

AN EXPLORATION OF THE DATING ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS OF
SINGLE ARMY SOLDIERS AND THEIR PERCEIVED READINESS TO MARRY

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

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The Ohio State University
2006

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ABSTRACT

Variations in readiness to marry as a function of one's demographic background, past relationship experiences, dating attitudes and beliefs and relationship behaviors has yet to be examined. Using data from a study designed to evaluate the effectiveness of a relationship education program for singles, this study explored these associations by evaluating 248 single Army soldier's perceived readiness to marry their past dating partners. Analyses were conducted examining four readiness to marry groups including respondents who never felt ready to marry and were also conducted including only those respondents who felt ready to marry at some time. Overall, findings suggest that single soldiers tend to pace their relationships quickly and hold moderately constraining beliefs and attitudes toward mate selection. Specifically, single soldiers differed the most on how they behaved in their past relationships, while, overall, few statistically significant differences were found among the other variables of interest. These findings provide a foundation for future research to examine how dating behaviors more specifically affect readiness to marry and how behaviors may overtime influence one's attitudes and beliefs toward mate selection.

Dedicated to my mother, Shirley, my father, John, and my sister, Jessica

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my adviser, Ted Futris, for his editorial support, encouragement and his patience. I also would like to acknowledge his incredible and most helpful ability to think outside of the box regarding statistical presentation and analyses and for inspiring me to embrace the process of writing a thesis.

I would also like to thank Sarah Schoppe-Sullivan and Jerelyn Schultz for serving on my committee and for providing me with their invaluable insights and suggestions.

I would also like to thank Ron Thomas and Pete Frederich from the United States Army for making the research project that provided this data possible.

Finally, I would like to thank my family who provided me with unconditional support and the motivation to persevere through my frustrated moments.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Love, dating, mating and marriage have long been a mystery and have thus generated massive amounts of research and literature (Berscheid, 1986; Merrill, 1949; Simpson, Campbell, & Burgess, 1953; Whyte, 1990). Throughout the decades there has been a common theme in the literature on these subjects: that courtship practices are different than those of the past and that marriages today are less stable than those in the past (Surra, 1990).

In 1949, Merrill made statements about our society's dating and mating practices that would still apply today. He stated that

“Americans are a marrying people. They marry early and often...and the high divorce rate in this country is well known...Americans are interested in courtship and marriage. Many continental observers would consider this a vast understatement. Indeed, they suggest that Americans are obsessed with, rather than merely interested in, these relationships” (p. 3).

In the early 50's Burgess (1953) discussed the transition of courtship practices,

“young people today are often surprised to learn that dating is a recent social phenomenon. It arose along with the automobile, the motion picture and the radio. The automobile broke down the small neighborhood as the social unit for courtship. It also greatly extended the radius of movement for the social contacts of young people, which was a necessary precondition for dating. The motion picture taught adolescents and youth the art of love-making” (p. 63).

Burgess (1953) also outlined six reasons as to why dating had recently become a common way to develop romantic relationships,

“1) the transition from a rural to an urban population with the rapid growth of urbanization; 2) increasing mobility of a population; 3) individualization and fragmentation of personality; 4) the growing secularization of life, with the increase in the freedom of young people in social relations; 5) the decline in the religious concept and sanction of marriage; and 6) the emancipation of women from a position of economic, social and political inferiority to men” (p. 66).

Clearly the courtship process has changed. Today singles desire marriage as much as in the past, but partake in courtship habits that are less suitable for a healthy marriage. Singles have more freedom in selecting a partner, but these freedoms bring uncertainty as to how to develop a healthy relationship and result in more experiences with the dating process. With more dating experiences, singles have more opportunity to engage in practices that are less likely to lead to a healthy marriage (i.e., premarital sex, cohabitation, children out of wedlock, etc.) (Heaton, 2002; Kahn & London, 1991; Teachman, 2003)

While changes in our culture have provided more freedom to dating individuals, the mentality or expectations of those dating have also changed. Marriage is now approached as an option, but not a necessity (Surra, 1990). In the past, women tended to marry for financial security, men married to have someone keep house, and typically both married because of common family and religious backgrounds and the desire to start a family. Today the basis for marriage as a religious, economic, or parental partnership is diminishing and the outlook on marriage seems to have altered to that of the desire to find a soul mate (Dafoe Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001). Barbara Dafoe Whitehead and David Popenoe found that in a sample of 1,003 young adults ages 20-29 that 94% of the never-marrieds agreed that “when you marry you want your spouse to be your soul mate first and foremost” (p. 6). While this romanticized view of marriage

appears harmless at first glance, it does not reflect more stable marriages or views on marriage.

These changes in courtship and marriage have bred behavioral and attitudinal changes toward marriage and mate selection as well. Singles have become more pessimistic about having a lasting marriage (Dafoe Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001), yet desire the ideal, soul mate marriage. Because of these high expectations of a marriage relationship singles are more likely to test out a relationship to make sure it is 'just right' through cohabitating or by dating numerous partners before marriage. For example, research has shown that by 1997 there were 4.1 million cohabitating couples, which was a 46% increase from 1990 (Seltzer, 2001). While singles have more latitude now than ever to marry for love or because they have met their soul mate, these shifts in beliefs and expectations have allowed singles to avoid confronting the institutional and societal constraints of marriage and have not led to more stable marriages.

These attitudinal and behavioral shifts among men are expressed by an exploratory study conducted by Dafoe Whitehead and Popenoe (2002) that examined the commitment, dating and mating habits of 60 heterosexual males through focus groups in four metropolitan areas. They found that the men interviewed reflected a desire to marry, although they did not feel in any hurry. They seemed to enjoy their single life and with the sexual revolution and trends toward cohabitation, they could receive some benefits of marriage outside of the commitment of marriage. Some of the top reasons men listed for not committing to marriage are: they can get sex without marriage more easily than that in the past, they can enjoy the benefits of having a wife by cohabitating rather than marrying, they want to avoid divorce and its financial risks, they are waiting for the perfect soul mate and she hasn't appeared and they face few social pressures to marry. The results from this focus group further emphasize the

changes in courtship practices. Singles (men in this case) don't feel the pressure or need to marry, because the dating culture provides all the benefits of marriage without the commitment of marriage.

This same phenomenon is explored among women in *Hooking Up, Hanging Out and Hoping for Mr. Right*, an 18 month study of the attitudes and values of college women regarding sexuality, dating, courtship and marriage (Glenn & Marquardt, 2001). The study involved in-depth interviews with 62 college women on 11 campuses, supplemented by 20-minute telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,000 college women (Glenn & Marquardt, 2001). One of the major findings of the study was that 'hooking up,' a distinctive sex-without-commitment interaction between college women and men is widespread on campuses and profoundly influences campus culture. Another important finding was that college women from divorced families appeared to be more eager to marry, although were less likely raised to save sex until marriage and were more likely to have hooked up repeatedly; 37% of college women whose parents had divorced reported hooking up more than six times, compared with 23% of women from intact families (Glenn & Marquardt, 2001).

In addition, the campus hookup culture does little to guide and support these women in their thinking about sex, love, commitment and marriage. The majority of the women surveyed reported a wish to be married someday, yet their present social experiences are not considered and evaluated with respect to their long-term, future relationship goals. Eighty-three percent of the women agreed that "The things I do in my relationship today will affect my future marriage," yet the in-depth interviews that were conducted revealed that these young women truly did not acknowledge the connection between their actions today and their future relationships (Glenn & Marquardt, 2001). For example a student from Rutgers University said,

I think hooking up with different people and seeing what you like and don't like is a good idea. Because eventually you're going to have to...marry someone and I'd just like to know that I experienced everything (p. 32).

Glenn and Marquardt (2001) argue that these women would have a hard time justifying how having one's heart broken time and time again or attempting to separate sex from feeling is good preparation for a trusting and happy marriage later on.

Both Dafoe Whitehead and Popenoe (2002) and Glenn and Marquardt (2001) found singles favorable attitudes toward cohabitation and premarital sex to be widespread. Research finds these premarital high risk behaviors (i.e., premarital sex with multiple partners, cohabitation and having a child out of wedlock) increase one's chances of suffering from divorce (Heaton, 2002; Kahn & London, 1991). Research has clearly demonstrated the pervasiveness of these behaviors for example, 88% of never married men had a sexual experience and 18.3% have had more than four sexual partners (Christopher & Sprecher, 2001), in 1995 40% of women ages 19-24 had cohabitated and more than half of all first unions in the early 1990s began with cohabitation (Bumpass & Lu, 2000) and about 30% of nonmarital births are to women under 20 years of age (Seltzer, 2001). While engagement in these premarital high risk behaviors is prevalent, singles today have more opportunity in their numerous dating relationships to partake in these behaviors and take little notice of how these activities will affect their future marital happiness.

Courtship and dating trends have evolved significantly from a means to find financial, religious and parental partnership to a process that involves the search for one's soul mate. This process has been enhanced by the increasing independence of women, and the resulting decrease in need for the financial security that typically accompanies marriage, the increased mobility of our society and the sexual freedom that

singles have today. The most important question to ask after examining these trends is: are singles better off and are marriages more stable given the new freedoms allowed by our evolving society?

The Stability of Marriage

The stability or instability of marriages today is a topic of much debate. Some argue that the institution of marriage is deteriorating (Popenoe, 2003) and some argue that marriage is just changing and people may be choosing alternatives to marriage (Heaton, 2002). Regardless of the debate, it is difficult to ignore the statistics related to the state of marriages today.

Approximately one million marriages end in the United States each year (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). In addition, the National Center for Health Statistics released a report which found that 43% of first marriages end in separation or divorce within 15 years (Bramlett & Mosher, 2001). Dafoe Whitehead and Popenoe (2003) reported that today,

“Americans live longer, have fewer children and spend a longer proportion of the life span as single adults than they do in continuous marriage. The Census Bureau projections suggested that by 2010, married couples with children will account for only 20% of total households and the percentage of one-person households is projected to reach close to 27% of total American households by 2010” (p. 14).

Because the majority of society is or will be affected by divorce in some way, it is important to ask, what is the impact of divorce on children, their future relationships and how are divorcees developing new relationships?

The Impact of Divorce on Children and their Future Relationships

Since 1979 research has supported the proposition that the higher the marital quality in the parents' marriage, the higher the marital quality in the children's marriage (Larson & Holman, 1994). Half of all divorces each year include children (U.S. Bureau of

the Census, 1998). Because millions of children are affected by divorce, it is important to mention the impact divorce has on children and their future romantic relationships.

Throughout this section, it is crucial to keep in mind that the effects of parental divorce is a controversial topic and some research does suggest that parental divorce does not have many long-term effects (Mullett & Stolberg, 2002). Also, it is important to note that the actual experience of a divorce may not be the cause of some of the suggested negative impacts of parental divorce. Instead, the experiences before, during and after the divorce may mediate the experience of divorce, meaning that other variables, such as the amount of parental discord throughout the marriage, the parental involvement after the marriage and the age of the child at the time of their parent's divorce may all be contributing factors as to how the divorce will affect individuals' future relationships (Braver & Cookson, 2003). However, some researchers have demonstrated that divorce negatively affects children's overall adjustment (Wallerstein, 2000; Amato & Sobolewski, 2001), attitudes toward marriage (Heaton, 2002) and increases their chances of divorce (Bumpass, et al. 1991). With relevance to this study, it is important to ask: how does divorce impact the quality and stability of children's future relationships?

Challenges in Forming Relationships

Research has shown that children of divorce are at higher risk from having their own marriages dissolve (Heaton, 2002) and they face more challenges in attempting to build healthy relationships (Christensen & Brooks, 2001). Specifically, parental divorce +has been shown to erode one's sense of trust when it comes to intimate relationships and hinders the development of intimate relationships due to a fear of rejection and lack of trust (Johnston & Thomas, 1996).

In addition to lack of trust, parental conflict has been related to future difficulties with intimacy for children of divorce. It has been argued that children learn inappropriate relationship behavior, ineffective conflict management skills and dysfunctional patterns of relating from their parents (Westervelt & Vandenberg, 1997). Also, parental conflict has been argued to be a strong predictor of intimacy problems and negative attitudes toward marriage for adult children of divorce (Gabardi & Rosen, 1991).

Suffering from emotional neediness has also been argued to be a characteristic of adult children of divorce. Amato (1996) found that adult children of divorce were more likely to marry at an earlier age and argued that this eagerness to marry is a result of an overwhelming emotional neediness of adults from divorced families. Amato (1996) argued that these emotional deficits in children of divorce are the result of the failed marriages of their parents.

At Risk Premarital Behaviors and Attitudes toward Marriage

In addition to challenges developing healthy, intimate relationships, children of divorce also take part in risky premarital behaviors and espouse risky premarital attitudes and beliefs. These risky beliefs and behaviors have been linked to higher rates of relationship dissolution. For example, adult children of divorce tend to be more sexually permissive. Gabardi and Rosen (1991) found that those from divorced families had significantly more sexual partners than those from intact families. Research has shown that the more premarital partners one has before marriage, the more likely they are to suffer a divorce (Teachman, 2003).

Adult children of divorce have also been shown to have more negative views toward marriage, which have been argued to contribute to a preference for cohabitation over marriage (Tasker, 1992). In addition, researchers have found that children of divorce believe that marriage does not last a lifetime and that divorce is always an

option, when in an unhappy relationship (Glenn & Kramer, 1987). This belief spawns a decrease in the stigma that surrounds divorce, thus making divorce an easier option. Johnston and Thomas (1996) argued that this attitude that marriage can be dissolved rather than worked on may be a large contributor to the rise in divorce rates.

If individuals choose to marry, it is important to the well-being of children involved that these marriages survive and are healthy. More children are affected by divorce now than ever. Consequently, many children of divorce suffer not only immediate effects but also long term effects in terms of their future relationships.

Divorcee's Future Relationships

While the impact of divorce on children's future romantic relationships is known little research exists on the dating patterns of divorced individuals (Anderson, Greene, Walker, et al, 2004). Because second and higher-order marriages have an even greater likelihood of ending in divorce (Amato, 2001) and because about one out of every six adults endures two or more divorces (Cherlin, 1992), it is necessary to note the research that is available on those re-entering the dating pool following a divorce.

Anderson, Greene, Walker, et al. (2004) examined the courtship tendencies of 78 divorced couples: 39 recent filers and 39 one year post-filers. The authors found that of the recent filers, 8% were described as cohabiting with a new partner and 24% of the one-year filers were cohabiting. The most surprising finding was that at the time of the filing, 50% of the sample already had courtship experience, meaning that those individuals were dating before their divorce was final, or even filed. Also, one-quarter of the recent filers were in an existing relationship that they defined as 'serious' when they filed for divorce. The authors concluded, "results from this study show the relative rapid entry into new romantic relationships for divorcing parents, with many children exposed to the new partner(s) and related transitions" (p. 74).

Amato (2001) argued that “the shift from a dominant pattern of lifelong marriage to one of serial marriage punctuated by periods of being single represents a fundamental change in how adults meet their needs for intimacy over the life-course” (p. 488). The change from one marriage to serial marriages, the high divorce rate, the detrimental effects divorce has on children and the fast pace at which divorcees are entering back into serious relationships are all obstacles those individuals have to overcome when they attempt to establish healthy relationships. So the questions remain what are the predictors of healthy and stable relationships and what characteristics make one susceptible to divorce?

Predictors of Relationship Stability and Quality

It is essential to understand the aspects of individuals’ personalities, behaviors and relationship characteristics that are predictive of satisfied, healthy marriages so that when involved in a dating relationship, they can be aware of factors that impact the future stability and happiness of their relationship. This next section will explore the general predictors of premarital relationship stability/instability and personality characteristics that are related to more stable, happy relationships.

Length of Courtship and Age

Two of the most common predictors of relationship stability are longer premarital courtships and being older at first marriage (Whyte, 1984; Grover, et al., 1985; Bumpass, et al., 1991; Heaton, 2002). For example, Whyte (1984) and Grover et al. (1985) both found that longer premarital courtships were positively related to greater stability in marriage. Grover et al. (1985) argued that, “the underlying principle associated with the relationship between time dating and relationship satisfaction is the greater opportunity for couples to know each other prior to deciding to marry and the greater their chance to experience some of the ordinary problems, irritations and

frustrations of intimate relationship, the more informed their choice of a partner will be” (p. 383).

In addition to dating longer before marriage, age at first marriage is strongly associated with greater marital stability (Whyte, 1984; Grover, et al., 1985; Heaton, 2002). This relationship may be attributed to the maturity of the couples. For instance, the older an individual is, the more life experiences they have had and the more likely they are prepared for as serious a task and commitment as marriage.

These two predictors of marital stability are important to take notice of when developing a romantic relationship. Taking the time to fully get to know someone premaritally may reveal trouble spots that may occur after marriage, thus allowing the opportunity to remedy these problems before marriage. In addition to the relationship between length of courtship and age at marriage with marital stability, other behavioral and attitudinal factors have been shown to make one more prone for marital/relationship dissolution.

Attitudinal and Behavioral Factors

Research has clearly shown that certain premarital behaviors make one more susceptible to divorce. Heaton (2002) found that having a baby out of wed-lock and cohabitating premaritally were positively related to marital dissolution. Also, Kahn and London (1991) found that women who were sexually active prior to marriage faced a considerably higher risk of marital disruption than women who were virgins when married. In addition Teachman (2003) found that women with intimate premarital relationships (i.e., premarital sex and/or cohabitation) with more than one partner were at an increased risk for marital dissolution. The relationship between premarital sexual behavior and subsequent marital dissolution is evident, but the explanation for these findings is less obvious. Researchers argue that multiple sexual partners indicates less

commitment to the idea of a permanent relationship or may provide awareness of alternatives to one's marital partner as sources of sexual intimacy and fulfillment (Teachman, 2003).

While certain premarital behaviors are predictive of marital dissolution, these behaviors have been argued to be partially the cause of negative attitudes or beliefs toward marriage. For example, Kelly and Conley (1987) found individuals who were more sexually experienced were less conservative in their attitudes toward marriage. Kurdek (1993) also found that those individuals in unstable marriages held stronger dysfunctional beliefs regarding relationships. Amato and Rogers (1999) argued that these shifts in divorce attitudes are essential because they found that individuals who adopted more favorable attitudes toward divorce tended to experience declines in relationship quality, whereas those who adopted less favorable attitudes toward divorce tended to experience improvements in relationship quality.

Premarital behaviors are important to the stability of future relationships and also to the formation of healthy beliefs toward marriage and divorce. While the direction of the affect of attitudes on behavior or behaviors affecting attitudes is unclear, the importance of premarital behaviors and attitudes on the stability of future relationships is apparent. Additionally, specific personality characteristics of the individual and the compatibility between partners in a romantic relationship have also been shown to be predictive of relationship quality and stability.

Personality and Compatibility

Personality traits are important to examine in regards to romantic relationships, because certain personality dispositions may create enduring vulnerabilities that affect how couples adapt to stressful experiences (Karney & Bradbury, 1995) and personality helps define aspects of the relational context that may affect day-to-day interactions

(Bradbury & Finchman, 1988). Research has clearly shown that certain personality traits are more likely to characterize unstable relationships. The Big Five dimensions of personality (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience) have been examined in relation to marital satisfaction and stability. Results have indicated that those who divorce earlier are less agreeable (Gattis, et. al., 2004; Donnellan, et al., 2004), are less conscientious (Gattis, et al., 2004; Donnellan, et. al., 2004) and are higher in neuroticism (i.e., a negative or irritable tone in relationships) (Kelly and Conley, 1987; Gattis, et al., 2004; Donnellan, et al., 2004). Although no exact explanation has been provided for the relationship between these personality dimensions and relationship instability, speculations have been made. For example, less agreeable individuals are probably more likely to engage in certain interactional behaviors that are harmful to the relationship. Conscientious people, on the other hand, are probably more responsible, dependable and hardworking and thus create fewer areas of disagreement in a relationship (Donnellan, et al., 2004). Neuroticism is the personality dimension that has been most consistently linked with relationship dissatisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 1997) and tends to prompt negative communication in a relationship. Neuroticism has been argued to precipitate negative day-to-day interactions involving both words and deeds (Donnellan, et al., 2004). Personality dimensions are crucial to understand throughout the development of relationships, especially because these personality traits provide the framework from which the relationship will operate and have the potential to create enduring vulnerabilities within the relationship.

In addition to personality dimensions, compatibility between partners has been shown to be predictive of relationship satisfaction and stability. Studies have shown that partners that are more alike in certain interests report greater satisfaction with their

relationships (Russell & Wells, 1991; Arindel & Luteijn, 2000) and there is evidence that partnerships based on similarity are more stable (Tzeng, 1992). Houts, Robbins, and Huston (1996) found that men were more positive about their courtship experiences when couples were more similar in their leisure interests. Also researchers have found that compatibility in personality, intelligence, physique, social background, attitudes, habits and leisure preferences was positively related to marital adjustment, as indicated by scores on the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment scale (Wilson & Cousins, 2003; Kaslow & Robinson, 1996).

Religious affiliation and attendance have also been shown to be predictive of marital satisfaction (Vaughn & Heaton, 1997; Fiese & Tomcho, 2001). When both spouses attend church regularly, couples have been argued to face the lowest risk of divorce and as spousal differences in church attendance increase so does the risk of dissolution. In addition, mixed-faith marriages have been shown to significantly increase the rate of dissolution (Vaughn & Heaton, 1997). Religious affiliation and participation in religious activities may increase couple solidarity especially because religious doctrine supports family values and commitment to marriage. Also, sharing the same religious beliefs and background may reduce the likelihood that spousal conflict will arise regarding childrearing (Fiese & Tomcho, 2001). Similarly, a shared value system has been shown to be characteristic of happy and stable relationships (Beavers, 1985; Murstein, 1980; Kaslow & Robinson, 1996; Rosen-Grandon, Myers, & Hattie, 2004).

Shared humor appreciation has also been linked to marital and couple satisfaction (Priest & Taylor Thein, 2003; Kaslow & Robinson, 1996; Murstein & Brust, 1985). For example, couples in long-term satisfied marriages rated "laughing together frequently" as a top ten reason for remaining satisfied in their relationship (Lauer, Lauer, & Kerr, 1990). Also, having more similar preferences for jokes has been shown to be

predictive of greater feelings of loving and liking for partners (Murstein & Brust, 1985). Humor is important to relationships in that it may be used to negotiate conflicts or as a mechanism to ease stressful situations.

While some research suggests that individuals who are more similar in certain areas are more satisfied with their relationships, this is not to say that being different is bad. When examining compatibility in relationships, it seems that couples fated to be happy are typically compatible on certain personality and leisure interest dimensions, but also complement one another's differences (Gattis, et. al., 2004; Kaslow & Robinson, 1996). Complementarity has been argued to be important to marital success in that the two individuals have characteristics that differ from one another, yet each partner serves as the completion of the other (Kaslow & Robinson, 1996).

Compatibility or complementarity among partners is important to relationship stability and satisfaction, especially among some of the most predictive personality factors (i.e. neuroticism, conscientiousness and agreeableness). Because certain personality traits influence how well couples interact with one another, compatibility among these personality dimensions is crucial to how couples interact in stressful situations, cope with relationship difficulties and impacts their overall relationship satisfaction. Also, compatibility among leisure interests, religion and sense of humor have also been shown to be predictive of satisfied relationships.

While researchers are well aware of the predictors of marital stability, the common individual is not. Larson and Holman (1994) argued that "couples need to be informed of the potential influences of these factors (that predict marital stability) *before* they marry, so they can make more informed choices, anticipate potential problems and solve as many problems as possible before they get married" (p. 235). Therefore, it is

important to acknowledge these predictors of relationship quality and stability when exploring the relationship behaviors of singles today.

The Current Study

The research clearly shows that the dating culture has evolved from that of the past, marriages are less stable than those of the past and singles are now looking to establish relationships with a soul mate (Dafoe Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001; Surra, 1990). While expectations for a happy, life-long marriage remain high, singles' attitudes toward marriage exude pessimism and frustrations about the search for a happy marriage (Dafoe Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001). These frustrations have translated into a dating culture that is not fostering healthy relationships and singles' frustrations have rendered them vulnerable to more relationship risky behaviors (i.e., premarital sex with several partners, cohabitation) (Dafoe Whitehead & Popenoe, 2002). Because the dating culture has changed, yet healthy marriages and relationships are still desired, it is important to understand what is happening in singles' relationships, how fast it is happening and how the pace of a relationship may influence one's perceived readiness to marry. The current study explores how singles behave in and develop their relationships, their attitudes and beliefs about marriage and how their dating behaviors and attitudes contribute to their perceived readiness to marry.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The current chapter explores the literature regarding the attitudes and beliefs singles hold toward marriage and mate selection and how these attitudes impact subsequent behaviors. In addition, this chapter will review past theories on love, falling in love and relationship development and will provide and explore an alternative model in which to examine close, developing relationships. Finally, this chapter will explain the current study and outline the research questions to be explored.

Attitudes and Beliefs about Mate Selection

The attitudes and beliefs singles hold about marriage and dating are central to some of the frustrations and dissatisfactions they experience in the mate selection process (Crosby, 1985). This frustration may be precipitated by specific constraining beliefs about mate selection characterized as having four qualities: 1) they limit one's choices regarding who or when one marries; 2) they encourage exaggerated or minimal personal effort to find a suitable mate; 3) they inhibit thoughtful consideration of interpersonal strengths and weaknesses and of premarital factors known to have an influence on the success of marriage and; 4) bring about mate selection problems and frustration and restrict options for alternative solutions for problems (Larson, 2002). In general "young adults experience a mixture of high expectations of marriage and apprehension about the implications and long-term consequences associated with getting married" (Larson, 2002; p. 229).

While attitudes and beliefs about mate selection may be essential when understanding some of the frustrations singles face in the mate selection process,

attitudes and beliefs are also crucial in understanding the behavior of singles in dating relationships. Salts and Seismore (1994) assessed attitudes toward marriage and subsequent premarital behavior. Results indicated that overall, females and virgins had more favorable attitudes toward marriage, than males and nonvirgins with multiple sex partners. Weis, Sosnerick, Cate and Sollie (1986) also examined associations between sex, love and marriage (SLM) and found that persons who strongly associated SLM were less likely to approve of premarital sex and extramarital involvements and tended to have fewer premarital sexual partners. Also, individuals with high SLM were more likely to have fewer or no premarital coital partners and more likely to have experienced guilt in response to premarital sexual behavior, more likely to be currently involved in a steady intimate relationship, less likely to have engaged in a wide variety of heterosexual behaviors and more likely to have had first intercourse at a later age compared to those with low SLM associations (Weis et al. 1986).

These findings are important because they demonstrate the relationship between attitudes held about love, sex and marriage and how they relate to subsequent behaviors. As discussed earlier (in Chapter I), individuals who hold more negative views toward marriage (Kelly & Conley, 1987; Kurdek, 1993; Amato & Rogers, 1999) and have more sexual partners (Kahn & London, 1991; Bumpass et al., 1991; Heaton, 2002; Teachman, 2003) are at higher risk for future marital dissolution.

Love in Relationships

Because the attitudes and beliefs that singles hold about mate selection are crucial to their satisfaction and behavior in romantic relationships, it is also important to examine the role that love plays in romantic relationship development. After all, Ponzetti (2005) found that “love was mentioned as the most prevalent reason for the decision to

marry” (p. 136) and Riehl-Emde et al. (2003) found that couples’ assessment of their love was the first and foremost variable for predicting greater relationship well-being.

Defining Love and Styles of Loving

So, what is “love”? Researchers have examined this question for decades and thus several variations on what love is have developed. For instance, Zick Rubin (1970) was one of the first to explore the construct of romantic love and based on previous research and literature, Rubin defined love as “an interpersonal attitude held by a person toward another person involving the predispositions to think, feel and behave a certain way” (p. 268).

John Lee (1977) took the notion of studying love one step further. Instead of studying the construct of love, he examined styles of loving. His research produced three primary (i.e., Eros, Ludus and Storge) and three secondary (i.e. Mania, Agape and Pragma) love-styles. These love styles are summarized in Table 2.1. Lee’s typology of love was validated by Hendrick and Hendrick (1986).

The Process of Falling In Love

While the definitions and styles of love are important to understand, more important is identifying the ways in which one falls in love. Ira Reiss (1960) presented one of the first dynamic theories of relationship development entitled the Wheel Theory of Love. Reiss’s theory examined love from a sociological framework that not only included the psychological aspects of love but also the social and cultural aspects. Reiss’s theory is comprised of four dynamics which operate in a circular fashion and can be either negative or positive, meaning that the relationship can either evolve or dissolve depending on how each of the four dynamics are maintained. The four dynamics are rapport, self-revelation, mutual dependencies or interdependent habit systems and personality need fulfillment (see Figure 2.1).

Primary Love Styles	Description
Eros	Search for a beloved whose physical presentation embodies an ideal held by the lover
Ludus	The degree of involvement is carefully controlled and relationships are multiple and short-lived
Storge	Slowly developing affection and companionship, with an expectation of long-term commitment
Secondary Love Styles	
Mania	Eros & Ludus-- Obsessive and emotionally intense love-style, characterized by preoccupation with the beloved and need for repeated reassurance
Agape	Sorge & Eros-- Altruistic love where the lover sees it as his duty to love without expectation of reciprocity
Pragma	Ludus & Storge-- Involves conscious consideration of the 'vital statistics' about a suitable beloved.

Table 2.1: John Lee's love styles

Rapport is characterized by a feeling of ease around the other and a willingness to talk and get to know the other and is regulated by cultural background. For example, the cultural background of an individual may regulate their values and standards and how they operate in relationships. After rapport is established, an individual may feel more at ease in the relationship and more willing to reveal intimate aspects of their life. This second process is self-revelation. When an individual engages in self-revelation, they are more likely to disclose their hopes, dreams, fears, and engage in sexual activity. Only after the first two processes are developed can mutual dependencies or interdependent habit systems form. This stage is characterized by an individual's need or dependency to have the other fulfill their habits. For example, the fulfillment of sexual needs, or the need to have someone to share humor with. The final dynamic is personality need fulfillment. These needs are some of the same reasons one may feel rapport from the beginning. Some of the needs are: someone to confide in, someone who will stimulate ambition and someone to look up to.

These four processes are always occurring throughout the development of relationships. The continuation of building rapport and self-revelation along with meeting one another's needs will make a relationship stronger and more intense as the individuals evolve together. Similarly, if the processes stop occurring and the individuals stop maintaining and building rapport the relationship will unravel. Overall, Reiss's Wheel Theory made it possible to describe the development and maintenance of love relationships (Reiss, 1960).

Another important contribution to understanding the development of love was made by Sternberg (1986) who developed a theory in order to describe different types of love and explain why some loves last and others do not. Sternberg described three

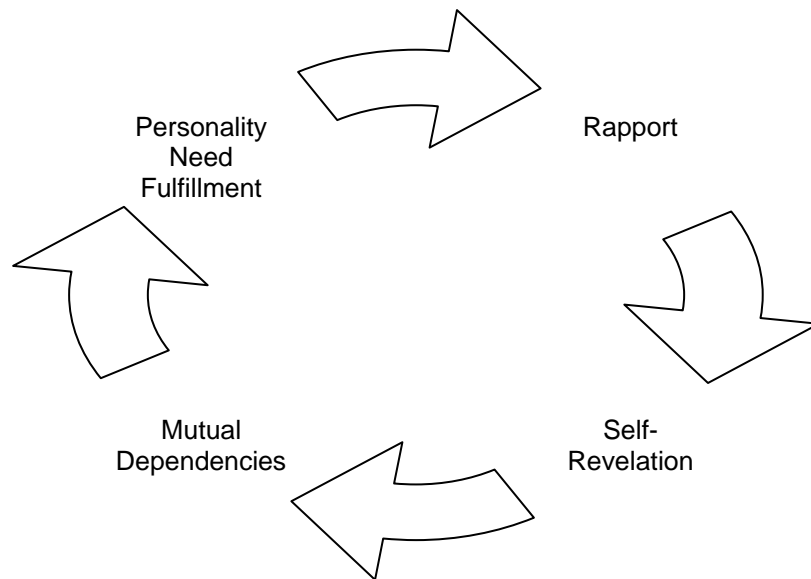


Figure 2.1: Reiss's Wheel Theory of Love

components which comprise his *triangular theory of love*: intimacy, passion and decision/commitment. Intimacy is indicative of feelings of closeness and connectedness in relationships. Thus, intimacy is what develops into feelings of warmth within a relationship. Passion serves as the motivational component, giving rise to feelings of physical attraction, romance and sexual desires. Commitment, or the decision component, is the assessment that one loves another and ultimately, the decision to maintain that love overtime. Overall the intimacy component is somewhat like the emotional investment one makes in a relationship, the passion component the motivational drive and the commitment component the cognitive force guiding the decision making process. It is critical to Sternberg's theory states that to understand love relationships one must realize that the importance of these components differs from one relationship to another. These components also vary across different types of relationships, as well as vary over-time within relationships.

Sternberg posits that eight types of love are possible through various combinations of intimacy, passion and decision/commitment: nonlove, liking, infatuated love, empty love, romantic love, companionate love, fatuous love and consummate love (see Table 2.2 for a description of each). Each of these types of love, formed through different combinations of the components of love, give rise to different relationship experiences. Sternberg argued, "that the framework for understanding love generated by the triangular theory seems to make intuitive sense in terms of people's everyday experience and also seems to capture some of the kinds of love that are perhaps missed by frameworks that are not theoretically generated" (p. 124).

Types of Love	Intimacy	Passion	Decision/ Commitment	Example
<i>Nonlove</i>	-	-	-	Acquaintances
<i>Liking</i>	+	-	-	Friendships
<i>Infatuated</i>	-	+	-	Love at first sight
<i>Empty</i>	-	-	+	Long bland relationships, where commitment is holding it together
<i>Romantic</i>	+	+	-	Liking plus physical attraction
<i>Companionate</i>	+	-	+	Close friendship or marriage when the passion has died
<i>Fatuous</i>	-	+	+	Whirlwind romance
<i>Consummate</i>	+	+	+	Ideal romance

Table 2.2: Sternberg's Types of Love

Early Bonding Experiences and Future Relationships

Another theory of love, which takes a different perspective, is attachment theory. Attachment theory proposes that “close relationships among adults are influenced by enduring styles of attachment developed in childhood” (Femlee & Sprecher, 2000; p. 366) and attachment is defined as “one of several distinct but interlocking behavioral systems, including exploration, care-giving, affiliation and sexual mating” (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Attachment research was primarily directed toward infant-caregiver relationships, although today more attachment research is geared toward the influence of mental representations formed in childhood on later romantic relationships.

One of the major debates within attachment research is whether or not individuals’ mental representations or working models remain stable over time. A working model or mental representation can be described as a fluid interplay between what occurs in everyday experiences and past experiences and how these experiences are used to formulate expectations of what to anticipate from yourself and others. If mental representations remain stable overtime, it leaves individuals with little room to change the way they form their attachments later in life. This is of importance because if, in fact, working models do remain stable throughout the life span these working models will play out in adult relationships throughout life, meaning that primary attachments are crucial to subsequent attachments later (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

Researchers have found that adults with different attachment styles perceive and experience love differently (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) and that attachment style is related to both romantic attitudes and adjustment in addition to overall well-being (Moore & Leung, 2002). Attachment styles have been specifically linked to marital satisfaction, in that individuals classified as secure were found to be most satisfied with their relationships (Treboux, Crowell & Waters, 2004). While working models are typically

fairly resistant to change, alterations to working models are possible but usually occur with significant disruptive life experiences and are usually long-lasting (Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell, Albersheim, 2000). Hence, the way in which individuals attach and form working models early in life has implications for their future relationship happiness and overall well-being (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Intimacy and Close Relationships

Defining the constructs such as love and intimacy within relationship research has proved to be challenging (Moss & Schwebel, 1993; Fehr, 1988). While the majority of the constructs such as love, trust, commitment, affection, emotion, dependence, needs and intimacy are all commonplace words, they are difficult to conceptualize and reach meaning agreed upon by the masses (Moss & Schwebel, 1993). Researchers have explored these constructs and the relationships between these constructs involved in developing relationships.

For example, Schaefer and Olson (1981) outlined five factors as types of intimacy: emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational. Schaefer and Olson concluded that individuals desire varying amounts and combinations of these six types of intimacy. More recently, Moss and Schwebel (1993) expanded on Schaefer and Olson's (1981) attempt to define intimacy in romantic relationships. They conducted an extensive review of the subject of intimacy in research and literature and found 61 unique definitions. Seven themes were identified in these definitions and were reduced to five components: commitment, affective intimacy, cognitive intimacy, physical intimacy and mutuality. Commitment refers to the desire to permanently remain with the partner. Affective intimacy refers to the depth of awareness individuals have about their partner's emotional world and the exchanges of emotions they share. Cognitive intimacy refers to the depth of awareness individuals have of their partner's cognitive world and the

exchanges of cognitions they share. Physical intimacy refers to the extent of shared physical encounters as well as the physiological arousal state experienced toward the partner at each level of the physical encounter. Finally, mutuality refers to the reciprocal exchange that occurs in intimate relationships, indicating that partners may differ in the energy invested in maintaining intimacy as well as the value they place on the intimacy obtained. Different degrees of each of these areas of closeness can be used to describe themes in various relationships. For example, intimacy between romantic partners would consist of high degrees of closeness across all components, while intimacy between friends would be low in physical intimacy while high in the other components of intimacy.

Moss and Schwebel (1993) conclude that their more parsimonious, comprehensive definition of intimacy may be of value to researchers who wish to study this complicated construct. These researchers furthered the study of producers of human bonding by identifying the components that constitute intimacy and closeness in developing relationships. Moss and Schwebel developed a comprehensive definition of intimacy, while also allowing for different degrees of intimacy within a variety of interpersonal relationships.

Summary of Past Perspectives

The past theories have made great strides toward defining the complex emotion of love and have provided valuable insight into the process of falling in love. Rubin (1970) defined love as an interpersonal attitude held by a person toward another person involving the predispositions to think, feel and behave a certain way, while Lee (1977), on the other hand, described various styles of loving. Reiss (1960) presented one of the first models that demonstrated the dynamic way in which people fall in love and Sternberg (1986) was the first to describe different types of love based on varying

degrees of intimacy, passion and commitment. While attachment theory describes the development of bonds with close others, it took a somewhat different approach on love, tracing the development of one's capacity to love in different ways back to childhood. And, finally, Moss and Schwebel (1993) were some of the first to attempt to describe different types of intimacy in relationships and how components of intimacy describe different types of relationships.

While these theories provided different perspectives on the meaning of love, falling in love and the development of close relationships, several commonalities across the theories are evident. Sharing knowledge and mutual self-disclosure are two common themes throughout the theories discussed. Reiss (1960) mentioned building rapport as crucial to the development of a relationship and Sternberg (1986) described his intimacy component as the way in which a couple gets to know each other that subsequently develops into feelings of closeness and connectedness in a relationship.

Need fulfillment is also a common theme throughout the past theories. Reiss (1960) discussed personality need fulfillment and how meeting one another's needs will make a relationship stronger and more intense. One premise of attachment theory rests on need fulfillment. For instance, trust or working models are developed through the way in which a child's needs are met by their primary caregiver. Moss and Schwebel (1993) discuss the notion of mutuality when defining intimacy and how need fulfillment is critical in intimate relationships.

As well, sexual expression is common among the theories discussed. Sternberg (1986) introduced passion as a component to his theory of love in that passion is a motivational force that produces feelings of physical attraction, romance and sexual desire. Also, when defining intimacy, Moss and Schwebel (1993) included physical

intimacy, described as the extent of shared physical encounters as well as the physiological arousal state experienced toward a partner.

While many commonalities exist across these models, no one theory has integrated these ideas into one complete model. This paper presents an alternative model, The Relationship Attachment Model, which integrates this past research and theory and has the potential to be a more complete model of relationship development.

The Relationship Attachment Model

The Relationship Attachment Model (R.A.M.), an alternative model with which to examine close relationships is comprised of five hierarchical, reciprocal, interactive dynamics: knowledge, trust, reliance, commitment and sex (see Figure 2.2). The model emphasizes that the growth of these five areas occur in unison meaning growth in one area should never exceed the previous. This ensures that in a relationship one should never trust someone more than they know them, never rely on someone more than they trust them, never commit to someone before sufficient knowledge about the person is gained and trust and reliance are established; and finally one should never advance too far in the sexual realm without really taking the time to build up the four previous dynamics.

These five distinct facets of human interaction are derived from an adult premarital education program entitled P.I.C.K. (Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge) a Partner (Van Epp, 1997). This program is used with singles and singles-again to teach the core areas to get to know about a partner in a premarital relationship in order to predict what they will be like as a marriage partner, as well as how to pace a growing attachment without suffering from the 'love is blind' syndrome.

The Relationship Attachment Model is characterized by five assumptions. First, each component is a bonding force, meaning that each of the components produces a

feeling of closeness to another. Second, each component has a range, meaning that each of the components can occur in various degrees of intensity. Third, the components are independent but also interactive; this refers to the ability of each of the

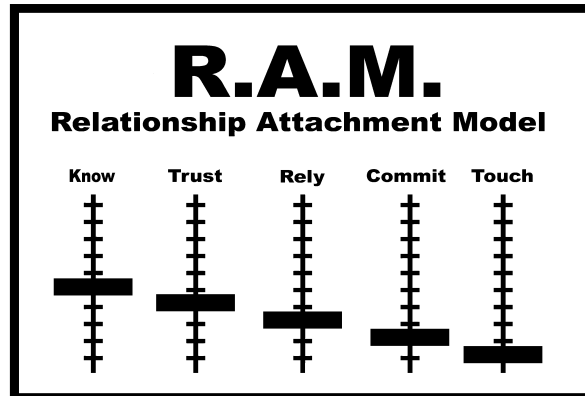


Figure 2.2: The Relationship Attachment Model

components to act or develop separately but not without affecting the entire balance of the relationship. Fourth, each component is both personal and reciprocal. This refers to the notion of each of the components spawning a feeling of closeness but the components work both ways; for example, the more you know someone the closer you feel to them, the more they get to know you the closer you feel to them. Finally, the components have a hierarchical order. This refers to the ability of the model to illustrate healthy vs. unhealthy or vulnerable vs. less vulnerable relationships based on the level of each of the components.

In order to examine the components specific to the Relationship Attachment Model proposed by Van Epp (1997), a brief overview will be provided on each of the five bonding components: knowledge, trust, reliance, commitment and sex.

Feeling Known and Knowing Your Partner

Consistent with the past theories, getting to know an individual requires mutual self disclosure and rapport (Reiss, 1960; Sternberg, 1986) and is important when building a relationship. When developing a close relationship, certain areas of a prospective partner are telling of what they will be like as a life-long mate and are therefore important to *get to know* (Van Epp, 1997). The five areas important to get to know about an individual in the mate selection process are common themes throughout relationship research and include: family background, the functioning of a partner's conscience, your compatibility as a couple, how they behave in past/other relationships and their skills in relationships.

Family Background. Research has documented the impact of family background characteristics on readiness to marry, relationship quality and relationship stability. A longitudinal study by Holman, Larson and Harmer (1994) found that a combined measure of premarital family/home environment was predictive of early marital quality and stability. Also family-of-origin conflict predicted lower marital quality and expressiveness in one's family-of-origin has been shown to be predictive of higher marital quality (Wamboldt & Reiss, 1989; Whyte, 1990). It also has been found that when individuals have a working model of their family of origin characterized by effective patterns of interaction they appear to do better at managing the ordinary demands of adult intimate partnerships (Sabetelli & Bartle-Haring, 2003). In addition, those individuals who have the perception that they grew up in a less than optimal family, tend to experience more difficulties in their intimate relationships, are more difficult to please

and set unrealistic standards for their relationships (Sabetelli & Bartle-Haring, 2003). Finally, Conger, Cui, Brandt, and Elder (2001) examined the family-of-origin processes and adult relationship quality and found that those who came from nurturing, involved households were more warm, supportive and less hostile toward their romantic partner. Overall these studies demonstrate the connection between family background and one's beliefs and behavior in later adult romantic relationships. When getting to know a partner in a developing relationship it is important to take into consideration their experiences growing up and how they may have contributed to who they are as an adult.

The Conscience. While conscientiousness has been shown to be a trait of those in more stable marriages (Kurdek, 1993 and Gattis, et al., 2004), it is often a quality that is not given much attention in the research. Van Epp (1997) emphasizes the importance of getting to know how an individual's conscience operates in close relationships. Research has found that perspective taking is predictive of marital adjustment (Long & Andrews, 1990). Franzio, Davis, and Young (1985) found that perspective taking and self-awareness were related to a partner's habitual attention to how their behavioral tendencies affected their partner's emotions and thus significantly enhanced the quality of these close relationships. Finally, Friedman et al. (1995), using data from a life-long study of adults studied since childbirth first conducted by Terman et al. (1925), found that conscientiousness in childhood predicted longevity, even when lifestyle choices (i.e., smoking, drinking, etc) were controlled. The authors also argued that "conscientious, dependable people are more likely to maintain stable marriages or other networks of social support" (p. 702). Friedman et al.'s (1995) findings demonstrate the impact conscientiousness has on one's ability to make good, healthy choices as well as choices that would lead to a healthy marriage. Conscientious individuals tend to be hardworking, responsible, dependable individuals and thus tend to create fewer areas of

disagreement in their relationships. These studies provide support for the notion that one should take time to get to know one's conscience in a developing relationship, especially because consciousness is linked to happier, healthier marriages.

Compatibility. As noted earlier in Chapter 1, one's compatibility with their partner's personality as well as with their leisure interests, religion and sense of humor influences marital quality and stability and this is important to explore in a dating relationship. A partner's personality is a pervasive element to a relationship and has the potential, if not a desired personality, to cause enduring problems and frustrations in the relationship. Research consistently finds neuroticism, conscientiousness and agreeableness to be critical personality traits to pay attention to in the courtship process. Neuroticism has been shown to be related to unstable and unsatisfied relationships (Kelly and Conley, 1987; Gattis, et al., 2004; Donnellan, et al., 2004); conscientiousness is related to more stable and satisfied relationships (Friedman, et al., 1995; Gattis, et al., 2004; Donnellan, et al., 2004) and agreeableness has been shown, throughout the literature, to be a predictor of divorce, such that those who divorce earlier are often less agreeable (Gattis, et al., 2004; Donnellan, et al., 2004). Compatibility of personality may be misunderstood as implying being the same on personality dimensions, but it is important to note that compatibility means that couples complement one another and while two individuals may have characteristics that differ from one another; each partner should serve as a completion of the other. In the research this is referred to as complementarity (Kaslow & Robinson, 1996).

In addition, research has clearly shown that partners that are more alike in leisure interests, religion and sense of humor report greater satisfaction with their relationships (Russell & Wells, 1991; Arindel & Luteijn, 2000). For example, men rated their courtship experiences more positively when the couples reported similar leisure

interests and lower similarity was related to more negative feelings and behaviors during courtship for both men and women (Houts, Robbins, & Houston, 1996). Also the same religious affiliation and attendance have been shown to be predictive of marital and relationship satisfaction (Vaughn & Heaton, 1997; Fiese & Tomcho, 2001). As well, sense of humor similarity and appreciation has been shown to be indicative of relationship satisfaction (Murstein & Brust, 1986; Priest & Taylor Thein, 2003).

Compatibility among partners is important to relationship stability and satisfaction, especially among some of the most predictive personality factors (i.e. neuroticism, conscientiousness and agreeableness). Because certain personality traits impact how well couples interact with one another, compatibility among these dimensions is crucial to how couples interact in stressful situations, cope with difficulties in their relationships and overall impacts their overall relationship satisfaction. In addition, being similar in other aspects of personality (i.e. intelligence and attitudes) as well as leisure interests, religious affiliation and sense of humor provides common ground from which to develop a lasting relationship.

Past and Other Relationships. While the importance of past and other relationship experiences of a partner are mentioned less in the literature and relationship programming, research does suggest that how a partner treats others and past partners is indicative of how they will treat future partners. Berk and Anderson (2000) argued that, “casual observation suggests that interactions in a new relationship may bear a strong resemblance to interactions in a past relationship” (p. 546). Furman, Simon, Shaffer, and Bouchey (2002) found adolescents’ representations of their relationships with parents, romantic partners and friends were all related in that their working models of their friends influenced their working models with their parents and romantic partners. Also, Baxter, Dun and Sahlstein (2001) examined rules of relating in social networks of

young adults and the authors found that specific rules related to loyalty, openness/honesty and respect were applied to not only friendships but romantic relationships as well.

Another way to conceptualize the importance of past and other relationships is through the notion of relationship schemas or scripts (Planalp, 1987; Surra & Bohman, 1991). Relationship schemas refer to the cognitive sets people form regarding their interactions in close relationships and more specifically, scripts refer to the expectations of certain events (i.e. expecting flowers on Valentine's day) in relationships (Harvey & Omarzu, 1997). Relationship scripts or schemas use past relationship experiences to form expectations that influence how one thinks and behaves in current relationships, thus getting to know how a partner has treated others and past relationship partners is crucial when understanding how one's partner operates in their current relationship. In a developing relationship, it is imperative to take notice of how one treats others and has treated others in the past, especially because research finds a connection between how people have treated others in the past and how they will treat others in the future.

Relationship Skills. The most commonly addressed topic in premarital and marital programming is the importance of conflict resolution and communication skills. Kelly, Huston and Cate (1985) found that premarital conflict is a precursor to marital conflict and that it relates to the extent to which couples are satisfied when they have been married approximately two and a half years. In addition, the way in which couples resolve conflict is important. For instance, satisfied couples report less impulsive and more cooperative, supportive and flexible ways of resolving problems (Kaslow & Robinson, 1996) whereas low levels of problem-solving skills tend to relate to rapid rates of relationship deterioration (Johnson, et al., 2005).

Research on couple communication has found that the ability to communicate and identify emotions was associated with both self and partner adjustment (Cordova, Gee & Warren, 2005). The lack of effective communication skills has been argued to be a large contributor to marital distress (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989) and the deficiency of these skills in a premarital relationship has been shown to translate into a lack of skills in a marital relationship (Markman, et al., 1988). Hahlweg, et al. (1998) found, in a three-year follow up after teaching couples to effectively communicate and use problem-solving skills, that fewer marital dissolutions occurred, and rates of relationship satisfaction were higher and positive communication behavior was more prevalent among these couples.

Improper conflict management or communication in a relationship can increase negativity in a relationship as well as toward a partner. Poor use of conflict management and communication skills can be debilitating to a relationship (Russell-Chapin, et al., 2001). Therefore, appropriate use of these essential skills should be exercised in order to maintain a healthy, stable, satisfied relationship.

The Process of Getting to Know a Partner. While certain areas of a partner are important to get to know throughout the courtship process (i.e., family of origin, conscience, compatibility, past and other relationships and relationships skills) there is also a process that is essential when getting to know another. This process involves spending time with one another, sharing diverse experiences, talking with one another and engaging in this process over time. The passage of time is crucial throughout the courtship process, because without taking the time to get to know someone completely, areas of their personality and problematic areas of the relationship may not have had time to present themselves (Grover, et al., 1985). Also, research has found that longer courtships are correlated with marital stability (Heaton, 2002; Grover, et al., 1985;

Whyte, 1984). The process dimension of getting to know another and the feelings of closeness this process creates will be explored below.

As relationships develop, it is not uncommon for individuals to spend vast amounts of time staying up all night talking to one another, sharing and getting to know each other. This mutual self-disclosure is an interaction that occurs in close relationships that produces a feeling of knowing and being known by another. John Harvey and Julia Omarzu (1997) argue that “a never-ending reciprocal knowing process involving a complex package of interrelated thoughts, feelings and behaviors represents an essential condition for creating and sustaining closeness in mutually satisfying relationships” (p. 224). Reis and Shaver (1988) believe that intimacy is developed out of the process of continuing reciprocity of self-disclosure in that each person feels his or her innermost self validated, understood and cared for by the other. The relationship between intimacy and self disclosure has been argued to be mutually inclusive, meaning that in order to establish a sense of closeness and intimacy self disclosure is essential (Chelune, 1984).

Knowing and feeling known produces a feeling of closeness not solely through mutual self-disclosure but also through various shared activities and situations. Harvey and Omarzu (1997) stated, “each and every person represents an intricate set of experiences, personal qualities, dispositions, hopes, plans and potential reactions to environmental stimuli” (p. 234). Because getting to know someone is multidimensional, it is crucial to get to know them in many settings. People change in different situations; thus, the more experiences individuals share and the more diverse their interactions, the more opportunities they will have to get to know each other and the closer they will become.

While getting to know someone and feeling known is an interaction that produces closeness through mutual disclosure and diverse shared activities, time is another crucial impetus to this developing feeling of closeness. Time is an essential ingredient to both mutual self-disclosure and various shared activities. Time ensures a sort of testing process of the knowledge obtained through the getting to know process with an individual. Sophisticated forms of human behavior are only learned and understood over a significant period of shared experience. In order to become fully aware of an individual's repertoire, the knowing process requires time. Both Whyte (1984) and Grover, et al. (1985) found that longer premarital courtships were correlated with greater stability in marriage. They argued that the underlying principle was that the greater the opportunities for couples to know each other prior to deciding to marry the greater their chance to experience some of the ordinary problems, irritations and frustrations; thus, the more informed they were when choosing a marital partner.

Mutual self-disclosure, shared various activities and time are three interactions of the getting to know and be known process that produce feelings of closeness in a relationship. The interaction process of knowing and feeling known develops into a sense of predictability and trust, which is the second bonding interaction.

Feeling Trusted and Trusting Your Partner

The ability to trust and be trusted by another corresponds with the concept of internal working models in attachment theory. Attachment theory suggests that mental representations of self and others or 'working models' formed through interactions with attachment figures organize cognitions, affect and behavior in close relationships (Bowlby, 1973). Hazan and Shaver (1987) found that mental representations or working models of self and relationships were related to attachment and that individuals with different attachment styles entertained different beliefs about the course of love and the

trustworthiness of partners. They claimed that attachment style affects one's ability to trust in adult relationships. Hazan and Shaver (1987) found that the secure style was defined as comfort with closeness and interdependence and confidence in others' love, the avoidant style was characterized by insecurity in others' intentions and fear of intimacy and difficulty depending on partners and the anxious-ambivalent style was defined by a strong desire for intimacy with insecurity about others' responses.

Mario Mikulincer (1998) suggested that trust is an integral part of secure attachment. The dependability component of trust refers to the confidence one has that a partner in a close relationship will be concerned about and responsive to one's needs, goals and desires. Thus, this component of trust includes positive expectations about partner availability as well as about his or her responsiveness and caring. All of these hopes are the primary components of secure persons' working models of others.

Trust is defined as the degree of positive cognitive, affective attributions one holds in their mental representations of another. As a person gets to know another, he/she constructs a mental profile of that person. Initially, stereotypes, associations and ideals are used to 'fill in the gaps' of what is assumed to be true about the person. As time allows for more interactions and experiences, the mental profile is adjusted to reflect the deeper knowledge gained about the other person. This interaction of investing trust in one another perpetuates feelings of bondedness in close relationships. This trust dynamic interacts with the know dynamic in a way that each can develop at a different pace, although not independent from one another; a sense of knowing and being known is accompanied, no matter to what degree, by some sense of trust.

Feeling Relied Upon and Relying Upon Your Partner

The third bonding interaction is the ability to rely and be relied upon by another. This interaction is most clearly explained as mutual need fulfillment and is consistent

with Reiss's (1960) personality need fulfillment component and Moss and Schwebel's (2003) notion of mutuality which are both characterized as elements that precipitate closeness between partners. Le and Agnew (2001) argued that within the context of close interpersonal relationships, some of the most important outcomes are those related to need fulfillment and that need fulfillment is closely linked to emotional experiences within the relationship.

Feelings of closeness occur as specific needs are met. The reciprocity of need fulfillment results in a deeper experience of closeness and intimacy than unidirectional need fulfillment. A study by Utne, Hatfield, Traupmann and Greenbeger (1984) on equity within relationships and marital satisfaction, found that when individuals found themselves participating in inequitable relationships, they became more distressed. The more inequitable the relationship, the more distress they felt (pg. 324).

Reliance is defined as mutual need fulfillment. As a person gets to know another they develop mental representations of how this person is in specific situations, resulting in some level of a sense of trust in that individual. This developed sense of trust allows individuals to rely on others to meet certain degrees of needs. By mutually meeting each others' needs, a sense of intimacy or bondedness continues to grow. This bondedness is developed out of the interactions between getting to know an individual, trusting them and relying on them to meet specific needs.

Feeling Your Partner is Committed and Feeling Committed to Your Partner

The fourth bonding interaction is the ability to commit and be committed to by another and is consistent with Sternberg's commitment or decision making component. Relationship researchers agree that commitment is a central component of romantic relationships (Duemmler & Kobak, 2001). It has been argued that three types of commitment exist: personal commitment or the sense of wanting to stay in a

relationship, moral commitment or feeling morally obligated to stay and structural commitment or feeling constrained to stay regardless of personal or moral commitment (Johnson, Caughlin, & Huston, 1999). These three types of commitment or motivations to stay, committed were supported by the findings of Fennell (1987) who asked couples married over 20 years to describe their reasons as to why they are still married. Regardless of which type, commitment creates a feeling of connectedness or bondedness with another by arousing feelings of 'my partner belongs to me' and 'I belong to my partner.'

The concept of commitment is examined in numerous studies. Beverly Fehr (1999) examined laypeople's conceptions of commitment using a prototype analysis and generated 419 different types of commitment and 182 were idiosyncratic. She also found that participants who held a relational conception of commitment had more positive relationship outcomes. Also, in relationship-driven commitments, commitment evolved smoothly and with few reversals (Surra & Hughes, 1997). In addition, shifting into more committed relationships has been shown to be followed by improvements in subjective well-being (Kamp Dush & Amato, 2005). According to Harvey and Omarzu (1997) bonding is defined by public commitment or acts that indicate that individuals have formed a close relationship (pg. 229). In a study on the level of commitment in relationships and the tendency to express complaints, Roloff and Solomon (2002) found that relational commitment is positively related to willingness to confront a partner, which is indicative of the desire to work through minor or major issues within the relationship. Some researchers even define love and commitment as one and the same (Money, 1980; Forgas & Dobosz, 1980).

Commitment contributes to the bondedness of a relationship. Beach and Tesser (1988) found that the more commitment a person feels toward another, the more he/she

will focus cognitive and affective attention toward that individual and it has been shown that a person feels and thinks more positively toward another once a decision to commit is made (Brehm & Cohen, 1962).

Forming a Physical/Sexual Bond

Sexual interactions are an attachment provoking dynamic that intensifies the feeling of bondedness between individuals. "Physical contact is the most direct form of closeness. Lovers usually enjoy physical contact and it, in turn, intensifies their experience of closeness" (Birtchnell, 1993). According to Freud (1951), the desire for sexual union is at the core of emotion. Intimacy is often equated with sexual involvement in the literature—the greater the sexual involvement, the more intimacy. In an attempt to define intimacy, Moss and Schwebel (1993) proposed five components, one being physical intimacy. Physical intimacy refers to the extent of shared physical encounters as well as to the physiological arousal state experience toward the partner at each level of the physical encounter. This dynamic involves everything from extended gazing to uninhibited sexual intercourse.

F. Scott Christopher and Rodney Cate (1985) conducted a study that investigated couples' premarital sexual activity and relationship development. Couples were placed into four classifications: 'rapid-involvement' or couples who demonstrated high levels of sexual involvement early in the relationship and typically engaged in sexual intercourse on the first date; 'gradual-involvement' or couples who reported gradual increase in the levels of sexual involvement throughout their relationship and only engaging in intercourse when considering to become a couple; 'delayed-involvement' couples delayed most sexual activity until actually becoming a couple; and finally the 'low-involvement couples were characterized by very low sexual involvement without sexual intercourse. One key finding was that 'rapid-involvement' individuals

reported higher love feelings early in their relationship when compared to the individuals from the other classifications. Christopher and Cate (1985) suggested that “rapid-involvement couples may have reported high levels of love to justify their high levels of sexual interaction on the first date” (p. 282). Another important finding revealed that ‘rapid- involvement’ couples reported a higher level of conflict than did delayed-involvement individuals and low-involvement individuals. The authors also found that all classifications of sexual involvement increased in levels of conflict as their sexual involvement increased, especially when they approached or achieved the orgasmic levels of sexual involvement. The authors did not provide an explanation as to why sexual involvement and conflict were correlated. Although one could argue that by becoming sexually involved in a relationship before fully getting to know one another, elements that would have caused problems in the relationship, thus resulting in a breakup, were overlooked and overshadowed by the intense emotional bond that occurred because of early sexual involvement. The authors concluded by simply stating that the study was able to demonstrate that following different sexual pathways resulted in varying relational experiences. This study exemplifies how early sexual involvement in relationships, has the potential to alter the course of the remainder of the relationship.

“Sexuality is woven into the fabric of close relationships” (Christopher & Sprecher, 2001; pg. 218). For instance Baxter and Bullis (1986) reported that first intercourse with a partner was perceived as an experience that increased commitment to a partner. Also, Peplau, Rubin and Hill (1977) reported that delaying sexual involvement until a relationship progressed to a higher level of commitment resulted in higher levels of love, closeness and probability of marrying the partner. No matter to what degree or intensity, sexual intimacy is an interaction that produces feelings of closeness and will have a powerful effect on the relationship. Because sex has become a customary part

of developing relationships (Christopher & Sprecher, 2001), it is important to be aware of the powerful bonding force behind sexual interactions.

The Current Study

Undoubtedly the dating culture has changed from that of the past, allowing more freedom for singles to marry because of true love or because they found their soul mate. These high hopes of a soul mate-type relationship combined with the high divorce rate have left singles with high expectations of marriage thwarted by low aspirations. These singles are thus spending more time dating and dating more partners before marriage, allowing them to have more time to engage in high risk premarital behavior (i.e., premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) with multiple partners. Premarital sex and premarital cohabitation have both been shown to increase one's chances of divorce (Kahn & London, 1991; Heaton, 2002; Teachman, 2003) and also have been shown to precipitate more negative attitudes toward marriage (Crosby, 1985; Weis, et al., 1986; Kelly and Conley, 1987 Kurdek, 1993; Amato & Rogers, 1999). While they are attempting to find their soul mate to ensure themselves a happy lifelong marriage, they are in turn sabotaging their future marital relationship by engaging in these high risk behaviors. After examining the conundrum singles face when searching for a marital partner, the question still remains: how does one know when they are ready to marry their partner?

While perceived readiness for marriage is frequently mentioned in the literature (Holman & Li, 1997), few studies have examined readiness for marriage as an outcome variable. For example those who are older, female, from happily married households and highly romantic reported a shorter waiting time before marriage and a higher readiness for marriage (Larson 1988; Larson, et al, 1998). Also, greater levels of couple communication, the support of family and close others and individual traits directly or

indirectly influence how ready individuals perceive themselves to be for marriage (Holman & Li, 1997). In contrast, those individuals from divorced families reported longer waiting periods before marriage, which suggests that children of divorce are more cautious than others about getting married (Larson, et al., 1998).

At present, no known research has been conducted on the differences between individuals who perceive themselves as ready to marry early in a relationship and those who do not feel ready to marry until later in a relationship. Because research consistently finds that longer courtship is a predictor of marital stability (Grover, et al., 1985; Whyte 1990; Larson & Holman, 1994; Heaton, 2006), it is important to examine the relationship development patterns of those who feel ready to marry very early in a relationship compared to those who take longer to feel ready to marry.

Perhaps differences in readiness to marry may not be related to aspects of a specific relationship, but instead may be characteristic of an accelerated pattern of relationship development that those particular individuals have repeated in their past relationships and will continue to repeat in their future relationships. In today's society, when the divorce rate is high, a soul-mate is desired and singles are pessimistic about marriage, it is crucial to note how singles are behaving in their dating relationships, especially when these relationships may lead to marriage. Hence, a study on the topic of premarital relationship development and perceived readiness to marry would not only provide a new perspective from which to examine relationship development for researchers, but also has implications for relationship educators and the importance of having a conscious, intentional approach to dating and mate selection.

The current study explores the past dating behaviors of singles as well as other factors that may influence their perceived readiness to marry. Specifically the study asks:

1. *How does readiness to marry vary as a function of general demographic characteristics (i.e. gender, age, race, religiosity, educational background, whether they have children, and martial history)?* Past research has found that: gender is related to perceived readiness to marry (Larson, 1988; Larson, 1998), age at first marriage is related to future marital stability (Whyte, 1984; Grover, et al., 1985; Bumpass, et al., 1991; Heaton, 2002), individuals from a certain racial background may be more susceptible to divorce (Bumpass, et al., 1991), religiosity is linked to martial satisfaction and stability (Vaughn & Heaton, 1997; Fiese & Tomcho, 2001), those with less education are at a higher risk to suffer from divorce, having a child out-of-wedlock is linked to greater risks for marital dissolution (Kahn & London, 1991; Heaton, 2002) and being previously married increases one's chance of divorce (Amato, 2001). While I expect females to feel ready to marry sooner than males, it is unclear how these other demographic characteristics impact singles' perceived readiness to marry.
2. *How does readiness to marry vary as a function of parent's marital status?* Research has suggested that adult children of divorce tend to marry at a younger age and that suffering from parental divorce is characterized by an eagerness to marry (Amato, 1996). Based on past research, I would expect those who have a history of parental divorce to perceive themselves as ready to marry sooner than those without a history of parental divorce.
3. *How does readiness to marry vary as a function of one's dating history?* Because research has shown that singles have become more frustrated with the dating process (Dafoe & Whitehead, 2002; Glenn & Marquardt, 2001) and therefore engage in more premarital risky behaviors with more partners, it is important to examine if their dating history influences when they feel ready to marry. I expect to find that the more dating partners an individual has, the sooner they will feel ready to marry their partner.

4. *How does readiness to marry vary as a function of one's attitudes and beliefs about mate selection?* Attitudes and beliefs regarding mate selection have been argued to be central to some of the frustrations singles experience in the dating process (Crosby, 1985). Also, attitudes and beliefs about mate selection and marriage have been shown to be predictive of different relationship behaviors (Salts & Seismore, 1994), some of which are high risk behaviors (i.e. premarital sex and cohabitation). Therefore examining singles' attitudes and beliefs about mate selection may provide some explanation as to how these attitudes are associated with one's perceived readiness for marriage. I expect that those who exude more negative beliefs about mate selection to feel ready to marry later than those who exude more positive beliefs about mate selection.
5. *How does readiness to marry vary as a function of past dating behaviors?* Clearly research has found that longer courtships are predictive of marital stability (Whyte, 1984; Grover, et al., 1985; Heaton, 2002). Thus, the current study explores how one's perceived readiness to marry varies by how quickly or slowly individuals form serious relationships. I would expect those who form relationships quickly to feel ready to marry sooner than those who form their relationships more slowly.

Focus on Army Soldiers

To explore the questions mentioned above, data were collected from single soldiers who were part of a larger study on the effectiveness of a relationship education program. An understanding of the premarital beliefs and behaviors of single soldiers and how they may impact readiness to marry is essential given the prevalence of singles in the military, the high (and fast) rate at which they marry and divorce and the vested interest the Army is taking in the status of soldiers' relationships and families. Recent estimates show that the Army is comprised of approximately 626,777 singles and 46,998 divorcees (Military Community and Family Policy, 2003). The duration of military postings and close proximity of single men and women, combined with the young ages of enlistees (Army Demographics, 2001), creates the prospect for sexual activity, leading

to unplanned pregnancies (Hoiberg & White, 1992) as well as an active marriage market (Lundquist & Smith, 2005). Bumpass, et al. (1991) found that when a husband is in the armed forces in the first year of marriage, the dissolution rate is twice as high compared to civilian couples. Thus, service men have higher rates of marriage and are more likely to divorce when compared to male civilians and the divorce rate among Army soldiers and officers continues to rise (Zoroya, 2005). In addition, military marriage benefits (e.g., off-base housing allowance, supplementary allowance for food expenses) encourage servicepersons to enter into marriages of systematically lower quality than would be acceptable in civilian life (Flueck & Zax, 1995).

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Procedure

The sample was obtained from a larger study that assessed the impact of a premarital relationship education program for singles in the United States Army. The relationship education program was delivered and evaluated in two United States Army training centers located at Fort Jackson (SC) and Defense Language Institute (CA). At the conclusion of each program, participants completed a survey about their knowledge, attitudes and experiences in dating. As well, single soldiers not participating in the program were recruited and voluntarily completed a similar survey to serve as a comparison.

Sample

Completed surveys were collected from 272 single soldiers (123 program participants and 149 non-program respondents). On average, respondents were 22.3 years old (range 17-45, $SD = 4.9$), 55.9% were female and 60.9% were Caucasian. Nearly all of the participants (96.7%) had completed high school and 63.9% had extended their education beyond high school. All of the respondents were currently single, 88.2% reported that they had never been married and the majority (83.6%) reported never having children. Almost half (48%) reported that they were currently in a romantic relationship.

	Overall (N=272)	Comparison (n=149)	Program (n=123)
Gender (% Male)	44.1	49.7	37.4
Current Age (%)			
17-20Years Old	48.4	53.7	41.9
21-24 Years Old	30.6	31.6	29.5
25 and Older	21.0	14.7	28.6
Mean (SD)	22.3 (4.9)	21.3 (3.9)	23.4 (5.7)
Age when joined the Army (%)			
17-20Years Old	57.6	57.8	57.4
21-24 Years Old	29.9	32.2	27.0
25 and Older	12.5	10.0	15.6
Mean (SD)	21.0 (4.1)	20.8 (3.9)	21.2 (4.4)
Race (%)			
Caucasian	60.9	66.9	53.7
African American	14.4	12.8	16.3
Hispanic	10.3	7.4	13.8
Other (Multiracial)	14.4	12.9	16.2
Religiously Affiliated (% Yes)	83.8	85.2	82.1
Highest Grade Completed (%)			
Less than High School	3.3	4.1	2.4
High School Grad/GED	32.7	36.3	28.5
Beyond High School	63.9	59.6	69.1
Marital Status (% Never Married)	88.2	93.9	81.3
Have Children (% Yes)	15.6	8.8	23.6
Parent's Marital Status (%)			
Never married	11.6	10.4	13.1
Married	37.5	35.2	40.2
Separated/Divorced	44.9	47.6	41.8
Widowed	6.0	6.8	4.9

Table 3.1: Demographic Characteristics of Program and Comparison Group Participants

Analyses comparing the program (n = 123) and non-program (n = 149) groups (see Table 3.1) showed that the program group was more likely to consist of soldiers who were, on average, older (M = 21.3 vs. 23.4; $F = 12.7$, $p = .000$), female (50.3% vs. 62.6%; $X^2 = 4.1$, $p = .04$), non-white (33.1% vs. 46.3%; $X^2 = 4.9$, $p = .03$) and previously married (6.1% vs. 18.7%, $X^2 = 10.3$, $p = .001$). While research has not demonstrated that age, race and previous marital status are related to one's perceived readiness to marry, gender has been shown to be predictive of one's readiness to marry, in that females feel ready to marry sooner than males (Larson, 1988; 1998). However, because this study explores the past dating experiences, behaviors and attitudes toward marriage and mate selection, differences between participants and non-participants should not have a bearing on the variables explored in this study. Therefore, analyses for this study were conducted using both the program and non-program participants.

Measures

The self-administered survey assessed demographic variables, dating and relationship experiences, dating and relationship satisfaction, attitudes regarding relationships and mate selection and the timing and development of their relationships.

Dating experiences. The dating and relationship experiences were assessed through 10 questions. First, respondents were asked how many dating relationships they had before and after joining the military. The responses to these two questions were condensed into one variable indicating the total number of past dating partners. Next, respondents were asked on average, how long their relationships typically last as well as the length of their longest relationship. To assess their experiences in committed relationships, respondents were asked to first define how long until they consider a relationship to be serious, followed by two questions on how many serious dating relationships they have had before and after joining the military. These last two

responses were combined to represent each respondent's total number of committed relationships. Finally, respondents were asked whether or not they were currently in a committed relationship. Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with their past relationships. Satisfaction on a 6-point Likert-scale: (1) *very dissatisfied*; (2) *dissatisfied*; (3) *somewhat dissatisfied*; (4) *somewhat satisfied*; (5) *satisfied*; (6) *very satisfied*.

Attitudes and beliefs. The attitudes and beliefs held by soldiers concerning mate selection were measured using the 32-item Attitudes about Romance and Mate Selection Scale (Cobb, Larson, & Watson, 2003). The instrument employs 28 questions in addition to 4 distracter items and is comprised of seven subscales (4-items each) that each represent a constraining belief about mate selection: 1) *One and Only*, e.g., "there is a one and only right person in the world for me to marry;" 2) *Love is Enough*, e.g., "falling in love with someone is sufficient reason for me to marry that person;" 3) *Cohabitation*, e.g., "if my future spouse and I live together before marriage, we will improve our chances of staying together;" 4) *Perfect Partner/Idealization*, e.g., "until I find the perfect person to marry I should not get married;" 5) *The Perfect Relationship* e.g. "we must prove our relationship will work before getting married;" 6) *Ease of Effort*, e.g. "finding the right person to marry is more about luck than effort;" and 7) *Opposites Complement*, e.g. "I should choose someone to marry whose personal characteristics are opposite of my own." The respondents were asked to rate their agreement to each item on a 7-point Likert-scale (1) *very strongly disagree*; (2) *strongly disagree*; (3) *disagree*; (4) *no opinion*; (5) *agree*; (6) *strongly agree*; (7) *very strongly agree*. A mean score was computed with higher scores indicating a more intense constraining belief about mate selection in that particular subscale (alpha reliabilities ranged from .49 to .94).

Dynamic	Item	
Knowledge	1	I felt that I knew my partner's hobbies and interests
	2	I had a fairly clear opinion of what my partner was like
	3	I felt that I knew my partner's dreams and goals
	4	I felt that I knew my partner's communication style
	5	I knew how my partner handled stress and serious conflict
	6	I met my partner's friends
	7	I understood what my partner's friendships were like
	8	I understood what my partner had been like in past relationships
	9	I talked with my partner about their childhood
	10	I understood what my partner's family relationships were like
	11	I had a clear understanding of what my partner's family was like
	12	I had a realistic view of how emotions were expressed in my partner's family
	13	I met my partner's family
Trust	1	I felt that I could trust my partner
	2	I felt comfortable sharing my dreams and aspirations with my partner
	3	I was fairly certain that my partner wouldn't do something I disliked
	4	I was willing to confide my deepest secrets with my partner
	5	I trusted my partner to keep his/her promises
Reliance	1	I depended on my partner to meet my needs
	2	I strongly relied on my partner to help or support me
Commitment	1	I expected my partner to date only me
	2	I referred to my partner as my girl/boyfriend
	3	I demonstrated examples of commitment
	4	I resisted temptations because of my partner
	5	I was unwilling to date anyone other than my partner
Sex	1	I got to first base (kissing/anything above the shoulders)
	2	I got to second base (anything above the waist)
	3	I got to third base (below the waist, but not sex)
	4	I desired sex with my partner
	5	I slept with my partner but did not have sex
	6	I got to home (sex)
	7	I expected sex with my partner

Table 3.2: Dating Behaviors Scale

Relationship behaviors. The pacing and development of their past relationships was measured using a 33-item scale developed for this project that examines the five dynamics important to developing a healthy relationship (Van Epp, 1997): 1) *Knowledge* (13-items); 2) *Trust* (5-items); 3) *Reliance* (2-items); 4) *Commitment* (6-items); and 5) *Sex* (7-items). Table 3.1 provides a listing of these items. Respondents were asked to think back on their longest relationships and rate, on average, when the following events occurred, on an 8-point Likert-scale: (1) *within the first week*; (2) *within the first month*; (3) *within 2 months*; (4) *within 3-4 months*; (5) *within 5-6 months*; (6) *within 7-12 months*; (7) *longer than a year*, and (8) *never*. In order to appropriately examine the five dynamics operating in developing relationships, each item will be looked at individually, rather than creating subscales. Because of the assumption underlying the Relationship Attachment Model that each component can occur in various degrees of intensity, it is important to explore the varying intensities of each component. For example, low intensity knowledge consists of getting to know one's hobbies and interests and high intensity knowledge would consist of meeting a partner's family or understanding how emotions were expressed in their partner's family. Also, low intensity sex (touch) would be holding another's hand and high intensity sex would be having intercourse. As such, each of the items comprising each component will be examined independently but in relation to each of the other items.

Readiness to marry. Participants' perceived readiness to marry, the dependent variable, was based on participants' response to the commitment item, from the 33-item pacing and development of past relationship scale, "I felt ready to marry my partner." In addition to using the continuous indicator of readiness to marry (range=1-8; M= 6.5;

SD=1.7), examination of the distribution of scores suggested the following four classifications: (1) never felt ready to marry their partner (n=95), (2) felt ready to marry their partner within the first 4 months (n=33), (3), felt ready within 5-12 months (n=66) and (4) felt ready after at least a year (n=64). These four groups are expected to be intuitively distinct, and yield sample sizes large enough to explore those distinctions across the independent variables of interest.

Analysis

First, bivariate correlations were analyzed to explore variations between the continuous measure of readiness to marry and continuous independent variables. Next, t-tests (for continuous variables) and chi-squares (for categorical variables) were performed to examine group differences. Finally, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to compare these four readiness to marry groups across the seven belief and attitude subscales as well as the 33 dating behaviors. If the multivariate analyses yield statistically significant results, univariate analyses were conducted to identify where those group differences existed. Results hope to reveal the general profile and characteristics of those single soldiers who feel ready to marry sooner versus later.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This section will explore the five research questions posed in Chapter III. Because analyses revealed variations between those who never felt ready to marry and the three other readiness to marry groups, analyses were conducted comparing the four readiness to marry groups, as well as the three groups who at one time did feel ready to marry, thus excluding those who never felt ready to marry. Because the primary objective of the research questions is to explore factors that contribute to one's overall readiness to marry, it seems appropriate to explore the research questions including only those who at some point felt ready to marry. Therefore, throughout this section the results will be organized first by the analyses including those who never felt ready to marry (4 groups) and second by the analyses excluding those who never felt ready to marry (3 groups).

Variations in Readiness to Marry by Demographic Characteristics

Overall, participants tended to be in their mid-twenties, Caucasian, religiously affiliated, highly educated, and never-married (see Table 4.1). Specifically, participants ranged in age from 17-45 and were, on average, 22.3 years old ($SD = 5.0$); 50% were between 20-29 years old. Most participants were Caucasian (62.9%) followed by African American (14.5%) or Hispanic (9.7%). Most participants were religiously affiliated

(83.1%) with over half identifying themselves as either Catholic (22.2%) or Baptist (23.0%). Regarding educational attainment, 4.0% had less than a high school education, 39.1% were either high school graduates or had obtained their GED, 39.9% had some college experience, and 16.9% were college graduates. The majority (87.9%) of participants had never been married and only 16.6% have children. In addition, participant's parental marital status was assessed, and 13.7% reported that their parents had never married, 42.3% reported that their parents were still married and 44.0% reported that their parents were divorced.

Four Group Comparison. Chi-square analyses revealed that demographic characteristics such as gender, race, level of education and religiosity did not vary across the four readiness to marry groups. Analyses did, however, reveal a statistically significant difference in the average age of respondents across groups, $F(3, 244) = 3.1$, $p < .05$, such that "never readies" were younger than those who felt ready to marry after at least a year ($M = 21.3$ vs. 23.6 , respectively). Also, whether or not respondents had been previously married differed across groups, $\chi^2(1, N = 271) = 13.1$, $p < .01$: those individuals who felt ready to marry after a year were most likely to have been previously married (23.7%) compared to only 4.3% who never felt ready, 15.6% who felt ready within 4 months and 10.9% who felt ready in 5-12 months. In addition, analyses revealed a statistically significant difference on participant's parental status, $\chi^2(1, N = 270) = 15.8$, $p = .001$: compared to only 7.6% of those individuals with children who reported never feeling ready to marry, a greater proportion of individuals who felt ready to marry in either 4 months (31.3%) or in at least a year (27.1%) had children. Overall, these trends suggest that age, experience with marriage and parental status are associated with one's readiness to marry.

	Overall (n=248)	Group 1 (n=92)	Group 2 (n=32)	Group 3 (n=64)	Group 4 (n=60)	X ² or F-value	
						4 groups	3 groups
Gender (% Male)	43.5	46.7	43.8	35.9	46.7	0.5	0.5
Current Age Mean (SD)	22.3(5.0)	21.3(4.1)	23.1(5.2)	22.1(4.8)	23.6(5.9)	3.1 ^a	1.3
Race (%)						0.6	0.5
Caucasian	62.9	68.5	62.5	64.1	53.3		
African American	14.5	12.0	15.6	7.8	25.0		
Hispanic	9.7	7.6	9.4	14.1	8.3		
Other (Multiracial)	12.9	11.6	12.5	14.0	13.4		
Religiously Affiliated (% Yes)	83.1	78.3	87.5	87.5	83.3	0.4	0.77
Highest Grade Completed (%)						0.3	0.77
Less than High School	4.0	0.0	3.0	6.3	8.3		
High School Grad/GED	39.1	42.4	43.8	34.4	36.7		
Some college	39.9	40.2	31.3	45.3	38.3		
College Graduate	16.9	17.4	21.9	14.1	16.7		
Marital Status (% Never Married)	87.9	95.7	84.4	89.1	74.6	0.004 ^b	0.2
Have Children (% Yes)	16.6	7.6	31.3	12.5	27.1	0.001 ^c	0.053
Parent's Marital Status (%)						0.1	0.032 ^a
Never married	13.7	14.1	6.3	7.8	23.3		
Married/Widowed	42.3	43.5	34.4	45.3	41.7		
Divorced	44.0	42.4	59.4	46.9	35.0		

Note: Group 1 = Never felt ready to marry; Group 2 = Ready to marry in 4 months, Group 3 = Ready to marry within 5-12 months, Group 4 = Ready to marry after a year.

^a p<.05; ^b p<.01; ^c p<.001; ^d p<.000

Table 4.1: Demographics of Readiness to Marry Groups.

Three Group Comparison. Analyses, including only those who felt ready to marry at some point, again; revealed no significant differences on gender, race, level of education and religiosity. In addition, no significant difference occurred between groups on age and previous marital status, but approached significance ($X^2 [2, N = 155] = 5.9, p = .053$) for parental status. The only statistically significant difference between these three groups was found on their parent's marital status, $X^2 (4, N = 156) = 10.6, p < .05$. Analyses revealed that 59.4% of those who felt ready within 4 months had experienced a parental divorce versus 46.9% and 35% of those who felt ready to marry within 5-12 months and after at least a year, respectively. Also, 23.3% of those respondents who felt ready to marry after at least a year had parents who never married versus 6.3% of those who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months and 7.8% of those who felt within 5-12 months. Hence, those ready to marry sooner are more likely to have experienced a parental divorce and a greater percent of those parents that never married who take longer to feel ready to marry have.

Variations in Readiness to Marry by Dating Experiences

Overall, most of the sample reported having multiple and satisfying past dating experiences, and that they were currently in a committed relationship. On average, respondents reported having an average of 8.1 (SD = 13.6) dating relationships (range = 0 to 149), that typically lasted 392.7 days (SD = 413.8). Respondents did not consider their relationships serious until they lasted approximately 260.7 (SD = 291.7) days and, overall, had experienced an average of 2.5 (SD = 1.7) serious relationships at the time of the study. In addition, the length of their longest relationship, ranged from 10 to 3,616 days, or about 10 years (M = 921.9; SD = 836.7). Most (87.8%) of the participants reported being satisfied with their past relationships (M = 3.7; SD = 1.3), and almost half of the sample (49.2%) was currently in a committed relationship. A breakdown of the

overall dating experiences of the sample as well as the dating experiences by group can be found in Table 4.2.

Four Group Comparison. Analyses examining the four readiness to marry groups revealed several significant differences in reference to their dating experiences. First, chi square analyses revealed a significant difference on current relationship status, $X^2(3, N = 248) = 29.4, p = .000$, in that the more likely one is to feel ready to marry the more likely they are to be in a committed relationship. Also, on average, the longer respondents took to feel ready to marry, the more likely they were to be in a committed relationship. For example, of those who never felt ready to marry, 27.2% were in a committed relationship in contrast to the 56.3% of those ready within 4 months, 60.9% for those ready within 5-12 months and 66.7% for those who felt ready to marry after at least a year.

Next, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) comparing the four readiness to marry groups across the other dating experiences revealed a significant multivariate effect (based on Wilks' Lambda), $F(6, 18) = 2.7, p = .000$. Where as no significant differences were found on respondent's total number of dating relationships, how long their relationships must last until they consider them serious and their overall satisfaction with their past relationships, post hoc univariate analyses showed a significant difference on the average length of respondent's longest relationship, the total number of serious relationships and the average length of their relationships. First, the average length of participant's relationships varied by readiness to marry, $F(1, 3) = 6.9, p = .000$, such that those who never felt ready to marry had significantly shorter relationships than those who felt ready within 4 months ($p < .05$) and after a year ($p = .000$). Also, those who felt ready within 5-12 months had significantly shorter relationships than those who felt ready after a year ($p < .01$).

	Overall (n=248)	Group 1 (n=92)	Group 2 (n=32)	Group 3 (n=64)	Group 4 (n=60)	X ² or F-value	
						4 groups	3 groups
Currently in a relationship (% yes)	49.2	27.2	56.3	60.9	66.7	29.35 ^d	1.03
Satisfaction with past relationships	3.70(1.30)	3.70(1.18)	3.71(1.55)	3.75(1.24)	3.65(1.43)	0.06	0.08
Number of dating relationships	8.1(13.6)	6.8(7.8)	9.5(20.5)	7.0(4.8)	10.4(20.5)	0.90	0.63
Average length of relationships (days)	392.7(413.8)	267.6(294.4)	493.8(620.5)	345.8(307.2)	571.5(473.8)	6.93 ^c	3.60
Length of relationship before it is considered serious (days)	260.7(291.7)	255.7(291.1)	258.7(307.9)	272.0(372.6)	257.1(176.9)	0.04	0.40
Number of serious relationships	2.5(1.7)	2.0(1.7)	2.1(1.2)	2.8(1.3)	3.0(1.8)	5.70 ^b	3.30
Length of longest relationship (days)	921.9(836.7)	581.8(483.8)	997.7(875.8)	947.1(994.9)	1341.2(852.2)	9.90 ^c	2.80

^a p<.05; ^b p<.01; ^c p<.001; ^d p<.000

Note: Group 1 = Never felt ready to marry; Group 2 = Ready to marry in 4 months, Group 3 = Ready to marry within 5-12 months, Group 4 = Ready to marry after a year.

Table 4.2: The Past Dating Experiences of the Readiness to Marry Groups.

Next, a significant group difference was found on total number of serious relationships, $F(1, 3) = 5.7, p = .001$: those who never felt ready had significantly fewer serious relationships than those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p < .01$), and after at least a year ($p = .000$), and those who felt ready within 4 months had significantly fewer serious relationships than those who felt ready after at least a year ($p < .05$). Finally, these four readiness to marry groups differed with respect to the length of their longest relationship, $F(1, 3) = 9.9, p = .000$. On average, those who never felt ready to marry had significantly shorter relationships than those who felt ready after four months ($p < .05$), within 5-12 months ($p < .01$) and after at least a year ($p = .000$). Also, those who felt ready to marry after 5-12 months had significantly shorter relationships than those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .01$). Overall, these trends suggest that those who never feel ready to marry tend to have fewer serious dating relationships, short-lived relationships and, in regards to their longest relationship, they tend to have much shorter 'long' relationships when compared to the other groups.

Three Group Comparison. Chi-square analyses comparing the three readiness to marry groups revealed no significant difference in whether participants were currently in a committed relationship and no significant multivariate effects on the remaining variables. Those who felt ready to marry at some point in time during their past relationships, on average, tended to have 8.6 (SD = 15.6, mean range 6.9 to 9.9) dating relationships that typically lasted an average of 471.3 days (SD = 451.3, mean range 346.67 to 586.85). These respondents also had similar views on how long a relationship must last until it is considered serious (group means ranged from 257.1 to 272.0 days) and a comparable number of serious relationships (group means ranged from 2.1 to 3.0). On average, respondents longest relationship lasted 1116.2 days or just over 3

years (mean range 947.1.6 to 1341.2). Therefore, eliminating those who never felt ready to marry from the sample revealed far less statistically distinct differences in the dating relationship patterns and experiences of those who did feel ready to marry at one time.

Variations in Readiness to Marry by Dating Attitudes and Beliefs

The attitudes about romance and mate selection were evaluated and respondents scores, on average, ranged from disagreement (M = 3.3) to strong agreement (M = 5.5) on each of the constraining beliefs (see Table 4.3 for overall and group means). In other words, respondents tended to hold more moderate views that there is only one right person out there for them (M = 4.3), that love is sufficient reason to marry (M = 4.5) and that cohabitation can strengthen one's future marriage (M = 4.2). Respondents, on average, tended to agree more with the belief that one should wait to marry until they find the right/perfect partner (M = 4.6) and that they must feel completely assured of marital success before getting married (M = 5.5). In contrast, these single soldiers were less likely to agree that choosing a mate should be easy (M = 3.7) and that opposites compliment (M = 3.3). Examination of the group means suggests that those who took longer than a year to feel ready to marry, on average, tend to hold more intense constraining views that there is a one and only partner for them, that they must wait until they have found the perfect partner, that love is a sufficient reason to marry and that cohabitation will improve their chances of marital success. Nonetheless, multivariate analyses examining the four and three groups showed no statistically significant differences.

Variations in Readiness to Marry by Dating Behaviors

Analyses of the dating behaviors was based on respondents who completed all 32 items ($n = 228$), and suggest that these single soldiers tended to pace their past

relationships relatively quickly. On average, respondents reported that they fully knew their partner (mean range 2.0 to 4.5) and were exhibiting signs of commitment (mean range 2.7 to 3.5) within the first two to four months of the relationship. Subsequently, trust in and reliance on their past partners tended to develop within six months of the relationship (mean range 3.2 to 5.0). Becoming physically intimate with their past partners tended to evolve quickly within the first four months of the relationship, such that respondents, on average, reported having sexual intercourse within 3-4 months of the relationship (M = 4.4).

Subscale	Overall (n=248)	Group 1 (n=92)	Group 2 (n=32)	Group 3 (n=64)	Group 4 (n=60)
One and Only	4.3(1.3)	4.1(1.2)	4.5(1.3)	4.4(1.4)	4.7(1.4)
Love is Enough	4.5(1.3)	4.3(1.3)	4.4(1.2)	4.4(1.4)	4.9(1.4)
Cohabitation	4.2(1.7)	4.2(1.7)	4.2(1.7)	4.0(1.6)	4.4(1.6)
Opposites Complement	3.3(0.9)	3.4(0.8)	3.4(0.9)	3.3(0.9)	3.3(0.9)
Ease of Effort	3.7(1.2)	3.7(1.3)	3.7(1.2)	3.7(1.1)	3.7(1.2)
Idealization	4.6(1.0)	4.5(0.9)	4.5(1.0)	4.6(1.1)	4.7(1.1)
Complete Assurance	5.5(1.1)	5.5(1.0)	5.0(1.3)	5.6(1.0)	5.5(1.0)

Table 4.3: Group Mean (SD) Scores on the Attitudes about Romance and Mate Selection Subscales.

Table 4.4 provides a mean rank ordering of these dating behaviors with the respondents who felt ready to marry their partner after at least a year as the referent group. The majority of those who never felt ready to marry their partner reported developing almost all of the aspects of the Relationship Attachment Model (i.e., knowledge, trust, reliance, commitment and sex) although unlike the other groups; they never felt ready to marry their partner. In contrast, those who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months reported partaking in all the dating behaviors evaluated by the

32-item dating behaviors scale, except expecting sex with their partner, within 4 months and, on average, before their reported readiness to marry. In addition, those who felt ready to marry within 5-12 months, on average, reported participating in all of the 32 dating behaviors within the first 5-6 months of the relationship as well as before their reported readiness to marry. Finally, those who felt ready to marry after at least a year, on average, reported performing all the 32 dating behaviors within 5-12 months and completed all of these behaviors before they indicated they felt ready to marry their partner.

Across all groups, strongly relying on a partner ($M = 5.04$), depending on a partner to meet their needs ($M = 4.83$), confiding one's deepest secrets ($M = 5.04$) and expecting sex ($M = 5.02$) were all dating behaviors that took longer, on average, to occur. While meeting a partner's friends ($M = 2.03$), getting to "first base" ($M = 2.05$), talking about their partner's family ($M = 2.40$) and expectations of exclusivity ($M = 2.87$) were all dating behaviors that occurred, on average, quickly in a dating relationship for all four groups. A detailed table of the frequencies and mean scores for the dating behavior scale for each individual group can be found in Appendices B-F.

Four Group Comparison. Analyses comparing the four readiness to marry groups revealed a significant multivariate effect (based on Wilks' Lambda) for readiness to marry, $F(32, 96) = 1.5, p = .003$. Assessment of the univariate analysis revealed significant differences on over half of the dating behaviors (see Table 4.4 for F-statistics). In order to provide the clearest explanation as to where the exact differences occurred, results will be organized by the five components of the Relationship Attachment Model (R.A.M.): knowledge, trust, reliance, commitment and sex.

Item	Group				F-value	
	1 n=84	2 n=28	3 n=60	4 n=56	4 groups	3 groups
K I met my partner's friends	2.17	2.11	1.88	1.93	0.39	0.22
S I got to first base (above the shoulders)	1.99	1.57	2.03	2.41	1.79	2.71
K I talked with my partner about their family	2.25	1.86	2.65	2.63	2.32	3.19 ^a
K I met my partner's family	3.58	3.21	3.18	3.14	0.56	0.01
S I got to second base (above the waist)	3.06	2.18	2.97	3.14	1.72	2.58
C I expected my partner to date only me	2.69	1.79	2.62	3.29	4.20 ^b	7.05 ^c
C I was unwilling to date anyone else	3.05	2.57	3.08	3.36	0.75	1.24
K I felt that I knew my their hobbies and interests	2.63	2.29	3.10	3.41	3.89 ^b	4.43 ^b
C I referred to my partner as my girl/boyfriend	3.15	2.11	2.77	3.52	3.60 ^b	5.55 ^b
S I got to third base (below the waist; not intercourse)	3.90	2.82	3.63	3.73	1.76	2.04
K I had a clear opinion of what my partner is like	2.30	2.50	3.28	3.80	11.78 ^d	5.37 ^b
C I resisted temptations because of my partner	3.46	2.39	3.35	3.80	2.46	4.19 ^a
K I understood my partner's friendships	3.08	2.86	3.63	3.98	3.41 ^a	3.37 ^a
S I desired sex with my partner	3.86	3.14	3.63	4.04	0.92	1.31
T I felt comfortable sharing my dreams and aspirations	3.25	2.25	3.53	4.09	6.20 ^d	10.31 ^d
T I trusted my partner to keep their promises	2.98	2.07	3.23	4.09	7.17 ^d	10.77 ^d
K I felt that I knew my partner's communication style	3.08	2.29	3.45	4.13	7.00 ^d	10.81 ^d
K I understood my partner's family relationships	3.57	3.00	3.68	4.27	2.66 ^a	4.60 ^b
C I demonstrated examples of commitment	3.33	2.21	3.48	4.27	8.20 ^d	14.27 ^d
K I felt that I knew my partner's dreams and goals	3.94	2.39	3.87	4.46	6.50 ^d	12.95 ^d
K I knew how my partner handled stress and conflict	3.73	2.75	4.10	4.46	5.33 ^c	9.49 ^d
T I felt that I could trust my partner	3.73	2.36	3.38	4.48	8.06 ^d	16.96 ^d
S I slept with my partner but did not have sex	4.21	2.57	4.03	4.54	4.04 ^b	6.38 ^b
K I understood my partner's past relationships	4.10	3.39	4.23	4.55	1.63	2.60
T I was fairly certain my partner would not do something I disliked or would embarrass me	3.88	2.79	4.02	4.61	4.04 ^b	7.17 ^c
K I understood what my partner's family was like	2.86	2.75	4.18	4.64	5.00 ^b	9.05 ^d
S I got to home (intercourse)	4.75	3.50	4.10	4.68	2.64 ^a	2.83
K I had a view of how emotions were expressed in my partner's family	4.43	3.36	4.50	5.05	3.48 ^a	6.33 ^b
R I depended on my partner to meet my needs	5.10	3.61	4.65	5.25	3.71 ^b	5.86 ^b
S I expected sex with my partner	5.14	4.46	4.75	5.39	1.19	1.77
T I was willing to confide my deepest secrets	5.26	3.89	4.73	5.61	4.88 ^b	7.76 ^c
R I strongly relied on them to help or support me	5.19	3.79	4.87	5.64	4.33 ^b	7.23 ^c

^a p<.05; ^b p<.01; ^c p<.001; ^d p<.000;

Note Responses: 1= *within the first week*; 2= *within the first month*; 3= *within 2 months*; 4= *within 3-4 months*; 5= *within 5-6 months*; 6= *within 7-12 months*; 7= *longer than a year*; 8= *never*. Group: 1= Never felt ready to marry; 2 = Ready to marry in 4 months, 3 = Ready to marry within 5-12 months, 4 = Ready to marry after a year. Item Category: K= Knowledge, T= Trust, R= Reliance, C= Commitment, S= Sex.

Table 4.4: Dating Behavior Means and Significance.

Getting to Know a Partner

Univariate analyses revealed several statistically significant differences between groups across 9 of the 13 items intended to measure how quickly participants got to know their partners. Most differences were found on items that were intended to measure how quickly one got to know about their partner's family background, interests and personality, relationship skills and past and other relationships. The results of the dating behaviors scale are organized according to these categories that include items intended to measure how well individuals got to know certain aspects of their partner.

Family Background. Results showed significant differences between groups on three of the five items that assessed how quickly one got to know their partner's family. Those who felt ready to marry after at least a year took longer to *understand what their partner's family relationships were like* than those who felt ready within 4 months ($p = .008$) and than those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .049$). Respondents who felt ready to marry their partners within 4 months reported having a *realistic view of how emotions were expressed in their partner's family* as well as a *clear understanding of their partner's family* sooner than those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .032, .020$ respectively), those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .029, .004$ respectively) and those who felt ready to marry after at least a year ($p = .001, .000$ respectively). In addition, those who never felt ready to marry reported having a clear understanding of their partner's family sooner than those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .037$).

Interests and Personality. Results showed statistically significant differences between groups on all of the items intended to measure how quickly one got to know their partner's interests and personality. Respondents differed on when they reported that they *felt they had a clear opinion of what their partner was like* in that those who never felt ready to marry reported knowing what their partner was like sooner than those

who felt ready to marry within 5-12 months ($p = .000$) and those who felt ready in longer than a year ($p = .000$). Respondents who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months also felt that they *knew their partners dreams and goals* sooner than those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .001$), those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .002$) and those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .000$). Finally, respondents who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months felt that *they knew their partner's hobbies and interests* sooner than those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .037$) and those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .005$). In contrast, those who took at least a year to feel ready to marry took longer to get to know their partner's hobbies and interests than those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .008$).

Relationship Skills. The four readiness to marry groups differed significantly on all of the items that assessed how quickly one got to know their partner's relationship skills. Respondents who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months reported feeling that they *knew their partner's communication style and how their partner handled stress and serious conflict* sooner than those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .050$, $.022$ respectively), those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .007$, $.003$ respectively) and those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .000$, $.000$ respectively). And those who never felt ready to marry their partner reported taking less time to get to know their partner's communication style and to understand how their partner handled stress and serious conflict than those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .001$, $.028$ respectively).

Past and Other Relationships. Three items assessed how quickly respondents got to know their partner's past and other relationships, and results showed that the four groups differed significantly on only one of these items. Participants who felt ready to marry their partner after at least a year took longer, on average, than respondents who

never felt ready to marry ($p = .008$) and those who felt ready within 4 months ($p = .013$) to *understand their partner's friendships*.

Developing Trust in a Partner

Univariate analyses also revealed statistically significant differences between groups on all of the items assessing how soon participants developed trust in their partners. Respondents who felt ready to marry within 4 months reported *feeling comfortable sharing their dreams and aspirations, trusting their partner* and reported being *fairly certain that their partner would not do something they disliked or would embarrass them* sooner than those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .002, .001, .028$ respectively), those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .003, .021, .019$ respectively) and those who felt ready to marry after a year ($p = .000, .000, .001$ respectively). Also, those who were never ready to marry felt comfortable sharing their dreams and aspirations and trusted their partner sooner than those who felt ready to marry after at least a year ($p = .011, .024$ respectively). As well, those who felt ready to marry within 5-12 months trusted their partner sooner than those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .002$). *Trust in a partner to keep his or her promises* developed much slower for those who felt ready to marry their partner after at least a year than for those who never felt ready to marry their partner ($p = .008$) and for those who felt ready to marry within 4 months ($p = .000$). Next, respondents who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months were *willing to disclose their deepest secrets to their partner* faster than those who never felt ready ($p = .003$) and those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .001$). Likewise, those who felt ready within 5-12 months confided in their partner sooner than those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .026$).

Developing Reliance on a Partner

Exploration of the univariate analyses revealed differences between groups on both of the reliance items. Respondents who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months *depended on their partner to meet their needs* sooner than those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .004$) and those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .002$). In addition, those who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months *strongly relied on their partner to help or support them* sooner than those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .005$), those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .040$) and those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .001$).

Developing Commitment to a Partner

Results showed that the four readiness to marry groups differed significantly on three of the five items that assessed how quickly one developed commitment in their relationships. In regards to *expectations of exclusivity*, univariate analyses revealed that those who felt ready to marry within 4 months expected their partner to date only them sooner than both those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .026$) and those who felt ready to marry after at least a year ($p = .001$). Respondents who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months *demonstrated examples of commitment* before those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .005$), those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .003$) and those who took at least a year to feel ready to marry ($p = .000$). In contrast, those who felt ready to marry after at least a year took longer to demonstrate examples of commitment than those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .003$) and those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .021$). Participants who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months *referred to their partner as their boyfriend or girlfriend* sooner than those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .016$) and sooner than those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .002$). As well, those who felt ready to marry their partner within 5-12

months called their partner boyfriend or girlfriend sooner than those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .043$).

Developing a Sexual Relationship with a Partner

Univariate analyses suggested that the four readiness to marry groups differed significantly on two out of seven items measuring how quickly participants became sexually involved. Those who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months, on average, *slept with their partners without having sex* sooner than those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .003$), felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .012$) and felt ready after at least a year ($p = .001$). Those who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months *had sexual intercourse ("got to home")* sooner than those who never felt ready to marry ($p = .014$) and sooner than those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .022$).

Overall, analyses of the four readiness to marry groups suggest some consistent trends. First, typically those who felt ready to marry within 5-12 months did not differ very much from those who felt ready to marry after at least a year. Second, those who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months developed their relationships, on average, much quicker than those who took longer to feel ready to marry their partner. In addition, the majority (59.5-98.2%, see Appendix B) of those who never felt ready to marry their partner still reported developing all aspects of the Relationship Attachment Model (i.e., knowledge, trust, reliance, commitment and sex), although unlike the other groups, they never felt ready to marry their partner. Possible explanations for this finding will be explored in the discussion chapter.

Dating Behaviors: 3 Groups

Results revealed a significant multivariate effect (based on Wilks' Lambda) for readiness to marry based on only those who felt ready to marry, $F(32, 64) = 1.47$, $p = .023$. Univariate statistics revealed significant differences on twenty-two out of the thirty-

two dating behaviors and results were similar to those found with the four groups, with a few exceptions. These exceptions are noted below.

Getting to Know a Partner

Analyses performed with the three readiness to marry groupings revealed statistically significant differences on 10 of the 13 items intended to assess how quickly one got to know their partner. The same variables in the analyses with the four readiness to marry groups were found to be statistically significant, in addition to how quickly respondents *spoke to their partner about their family*. Also, respondents who felt ready to marry within 4 months consistently, across all of the knowledge items, reported, on average, getting to know things about their partner sooner than those who felt ready later.

Family Background. Similar to the analyses with the four readiness to marry groups, the analyses of the three readiness to marry groups showed statistically significant differences on the same three items assessing how quickly one got to know their partner, with the addition of one more. The difference occurred on when the respondents *talked with their partner about their family*. Results revealed that those who felt ready to marry within 4 months talked with their partner about their family and childhood sooner than those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .020$) and sooner than those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .025$). Also, those who felt ready within 4 months also reported *knowing how emotions were expressed in their partner's family, knowing what their partner's family was like and having a clear understanding of what their partner's family relationships were like* sooner than those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .017, .002, .004$ respectively) and those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .001, .000, .003$ respectively).

Interests and Personality. Analyses showed that the three readiness to marry groups also differed on all of the items intended to assess how quickly one got to know about their partner's personality and interests. These three items also differed significantly when the four readiness to marry groups were analyzed. For example, those who felt ready within 4 months had a *fairly clear opinion of what their partner was like* within approximately 2 months whereas those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .05$) and after at least a year ($p = .001$) felt like they had a clear opinion of their partner around 2.5 to 4 months. Also, understanding a partner's *hobbies and interests* as well as *knowing their partner's dreams and goals* occurred sooner for those who felt ready within 4 months than for both those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .032, .000$ respectively) and those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .004, .000$ respectively).

Relationship Skills. The analyses with the three readiness to marry groups showed that the groups differed significantly on the two items assessing how quickly one got to know their partner's use of relationship skills, these results parallel the findings with the four readiness to marry groups. For example, those who felt ready to marry within 4 months felt that they knew *how their partner handled stress and serious conflict* sooner than those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .001$) and those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .000$) and felt that they knew *their partner's communication style* sooner than those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .003$) and those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .000$). Also, those who felt ready within 5-12 months felt they understood their partner's communication style sooner than those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .035$).

Past and Other Relationships. The three readiness to marry groups were statistically different on the same item, assessing how quickly one got to know about their partner's past and other relationships, as the four readiness to marry groups. For

instance, those who felt ready to marry within four months, *felt that they understood their partner's friendships* quicker than those who felt ready to marry after at least a year ($p = .010$).

Developing Trust in a Partner

The three readiness to marry groups differed across four of the five trust items on the dating behaviors scale. Univariate analyses revealed that those who felt ready to marry within 4 months, on average, tended to *feel comfortable sharing their dreams and aspirations with their partner, trust their partner, trust their partner to keep their promises and trusted their partners not to embarrass them or do something they disliked* sooner than those who felt ready to marry within 5-12 months ($p = .002, .007, .008, .011$ respectively) and those who felt ready to marry after at least a year ($p = .000, .000, .016, .000$ respectively). Also, respondents who felt ready to marry within 4 months *felt willing to confide their deepest secrets to their partner* sooner than those who felt ready in at least a year ($p = .000$), and those who felt ready within 5-12 months felt confident *confiding their deepest secrets to their partner* quicker than those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .016$). Overall, this pattern suggests that those who feel ready to marry their partners sooner tend to develop trust in their relationships at a faster pace.

Developing Reliance on a Partner

Similarly to the analyses performed with the four readiness to marry groups, univariate results revealed significance on the same two reliance items when performed with the three readiness to marry groups. Results showed that those who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months *strongly relied on their partner to help or support them* as well as *depended on their partner to meet their needs* sooner than those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .028, .030$ respectively) as well as those who felt ready to marry after at least a year ($p = .000, .001$ respectively). These results suggest

that those who feel ready to marry sooner develop reliance upon their partners faster in developing relationships.

Developing Commitment to a Partner

Analyses comparing the three readiness to marry groups revealed three significant differences in regards to the five commitment items. Whereas the four groups did not differ on when *respondents resisted temptations because of their partner*, the three groups did, such that those who felt ready within 4 months resisted temptations sooner than those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .049$) and those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .004$). However, analyses with 4 groups and analyses with 3 groups did reveal significant differences on two of the same variables. First, *expectations of exclusivity* and *demonstration of examples of commitment* arouse quicker for those who felt ready to marry within 4 months than those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .039$, $.001$ respectively) and those who felt ready after at least a year ($p = .000$, $.000$ respectively). As well, as those who felt ready within 5-12 months expected exclusivity and demonstrated examples of commitment sooner than those who felt ready to marry their partner after at least a year ($p = .041$, $.012$ respectively). Once again, these overall trends demonstrate how those who feel ready to marry their partner sooner develop their relationships, specifically commitment in their relationship, more quickly than those who feel ready to marry later.

Developing a Sexual Relationship with a Partner

Univariate analyses conducted with the three readiness to marry groups revealed that the three groups only statistically differed with respect to *when they slept with their partner, but did not have sex*. Results showed that those who felt ready to marry within 4 months *slept with their partner without having sex* sooner than those who felt ready within 5-12 months ($p = .008$) and sooner than those who felt ready to marry after at

least a year ($p = .001$). Although, those who felt ready to marry within 4 months tended to, on average, have sex sooner ($M = 3.50$ or 2-3 months) than those who felt ready to marry within 5-12 months ($M = 4.10$ or 3-4 months) and after at least a year ($M = 4.68$ or 4-6 months), analyses did not suggest the differences were statistically significant.

Overall, analyses of the three readiness to marry groups suggested that, on average, those who felt ready to marry within four months tended to develop their relationships much quicker than those who felt ready later in the relationship. Also, those who felt ready to marry within 5-12 months did not differ substantially from those who felt ready to marry after at least a year. These findings will be explored further in the discussion chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter will explore the relevance of the findings presented in Chapter 4 and discuss these findings in relation to the five research questions posed in Chapter 2. In addition, limitations, directions for future researchers and implications for practitioners will be discussed.

Variations in Readiness to Marry by Demographics

Regarding how readiness to marry varied as a function of general demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, age, race, religiosity, educational background, parental status and marital history), analyses found that those who never felt ready to marry differed significantly from the other groups in relation to their age, their previous marital status and whether or not they had children. Considering the fact that those who never felt ready to marry were, on average, younger and therefore have had less life experiences than those who did feel ready to marry at some point, it made intuitive sense that they were less likely to have been previously married and less likely to have had children. Also, those who had been previously married were more likely to feel ready to marry again at some point, but typically after at least a year. Likewise those who have children were least likely to never feel ready to marry. These findings could be interpreted as those who have been previously married may also be those participants who have children or perhaps having previous marital experience would make one more cautious about marrying again, thus taking more time in a premarital relationship, but not deter them from feeling ready to marry again. In regards to parental status, perhaps those respondents with children feel slightly more anxious about finding a marital partner, especially because being a single parent is accompanied with

additional challenges and marrying may be beneficial economically for single parents (Anderson, 2003; Osborne, 2005). In addition, these respondents may hold the belief that marriage is important for childrearing, which may contribute to their readiness to marry (Osborne, 2005). As well, having a child requires a considerable amount of commitment (Kapinus & Johnson, 2003) and perhaps those who have already made such a major lifetime commitment are more likely to feel ready to make a lifetime commitment to a partner in marriage.

However, the expected difference that females would feel ready to marry sooner than males (Larson, 1988) was not found. This lack of finding could be because the previous research examined readiness to marry of college aged-students (Holman & Li, 1997; Larson, 1988, 1998), and while this sample had a mean age of 22.3 years old, which is arguably college-aged, their involvement in Army life may present a completely different type of scenario than college provides. Research has shown that those in the Army are in an environment which fosters accelerated relationships and even provides better benefits to those who marry (Fluek & Zax, 1995); therefore both men and women in the Army may equally feel a greater readiness to marry. However, the sample used in this study was relatively new to the Army life and may not have yet been influenced by the Army environment. Therefore, the similarity in readiness to marry between males and females may have something to do with specific personality traits of those in the Army. For example, Rosen, Weber and Martin (2000) examined personality traits of those in the military and found that passive, feminine traits were viewed negatively. Therefore, one could cautiously argue that females in the Army may have less stereotypically feminine views toward marriage, making them less likely to differ from the males in their readiness to marry.

Likewise, no differences were found in regards to respondent's race, religiosity and educational background, all of which throughout the research have been shown to be predictive of marital stability (Bumpass, et al., 1991, Vaughn & Heaton, 1997, Kahn & London, 1991). The lack of statistically significant differences may have been a result of examining the individual as opposed to studying a couple currently in a relationship. For example, a couple's readiness to marry may be affected in a relationship involving two different races or two different religious backgrounds (Feise & Tomcho, 2001). However this study only asked respondents to indicate their personal religious background and ethnicity and not that of their partner too, which may have been a better indicator of how these two variables relate to readiness to marry.

When the three groups, excluding those who never felt ready to marry, were analyzed no significant differences were found on age, previous marital status, parental status, gender, ethnicity, religiosity or educational background. However, a statistically significant difference was found in relation to respondent's parent's marital status. Those who felt ready to marry sooner (i.e., within 4 months) were more likely to have divorced parents. Past research has suggested that individuals with divorced parents may have an eagerness or neediness to marry (Amato, 1996) and the findings of this study parallel those of past research. Although the results suggest that those who have divorced parents feel ready to marry sooner than those with parents who are still married the relationship may not be causal. For instance, the impact divorce has on children, especially the long-term impacts are not completely known. In addition, the nature of the divorce, the amount of time the child spends with each parent, the involvement of the parents, the amount of discord observed by the child, etc. are all factors that play a part in how a divorce affects a child and their future relationships (Braver & Cookson, 2003; Mullett & Stolberg, 2002). Even so, results of this study do indicate that those who come

from parental divorce do feel ready to marry sooner than those who come from intact parental marriages.

In contrast to the eagerness to marry of those respondents who suffered a parental divorce, those respondents whose parents never married were slower, on average, to feel ready to marry. For instance, of those who felt ready to marry after at least a year, 23.3% had parents who never married in contrast to the 7.8% of those who felt ready within 5-12 months and 6.3% who felt ready within 4 months. Perhaps those respondents who did not have married parents lacked a marital role model and because of this are more careful or more reluctant when choosing a mate. Research does suggest that children of divorce sometimes learn inappropriate relationship behaviors from observing their parents (Westervelt & Vandenberg, 1997), so while little research exists on individuals whose parents never married, perhaps the lack of a marital role model makes them more cautious throughout their courtships, thus taking longer to feel ready to marry.

Variations in Readiness to Marry as a Function of Relationship History

Variations in respondent's readiness to marry as a function of their relationship history differed significantly between the four readiness to marry groups. Results showed that the groups differed on whether or not they were currently in a committed relationship. Those who were not currently in a relationship were more likely to have never felt ready to marry their partner compared to those who were in a committed relationship. Perhaps those currently in a relationship are experiencing the high and euphoric feelings of being in love and happy, whereas those currently not in a relationship have up until this point only experienced relationships that have ended. Therefore in hindsight they are more likely to rate that they never felt ready to marry a

partner, whereas maybe if they were asked the same question “in the heat” of a past relationship, they would have responded differently.

Significant differences were also found regarding the average length of respondents relationships: those who never felt ready to marry had significantly shorter relationships than those who felt ready to marry at some point. This finding is commonsensical in that having shorter relationships may have not provided those participants the time necessary to feel ready to marry. Likewise, those who never felt ready to marry had fewer serious relationships and had shorter relationships, on average, than the other three groups. These findings coupled with the findings that these respondents were also younger than the other three groups suggest that those who never felt ready to marry were, overall, younger and less experienced in romantic relationships.

Because of these findings, conducting the analyses with only those who felt ready to marry was necessary. The results of analyses with the three readiness to marry groups suggested that the three groups did not differ in their past relationship experiences. One of this study’s great strengths is the homogeneity of the sample in that it allowed a truly accurate assessment of the respondents’ attitudes and beliefs about mate selection as well as their dating behaviors.

Variations in Readiness to Marry as a Function of Relationship Attitudes and Beliefs

Regarding how readiness to marry varies as a function of one’s attitudes and beliefs about mate selection, findings did not reveal any significant differences. While it was hypothesized that those who exuded more negative beliefs about mate selection would feel ready to marry later than those who held more positive beliefs, results did not support this expectation. However, the lack of significant differences suggests that the four readiness to marry groups’ beliefs about dating and mate selection are similar while

their demographic backgrounds and relationship experiences are different. While it would seem fair to assume that past experiences in relationships and in life would form one's beliefs and attitudes about future relationships (Harvey & Omarzu, 1997; Surra & Bohman, 1991), the findings do not suggest this pattern. In contrast, when analyses were conducted including only the three readiness to marry groups, once again no significant differences were found. However, these groups did not differ significantly in their past relationship experiences or their demographic backgrounds, excluding their parent's marital status. This is important to keep in mind when examining the dating behaviors scale because the respondents do differ in regards to their dating behaviors, yet are similar in demographic characteristics, past relationship experiences and attitudes about mate selection, therefore differing in their behaviors raises the question as to whether beliefs or behaviors come first. This impact of beliefs on behaviors or visa versa will be explored further in the next section. Cobb, Larson, and Watson (2003) suggested that the Attitudes about Romance and Mate Selection Scale (ARMSS) should be examined in relation to one's readiness to marry, however the results of this study do not suggest any relationship between constraining beliefs and one's readiness to marry.

Variations in Readiness to Marry as a Function of Dating Behaviors

The fifth research question explored how readiness to marry varies as a function of past dating behaviors. It was hypothesized that those who feel ready to marry sooner will develop in relationships quicker. Analyses suggest that those who feel ready to marry within 4 months, overall, tend to differ from those who feel ready to marry after at least a year and most often differ from those who feel ready to marry within 5-12 months. Still, these participants' past relationships appeared to develop in similar ways, meaning they participated in the dating behaviors in a similar order, yet, depending on when they felt ready to marry, they took part in them faster or slower. Across all groups, it

appeared that they were all slowest to depend on their partner to meet their needs, rely on their partner to help or support them and to confide their deepest secrets. This finding may indicate the cautiousness of individuals in guarding their “heart” or their independence, however this caution is thrown to the wind in regards to when they have sex with their partner and getting to know their partners on more superficial levels. Another surprising finding is that those who feel ready to marry within 4 months tend to trust their partner within the first month in stark contrast to those who feel ready to marry after at least a year who do not develop trust in their partner until approximately 5 months into the relationship. This finding is yet another example of how quickly those who felt ready to marry within 4 months develop their relationships.

When examining the differences between the readiness to marry groups, on average, most respondents developed the majority of the R.A.M. components (i.e., knowledge, trust, reliance, commitment and sex) before feeling ready to marry. However, the within group variations did reveal some respondents who never took part in some of these dating behaviors, yet still felt ready to marry their partner. For example, 18% of those respondents who felt ready to marry their partner within 4 months never strongly relied on their partner to help or support them and were never willing to trust their partner with their deepest secrets. Likewise, of those who felt ready within 5-12 months, 23.3% never strongly relied on their partner to help or support them and 17% never depended on their partner to meet their needs. In addition, of those respondents who felt ready after at least a year 16% never depended on their partner to meet their needs. This trend suggests that the dating behaviors that were not developed tended to be the same behaviors across all the groups that felt ready to marry at some point. In addition, all of these behaviors measured the deeper and more intense levels of trust and reliance. This trend indicates that those who felt ready to marry at some point

tended to develop the intense levels of knowledge about their partner and have sex with their partner, however a significant amount of these respondents neglected to develop deep levels of trust in and reliance on their partner. Perhaps future research could investigate the role trust and reliance specifically plays in romantic relationship development, especially because trust and reliance are two components crucial to a healthy marriage (Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997).

Beliefs vs. Behaviors

A surprising finding throughout the analyses among those who, at one time, felt ready to marry was that these individuals did not differ on their demographic backgrounds, their past relationship experiences or their attitudes and beliefs about mate selection, yet they differed drastically in regards to their dating behaviors. This finding is interesting because it evokes the question as to when their beliefs will catch up with their behaviors or visa versa. Considering some research suggests that individuals who hold more negative views toward marriage or more positive views toward divorce, in general, are more susceptible to acting out these behaviors and subsequently suffer a divorce and/or marital instability (Amato, 1999), the direction of the relationship warrants further examination. For example, it would be incorrect to assume that only attitudes prior to marriage affect one's chance of marital stability or instability because that notion entirely ignores the crucial role that behaviors fill. For example, if one were to argue that only prior held beliefs and values affected one's chance of marital stability, then by that particular mindset, an individual could engage in any premarital behavior they desired, yet if they still held a conservative belief system, their marital stability would not be at all altered. This argument is flawed for two reasons.

First, this reasoning is contrary to past research that has found that the behavior of engaging in promiscuous sexual behaviors increases one's chance of divorce (Kahn &

London, 1991). Similarly, research has found that holding less conservative beliefs about marriage increases one's chances of divorce, thus the attitudinal component (Kelly & Conley, 1987; Kurdek, 1993). Therefore past research has demonstrated that both the attitudes of an individual as well as their behaviors are important to their future marital stability. Secondly, this reasoning would assume that behaviors are completely unrelated to beliefs, when a more accurate interpretation would be that the behaviors and the beliefs of individuals are undergoing constant reorganization. This is demonstrated by ratings of individuals acceptance of premarital sex such that in 1969, more than 75% of American adults with an opinion on premarital sex said it was either "always" or "almost always" wrong, but by the 1980s only 37% of American adults said that premarital sex was "always" or "almost always" wrong (Harding & Jencks, 2003). Similarly, while acceptance of premarital sex has increased, the number of individuals engaging in premarital sex in the past twenty years has increased 63% (Martin, et al., 2001).

According to Cialdini et al., (1999) the principal of social proof argues that an individual's level of acceptance of a belief, or performance of a behavior, increases as more people accept that belief or perform that behavior. Therefore, one could cautiously argue that as individuals are increasingly engaging in accelerated relationship behaviors and are observers of the fast pace singles or parents reenter the dating scene following a divorce, the fast pace of Hollywood relationships, the very public acceptance and increase in cohabitation, etc. individuals' beliefs toward more accelerated relationship behaviors and their subsequent increased acceptance could be partially due to the increase of these behaviors in the first place. In other words, the behaviors are related to the beliefs in that the behaviors are acted out and then either the beliefs are already consistent or they become consistent otherwise these individuals would be living out

their romantic relationship lives suffering from cognitive dissonance (Aronson, 1999). Similarly, identity theory asserts that the identities and behaviors of others shape our behavior and if these behaviors with others are stable and continued over time, alterations to our identity will follow in an effort to maintain consistency between our behaviors and our identity (Cast, 2003). These theories suggest that behaviors over time will shape our beliefs and our identities; however no known research has examined the impact of dating behaviors on relationship beliefs among singles.

The dilemma regarding whether beliefs shape behaviors or behaviors shape beliefs cannot be explained through the data collected for this study. However, further research should examine the role that both play, especially because research has demonstrated that both certain beliefs and behaviors can make one more prone for marital instability or dissolution (Cobb, Larson & Watson, 2003). In addition understanding how beliefs and behaviors impact one another is important for marriage and relationship educators in that understanding the direction of this relationship could provide program developers the understanding of how to most effectively help individuals form healthy relationships or maintain healthy marriages in that they could tailor programs around specifically impacting either beliefs and/or behaviors.

Never Ready to Marry vs. Ready to Marry

The analyses were conducted first by examining 4 readiness to marry groups, including those who never felt ready to marry, and secondly with those who only felt ready to marry at some point in their relationship. Considering those who never felt ready to marry were significantly younger than those who felt ready to marry and also had less relationship experiences it made sense to examine the data without including those respondents, especially because their young age or lack of relationship experiences may have attributed to their never being ready to marry.

However, those who never felt ready to marry developed their relationships in a way most similar to those who felt ready to marry after at least a year. And while they responded that they never felt the highest level of commitment in their relationships (i.e., readiness to marry) they did partake in the majority (range = 59.5 to 98%) of the dating behaviors measured in this study. Therefore the question remains, why are these respondents not feeling ready to marry, yet are engaging in all of the same relationship behaviors as those who feel ready to marry? Perhaps those respondents are just not old enough or experienced enough to feel ready to marry or perhaps this group is unique in that they have trouble developing commitment in their relationships. After all, while the sample was, on average, significantly, younger the range in ages did reflect considerable variability (range = 17 to 45). Although the differences between those who never felt ready to marry and those who did cannot be explained by the results of this study, it does pose an interesting question for future research. Such that: what are the differences between those who feel ready to marry at some point and those who never feel ready?

In addition, the differences between those who never feel ready to marry and those who do feel ready to marry raise another question which concerns the healthiness of partaking in the majority of these behaviors without ever feeling an intense commitment. In other words, considering some of the dating behaviors recorded in this study are behaviors that would typically be characteristic of committed relationships, is it healthy for individuals to expose themselves to these types of serious relationships without the intent of serious commitment? And overtime will partaking in these serious dating behaviors or being a serial dater (i.e., having premarital sex with several partners) without intense commitment affect the relationships that they later intend on making serious?

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Results of this study can only be suggestive and exploratory because of several limitations. First, when the dating behaviors of respondents were assessed, including the variable used to distinguish the readiness to marry groupings, they were asked to think back to their longest relationships and rate when the following events occurred. While this method was able to provide a general trend or way in which these respondents typically developed in their relationships, it was unclear as to what relationship they had in mind when they responded to the items and whether they thought back to several long relationships and responded how they typically developed in relationships or to whether they responded with one relationship in mind. In addition, respondent's ability to recall the accurate timeframe in which the specific items assessed in the dating behaviors section occurred may have been imprecise. Also, respondent's current relationship status may have been a variable that confounded how participants answered questions, particularly their response to the question asking when they felt ready to marry their partner. For example, currently being in a happy relationship may make one feel more ready to marry, however if the relationship ends, the relationship that once could have lead to marriage may not in hindsight appear so great after all. Therefore, those who currently are not involved in relationships, have only failed relationships which may have affected their response to the item which asked when they felt ready to marry their partner. While no known research has been conducted on this particular notion in regards to readiness to marry, research has suggested that when a relationship is the object of focal awareness, individuals are more inclined to think more about their partner, become more certain about their partner and increase their satisfaction with their partner and in their relationship (Acitelli, 1993).

This study clearly suggested that readiness to marry does vary by one's dating behaviors. However future research should explore individuals' ratings of readiness to marry in specific dating relationships. This would allow more precise interpretations of the findings and also would increase the chances of participants accurately indicating when they felt ready to marry their partner. In addition, future research should examine whether individuals' attitudes and beliefs toward mate selection change overtime and become more consistent with their behaviors or if the two operate independently. Because research does suggest that both beliefs and behaviors are important to mate selection and marital stability (Crosby, 1985; Larson, 2002), studying both changes in beliefs and behaviors longitudinally would provide a clearer picture of how the two affect each other.

Conclusion

Overall, respondents were similar in regards to their demographic backgrounds, their past dating experiences and their attitudes and beliefs toward marriage and mate selection. However, this study clearly suggests that those who felt ready to marry sooner differed significantly in their dating behaviors from those who felt ready to marry later. Interestingly, examining the dating behaviors within the groups revealed that the readiness to marry groups participated in the dating behaviors in almost identical order. However the groups varied significantly in their pace or how soon they participated in these behaviors. Therefore, while those who feel ready to marry within 4 months, on average, accomplish all of the dating behaviors in a similar order to those who feel ready after at least a year, their pace is significantly faster. This raises the question as to whether those who feel ready to marry within 4 months are doing the dating behaviors well, meaning can they really get to know their partner deeply within 4 months? In addition, is the quality of their relationships the same as those who take more time in

their dating relationships to get to know about their partner and develop trust, reliance and commitment? Future research should examine how the speed or pace of a dating relationship contributes to the quality of the relationship presently and in the future. In addition, qualitative studies could provide a rich understanding of what individuals are thinking in their relationships as well as the thought process they undergo before deciding that they feel ready to marry their partner. Considering the fast pace of relationships today, this future research could contribute significantly to the understanding of how the pace in developing relationships contributes to future relationship success.

On the whole, this study provides a foundation for which to more closely examine the dating experiences, beliefs and behaviors of single individuals. In addition, to exploring the notion of whether relationship beliefs lead to changes in dating behaviors or dating behaviors lead to changes in relationship beliefs. These topics warrant further examination because of the overwhelming impact stable and happy relationships have on our society. Learning more about how singles can best develop their premarital relationships so that they lead to healthy marriages could potentially thwart some of the unhealthy premarital relationship behaviors and beliefs that sabotage future marriages, thus reducing the risk of divorce.

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APPENDIX A.

IDs with missing variables.

Respondent	Demo ^a	Relationship History ^b	Attitudes & Beliefs ^c	Dating Behaviors ^d
Never ready to marry				
1002	4			
1118*		2	6	
1054		2		
1064		2,3		
1074*		2, 3, 5		
1095		2, 3		
1102		3		
1122		2, 3		
1134		6		
1158				C5
1173		2, 3		
1194*				K12, T4, S1, S2, S3
1262		3, 5		
1304		2		
1307				S7
2001		2		
2051				K13
2116		3		
2128				C4
2137	4			
2146				C4
2148		2, 3		
Within 1-4 months				
1006		2		
1014		3		T1
1015				K2
1016				K1
1052		2, 3		
1081	4	3		
1100		2, 3		
2058		2, 3, 5		
2063*		3		T3, R1, C4, S4
2256		3		
Within 5-12 months				
1008*	2, 3	3, 4		
1011		2, 3, 5		
1024		2, 3		
1025		3		
Respondent	Demo ^a	Relationship History ^b	Attitudes & Beliefs ^c	Dating Behaviors ^d

1042		2		
1119*		3		K12, K13, T4, R2, C3, S5
1175		2, 5		
1200		4		
1270				C4
1305		2, 6		
2003				K8, K11
2162		3, 5		
2248		3		
Longer than a year				
1020				K7
1032*	3, 6	1, 6		
1035	6			
1063		2, 3		
1110				K12
1120		2, 3		
1151				K13, C4
1170				C2
1172*	1		1-7	
1309*			1-7	K12, R1, R2, C1, C3
2004	3, 5, 6			
2140*				K3, K7, K9, K10, T2, T5, R2, C3
2156		3		
2168		1		

* denotes those dropped from the analyses

^aDemographics: (1) *age*; (2) *ethnicity*; (3) *highest grade completed*; (4) *parent's marital status*; (5) *ever married*; (6) *parental status* (no missing on gender or religiosity).

^bRelationship History: (1) *total number of dating relationships* (2) *average length of relationships*; (3) *how long until a relationship is considered serious*; (4) *total number of serious dating relationships* (5) *length of longest relationship*; (6) *overall, how satisfied are you with your past relationships*; (7) *are you currently in a relationship*

^cAttitudes and Beliefs: (1) *The One and Only*; (2) *The Perfect Partner/Idealization*; (3) *The Perfect Relationship*; (4) *Love is Enough*; (5) *Cohabitation*; (6) *Opposites Complement*; (7) *Choosing Should be Easy*.

^dDating Behaviors: (K) *Knowledge*; (T) *Trust*; (R) *Reliance*; (C) *Commitment*; (S) *Sex*. Please refer to *Table 4* for a complete listing of items.

APPENDIX B.

Mean (SD) and Frequencies of Timing of Dating Behaviors for Overall Sample (n=228)

Item	M	SD	Timing Frequencies (%)				
			1-2	3-4	5-6	7	8
K I met my partner's friends	2.03	1.76	82.5	9.7	1.3	1.8	4.8
S I got to first base (above the shoulders)	2.05	1.63	78.9	11.8	4.4	3.1	1.8
K I talked with my partner about their family	2.40	1.56	70.6	19.7	5.3	1.8	2.5
C I expected my partner to date only me	2.71	1.89	61.0	24.5	7.4	2.2	4.8
K I felt that I knew my their hobbies and interests	2.90	1.73	52.6	32.1	9.6	1.8	3.9
K I had a clear opinion of what my partner is like	2.95	1.70	49.5	33.3	11.9	3.5	1.8
S I got to second base (above the waist)	2.95	1.97	53.9	29.4	7.0	3.1	6.6
C I referred to my partner as my girl/boyfriend	3.01	2.02	53.5	29.0	7.9	2.6	7.0
C I was unwilling to date anyone else	3.07	2.27	54.4	22.8	9.2	3.1	10.5
T I trusted my partner to keep their promises	3.21	2.06	48.7	28.0	12.7	3.1	7.5
K I met my partner's family	3.32	2.30	53.9	19.8	11.4	2.6	12.3
K I felt that I knew my partner's communication style	3.34	1.93	43.9	34.3	12.7	3.9	5.3
C I resisted temptations because of my partner	3.39	2.29	51.8	22.4	10.1	4.4	11.4
T I felt comfortable sharing my dreams and aspirations	3.41	1.96	40.4	34.3	15.3	3.9	6.1
K I understood my partner's friendships	3.42	1.98	40.3	34.7	15.4	2.6	7.0
C I demonstrated examples of commitment	3.46	1.90	39.0	37.3	13.1	5.7	4.8
T I felt that I could trust my partner	3.65	2.02	34.2	37.3	15.8	5.7	7.0
S I got to third base (below the waist; not intercourse)	3.66	2.19	40.4	29.3	14.9	3.9	11.4
K I understood my partner's family relationships	3.70	2.06	34.2	37.3	14.9	4.4	9.2
S I desired sex with my partner	3.75	2.46	45.2	20.6	14.1	6.1	14.0
K I felt that I knew my partner's dreams and goals	3.86	2.12	32.0	35.1	17.5	3.9	11.4
K I knew how my partner handled stress and conflict	3.89	1.99	28.5	37.8	21.0	4.8	7.9
T I was fairly certain my partner would not do something I disliked or would embarrass me	3.96	2.32	37.3	28.5	13.1	5.3	15.8
K I understood what my partner's family was like	4.00	2.23	33.3	28.9	20.6	4.4	12.7
S I slept with my partner but did not have sex	4.04	2.57	41.7	19.3	14.0	4.4	20.6
K I understood my partner's past relationships	4.16	2.31	25.9	38.6	13.6	4.4	17.5
S I got to home (intercourse)	4.41	2.35	27.6	31.2	15.3	7.5	18.4
K I had a view of how emotions were expressed in my partner's family	4.47	2.31	24.1	36.0	20.7	6.1	18.9
R I depended on my partner to meet my needs	4.83	2.36	21.6	27.6	19.6	6.1	25.0
S I expected sex with my partner	5.02	2.49	23.2	24.6	15.8	5.3	31.1
R I strongly relied on them to help or support me	5.04	2.34	18.1	27.6	20.1	7.9	26.3
T I was willing to confide my deepest secrets	5.04	2.16	14.5	28.5	25.5	11.8	19.7

Note. Timing: 1-2 = *within the first month*; 3-4 = *within 2-4 months*; 5-6 = *within 5-12 months*; 7 = *longer than a year*; 8 = *never*. Item Categories: K = *Knowledge*; T= *Trust*; R= *Reliance*; C= *Commitment*; S= *Sex*.

APPENDIX C.

Mean (SD) and Frequencies of Timing of Dating Behaviors for Never Readies (n=84)

Item	M	SD	Timing Frequencies (%)				
			1-2	3-4	5-6	7	8
S I got to first base (above the shoulders)	1.99	1.68	83.3	9.5	1.2	1.2	4.8
K I met my partner's friends	2.17	2.13	83.3	6.0	0.0	0.0	10.7
K I talked with my partner about their family	2.25	1.68	76.2	15.5	2.4	1.2	4.8
K I had a clear opinion of what my partner is like	2.30	1.32	69.0	25.0	4.8	0.0	1.2
K I felt that I knew my their hobbies and interests	2.63	1.80	64.3	22.7	6.0	1.2	6.0
C I expected my partner to date only me	2.69	2.01	63.1	22.6	4.8	2.4	7.1
K I understood what my partner's family was like	2.86	2.52	44.0	22.6	10.7	3.6	19.0
T I trusted my partner to keep their promises	2.98	2.12	59.5	19.1	10.7	1.2	9.5
C I was unwilling to date anyone else	3.05	2.47	57.1	20.3	6.0	1.2	15.5
S I got to second base (above the waist)	3.06	2.09	53.6	29.7	4.8	2.4	9.5
K I felt that I knew my partner's communication style	3.08	2.07	52.4	30.9	6.0	2.4	10.7
K I understood my partner's friendships	3.08	2.07	47.3	31.1	12.1	0.0	9.5
C I referred to my partner as my girl/boyfriend	3.15	2.13	51.2	31.0	4.7	3.6	9.5
T I felt comfortable sharing my dreams and aspirations	3.25	2.11	46.4	31.0	9.5	2.4	10.7
C I demonstrated examples of commitment	3.33	2.06	44.0	35.7	8.4	2.4	9.5
C I resisted temptations because of my partner	3.46	2.52	56.0	17.9	6.0	1.2	19.0
K I understood my partner's family relationships	3.57	2.35	46.2	28.5	6.0	3.6	15.5
K I met my partner's family	3.58	2.69	56.0	13.1	7.2	1.2	22.6
T I felt that I could trust my partner	3.73	2.37	39.3	30.9	10.7	4.8	14.3
K I knew how my partner handled stress and conflict	3.73	2.25	36.9	34.5	11.9	2.4	14.3
S I desired sex with my partner	3.86	2.55	44.0	22.6	9.6	6.0	17.9
T I was fairly certain my partner would not do something I disliked or would embarrass me	3.88	2.58	42.9	23.8	8.3	2.4	22.6
S I got to third base (below the waist; not intercourse)	3.90	2.40	41.7	26.2	10.7	2.4	19.0
K I felt that I knew my partner's dreams and goals	3.94	2.45	38.1	30.9	8.4	2.4	20.2
K I understood my partner's past relationships	4.10	2.44	33.3	33.4	9.5	2.4	21.4
S I slept with my partner but did not have sex	4.21	2.72	41.7	17.8	10.7	2.4	27.4
K I had a view of how emotions were expressed in my partner's family	4.43	2.59	28.5	32.1	8.4	2.4	28.6
S I got to home (intercourse)	4.75	2.53	27.4	26.2	13.1	3.6	29.8
R I depended on my partner to meet my needs	5.10	2.67	25.0	23.9	7.2	3.6	40.5
S I expected sex with my partner	5.14	2.65	26.2	21.4	10.7	1.2	40.5
R I strongly relied on them to help or support me	5.19	2.55	19.0	26.2	15.4	1.2	38.1
T I was willing to confide my deepest secrets	5.26	2.36	14.3	27.4	20.2	6.0	32.1

Note. Timing: 1-2 = *within the first month*; 3-4 = *within 2-4 months*; 5-6 = *within 5-12 months*; 7 = *longer than a year*; 8 = *never*. Item Categories: K = *Knowledge*; T= *Trust*; R= *Reliance*; C= *Commitment*; S=Sex.

APPENDIX D.

Mean (SD) and Frequencies of Timing of Dating Behaviors for Those Ready within 4 Months (n=28)

Item	M	SD	Timing Frequencies (%)				
			1-2	3-4	5-6	7	8
S I got to first base (above the shoulders)	1.57	0.96	85.7	10.7	3.6	0.0	0.0
C I expected my partner to date only me	1.79	1.29	85.7	10.7	0.0	3.6	0.0
K I talked with my partner about their family	1.86	0.89	92.9	3.6	3.6	0.0	0.0
T I trusted my partner to keep their promises	2.07	1.46	78.6	17.8	0.0	0.0	3.6
K I met my partner's friends	2.11	1.73	78.5	14.3	0.0	3.6	3.6
C I referred to my partner as my girl/boyfriend	2.11	1.81	85.7	7.2	0.0	0.0	7.1
S I got to second base (above the waist)	2.18	1.54	71.4	21.5	3.6	0.0	3.6
C I demonstrated examples of commitment	2.21	1.57	64.3	28.5	3.6	3.6	0.0
T I felt comfortable sharing my dreams and aspirations	2.25	1.24	64.3	32.2	3.5	0.0	0.0
K I felt that I knew my partner's communication style	2.29	1.05	64.3	35.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
K I felt that I knew my their hobbies and interests	2.29	1.51	71.4	25.0	0.0	0.0	3.6
T I felt that I could trust my partner	2.36	1.16	60.7	32.1	7.1	0.0	0.0
K I felt that I knew my partner's dreams and goals	2.39	1.13	57.1	39.3	3.6	0.0	0.0
C I resisted temptations because of my partner	2.39	1.73	75.0	14.3	3.6	3.6	3.6
K I had a clear opinion of what my partner is like	2.50	1.14	53.6	42.9	3.6	0.0	0.0
S I slept with my partner but did not have sex	2.57	2.01	71.4	14.3	3.6	7.1	3.6
C I was unwilling to date anyone else	2.57	2.24	60.7	25.0	3.6	0.0	10.7
K I knew how my partner handled stress and conflict	2.75	1.14	39.2	57.2	3.6	0.0	0.0
K I understood what my partner's family was like	2.75	1.56	50.0	42.8	3.6	0.0	3.6
T I was fairly certain my partner would not do something I disliked or would embarrass me	2.79	1.85	64.3	21.5	7.2	0.0	7.1
S I got to third base (below the waist; not intercourse)	2.82	1.87	57.1	28.6	7.2	0.0	7.1
K I understood my partner's friendships	2.86	1.48	50.0	39.2	7.2	3.6	0.0
K I understood my partner's family relationships	3.00	2.00	46.4	39.3	3.6	0.0	10.7
S I desired sex with my partner	3.14	2.59	60.7	14.2	7.1	0.0	17.9
K I met my partner's family	3.21	2.35	60.7	17.9	3.6	3.6	14.3
K I had a view of how emotions were expressed in my partner's family	3.36	2.02	39.3	39.3	10.7	0.0	10.7
K I understood my partner's past relationships	3.39	2.33	39.3	39.2	3.6	3.6	14.3
S I got to home (intercourse)	3.50	2.20	50.1	25.0	7.1	7.1	10.7
R I depended on my partner to meet my needs	3.61	2.17	35.7	42.9	7.1	0.0	14.3
R I strongly relied on them to help or support me	3.79	2.30	39.3	35.7	7.1	0.0	17.9
T I was willing to confide my deepest secrets	3.89	2.46	35.7	28.6	14.3	3.6	17.9
S I expected sex with my partner	4.46	2.65	32.1	25.0	10.7	3.6	28.6

Note. Timing: 1-2 = *within the first month*; 3-4 = *within 2-4 months*; 5-6 = *within 5-12 months*; 7 = *longer than a year*; 8 = *never*. Item Categories: K = *Knowledge*; T = *Trust*; R = *Reliance*; C = *Commitment*; S = *Sex*.

APPENDIX E.

Mean (SD) and Frequencies of Timing of Dating Behaviors for Those Ready within 5-12 months (n=60).

Item	M	SD	Timing Frequencies (%)				
			1-2	3-4	5-6	7	8
K I met my partner's friends	1.88	1.52	81.6	11.7	3.3	1.7	1.7
S I got to first base (above the shoulders)	2.03	1.51	78.3	13.3	5.0	3.3	0.0
C I expected my partner to date only me	2.62	1.76	66.7	18.3	11.7	0.0	3.3
K I talked with my partner about their family	2.65	1.46	60.0	31.7	5.0	1.7	1.7
C I referred to my partner as my girl/boyfriend	2.77	1.84	56.6	30.0	6.7	0.0	6.7
S I got to second base (above the waist)	2.97	2.04	51.7	33.4	5.0	0.0	10.0
C I was unwilling to date anyone else	3.08	2.17	53.3	23.4	13.4	3.3	6.7
K I felt that I knew my their hobbies and interests	3.10	1.73	45.0	35.0	15.0	1.7	3.3
K I met my partner's family	3.18	2.00	50.0	28.3	11.7	5.0	5.0
T I trusted my partner to keep their promises	3.23	1.94	38.3	40.0	15.0	6.7	6.7
K I had a clear opinion of what my partner is like	3.28	1.89	45.0	30.0	26.6	5.0	3.3
C I resisted temptations because of my partner	3.35	2.05	48.3	26.7	16.7	1.7	6.7
T I felt that I could trust my partner	3.38	1.72	33.3	46.7	13.3	1.7	5.0
K I felt that I knew my partner's communication style	3.45	1.81	41.7	36.7	13.4	5.0	3.3
C I demonstrated examples of commitment	3.48	1.50	31.7	48.3	16.7	5.0	3.3
T I felt comfortable sharing my dreams and aspirations	3.53	1.89	33.3	38.3	20.0	3.3	5.0
K I understood my partner's friendships	3.63	2.12	36.7	35.0	15.0	3.3	10.0
S I desired sex with my partner	3.63	2.38	48.3	20.0	15.0	5.0	11.7
S I got to third base (below the waist; not intercourse)	3.63	2.18	36.7	35.0	15.0	5.0	13.3
K I understood my partner's family relationships	3.68	1.75	25.0	46.6	21.6	1.7	5.0
K I felt that I knew my partner's dreams and goals	3.87	1.94	26.7	41.6	18.3	3.3	10.0
T I was fairly certain my partner would not do something I disliked or would embarrass me	4.02	2.21	31.7	38.3	11.7	1.7	16.7
S I slept with my partner but did not have sex	4.03	2.56	41.7	18.4	16.7	1.7	21.7
K I knew how my partner handled stress and conflict	4.10	1.96	21.7	43.3	23.3	3.3	8.3
S I got to home (intercourse)	4.10	2.23	26.6	40.0	13.4	6.7	13.3
K I understood what my partner's family was like	4.18	2.06	21.7	36.7	28.4	0.0	13.3
K I understood my partner's past relationships	4.23	2.07	16.7	48.3	18.4	1.7	15.0
K I had a view of how emotions were expressed in my partner's family	4.50	2.08	16.7	35.0	30.0	1.7	6.7
R I depended on my partner to meet my needs	4.65	2.06	16.7	33.3	31.7	1.7	16.7
T I was willing to confide my deepest secrets	4.73	1.73	10.0	38.3	33.4	10.0	8.3
S I expected sex with my partner	4.75	2.34	25.0	26.7	21.7	3.3	23.3
R I strongly relied on them to help or support me	4.87	2.26	16.7	31.6	25.0	3.3	23.3

Note. Timing: 1-2 = *within the first month*; 3-4 = *within 2-4 months*; 5-6 = *within 5-12 months*; 7 = *longer than a year*; 8 = *never*. Item Categories: K = *Knowledge*; T= *Trust*; R= *Reliance*; C= *Commitment*; S=Sex.

APPENDIX F.

Mean (SD) and Frequencies of Timing of Dating Behaviors for Those Ready after a Year (n=56).

Item	M	SD	Timing Frequencies (%)				
			1-2	3-4	5-6	7	8
K I met my partner's friends	1.93	1.37	83.9	10.7	1.8	3.6	0.0
S I got to first base (above the shoulders)	2.41	1.87	69.7	14.2	9.0	7.1	0.0
K I talked with my partner about their family	2.63	1.69	62.5	21.5	10.7	3.6	1.8
K I met my partner's family	3.14	1.95	51.8	21.4	21.4	1.8	3.6
S I got to second base (above the waist)	3.14	1.83	48.2	28.6	14.3	8.9	0.0
C I expected my partner to date only me	3.29	1.92	39.3	41.0	10.7	3.6	5.4
C I was unwilling to date anyone else	3.36	2.11	48.2	25.0	23.2	7.1	7.1
K I felt that I knew my their hobbies and interests	3.41	1.59	33.9	46.5	14.3	3.6	1.8
C I referred to my partner as my girl/boyfriend	3.52	2.00	37.5	35.7	17.8	5.4	3.6
S I got to third base (below the waist; not intercourse)	3.73	1.97	33.9	28.5	25.0	12.5	0.0
K I had a clear opinion of what my partner is like	3.80	1.78	23.2	44.7	21.4	8.9	1.8
C I resisted temptations because of my partner	3.80	2.32	37.5	28.5	12.5	12.5	8.9
K I understood my partner's friendships	3.98	1.76	26.8	35.7	28.6	5.4	3.6
S I desired sex with my partner	4.04	2.35	35.7	21.4	23.2	10.7	8.9
T I felt comfortable sharing my dreams and aspirations	4.09	1.81	26.8	35.7	25.0	8.9	3.6
T I trusted my partner to keep their promises	4.09	2.02	28.6	34.2	19.6	10.7	7.1
K I felt that I knew my partner's communication style	4.13	1.86	23.2	35.7	28.6	10.7	1.8
K I understood my partner's family relationships	4.27	1.83	19.6	39.3	26.8	10.7	3.6
C I demonstrated examples of commitment	4.27	1.86	26.8	32.1	21.4	17.9	1.8
K I felt that I knew my partner's dreams and goals	4.46	1.82	16.1	32.2	37.5	8.9	5.4
K I knew how my partner handled stress and conflict	4.46	1.68	17.9	26.8	41.0	12.5	1.8
T I felt that I could trust my partner	4.48	1.72	14.3	39.3	30.4	14.3	1.8
S I slept with my partner but did not have sex	4.54	2.37	26.8	25.0	21.4	8.9	17.9
K I understood my partner's past relationships	4.55	2.80	17.9	35.7	19.6	10.7	16.1
T I was fairly certain my partner would not do something I disliked or would embarrass me	4.61	2.04	21.4	28.6	25.0	16.1	8.9
K I understood what my partner's family was like	4.64	1.97	21.4	23.2	35.7	12.5	7.1
S I got to home (intercourse)	4.68	2.14	17.9	32.1	25.0	14.3	10.7
K I had a view of how emotions were expressed in my partner's family	5.05	2.06	17.9	17.8	34.0	19.6	10.7
R I depended on my partner to meet my needs	5.25	2.05	14.3	19.7	32.1	17.9	16.1
S I expected sex with my partner	5.39	2.23	12.5	26.8	19.6	14.3	26.8
T I was willing to confide my deepest secrets	5.61	1.86	8.9	19.7	30.3	26.8	14.3
R I strongly relied on them to help or support me	5.64	1.87	7.1	21.4	28.6	26.8	16.1

Note. Timing: 1-2 = *within the first month*; 3-4 = *within 2-4 months*; 5-6 = *within 5-12 months*; 7 = *longer than a year*; 8 = *never*. Item Categories: K = *Knowledge*; T= *Trust*; R= *Reliance*; C= *Commitment*; S= *Sex*.