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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REMARITAL
ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DIVORCED PERSONS (RAQ-D)

by
Derrel J. Higgins

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Marriage and Family Therapy Program
School of Family Life
Brigham Young University

August 2007

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

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This dissertation has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the dissertation of Derrel J. Higgins in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REMARITAL ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DIVORCED PERSONS (RAQ-D)

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Marriage and Family Therapy Program

School of Family Life

Doctor of Philosophy

The development of the Remarital Assessment Questionnaire for Divorced Persons (RAQ-D) is presented. Steps of development of the questionnaire are outlined: a review of remarital literature, interviews with remarried couples, the creation of a pool of items, review of the items by clinicians, and the development of a preliminary questionnaire. Data were collected through the internet. An Exploratory Factor Analysis of the data yielded scales relating to adjustment areas that are specific to remarital couples. The resulting scales exhibited acceptable level of internal consistency. Psychometric properties of the resulting scales are reported. Implications and recommendations of further development of the resulting scales are discussed.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Over the past thirty years, remarriage has become a normative part of society in the United States (Visher & Visher, 1990). Over a decade ago, Cherlin and Furstenberg (1994) approximated that one-third of all Americans are expected to marry, divorce, and remarry during their lifetimes. While remarriages around 1970 accounted for 31% of all marriages, they now account for almost half of all marriages. Forty-six percent of the weddings taking place today involve a remarriage for at least one of the partners. Furthermore, it is estimated that in one out of five marriages, both the bride and groom are entering a second marriage (US Bureau of the Census, 2004).

Similar to couples entering a first marriage, many couples entering remarriage seek guidance to enhance their relationship and guard their future marriage against problems. These couples may turn to books, friends, religious leaders, and/or family professionals to assist them in their preparation for a successful and satisfying marriage. In the past, these professionals focused their preventive efforts primarily on first-marriage couples. Numerous interventions were developed to strengthen these first marriages against future problems that may lead to marital dissolution (Stahmann, 2000).

As the frequency of remarriage has increased over the past few decades, researchers, with increased study of this group, have discovered marital issues unique to remarried couples (Albrecht, Bahr, & Goodman, 1983; Messinger, 1976; Stahmann, 2000). Interventions sculpted for first-marriage couples did not address the distinct differences that are associated with second-marriage premarital relationships.

Comprehensive premarital questionnaires were one of the tools developed to assist in the fight against marital dissolution. The purposes of these questionnaires are to: assess weaknesses and strengths of the relationship, serve as an intervention (through raising the couples' awareness of problem and strength areas in their relationship), and serve as a guide to the clinician when developing a treatment plan.

There are three major premarital inventories available (Larson, Newell, Topham, & Nichols, 2002). However, these premarital inventories fail to assess specifically areas that are involved in second marriages. To alleviate this problem, some have adapted their premarital inventories to remarital situations (e.g., PREPARE-MC). Other inventories were developed to be general enough for both first-marriage and remarriage populations (e.g., FOCCUS) (Williams & Jurich, 1995). There are currently three remarital instruments included as part of premarital/marital inventories which are available to clinicians for assessing remarital couples. These include the PREmarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation - Marriage with Children (PREPARE-MC) (Olson, Fournier, & Druckman, 1996), Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study (FOCCUS) (Markey & Micheletto, 1997; Williams & Jurich, 1995) and RELATE-Remarriage (originally named the RELATE-RS) (Higgins, 2001). These inventories have likely provided assistance to remarital couples but there is currently no stand-alone inventory available that has been designed and developed with the sole purpose of assessing the areas that are specific to a premarital remarriage relationship following divorce.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to develop a stand-alone remarital instrument for couples entering remarriage following divorce, the Remarital Assessment Questionnaire for Divorced Persons (RAQ-D) that is based on research and on real-world experiences of remarried couples. This inventory was created with the purpose of assessing remarital relationships following divorce. (Couples entering remarriage following the death of a spouse are not included in the inventory due to the unique challenges surrounding the death of a loved one.) Through the development of this instrument it is hoped that remarital couples and the professionals working with them will be given an additional choice when seeking an assessment instrument to guide them in preparation for remarriage.

Research Design

The development of the Remarital Assessment Questionnaire for Divorced Persons (RAQ-D) for this dissertation embodied the following steps.

- 1) A review of remarriage literature in order to obtain relevant content for the Remarital Assessment Questionnaire for Divorced Persons items.
- 2) The completion of open-ended interviews with remarried couples to determine additional areas of content that are not covered by research literature.
- 3) A review of three current remarital inventories, PREPARE-MC, FOCCUS, and RELATE-Remarriage to identify their content related to remarriage.
- 4) The writing and editing of a pool of items that were designed to assess specific aspects of remarriage (assessing the items for content and construct validity as they are created).

- 5) Submission of the new items to a panel of clinicians to assess face and content validity.
- 6) The development of a webpage to receive feedback from solicited remarried and divorced persons in a relationship progressing towards remarriage through the medium of the internet.
- 7) Administration of a pilot study to a sample of self-identified divorced persons and remarried persons in order to receive feedback about the items and format of the inventory. Participants were solicited through announcements via e-newsletters, postings on relationship-based websites, and postings in relationship discussion forums
- 8) The organization of factors and elimination of items as determined by exploratory factor analysis.
- 9) Assessment of internal consistency reliability of the items selected.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Current Comprehensive Remarital Inventories

There are currently three comprehensive premarital inventories which also contain some items dealing with remarriage and parenting. These inventories are PREmarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation/PREmarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation - Married with Children (PREPARE/PREPARE-MC), Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study (FOCCUS) and RELATE-Remarriage. The following sections will briefly review each inventory.

PREPARE/PREPARE-MC. PREPARE-MC is an offshoot of the second version of the PREPARE inventory. Because PREPARE-MC is an extension of PREPARE, these instruments will be referred to as one (i.e. – PREPARE/PREPARE-MC) in the body of this work. In 1981, Olson and his colleagues (Olson, et al., 1996) developed PREPARE-MC from 90 of the 125 items in PREPARE. Twenty-five of the other items were reworded or modified.

The PREPARE manual states that those couples who use PREPARE can: “take stock of strength and growth areas that are present in their relationship, evaluate their level of idealism, explore important topics they might otherwise avoid, and begin to develop communication and conflict resolution skills” (Olson, et al., 1996, p. 9). Those who elect to employ PREPARE-MC, in addition to the benefits of PREPARE, can expect to: “explore the expectations partners have about remarrying, evaluate the impact of previous relationships on their current relationship, and examine parenting issues, including those related to stepfamily relationships” (Olson, et al., 1996, p. 10).

PREPARE-MC “is designed for couples planning to marry who have children” (Olson, et al., 1996, p. 10).

There are ten content areas in the PREPARE-MC inventory: marriage expectations, personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, role relationship, and spiritual beliefs. Feedback from the PREPARE-MC is sent directly to the professional with a strong recommendation that the couple not directly receive the inventory results (Olson, et al., 1996). In the manual for this inventory, the authors explain this preference. They would like the couple to be able to have the results given through a professional who can help them understand the findings and avoid misinterpretations (Olson, et al., 1996). Internal consistency ranges from .73 to .85 and test-retest scores range from .74 to .93 (Scott, 2001).

FOCCUS. Like PREPARE-MC, FOCCUS is a comprehensive remarital inventory often used by professionals when counseling premarital and remarital couples. This 156-item inventory was developed in 1985 by Markey, Micheletto, and Becker (Markey & Micheletto, 1997).

The development of FOCCUS incorporated four goals. First, the feedback from FOCCUS would give couples an opportunity to evaluate their relationship objectively. Second, the inventory was engineered to assess both “contemporary and specialized needs” of several different types of couples (i.e.- dual-career, interfaith, etc.) (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997, p. 130). Third, the inventory was to echo values and principles of religious couples. Fourth, the developers wanted FOCCUS to be easy to use for couples and practitioners alike. This inventory is used extensively in the Catholic Church to aid

couples in their preparation for marriage. There is a non-denominational version of FOCCUS available (Larson et al., 2002; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997).

FOCCUS has 13 primary areas of emphasis: lifestyle expectations, friends and interests, personality match, personal issues, communication, problem solving, religion and values, parenting issues, extended family issues, sexuality issues, financial issues, readiness issues, and marriage covenant. FOCCUS includes nine items specific to a remarital situation. The inventory has shown predictive validity of up to 80% for couples who utilized the inventory before marriage and later divorced (Williams & Jurich, 1995). FOCCUS was analyzed by SRI Research Center, Inc. (Lincoln, Nebraska) and was found to have “internal consistency reliability (subscales range from .86 to .98) and construct validity” (Markey & Micheletto, 1997, p. 2).

RELATE-Remarriage. The RELATIONSHIP Evaluation (RELATE) inventory was developed for use primarily with premarital couples. This inventory was originally named the PREP-M (Holman, Larson, & Harmer, 1994). Recently, RELATE added a remarriage supplement (RELATE-Remarriage) to specifically assess remarital issues. RELATE-Remarriage was developed to only be used alongside the RELATE inventory. RELATE-Remarriage is based on the RELATIONSHIP Evaluation–Remarital Supplement (RELATE-RS) (Higgins, 2001). The original supplement (RELATE-RS) is made up of 49 items in eight subscales (Higgins, 2001). The subscales are Unrealistic Expectations, Financial Challenges: Decision-Making, Financial Challenges: Child and Spousal Support, Stepparent Issues, Stepchild(ren) Effects on Marital Intimacy, Current Interactions with Ex-spouse: Closeness with Previous Spouse, Current Interactions with Ex-spouse: Reactivity to Previous Spouse, and Factors Involved with Widows/Widowers.

The internal consistency reliability of six of the subscales ranges from .63 to .86 (Higgins, 2001). Two of the subscales do not have internal consistency reliability reported (Higgins, 2001). The RELATE-Remarriage scale is composed of 30 items. There are no internal consistency reliability scores reported.

Review of Literature: Factors of Remarital Adjustment and Relationship Quality

As previously mentioned, remarital couples face unique challenges when entering into marriage (Ganong & Coleman, 1994; Hobart, 1991; Visher & Visher, 1990; 1991; 1996). When compared to couples in first marriages, remarried couples have an increased risk for marital dissolution (Ganong & Coleman, 1994; Raley & Bumpass, 2003), particularly in the first five years of marriage (Weston & Macklin, 1990).

This section includes the five most prevalent topic areas faced by remarital couples as determined from a comprehensive review of the literature. The literature review was conducted by searching the following databases: PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, ERIC, PsycBOOKS, and Social Sciences Abstracts. A total of 275 articles were gathered. The articles obtained from these searches were reviewed carefully by the researcher and grouped into descriptive categories (e.g., child support). The descriptive categories were then grouped into conceptual areas (e.g., finances in remarriage). The following conceptual areas were identified through this methodological process and will be addressed: unrealistic expectations, financial challenges, stepparent issues, stepchild(ren) effects on marital intimacy, and current interactions with previous spouse.

Unrealistic Expectations. Visher and Visher (1990) declared that one of the tasks successful remarital couples accomplish is the "transition from previous family culture to

stepfamily culture" (p. 4). They assert many remarital couples (and the blended families that they form) experience difficulty making the transition to a blended family when the following tasks were not successfully completed: 1) realizing the loss of the dream of a successful first marriage, 2) acknowledging and accepting other losses, such as relationships with friends and family, losses of the dream of an intact lifelong marriage, that are part of marital dissolution, and 3) forming realistic expectations of the new relationship. Remarried couples, as well as all members of a stepfamily, need to learn to expect that their family will be different than a first marriage family. In a study by Stahmann and Hiebert (1997), carrying unrealistic expectations was the third most damaging problem facing remarital couples rated by a national sample of clergy counselors.

Other authors confirm that remarried individuals commonly nurture the belief that their family life will be like that of a first family (Bray & Kelly, 1998; Heatherington & Kelly, 2002). Bray and Kelly (1998) further clarify a related unrealistic belief, the "rescue fantasy" (p. 114), in which an individual sees his or her role in marrying a single parent to reunify the family and recapture the lost nuclear family structure.

If the couple holds on to the ideal family image, that of a husband and wife in a first marriage, this may hinder their ability to integrate their new family (Visher & Visher, 1990). They should expect the integration/transition to take time (5-6 years) (Papernow, 1984; 1993). Dahl, Cowgill, and Asmundsson (1987) advise remarried couples to proceed with the transition slowly and cautiously recognizing the time it will really take to forge true familial relationships.

Various unrealistic expectations have been identified by other authors (Bray & Kelly, 1998; Deal, 2002; Heatherington & Kelly, 2002; Parrott & Parrott, 2001). For example, Parrott and Parrott (2001) coined the “just-us” (p. 113) expectation in which new partners are expected to let their past completely disappear and fully dedicate their time and attention to the new partner and his or her children. In this scenario, the previous spouse and children are seen as pesky inconveniences that need to be left in the past (Bray & Kelly, 1998). The “instant love” expectation (Bray & Kelly, 1998, p. 114) is used to describe the expectation that children somehow are naturally predisposed to absorb the love for their parent’s new partner (Heatherington & Kelly, 2002). Bray and Kelly (1998) also identified the “better-than” (p. 115) expectation in which a new partner believes the new marriage is going to be easier, more joyful, and overall more advantageous than the previous marriage. Another expectation revolves around the stepparent’s inability to recognize that his or her thoughts, feelings, and opinions should carry the same weight as all other family members’ emotional contributions (Bray & Kelly, 1998). Heatherington and Kelly (2002) as did Bray and Kelly (1998), identified the “rescue fantasy” (p. 175) myth in which the new partner acting as parent will bring a new more effective family environment which will alleviate the faltering parenting strategies of the past and present.

Financial Challenges: Decision making and child and spousal support. A remarital situation often creates a complex financial arrangement where monies may be allocated outside of the immediate remarital system (i.e., alimony or child support payments) (Estess, 1992; Lown and Dolan, 1988). Moreover, individuals who are divorced experience, on average, a 77% decrease in wealth; women experience the

financial pinch slightly more than men (Stroup & Pollock, 1994; Zagorsky, 2005). Thus, as divorced partners have the experience of decreasing financial resources this may increase the volatility of any topic intertwined with finances, whether real or imagined.

Numerous authors have identified finances as one of the most problematic areas of adjustment for remarriage couples (Benson & Pasley, 1993; Gordon & Daniel, 1992; Jacobson, 1993; Kelly, 1995; Hobart, 1991; LeBey, 2004; Lown & Dolan, 1988; 1994; Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997). Gordon and Daniel (1992) described the remarital situation as "...fertile ground for money conflicts" (p. 53). Lown and Dolan (1988) suggested that even clinicians struggle with a complete understanding of the complexity of blended family finances and clinicians affirm the destabilizing effect finances can have on a remarital relationship. Hobart's (1991) research evidenced that although finances are one of the top challenges for remarried couples, they do not have more measurable conflict over money than first married couples.

There are many ways finances can exert influence on a remarital relationship. Remarital couples may struggle with financial arrangements due to the lack of clearly-established norms (Kelly, 1995; Lown & Dolan, 1988). For example, some families struggle with the decision to combine their financial resources or whether to keep them separate (Lown & Dolan, 1994). Oftentimes couples fall into the myth that the degree of successful stepfamily integration can be measured by the level of integration of economic resources. This leads to false and potentially problematic beliefs about the meaning behind pooling money (Kelly, 1995). Couples who attempt to apply the same financial strategies and principles as couples in first marriages may only find themselves frustrated by the results. In fact, Benson and Pasley (1993) stated that one of the underlying

constructs for any remarital financial management program is that remarital finances are not comparable to nuclear family finances. Surprisingly, this problematic area has been found to be a commonly neglected area of discussion by couples progressing towards marriage (Burgoyne & Morison, 1997; LeBey, 2004).

Another primary cause of financial distress in remarriage is the decreased control over the family resources (Lown & Dolan, 1988). Individuals who divorce typically become financially independent, overseeing the finances of their family without a partner. The issue of combining finances is raised often during the creation of a remarriage. This may be distressing as partners in a remarriage have become accustomed to managing their own finances and the prospect of having reduced control is present (Benson & Pasley, 1993; Estess, 1992; LeBey, 2004).

Previous financial strains (i.e. debt or other financial obligations such as child support) may also be problematic for the newly formed couple (Gordon & Daniel, 1992; Lown & Dolan, 1988). Specific situations, such as having a family owned business or a handicapped child, have also been identified as particularly problematic (Gordon & Daniel, 1992). Previous debt may be particularly bothersome to the partner who did not incur it. These financial obligations are not only debt related but often come in the form of previously promised financing (i.e., a child's college education) (Aquilino, 2005; Gordon & Daniel, 1992; Grissett & Furr, 1994). Lebay (2004) noted that fathers, who experienced feelings of guilt for the dissolution of their marriage, tended to provide financially beyond the court order, even to the financial detriment of their newly created family. In a study by Knox and Zusman (2001), 66% of second wives reported feeling resentment toward their husband's financial obligations from his previous marriage.

Financial strains may also be magnified when part of the initiative to remarry is to alleviate financial pressure. Schmiede, Richards, and Zvonkovic (2001) suggested that some women, especially those with lower educational attainment, tended to remarry due to financial reasons. They posit that these women do in fact marry to obtain a higher income. Women who lack education have a more difficult time returning to an adequate income than women with higher education who put in more work hours (Dixon & Rettig, 1994). Similar to women, Gierveld (2004) found that men of lower education status are also more likely to enter into a union more quickly than their more educated counterparts.

A lack of a transition period to establish a financial plan may also lead to financial distress in remarriage. When children are involved, finances for a family must be immediately in place and, in fact, predate the relationship (Lown & Dolan; 1988; 1994). Remarital partners may resent this burden of financing children and/or the spouse of a previous family. They may also have negative feelings resulting from the lack of funds given by a former marital partner (Lown & Dolan, 1988; Lown & Dolan, 1994).

Stepparent Issues. Half of all remarriage relationships include children living in the home from one or both of the partners' previous relationships. Of the other half without resident children, the majority of relationships do include step-relationships in which the children visit and are considered part of the family (Crosbie-Burnett & McClintic, 2000). There are numerous hurdles to overcome such as building a relationship with each child, adjusting to the family's culture, and discovering the boundaries and unspoken rules of family life. Stepparents also face the task of moving from the outside of a family structure to the inside (LeBey, 2004). Research shows that even when stepparents put forth generous effort in the stepparent relationship, they often

do not develop the same level of positivity towards their stepchildren when compared to a biological parent (Cohen & Fowers, 2004).

Adjustment to stepparenting is further complicated by the lack of social norms (Svare, Jay, & Mason, 2004). Some examples of this include stepparents guessing at appropriate levels of interaction with stepchildren, the administration of discipline, and whose original family's traditions at holidays the stepfamily will continue. Svare and his colleagues (2004) clearly illustrate this lack of norms as they identified four distinct approaches to the stepparent role through qualitative analysis. This lack of accurate norms is also reflected in the media which portrays stepfamilies and stepfamily life in negative or mixed ways (Leon & Angst, 2005). And, many negative stereotypes and beliefs exist regarding stepparents in the general society (Claxton-Oldfield & Whitt, 2003).

Researchers have identified the stepparent's role as more challenging and less defined than the biological parent's role (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman, 1988). Stepparents often experience the stress of role ambiguity (Fine, Ganong, & Coleman, 1997, 1999; Giles-Sims, 1984; Schwebel, Fine, & Renner, 1991; Visher, 1996; Visher & Visher, 1991) as well as boundary ambiguity - not being able to delineate who is and who is not part of the stepfamily (Pasley, 1987). Recent studies have shown that role ambiguity is even more prevalent than previously thought (Stewart, 2005). Further, stepparents are also often acting as de facto parents with no legal rights or recognition (Mason, et al., 2002).

Researchers have identified challenges associated with stepparenting. These challenges contributing to stepparent stress include: 1) loss of former family arrangement,

2) feelings of exclusion from more-developed biological parent-child relationship, 3) distant or tumultuous relations with stepchildren, 4) sexual tension with stepchildren, and 5) difficulty exercising discipline (Fine & Schwebel, 1991; LeBey, 2004). Further, some stepparents do not intend to play any parenting role in the remarriage while their partner does have this expectation (Crosbie-Burnett, 1989; Kelly, 1995; LeBey, 2004; Visher & Visher, 1996; 2000).

Other research has focused on the diverse structure of the stepfamily. If one views the remarital family from a family systems perspective, in a situation where a divorced woman with children remarries, the biological father with joint custody is inside of the remarital family boundary. This may lead to role ambiguity for the new husband as the role of “father” is already filled. This situation has been likened to military fathers who are missing in action (Crosbie-Burnett, 1989). A national sample of clergy counselors (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997) identified “children” as being the second most problematic areas for remarital couples. Knox and Zusman (2001) found that two thirds of women in a remarriage felt their husband’s first family impacted their current family. Further, the study specifically assessed the feelings stepmothers had towards their stepchildren with 49% reporting “mostly positive”, 37% “mixed” and 14% as “mostly negative” (Knox & Zusman, 2001).

Some authors have attempted to outline means of achieving successful stepparent relationships. Visher and Visher (1990; 1991; 1996; 2000) recommend that successful stepparents are those who find satisfaction in roles other than parent (i.e. companion or friend). Bray and Kelly (1998) assert that stepparents must be flexible and accepting of the changes that occur in the stepfamily, as many factors such as the nonresidential parent

will influence change within the stepfamily. Beaudry, et al. (2004) found that utilizing effective communication was very helpful in increasing overall marital satisfaction in stepfamily context.

Stepchild(ren) Effects on Marital Relationship Formation. One way children from a previous marriage can affect a remarriage is in the area of marital relationship establishment. Developing intimacy in marriage has been recognized as a necessary task in “the process of marital adjustment and as a component of spouses’ evaluation of marital satisfaction” (Gold, Bubenzer, & West, 1993, p. 98). Also, “marital intimacy can be seen as one of the more descriptive dimensions of marital relationships and can be viewed as a mediator of higher order relational qualities such as mutuality, interdependence, trust, commitment, and caring” (Gold, Bubenzer, & West, 1993, p. 98).

Newly first-married couples often have the luxury of a honeymoon period in which intimacy can begin developing between the couple before children are added to the complexity of familial relations. Blended families do not have the luxury of this a honeymoon period. The partners are immediately thrust into parental roles. This is especially true if the marriage is the first for one of the partners. They may be suddenly grappling with the role of parent (Gold, Bubenzer, & West, 1993). Goetting (1982) asserted that when partners are faced with the competing roles of spouse and parent, the spouse role is neglected. This issue may not be so clear however, as problems seem to develop if there is neglect due to overshadowing loyalty in either the marital relationship or the bioparent-child relationship (Cartwright, 2003). Other researchers further clarify this phenomenon by highlighting the loyalty conflict new spouses face in often having to

choose between their new partner and their own biological children (Cartwright, 2003; Kheshgi-Genovese & Genovese, 1997).

Adding to this issue are the common patterns of dating, courtship, and marriage following divorce. Anderson, et al. (2004) found that repartnering following a divorce happens relatively quickly, with 50% of parents having some dating experience even prior to the divorce filing with the court. Often children are not exposed to the new partner until the relationship is already formed and oftentimes moving towards marriage (Anderson & Greene, 2005; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2003). Children are also involved in varying degrees in most, if not all, of the transitions from divorce to remarriage including: dating, serious involvement, sleepovers, cohabitation, break-ups, pregnancies, and engagements (Anderson & Greene, 2005). Each of these transitions has varying significance for each child in the household (Anderson & Greene, 2005).

Koerner, et al. (2004) found that children and their parent have very different experiences with the parent's new relationship and the potential impact on family life. Children often create different meaning of the remarriage than do the parents. Parents most often see the changes as positive, whereas children see the remarriage as a disruption and another enormous life altering change in which they once again have no control (Cartwright, 2003).

Other authors further attest that the presence of children is associated with increased marital intimacy for the biological parent, yet for the stepparent the presence of children is associated with decreased marital intimacy (Gold, Bubenzer, & West, 1993). Research has found that the mere presence of stepchildren in a remarriage increases the potential of divorce (Fine & Schwebel, 1991). In a study by Knox and Zusman (2001)

51% of women who were currently involved in a remarriage with stepchildren reported that the stepchildren had “caused problems in [their] relationship with [their] husband” (p. 70).

Hobart (1989, 1991) found that remarried couples reported more conflict over parenting issues when compared to first-marriage couples. He also found that marital adjustment scores were lower in remarriage situations where the husband brought children into the relationship when compared to remarriages where no children were brought in by the husband, regardless of the presence of other children, shared biological or those brought in by the woman. These studies highlight the commonly observed strain implicated in the stepparent role and the need for remarried partners to place a priority on the marital relationship especially as it is developing (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2003). Visher and Visher (1990; 1996) identify strengthening the couple relationship as one of the first priorities when faced with problematic stepchild relations.

The children in stepfamilies also are usually in the midst of dealing with the trauma and uncertainty of their parents’ breakup (Berk, 2000; Dreman, 2000; Hickey & Dalton, 1994; Marquardt, 2005; Oppawsky, 2000; Samenow, 2002; Schneider & Zuckenberg, 1996; Teyber, 2001; Waite & Gallagher, 2000; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2003; Wallerstein, et al., 2000). This personal strain often will translate into difficulties associated with building a new relationship with their parent’s new partner. Further, children often deal with issues of becoming “parentified,” which refers to taking on responsibility for their parent’s problems (Oppawsky, 1989; Wallerstein, et al., 2000). Although developmentally inappropriate, children often can experience this role as soothing as it gives them emotionally close ties to their custodial parent and a semblance

of control over family dynamics (Hickey & Dalton, 1994; Teyber, 2001; Waite & Gallagher, 2000; Wallerstein, et al., 2000). This often sets the stage for their parent's new partner to "dethrone" the child, leading to feelings of lack of control and even resentment and potential hostility towards the new partner (Oppawsky, 1989; Prilik, 1998; Wallerstein, et al., 2000). Further, the entering of the parent into a new marriage destroys the child(ren)'s hope for parental reunification (Prilik, 1998; Wallerstein, 2000).

Bray and Kelly (1998) also identify the situation of "remarriage-activated fathers" who spring into action when their children's mother is getting remarried. This can add even more complexity and stress to the remarital relationship when previous spouses see the changes they had so-long desired from this person. Additionally, this will likely sharply increase the involvement of the nonresidential parent.

Another common pattern in which children become intertwined has been identified as "Parental Alienation Syndrome." This is defined as one parent encouraging the child to reject the other parent (Garrity & Baris, 1994, p.65). This is also referred to in research literature as "brainwashing" and "programming". "Brainwashing" is defined as "the selection and application of particular techniques, procedures and methods to implement a specific idea" (Hickey & Dalton, 1994, p. 37). "Programming" is defined as "giving directions based on a specific or general belief system to a child, in order to obtain a desired end or goal" (Hickey & Dalton, 1994, p. 38).

Parental alienation is common in divorce situations. The American Bar Association indicated that only 140 of 700 families (1 out of 5) "showed no evidence of programming or brainwashing" (Hickey & Dalton, 1994, p. 37). Thus, the vast majority of divorcing families experience this practice.

Sadly, these issues are the proverbial “tip of the iceberg” when considering the experience of children of divorce. Children of divorce may also experience divided loyalties, self-blame, lack of consistency, a break in extended family and social support, among other various problematic situations (Samenow, 2002; Waite & Gallagher, 2000; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2003; Wallerstein, et al., 2000).

Current Interactions with Previous Spouse: Closeness. Another area affecting remarital relationships is the remarital partners’ current interactions with their previous spouse. Findings evidence a negative relationship between liking the previous spouse and marital adjustment (Buunk & Mutsaers, 1999; Masheter, 1997; Roberts & Price, 1989). Researchers assert that a caring, positive relationship between former spouses make adjustment in the remarriage increasingly difficult. Masheter (1997) found that high preoccupation with the ex-spouse is associated with poor post divorce adjustment. Roberts and Price (1989) specify that some of this difficulty may be associated with decreased ability of self-disclosure with a new spouse when there were feelings of love for the former spouse. Further, another study identified “problems related to previous marriages” as a common challenge that clergy counselors face when helping remarried couples (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997, p. 173).

Bray and Kelly (1998) stated that it was especially important for the husbands to separate from the previous marital relationship as, “...unresolved issues with a husband’s former spouse...usually end up spilling over not just into the stepfamily, but directly into their lives” (p. 200). In a study by Knox and Zusman (2001), it is reported that almost one third of second wives feel like their husband “still feels married in some way to his former wife” (p. 71) and a little more than one third report feeling jealous of their

husband's former spouse. Buunk and Mutsaers (1999) found similarly that wives especially have an aversion to their husbands' positive relationship with their former spouse.

Current Interactions with Previous Spouse: Reactivity. One of the critical tasks for any individual entering marriage is to separate from their family of origin. With first-marriage couples, this task is more related to separating from their family of origin. In the context of remarriage, the previously married individual's task is to separate from the previously formed marriage relationship as well as the nuclear family created by the marriage (Bray & Kelly, 1998). Janda and MacCormack (1991) posited that unresolved feelings of a previous spouse are one of the most formidable tasks that remarital partners most overcome. Bray and Kelly (1998) refer to this process as "ghostbusting" (p. 37); partners must identify the emotionally charged areas from their past relationships which create or have the potential to create problem spots in the current marriage. These emotionally charged areas are often expressed as anger (Clapp, 2000).

Belanger, Laughrea, and Lafontaine (2001) found that anger impedes marital adjustment as well as decreases sexual satisfaction in marriage. Anger is also related to negative marital interaction leading to marriage instability (Gottman, Coan, Carrere & Swanson, 1998). These interactions were shown to be predictive of marital success or failure.

When an individual continues to have "venomous" feelings towards a previous spouse, it may indicate that the healing process has not progressed and may be halted due to an inability or unwillingness to resolve negative feelings about one's previous spouse (Masheter, 1997; Rye, et al., 2004). This hostility is linked to very real, painful, and

sometimes ongoing experiences. Extramarital affairs as a cause for divorce are a good example of a painful, ongoing experience. Brown (2001) posits that divorced partners who are not able or willing to resolve the bitterness or obsession about the affair have the “...most difficult time putting their life back in order again” (p. 321). The lack of resolution resulting from any marital difficulty may keep the individual “stuck” in the negativity of that relationship. Sager (1989) identified this as a sign of overattachment and an incomplete emotional divorce.

Researchers have further clarified this concept by finding that specific attachment styles in marriage were associated with aggression level. Vareschi and Bursik (2005) found that anxiously attached individuals were the most negatively expressive, while securely attached individuals fared the best. Further, Toews, Catlett, and McKenry (2005) found that insecurely attached women were predictably more verbally aggressive throughout the marital separation.

Aggressiveness can be related to ongoing conflict, such as custody battles or other events or interpretations of events that are quite negative. Masheter (1997) identified not only hostility alone but the combination of preoccupation and hostility to be restrictive to well-being an impediment to the development of new relationships. Angered partners who experienced divorce tend to blame wholly the ex-spouse and fail to learn from their own shortcomings in their past relationships (Heatherington & Kelly, 2002). Feelings of anger are also associated with poor psychological adjustment after a divorce (Hilton & Kopera-Frye, 2004).

Oftentimes it appears that disdain for a previous spouse grows as old memories are reinterpreted with growing negativity for the previous spouse. For example, when a

previous spouse is getting remarried, the other spouse may feel the previous partner is continuing his or her “selfish ways” by not considering whether or not the children are supportive of the new marriage. The ex-spouse may increase in negativity as he or she interprets the other’s behavior as selfish and inconsiderate.

Rye, et al. (2004) found that forgiveness is a key factor in lessening the negative effects of divorce. They also found that forgiveness of an ex-spouse is associated with improved mental health, less depression, and decreased anger. Reducing hostility is especially critical when there are children involved. Continuing parental relations ensures continued contact between ex-spouses and creates fertile grounds for continuing conflict.

Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, and Diener (2003) found that while individuals who are reactive to negative life events, such as divorce, have a more difficult time returning to their previous level of happiness than individuals who are not as reactive. Thus, assessing reactivity to the divorce process as well as reactivity towards the ex-spouse will aid in gauging the success of a remarriage. Individuals who are more reactive to their previous spouse will likely have a more difficult time adjusting in their current remarriage.

Chapter III

Methods

Design and Procedure

The development of the Remarital Assessment Questionnaire for Divorced Persons followed similar steps and recommendations outlined by Dawis (1987) and Murphy and Davidshofer (1998). The steps include item creation, scale construction, and development of test format.

Item Creation

First, research was gathered by conducting a search for applicable empirical and clinical remarriage literature (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). The gathered research was examined and literature was classified into areas or topics related to remarriage (e.g., finances). Inventory items were created based on the findings of specific articles, being careful to document which article prompted each item. (Documentation was completed to avoid plagiarism of existing questionnaires.) Items were written following guidelines suggested by various researchers regarding item length, wording, and face validity (Babbie, 1998; Fiske, 1981, Murphy & Davidshofer, 1998; Payne, 1951). For example, care was taken to avoid lengthy items that may confuse readers or lead them to miss the main point. Attention was paid to the wording, being careful to avoid double-negatives and ambiguity. Items were written avoiding any use of sexist, racist, or other offensive language (Murphy and Davidshofer, 1998). A large pool of items was also created in anticipation of omitting items throughout the evaluation process (Carmines and Zeller; 1979).

Six remarried couples were selected by convenience sample for an interview. The couples were in various stages of remarriage. Two couples had been married for 0-5 years (mean of 3.5 years), two couples had been married 10-15 years (mean of 12.2 years), and two couples had been married for over 25 years (mean of 34.4 years). Four of the couples had partners who were both previously married. Two couples had one partner for whom this was a first marriage. Six of the partners had children from a previous marriage. Two did not have children from a previous marriage. None of the partners were widows/widowers. All of the couples were Caucasian.

Each couple was interviewed in an open-ended format to “elicit a wide range of statements about the variable in question” (Dawis, 1987, p. 195; Devellis, 1991). Interviews were semi-structured and focused on areas of adjustment that have been most difficult for them as a couple. Each individual was also interviewed alone to allow free expression of his/her thoughts regarding marital struggles without fear of instigating negativity in the relationship. All interviews were conducted in the couples’ homes by the investigator. Each interview lasted from approximately 40 minutes. The interviewed remarried individuals identified similar themes and areas of challenge. Additional items were created based from responses of the six remarried couples during the interview process.

Additional Items Generated Through Interviews

General conflict level. Many couples who were interviewed identified the general conflict level in the relationship as a factor in how well the new marriage was forming. Some couples stated that it brought generalized stress into their current relationship when

their stress level was high due to problematic interactions with their previous partner. No articles were identified that specifically addressed this issue through empirical study.

Clinically this makes sense as when an individual is highly distressed in one life facet, that distress can often generalize to other areas. In this case, a marital partner who is experiencing moderate to high distress due to their current interactions with their previous partner may be more prone to negativity in the current remarital relationship.

Miscellaneous interview items. There were also other items generated that did not seem to readily “fit” into a category. These items were generated primarily from the interviews with remarried persons (Life Experience Experts). These items were focused on the level of conflict that was present through the divorce with the ex-spouse.

Following development of the preliminary pool of items, a panel of five clinicians reviewed the items and gave feedback regarding the face validity of the items. The clinicians were instructed to make notes of their overall impressions of the items and encouraged to give suggested revisions.

The panel of clinicians was composed of five doctoral and masters level graduate students in the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program at Brigham Young University. All had completed graduate coursework in premarital and remarital counseling and had completed at least 100 hours of clinical work (face-to-face client contact). These students were selected by a convenience sample. A memo (see Appendix A) was submitted to 15 graduate students with the preliminary questions attached. A member of the faculty who is an expert in remarital issues was also included (through consultation) in this step of development (R. F. Stahmann, personal communication, August 16, 2004). The feedback from the students was reviewed and the

item pool was modified (i.e. deletions, revisions, and additions were made) taking their feedback into account.

Babbie (1998) further stresses the importance of face validity; that is, the construct the item is intended to measure should be logically apparent to the reader. Thus, items were assessed for face validity while being written, when reviewed by clinicians who work with remarried couples, and through the gathering of data from respondents (i.e., feedback from participants). For descriptive purposes, demographic items were also added to gather information about the research participants that would be completing the online questionnaire. These items gathered information about the participant's age, sex, relationship status, income, education, ethnicity, and other commonly collected descriptive information.

Scale Construction

The revised pool of test items (N=72) was organized into a preliminary inventory. The questions were organized into a questionnaire format taking into account suggestions made by survey development researchers (Dawis, 1987). The items had a 5-point Likert scale response set reflecting the underlying dimension attempting to be measured (Dawis, 1987). All items sought to measure agreement with a statement using the response set: *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree*.

Organization of Items

The generated items were then sorted conceptually by the researcher into the following categories:

Unrealistic Expectations. These items were developed to assess the partners' expectations of the difficulty and duration of the transition in becoming a stepfamily. If

partners expect their stepfamily to be similar to a first-marriage family, the transition may be impeded. The items that were developed for this category included:

- My children are my first priority, even before my marriage.*
- My partner's children should obey me.*
- I expect my partner's children to have respect for me.*
- First-marriage couples adjust to marriage easier than remarried couples.*
- A husband and wife with children in their first marriage is the ideal family.*
- My children will accept my new partner as their new parent.*
- My partner will be able to easily take the role of parent with my biological child(ren).*
- My children will likely struggle to accept my new partner.*
- I am aware of how my previous relationship affects my current relationship.*
- I am more realistic about this marriage than my previous marriage(s).*
- This relationship will take more effort than a typical first marriage.*
- I really believe in my ability to be successful in this relationship.*

Financial Challenges: Decision making and Child and spousal support. Items were written to assess the partners for feelings of resentment regarding financial obligations from prior marriage relationships. The items were written to assess the level of communication and problem-solving abilities regarding finances as well as financial plans and agreement upon them. The items that were developed for this category included:

- We have discussed many ways to manage our finances.*
- I feel included by my partner when it comes to decisions about money.*
- We have not been able to agree on a plan to manage our finances.*
- I feel like my partner respects my opinion about finances*
(Specific to Decision-making)

- My ex-spouse and I have conflict about how money should be allocated.*
- The support I receive from my ex-spouse is enough to financially care for my children.*
- My current partner and I fight about my financial obligations to my ex-spouse and/or my children.*
- There are negative feelings about finances between myself and my ex-spouse.*
- The financial obligations of our divorce are being fulfilled by my ex-spouse.*
- I fulfill my side of the financial obligations from our divorce.*

My ex-spouse seems content with his/her current financial situation.

(Specific to child and spousal support)

Stepparent Issues. The items in this category were written to assess where the partner's existing children will reside. Items also assess expectations and attitudes of each partner in the areas of parenting and discipline. The items that were developed for this category included:

It is hard or is going to be hard living with my partner and his/her children.

I have noticed that my partner's children have not been disciplined properly.

Dealing with my partner's children is overwhelming to me.

It is difficult to communicate with my partner's children.

My partner is critical of me in the way I interact with his/her children.

Looking back, I wasn't ready for the parenting roles that I took on in this marriage.

I thought stepfamily life would be better than it has turned out.

I have noticed that other people have difficulty interacting with my partner's children.

I try to reach out to my stepchild(ren) but am often rejected.

I don't know what is expected of me as a stepparent.

Nobody seems to appreciate what I gave up in order to become part of this family.

I don't feel like I can bring up problems that I see in our stepfamily.

I am happy with the division of our roles in our household.

I end up doing more around the house than my partner.

My stepchildren see me more negatively than they should.

When my stepchildren go to my ex-spouse's home, they come home behaving worse.

My partner's children seem to be the cause of most conflicts between them.

Stepchild(ren) Effects on Marital Relationship Formation. Items in this category were written to assess the impact of the presence of stepchildren in the newly formed marital relationship. Items also assess partner negativity associated with interaction between biological child and parent. The items that were developed for this category included:

My partner's children seem to want to break up our marriage.

My marriage would be better off if my partner's children were not in the picture.

My partner's children only impact our relationship negatively.

I would prefer it if my partner's children just stayed with their other parent.
My partner's children are pleased that I am part of the family. (reverse scored)
Sometimes I wonder if our relationship will be destroyed by my partner's children.
When it comes to time with my partner, I feel like I take "second place" to my stepchildren.
Sometimes it bothers me when my partner spends time with his/her children.

Current Interactions with Previous Spouse: Closeness. The items were written to assess for inappropriate connection and emotional connection with a former spouse. The items that were developed for this category included:

I still wish I could somehow get back together with my ex-spouse.
I have attempted to get back together with my ex-spouse.
I continue to have loving feelings for my ex-spouse.
I hope I can have a caring relationship with my ex-spouse.
I feel close to my ex-spouse.
My partner is uncomfortable with me talking to or seeing my ex-spouse.

Current Interactions with Previous Spouse: Reactivity. The items developed for this category were written to assess the level of negative emotionality elicited by the interactions with or thoughts regarding a previous spouse. The items that were developed for this category included:

When I interact with my ex-spouse, it usually upsets me.
I have really come to peace with my previous marriage. (reverse scored)
There are unresolved feelings that I have towards my ex-spouse.
I am still very angry about my divorce.
My ex-spouse is a good parent to our shared children.
My ex-spouse is a lousy parent.
My ex-spouse is a bad influence on my children.
My partner's ex-spouse negatively influences our home environment.

General Conflict Level. Items generated for this section were written to assess the general level of conflict in the past relationship as well as conflict that is continuing from that relationship. The items that were developed for this category included:

I had to fight for the current custody arrangements I have with my children.

There were legal battles during my divorce.
I am still fighting with my ex-spouse over various issues.
I feel “battle-scarred” from my divorce because it was so bad.
My ex-spouse is mature and reasonable.
I literally hate my ex-spouse.

Miscellaneous Interview Items. The following items were developed through the interview process but did not readily fit into any specific category. The items that were developed for this category included:

I am putting more effort into making this marriage work than I did in my previous marriage(s).
I seek (or have sought) support from other people who have dealt with divorce and remarriage.
My current partner and I don't let our past relationships negatively affect our relationship.

Procedures for Content Validation

Development of questionnaire format. The instrument was then formatted to be posted on a webpage. The webpages were designed to have a consistent presentation across various platforms (i.e., Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Internet Explorer, etc.) (Michalak & Szabo, 1998). The webpage and data collection mechanism were piloted to ensure accurate collection and transfer of data (Birnbaum, 2004; Michalak & Szabo, 1998). Life Experience Experts (remarried individuals and divorced individuals in a relationship heading towards remarriage) were solicited by convenience sample through various means. Some participants were solicited by sending an email announcement to all known contacts. Care was taken to avoid sending the announcement to individuals who would not care to receive the announcement and may view the email as spam or junk mail (Birnbaum, 2004). The announcement was also posted on discussion boards of relationship-oriented websites. A request was also sent to organizations which send out relationship-oriented newsletters (i.e., Smartmarriages.com) for the inclusion a brief announcement and link to the survey in the newsletter. Finally, webmasters of

remarriage-oriented websites were contacted via email to request the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) (or web address) be placed on their websites. These means were suggested by researchers who have utilized the web in their research (Birnbaum, 2004; Kaye & Johnson, 1999; Michalak & Szabo, 1998).

Respondents reading the announcement were able to click onto a link that directed them to the survey. They first read an introduction page explaining the project (Appendix B). The informed consent form (Appendix B) was located immediately below the introduction. This page readily identified the researchers and their affiliated institution to help assure participants of the legitimacy of the research (Michalak & Szabo, 1998). The introduction page and informed consent section also acknowledged the nature and intent of the study (Michalak & Szabo, 1998) giving participants the option of not participating or discontinuing participation at any time (Pittenger, 2003). Participants could then choose to take the survey by clicking on a button indicating they were voluntarily giving their consent (Michalak & Szabo, 1998) (see Appendix B). After they clicked on the consent button, another webpage appeared containing the questionnaire (see Appendix C).

The survey began with the remarital items which were developed through the previous phases of development. The responses to the questions were available by clicking on radio buttons and then choosing one of the answer options (see Appendix C). This format was used to help the survey appear organized and easy to fill-out (Kaye & Johnson, 1999) and it is recommended over other formats (i.e., checkboxes) (Birnbaum, 2004).

After answering the items related to remarriage, the respondents clicked on a “continue” button. This directed participants to a new page containing a brief demographics section. Participants were allowed to remain anonymous, as data privacy is a primary concern of internet research participants (Michalak & Szabo, 1998; Pittenger, 2003). After participants completed the survey, they could click on a complete questionnaire button which saved the entered data on a server. Upon clicking on the complete questionnaire button, another page appeared thanking the respondents for their participation (Michalak & Szabo, 1998). A list of web resources was then given to the respondents for their participation in the study as an incentive (Michalak & Szabo, 1998). The participants were able to print this page for future reference if they desired. The respondents were also invited to give their contact information if they would like to receive a dissemination of the research findings as further incentive for participating (Michalak & Szabo, 1998). At the end of the survey, the participants had an opportunity to comment on individual questionnaire items and the questionnaire as a whole.

Understanding the potential difficulties of utilizing web-based research, the investigator undertook various means to reduce the risk of problems. While the potential for multiple submissions may be increased when using an anonymous medium such as the internet, there are multiple methods of preventing this type of data corruption (Birnbaum 2004). In this study, “cookies” were utilized to prevent multiple submissions. A cookie is a very small text file that is put onto one’s computer when accessing a site. The site can then check the cookie to see if the individual has previously visited the site. If the individual had visited the site previously and filled out the questionnaire, the individual was not allowed to access the questionnaire subsequent times. Additionally,

one could not directly access the questionnaire without viewing the informed consent. This acted as a gatekeeper to keep any participant from accessing the questionnaire without an opportunity to thoroughly review the informed consent. Further, the participant could not access the questionnaire without clicking on the button indicating “I voluntarily give my consent to participate.”

Internet Research

Research conducted via the internet has increased dramatically and has become an accepted form of data gathering (Birnbaum, 2001; Birnbaum, 2004; Tourangeau, 2004). The advantages of utilizing web-based research include the low cost (Baron & Siepmann, 2000; Buchanan, 2000; Kraut, Olson, Banaji, Bruckman, Cohen, & Couper, 2004; Meyerson & Tryon, 2003; Tourangeau, 2004), the ease of creating and disseminating a survey allowing collection of data from a large sample in a short time (Birnbaum, 2004; Kraut, et al., 2004; Meyerson & Tryon, 2003), as well as departing from the over reliance of student samples (Birnbaum, 2004; Buchanan, 2000). Additionally, the subjects are more varied and one can solicit specific groups of subjects (Baron & Siepmann, 2000, Birnbaum, 2004; Kraut, et al., 2004). Another advantage is the reduction in possible error from transcription (Kraut, et al., 2004). Although random sampling is not possible, some researchers feel the data is better than data collected from students as data collected from students tends to be from higher socioeconomic status individuals who are in their early 20's (Baron & Siepmann 2000, Musch & Reips 2000, Reips 2000). Krantz and Dalal (2000) show that data gathered via the web is as valid as data gathered in a lab setting. Meyerson and Tryon (2003) compared data gathered on the web versus previously gathered data and found the data psychometrically equivalent and had almost

identical reliability ratings. Others have found that data gathered via the internet are comparable with data gathered with other methods (Mathy, Kerr, & Haydin, 2003).

Additional advantages have been identified. Birnbaum (2004) lists another advantage as the elimination of possible bias introduced by researchers and their assistants when giving directions to participants. Baron and Siepmann (2000) sum it up well by stating, “In our view, Web questionnaires have many major advantages over paper questionnaires and few major disadvantages” (p. 264).

Despite the apparent advantages of internet based research, several issues have been identified regarding conducting research via the internet (Birnbaum 2004; Mathy, Kerr, & Haydin, 2003; Kraut, Olson, Banaji, Bruckman, Cohen, & Couper, 2004; Meyerson & Tryon, 2003; Michalak & Szabo, 1998; Pittenger, 2003; Riva, 2001; Tourangeau, 2004). One identified disadvantage is the investigators lack of ability to standardize the environment. Participants may fill out the instrument any time day or night (Kraut, et al., 2004; Michalak & Szabo, 1998). Other researchers raise concerns about the inability to verify the participant’s age and identity (Mathy, Kerr, & Haydin, 2003; Pittenger, 2003). The researcher has no way to verify that the participants read and understood the informed consent form (Kraut, et al., 2004; Pittenger, 2003). The researchers cannot be assured that the sample is representative of the population (Kraut, et al., 2004; Pittenger, 2003). Mathy, Kerr, and Haydin (2003) discuss in depth the representitiveness of internet samples. They list the poor and ethnic minorities as groups that are underrepresented among internet users. They specifically identify sampling bias and respondent biases as potential problems with internet research. Researchers also list the fact that a significant amount of households do not have access to the internet

(Tourangeau, 2004). There is also no centralized list of internet users so it is impossible to have a random sample (Tourangeau, 2004). Despite these identified potential issues, Meyerson and Tryon (2003) assert that their data gathered on the web was as representative as data collected by other means, although they do admit that there is a slight overrepresentation of males (6.13% over US Census data) and Caucasians (12.85% above US Census data). Another area of caution identified by Birnbaum (2004) is that it is vital to explain the directions to participate very carefully as there will be no assistant available to answer participant questions.

Statistical Analysis

The goal of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is to “...identify latent factors that explain the covariation among a set of measured variables. ...thereby achieving a more parsimonious explanation of the variables” (Kahn, 2006; p. 686). In the research literature the two most common techniques used are Principal Components Analysis and Exploratory Factor Analysis. Fabrigar, et al. (1999) clearly state that “When the goal of analysis is to identify latent constructs underlying measured variables, it is more sensible to use EFA [Exploratory Factor Analysis] than PCA [Principal Components Analysis],” (p. 276). Principal Components Analysis is a technique used to “...retain as much information about the measured variables as possible” (Kahn, 2006; p. 688) allowing the researcher to identify principal components but not factors. Although the most common method of exploratory factor analyses reported in research literature is Principal Components Analysis (PCA), researchers suspect that this frequency of use is simply due to PCA being the default settings of SPSS (Pohlmann, 2004). In a meta analysis of articles published 1992-2002 in The Journal of Educational Research it was shown that

the vast majority of research endeavoring to utilize exploratory factor analysis employed PCA but the researchers of each study typically do not discuss the reasoning behind this decision (Pohlmann, 2004). Researchers identify PCA as useful but suggest other more appropriate methods such as Principal Axis Factoring, a type of Exploratory Factor Analysis (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Costello and Osborne (2005) assert that PCA is actually not a true method of factor analysis but a data reduction method developed to reduce need for computing power as computing at the time was quite expensive. Thus, an Exploratory Factor Analysis was employed in this study to identify the latent constructs.

The data were preliminarily analyzed to determine its skewness and kurtosis (Fabrigar, et al., 1999). It was determined that the data for some of the variables was not distributed normally in both the male and female data set (e.g., skewness > 2 or kurtosis > 7 ; West, Finch, & Curran, 1995). If the data is not distributed normally then the method of Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) is recommended (Fabrigar, et al., 1999). Costello and Osborne (2005) state that when your data distributions are non-normal “PAF will give you the best results” (p. 2). Thus, the method of Principal Axis Factoring, a type of Exploratory Factor Analysis, was best suited for the data set (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Fabrigar, et al., 1999).

The statistical process of EFA “views” the data from different perspectives in an attempt to discover relationships between the variables. This process is referred to as rotation. There are two different types of rotational methods that can be employed, oblique (e.g., Promax) and orthogonal (e.g., Varimax) (Fabrigar, et al., 1999; Kahn, 2006). The primary difference between the two methods is that an orthogonal rotation

assumes the factors are not related to one another whereas an oblique rotation assumes they are (Fabrigar, et al., 1999; Kahn, 2006).

An oblique rotation was selected, as the factors relating to the remarriage experience were expected to be related (Abdi, 2003; Costello & Osborne, 2005; Fabrigar, et al., 1999). Specifically, Promax rotation was selected because it was identified as having a slight advantage over other oblique rotation methods although most would yield the same results (Abdi, 2003). Promax has an advantage over Varimax rotation, which is routinely used, as Promax allows the factors to be related (Pohlmann, 2004). Factors were selected for inclusion in the scale by having an eigenvalue higher than 1.00. Variables within the factors were included when they loaded with a score of at least 0.50 on one factor and did not load across other factors. Items that loaded onto more than one factor were excluded when two or more of the loadings were above .50.

Chapter IV

Results

Participants

A total of 289 questionnaires were received. As the questionnaires were received, the data was entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version 11.0, (SPSS) for analysis. Thirty-three submitted questionnaires were excluded from the analysis because they were incomplete. Also, participants who were not involved in a remarital relationship or who were not in a relationship following a divorce were excluded from the analysis. These participants included those who were widowed or single not currently in a relationship. Thus, questionnaires from five participants who were remarried following widowhood, one participant who was a single following widowhood, and one participant who was single were excluded from data analysis. The total usable sample was 250 questionnaires.

Female data set. There were a total of 194 females who participated in the study. The mean age of females was 38.7 years with a range of 21 to 66. The sample was primarily Caucasian (91.2%) with Hispanic being reported second (3.1%). There were numerous religions represented although the sample had large samples of Latter-day Saints (31.4%) and Protestants (24.2%). The majority of female participants were currently involved in a remarriage following divorce (79.9%). A slight majority had not lived with their partner before marriage (54.1%). Most females reported having attended college with 47.9% having completed some college, 22.2% having finished a Bachelors degree, and 17.5% having finished a graduate or other professional degree. The median

income reported for female participants was between \$40,000 and \$49,999. A detailed summary of the descriptive statistics of female participants can be found in Table 1.

Male data set. There were a total of 56 males who participated in the study. The mean age of males was 44.02 with a range of 26 to 74. The majority of male participants were Caucasian (85.7%) with 14.3% reporting as Hispanic, Black, or biracial. There were numerous religions represented although the sample consisted predominantly of Protestants (28.6%) and Latter-day Saints (23.2%). The majority (73.2%) were currently involved in a remarriage following a divorce. Sixty-one percent lived with their current partner before marrying. Most participants had attended college with 26.8% having completed some college, 48.2% having completed a Bachelors degree, and 21.4% having completed a graduate or professional degree. The median income fell between \$50,000 and \$59,999 although the distribution was skewed to the higher end (23.3% reporting an income at \$80,000 or above). A detailed summary of the descriptive statistics of the male participants can be found in Table 2.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Female Sample (N=194)

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>SD</u>
Age	38.7	21-66	9.97
Current Marital Status			<u>Percent</u>
a. Married – my first marriage (spouse was divorced)			11.9
b. Married – following a divorce			79.9
c. Married – following an annulment			1.5
d. Separated			.5
e. Divorced			6.2
Length of time of being a stepfamily			
a. We are not married.			3.6
b. 0-1 years			13.4
c. 1-2 years			11.9
d. 2-3 years			11.9
e. 3-5 years			17.5
f. 5-10 years			15.5
g. Over 10 years			11.3
h. Neither of us brought (or are bringing) children into this marriage.			9.8
i. Does Not Apply			5.2
How many times married			
a. 0			2.6
b. 1			13.9
c. 2			67.0
d. 3			13.9
e. 4			2.1
f. 5 or more			.5
Educational Level			<u>Percent</u>
a. Less than high school			1.5
b. High school equivalency (GED)			2.6
c. High school diploma			8.2
d. Some college			34.0
e. Associates degree			13.9
f. Bachelors degree			22.2
g. Graduate or professional degree			17.5

Table 1 (continued)

Demographic Characteristics of the Female Sample (N=194)

Income Level	
a. None	11.3
b. Under \$10,000	4.6
c. \$10,000 - \$19,999	6.2
d. \$20,000 - \$29,999	12.4
e. \$30,000 - \$39,999	14.4
f. \$40,000 - \$49,000	14.4
g. \$50,000 - \$59,999	9.3
h. \$60,000 - \$79,999	11.9
i. \$80,000 - \$100,000	8.2
j. Over \$100,000	7.2
Race or Ethnic Group	
a. Hispanic/Latino	3.1
b. Caucasian	91.2
c. Asian American	1.5
d. Native American (American Indian)	.5
e. African American (Black)	1.5
f. Mixed / Biracial	2.1
Religious Affiliation	
a. Protestant (Methodist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Baptist, etc.)	24.2
b. Catholic	11.3
c. Latter-day Saint (Mormon)	31.4
d. Buddhist	.5
e. Islamic	.5
f. Other	15.5
g. No Religious Affiliation	16.5

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of the Male Sample (N=56)

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>SD</u>
Age	44.0	26-74	11.26
Current Marital Status			<u>Percent</u>
a. Married – my first marriage (spouse was divorced)			8.9
b. Married – following a divorce			73.2
c. Married – following an annulment			5.4
d. Separated			3.6
e. Divorced			8.9
Length of time of being a stepfamily			
a. We are not married.			3.6
b. 0-1 years			12.5
c. 1-2 years			3.6
d. 2-3 years			5.4
e. 3-5 years			17.9
f. 5-10 years			16.1
g. Over 10 years			10.7
h. Neither of us brought (or are bringing) children into this marriage.			16.1
i. Does Not Apply			14.3
How many times married			
a. 0			0.0
b. 1			16.1
c. 2			69.6
d. 3			8.9
e. 4			3.6
f. 5 or more			1.8
Educational Level			<u>Percent</u>
a. Less than high school			0.0
b. High school equivalency (GED)			1.8
c. High school diploma			1.8
d. Some college			0.0
e. Associates degree			3.6
f. Bachelors degree			48.2
g. Graduate or professional degree			21.4

Table 2 (continued)

Demographic Characteristics of the Male Sample (N=56)

Income Level	
a. None	0.0
b. Under \$10,000	3.6
c. \$10,000 - \$19,999	1.8
d. \$20,000 - \$29,999	12.5
e. \$30,000 - \$39,999	10.7
f. \$40,000 - \$49,000	19.6
g. \$50,000 - \$59,999	12.5
h. \$60,000 - \$79,999	16.1
i. \$80,000 - \$100,000	17.9
j. Over \$100,000	5.4

Race or Ethnic Group	
a. Hispanic/Latino	3.6
b. Caucasian	85.7
c. Asian American	0.0
d. Native American (American Indian)	0.0
e. African American (Black)	3.6
f. Mixed / Biracial	7.1

Religious Affiliation	
a. Protestant (Methodist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Baptist, etc.)	28.6
b. Catholic	12.5
c. Latter-day Saint (Mormon)	23.2
d. Buddhist	1.8
e. Islamic	0.0
f. Other	26.8
g. No Religious Affiliation	7.1

Results of RAQ-D: Female Analysis

The female data set variables were first grouped into conceptually similar groups. Following, the female data set was analyzed utilizing Exploratory Factor Analysis. Principal Axis Factoring with a Promax (oblique) rotation was utilized to identify the underlying factors in the data. Items that did not load onto any factor were excluded. Items that loaded onto more than one factor were excluded when two or more of the loadings were above .50. Factors with an eigenvalue higher than 1.00 were retained. There were seven related factors identified by the analysis with eigenvalues higher than 1.00 (refer to Table 3). These seven factors became the subscales for the RAQ-D: Female. There were two additional factors with eigenvalues higher than 1.00 however, the variables in these two factors were not conceptually related. These two factors combined accounted for only 5.99% of the variance. It was decided to not include these two factors in the scale. A total of 38 items were retained from the original pool of 72 items.

Table 3

Eigenvalues and Variance of RAQ-D: Female Subscales

Subscale	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	α^*
I. Stepmother Attitude Toward Stepchildren	11.17	29.40	.95
II. Financial Decision-Making	4.07	10.72	.86
III. Warring with Ex-spouse	2.87	7.56	.80
IV. Negativity Towards Ex-spouse	2.80	7.38	.73
V. Loving Feelings Towards Ex-spouse	2.11	5.55	.75
VI. Expectations of Stepparenting	1.94	5.10	.79
VII. Financial Issues with Ex-spouse	1.59	4.18	.70

* α is Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1970)

Scale Development and Subscale Labeling

The first subscale was labeled Stepmother Attitude Toward Stepchildren. This subscale accounted for 29.40% of the variance. It had an eigenvalue of 11.17. Items in this subscale reflected attitudes a stepmother may have towards her stepchildren. The range for this subscale was 0 – 85, with a high score meaning the individual has a negative attitude towards her stepchild(ren). This subscale was composed of 17 items (refer to Table 4). The highest loading item on this subscale was 'My marriage would be better off if my partner's children were not in the picture.' (0.958). Other items for this subscale included the perception of the stepmother's roles within the family, her perception of her relationship with the child(ren), anticipated difficulty adjusting to living with stepchildren, and negative aspects of dealing with stepchildren. Reliability for the subscale was .95.

Table 4

Remarital Assessment Questionnaire for Divorced Persons-Female Items showing Eigenvalues and Correlations

Variable	Factor**							α^*
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
Factor I Stepmother attitude toward stepchildren								
My marriage would be better off if my partner's children were not in the picture.	.958							.845
Sometimes I wonder if our relationship will be destroyed by my partner's children.	.933							.842
My partner's children only impact our relationship negatively.	.923							.811
It is difficult to communicate with my partner's children.	.906							.815
Dealing with my partner's children is overwhelming to me.	.897							.808
I try to reach out to my stepchild(ren) but am often rejected.	.848							.774
My partner's children seem to want to break up our marriage.	.779							.682
I would prefer it if my partner's children just stayed with their other parent.	.782							.736
Looking back, I wasn't ready for the parenting roles that I took on in this marriage.	.748							.702
I have noticed that my partner's children have not been disciplined properly.	.684							.599
I thought stepfamily life would be better than it has turned out.	.676							.669
Sometimes it bothers me when my partner spends time with his/her children.	.655							.663
It is hard or is going to be hard living with my partner and his/her children.	.634							.686
Nobody seems to appreciate what I gave up in order to become part of this family.	.592							.593
My stepchildren see me more negatively than they should.	.574							.669
I don't feel like I can bring up problems that I see in our stepfamily.	.519							.706
I don't know what is expected of me as a stepparent.	.516							.623
Factor II Financial decision-making								
I feel included by my partner when it comes to decisions about money.		-.951						.817
I feel like my partner respects my opinion about finances.		-.813						.747
We have not been able to agree on a plan to manage our finances.		.779						.622
We have discussed many ways to manage our finances.		-.771						.665
Factor III Warring with ex-spouse								
I had to fight for the current custody arrangements I have with my children.			.875					.701
There were legal battles during my divorce.			.821					.663
I feel "battle-scarred" from my divorce because it was so bad.			.674					.580
I am still fighting with my ex-spouse over various issues.			.600					.543
Factor IV Negativity towards ex-spouse								
There are unresolved feelings that I have towards my ex-spouse.				.770				.567
I am still very angry about my divorce.				.660				.562
When I interact with my ex-spouse, it usually upsets me.				.621				.518
My partner usually ends up angry if he/she has to talk to my ex-spouse.				.595				.443
Factor V Loving feelings towards ex-spouse								
I continue to have loving feelings for my ex-spouse.					.820			.613
I still wish I could somehow get back together with my ex-spouse.					.828			.712
I have attempted to get back together with my ex-spouse.					.610			.469
Factor VI Expectations of stepparenting								
My partner will be able to easily take the role of parent with my biological child(ren).						-.786		.618
My children will accept my new partner as their new parent.						-.785		.674
My children will likely struggle to accept my new partner.						.687		.593
Factor VII Financial issues with ex-spouse								
There are negative feelings about finances between myself and my ex-spouse.							.716	.633
My ex-spouse and I have conflict about how money should be allocated.							.596	.540
The financial obligations of our divorce are being fulfilled by my ex-spouse.							-.478	.387

*Corrected item-total correlation

**I = Stepmother attitude toward stepchildren, II = Financial decision-making, III = Warring with ex-spouse, IV = Negativity towards ex-spouse, V = Loving feelings towards ex-spouse, VI = Expectations of stepparenting, VII = Financial issues with ex-spouse

The second subscale was labeled Financial Decision-making. This subscale accounted for 10.72% of the variance. It had an eigenvalue of 4.07. This subscale had a range of 0 – 20, with a high score being interpreted positively. An individual scoring high in this category is able to incorporate effective financial joint decision-making strategies into their relationship. The subscale was composed of four items. The highest loading item was ‘I feel included by my partner when it comes to decisions about money.’ (-0.951). Included within this subscale were level of agreement regarding financial plans, perception of having one’s opinion respected regarding finances, and amount of discussion regarding finances. Reliability for the subscale was .86.

The third subscale was labeled Warring with Ex-spouse. This subscale accounted for 7.56% of the variance. It had an eigenvalue of 2.87. This subscale had a range of 0 – 20. Items generally assessed the level of conflict experienced through the divorce process. A higher score on this measure indicated the level of conflict from the past divorce process that may even be currently impacting the individual. The subscale was composed of four items. The highest loading item was ‘I had to fight for the current custody arrangements I have with my children.’ (0.875). Items specifically assessed if the couple fought legally, are still fighting, and whether the individual feels “battle-scarred” from the divorce. Reliability for the subscale was .80.

The fourth subscale was labeled Negativity Towards Ex-Spouse. The items in this subscale generally assessed level of negativity felt towards the ex-spouse. This subscale accounted for 7.38% of the variance. It had an eigenvalue of 2.80. This measure ranged from 0 – 20, indicating the current level of negativity that exists towards the female’s ex-husband. This negativity is thought to have a negative impact on the

current remarital relationship. There were four items in this subscale. The highest loading item was ‘There are unresolved feelings that I have towards my ex-spouse.’ (0.770). Other items assessed level of anger and reactivity towards the ex-spouse as well as the level of reactivity of the current partner. Reliability for the subscale was .73.

The fifth subscale was labeled Loving Feelings Towards Ex-Spouse. These items attempted to measure the level of loving feelings the individual continues to have for their ex-spouse. This subscale accounted for 5.55% of the variance. It had an eigenvalue of 2.11. This measure ranged from 0 – 15, showing that the individual may be fostering inappropriate feelings for the previous spouse which may hinder the development of the new marital relationship. There were three items in this subscale. The highest loading item was ‘I continue to have loving feelings for my ex-spouse.’ (0.820). The other two items are ‘I still wish I could somehow get back together with my ex-spouse.’ and ‘I have attempted to get back together with my ex-spouse.’ Reliability for the subscale was .75.

The sixth subscale was labeled Expectations of Stepparenting. The items are especially aimed at assessing unrealistic beliefs regarding the stepparenting environment. This subscale accounted for 5.10% of the variance. It had an eigenvalue of 1.94. A high score on the Expectations of Stepparenting subscale (range 0 – 15) suggested a high level of unrealistic expectations that may impact the remarriage negatively. There were three items composing this subscale. The highest loading item was ‘My partner will be able to easily take the role of parent with my biological child(ren)’ (-.786). Reliability for the subscale was .79.

The seventh subscale was labeled Financial Issues with Ex-spouse. The items endeavored to assess the emotions associated with financial obligations from the previous

marriage. This subscale accounted for 4.18% of the variance. It had an eigenvalue of 1.59. A high score on this subscale (range 0-15) indicated a high level of negativity intertwined with finances surrounding the stepfamily situation. There were three total items. The highest loading item was ‘There are negative feelings about finances between myself and my ex-spouse.’ (.716). Reliability for the subscale was .70.

These seven subscales accounted for a cumulative of 69.89% of the variance in the data. Cronbach’s alpha (Cronbach, 1970) was utilized to determine internal consistency reliability of the scale resulting from the factor analysis. Internal consistency is described as how well a group of items are measuring a construct (Babbie, 1998). The combined reliability for all seven female subscales was .88. The complete questionnaire is displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

Remarital Assessment Questionnaire for Divorced Persons-Female

Items	Response Set
1. My marriage would be better off if my partner’s children were not in the picture.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Sometimes I wonder if our relationship will be destroyed by my partner’s children.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
3. My partner’s children only impact our relationship negatively.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
4. It is difficult to communicate with my partner’s children.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Dealing with my partner’s children is overwhelming to me.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
6. I try to reach out to my stepchild(ren) but am often rejected.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
7. My partner’s children seem to want to break up our marriage.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
8. I would prefer it if my partner’s children just stayed with their other parent.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Looking back, I wasn’t ready for the parenting roles that I took on in this marriage.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
10. I have noticed that my partner’s children have not been disciplined properly.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
11. I thought stepfamily life would be better than it has turned out.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>

12. Sometimes it bothers me when my partner spends time with his/her children. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
13. It is hard or is going to be hard living with my partner and his/her children. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
14. Nobody seems to appreciate what I gave up in order to become part of this family. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
15. My stepchildren see me more negatively than they should. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
16. I don't feel like I can bring up problems that I see in our stepfamily. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
17. I don't know what is expected of me as a stepparent. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
18. I feel included by my partner when it comes to decisions about money. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
19. I feel like my partner respects my opinion about finances. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
20. We have not been able to agree on a plan to manage our finances. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
21. We have discussed many ways to manage our finances. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
22. I had to fight for the current custody arrangements I have with my children. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
23. There were legal battles during my divorce. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
24. I feel "battle-scarred" from my divorce because it was so bad. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
25. I am still fighting with my ex-spouse over various issues. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
26. There are unresolved feelings that I have towards my ex-spouse. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
27. I am still very angry about my divorce. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
28. When I interact with my ex-spouse, it usually upsets me. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
29. My partner usually ends up angry if he/she has to talk to my ex-spouse. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
30. I continue to have loving feelings for my ex-spouse. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
31. I still wish I could somehow get back together with my ex-spouse. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
32. I have attempted to get back together with my ex-spouse. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
33. My partner will be able to easily take the role of parent with my biological child(ren). Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
34. My children will accept my new partner as their new parent. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
35. My children will likely struggle to accept my new partner. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
36. There are negative feelings about finances between myself and my ex-spouse. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
37. My ex-spouse and I have conflict about how money should be allocated. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply
38. The financial obligations of our divorce are being fulfilled by my ex-spouse. Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree Does not apply

Results for RAQ-D: Male Analysis

The male data set variables were first grouped into conceptually similar groups. Following, the male data set was analyzed utilizing EFA. Principal Axis Factoring with a Promax (oblique) rotation was utilized to identify the underlying factors in the data. Items that did not load onto any factor were excluded. Items that loaded onto more than one factor were excluded when two or more of the loadings were above .50. Factors were selected for inclusion in the scale by having an eigenvalue higher than 1.00. The analysis revealed four factors with eigenvalues higher than 1.00. These four factors became the subscales for the RAQ-D: Male. The variables in the identified factors were conceptually related. All identified factors were included in the final scale. A total of 14 items were retained from the original pool of 72 items.

Table 6

Eigenvalues and Variance of RAQ-D: Male Subscales

Subscale	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	α^*
I. Stepfather Attitude Toward Stepchildren	3.41	24.37	.81
II. Financial Decision-Making	3.01	21.52	.80
III. Warring with Ex-spouse	2.42	17.29	.77
IV. Loving Feelings Towards Ex-spouse	1.65	11.81	.87

* α is Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1970)

Scale Development and Subscale Labeling

The first subscale was labeled Stepfather Attitude Toward Stepchildren. Items in this subscale reflect attitudes that a stepfather may have towards his stepchildren. This subscale accounted for 24.37% of the variance. It had an eigenvalue of 3.41. A high

score in this subscale (range 0 – 20) indicates the stepfather has a negative attitude towards his stepchildren. The subscale was composed of four items. The highest loading item was ‘My partner’s children are pleased that I am part of the family.’ (-.868). Items in this subscale attempted to assess the perceived difficulty of interacting with the stepchildren, rejection from the stepchildren, and perception of others outside of the family having difficulty with the stepchildren. Reliability for the subscale was .81.

Table 7

Remarital Assessment Questionnaire for Divorced Persons-Male Items Showing Eigenvalues and Correlations

Variable	Factor**				α*
	I	II	III	IV	
Factor I Stepfather attitude towards stepchildren					
My partner's children are pleased that I am part of the family.	-.868				.517
I have noticed that other people have difficulty interacting with my partner's children.	.845				.603
It is hard or is going to be hard living with my partner and his/her children.	.771				.714
I try to reach out to my stepchild(ren) but am often rejected.	.752				.689
Factor II Financial decision-making					
We have discussed many ways to manage our finances.		.913			.676
We have not been able to agree on a plan to manage our finances.		-.861			.626
I feel included by my partner when it comes to decisions about money.		.850			.631
Factor III Warring with ex-spouse					
I feel "battle-scarred" from my divorce because it was so bad.			.853		.522
I had to fight for the current custody arrangements I have with my children.			.718		.575
I am still fighting with my ex-spouse over various issues.			.658		.647
There were legal battles during my divorce.			.610		.582
Factor IV Loving feelings towards ex-spouse					
I hope I can have a caring relationship with my ex-spouse.				.827	.801
I continue to have loving feelings for my ex-spouse.				.810	.726
I feel close to my ex-spouse.				.623	.742

*Corrected item-total correlation

**I = Stepfather attitude towards stepchildren, II = Financial decision-making, III = Warring with ex-spouse, IV = Loving feelings towards ex-spouse

The second subscale was labeled Financial Decision-Making. This subscale accounted for 21.52% of the variance. It had an eigenvalue of 3.01. The Financial Decision-Making subscale has a range of 0 – 15 with a high score being interpreted positively. An individual scoring high in this category is able to incorporate effective financial joint decision-making strategies into their relationship. The subscale was

composed of three items. The highest loading item was ‘We have discussed many ways of managing our finances.’ (.913). The items in this group assessed the level of discussion the couple has engaged in regarding finances, agreement on a plan, and perception of having one’s opinion about the finances respected. Reliability for the subscale was .80.

The third subscale was labeled Warring with Ex-spouse. This subscale accounted for 17.29% of the variance. It had an eigenvalue of 2.42. Warring with Ex-spouse had a range of 0 – 20. A higher score on this measure indicated the level of conflict from the past divorce process that may even be currently impacting the individual. The subscale was composed of four items. The highest loading item was ‘I feel ‘battle-scarred’ from my divorce because it was so bad.’ (.853). Items also assessed the level of legal conflict, whether the conflict still exists, and whether the couple fought about custody arrangements. Reliability for the subscale was .77.

The fourth subscale was labeled Loving Feelings Towards Ex-Spouse. This subscale accounted for 11.81% of the variance. It had an eigenvalue of 1.65. Scoring high on the Loving Feelings Towards Ex-spouse subscale (range 0 – 15) showed that the individual may be fostering inappropriate caring feelings for the previous spouse which may hinder the development of the new marital relationship. The subscale was composed of three items: ‘I feel close to my ex-spouse.’, ‘I continue to have loving feelings for my ex-spouse’, and the highest loading item ‘I hope I can have a caring relationship with my ex-spouse.’ (.827). Reliability for the subscale was .87.

These four subscales accounted for a cumulative of 74.99% of the variance in the data. Cronbach’s alpha (Cronbach, 1970) was utilized to determine internal consistency

reliability of the overall instrument resulting from the factor analysis. Reliability for the entire scale was .72. The complete questionnaire is displayed in Table 8.

Table 8

Remarital Assessment Questionnaire for Divorced Persons-Male

Items	Response Set
1. My partner's children are pleased that I am part of the family.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have noticed that other people have difficulty interacting with my partner's children.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
3. It is hard or is going to be hard living with my partner and his/her children.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
4. I try to reach out to my stepchild(ren) but am often rejected.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
5. We have discussed many ways to manage our finances.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
6. We have not been able to agree on a plan to manage our finances.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
7. I feel included by my partner when it comes to decisions about money.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
8. I feel "battle-scarred" from my divorce because it was so bad.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
9. I had to fight for the current custody arrangements I have with my children.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
10. I am still fighting with my ex-spouse over various issues.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
11. There were legal battles during my divorce.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
12. I hope I can have a caring relationship with my ex-spouse.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
13. I continue to have loving feelings for my ex-spouse.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>
14. I feel close to my ex-spouse.	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply <input type="checkbox"/>

Tables 9 and 10 illustrate the mean scores and standard deviation for each subscale in the RAQ-D: Female and RAQ-D: Male. The subscales of the RAQ-D: Female and RAQ-D: Male are independent of one another. Thus it would be inappropriate to add the scores together to calculate an overall "remarriage adjustment score" or the like. Simply, the scores should be interpreted only within the context of the specific subscale. A total score for the scale would have no meaning. Future research will likely endeavor

to establish the meaning of a total score along with empirically supporting relationship stability predictive ability of the RAQ-D: Female and RAQ-D: Male.

Table 9

Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Range of Scores for RAQ-D: Female (N=194)

Subscales	Females		
	Mean	SD	Range
I. Stepmother Attitude Toward Stepchildren	52.36	17.03	0-85
II. Financial Decision-Making	8.40	3.70	0-20
III. Warring with Ex-spouse	14.68	4.09	0-20
IV. Negativity Towards Ex-spouse	14.80	3.56	0-20
V. Loving Feelings Towards Ex-spouse	13.63	2.22	0-15
VI. Expectations of Stepparenting	9.31	3.01	0-15
VII. Financial Issues with Ex-spouse	8.50	3.07	0-15

Table 10

Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Range of Scores for RAQ-D: Male (N=56)

Subscales	Males		
	Mean	SD	Range
I. Stepmother Attitude Toward Stepchildren	12.37	3.93	0-20
II. Financial Decision-Making	5.84	2.38	0-15
III. Warring with Ex-spouse	14.73	3.80	0-20
IV. Loving Feelings Towards Ex-spouse	11.32	3.34	0-15

Chapter V

Discussion

Summary of Findings

Through the steps followed in this study, two questionnaires were developed, one for females, RAQ-D: Female, and the other for males, RAQ-D: Male. Exploratory factor analysis of the female data indicated that seven factors were present. The analysis revealed seven meaningful subscales that demonstrated high internal consistency: Stepmother attitude toward stepchildren, Financial decision-making, Warring with ex-spouse, Negativity towards ex-spouse, Loving feelings towards ex-spouse, Expectations of stepparenting, Financial issues with ex-spouse. The scale, RAQ-D: Female, is comprised of 38 items. Exploratory factor analysis of the male data indicated that four factors were present. The male version is composed of four subscales: Stepfather attitude toward stepchildren, Financial decision-making, Warring with ex-spouse, and Loving feelings towards ex-spouse. The scale, RAQ-D: Male, has a total of 14 items. The subscales all exhibited high internal consistency. The female version of the scale accounts for 69.9% of the variance in the data. The male version accounts for 75% of the variance. Both versions of the scale exhibited face validity and demonstrated acceptable internal consistency.

There are apparent differences between the two developed questionnaires, RAQ-D: Male and RAQ-D: Female. The RAQ-D: Female is comprised of seven subscales with a total of 38 items. The RAQ-D: Male is comprised of four subscales with a total of 14 items. The subscales of Negativity towards ex-spouse, Expectations of stepparenting, and Financial issues with ex-spouse were not identified as factors for the male sample.

One probable reason for this difference is due to the difference in sample size. It is likely that as the female sample was much larger (N=194 vs N=56) the analysis was able to delineate more clearly the underlying factors.

There are other possible explanations for this discrepancy. Men and women may simply think differently about the issues involved with remarriage. They may make sense of the different issues of finances, parenting, and others associated with remarriage in some significant ways. For example, Lacroix (2006) found that, “Gender is and remains a significant variable in determining how parental responsibility is experienced and shared after separation” (p. 195). Cohen and Finzi-Dottan (2005) found that, “different factors predicted parental satisfaction in mothers and fathers” (p. 92) in the post-divorce family. Mothers’ satisfaction was more internally based and fathers’ was connected to the “perceptions of key women in their lives” (p. 92) (e.g., the stepmother).

Research also shows that men and women experience financial issues differently in remarriage. Ganong, Coleman, and Mistina (1995) discovered that normative beliefs differ about the financial roles that men and women play in remarriage. Additionally, women experience negative financial consequences more extensively than men in a divorce (Stroup & Pollock, 1994; Zagorsky, 2005). Future research with greater sample size may be able to more clearly delineate the differences between men and women regarding remarriage attitudes and beliefs.

Comparison to Other Questionnaires

When reviewing the items of the RAQ-D: Male and RAQ-D: Female to existing questionnaires there are several interesting observations. First, the statistical analysis of the data resulted in male and female versions of the questionnaire. As previously

discussed, this may be due to the difference in sample size between the two groups. However, if the difference is in part due to significant differences between men and women and their experience of divorce this would have implications for the other instruments that do not delineate between the sexes. Further research should endeavor to fully explain this difference.

Also, this questionnaire is internet-based only. FOCCUS and PREPARE do not offer online administration for couples. Both are pencil and paper based questionnaires. RELATE-Remarriage does offer online administration and scoring.

Another comparison involves the delivery of results to the couple and the involvement of a counselor for the various questionnaires. The results of RELATE-Remarriage are sent directly to the couple. There is no requirement for couples to take the inventory in conjunction with a counselor. Both FOCCUS and PREPARE require the couple to use a counselor to have the inventory administered and scored. The results are sent to the counselor and then the counselor presents the results to the couple. The results of the RAQ-D: Male and RAQ-D: Female are planned to be sent directly to the couple although the instrument does not yet have a scoring mechanism so this is a proposed method of feedback. The RAQ-D is specifically designed to be administered only on the web with results being delivered via the web. Partners will be advised to take the questionnaire separately as having the other partner present may alter the answers given.

Finally, the RAQ-D was designed to be a stand-alone questionnaire. RELATE-Remarriage is designed to be taken with the RELATE inventory. FOCCUS and PREPARE are complete instruments, similar to RAQ-D, and are not taken in conjunction with another related instrument.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study is that the panel of clinicians was chosen by convenience sample. The group was entirely composed of graduate students at Brigham Young University in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program. Overall, the group was balanced as to gender and single vs. married. However, none of the participants had personally experienced divorce or remarriage, thus they may not have a full understanding of all the facets of these experiences. Also, the group was not representative of religious diversity (all participants were Latter-day Saints). Thus, it is possible that the group may not have taken into account varying religious perspectives when reviewing the potential inventory items. However, this inventory is not religiously based and so this effect if there were any would most likely be negligible. If future versions of the instrument include religious questions, the researcher should endeavor to include panel members of various faiths.

Another limitation of the study is that the panel of Life Experience experts was chosen by convenience sample. This group was predominantly Caucasian (female 91.2%, male 85.7%). There is a possibility that this composition of individuals could have altered the results of the factor analysis in some significant way. Numerous authors have cited this concern regarding gathering data for research via the internet (Birnbaum, 2004) all of whom assert this may have an impact on the generalizability of the results. However, even if the process of selecting items was skewed by the sample composition, the items in the final draft of the questionnaire will still be helpful to remarital couples.

There are also concerns about data collected from the relatively new research medium, the internet. Data gathered from internet users has been shown to be

demographically different from internet nonusers, however, these differences are diminishing (Kraut, Olson, Banaji, Bruckman, Cohen, & Couper, 2004). One group that is significantly lower in internet usage is ethnic minorities and low socioeconomic status groups (Mathy, Kerr, and Haydin, 2003). Still, this instrument is being designed specifically for internet use, thus it seems appropriate that it is developed and normed with internet users. Other limitations of internet based research have been previously discussed.

Remarriage Following Widowhood

One type of remarital relationship that is often neglected by researchers is those formed after the death of the previous spouse. The surviving spouse entering into the new marriage may be faced with some distinct challenges (Barash, 2000). This group was omitted from this study as the issues faced by individuals remarrying after widowhood have some significant differences than those entering remarriage following divorce. For example, after the death of a spouse the surviving spouse and children cherish the memory of the deceased family member as well as continue to fulfill that spouse's/parent's goals and dreams for the family (Grinwald & Shabat, 1997). Conversely, following divorce, the ex-spouse's goals and dreams for the family are often rejected. Thus, as this group was omitted from the study, the RAQ-D both male and female versions is not meant to be used with individuals who are in a relationship following widowhood.

Clinical Implications

Implications for Marriage and Family Therapists. Given the current divorce rate of approximately 50% (US Bureau of the Census, 2004), marriage and family therapists are sure to have numerous clients who could benefit directly from the use of the RAQ-D. First, the RAQ-D can be utilized as an assessment of remarital issues in premarital counseling. Stahmann (2000) states, “Family therapists are in a natural position to take a leadership in premarital counseling” (p. 113). Marriage and family therapists can request that couples entering a remarriage complete the RAQ-D. The responses of each individual will give insight regarding issues that may develop during the remarriage. Therapists can equip couples with the necessary tools to overcome or handle those issues as they arise later in their remarriage.

Second, the RAQ-D can be used as an intervention combined with counseling in a remarriage. Marriage and family therapists can request that couples complete the RAQ-D to identify the “hot spots” in their marriage. The responses of each individual will give insight regarding issues that are present in the relationship. Those issues can be used to develop a treatment plan catered to the couple’s specific needs to overcome potential issues in the relationship related to remarriage.

Third, the RAQ-D can be used as a resource for marriage and family therapists to simply gain additional knowledge and awareness of remarital issues and topics. The feedback report can assist therapists in the manner and order of their psychoeducation and/or therapy with remarried couples in general. Stahmann (2000) identifies marriage and family therapists as being uniquely qualified to deliver premarital counseling to all types of couples.

Marriage and family therapists in training can also benefit from becoming familiar with the inventory content to guide them in their training of how to assist remarital couples and individuals to prepare for their upcoming marriage. In particular, the RAQ-D can help clinicians in training to know specific questions to ask couples and topic and issues to cover during in working with a remarital couple.

This inventory will also be useful for couples who are not planning to make marital vows but who are simply living together and thus combining two family systems. Therapists may be able to apply much of the same therapy and guidance for these cohabiting couples. This may be an especially relevant development as cohabitation is becoming a popular alternative to marriage (Bumpass & Lu, 2000) despite the lesser relationship quality provided in a cohabiting relationship when compared to marital and remarital relationships (Skinner, Bahr, Crane, & Call, 2002).

Implications for Family Life Educators. This inventory may also be used in a group setting with clergy, educators, or even group therapists that are running a group focused on preparing couples for remarriage. The RAQ-D would likely be useful in a classroom setting. Couples participating in such a group could be instructed to complete the questionnaire. They could be directed to identify specific questionnaire items that elicited negative emotion or thoughts regarding their current relationship or even expectations of conflict. The group facilitator could cater the individual couple interventions to be sure to help to resolve the identified relational issues. Also, Family Life Educators would likely benefit from simply reading the questionnaire to increase their awareness of the common categorical issues that arise in the context of remarriage.

This could guide classroom discussion to be effective and increasingly informative to the class participants.

Implications for Couples. Couples will also directly benefit from the use of the RAQ-D. The next step of development planned for the RAQ-D will be to create a feedback mechanism. Couples taking The RAQ-D will receive a feedback report giving the couple insight on their relationship. Remarital couples utilizing this remarriage-specific inventory will benefit by receiving this feedback on the areas that are often problematic for remarried couples. This will allow these couples to first be aware of these potential “hot spots” as well as an opportunity to strengthen possible weaknesses in their relationship.

Recommendations for Further Research

One of the most crucial areas of future research should focus on the discovery of reasons why the majority of remarried couples do not utilize preventative measures when approaching marriage (Ganong & Coleman, 1994). After surveying clergy regarding premarital counseling, Jones and Stahmann (1994) found that among the weddings performed by the clergy, couples entering a remarriage only accounted for one fourth of those who participated in premarital counseling. Ganong and Coleman (1994) postulate three theories for remarried couples lack of preventative measures: the pervasive belief of couples “if it isn’t broken, don’t fix it” (p. 47), a tunnel vision effect that may occur when couples are in the bliss of a new relationship, or possibly the “absence of well-qualified assistance for remarriage and stepfamily preparation” (p. 47). Whatever the actual reasons, future research should endeavor to further the effectiveness of remarital preparation along with its utilization.

More specific to the RAQ-D, the following research should be pursued to accomplish the complete development of the instrument. There should be a larger sample size of men from which to explore additional factors. Additionally, further samples should be composed of a more representative group of participants (such as more diversity in religious, racial, and socioeconomic status).

Further research should examine and expand the psychometric properties of the questionnaire. The research should undertake to develop a structural equation model of the theorized factors and their relationship to one another. The research should also investigate the factors identified through the exploratory factor analysis by performing a confirmatory factor analysis. This procedure will allow the researcher to see if the data does fit the identified factors and the underlying model hypothesized (Streiner, 2006). Further research should also confirm the reliability of the questionnaire through methods such as split-half reliability.

The research should then endeavor to establish concurrent validity. This is done by correlating the scores and the interpretations of the scores with standardized instruments that have previously born out their efficacy in assessing relationship stability like the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Carey, Spector, Lantinga, & Krauss, 1993; Eddy, Heyman, & Weiss, 1991; Spanier & Thompson, 1982), or brief versions of the DAS, such as the DAS-4 (Sabourin, Valois, & Lussier, 2005) or Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) (Busby, Crane, & Larson, 1995; Crane, Middleton, & Bean, 2000) or the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT) (Freeston & Plechaty, 1997; Locke & Wallace, 1959). This research will help to establish the correlative efficacy of the RAQ-D in assessing relationship distress and stability.

Further research needs also evaluate and measure the predictive validity of the RAQ-D to answer the question, “Can the RAQ-D predict the success of a remarital relationship?” Other premarital inventories have evidenced great predictive success. The PREP inventory has shown up to 90% accuracy in predicting future marital success (Scott, 2001). Future predictive research may lead to a revision of RAQ-D to remove items that do not contribute to relationship success prediction and adding new items that increase prediction ability of the questionnaire.

As the field of research in remarriage expands, it may be helpful for a qualitative study of remarriage to be completed. A thorough qualitative analysis of the remarital experience may elicit the addition of new content areas, such as sexuality in remarriage, or other content areas not covered in the research literature. As these areas are identified, new items can be created and added to the questionnaire to assess these issues.

Another recommendation is to create a paper and pencil version of the inventory that can be utilized without the internet. This will allow individuals who do not use the internet to utilize the instrument. However, it should be noted that the instrument would need to be normed to this population as it may be significantly different than the population of internet users. Also, as the methodology of internet research becomes more refined, the researchers must continually norm the instrument to internet users as more accurate means and techniques become available.

Development of Related Scales

Future work may also include developing a scale based on the experiences in remarriage following widowhood, the Remarital Assessment Questionnaire for Widowed persons (RAQ-W). The research would need to establish if it would be appropriate to

have male and female versions of the questionnaire. Items for this questionnaire would need to be developed with age and life cycle issues kept in mind. These items would likely deal with health issues, adult children, retirement, grandparenting and associated topics.

There are other likely differences between content areas for the RAQ-D and the RAQ-W. Items for the RAQ-W would likely be more focused on assessing attitudes of the new spouse that is entering the family. Items would assess the spouse's ability to allow for the deceased spouse's goals, plans, and traditions to not only exist in the newly formed stepfamily, but even be revered. Other items may need to assess for feelings of jealousy or negative feelings associated with being compared to the deceased spouse by children, the spouse, and even extended family. Further, the items regarding finances would not need to assess for child and/or spousal support as this would not be associated with this type of family. The financial items would likely be more focused on retirement issues, financial assistance of adult children, and like items. Items that assess anger, conflict, and closeness with the ex-spouse will not need to be included.

The RAQ-W could likely be developed into a stand-alone instrument. It seems that this area of remarriage is unique enough to warrant development separate from areas that are more related to divorce. This could be accomplished by attaining a sample of widows and widowers through various means (i.e., - contacting organizations dedicated to serving this population and recruiting individuals, etc.). This may be an important area to pursue as there is a large aging population in the United States who may benefit from an inventory of this type.

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Appendix A

Memo to Clinicians

Dear (student's name will be written here)

For my dissertation I am developing a questionnaire focused on remarital couples. The attached sheets contain a rough draft of the items that have been generated thus far. The next step of the process is to have graduate students in Marriage and Family Therapy review the items and give feedback. I have chosen to utilize MFT students, as they are familiar with areas that may be problematic for couples experiencing remarriage.

There are approximately (the total number) items currently. It is anticipated that these items will be reviewed and then modified, deleted, or combined to produce a final questionnaire consisting of around 30-50 questions.

If you decide to participate in the reviewing process simply follow the guidelines below:

- You can give me minimal or maximum feedback – it's up to you. I know that you have a very busy schedule so feel free to give simple feedback (i.e. – crossing out questions that you don't like, writing feedback for the questionnaire as a whole, etc.).
- If you would like to give more feedback that would be appreciated (i.e. – stating why you may not have liked a particular item, giving ideas for other items that I may not have thought of, identifying which areas, in your opinion, are most important to cover in the questionnaire, etc.).
- I encourage feedback on:
 - the questionnaire as a whole (Do you think that it's valid, useful, etc.?)
 - on specific sections (Is the section necessary, are there any other sections that you would include, subsections, etc.?)
 - on particular items (Is the item clear and useful? Does it have face validity?)
- The items have numbers associated with them. Please disregard these numbers. They are simply used to coordinate current research with the particular item.
- After you complete your review, simply put the packet into my box (Higgins) in the MFT office (Room 274, TLRB).

If you choose not to participate, simply put this packet into my box (Higgins) in the MFT office (Room 274, TLRB).

If you have any questions please contact me by phone at 812-2631 (my home), through email at derrel@byu.edu, or track me down at the Comprehensive Clinic. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this reviewing process. I appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Derrel J. Higgins

Appendix B

Webpage Introduction and Informed Consent for Life Experience Experts

Remarital Assessment Questionnaire Project

Information about this project

Thank you for your interest in this project. We appreciate your time and value the feedback you will provide us.

Participation in this project is easy. Simply read through the Research Participant Passive Consent Form below. At the end of the page is a link that will lead you to the questionnaire. Your participation is anonymous.

As this is the first of many steps in the development of the Remarital Assessment Questionnaire, regrettably, you will not receive results from taking it. Questionnaires are developed in three stages. First, items, or questions, are written that seem to assess the areas the questionnaire is attempting to address. Second, the items are refined by a process of review and statistical analysis. This is the stage of this questionnaire. The third stage involves developing a feedback mechanism or your “results”. This will take place in the future. If you would like to see the finalized version of the instrument when this process of development is complete, an area to give your contact information will be provided at the end of this questionnaire.

Although you will not receive direct feedback from answering these questions there are multiple potential benefits. Reading and answering these questions may help raise your awareness of areas of growth for your own relationship. You may print the questions and discuss them as a couple leading to helpful relationship discussions. Additionally, after completion of the questions, you will be provided with a list of links for online resources for remarried couples.

Thank you for your participation,

Robert F. Stahmann, Ph.D. Derrel J. Higgins, M.S.

Research Participation Passive Informed Consent Form

Your Consent to be a Research Subject and Participate in this Project

The purpose of this research study is to develop a remarriage questionnaire. It is being conducted by Robert Stahmann, Ph.D., a professor in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at Brigham Young University, and Derrel Higgins, M.S., a doctoral graduate student in the same program. You were selected for participation because you have had experience with divorce and/or remarriage and can give valuable feedback to the researchers regarding the questionnaire.

If you choose to participate in this research study you will be asked to complete the Remarital Assessment Questionnaire. It is expected that the questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

There are a few possible risks or discomfort for participation in this study. Some questions are personal and may make you feel uncomfortable. Some questions may lead you to recall unpleasant memories.

In general, couples entering into a second marriage will benefit from this research. They will benefit from having an assessment specifically designed to assess and give the couple specific feedback on their remarital relationship. This same information will also help to guide a clergy member, a counselor, or therapist in their treatment and/or education for couples using their services.

Participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate and the right to withdraw later without any penalties or negative consequences. Strict confidentiality will be maintained. No individual identifying information will be requested.

If you have any questions regarding this research project you may contact Derrel Higgins, at the Comprehensive Clinic at Brigham Young University at (801) 422-7759 or by email at derrel@byu.edu. You may contact Dr. Robert Stahmann at (801) 422-3888.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in a research project you may contact Shane Schulthies, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Brigham Young University, (801) 422-5490.

I have read this consent form and I am prepared to participate in this study. By clicking on the link below, I willingly give my consent to participate in this study.

I voluntarily give my consent to participate

Appendix C

Screenshots of RAQ-D

Questionnaire Items

MyMarriageBuilder.com - Questionnaire - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by LDS Church

Remarital Assessment Questionnaire (RAQ)

Please respond to each question as to your current situation and how you generally feel about it now (during the past two weeks).

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply
1 -- My children are my first priority, even before my marriage.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 -- My partner's children should obey me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3 -- I expect my partner's children to have respect for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4 -- First-marriage couples adjust to marriage easier than remarried couples.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5 -- A husband and wife in their first marriage is the ideal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply
6 -- My children will accept my new partner as their new parent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7 -- My partner will be able to easily take the role of parent with my biological child(ren).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8 -- My children will likely struggle to accept my new partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9 -- I am aware of how my previous relationship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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MyMarriageBuilder.com - Questionnaire - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by LDS Church

arrangements I have with my children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
65 -- There were legal battles during my divorce.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply
66 -- I am still fighting with my ex-spouse over various issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
67 -- I feel "battle-scarred" from my divorce because it was so bad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
68 -- My ex-spouse is mature and reasonable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
69 -- I literally hate my ex-spouse.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
70 -- I am putting more effort into making this marriage work than I did in my previous marriage(s).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
71 -- I seek (or have sought) support from other people who have dealt with divorce and remarriage.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply
72 -- My current partner and I don't let our past relationships negatively affect our relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Continue >>

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Demographics Section.

MyMarriageBuilder.com - Questionnaire - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by LDS Church

Remarital Assessment Questionnaire (RAQ)

(Page 2 of 2)

Age:	<input type="text"/>
Your Zip Code:	<input type="text"/>
Sex:	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female
Current marital status:	<input type="text" value=""/>
We lived together before we were married:	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
What is the highest education you have completed?	<input type="text" value=""/>
Income level (Your current personal yearly gross income):	<input type="text" value=""/>
Your race or ethnic group:	<input type="text" value=""/>
Religious Affiliation:	<input type="text" value=""/>
How many years have you been married (current marriage)?	<input type="text"/>
Do you have children from more than one relationship?	<input type="text" value=""/>
I have <input type="text"/> total children.	
I have brought <input type="text"/> (number of) children into this relationship to live with us (at least four days a month).	
My partner has brought <input type="text"/> children into this relationship to live with us (at least four days a month).	
How many times have you been married?	

Done Local intranet

MyMarriageBuilder.com - Questionnaire - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by LDS Church

My partner has brought children into this relationship to live with us (at least four days a month).

How many times have you been married?

Are your biological parents divorced?

How many times has your mother been married?

How many times has your father been married?

How long did you know your partner before you got engaged?

How long did you know your partner before you were married?

How long have you been a stepfamily?

We are not married

0-1 years

1-2 years

2-3 years

3-5 years

5-10 years

Over 10 years

Neither of us brought (or are bringing) children into this marriage.

Does Not Apply

[Complete Questionnaire](#)

Done Local intranet