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Martial Instability: Its Probability Based on a Demographic Profile of Couple Seeking Counseling

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MARITAL INSTABILITY: ITS PROBABILITY
BASED ON A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE
OF COUPLES SEEKING COUNSELING

Mary Frances Nail, B.A.

A Digest Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate
School of the Lindenwood Colleges in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Art

1986



Digest

This study was an investigation of the marriage relationship. It specifically investigated those spouses who are experiencing severe enough difficulties in their marriage to seek professional counseling.

The subjects (N = 405) for this study were couples who had come for counseling at PACT (formerly PAC), a private counseling agency in the St. Louis metropolitan area. The information was gathered by reviewing the files of couples who had come to PACT over a 10 - year period, from 1977 through 1986. The criteria to qualify as a "couple subject" was (a) that it was the first marriage for each spouse, and (b) that all the necessary demographic information was included in the file.

To reveal an overall and detailed characteristic description of the "couple subjects" used in this study, the data were used to develop an average profile of these couples over the 10 - year period.

Seven empirical questions were researched in this study. These questions were formulated to discover if there were any trends in those specific

attributes that were evident during over the 10 - year period, 1977 through 1986.

The results of this research indicated that the incidence of the critical characteristics in the profile of the unstable marriage does not appear to have changed significantly over the past decade. This suggests that the "face of marital instability" seems to have remained stable over the 10 - year period studied.

It is hoped that the information gathered in this research will be useful to demographers and researchers in the future study of the marital dyad and specifically the instable marriage. It is also hoped that it will be useful, in a practical way, to marriage therapists in their practice.

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OF COUPLES SEEKING COUNSELING

Mary Frances Nail, B.A.

A Culminating Project Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate
School of the Lindenwood Colleges in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Art

1986

THE DECADE

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1986

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Chapter I

Introduction

Definition of Marital Instability

The marital relationship is complex and multifaceted. Measuring marital instability, therefore, could take many different approaches. Some studies have measured the instability of marriage using only the statistics of marriages which have dissolved or are in the process of dissolution (cf., Bumpass & Sweet, 1972; Furstenberg, 1976; Maneker & Rankin, 1985; Norton & Glick, 1979; Pope & Mueller, 1979. Others have measured the instability of intact marriages (cf. Campbell, Converse & Rogers, 1976; Huber & Spitze, 1980; Booth & White, 1980; Booth, Johnson & Edwards, 1983).

The Booth, Johnson and Edwards (1983) study is one investigation that disputed the use of the term "instability" when measuring such concepts as divorce, permanent separation and desertion. These researchers contended that these studies are actually measuring some of the consequences of

instability and not the instability itself. For the purpose of their study, Booth, et. al. (1983), defined marital instability as, "a couple's propensity to dissolve an existing marriage, even though dissolution may not be the final outcome" (p. 388). By using this definition they contended that they were measuring: (a) an affective state (how I feel about my marriage), (b) cognitions concerning the relationship (what I have thought about doing as a result of how I feel), and (c) certain actions (what I have actually done about how I feel and what I have thought). By this redefinition they attempted to give conceptual clarity to the research they conducted to measure marital instability.

For the purpose of this study, the term "marital instability" was even more concisely defined. The present research was used to measure marital instability in terms of couples who seek marital counseling. The assumption was that only couples who are experiencing problems severe enough to require professional help (i.e., instability) in their relationship, will be seeking counseling. There are undoubtedly varying types and degrees of instability. It was not the task of this study,

however, to measure the type or level of instability. Rather, the existence of instability was assumed by the presence of the couple in the counseling setting, and the purpose was to find a demographic profile of those couples, and trends in that profile over a 10 - year period.

Purpose of the Study

One of the uses of the data obtained in this study is to measure specific characteristics, over a 10 - year period, of couples who have experienced severe enough problems in their marriage to seek professional counseling. This information can be useful in several ways. Awareness of possible conflict as signalled by a couple's present, anticipated and planned (i.e. children, etc.) demographic profile, can be valuable to a marriage therapist when doing premarital counseling. Helping a couple, before they are married, to examine possible stress points in their relationship may cause the couple to evaluate more clearly and rationally the possible pitfalls toward which they may be inclined. Prior knowledge of

these possibilities during the premarital stage may encourage discussion and communication on the subject, thus deterring or diminishing the negative effect.

The data obtained can also be used with couples who are already married and are seeking counseling for the problems and instability they are experiencing in their marriage relationship. Employing this information, the therapist may be better able to bring the couple to an awareness of the contribution that their demographic characteristics may have in complicating their relationship. This awareness may serve as a basis for understanding what the possibilities are for working through some underlying issues that are complicating the relationship and contributing to the instability within the marriage.

Areas of Focus

The various areas of demographic concern that were included in this study are:

- (1) Age of husband and wife at time of marriage
- (2) Age homogamy or heterogamy of the

marriage

- (3) Education level of husband and wife
- (4) Timing and number of children
- (5) Occupational status of husband and wife
- (6) Length of marriage before seeking counseling

Chapter II

Literature Review

Age at Marriage

Past research on the topic of marital instability, marital dissatisfaction and marital dissolution, indicates that age at the time of marriage is one of the most frequent topics. These studies have consistently shown that the age of the husband and the wife at the time of marriage is a significant factor in the probability of marital instability and/or dissolution. In Bumpass and Sweet's (1972) research, age at marriage was the strongest single predictor of marital instability. Bane (1976) called it the most important predictor of divorce.

The research by Lee (1977) verified these statements and statistics and utilized previous studies (Burchinal, 1965; Bartz & Nye, 1970) to examine the intervening variables which mediate instability as a result of marrying at an early age. In this research, Lee (1977) studied such subjective factors of the early marital

relationship as marital role performance and marital satisfaction. He then collated these results with age of the spouses at the time of marriage and found a positive correlation with both of the subjective factors.

The Bartz and Nye (1970) study, pointed to several possible derivatives of marrying at an early age. They suggested that one possible factor for the difficulty in early marriages is that people who marry young are unprepared emotionally and psychologically for the process of selecting a mate. Other possible factors in their study included variables such as low parental marital satisfaction, poor relations with parents, minimal interest in education and little or no religious involvement. Each of these variables was also inversely related to marital stability, and each was associated with early marriage.

In Burchinal's (1965) study, several other factors were also associated with persons who marry at a young age. These were low education, premarital pregnancy, short pre-marital acquaintance, personality maladjustment, and low socioeconomic background.

Morgan, and Rindfuss (1985) stated that in

addition to the lack of maturity factor in early age marriages is the factor of the number and strength of life cycle changes the marriage must undergo in the early years. In their empirical study, they included such life cycle factors as completing an education, establishing a career, developing avocational interests, and separating from the family of origin. In later marriages, at least some of these stages are more likely to have been worked through. They (Morgan & Rindfuss, 1985) contend that these life cycle transitions can be stressful to the individual and therefore can also be stressful to a marriage relationship.

Bahr, Chappell and Leigh (1983) speculated that early marriages may have a higher divorce rate, not necessarily because of lower marital satisfaction, but because they have more alternatives (i.e., more potential mates available) and fewer barriers (i.e., fewer children or none at all) to impede divorce.

This is consistent with the Bartz and Nye (1970) study on marital satisfaction. They concluded that the higher divorce rates of early marriages may be, at least in part, due to the fact

that these people are cognizant of their excellent chances for remarriage and are therefore less willing to tolerate given levels of dissatisfaction in their current marriages than are those who contract their initial marriages later in life.

Booth and Edwards (1985) studied marital instability in relation to late marriages as well as early marriages. They found that marital instability is most likely to occur for those who marry early (i.e., women=19 or younger, men =20 or younger). The next group most likely to experience marital instability are those who marry late (i.e., women= 27 or older, men=28 or older). Persons marrying in their early twenties (i.e., women = 20-26, men = 21-27) are the least likely to experience marital instability.

As indicated by the Booth and Edwards study, there is little research on the relationship between marrying late and marital instability. However, they speculated about the reasons for the likelihood of marital instability for those who marry beyond their late twenties. They (Booth & Edwards, 1985) asserted that one possible

explanation may be that, given more life experiences:

...their standards of role performance may be well-developed and more firmly entrenched compared with younger individuals. More restricted by virtue of the "marriage squeeze" in their mate choices, the likelihood of unfilled expectation would be greater. Combined with expectations that may be less readily modified, higher levels of marital instability are likely to be experienced.(p. 69)

In addition, Booth and Edwards stated that after being unmarried for many years, a person may feel confident that they can cope emotionally and financially with a divorce, and are therefore less stressed at the possible results of the dissolution of the marriage.

Addressing the external pressures which may contribute to the instability of late marriages, Booth and Edwards (1985) contended that individuals who marry late may be more likely to have formed relationships with their parents that could be threatened by a marriage. Similarly, the difficulties of integrating long-standing single friendships with a new spouse may also tend to have a weakening effect on the marriage relationship and lead to instability.

Heterogamous and Homogamous Marriages

A second area of focus in the present study was the effects of age homogamous and age heterogamous marriages. For the purpose of definition, a homogamous marriage is one in which the husband and wife are the same age, within a given span of years. The heterogamous marriage then, is one in which one of the spouses is at least a given number of years older or younger than the other. For example, the Atkinson and Glass (1985) study defined a homogamous marriage to be one in which both spouses were the same age, plus or minus four years. The heterogamous marriage then, was one in which one of the spouses was at least four years older than the other.

In another study of heterogamous marriage, Jorgensen and Klein (1979) concluded that there is virtually no evidence that heterogamy necessarily leads to marital disagreement and marital conflict. They found that:

Heterogamous couples in the early years of marriage appear, if anything, to have less dissensus over marital role expectations than do their more homogamous counterparts, and this difference tends to disappear over time. (p. 63)

A study by Vera, Berardo and Berardo (1985) found that the effects attributed to heterogamy are spurious and that the instability within these marriages is more a reflection of the effects of other confounding variables such as socioeconomic status and race. The results of their research indicated that age-disparate marriages are more prevalent among low-income families than among the higher income strata. They (Vera, et.al., 1985) concluded that the poorer marital quality of a heterogamous marriage can more likely be attributed to the negative effects of the lower socioeconomic status than the age discrepancy itself.

Atkinson and Glass (1985) discovered that there is a consistent trend toward homogamous marriages. They examined the statistics from the 1900, 1960 and 1980 U.S. Census Bureau population surveys. From this they found that in 1900, 62.9% of the marriages were age-heterogamous (i.e., one spouse being more than 4 years older or younger than the other), with 47.1% of the unions having women married to older men. In 1960, 63.3% of the marriages were homogamous (i.e., spouses being the same age, + or - four years), and in 1980 69.9% were homogamous. They speculated that the reason

for the trend toward more homogamous marriages may be a reflection of relative male-female status trends toward more equality in our society. Richman (1977) also suggested that the more egalitarian a society becomes, the less likely it is to hold traditional attitudes about male-female differences, thus there will be less age disparity between marital partners in social systems that tend toward greater gender equality.

Education of Spouses

A third area of focus in the present study was the effect the education level of the husband and wife may have on the stability of the marriage. This was evaluated using the variable of the level of education at the time that they came in for marital counseling.

Some studies (cf., Goode, 1951, 1956; Kephart, 1955; Levinger, 1965) indicated that the higher the education level, the more likely it is that there will be marital happiness and satisfaction. Other studies (cf., Campbell, Converse and Rodgers, 1976; Maneker & Rankin, 1985)

indicated, however, that the factor of formal education does not necessarily indicate the likelihood of marital satisfaction or duration. Maneker and Rankin (1985) speculated that education was more an indirect indicator of marital adjustment, such as when it is used in studies as part of the measurement of the total socioeconomic status of the husband and wife.

Maneker and Rankin (1985) also cited a monograph (California, 1966) published by the California Department of Public Health that studied the duration of marriage. These results indicated that the median duration of marriage for husbands who had completed 1 to 4 years of high school was about 5 years. Those husbands who had at least some college education had a median duration of 6.2 years. However, those who had an eighth-grade education or less had the longest duration of a median of 8.6 years. This research, therefore, disputed the theory that more education equals more marital stability and a longer duration of marriage.

Although some of the earlier studies of the effect that education has on marital relationships indicated that a formal higher education was

directly related to marital happiness and satisfaction (cf. Goode, 1951, 1956; Kephart, 1955; Levinger, 1965), more recent research such as the one conducted by Campbell, Converse and Rodgers (1976) suggests an inverse relationship. This study indicated that the least satisfied wives were the ones who had completed their college education.

Bernard (1982) was particularly concerned with the effects of the education of the wife on the marital relationship. She stated that:

Educated women want more contact with their husbands; merely formal role performance is not enough for them. They want their husbands to talk to them more, to share their leisure time with them. Deprivation of this kind of companionship, taken for granted in the old concept of marriage, can easily be construed as "mental cruelty." Even more, women educated in the modern manner are less inhibited in their interest in power; their college-educated husbands, even in the conservative 1950's were having difficulty dealing with this situation. (p. 169 -170)

The Glenn and Supancic (1984) research confirmed the theory suggested by Glick (1957) that persons who have dropped out of a unit of education have higher marital dissolution rates than persons who have completed that unit of education. This theory suggested that a lack of persistence is the common variable accounting for both dropping out of

a unit of schooling and many of the failed marriages of the dropouts. This theory was also confirmed by Bernard (1966) and Bauman (1967).

As Maneker and Rankin (1985) concluded, there appears to be much contradiction in the literature concerning the effect of education on the stability, satisfaction and/or dissolution of a marriage. It appears, therefore that further research is warranted to examine whether or not the level of education of the husband and/or wife is indeed a factor of significance when investigating its possible effect on the marital relationship.

Effect of Children

A fourth area of investigation in the present study was the presence or absence of children as a product of the marital relationship and the possible effect this has on the stability of the marriage. In a 1974 study, Andrews concluded that the presence of children tended to disrupt the rewards of the marital partners. On the other hand, Morgan and Rindfuss (1985) found that couples who delay childbearing actually run higher risks of marital disruption than they would by having a

child earlier. They contended that the presence of a child is a deterrent to marital disruption not necessarily because the marriage becomes more satisfying, but because children provide more barriers to disruption.

When researching the family life cycle and its adjustment periods, several other studies (cf., Rollins & Cannon, 1974; Rollins & Feldmen, 1970; Spanier, Lewis & Cole, 1975) have indicated that the optimal time period for the adjustment of the marital dyad occurs prior to the arrival of children. Also, according to Andrews (1974), a successful adjustment to the presence of children is most likely when there has first been sufficient time for the adjustment of the marital dyad prior to the arrival of the first child.

When specifically studying adolescent marriages, Bishop and Lynn (1983) emphasized that:

Adolescents who marry early who have not achieved a reasonable integration of personal identity, and who are working on consolidating values, goals and expectations in the marital dyad, may experience an overload if parenting roles and responsibilities are added as well. (p.275-276)

It therefore appears that the time span between marriage and the birth of the first child is a

significant factor in the stability or instability of the marital relationship.

In regard to childless couples, some studies (cf., Chester, 1972; Gibson, 1980) have found that there is a higher divorce rate among couples with children. Other studies (cf., Bumpass and Sweet, 1972; Koo & Janowitz, 1983) have indicated that childless marriages experience a greater risk of disruption. Carlson and Stinson (1982), however, contended that because the meaning of childlessness has changed drastically in recent years, it is no longer associated with higher marital instability or disruption.

Occupation of Spouses

The fifth area of focus in the present study concerns the occupational status of the husband and wife. Often this information has been used as only a part of the total socioeconomic variable (cf., Lee, 1977; Glenn & Supancic, 1984).

Other research has used the occupational status alone as a significant variable. For example, Hicks & Platt (1970) and Scanzoni (1975) found that there is a positive relationship between

marital satisfaction and the husband's occupational status and income. In studying adolescent marriages, Reiner and Edwards (1974) concluded that couples who marry before the age of 21 double their probability of divorce within 20 years. A significant contributing factor was the occupation and earning potential of the husband. They (Reiner and Edwards, 1974) found that if the husband earns less than \$8,000, they redouble the probability of divorce within 20 years. In a more recent study of marital duration, Levinger (1979) found that the couples most likely to divorce are those in which the wife's income is relatively high and the husband's income relatively low.

Other research has concentrated on the work status of the wife. Regan and Roland (1985) administered a questionnaire to university students graduating in 1970 and in 1980 to measure the changes in career values, lifestyle commitment, and vocational aspiration. They found that there was a dramatic increase during the 1970s in university women's desire for high-status professional careers and the career-based values necessary to achieve that success. They also concluded that these women

had the greatest potential for role conflict between the commitment to marriage and a family, and the commitment to their career.

Length of Marriage

A final area of focus for the present study was the length of the marriage before the couple sought professional marital counseling. In the review of past research, the length of marriage (Lee, 1977) and duration of the marriage (Maneker & Rankin, 1985) has generally been used to indicate how long the couple stayed together before separation or divorce.

For the purpose of the present study, however, the term "length of marriage" was used to indicate the time span between the date of marriage and the date of the initial session of marital counseling. It was anticipated that this information would be useful to add to the demographic profile of couples experiencing marital instability.

Chapter III

Empirical Foci

To ascertain whether the demographic profile of unstable marriages is undergoing change, the present study examined trends in the following characteristics of unstable couples across a 10 - year period:

1. At least one of the spouses was under the age of 20 at the time of the marriage.
2. The heterogamous marriage (i.e., one of the spouses is more than 4 years older or younger than the other).
3. The husband has 12 years or less of formal education.
4. The wife has more than 12 years of formal education.
5. The birth of the first child was within two years of the date of the marriage.
6. The husband's occupation is in one of the last three classifications. (These classifications will be defined in the methods section of this paper.)
7. The wife's occupation is in one of the

first two classifications. (These classifications will be defined in the methods section of this paper.)

Additional Study

Other significant data (such as the presence or absence of children, the number of children, and the length of marriage before the couple came in for counseling) was also gathered. It was expected that these factors would be useful in determining the profile characteristics of the sampled population.

Chapter IV

Research Methods

Subjects

The target population of this study were couples in general who experience enough instability in their marital relationship to seek professional marriage counseling. The sampled population was clients who came for counseling at Psychotherapist and Associated Consultants (PAC), which is now Psychotherapists and Associated Consulting Team (PACT). This is a private counseling agency in the suburban St. Louis, Missouri area which was established in 1963 by its founder and now Clinical Director, James A. McKenna, M.S.W., A.C.S.W.

Some clients were excluded from the population sampled. Clients who were single (either never married or divorced) were not considered to be relevant to the study. Also, for the purpose of this research, the sampled population excluded those couples in which either the husband or the

wife had been previously married. The couples sampled, therefore, were those in which both of the spouses were in their first marriage. This controlled for the variables and possible complications of both multiple marriages and children from the previous marriage of either or both of the spouses.

Procedures

The data for this research were collected from the client files at PACT. The demographics of the sampled population were compiled using data from a 10 - year period, 1977 through the current files of 1986. Since collection of the data began on September 15, 1986, the information for 1986 will not be for a complete one - year period.

The data was taken from the client information form at PACT (PAC). This form has changed over the 10 - year period. Examples of the various forms used can be seen in Appendix A.

To insure that the most complete information possible would be collected, all of the files over the 10 - year period were reviewed. Only the files of clients who met the criteria described in the

"subject" section and whose client information sheet gave all of the following information were considered as subjects in this research:

1. Current age of each spouse
2. Date of marriage
3. Education level of each spouse
4. Occupation of each spouse
5. Number of children (if any)
6. Age or birthdate of the first child (if any)

To examine empirical question 1, as stated above, the present study used the same age categories as Maneker and Rankin (1985) used in their study. These categories are as follows:

Age at marriage = under 20
 = 20-24
 = 25-29
 = 30 or older

To examine empirical question 3 and empirical question 4, as stated above, a variation of the classifications that Maneker and Rankin (1985) used to indicate educational level were also employed. Two variations of this scale were made. One variation was to allow for the recognition of

technical training beyond the high school level, and was included in the category of "1-3 years of college completed". The other variation was made to allow for the recognition of schooling that went beyond the completion of a four - year degree, and continued on into the graduate level. This was given the separate category of "5 or more years of college completed". Therefore, the classifications for measuring education was as follows:

0-8 years of school completed

9-11 years of school completed

12 years of school completed

1-3 years of college or technical school
completed

4 years of college completed

5 or more years of college completed

To examine empirical question 6 and empirical question 7, as stated above, the present study used a variation of the same occupational classifications used by Glenn and Supancic (1984). This variation added the category of "Homemaker or Not employed outside the home", and excluded the category of "farmer and farm laborers". It was decided that each of these changes was more consistent with the metropolitan location of PACT

(PAC) and therefore more representative of its client population. These classifications are as follows:

Professional and technical workers

Managers and administrators

Sales workers

Clerical workers

Craftsmen

Service workers--Skilled laborers

Unskilled laborers

Homemaker or Not employed outside the home

The data collected were used to perform a statistical analysis to examine each empirical question. The independent variable for each question tested was time, measured in one year intervals from 1977 to 1986. The dependent variables differed as follows:

Empirical Question 1--The change in the proportion of the occurrence of marriages having at least one of the spouses under age 20 at the time of marriage.

Empirical Question 2--The change in the proportion of the occurrence of marriages having one of the spouses more than four years

older than the other.

Empirical Question 3--The change in the proportion of the occurrence of marriages where the husband has 12 years or less of formal education.

Empirical Question 4--The change in the proportion of the occurrence of marriages where the wife has more than 12 years of formal education.

Empirical Question 5--The change in the proportion of the occurrence of marriages where the birth of the first child is within two years of the date of the marriage.

Empirical Question 6--The change in the proportion of the occurrence of marriages where the husband's occupation is in one of the three lowest classifications (as defined below in this section of the paper).

Empirical Question 7--The change in the proportion of the occurrence of marriages where the wife's occupation is in one of the first two classifications (as defined below in this section of the paper).

To organize the data, a relative frequency distribution and table of proportions was made for

each dependent variable. The method of statistical analysis then performed on each empirical question was a Chi-square (χ^2) Test of the Homogeneity of Proportions using the following formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum n_i (p_i - \bar{p})^2 / \bar{p} \cdot \bar{q}$$

where:

n_i = the number of subjects in any particular year

p_i = the proportion of cases possessing the critical attribute in any one year

\bar{p} = the total number of critical cases, divided by the sum of n

$$\bar{q} = (1 - \bar{p})$$

The degrees of freedom for each empirical question tested was the number of years included in the study minus 1:

$$df = (10 - 1) = 9$$

The .05 level of significance was used when determining the statistical significance to examine each empirical question tested. Each χ^2 test, using 9 degrees of freedom, was significant if it exceeded 16.919.

Chapter V

Results

The total number of client files that met all of the requirements of this research (as stated in the procedures section of this paper) were 405. This figure represents 405 couples who were in their first marriage and came to PACT (PAC) for counseling from 1977 to 1986, and whose files contained all of the required information listed in the procedures section of this paper.

The number of subjects who met these requirements for each of the years studied is as follows:

1977 = 23

1978 = 35

1979 = 33

1980 = 50

1981 = 55

1982 = 32

1983 = 40

1984 = 55

1985 = 43

1986 = 39

As was expected not all of the couples had children. Therefore, for empirical question 5, for which the presence of children was a necessary criteria, there were fewer subjects than there were for the other empirical foci. The number of subjects who met the requirements for empirical question 5 for each of the years studied was as follows:

1977 = 19

1978 = 20

1979 = 26

1980 = 35

1981 = 42

1982 = 26

1983 = 28

1984 = 43

1985 = 36

1986 = 28

The total subjects then who have children and therefore can be factored into empirical question 5 was 303.

For each empirical focus it must be noted that the year 1986 includes only data from January 1 to September 15, which is when the research began.

Each of the empirical question tested was

considered separately to determine the progression of change in that characteristic over the designated 10 - year period. The data from each empirical foci were then considered collectively to study a profile of the couples who are experiencing marital instability and came to PACT for counseling over the designated 10 - year period. The results will be presented in the same sequence.

Age at Marriage

The age of each of the subjects at the time of their marriage was calculated as follows:

1. The current age of each of the subjects was taken from the client information form which was completed upon their first visit to PACT (PAC).
2. The date of marriage was gathered in the same manner as in step one.
3. The number of years married was then calculated by subtracting the date of marriage from the date at which they had entered counseling.

4. For each subject then, the age at marriage was then calculated by subtracting the number of years married from their current age.

The frequency distribution was then constructed for each year, 1977 through 1986, representing all the subjects in in any given year in which at least one of the spouses in that couple was under the age of 20 at the time of marriage. The proportion of the occurrence of this characteristic in each year studied was then calculated by dividing the number of subjects with this characteristic in each year by the total number of subjects in that year. The results of this calculation can be seen in Table 1.

These mean proportions were then used in a graphic representation to scale the change in the frequency of the occurrence of this characteristic over the 10 - year period (see Figure 1). This graph shows that there has been a decline over the 10 - year period in the proportion of subjects having at least one of the spouses under the age of 20 at the time of marriage. The proportionate difference is .24 (from 1977 to 1986). Although this was not a steady decline, there appears to be

Table 1
 Proportion of Occurrence
 for Each Empirical Question Tested

Year	Characteristic						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1977	.39	.30	.35	.52	.47	.22	.17
1978	.34	.20	.32	.69	.55	.37	.23
1979	.30	.24	.24	.55	.65	.33	.24
1980	.18	.20	.28	.52	.57	.32	.28
1981	.20	.18	.25	.62	.57	.20	.35
1982	.25	.22	.34	.53	.69	.34	.13
1983	.28	.35	.38	.55	.36	.33	.15
1984	.20	.31	.20	.62	.58	.27	.24
1985	.12	.12	.16	.56	.40	.21	.26
1986	<u>.15</u>	<u>.23</u>	<u>.36</u>	<u>.59</u>	<u>.46</u>	<u>.31</u>	<u>.28</u>
	$\bar{p} = .23$	$\bar{p} = .23$	$\bar{p} = .28$	$\bar{p} = .58$	$\bar{p} = .53$	$\bar{p} = .29$	$\bar{p} = .24$



Figure 1. The mean proportion of marriages, as a function of year, in which at least one of the spouses was under the age of 20 at the time of marriage.

a noticeable decline from 1977 to 1986 in the proportion of subjects who were under the age of 20 at the time they married.

The mean proportion of occurrence over the entire 10 - year period was then calculated by adding the proportion for each year, 1977 through 1986, and dividing it by the number of years surveyed in the study (10). The mean proportion of the occurrence of at least one of the spouses being under 20 years of age at the time of marriage was .23 (see Table 1).

To determine the statistical significance of the results of the data pertaining to this empirical question, the chi-square statistic was calculated as shown in Table 2 and using the formula stated in the methods section of this paper. This calculation proceeded as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum n_i (p_i - \bar{p})^2 / \bar{p} \cdot \bar{q}$$

$$\chi^2 = 2.2807 / .1771$$

$$\chi^2 = 12.8780$$

where:

$$\bar{p} = .23 \text{ (see Table 1)}$$

$$\bar{q} = (1 - \bar{p}) = .77$$

As stated in the methods section of this paper

Table 2
 Chi-square Analysis of the Homogeneity of the
 Proportion of Occurrence for Empirical Question #1

Year	p_i	$p_i - \bar{p}^a$	$(p_i - \bar{p})^2$	N_i	$N_i \cdot (p_i - \bar{p})^2$
1977	.39	.16	.0256	23	.5888
1978	.34	.11	.0121	35	.4235
1979	.30	.07	.0049	33	.1617
1980	.18	- .05	.0025	50	.1250
1981	.20	- .03	.0009	55	.0495
1982	.25	.02	.0004	32	.0128
1983	.28	.05	.0025	40	.1000
1984	.20	- .03	.0009	55	.0495
1985	.12	- .11	.0121	43	.5203
1986	.15	- .08	.0064	39	<u>.2496</u>
					$\Sigma = 2.2807$

Note. Tested at the .05 level of significance

^aWhere $\bar{p} = .23$ (See Table 1)

in order to be significant at the .05 level, and with 9 degrees of freedom, the chi-square analysis must exceed 16.919. Therefore, for question 1 the chi-square test did not prove to be statistically significant, $\chi^2(9) = 12.8780$. This outcome suggests that the age-at-time-of-marriage factor did not change significantly in incidence across the 10 - year period studied.

Heterogamous or Homogamous Marriages

The determination of whether a couple had a heterogamous or homogamous marriage was calculated by subtracting the age of the younger spouse from the age of the older spouse. If the difference in age was more than or equal to four years, the couple was included in the category of being in a heterogamous marriage. If the difference in age was more less than four years, the couple was included in the category of being in a homogamous marriage. It was decided that the change in the frequency of the occurrence of the heterogamous marriage would be specifically measured.

A frequency distribution was then constructed for each year, 1977 through 1986, representing all

the subjects in any given year in which the age difference between the husband and wife was more than or equal to four years. The mean proportion of the occurrence of this characteristic in each year studied was then calculated by dividing the number of subjects with this characteristic in each year by the total unumber of subjects in that year. The results of this calculation can be seen in Table 1.

These mean proportions were then used in a graphic representaion to scale the change in the frequency of the occurrence of this characteristic over the 10 - year period (see Figure 2). This graph shows that although there has been a decrease in the proportion of the occurrence of heterogamous marriages (with a proportionate difference of .07) between 1977 and 1986, it neither represents a large difference, nor a consistent progression over the 10 - year period.

The mean proportion of occurrence over the entire 10 - year period was then calculated by adding the proportion for each year, 1977 through 1986, and dividing it by the number of years surveyed in the study (10). The overall mean

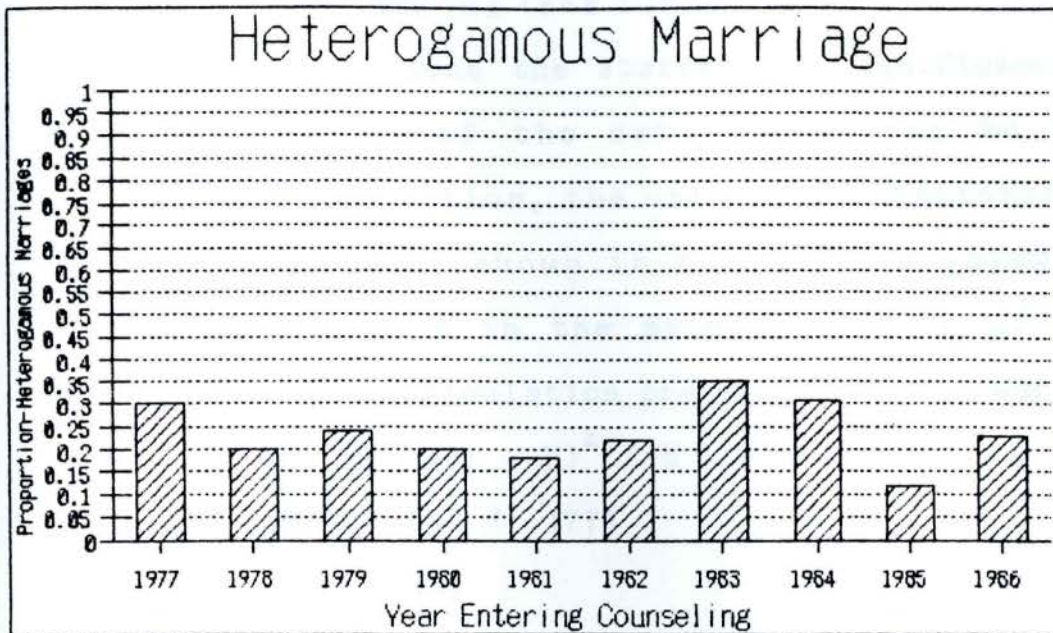


Figure 2. The mean proportion of marriages, as a function of year, in which one of the spouses was more than or equal to four years older than the other.

proportion of the occurrence of the age difference between the spouses being more than or equal to four years was .23 (see Table 1).

To determine the statistical significance of the results of the data pertaining to this empirical question, the chi-square statistic was calculated as shown in Table 3 and using the formula stated in the methods section of this paper. This calculation proceeded as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum n_j (p_j - \bar{p})^2 / \bar{p} \cdot \bar{q}$$

$$\chi^2 = 1.6990 / .1771$$

$$\chi^2 = 9.5935$$

where:

$$\bar{p} = .23 \text{ (see Table 1)}$$

$$\bar{q} = (1 - \bar{p}) = .77$$

As stated in the methods section of this paper in order to be significant at the .05 level, and with 9 degrees of freedom, the chi-square analysis must exceed 16.919. Therefore, for empirical question two, the chi-square test did not prove to be statistically significant, $\chi^2(9) = 9.5935$. This outcome suggests that the heterogamous marriage factor did not significantly change in incidence across the 10 - year period studied.

Table 3
 Chi-square Analysis of the Homogeneity of the
 Proportion of Occurrence for Empirical Question #2

Year	p_i	$p_i - \bar{p}^a$	$(p_i - \bar{p})^2$	N_i	$N_i \cdot (p_i - \bar{p})^2$
1977	.30	.07	.0049	23	.1127
1978	.20	-.03	.0009	35	.0315
1979	.24	.01	.0001	33	.0033
1980	.20	-.03	.0009	50	.0450
1981	.18	-.05	.0025	55	.1375
1982	.22	-.01	.0001	32	.0032
1983	.35	.12	.0144	40	.5760
1984	.31	.07	.0049	55	.2695
1985	.12	-.11	.0121	43	.5203
1986	.23	.00	.0000	39	.0000
					$\Sigma = 1.6990$

Note. Tested at the .05 level of significance

^aWhere $\bar{p} = .23$ (See Table 1)

Education of the Husband

The data for the education level of the husband was taken directly from the client information form which was completed upon the client's first visit to PACT (PAC). The levels were recorded for each subject according to the following designations:

- A -- 0 to 8 years of school completed
- B -- 9 to 11 years of school completed
- C -- 12 years of school completed
- D-- 1-3 years of college or technical school completed
- E -- 4 years of college completed
- F -- 5 or more years of college completed

It was decided that the characteristic to be measured in this area of focus would be the change in the occurrence of the couple subjects in which the husband's education was less than or equal to 12 years of schooling. Therefore, only those in the categories of A, B, and C were used for data in this portion of the study.

A frequency distribution was constructed for

each year, 1977 through 1986, representing all the subjects in any given year in which the husband was in category A, B, or C. The mean proportion of the occurrence of this characteristic in each year studied was then calculated by dividing the number of subjects with this characteristic in each year by the total number of subjects in that year. The results of this calculation can be seen in Table 1.

These mean proportions were then used in a graphic representation to scale the change in the frequency of the occurrence of this characteristic over the 10 - year period (see Figure 3). This graph shows that while there has been a fluctuation over the past ten years, the proportion of difference between the year 1977 and 1986 is only .01.

The mean proportion of occurrence over the entire ten year period was then calculated by adding the proportion for each year, 1977 through 1986, and dividing it by the number of years surveyed in the study (10). The overall proportion of the occurrence of the husband having 12 years or less of education was .28 (see Table 1).

To determine the statistical significance of the results of the data pertaining to this

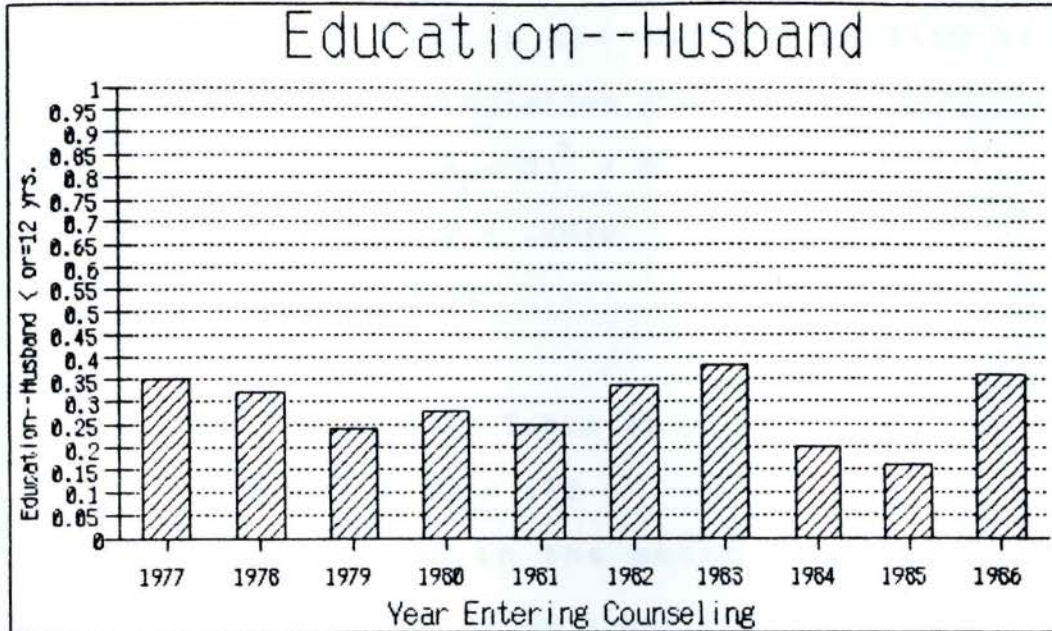


Figure 3. The mean proportion of marriages, as a function of year, in which the husband has 12 years or less of formal education.

empirical question, the chi-square statistic was calculated as shown in Table 4 and using the formula stated in the methods section of this paper. This calculation proceeded as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum n_i (p_i - \bar{p})^2 / \bar{p} \cdot \bar{q}$$

$$\chi^2 = 2.1070 / .2016$$

$$\chi^2 = 10.4514$$

where:

$$\bar{p} = .28 \text{ (see Table 1)}$$

$$\bar{q} = (1 - \bar{p}) = .72$$

As stated in the methods section of this paper, in order to be significant at the .05 level, and with 9 degrees of freedom, the chi-square analysis must exceed 16.919. Therefore, for empirical question three, the chi-square test did not prove to be statistically significant, $\chi^2_{(9)} = 10.4514$.

Education of the Wife

The data for the education level of the wife was taken directly from the client information form completed upon the client's first visit to PACT (PAC). The levels were recorded for each subject

Table 4
 Chi-square Analysis of the Homogeneity of the
 Proportion of Occurrence for Empirical Question #3

Year	p_i	$p_i - \bar{p}^a$	$(p_i - \bar{p})^2$	N_i	$N_i \cdot (p_i - \bar{p})^2$
1977	.35	.07	.0049	23	.1127
1978	.32	.04	.0016	35	.0560
1979	.24	- .04	.0016	33	.0528
1980	.28	.00	.0000	50	.0000
1981	.25	- .03	.0009	55	.0495
1982	.34	.06	.0036	32	.1152
1983	.38	.10	.0100	40	.4000
1984	.20	- .08	.0064	55	.3520
1985	.16	- .12	.0144	43	.6192
1986	.36	.08	.0064	39	.2496
					$\Sigma = 2.1070$

Note. Tested at the .05 level of significance
^aWhere $\bar{p} = .28$ (See Table 1)

using the same letter designations for the education level of the husband. This scale can be seen in the immediately preceding section of this paper. It was decided that the characteristic to be measured in this area of focus would be the change in the occurrence of the couple subject in which the wife the wife had more than 12 years of education. Therefore, only those in the categories of D, E or F were used for data in this portion of the study.

A frequency distribution was then constructed for each year, 1977 through 1986, representing all the subjects in any given year in which the wife's education was in category D, E or F. The mean proportion of the occurrence of this characteristic in each year studied was then calculated by dividing the number of subjects with this characteristic in each year by the total number of subjects in that year. The results of this calculation can be seen in Table 1.

These mean proportions were then used in a graphic representation to scale the change in the frequency of the occurrence of this characteristic over the 10 - year period (see Figure 4). This graph shows that the frequency of the occurrence of

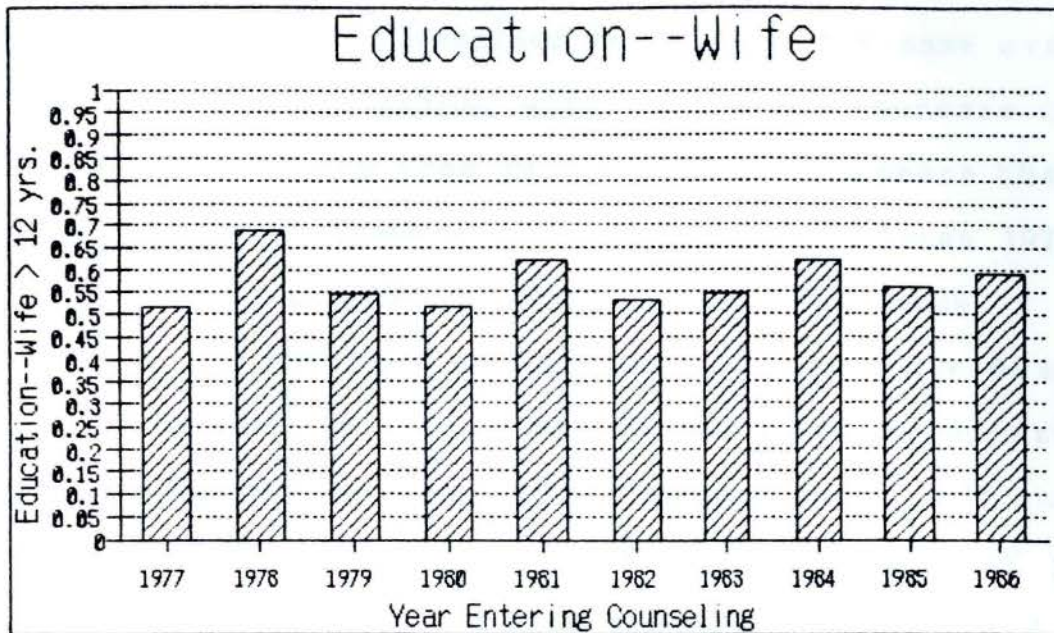


Figure 4. The mean proportion of marriages, as a function of year, in which the wife has more than 12 years of formal education.



this characteristic being present in the sample couples has remained relatively the same over the ten year period, with only a .07 increase in its occurrence from 1977 to 1986. It appears that the most noticeable increase occurred between 1977 and 1978, with a .17 proportionate difference.

The mean proportion of occurrence over the entire 10 - year period was then calculated by adding the proportion for each year, 1977 through 1986, and dividing it by the number of years surveyed in the study (10). The overall mean proportion of the occurrence of the wife being in the highest level of education was .58 (see Table 1). It is important to note that of all the results in this research, this characteristic had the highest overall proportionate level of occurrence over the 10 - year period studied.

To determine the statistical significance of the results of the data pertaining to this empirical foci, the chi-square statistic was calculated as shown in Table 5 and using the formula stated in the methods section of this

Table 5
 Chi-square Analysis of the Homogeneity of the
 Proportion of Occurrence for Empirical Question #4

Year	p_i	$p_i - \bar{p}^a$	$(p_i - \bar{p})^2$	N_i	$N_i \cdot (p_i - \bar{p})^2$
1977	.52	.06	.0036	23	.0828
1978	.69	.11	.0121	35	.4235
1979	.55	- .03	.0009	33	.0297
1980	.52	- .06	.0036	50	.1800
1981	.62	.04	.0016	55	.0880
1982	.53	- .05	.0025	32	.0800
1983	.55	- .03	.0009	40	.0360
1984	.62	.04	.0016	55	.0880
1985	.56	- .02	.0004	43	.0172
1986	.59	.01	.0001	39	.0039
					$\Sigma = 1.0291$

Note. Tested at the .05 level of significance

^aWhere $\bar{p} = .58$ (See Table 1)

paper. This calculation proceeded as follows:

$$\chi^2 = n_i (p_i - \bar{p})^2 / \bar{p} \cdot \bar{q}$$

$$\chi^2 = 1.1291 / .2436$$

$$\chi^2 = 4.6351$$

where:

$$\bar{p} = .58 \text{ (see Table 1)}$$

$$\bar{q} = (1 - \bar{p}) = .42$$

As stated in the methods section of this paper in order to be significant at the .05 level, and with 9 degrees of freedom, the chi-square analysis must exceed 16.919. Therefore, for question four, the chi-square test did not prove to be statistically significant, $\chi^2(9) = 4.6351$. This outcome suggests that the wife's education factor did not significantly change in incidence across the 10 - year period studied.

Span Between Date of Marriage and Birth of First Child

The data for this empirical focus was gathered as follows:

1. It was first determined if the couple had children or did not have children. Only the couples who had children were used to

evaluate this question.

2. The age of the first child was then recorded.
3. The length of time for which the couple had been married was then calculated by recording the time difference between the date of marriage and the date the couple first came in for counseling at PACT (PAC).
4. For each subject the difference between the number of years married and the age of the child was calculated.
5. It was decided that the characteristic to be measured in this area of focus would be the change in the occurrence of the couple subjects in which the birth of their first child occurred within two years of their marriage. Therefore, only the subjects with this characteristic were used for the data for this empirical question.

A frequency distribution was then constructed for each year, 1977 through 1986, representing all the subjects in any given year in which there was a child born within two years of the marriage date.

The mean proportion of the occurrence of this characteristic in each year studied was then calculated by dividing the number of subjects with this characteristic in each year by the total number of subjects in that year. The results of this calculation can be seen in Table 1.

These mean proportions were then used in a graphic representation to scale the change in the frequency of the occurrence of this characteristic over the 10 - year period (see Figure 5). This graph shows that while there were numerous fluctuations over the ten year period, the proportionate difference between 1977 and 1986 was only .01.

The mean proportion of occurrence over the entire 10 - year period was then calculated by adding the proportion for each year, 1977 through 1986, and dividing it by the number of years surveyed in the study (10). The overall mean proportion of the occurrence of couples who had their first child within two years of their marriage date was .53. It is important to note that of all the results in this research, this characteristic had the second highest overall proportionate level of occurrence over the 10 -

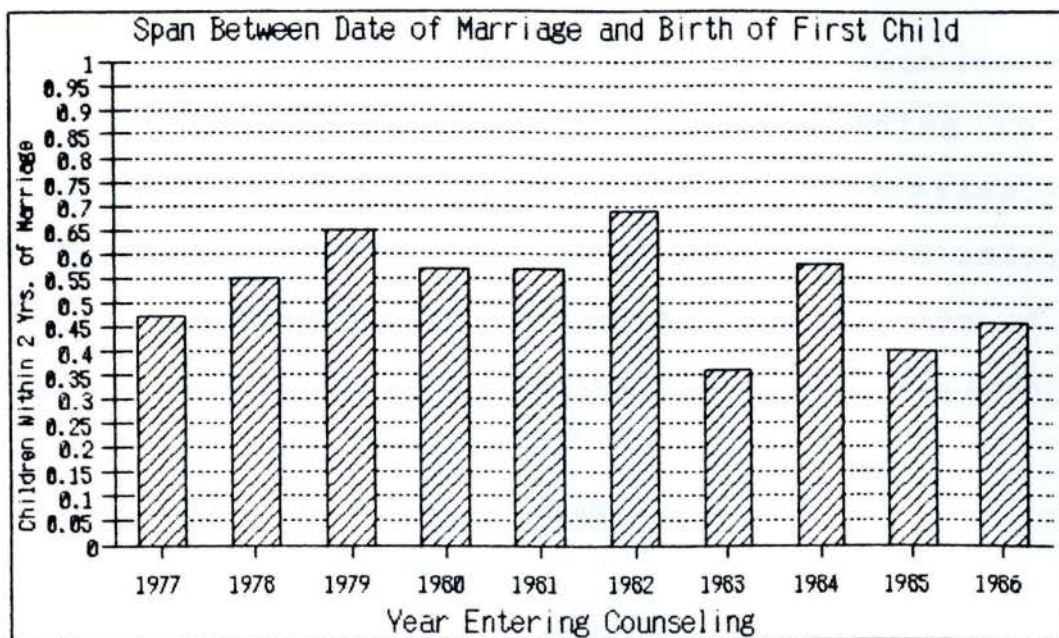


Figure 5. The mean proportion of marriages, as a function of year, in which the couple had their first child born within two years of their marriage date.

year period studied.

To determine the statistical significance of the results of the data pertaining to this empirical focus the chi-square statistic was calculated as shown in Table 6 and using the formula stated in the methods section of this paper. This calculation proceeded as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum n_i (p_i - \bar{p})^2 / \bar{p} \cdot \bar{q}$$

$$\chi^2 = 2.9019 / .2491$$

$$\chi^2 = 11.6495$$

where:

$$\bar{p} = .53 \text{ (see Table 1)}$$

$$\bar{q} = (1 - \bar{p}) = .47$$

As stated in the methods section of this paper in order to be significant at the .05 level, and with 9 degrees of freedom, the chi-square analysis must exceed 16.919. Therefore, for question five, the chi-square test did not prove to be statistically significant, $\chi^2(9) = 11.6495$. This outcome suggests that the span between the marriage date and the birth of the first child factor did not significantly change in incidence across the 10 - year period studied.

Table 6
Chi-square Analysis of the Homogeneity of the
Proportion of Occurrence for Empirical Question #5

Year	p_i	$p_i - \bar{p}^a$	$(p_i - \bar{p})^2$	N_i	$N_i \cdot (p_i - \bar{p})^2$
1977	.47	- .06	.0036	19	.0684
1978	.55	.02	.0004	20	.0080
1979	.65	- .12	.0144	26	.3744
1980	.57	- .04	.0016	35	.0560
1981	.57	.04	.0016	42	.0672
1982	.69	.16	.0256	26	.6656
1983	.36	- .17	.0289	28	.8092
1984	.58	.05	.0025	43	.1075
1985	.40	- .13	.0169	36	.6084
1986	.46	- .07	.0049	28	<u>.1372</u>
					$\Sigma = 2.9019$

Note. Tested at the .05 level of significance

^awhere $\bar{p} = .53$ (See Table 1)

Occupation of the Husband

The data for the occupation of the husband was taken directly from the client information form that was completed upon the client's first visit to PACT (PAC). The occupations were recorded using the following designations:

- A -- Professional and technical workers
- B -- Managers and administrators
- C -- Sales workers
- D -- Clerical workers
- E -- Craftsmen
- F -- Service workers--Skilled laborers
- G -- Unskilled laborers
- H -- Homemaker or Not employed outside the
home

It was decided that the characteristic to be measure in this area of focus would be the change in the occurrence of the couple subjects in which the husband's occupation was in one of the last three classifications. Therefore, only those in the categories of F, G, and H were used for data in this portion of the study.

A frequency distribution was constructed for each year, 1977 through 1986, representing all the

subjects in any given year in which the husband was in category F, G, or H. The mean proportion of the occurrence of this characteristic in each year studied was then calculated by dividing the number of subjects with this characteristic in each year by the total number of subjects in that year. The results of this calculation can be seen in Table 1.

These mean proportions were then used in a graphic representation to scale the change in the frequency of the occurrence of this characteristic over the 10 - year period (see Figure 6). This graph shows that while there has been a fluctuation over the past ten years, the proportionate difference between the year 1977 and 1986 is .09. The largest proportionate increase of occurrence was between the year 1977 and 1978 when there was an increase of .15.

The mean proportion of occurrence over the entire 10 - year period was then calculated by adding the proportion for each year, 1977 through 1986, and dividing it by the number of years surveyed in the study (10). The overall proportion of the occurrence of the husband being in one of the last three occupational categories was .29 (see

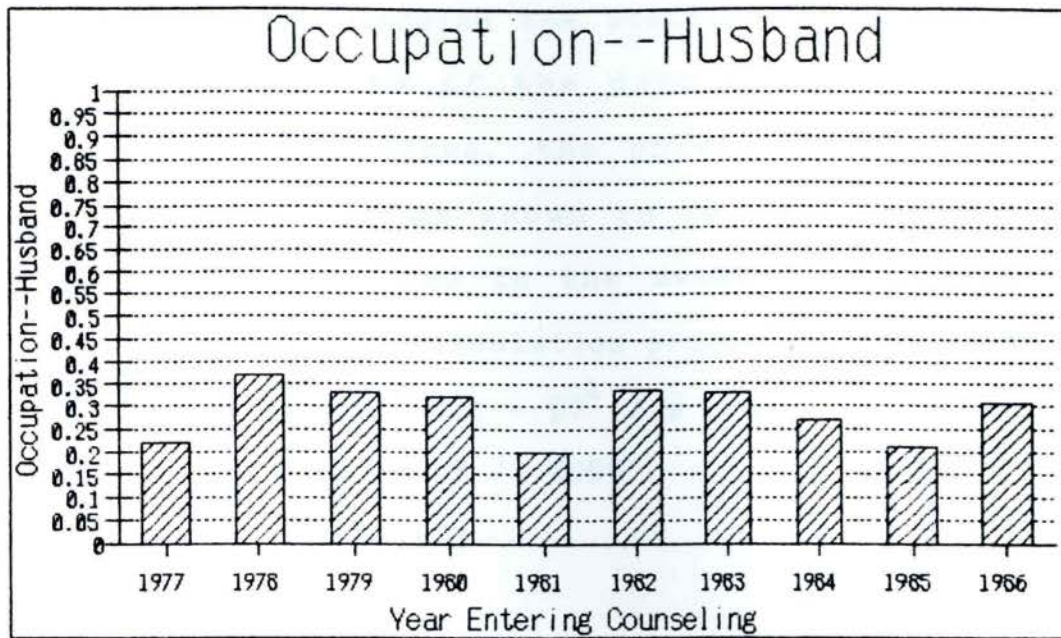


Figure 6. The mean proportion of marriages, as a function of year, in which the husband's occupation was in category F, G or H (see description, p. 58).

Table 1).

To determine the statistical significance of the results of the data pertaining to this empirical focus, the chi-square statistic was calculated as shown in Table 7 and using the formula stated in the methods section of this paper. This calculation proceeded as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum n_j (p_j - \bar{p})^2 / \bar{p} \cdot \bar{q}$$

$$\chi^2 = 1.3368 / .2059$$

$$\chi^2 = 6.4925$$

where:

$$\bar{p} = .29 \text{ (see Table 1)}$$

$$\bar{q} = (1 - \bar{p}) = .71$$

As stated in the methods section of this paper in order to be significant at the .05 level with 9 degrees of freedom, the chi-square analysis must exceed 16.919. Therefore, for empirical question six, the chi-square test did not prove to be statistically significant, $\chi^2(9) = 6.4925$. This outcome suggests that the husband's occupation factor did not significantly change in incidence across the 10 - year period studied.

Table 7
 Chi-square Analysis of the Homogeneity of the
 Proportion of Occurrence for Empirical Question #6

Year	p_i	$p_i - \bar{p}^a$	$(p_i - \bar{p})^2$	N_i	$N_i \cdot (p_i - \bar{p})^2$
1977	.22	- .07	.0049	23	.1127
1978	.37	.08	.0064	35	.2240
1979	.33	.04	.0016	33	.0528
1980	.32	.03	.0009	50	.0450
1981	.20	- .09	.0081	55	.4455
1982	.34	.05	.0025	32	.0800
1983	.33	.04	.0016	40	.0640
1984	.27	- .02	.0004	55	.0220
1985	.21	.08	.0064	43	.2752
1986	.31	.02	.0004	39	.0156
					$\Sigma = 1.3368$

Note. Tested at the .05 level of significance

^aWhere $\bar{p} = .29$ (See Table 1)

Occupation of the Wife

The data for the occupation of the wife was taken directly from the client information form that was completed upon the clients first visit to PACT (PAC). The types of occupations were recorded for each subject using the same letter designations that were used for the occupational categories of the husband. This scale can be seen in the immediately preceding section of this paper. It was decided that the characteristic to be measured in this area of focus would be the change in the occurrence of the couple subjects in which the wife's occupation was in one of the first two categories. Therefore, only those wives who were in category A or B were used for data in this portion of the study.

A frequency distribution was then constructed for each year, 1977 through 1986, representing all the subjects in any given year in which the wife's occupation was in category A or B. The mean proportion of the occurrence of this characteristic in each year studied was then calculated by dividing the number of subjects with this characteristic in each year by the total number of

subjects in that year. The result of this calculation can be seen in Table 1.

These mean proportions were then used in a graphic representation to scale the change in the frequency of the occurrence of this characteristic over the 10 - year period (see Figure 7). This graph shows that between the year 1977 and 1986 there was a proportionate increase of .11 in the occurrence of the wives in the first two occupational categories. Over the 10 - year period there does not appear to be any definable pattern of increase in the occurrence of this characteristic.

The mean proportion of occurrence over the entire 10 - year period was then calculated by adding the proportion for each year, 1977 through 1986, and dividing it by the number of years surveyed in the study (10). The overall mean proportion of the occurrence of the wife being in one of the two highest levels of occupational categories was .24 (see Table 1).

To determine the statistical significance of the results of the data pertaining to this empirical focus, the chi-square statistic was

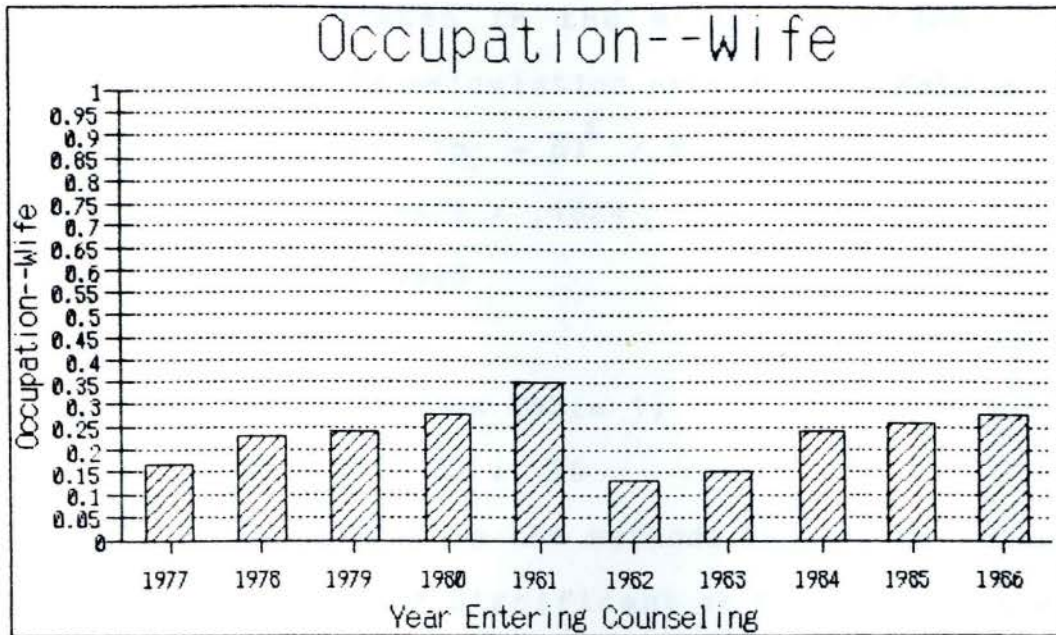


Figure 7. The mean proportion of marriages, as a function of year, in which the wife's occupation was in category A or B (see description p. 58).

calculated as shown in Table 8 and using the formula stated in the methods section of this paper. This calculation proceeded as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum n_j (p_j - \bar{p})^2 / \bar{p} \cdot \bar{q}$$

$$\chi^2 = 1.6525 / .1824$$

$$\chi^2 = 9.0598$$

where:

$$\bar{p} = .24 \text{ (see Table 1)}$$

$$\bar{q} = (1 - \bar{p}) = .76$$

As stated in the methods section of this paper in order to be significant at the .05 level with 9 degrees of freedom, the chi-square analysis must exceed 16.919. Therefore, for empirical question 7, the chi-square test did not prove to be statistically significant, $\chi^2(9) = 9.0598$. This outcome suggests that the occupation of the wife factor did not significantly change in incidence across the 10 - year period studied.

Profile

To provide an overall picture of the results of the data collected, the mean proportions of the occurrence of each of the empirical foci as a function of year was taken from Table 1 then

Table 8
 Chi-square Analysis of the Homogeneity of the
 Proportion of Occurrence for Empirical Question #7

Year	p_i	$p_i - \bar{p}^a$	$(p_i - \bar{p})^2$	N_i	$N_i \cdot (p_i - \bar{p})^2$
1977	.17	- .07	.0049	23	.1127
1978	.23	- .01	.0001	35	.0035
1979	.24	.00	.0000	33	.0000
1980	.28	.04	.0016	50	.0800
1981	.35	.11	.0121	55	.6655
1982	.13	- .11	.0121	32	.3872
1983	.15	- .09	.0081	40	.3240
1984	.24	.00	.0000	55	.0000
1985	.26	.02	.0004	43	.0172
1986	.28	.04	.0016	39	.0624
					$\Sigma = 1.6525$

Note. Tested at the .05 level of significance

^aWhere $\bar{p} = .24$ (See Table 1)

plotted on a bar graph (see Figure 8).

For the purpose of giving an overall picture of the subjects studied, a relative frequency distribution was made for each of the characteristics taken from or calculated from the client information forms. They were:

1. The age of the husband at the first counseling session
2. The age of the wife at the first counseling session
3. The age difference between the husband and the wife
4. The number of children at the time of counseling
5. The span of years between marriage and the birth of the first child
6. The age of the husband at the time of marriage
7. The age of the wife at the time of marriage
8. The length of marriage before seeking counseling

This data was then used to find the average of each of these characteristics for each year

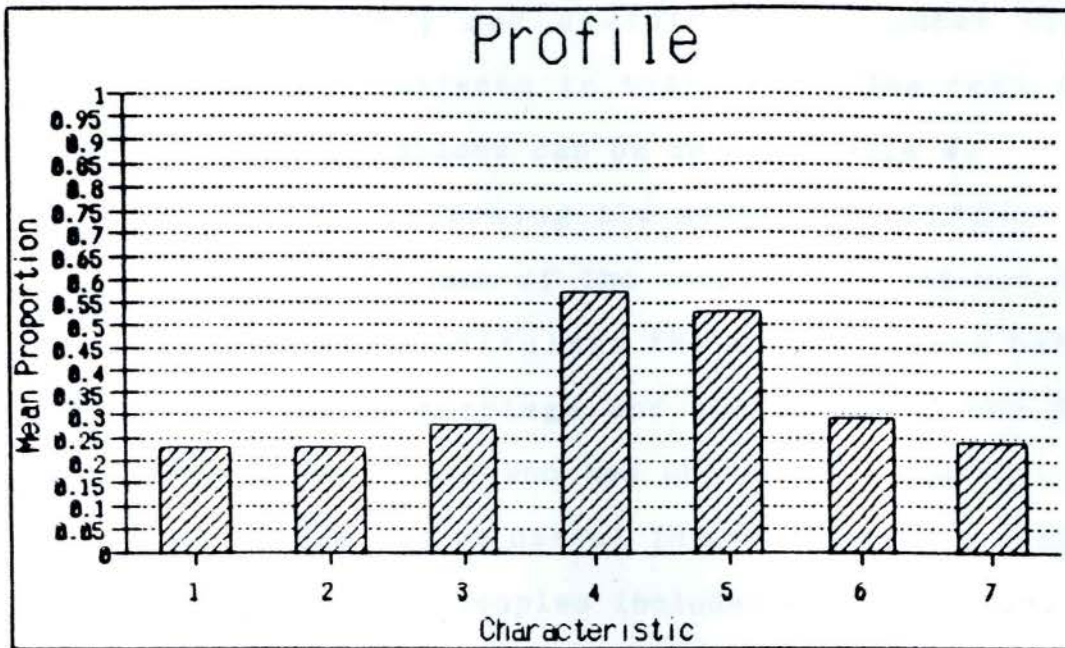


Figure 8.

- Characteristic 1 - Mean proportion of couples with at least one spouse less than 20 years of age at time of marriage
- Characteristic 2 - Mean proportion of heterogamous marriages
- Characteristic 3 - Mean proportion of husbands having 12 years or less of formal education
- Characteristic 4 - Mean proportion of wives having more than 12 years of formal education
- Characteristic 5 - Mean proportion of couples who had their first child within two years of marriage date
- Characteristic 6 - Mean proportion of husbands in occupational category F, G, or H
- Characteristic 7 - Mean proportion of wives in occupational category A or B

studied, 1977 through 1986, by adding the total for each category and dividing that number by the number of subjects in that year. The results of these calculations can be seen in Table 9.

Data concerning the number of children that were born to each of the couples studied was taken primarily to calculate the span of years between the date of marriage and the birth of the first child (for those who had children). However, this data alone can be useful in getting a more complete profile of the couples included in this study.

As was expected, not all of the couples in the study had children. The overall mean proportion of the couples without children at the time they came for counseling was .25. The overall mean proportion of the couples with children was .75. This indicates that a substantial majority of the subjects in this study did have children at the time they came for their first visit to PACT (PAC). As can be seen in Table 9, the overall average number of children born to those couples studied who did have children was 2.38. This indicated that couples included in this study had, on the average, two or three children.

The data that was collected concerning the

Table 9
Mean for Each Characteristic Surveyed

Year	Characteristic ^a							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1977	34.48	32.52	1.96	2.42	2.95	22.57	20.17	12.35
1978	34.17	32.20	1.97	2.40	2.70	22.37	20.37	11.86
1979	34.85	32.70	2.15	2.19	2.19	23.06	20.90	11.79
1980	35.16	32.88	2.28	2.40	2.63	24.28	22.00	10.88
1981	36.87	32.80	4.07	2.19	3.19	22.89	21.33	11.29
1982	36.81	34.81	2.00	2.08	2.15	23.31	21.03	13.78
1983	35.45	33.68	1.77	2.18	4.14	23.55	21.78	11.95
1984	37.27	35.04	2.23	2.26	2.60	24.58	22.40	12.67
1985	39.35	37.91	1.44	2.05	3.06	34.49	23.07	14.84
1986	<u>36.51</u>	<u>34.43</u>	<u>2.08</u>	<u>1.64</u>	<u>3.29</u>	<u>24.21</u>	<u>22.08</u>	<u>12.35</u>
	36.09 ^b	33.90 ^b	2.19 ^b	2.38 ^c	3.19 ^b	25.95 ^b	23.69 ^b	13.18 ^b

- ^a Characteristic 1 - The average age of the husband at time of counseling
 Characteristic 2 - The average age of the wife at time of counseling
 Characteristic 3 - The average age difference between husband and wife
 Characteristic 4 - The average number of children at time of counseling
 Characteristic 5 - The average span of years between marriage and birth of the first child
 Characteristic 6 - The average age of the husband at marriage
 Characteristic 7 - The average age of the wife at marriage
 Characteristic 8 - The average length of marriage before seeking counseling

^b Measured in years

^c Measured in numbers

number of years the couple had been married prior to their seeking counseling was also collected primarily to determine the span of time between the birth of the first child and the marriage date. This data, however, can also be used to give a more complete profile of the couples included in this study.

Table 9 indicates the average number of years a couple had been married prior to seeking counseling, for each year studied, 1977 through 1986. Using these averages, an overall average was calculated by adding these averages and dividing by the number of years studied (10). The results of this calculation indicate that couples included in this study had been married an average of 13.18 years before seeking counseling (see Table 9).

Chapter VI

Discussion

Since none of the results of the data collected proved to be statistically significant, this indicates that the incidence of the critical characteristics in the profile of the unstable marriage does not appear to have changed significantly over the past decade. That is, the "face of instability" seems to have remained stable over the past 10 years.

Although there were not significant changes in the characteristics studied, there are several observations, as a result of this study, that can be of interest to demographers as well as marriage therapists in their practice. In reviewing the results of the data concerning the effects of the wife being in a professional level occupation, it is interesting to note that between the years 1981 and 1982, there was a noticeable drop in what appeared to be a steady incline in the occurrence of this characteristic in the subjects studied. It is suggested that this might be a reflection of the occurrence of a recession that occurred in the

United States in 1981. It would follow that the first "executives" to lose their jobs would be the last hired. Since the "executive woman" is a relatively new phenomenon, it would then follow that they would be the first to lose their jobs. This conceivably may have precipitated stress not only for these women but also for the family economics and the marital relationship.

However, as can be observed in Figure 7, since 1982 there has been a repeat of the period from 1977 to 1986 in the steady increase in the occurrence of this characteristic in the subjects studied (see Figure 7). It is therefore suggested that the noticeable difference between 1981 and 1982 in the occurrence of this characteristic is more likely to be a reflection of the state of the nationwide economic situation rather than specifically applying only to the subjects in this study.

Unexpectedly, the data collected concerning the age at marriage of both of the spouses did not prove to be either statistically or proportionately significant. It is, however, interesting to note that, with some fluctuation over the specified 10 - year period, the proportion of couples marrying at

an early age (with one of the spouses being under 20 years of age) has noticeably decreased from 39% of the couples surveyed in 1977 to 15% of the couples surveyed in 1986. This most likely reflects the general societal trend toward marrying at a later age that was projected in a study by Parke and Glick (1967).

Of particular interest to the demographer and the marriage therapist might be the average demographic profile of the couple subjects in the present study. It is interesting to note the similarity for each of the 10 years studied of (1) the average age of the husband, (2) the average age of the wife, and (3) the average number of years married before seeking counseling (see Table 9). It would be useful for future studies to investigate the consistency with the results of the present study and if consistency is found to investigate the significance to marital instability of an average age of 36 for the husband, an average age of 34 for the wife, and an average of 13 years of marriage before seeking counseling. This could perhaps be accomplished by investigating the life - cycle occurrences that correlate with those

particular ages and number of years married.

It is interesting to note that, on the average, both the husband and the wife in the sampled population had more than a high school education. Further investigation into the data revealed that 72% of the husbands surveyed had one year or more of college and 57% of the wives had one year of college or more.

The occupation level of the spouses was further investigated to reveal that 44% of the husbands surveyed were in the upper two categories of occupational levels. That is, 44% of the husbands surveyed were (1) professional or technical workers or (2) managers or administrators. This represents a relatively significant proportion of the total number of husbands surveyed.

In like manner, the occupation level of the wives were also further investigated to reveal that 34% of the wives were in the last occupational category. That is, 34% of the wives surveyed were homemakers or not employed outside the home. This also appears to be a relatively significant proportion of the total number of wives surveyed.

Taking into consideration the further

investigation of the educational and occupational categories of the couples surveyed, it is suggested that a relatively significant proportion of the sampled population is representative of a highly educated and typically "traditional" marital dyad (i.e., the husband being a professional and the wife a homemaker). It would be interesting for future research to explore the differences in the results of a similar investigation using subjects from a different geographic or socioeconomic population.

It would also be of interest, particularly to the marital therapist, for future research to explore the potential effects of the differences in the education levels of the spouses. This could be accomplished by conducting research based on a concept of the homogeneous or heterogeneous education levels of the spouses, both at the time of marriage and at the time of beginning counseling.

The data collected to research the empirical questions shows that the couples who sought marital counseling at PACT between 1977 and 1986, and who met the criteria for subjects in this study were:

1. More likely to have married when both the husband and wife were 20 years of age or older as opposed to 20 years of age or younger.
2. More likely to be age homogamous (i.e., the age difference between the husband and wife was less than 3 years) than age heterogamous (i.e., the age difference being more than 3 years).
3. More likely to have a husband with more than 12 years of formal education, as opposed to less than 12 years of formal education.
4. More likely to have a wife with more than 12 year of formal education, as opposed to less than 12 years of formal education.
5. More likely to have had their first child within two years of their marriage date as opposed to more than two years after their marriage date.
6. More likely to have a husband in the upper five levels as opposed to the lower three levels of occupation (see p. 58).
7. More likely to have a wife in the lower six levels as opposed to the upper two

levels of occupation (see p. 58).

These tendencies, however, may not necessarily be indicative of marital instability. For instance, the results of this study showing that there is a tendency of the sampled population to marry at the age of 20 or older may actually be a reflection of the general trend in our society to postpone marriage for various reasons and marry at a later age. To make the distinction between this trend being an indicator of marital instability or merely a general trend in our society, a comparison would have to be made to couples in the general population who were not seeking counseling for instability in their marriage relationship. The same rationale would apply to the remaining six empirical foci.

It is therefore suggested that in future investigations similar to the present study, it would be advisable to add a control group for a comparison study. This could be accomplished by collecting data from a control group, during the same time period, of couples who do not think that their marital problems are severe enough to seek professional help and who are not seeking

counseling. This type of study would likely give more accurate data on those characteristics which apply more specifically to unstable marriages versus marriages in general.

It is also speculated that more reliable data could be collected from a longitudinal study in which each client's face sheet was fully completed upon the first visit. It is possible that the data from this study was influenced by the fact that not all of the client's face sheets were complete enough to be included in the research. Therefore, only those clients who were thorough enough to entirely complete their demographic information could be included in this survey.

In addition, it is also suggested that it would be helpful to supplement the demographic data obtained by asking the participating subjects to complete a short questionnaire. The Marital Instability Index developed by Booth, Johnson and Edwards (1983), proved to be a valid measure and could be used to supplement the demographic data to get both an objective and subjective picture of the couple experiencing marital instability.

It is important to emphasize that in order to stay conceptually consistent with this research,

the study of marital instability must be kept distinct from the study of divorce or separation. As was stated by Booth, Johnson and Edwards (1983) in their study, "...instability refers to a situation in an intact dyad, not to one that already have been disrupted" (p. 392).

It is hoped that the results of the present study will be a good source for comparison in future studies. It is also hoped that this and future similar studies will lead to a better understanding of the changing societal trends and the dynamics of the marriage relationship. Such research can be useful not only to demographers, but also to therapists who are dedicated to helping those couples who are experiencing instability in their relationship and come to them for counseling.

Appendix A

Client Information Forms

LAST NAME

FIRST NAMES

WOMAN'S MAIDEN NAME

ALIAS/PREVIOUS MARRIAGE

ADDRESS

DATE

SOURCE OF REFERENCE

TELEPHONE: HOME

WORK

Family	Birth Date	Occupation or School	Birthplace	Race	Religion
(Yourself)					
(Spouse)		Education	Marriage Date		
(Names of Single Children)		(Yourself)			
		(Spouse)	Employer		
(Others in Household)					

CONFIDENTIAL FAMILY INFORMATION _____ Source of Referral _____ Date _____

Last Name _____ (Husband) _____ (Wife) _____ Woman's Maiden Name _____ Name(s) from previous marriage(s) _____
 Address (if living separately, please give both addresses) _____
 Street _____ Town State _____ Zip _____ Home _____ Work _____ Telephone _____
 Street _____ Town State _____ Zip _____ Home _____ Work _____

Employment - Social Security Numbers _____ Husbands _____ Wife _____
 Occupation or School _____ Husbands _____ Wife _____ Company _____
 Employer(s) _____ Husbands _____ Wife _____ Address _____ Address _____
 Will your insurance be used to pay for services? _____ If yes, please list name of insurance company _____ Card and Group Numbers _____

Will you be using MasterCard/Visa? _____ If so, give card numbers _____ D MasterCard _____ Exp Date _____
 Health - Please give name(s) of present physician(s), if any _____ D Visa _____ Exp Date _____

Are you or spouse presently undergoing treatment for any physical or mental disorders _____ If so, please give name(s) of your doctor's and what you are being treated for _____

Has any member of family ever been seen for counseling or therapy before now? _____ If so, please give names of previous therapist(s) _____ Date(s) Seen _____
 Are you willing to sign a release for information from any previous therapist, counselor, or physician you have listed? _____ If not, please indicate reasons _____

Family Information		Date of Birth	Marriage Status	Marriage Date(s) Last Previous	Education
Man's Name					
Woman's Name					
Name of Children			Name of Children (Cont'd)		Date of Birth



CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION FORM

DATE: ___/___/___ REFERRAL SOURCE: _____

(H)-Husband (W)-Wife: If you are single or being seen as an individual please fill in the box appropriate for you.

NAME: (Last) _____ (H) _____ (W) _____

ADDRESS: (H) _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

ADDRESS: (W) _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE: (H) (____) _____ OFFICE PHONE: (H) (____) _____
(W) (____) _____ (W) (____) _____

MARITAL STATUS: _____ SINGLE _____ MARRIED _____ SEPARATED _____ DIVORCED _____ WIDOWED

REMARIED _____ (PREVIOUS MARRIED NAMES(S) _____

MARRIAGE DATE: (PRESENT) _____ (PREVIOUS) (H) _____ (W) _____

AGE: (H) _____ (W) _____ BIRTHDATE: (H) ___/___/___ (W) ___/___/___

EDUCATION: (H) _____ H.S. GRAD. _____ TECH SCHOOL _____ COLLEGE _____ DEGREE _____
COLLEGE ATTENDED _____ GPA: _____

(W) _____ H.S. GRAD. _____ TECH SCHOOL _____ COLLEGE _____ DEGREE _____
COLLEGE ATTENDED _____ GPA: _____

HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED PSYCHOLOGICAL OR PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES BEFORE? _____
IF SO, WHERE? _____

FAMILY DATA:

CHILDREN'S NAMES	M	F	AGE	SCHOOL	RESIDENCE

(MORE INFORMATION ON BACK)

Marriage and Family Therapy • Individual and Group Treatment

755 S. New Ballas Road • Suite 100 • St. Louis, Missouri • 63141 • (314) 432-4522

OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION:

OCCUPATION: (H) _____ (W) _____

EMPLOYER: (H) _____ (W) _____

ADDRESS: (H) _____ (W) _____

S.S. #: (H) _____ (W) _____

INSURANCE COVERAGE: (H) _____ YES _____ NO (W) _____ YES _____ NO

NAME OF COMPANY _____

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