differently by the researcher, therapist, and participants. Communicating the intuitive process with the client was found to be a helpful agent of change in the treatment. Therefore, the use of clinical intuition was found to be a useful skill for therapists to develop and a helpful intervention for treatment. The research implicated that counseling programs need to incorporate intuition development as part of the training (Daley, 2006).

Another study specifically targeted family therapists to explore the possible use and believed usefulness of intuition (Jeffery, 2008). This study examined family therapists' views of the use of intuition in therapy (Jeffrey). Jeffrey used a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore intuition in family therapy, intuition in the counseling relationship, spirituality and intuition, training intuition, and reluctance in using intuition in therapy. The study found an identified connection between intuitive experiences, spiritual beliefs, and practices in therapy. Supervision and mentoring were found to be the main methods used for therapists to develop intuitive skills. The results

found supervisors reluctant to use and train intuition in the field of family therapy. The results suggest intuition is useful in the counseling relationship, and further exploration is needed to determine if it would be beneficial to implement it into training programs.

Charles (2004) studied intuition in psychotherapy using a qualitative approach. She conducted a focus group including only experienced counselors (five years or more of counseling experience) to gauge the value of intuition. The focus group included five females and two males. The researcher included self reports on her reactions to the focus groups and personal experience. The results showed reactions to intuition were both positive and negative. The positive reactions suggested that intuition was highly valued and transcendent. The negative reactions included reports of intuition being scary, out of reach, not easily recognized, denigrated, and inexplicable. The value placed on intuition in counseling was found to be related to the intuitive type of the therapist and to subjective experiences. There were not enough data to confirm a significant role for intuition in counseling, but it does appear the counselors' openness to the concept of intuition led to it being reported as valuable.

Another study explored the influence of counseling interns' psychological type on their choice of counseling theoretical orientation (Varlami & Bayne, 2007). This mixed methods study included 210 participating master's level counseling students from four universities in London. The study used two questionnaires identified as the Keirsey Temperament Sorter II (KTSII) and a short questionnaire for demographic information and open-ended questions on theoretical orientation selection. The study found that there

was a positive correlation between trainee counselor personalities and choice of theoretical orientation. The participants who had introversion as an identified personality trait positively correlated with choosing a person-centered theoretical orientation approach to counseling. Another positive relationship was found up between personality traits of sensing and judging for the choice of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Psychodynamic orientation was most strongly related to intuition, intuition and extraversion, and intuition, feeling, and judging. The results support the position that personality traits are correlated with decision-making processes in approaching treatment orientation in counseling, but only three theories were identified in this study by participants. Therefore, continued research needs to be conducted in this area to include additional theoretical orientations.

In addition to personality, intuition has been linked to a cognitive process when a person makes a decision (Welling, 2005). Welling studied the intuitive process and outlined a five phase model a person goes through when using intuition. The findings support the five phase model while comparing it to cases studied in psychotherapy from previous research. This article refers to the first phase as Detection Phase. The detection phase involves a feeling of being drawn to something that is occurring in the present without logical reasoning why. The second phase is Dichotomic Awareness Phase and it occurs when the intuition is experienced and brought to conscious awareness. Related Object Phase comes next and involves a conscious connection between the intuition and the present object and/or experience. Fourth is the Metaphorical Solution Phase that is the

recognition of the importance of the intuition to the present situation. Finally the fifth phase is Explicit Verbal Understanding Phase in which the intuition is understood with clarity and more entirety than in any other phase. This outline of phases offers a specific process of how intuition begins as an unconscious urge and is processed into conscious awareness.

Based on the reviewed literature, there is some support for intuition being a valuable tool in psychotherapy. In addition there is evidence provided that intuition plays a key role in trusting relationships and decision-making choices for communication patterns in interactions. There has been some research on the role of intuition in the fields of neuroscience and human cognition.

Neuroscience and Human Cognition

Intuition has been researched in a variety of fields, but neuroscience and human cognition development seem to offer the most relevant research in the area of this study (Baylor, 2001; Hodgkinson et al., 2008; Sadler-Smith, 2008; Volz & von Cramon, 2006). Vaughan (1979) believes that intuition plays a vital role in interpersonal relationships and problem solving. Vaughan's book, *Awakening Intuition*, focused on explaining intuition and provided exercises to help the reader enhance intuitive abilities. There are several books on ways to enhance intuition that is intended to help people improve their ability to build a holistic decision making process that uses both intuitive and rational processing (Charles, 2004; Naparstek, 1997; Vaughan). Intuition is an indispensable process in decision making and is most effective when collaboratively working with rational

processing (Sadler-Smith). The current research in the field of neuroscience continues to be complimentary of the research results of the human cognition process (Baylor; Hodgkinson et al.; Sadler-Smith; Volz & von Cramon).

A recent article examined intuition in an attempt to unify its use in affect and cognition (Hodgkinson et al., 2008). This article provided an extensive literature review of the varying theories on intuition and showed that interest in the concept of intuition has been growing over the past decade. The concept of intuition has been shown to have more scientific validity and has been inquired about in the following areas: education, personal relationships, medicine, organizational decision making and employee recruitment, and organizational training and development (Hodgkinson et al.). The article emphasized the importance of clear distinctions between intuition and insight. Intuition is believed to be an antecedent of creativity, and occurs before insight (Hodgkinson et al.). Finally, intuitive judgment is connected to tacit knowledge, implicit learning, recognition of patterns, and building expertise (Hodgkinson et al.). Therefore, intuition appears to be interwoven throughout different levels of making decisions and judgments.

A u-shaped model for intuition development was devised based on evidence from conducting an extensive literature review (Baylor, 2001). Baylor assumed that as people develop expertise in a specific area, then they begin using mature intuition. The model separated intuition into two categories, immature intuition and mature intuition. Intuition is believed to integrate immediacy, reason and sensing relationships (Baylor). This occurs in both immature and mature intuition, but they differ in the level of experience in a

specific area. Therefore, immature intuition is believed to be used the majority of the time by a novice, but then decreases as a person gains experience. Once a significant level of experience has been gained, a person is able to integrate experience and intuition together, forming mature intuition (Baylor). Based on this model of intuition development, it may be possible that intuition may develop in a similar way when dating and choosing to marry a partner.

Another study explored intuition within the field of neuroscience in an effort to gain more information. Volz and Yves von Cramon (2006) studied the differences between intuitive and insight processes using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). The study included fifteen participants who participated in stimuli, task, and experimental sessions towards object conditions (commonly known object pictures) and non-object conditions (meaningless pictures). The participants were monitored using a 3-T scanner to show the areas of the brain that were activated during the tests. This study found that the median orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) appears to reflect the intuitive processes in making judgments (Volz & von Cramon). The ventral occipito-temporal gyrus/fusiform gyrus (VOT) was activated more when participants were responding to known objects, thereby suggesting it plays a stronger role in analytic or insight processes (Volz & von Cramon). The results of the imaging and testing suggested many different areas of the brain being activated while making decisions, thus requiring further studies to be conducted to support these results. However, the results do suggest that different

areas of the brain are more dominantly used in making judgments from intuition or insight.

Although there is little research on intuition in the fields of neuroscience, there does appear to be significant evidence to support further studies on the concept in the future. Overall the current research suggests that many processes are at work simultaneously when a person makes a decision. There has been evidence that intuition and analytical processing work in tandem and are most accurate when working collaboratively (Hogarth, 2005; Sadler-Smith, 2008). Although most studies and theories assume that intuition is innate to human functioning and processing, the level of function of intuitive processes can vary among humans (Naparstek, 1997; Sadler-Smith; Vaughan, 1979). Therefore, some people tend to be more intuitive than others, but it has been found that people may enhance their intuition through exercises (Naparstek; Spickler, 1983; Vaughan). This suggests that although people may differ in their natural levels of intuition, it is possible that they have been exposed to experiences that provide opportunities to enhance intuitive processing. These assumptions continue to support the idea that a person has experiences dating that help provide additional knowledge on making the decision on selecting a partner for marriage.

Summary

The current research on intuition provides adequate evidence that intuition plays a significant role in relationships and the decision-making process. Although there continue to be many gaps in the current research about intuition, it does appear that it is a

worthwhile concept to research further. This qualitative study has provided an extension of knowledge on intuition in a new area of marital partner selection. Due to the number of Americans who choose to marry and divorce every year, additional information on the human decision making process involved in choosing a partner to marry could be invaluable to many fields that work with married and/or divorcing couples. This study has provided information about intuition that has yet to be studied and will help with filling in some of the gap in the existing research on intuition.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Intuition is a concept that has been researched in many different areas over the past several decades. Current research has neglected to investigate the possibility of intuition having a role in the decision making process of people choosing to marry their partner. The purpose of this research was to determine whether intuition was an influential factor in a couple's experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry. This study used a qualitative methodology to collect and analyze the data obtained in the interviews of the participating couples. A phenomenological perspective was utilized with the qualitative methodology to aid in data analysis and viewing intuition as a phenomenon. This chapter describes the study's methodology of research design, participants, sample selection, data collection, and data analysis procedures.

Research Design

A qualitative research methodology was used in this study in conjunction with a phenomenological perspective to collect and analyze data. The phenomenological perspective is a common approach used within the qualitative methodology. Qualitative research methodology tends to include a theoretical lens of how to view the inquiry, seeks to gain knowledge about the meanings people or groups of people ascribe to a problem, and uses the researcher as the instrument for the data collection (Creswell,

2007). The phenomenological perspective incorporates all the qualitative characteristics and offers further focus on the phenomena being studied to help guide the research.

Although there are different types of phenomenological approaches, this study used the psychological phenomenological approach. Psychological phenomenological approach places emphasis on finding similarities between the direct statements from the participants and less focus on the researcher's interpretations (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, this approach will help group the participants' meanings into the themes found, rather than having them interpreted and relabeled into themes. The psychological phenomenological qualitative methodology fit well with the two other theories that complete the lens for this study.

Theoretical Framework

This study incorporates two theories, Symbolic Interactionism and Symbolic Experiential Family Therapy, to complete the theoretical lens and help guide the research inquiry. Symbolic Interactionism is a theory that conceptualizes how families develop and societies are constructed. It places emphasis on communication and communication through symbols. Blumer (1969) is considered the founder of the theory and identified three main themes to the theory as: (a) humans communicate with the environment or interaction based on the meanings and constructed meanings, (b) interactions create and teach meanings, and (c) interactions result in interpretive process of meaning and meaning making that is constantly in motion. The theory's focus on communication and

meaning making will be complementary to the phenomenological qualitative methodology chosen for this study.

The second theory used for this study's theoretical lens is Symbolic Experiential Family Therapy. Symbolic Experiential Family Therapy is a theory that is a treatment theory used to guide family therapy and interventions. This theory has been a useful addition to the theoretical lens for this study because it complements the theory Symbolic Interactionism and it has specific assumptions about marriage and intuition that further validate the purpose of this study.

The Symbolic Experiential Family Therapy theory was founded by Carl Whitaker and is considered a growth oriented approach to family therapy. Whitaker was an advocate for the use of symbolic experiential family therapy and since his death in 1995 there has been little published about this theory. Therefore, many of the original publications are used to describe this theory. The theory has five assumptions of marriage: (a) marriage is a third entity, (b) marriage is greater than its parts alone, (c) people choose partners with same or similar values and beliefs, (d) marriage is both legally and emotionally binding, and (e) marriages grow and seek to resolve predictable and unpredictable impasses throughout life (Whitaker, Greenberg, & Greenberg, 1979). In addition to the assumptions about marriage, this theory includes intuition in the concepts and interventions. Intuition is defined in this theory as "an informal, unconscious process for crossing logical gaps" (Keith, 1987, p. 13). Intuition was believed to help therapists appreciate the complexity and depth of relationships. The

other concepts and interventions build on or enhance the intuitive ability. Therefore, the symbolic communication, metaphors, confusion, and fantasy all include the role of intuition in the therapy to be meaningful to the process.

Symbolic Interactionism and Symbolic Experiential Family Therapy are two theories that complement each other. Symbolic Interactionism explains how families develop and become social constructions while Symbolic Experiential Family Therapy deals with the uniqueness of each family's symbolic communication and interaction. Therefore, the combination of the two theories offers a better understanding of family of origin, marriage, and society. In addition, the concept of intuition has been included in the theoretical concepts and its importance is linked across several communication patterns and decision making processes in relationships. These two theories provided a theoretical lens that guides the research questions and data analysis. The psychological phenomenological qualitative research design complements the use of the two theories for a theoretical lens in the design of this study.

Data Collection

This study used semi-structured separate individual interviews with each spouse of the participating couples. The standard method for data collection using a phenomenological approach is to conduct interviews with participants who have experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The researcher was the person to conduct the face-to-face individual interviews with participating couples in this study. The interviews focused on collecting the personal stories of each person's experience in

choosing to get married and personal meanings ascribed to this process. All the interviews were audio-taped and conducted in a private setting that was chosen by the participants.

Research Questions

This study began with an inquiry into the role of intuition in the decision-making process of choosing to marry a partner or not. It is common for most people to date more than one partner before making the decision to get married. This study attempted to explore the experiences that led up to couples deciding to marry each other and not someone else. There are two related research questions presented that helped guide the interview questions.

Research Question 1. What experiences help people decide to marry?

Research Question 2. Does intuition play a role in the decision to marry?

Interview Questions

The interview questions were asked by following an interview protocol (Appendix E). Each participant was asked the questions in the same order with prompts at the end of each question to encourage more depth to his or her answer if clarification was needed and to provide ample time to answer the question in its entirety. The participant questions were:

Interview Question 1. Tell me about your experience of dating and marrying your spouse.

Interview Question 2. How did you decide to marry this person?

Interview Question 3. What role, if any, has intuition played in your selection of this person for a marital commitment?

Interview Question 4. What other roles has intuition played, if any, in you choosing your spouse throughout the dating process?

Participants

Participants who were recruited were currently legally married and did not have any children. The participants had to be 18 years of age or older and be in a heterosexual marriage. The participating couples completed separate individual face-to-face interviews and had to have been married at least 3 months or more. The sample included 10 couples that resulted in 20 completed interviews. Daly (2007) has found that theoretical saturation tends to occur with 20 to 25 interviews for qualitative research. Therefore this study was able to obtain enough participants to meet adequate saturation.

Saturation is the point where the categories developed from the data become recurrent without additional information adding to the understanding of the categories or suggesting additional categories be developed (Creswell, 2007). The psychological phenomenological approach in this study focused on identifying direct statements and seeking a saturation point for the categories established for the direct statements. This method helped emphasize the richness of the data collected from the interviews. The couples were recruited from several different regions of Texas.

Sampling Procedures

The sampling method for this study was purposeful and voluntary. Purposeful sampling is commonly used with qualitative research and was used in this study since it was aimed at exploring the experience of the phenomenon intuition. Since the inclusion criteria for participation had specific requirements, the purposeful sampling method was the best fit for this study.

Participants were recruited through several different means of advertisement. The recruitment flyers (Appendix A) were placed in the following areas: university campuses, public bulletin boards, family doctor clinics, hair salons, therapist offices, and churches. Proper consent for posting the recruitment flyers was received by each venue prior to putting up the flyers. Snowball sampling techniques was included if participants knew of others who may be interested in participating in the study (Creswell, 2007).

Protection of Human Participants

The Institutional Review Board reviewed this study prior to conducting the research to ensure that ethical guidelines for participant protection were maintained. Daly (2007) summarizes ethical guidelines into two main concepts of confidentiality and anonymity. The protection of participant identity and the researcher accepting responsibility for making sure that participant rights are protected were the most important process for this study.

Consent forms (Appendix C) provided an explanation of the purpose of the research, procedures, potential risks, potential benefits, participant's rights, and

guidelines of confidentiality. The consent forms were reviewed completely before beginning the interviews. The participants were given a copy of the signed consent forms and contact information for the researcher and research advisor. The participants were notified of their rights to contact the researcher or research advisor at any time during or after the interview. The participants were notified of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time and without questions by the researcher (Creswell, 2007). The participants were notified that participation in the study is voluntary and that there is no penalty if they wish to terminate their participation.

In addition, the researcher ensured confidentiality for participants by using a participant coded filing system. Therefore, no names will be found on the demographic form (Appendix E) or used in the transcribed interviews. The researcher used the letters H or W to show if the husband or wife is responding to the question and each couple was given a code number. The researcher kept all the audio taped interviews, transcriptions, demographic forms, and field notes in a secure area behind two locks. The consent forms were kept in a separate locked area in the researcher's office to further protect confidentiality of participants from being identified or connected to the transcriptions. The consent forms were sent to the IRB upon completion of the study. All other confidential information will be shredded within two years of the study being completed.

Interview Procedures

The individual audio recorded interviews for this study were conducted face-to-face with each participating spouse and the researcher. The interviews were semi-

structured in the format of how the research was explained and order of the questions that were presented. The semi-structured format with open-ended questions allowed the participant to offer as much information as he or she felt was necessary.

Phenomenological studies include “meanings” questions that tend to have a central focus and common area of experience (Morse, 1994). The central focus of this study was the possible use of intuition in the decision making process of choosing to marry a partner.

Since the researcher was the tool in qualitative research to gather the information, it was imperative for the researcher to be objective and interested in collecting the stories of the participants without interjecting personal viewpoints into the data. The researcher maintained a friendly and professional demeanor in all interactions with the participants throughout the process of the study. Self presentation was an important part that helped the participants feel comfortable with sharing their stories and develop trust with the researcher.

The researcher used a recruitment process script (Appendix B) with the initial phone contact with each participant to explain the study and inclusion criteria. The researcher met with each participating spouse separately at an agreed-upon site at the agreed appointment time. The researcher reviewed the purpose of the study along with the potential risks and benefits. The researcher reviewed the consent form (Appendix C) with each participant and discussed his or her rights to confidentiality and right to end participation at any time during the interview without penalty. The participants’ were

given a copy of the signed consent form and a referral list. The researcher offered the participants' time to ask any questions before beginning the interview.

The researcher used the interview protocol (Appendix D) to discuss the information specific to the study. Then the researcher offered to answer any further questions prior to giving a final notice that the interview was officially starting with turning on the audio recorder. The first interview question was, "Tell me about your experience of dating and marrying your spouse." The participant was given adequate time to respond to the questions. The researcher used verbal and nonverbal prompts to gather ample information from the participant on each question. The researcher sat quietly and made notes on any observed nonverbal behaviors while the participant was answering the questions. After the interview questions were answered, the researcher asked the participant to complete a demographic form (Appendix E) that was kept with the audio tapes and any notes made by the researcher during the interview. The participant was thanked for his or her participation at the end of the interview.

Pilot Study

This study used a brief pilot study of the clarity and relevance of the interview questions with the first three participants in the study. Pilot testing allowed the researcher to gather feedback from the participants on their experience with the interview questions and interview process (Creswell, 2007). This allowed the researcher to refine the questions or interview process to better accommodate the participants and aid in gathering the most accurate information (Creswell). Two of the three participants in the

pilot study reported feeling questions three and four were similar. The researcher used additional prompts for question four to help clarify the difference to the remaining participants. The inclusion of a pilot study for this study helped enhance credibility of the study (Creswell).

Treatment of Data

The demographic forms and transcripts were coded with an H or W and a number to replace the participants' names to ensure confidentiality. The researcher referred to the participants by their code in the transcripts and all names were deleted. In addition, any other identifying information, such as other names or places, was deleted from the transcripts to conceal any other identifying information to the participants' identity. The demographic forms and audio tapes do not have any names on them other than the codes. The audio tapes were transcribed by the researcher to a hard paper copy and kept with the demographic forms and field notes. Documents and were kept in the researcher's locked office in a locked filing cabinet, except the signed consent forms and master code list. The consent forms and master code list were kept in a separate locked cabinet in the researcher's office. All data, transcripts, demographic forms, master code list, tapes, and notes will be shredded within two years after completion of the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

Once the data were collected and the interviews were transcribed, the researcher analyzed the transcripts by using a common analysis procedure for phenomenological qualitative research. This study used the following steps to analyze the data: reviewed the

interview as a whole, reviewed the interview as text, first order thematic, second order thematic, reviewed by co-researcher, and overall synthesis of researcher and co-researcher findings (Morrissette, 1999). Each one of the steps helped organize the data into themes that showed the similarities and differences between the different participants' interviews.

In the first stage of data analysis the researcher attempted to use an objective lens to review each audio tape as a whole (Creswell, 2007; Morrissette, 1999). This allowed the researcher to become familiar with the data and each participant's tone of voice and metaphors used in the interview in conjunction with reviewing the field notes. The next stage of interview as text included the researcher transcribing the interviews. Then the researcher read each interview transcript several times and highlighted metaphors, key words, and meaningful statements (Morrissette). This allowed for themes to emerge in each transcript.

The next step was first order thematic which included organizing the highlighted data and paraphrasing each statement (Morrissette, 1999). Then the researcher began grouping the paraphrased statements into similar groups (Morrissette). These paraphrased meanings included the context of the experience described by the participants. The emerging themes help describe the "how" of the experience reported by the participants (Morrissette). The paraphrased meanings included the reported influences that may have contributed to the choices and experience of the phenomenon. Therefore,

this included any experiences the participants report that may have contributed or influenced their decision to get married or select the partner they chose to marry.

The second order thematic stage came next in which the researcher began clustering the themes found and labeling them (Morrissette, 1999). This includes comparing the co-researcher's themes found. In this study the researcher had an experienced research colleague conduct a peer review of the findings. The comparison of findings of the researcher and research colleague's peer review is the stage of overall synthesis of co-researcher protocols (Morrissette). The final comparison gave clarification of the themes that were going to be reported and statements to be used to describe the themes.

The researcher provided a detailed description of each step of the data analysis. This included the process of selecting similarities and exact statements from the data. In addition the researcher included any field notes that contribute to the themes and understanding of the "what" and "how" of the experiences the themes represent in the next chapter. Finally, the themes were analyzed for their usefulness in providing further information to the fields of family therapy and counseling that provide services for couples.

Researcher as Person

In qualitative research the researcher is the tool to collect and analyze the data. The researcher's objectivity to the subject is a key component to ensuring that the findings are credible and without the researcher's biased interpretations. Qualitative

research requires the researcher to provide personal history and any other self disclosures that may influence the interpretation of the data in any way (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, the researcher discusses her personal history, interests in the study, and knowledge of intuition and marriage.

I am a Licensed Professional Counselor and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist-Associate who currently has a private practice in Denton, Texas. I have been providing outpatient and inpatient counseling services for the past four years to individuals, families, and couples. In addition to being self employed fulltime, I am a doctoral student at Texas Woman's University in the Family Therapy program. I received my Master of Science in Family Therapy from Texas Woman's University and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of North Texas.

My training and personality have led me to select the treatment theory Symbolic Experiential. This theory is a growth oriented theory that emphasizes the personhood of the therapist as the leading catalyst for change. In addition, one of the most valued tools a therapist can use is his/her intuition. Therefore, I have studied how to enhance intuition and do value it in my treatment methods for counseling others. I do value the concept and use of intuition. This is a bias I am aware of: I must bracket my beliefs about intuition during the research process.

In addition, I am currently married and have been for the past two years. In reviewing my experiences with dating and choosing partners, I do feel that intuition played a role in choosing my husband. I am aware that other aspects were very important

in my experience of choosing to get married, including personal maturity, previous failed relationships, and timing. My experiences have made me curious about other peoples' stories and whether they used intuition in the process of selecting a partner and deciding to marry.

Credibility

A key component in any research is the incorporation of ways to check the credibility of the findings. Credibility is the accuracy of the results being a representation of the participants' experiences and meanings (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research has several different validation strategies, and this study utilized three of the strategies: rich thick descriptions, peer review, and voluntary participant review of transcription (Creswell). The use of rich thick description provides extensive detail on the participants and areas being studied to allow the potential readers to make decisions on the accuracy of the study's findings. The researcher had a colleague familiar with research methods conduct a peer review of the study to further ensure the validity and reliability of the methods and findings. The peer review concurred with the themes the researcher found from the data. Finally, the researcher used the strategy to review accuracy of transcriptions by asking participants to volunteer to review his/her transcription. Eight of the twenty participants volunteered to read over their transcripts in this study. None of the participants that volunteered to read over their transcripts notified the researcher of any changes that needed to be made to transcripts. These methods helped improve the credibility and overall validity of the study.

Ethical Considerations

There are many different ethical considerations that need to be considered throughout the different stages of conducting research. One consideration that a researcher must ask self is if there are any underlying moral assumptions or agendas for the purpose of conducting the study (Creswell, 2007). The scope of this study was not designed to address any morality issues regarding the current research questions.

Another area of ethical consideration is the researcher's underlying political agendas or assumptions that may influence the study's findings (Creswell, 2007). Although this study has inclusion criteria that require legally married couples, the criteria were established to help find a more homogeneous sample of participants. Therefore, the study was seeking to understand the decision to get married to a specific partner over previous relationships and not to aid with any current political agendas.

Finally, there is an ethical consideration to specify if the research will reflect a diverse group of voices (Creswell, 2007). This helps in determining if the results can be generalized to larger groups or not. This study included some strict inclusion criteria that may limit the generalizability of the findings to some ethnic and cultural groups. This study only included a sample of participants who have been married three months or more years and are without children. The researcher provided clear and detailed information about the sample to help clarify the participants' experiences and population they may represent.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to determine whether intuition was an influential factor in a couple's experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry. This study used a phenomenological qualitative research approach. The study included 10 married couples who participated in separate, semi-structured, audio-taped interviews. The phenomenological approach helped capture the essence of the phenomena of intuition in the marital partner selection process. The study included the theories of Symbolic Interactionism and Symbolic Experiential Family Therapy as the theoretical lens for the study.

The participants were recruited from four different regions of Texas from recruitment flyers and snowball sampling recruitment. The study sought to get 15 couples to participate in separate interviews, but was able to get 20 completed interviews (10 couples) where saturation was met. The first three participants that completed the process served as a pilot study to determine the clarity of the questions and comfort of the interview process. Credibility of the study was established by using rich thick descriptions, peer review, and participants' volunteer to review their transcripts. The data were analyzed by using a phenomenological approach that included: interview as a whole, interview as text, first order thematic, second order thematic, individual co-researcher, and overall synthesis of co-researcher protocols. The researcher upheld confidentiality and participant rights by following the rules of the Institutional Review Board of Texas Woman's University.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this research study was to determine whether intuition was an influential factor in a couple's experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry. This chapter presents the results of this qualitative study and description of the sample of participants. A pilot study was conducted using the first three participants to determine if the interview questions were clear and the interview process was comfortable. There were a total of 20 interviews with 10 couples participating. Confidentiality was paramount and the participants' identity was protected by using a coding system for the interviews and demographic forms. All the interviews were audio taped and the researcher transcribed all the interviews verbatim. Finally the data were analyzed by the researcher and a peer review was conducted to establish credibility of the themes found and presented in this chapter.

Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of 20 participants (10 women and 10 men) who completed individual interviews. Participants were married and both spouses had to complete the interview for data to be included in the study, which resulted in 10 couples participating in the study. The participants were heterosexual and legally married. All the participants were in their first marriage and did not have any children. The participants ranged in age from 24 to 56 years of age with 55% in the age range 20 to 30 years of age, 25% in the

age range 31 to 40 years of age, 10% in the age range 41 to 50 years of age, and 10% in the age range 51 to 60 years of age. Participants resided in different regions of Texas with 50% residing in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex area. Six participants resided in the Houston metroplex. Two participants resided in the Austin metroplex, and two participants in the Corpus Christi area.

Ten of the participants were women and ten were men. Seventeen of the participants reported their race to be Caucasian, one reported Native-American, one reported being Hispanic, and one reported being Caucasian/Native-American/Asian-American. The gender, age, and ethnicity of participants are reported in Table 1. In addition education level and religious affiliation are reported in Table 1. The participants varied in their reports of religious affiliation and education level. Although the majority of participants reported a religious affiliation (70%), there were various responses that are reported in Table 1. All the participants reported have a high school education or equivalent with the majority (55%) reported having a Bachelor's degree, one participant reported having an Associate's degree, one reported having some college, five reported having a Master's degree, and two reported having a Doctoral degree. Five of the participants reported currently working on graduate/post graduate degrees.

Most of the participants reported occupations (85%) in a variety of fields, while three participants reported being full time students. Two of the participants that reported being full time students reported working part time. The occupations and household

incomes are listed in Table 2. The household incomes reported varied, but the majority (65%) reported an income above \$80,000.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 20)

Variable	Frequency	%
Gender		
Males	10	50
Females	10	50
Age		
20 – 30	11	55
31 – 40	5	25
41 – 50	2	10
51 – 60	2	10
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	17	85
Native-American	1	5
Hispanic	1	5
Multiracial	1	5
Highest Level of Education Completed		
Some College	1	5
Associate’s Degree	1	5
Bachelor’s Degree	11	55
Master’s Degree	5	25
Doctoral Degree	5	25

Table 1 (continued)

Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 20)

Variable	Frequency	%
Religious Affiliation		
Jewish	2	10
Catholic	4	20
Christian	4	20
Methodist	1	5
Protestant	3	15
None	2	10
Atheist	1	5
Agnostic	1	5
Believer	1	5
“Complicated”	1	5

Table 2

Occupation and Household Income of Participants (N = 20)

Variable	Frequency	%
Occupation		
Professor	2	10
Adjunct Professor/Family Therapist	1	5
Software Developer	1	5
Teacher	1	5
Nurse	2	10
Broadcasting	1	5
Designer/Architect	1	5
Marketing	1	5
Manager	2	10
Academic Advisor	1	5
Student	3	15
Firefighter	1	5
Clerk	1	5
Kennel Technician	1	5
Criminal Investigator	1	5
Household Income		
Below \$20,000	3	15
\$20,000 – 39,000	2	10
\$40,000 – 59,000	1	5
\$60,000 – 79,000	1	5
\$80,000 – 100,000	5	25
More than \$100,000	8	40

Table 3

Length of Marriage (N = 20)

Variable	Frequency	%
Length of Marriage		
5 months	2	10
1 year	4	20
3 years	4	20
4 years	4	20
6 years	2	10
21 years	2	10
31 years	2	10

The participants' length of marriage ranged from 5 months to 31 years with the majority (70%) being married less than 5 years. Birth order was a question on the demographic form and all participants reported having siblings and one reported being a twin. The length of marriage statistics are reported in Table 3. Although it was not asked specifically how participants met, thirteen included the information in their interviews. Seven participants reported meeting in college, three reported meeting in grade school, and three participants reported meeting through friends.

Findings

The purpose of this research study was to determine whether intuition was an influential factor in a couple's experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry.

The research was guided by two research questions listed below.

1. What experiences help people decide to marry?
2. Does intuition play a role in the decision to marry?

Each participant interviewed individually and was asked the following four interview questions.

1. Tell me about your experience of dating and marrying your spouse.
2. How did you decide to marry this person?
3. What role, if any, has intuition played in your selection of this person for a marital commitment?
4. What other roles has intuition played, if any, in you choosing your spouse throughout the dating process?

The researcher allowed each participant to speak in their own way and as long as they felt necessary. The researcher asked some clarifying questions and offered some prompts to make sure the participants were finished answering and to allow additional clarification between question three and question four. The pilot study was conducted with the first three participants and two of the three participants reported question three and question four sounding very similar. All three participants reported the interview process was comfortable. The researcher added additional prompts to clarify the difference between question three and question four after receiving the feedback from the pilot study. After the researcher transcribed the interviews, the researcher was able to analyze the data and various significant statements that were then grouped based on

similarity. The researcher grouped the categories found into themes and had a peer who had experience analyzing qualitative data to review the findings. The peer reviewer was given all the transcripts, interview analysis steps, and themes found by the researcher to allow her to review the process and themes found for accuracy. The peer review resulted in agreement with the themes found by the researcher. The researcher found six themes: (a) similar interests; (b) similar values and beliefs; (c) personality characteristics; (d) intuition; (e) logical reasoning; and (f) relationship characteristics. Each of the themes are described and illustrated by participant quotations in the following section. A between-person analysis that shows which themes each participant endorsed is shown in Table 4.

Similar Interests

Many of the participants (50%) said that having similar interests with their spouses contributed to choosing them to date and to marry. The reports of having things in common helped form the connection between the partners and offered a starting point for relating to each other. A few participants went into detail about what specifically they had in common that was important to them, while most simply mentioned that having things in common contributed to them continuing to date and feel they belonged together.

... we have similar interests and stuff. But I think that, -- that we're lucky in that regard because I do know like my parents have been married for years, and they are very different. And um, but we've been talking about how lucky we are that um, we happen to fall in love but are, also have a lot of similar interests. (W7)

And so I was interested and so I went over there one night to her house and uh, just to kind of hang out with her and our mutual friend. And uh -- yeah we were talking and found that, I think we found that we had similar interests. Then she had a really good sense of humor and I really enjoyed spending time with her.

(H9)

Um, we just hit it off really well, we had a lot in common, we both love sports, we both love basketball specifically, just like, as you can see looking around you plus with what I do, but um, we just you know complete each other's sentences and just got along real well. (H3)

And one of the biggest deals was I'm a sports freak and he, you know, talk -- does sports, that's what his life is and so, um, it was kind of just meant to be, so. (W3)

There were five women and five men participants who had significant statements that identified the theme of similar interests as contributing to choosing their spouse. There were three couples in which both spouses identified similar interests as a contributing factor in the between-couple analysis.

Similar Values and Beliefs

Many participants spoke of having similar values and beliefs (65%) in their interviews. Similar values and beliefs included participants mentioning things in common regarding religious beliefs, family values, personal ideals, and lifestyle values. Several

participants reported that the similar values and beliefs indicated to them that this was the right person for them to marry.

I just remember our first date and uh, just you know, she had a dog and uh, you know, we were the same religion, and you know, where we lived there were no Jewish people, and you know, the way she said, “Oh yeah, you know of course I’m really Jewish” and I was like looking at her and like, “Oh my God I’m Jewish” it was just like -- that was like a confirmation that I think we belonged together. (H10)

I mean we share a lot of the same kind of worldly views, um you know, our religious values too, I think are pretty much the same, they’re not like necessarily the core thing we live our lives around -- we both believe in the big man upstairs, but that’s not, you know so, a lot of the same worldly views, our personalities are the same. (H4)

Um well we’re both Christians so, I prayed a lot about it cause we were both socialized into the “till death do you part plan.” My parents are still married in fact, they are celebrating their anniversary this coming weekend. His parents are still married um, they’ve both been married for um almost five decades. So, I didn’t want to make a mistake and neither did he. So I just prayed about it a lot and I just felt in my spirit that he was the person I was suppose to marry. (W1)

With him the first date even before we even officially started dating -- we kind of had a very deep kind of conversation and he had everything that I wanted in a man. We had the same religion, um we had the same -- both of our parents have been married for 30 plus years, um he was really attractive -- all the things I wanted. (W3)

Both men and women participants reported similar values and beliefs being a contributing factor in how they choose their partner to marry. There were eight men and six women that reported this theme influencing their decision to marry and eight of the participants were from the same couples.

Personality Characteristics

Personality characteristics were mentioned by a majority of the participants. Some mentioned specific characteristics that influenced their decision to marry; while others reported feeling they were seeing a good person. Several participants reported that their personalities complimented each other or that they were compatible.

We're both really um -- both very opinionated, but in different ways and that kind of like drew us to each other cause we're not afraid to say what we think. (H3)

He has a calming effect on me, I'm a little more toward high strung [laugh], Type A, and he's a little more to the Type B. You know, he's just very emotionally

stable and uh, I don't know he just -- I don't know -- I just enjoy being with him. He makes me laugh and I felt like uh, it was the right decision for me, so. (W1)

She came off to me as a very patient, friendly and approachable individual. Very uh, very much a extrovert where as I was very much a introvert so it was comforting that she would come up to me and make sure that I'm doing things right. I felt myself eager to be by her side on as many occasions as possible. (H2)

I enjoy being with him. He has a good sense of humor um, he is very uh -- he gets things done, uh, he's not one to say he's going to do something and do it so he follows through and he cares. He's a very nice man. So uh, I have a lot of respect for him. (W5)

Um, I feel like our -- like we really play off each other's strengths. So, we like augment each other's strengths and down play each other's weaknesses. Um like, this was after we were married, but um, on uh -- on our honeymoon we were backpacking through Europe and so, we had a lot of, you know, stressful times, but it seemed that we were never both completely stressed out at the same time. (H7)

So, he just seemed a little bit wiser beyond his years you know. But yeah, he was just very -- he calmed me. He ground me and he was just very uncomplicated and it was just easy to hang out with him. -- He just makes me laugh a lot. (W6)

The majority of participants identified personality characteristics of their spouse as playing a role in their choosing to marry them. There were six couples where both spouses mentioned personality characteristics as being an influential factor in their decision.

Intuition

Intuition was reported by most of the participants (90%) as playing a role in their choosing their partner to marry. Although this study used a very elaborate and researched definition of intuition, most participants referred to intuition as a gut feeling or feeling of “knowing” and feeling right. A couple of participants felt unsure if it was intuition or a spiritual experience that was responsible for their decision. Two participants reported that intuition played a small role in their decision and two participants reported it played a partial role in their decision. All the other participants who reported intuition played a role did not clarify how much of a role it played, but that it was part of their process of deciding to marry their partner.

Um -- it really was the really cheesy, "you know when you know." It really was that type of a deal for me so, um, so in that sense I don't know if that would be considered intuition, um, but it was just a feeling that I didn't have with anybody else. But as soon as he and I started dating, I just knew immediately that yes. This is when people would ask, "So do you think he's the one?" "Oh absolutely yes, yes!" (W4)

I was drawn to her and that [pause] Yeah I, I just knew that um, you know, it was meant for us to be together, and that we were equally attracted to one another and just got along great. So I think, you can say that that kind of falls under intuition. (H1)

I guess -- I just feel like I always just kind of knew. I just always knew he was a good guy, and you know, so I guess that's you know kind of boring but you know [laugh]. I just -- I don't know, I just feel like I always kind of knew. (W8)

I always had a feeling, and I don't know if it would be intuition, you know per se, but I guess it could be defined as that, you know, that I really, really was drawn to her, and again on a physical level, but not -- I'm not talking about biology here but in terms of her the way she carried herself. The way she spoke and laughed and um, so I did, you know, I tried to uh, I try to listen to whatever part of me uh,

you know, whatever intuition I may have and uh, you know, the voice inside I suppose. Um, and it was always, “This is the girl” you know, and I always felt like this would be the girl. (H9)

Yeah um, I mean, it was just one of those things. Literally as soon as we started dating I just knew. Like I’ve never met anybody that I was so compatible with, that literally could finish my sentences when we barely knew each other, it was, you know, I just instantly just knew it. (W3)

Um there’s a, it’s a series, it’s eight books long, but there’s -- it concentrates on the story of Anne Shirley who marries and becomes Anne Blythe, but in her -- in her younger years before she actually gets married it comes down to a choice, main choice, between Gilbert Blythe and Charlie Sloan. And the story puts it really well that, without actually trying to put it really well that, that though “the Sloans speak with the tongues of men or angels, there Sloans.” And Ms. Rachel one of her mentors says, “I would never advise her to marry a Sloan. Even though they’re good people, they’re good honest people, there’s nothing wrong with them, they’re Sloans.” And I can’t put it any better than that because there was another guy who was after me pretty hard. And I would see him as a Sloan. (W2)

Um well, I feel like, it seems right and there's kind of this like this feeling of, just like knowing. I mean people talk about how you know when you know that this is the right one? Well, you kind of just know. So there was an aspect of that which I guess you could call intuition. I just knew she was the right one. (H7)

Logical Reasoning

Logical reasoning was another theme identified from the interview with the participants in their decision to marry. Half of the participants (55%) reported using logic to aid in their decision in choosing to marry their spouse. Some mentioned specific events that they analyzed, while others identified using logic in general. Many of the participants who reported using logical reasoning reported using intuition and mentioned other themes identified in this study too. There were four couples where each partner identified using logic in their decision to marry.

I looked at my process as someone, you know, that someone I could be with in my 40s, my 50s, my 30s, and I looked at it as a logical step, and educational choice. And uh, you know, I think I fell in love with her over a period of time, not like, it wasn't like really boom, that's not the way I am, the way I process. (H10)

When we were engaged, I validated my choice and I rationalized my choice by the facts. You know he did what no other guy did, he really respected the hurt that I was in, and gave me time to heal from it. After we got engaged, I was able to put down facts that he made those, he made that promise to wait until it was right for

me. Um, he had daddy's okay and daddies have as much intuition as little girls do, and just as much as a looking out for their interest and more experience. And our parents were all happy about the match. (W2)

I talked to long term friends, and one of my friends, for instance a mutual friend, you know, and found that he was very supportive of us, you know, probably because we had been together for so long, and uh, you know, I felt like we had the support of our friends and families, and uh, decided to do it, uh, so we did. (H9)

Um I decided to marry him because I respected his values and his um -- I thought we were a good balance. And I thought using prior experience, I thought I had a reference to know that we had something unique. We didn't argue. I think we were raised similarly. We always joke because our mothers have the same pots and pans set. Um so, and I really, for me the decision was very logical, not to say I didn't use my heart and have a lot of heart feelings, but it was very logical that if marriage was going to work it had to work logically as well and we complimented each other, as well. (W10)

I might have been a little more logical about it in the sense that you know we got along on the things that were important to me you know. Um and then I could you know I don't know how to say it – you know it was easy to be around him you know it's easy to be around him and I could be myself so you know so I guess that in itself you know just felt right. (W6)

Relationship Characteristics

The relationship characteristics theme was identified as a separate theme from personality characteristics because of the way the participants described their experiences in choosing to marry their spouses. Although there are some similarities between the themes of relationship characteristics and personality characteristics, in this particular theme the participants specifically described things that stood out to them about their relationship with their spouse and not their spouse as a person. In addition, this theme included reports of aspects of the relationships that made them special, like support networks, and how their relationships had unique characteristics.

So we went out two weeks after we met, just as friends, and I felt like, I was with a high school friend. You know, like someone I knew for forever -- and then we started dating. So it was very peaceful, our dating and marriage. And we didn't argue and didn't have much drama and just kind of clicked from the beginning.

(W10)

Well we just got along really well, and we'd been together for several years, and we are just extremely comfortable with each other. We knew that we loved each other, and that, we know that there was no one else we were interested in or anything. We were just like best friends. (H1)

I saw a lot of my friends dating women that were really clingy and that had to be there. And I think, I kept looking at my relationship with her, and you know, we enjoyed each other when we're together, but if I go off and play music or go off and do something like that, she's not freaking out and all upset. (H5)

And um, so then um, when I met my husband um, like a month after we started dating, I started having these feelings -- that I'd never had about anybody before. And I was telling my mom that sometimes I look at him and it's hard to describe it, I also almost feel like my heart is like getting bigger. Which I didn't think that was possible. And the other thing that we like talked about was, um sometimes, like I had never smiled when I kissed anyone before, and like, every time I kiss my husband I smile. So I think a number of these different things were, um, like I know that this is meant to be this is a good thing. (W7)

A little over half of the participants (55%) identified characteristics about their relationship as being an influential factor in their decision to marry. There were six participants whose partners also found relationship characteristics to be important to their decision as well.

All the participants spoke freely about their relationships during the interview and reported having good marriages. A few participants reported not being sure if they were answering the questions adequately, but were given ample time and several prompts to elaborate as much as they felt necessary. Only one participant reported being nervous during the interview after the tape recorder was turned off. All participants were offered a voluntary opportunity to review their transcripts and eight of the participants volunteered for this. None of the participants who reviewed their transcripts reported wanting any changes made to the information. A between-person analysis shows which themes participants reported in their interviews in Table 4.

Table 4

Between-Persons Analysis (N = 20)

Themes	W1	H1	W2	H2	W3	H3	W4	H4	W5	H5	W6	H6	W7	H7	W8	H8	W9	H9	W10	H10
Similar Interests	--	--	--	--	X	--	--	X	X	--	X	X	X	X	--	--	X	X	--	X
Similar Values & Beliefs	X	--	X	X	X	X	--	X	--	--	X	X	--	X	--	X	--	--	X	X
Personality Characteristics	X	X	X	X	--	--	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	--	X	X	--	X	--	--
Intuition	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	--	X	X	X	--
Logical Reasoning	X	--	X	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	X	--	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Relationship Characteristics	X	--	X	--	X	X	--	--	X	X	X	--	--	X	--	--	X	--	X	X

Legend for Table:

X = indicates the presence of a given theme in participant's reported experience

-- = indicates the absence of a given theme in that participant's reported experience

Summary

This chapter presented the results of a qualitative study that used a phenomenological approach to determine whether intuition was an influential factor in a couple's experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry. This study included 20 participants and represented 10 married couples. The results were reviewed by a peer who was familiar with conducting qualitative research to increase credibility of the identified results. The demographic characteristics of the sample were presented in this chapter along with the analysis of the data. The results found six themes: (a) similar interests; (b) similar values and beliefs; (c) personality characteristics; (d) intuition; (e) logical reasoning; and (f) relationship characteristics. The themes were described and illustrated with several of the participants' comments in the chapter.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research study was to determine whether intuition was an influential factor in a couple's experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry. This qualitative study used a phenomenological approach with symbolic interactionism and symbolic experiential family therapy as the theoretical framework for designing the study, collecting the data, and analyzing the data. Face-to-face semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with 20 participants where both married spouses volunteered to complete an interview. The participants were asked the following four questions: (a) Tell me about your experience of dating and marrying your spouse; (b) How did you decide to marry this person; (c) What role, if any, has intuition played in your selection of this person for a marital commitment; and (d) What other roles has intuition played, if any, in you choosing your spouse throughout the dating process? This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the data analysis and provides a discussion on the findings and their implications. In addition, this chapter reviews the limitations of this research study and provides recommendations for future research, for family therapists, and other mental health professionals.

Discussion

This research provided an opportunity for participants to talk about their experiences in deciding to marry and how they chose their spouse. In addition it looked to see if intuition was a factor in their decision to marry and/or how they chose their spouse to be the one with whom they made a marital commitment. The six themes from the participants' interviews are discussed in this chapter.

The six themes found in this study were: (a) similar interests; (b) similar values and beliefs; (c) personality characteristics; (d) intuition; (e) logical reasoning; and (f) relationship characteristics. Several of the themes are consistent with reports from previous studies on relationships in regards to similar interests, personality characteristics, and relationship characteristics (Gray, 1949; Nordvik, 1996; Wallerstein & Blakeslee 1996). Whitaker, Greenberg and Greenburg (1979) developed five assumptions about marriage that include: (a) marriage is a third entity, (b) marriage is greater than the sum of its parts alone, (c) people choose partners with similar values and beliefs, (d) marriage is both legally and emotionally binding, and (e) marriages grow and seek to resolve predictable and unpredictable transitions in life. It appears there are similarities between this study's findings and the symbolic experiential family therapy assumptions about marriage (Whitaker et al., 1979).

According to the symbolic experiential family therapy framework (Whitaker et al., 1979), finding a partner with similar values and beliefs was also found as a theme in this research study. The first research question focused on what factors or experiences

helped people decide to get married. Most participants discussed their experiences of deciding to get married included multiple factors that varied in importance based on individual values, beliefs, and previous experiences. The second research question focused on exploring if intuition played a role in the decision making process to get married. Most of the participants in this study reported experiencing an intuitive judgment about their relationship. The majority of the participants reported using several of the themes found in their decision to marry.

Similar Interests

Half of the participants in this study identified that similar interests played a factor in forming a connection with their spouse while dating and in the decision to marry their spouse. While some participants discussed specific interests that strengthened their relationship, other participants mentioned having lots of things in common that helped them relate to each other. Nordvik (1996) reported a similar finding that people select their marital partners based on attributes and common interests.

There was some evidence that similar interests were important to some couples in that both spouses mentioned having similar interests in their interviews. Although this was not reported by the majority of participants, it could be a factor that importance varies based on each relationship. One participant mentioned being a sports enthusiast and loving a particular sport and the spouse had the same passion for sports. Both spouses reported their love of sports was one factor that led them to believe they were right for each other. Another participant discussed a pivotal moment in their relationship when her

spouse found her recycling and felt a connection for doing the same thing. Therefore, similar interests were reported to play a significant role in some relationships.

Similar Values and Beliefs

Similar values and beliefs was another theme found in this research study that was reported to be a factor in deciding to marry. The majority of the participants reported similar religious beliefs, family values, and lifestyle values as being an influencing element to their choosing to marry their spouse. Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1996) found in their study on what makes a good marriage that moral qualities were listed as highly valued in marriage.

The study found that eight of the participants (four couples) who reported similar values and beliefs being an important factor in their decision making process to get married. Therefore, much like the previous theme it does seem that values and beliefs enhance the emotional connection in some relationships more than others. Several participants mentioned the importance of being of the same religion and having similar family values. In addition to having similar religious beliefs and values, several participants reported the importance of being able to communicate about these values openly. Some participants discussed feeling compatible with their spouses when they shared similar religious values and beliefs. Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1996) found that people seek partners that they feel they have a deep connection with that makes them a good fit.

Personality Characteristics

The study found that personality characteristics were mentioned by the majority of the participants as a contributing factor in deciding to marry their spouse. Several participants mentioned specific personality characteristics like patience, friendliness, sense of humor, and respect. Others reported liking their spouse's personality and feeling they were a good person. Gray (1949) found that people are attracted to complementary traits in personality. Similar findings were supported in a different study on good marriages and the results found that personality characteristics were an important factor and many participants had spouses with complementary characteristics (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1996). Although, a different study did not support the finding of personality characteristics being related to how people chose their spouse, but people select their partners based on attributes like common interests (Nordvik, 1996).

In this study the results showed that in six of the participating couples, both spouses reported personality characteristics being an important factor in choosing their mates over others and deciding to marry. Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1996) found similar results in their study and reported that most people sought out people they felt were a good psychological fit for them. Several participants discussed how their spouses were different from anyone they had dated in the past. One participant spoke about how their personalities seemed to play off each other's strengths. Therefore, personality characteristics did seem to be an important contributing factor in this study's sample in making the choice to marry their partner.

Intuition

Most of the participants reported intuition playing a role in their experience of dating and marrying their spouses. Many participants described intuition as a gut feeling, or feeling right, or a feeling of knowing. The symbolic experiential family therapy framework viewed intuition as an informal unconscious process that immediately brings information to our attention (Keith, 1987). Some participants reported intuition played a big role, while others reported it played a small role. All participants reported that there were many factors involved in deciding to marry and intuition was not the only determining factor. Currently there is limited research on intuition and relationships, therefore only a few studies are mentioned that found similar findings. Although Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1996) did not mention intuition, they reported that the connection between couples is both a conscious and unconscious process.

In addition, intuitive cognitive styles can have an easier time at avoiding decision difficulties (Shiloh & Shenhav-Sheffer, 2004). Several participants, who reported knowing right away when they met each other that the relationship was serious, tended to have a shorter courtship. There were a few who reported long engagements due to different external circumstances. A few of the participants reported relying on their faith or having a spiritual experience that they considered could be intuition as well. Jeffrey (2008) also found a relationship between intuition and spirituality in looking into the usefulness of intuition in the counseling relationship.

All the participants who reported intuition having some influence in their experience expressed feeling confident with their decision to marry, once they made it. No one expressed any concerns or doubts that occurred after making the decision. In addition, all participants in the study expressed feeling happy with their marriage and not regretting their choice. Daley (2006) found that clinical intuition was a sense of awareness in the counselor-client relationship. The participants in this study discussed their intuitive experiences and did appear to have more awareness of their relationship with their spouses being unique from previous relationships and experiences.

Finally, several participants reported trusting their intuition and listening to it in other areas of their life as well, while others tended to back up their feelings with rational reasoning. Intuition has been found to be interwoven in the decision making process and is often most effectively used if used in collaboration with rational cognitive processes (Hodgkinson et al., 2008; Sadler-Smith, 2008). Most of the participants reported intuition being part of their experience in dating and deciding to marry, but all reported looking at other factors in addition to intuition. Charles (2004) found that the value of intuition varies for each person and in the individual experiences. This study found similar results in that some participants placed a high value on intuition, while others valued logical analysis or other factors as a more influential deciding factor.

Logical Reasoning

Another theme found in this study was logical reasoning as being an influential factor in choosing a partner and deciding to marry. A little over half the participants

reported using some logical reasoning in their process of deciding to marry. Another study found that individuals with rational cognitive styles have better coping skill when dealing with unexpected obstacles during an event (Shiloh & Shenhav-Sheffer, 2004). Getting married is a big decision and one that is assumed to last a lifetime. Therefore using logical reasoning in deciding to marry may use rational cognitive styles in addition to intuition. Although, based on the reports from participants in this study the use of both logical reasoning and intuition seemed to be most helpful. Sadler-Smith (2008) reported that the most effective decision making occurs when intuitive and rational processing work collaboratively.

Relationship Characteristics

The final theme found in this study was relationship characteristics. Participants spoke about how their relationship with their spouse was unique and helped them decide to get married. Some participants discussed their relationship being different from previous relationships and having deeper feelings than they had for anyone else. Others participants discussed specific characteristics about the relationship such as communication, friendship, feeling safe, getting along well, and peacefulness. Similar characteristics (comfort, pleasure with each other's company, love, safety, feeling cared for, and trust) were mentioned in a study that examined factors that contributed to a good marriage (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1996). All the participants in this study reported being happy with their decision to marry their spouse and a few participants had been

married over 20 years. Therefore, it appears that the relationship characteristics reported in this study that are influential are consistent with previous findings.

In applying symbolic interactionism framework, the interactions between spouses helped develop new roles in their lives that led to taking on the context of a significant relationship that resulted in marriage (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). This fits with the symbolic experiential family therapy framework assumption that marriage is a third entity (Whitaker et al., 1979). All the participants in this study reported having a happy marriage and support from family and friends that appeared to further solidify their choice in deciding to marry.

Conclusions

Participants in this study spoke about their experiences in dating and marrying their spouse and what factors contributed to their decision-making process. The research was guided by two research questions: (a) what experiences help people decide to marry; and (b) does intuition play a role in the decision to marry? Six themes were found based on the participants expressed experiences. The themes found in this study are: similar interests, similar values and beliefs, personality interests, intuition, logical reasoning, and relationship characteristics. There are several conclusions that are identified and discussed in this section.

First, people report their relationship with their spouse is different from previous relationships and with a deeper connection. The participants shared the importance of finding their relationship with their spouse unique from any romantic relationship they

had previously. Many of the participants reported having a gut feeling about their spouse and noticed things about the relationship that were symbolic for them that the relationship “the one.” In addition to the importance of the marital relationship, many participants discussed having a support network of friends and family that believed in the marriages.

Second, most people tend to experience an intuitive judgment about their spouse prior to getting married. Although none of the participants reported relying only on intuition in making their decision to marry, most placed value on the additional information or feeling that it was the right relationship for them. The majority of the participants reported experiencing intuition at some point in their relationship that helped solidify their choice in choosing to marry. Therefore, intuition does appear to play a role in a person’s decision making process of selecting a partner and choosing to marry.

Third, people marry partners who share similar interests, values, and beliefs. It was found that people tend to choose partners who they have common interests with and similar moral and religious values. In addition, it was found that people tend to marry partners who have complementary personality characteristics. Similar interests and beliefs appear to help with establishing a relationship and open communication about personal beliefs.

The study found that there are many factors that contribute to the decision making process when people choose to get married, but intuition is a commonly reported factor in most of the participants’ experiences. Although many of the participants did not use the

word intuition in their interviews, they described having a sense of knowing or gut feeling. Therefore, it does appear that most people use intuition in choosing their partner to marry, whether they are consciously aware of it or not in their decision making process.

Limitations

There are several limitations that apply to this study. The sample participants were people that were willing to discuss their experience in deciding to get married and may have been more inclined to present their marriages and experiences in a more positive manner. The majority of the participant sample was Caucasian, a fact that may limit generalizability across different ethnic backgrounds. The majority of the participant sample was between 20 and 40 years of age, limiting generalizability with older age groups. The participant sample lived in several different regions of Texas, limiting the generalizability to other states.

This study included participants who all had some college experience, while the majority had completed a Bachelor's degree and several had completed or were working on completing graduate degrees. The majority of the participant sample appeared to have higher education and socioeconomic income levels than the majority of the general population. The majority of the participants who agreed to participate in the study saw the recruitment flyers at universities, therefore limiting the generalizability to populations that have not attended college.

The entire participant sample reported having siblings, and therefore it may limit the generalizability to only children. The majority of participants were married under 10 years, a fact that may limit generalizability to longer marriages. The participant sample included couples in their first marriage and limits generalizability to people who have been married more than once in their life. The sample size was adequate for a phenomenological qualitative study, but a larger sample would have more credibility to the findings of this study. Finally, the study used a qualitative approach, and this approach used alone may have limited specific data on intuition if a quantitative survey had been used in the study.

Implications

The results from this qualitative study suggest several implications for professionals including family therapists, counselors, psychologists, schools, churches, and agencies working with couples and families. All of the participants discussed the different things that helped them decide to marry their spouse and their process of making this decision. Professionals working with couples planning to get married would benefit from the knowledge of how people make the decision to marry and what factors influence their decision. Therefore, professionals and agencies providing premarital counseling services may find this information helpful and utilize it in effective treatment options. Mental health professionals who provide couples counseling would benefit from these findings in helping them evaluate and treat couples who are seeking to improve their marital relationship. In addition schools and school counselors would benefit from more

knowledge on what factors influence people to decide to get married when teaching or counseling on healthy relationships and divorce in families.

This study found that the participants reported being influenced by more than one factor in making their decision. They emphasized importance of having support from friends and family. Therefore professionals working with couples and families from a systemic perspective would benefit from exploring the existing support network for the clients. Mental health professionals should encourage the couples to discuss their experiences of deciding to get married and helping them discover what they enjoyed about their relationship that they would like to maintain or work on rebuilding.

The majority of the participants reported using intuition in their decision making process of choosing their spouse and getting married. Mental health professionals would benefit from gaining up-to-date knowledge on intuition and screening couples for use of intuition in making decisions. In addition, past research has provided evidence that family therapists and other mental health professionals have found benefits in treatment when using clinical intuition. Therefore, exploring couples' intuition and the use of clinical intuition in counseling may provide more effective treatment. Finally, building awareness of intuition for couples and mental health professionals may enhance a hidden strength for all people involved in treatment.

Recommendations

This research study provides information that can help mental health professionals and couples understand and recognize the factors that influenced their decision to marry.

There is still a need for further research on intuition and its role in the decision making process and in human relationships. The following are recommendations for future research.

Recommendations for Future Research

Intuition has been a concept that has been researched in several different areas, but is lacking in the feel of marriage and romantic relationships. The literature review provided current and relevant research that has been conducted previously on intuition and that was related to this study's purpose. Although the literature that is available currently is limited, there are some recommendations for future research based on the findings from this study.

1. This study may be replicated with a larger, more diverse sample of participants from other racial/ethnic backgrounds.
2. Future studies may include married couples with children.
3. Future studies may include married couples that have been divorced before.
4. Future studies may try a quantitative or mix methods approach by including a survey to ask more specific questions on intuition and a marital satisfaction scale that could be administered before and after the interviews.
5. Future studies may include a sample of participants from different states in the United States to help provide more information for mental health professionals in the United States.

6. Future studies may explore different life events that people have used intuition to help them through situations.
7. Future studies may include interviewing participants in different settings and do conjoint interviews.
8. Future studies may include intuition exercises and evaluate if the exercises had an impact on the decision making process for participants in the study dealing with an important life decision.

Recommendations for Family Therapists and Other Mental Health Professionals

The following are some recommendations for family therapists and other mental health professionals that work with couples and families seeking services for premarital counseling, marital enrichment, and divorce.

1. Family therapists and other mental health professionals should use clinical intuition when providing counseling services to clients.
2. Family therapists and other mental health professionals should obtain adequate knowledge on intuition and include it in the evaluation process. If intuition is valued or has been used by the couple or family, then it should be include in the treatment plan.
3. Family therapists and other mental health professionals should consider helping clients build awareness of intuition and enhance intuition.

4. Family therapists and other mental health professionals may benefit from working on enhancing their own intuition to help with self awareness and understanding of intuition.

5. Family therapists and other mental health professionals should include intuition in treatment when providing premarital counseling.

Summary

This study sought to determine if intuition is an influential factor in a couple's experience of selecting a person to date and to marry. This chapter contains the discussion of the themes found and the conclusions made based on the findings. The chapter includes the limitations of the study and implications of the findings on this study. Finally the chapter included the recommendations for future research and recommendations for mental health professionals and agencies that work with couples and families. There is still a need for further research on intuition and marital relationships.

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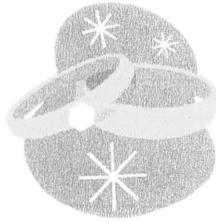
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Appendix A

Recruitment Flyer: How Did you Decide To Walk Down The Aisle?



HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO WALK DOWN THE AISLE?

PARTICIPANTS REQUESTED

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

Dissertation Research Project

Please help me uncover the mystery of what helps people say “I do” to some and “I don’t” to others. My name is Amanda Martin and I am a Ph.D. candidate conducting a qualitative research study. The purpose of the research is to determine whether intuition is an influential factor in a couple’s experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry her or him. I want to hear your story. Participation is voluntary and includes a confidential audio-taped interview with you and your spouse. Each spouse is interviewed separately. Confidentiality is assured. If you are interested in learning more about this study or have questions, please contact me at 940-765-3036. You may also contact my research advisor, Linda Brock, Ph.D., at 940-898-2713. If you know of other couples who might be willing to participate in this study, please invite them to contact me.

Appendix B
Recruitment Process Script

Recruitment Process Script

“Hello, this is Amanda Martin. Thanks for asking about my research. I’m a doctoral student at Texas Woman’s University and this research is my dissertation to complete my doctoral degree. The purpose of the research is to determine whether intuition is an influential factor in a couple’s experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry her or him. Do you have any questions so far? I am interviewing married couples who don’t have children. Have you been married for at least 6 months and no longer than 10 years? Is this you and your spouse’s first marriage? Each of you would participate in a separate interview that is estimated to last an hour. If you choose to volunteer to read a mailed copy of the transcript a month after the date of the interview to participate in a member checking procedure then you are estimated to spend an additional thirty minutes of your time. Do you have any questions you would like to ask me about the study? You are also welcome to contact my research advisor, Linda Brock, Ph.D. at 940-898-2713, for any additional information about me or my study. If you are interested in participating, we can set up a time to meet.” *Give procedural information and schedule an appointment.* “Okay, so I will meet with you on (mm/dd/yy) at (time, a.m., or p.m., and site). Would it be helpful if I called you 24 hours before to remind you of the appointment? Thank you for calling and being interested in participating in this study. I look forward to meeting you and your spouse.”

Appendix C
Consent Form

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: Is Intuition an Influential Factor in Marital Partner Selection: A Qualitative Study

Investigator: Amanda Martin, M.S.afaulkner@twu.edu 940-765-3036

Research Advisor: Linda Brock, Ph.D.lbrock@twu.edu 940-898-2713

Explanation and Purpose of the Research

You are being asked to participate in a research study for Mrs. Martin's dissertation at Texas Woman's University. The purpose of the research is to determine whether intuition is an influential factor in a couple's experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry. The study is proposed to help explore the significance of intuition in the decision of selecting a marital partner.

Description of Procedures

As a participant in this study you will be asked to spend one hour of your time in an audio-taped face-to-face interview with the researcher. If you choose to volunteer to read a mailed copy of the transcript a month after the date of the interview to participate in a member checking procedure then you are estimated to spend an additional thirty minutes of your time. The researcher will ask you questions about your experience of choosing to get married to your partner. You and the researcher will decide together on a private location where and when the interview will happen. The researcher will code all documents. The interview will be audio recorded and then written down so that the researcher can be accurate when studying what you have said.

Potential Risks

The researcher will ask you questions about your decision-making process in choosing to get married. Some possible risks in this study are emotional discomfort with the questions you are asked, fatigue and loss of your time. If you become tired or upset you may take breaks as needed. You may also stop answering questions at any time and end the interview. If you feel you need to talk to a professional about your discomfort, the researcher will provide you with a list of resources with your copy of the signed consent form.

Initials Page 1 of 2

The researcher will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researcher know at once if there is a problem and she will help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

Another risk in this study is the loss of confidentiality. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law. There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality with any email, downloading, and internet transactions. The interview will be held at a private location that you and the researcher have agreed upon. A code number, not your name, will be used on the transcripts. No one but the researcher will know your real name. To ensure confidentiality of identifiable data the researcher will keep it in locked cabinets in the researcher's locked office. Only the researcher and faculty research advisor will have access to hear the tapes. The tapes and written interview will be shredded within 2 years after the study is finished. The results of the study will be reported in scientific magazines or journals but your name or any other identifying information will not be included.

Participation and Benefits

Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. If you would like to know the results of this study we will mail them to you.*

Questions Regarding the Study

You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep. If you have any questions about the research study you should ask the researchers; their phone numbers are at the top of this form. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu.

Signature of Participant

Date

*If you would like to know the results of this study tell us where you want them to be sent:

Address:

Appendix D
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Participant's Code: _____

Date of Interview: _____

“The purpose of this study is to determine whether intuition is an influential factor in a couple’s experience of selecting a partner and choosing to marry her or him. By sharing your story of the decision making process of choosing to marry your spouse, you will help family therapists to understand the process of choosing to marry a partner over different options or outcomes for the relationship. Do you have any questions so far?”

“The questions I ask you are meant to allow you the opportunity to share your experience of deciding to marry. I will be audio-taping your story and may make some notes as you are speaking. I may ask some clarifying questions in order to make sure I understand you correctly.”

“Before we begin the interview, let us review the consent form. Do you have any questions about the consent form? I will give you a copy of the consent form for you to keep. You may take a break at any time and may stop the interview at any time if you feel it necessary. Do you have any questions before we begin? I will start the tape recorder now.”

“Tell me about your experience of dating and marrying your spouse.”

“How did you decide to marry this person?”

“What role, if any, has intuition played in your selection of this person for a marital commitment?”

“What other roles has intuition played, if any, in you choosing your spouse throughout the dating process?”

Additional Prompts

Facial expression showing attention and interest

Silence

Um Hum

What else?

Anything else?

Can you elaborate on that a little more?

And by that you mean?

“Now that the interview is over I will give you a demographic/personal information form to fill out before you leave. If you have any questions about the demographic form please let me know and I will offer further clarification. Thank you for your participation.”

Appendix E
Demographic Information Form

Demographic Information Form

Date of Interview _____ Participant Code _____ Age _____

Female _____ Male _____ Occupation _____

Level of education completed _____

If currently working on additional education please give a brief description _____

Gross Household Income:

Below \$20,000 _____ \$20,000 to 39,999 _____ \$40,000 to 59,999 _____

\$60,000 to 79,999 _____ \$80,000 to 100,000 _____ More than \$100,000 _____

Race/Ethnicity:

White _____ African-American _____ Hispanic _____

Asian-American _____ Native-American _____ Other _____

Marriage Information:

Month/Years Married _____

Birth Order Information:

What is your birth order in your family? _____

Religious preference if any _____

Would you like to volunteer to read over your transcribed interview? This participation is voluntary and helps ensure the accuracy of your information. Participation is estimated to take 30 minutes of time. The transcription will be ready to be reviewed a month from the date of the interview.

_____ Yes, I would like to volunteer to read over my transcribed interview.

My Address is: _____

_____ No, I would not like to participate in reading my transcribed interview.

Appendix F

Referral List

Referral List

1. Therapist Locator for all counties: www.therapistlocator.net

This search engine will help locate a therapist in your area and give information on fees and available therapists that offer a sliding scale.

2. Therapist locator for all counties: www.nbcc.org/directory/FindCounselors.aspx

This is another search engine that will help locate a therapist in your area and provides information on how to contact them, if insurance is accepted, if a sliding scale is offered, and specialties of the therapist.

3. TWU Counseling and Family Therapy Clinic (940) 898-2600

This clinic offers a sliding scale and therapy services to the community. This clinic is located in Denton, Texas.

If these resources have not met your needs in locating a therapist, please contact the researcher, Amanda Martin at (940) 765-3036, and I will help find you a referral.

Appendix G
IRB Approval Letter



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

August 6, 2010

Ms. Amanda Martin

Dear Ms. Martin:

Re: Is Intuition an Influential Factor in Marital Partner Selection: A Qualitative Study

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and appears to meet our requirements for the protection of individuals' rights.

If applicable, agency approval letters must be submitted to the IRB upon receipt PRIOR to any data collection at that agency. A copy of the approved consent form with the IRB approval stamp and a copy of the annual/final report are enclosed. Please use the consent form with the most recent approval date stamp when obtaining consent from your participants. The signed consent forms and final report must be filed with the Institutional Review Board at the completion of the study.

This approval is valid one year from August 6, 2010. According to regulations from the Department of Health and Human Services, another review by the IRB is required if your project changes in any way, and the IRB must be notified immediately regarding any adverse events. If you have any questions, feel free to call the TWU Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

[Handwritten signature of Kathy DeOrnellas, Ph.D.]

Dr. Kathy DeOrnellas, Chair
Institutional Review Board - Denton

enc.

- cc. Dr. Larry LeFlore, Department of Family Sciences
Dr. Linda Brock, Department of Family Sciences
Graduate School